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1 PREDICTORS OF FUTURE TRAVEL INTENTIONS TO LAGOS MEGACITY: EXPLORING THE CRIME-RISK PERCEPTIONS

Adewumi I. Badiora

Abstract

The issue of crime risk associated with travel has been receiving increased attention, yet this has scarcely been studied in African contexts. Besides, how travel intention is influenced by the interactions of perceived crime risk and socio-economic characteristics has scarcely been investigated. This study examines whether perceived crime-risk factors and socio-economic characteristics help to explain future travel intentions to megacities using Lagos, Nigeria as a case study. Self-administered questionnaires were used to gather information from a sample of travellers who arrived in Lagos in 2019. Frequency counts, percentages, mean and Ordinary Least Squares Regression (OLS) were used to analyse and interpret the data. The findings show that respondents were not certain about their safety in Lagos. Likewise, they were uncertain about their future travel to the city. Though partially mediated by travellers' socio-economic characteristics, the findings show that perceived crime risk significantly predicts future travel intentions. Implications of these findings to travel and security management are discussed.

Keywords: crime-risk, Lagos, megacities, perceived safety, repeat travel

INTRODUCTION

Megacity is a distinct description given to a metropolis with a population of ten million or more. There are currently twenty such cities in the world, and by 2025, they will be close to forty (United Nations, 2020). Megacities are growing and the ability of host nations to effectively deal with their explosive growth and keep up with infrastructure, resource requirements and security is, in many cases, weakening (US Chief of Staff of the Army, 2014). While megacities will continue to occupy a key strategic terrain, making their stability necessary for global connectedness, they may also offer a safe haven for dangerous individuals or groups who wish to foster crime (Dias & Salla, 2013; US Chief of Staff of the Army, 2014). This is because megacities offer several benefits to discrete threat networks. Large migrants reduce the transnational signature normally associated with terrorists, criminals, and those who engage in espionage activities. Operating from megacities allows hostile actors relative freedom to manoeuvre as they blend in with the local population (Taleb, 2014). Therefore, failure to focus attention on these mega places today will create a global strategic vulnerability tomorrow.

Crime would continue to intensify in megacities. Particularly, this is expected to become worse by the year 2025 in those megacities where there is a large gap between the rich and the poor (Olsen & Pizam, 1998; The U.S Office of the Director of National Intelligence, National Intelligence Council, 2008). This huge discrepancy between the wealthy and the poor has been a big problem in African and Asian cities (United Nations, 2020). Therefore, megacities such as Lagos in Nigeria, Mumbai in India, Cairo in Egypt, Tokyo in Japan, Shanghai in China and Karachi in Pakistan, among others, occupy unique positions in this discourse, in

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that travel intentions to these megacities can be severely impacted by crime. For the travel industry to respond effectively, it is crucial to have a sufficient understanding of the links between perceived crime-risk and travel intentions as well as their underlying factors and variables.

There is a wide literature on tourists' perception of crime-risk and intentions (see, for instance, Badiora & Bako, 2020; Chang, Duan, & Li, 2016; Cui, Liu, Drawve, Kennedy, & Caplan, 2020; Mawby, 2014;). Nonetheless, the current study deals with a broader category of respondents, travellers. A tourist is a particular type of traveller; thus, tourism is a subset of travel. Tourists are persons who visit a place for pleasure and sightseeing, especially when they are on holidays, and such trips include an overnight stay or a same-day visit (or excursionist). A traveller, on the other hand, is someone who moves between different geographic locations, for any purpose and for any duration (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2015). To this end, possible links between duration, purpose of visit and future travel intentions are established in this study, unlike in previous studies. Furthermore, there appears to be a paucity of information on how travellers perceive their safety, particularly in megacities. With very few undetailed exceptions (e.g., Abenoza, Ceccato, Susilo, & Cats, 2018; Ceccato & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2020), not much attention has been dedicated to understanding travellers' perceptions of crime-risk in Sub-Saharan African nations. Already, there is a dearth of travel research conducted on megacities in Africa; however, more emerging megacities on the continent present unique opportunities. According to a study by the Global Cities Institute of the University of Toronto, by 2100, all megacities will be in Africa, India and Southeast Asia. Also, only a little research has established that crime-risk perceptions impact travel intentions and till date, it has not been proven whether travellers' socio-economic characteristics mediate this impact. This study, therefore, aims to examine the effect of crime-risk perceptions on future travel intentions and the mediating role of socio-economic factors in the relationship between crime-risk perceptions and future travel intentions.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) offers a framework for the study. Although the literature on TPB is available (see discussion on theoretical framework and literature review in the next sections), no systematic study or theoretically informed empirical analysis has been found that was specifically related to Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly, Lagos despite being a renowned African travel destination and a foremost megacity. As a preliminary study, the idea of this study is to leverage on these literature gaps by investigating travellers' perceptions of Lagos, Nigeria. It focuses on the travellers' perceptions of crime-risk, their motivation, their future intentions, and how socio-economic factors mediate these variables.

The results contribute to deepening understanding of travellers' intentions and help with practical recommendations to attract them. The findings are also useful to travel administrators and contribute to the improvement of the security and attractiveness of megacities, particularly in Africa. This paper does not only add to travel research within a developing country context but also addresses the problem of perceptions of insecurity arising from Nigeria's tarnished image as a crime haven. The next section reviews the theoretical framework and literature on perceived risk and repeat travel followed by a discussion of the survey methods and findings.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is applied in this study to analyse crime-risk perceptions as predictors of travel intentions among a sample of Lagos visitors. TPB postulates that conduct is

predicted by an individual's intention to perform a behaviour and also by his/her perceived behavioural control, such as facilitating factors (Armitage & Conner, 2001). The global perception of behavioural control is the product of control beliefs (i.e., the perceived frequency of occurrence of salient facilitating or inhibiting factors, e.g., crime) multiplied by the power of those factors that facilitate or inhibit the behaviour in question (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). As illustrated in Figure 1, TPB postulates that a behavioural intention (e.g., travel) is directly predicted by the intention to perform and indirectly by the perceived behavioural control. This is also subject to socio-economic and individual factors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

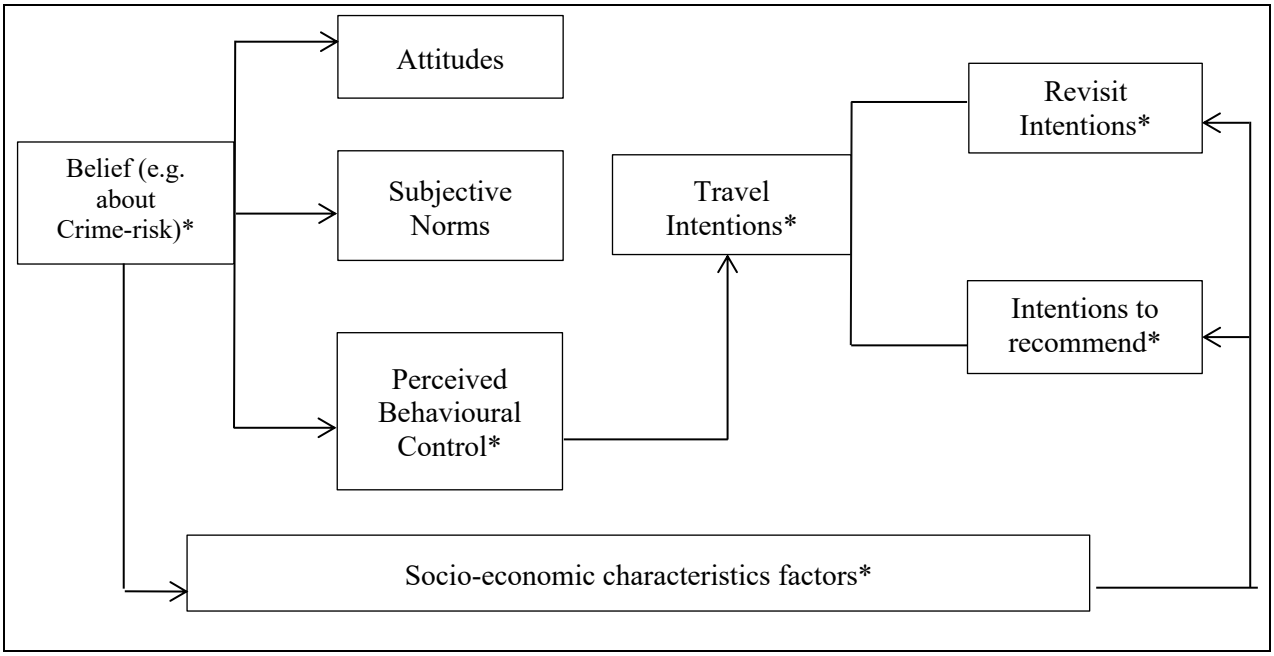

Figure 1: Conceptual model of the relationship of perceived crime-risk and socio-economic characteristics on the TPB

Note: ** Aspects of the model considered in this study*

The intention can be defined as the subjective probability of whether a person will or will not take certain actions. Related to the description of behavioural intentions such as travel, intentions are, thus, the expectation to travel in a certain way or to a particular destination (Makhdoomi & Baba, 2019). The intention to travel is affected by various factors which can both drive and limit travel intentions (Makhdoomi & Baba, 2019). Travel intention is, among other things, impacted by crime since crime, for example, can increase the demand for certain types of travel (security experts travel). Crime can limit travel intention as well (Fuchs & Reichel, 2011; Lee, Liu, Chung & Ho, 2015; Badiora & Bako, 2020) through the perception of risks related to crime (Boakye, 2010; George, 2012).

Travel risk perception consisting of multiple dimensions mainly refers to negative impacts that may occur during travel (Cui, Liu, Chang, Duan, & Li, 2016). Perceived risk is a key factor for travellers when selecting a destination (Mawby, 2014). Making travellers feel safe is becoming increasingly important

for international destination competitiveness, as travellers usually consider several alternatives (George, 2012; Badiora & Bako, 2020). The image formed as a result of the increase in crime rate may harm a country's travel industry and have a significant impact on travellers' intentions (Artuğer, 2015; Cetinsoz & Ege, 2013). Also, different travellers may view risk issues differently due to the differences in environmental circumstances (Law, 2006), psychology (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005), and travel experiences (Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007), which may affect their behavioural intentions differently (Quintal & Polczynski, 2010). Thus, as the incidence of crime increases, it becomes essential to predict its possible impacts and manage the consequences on the travel industry. Besides, the current study argues that travellers' perceptions of crime-risk will affect travel intentions differently. Another variable includes personal and social determinants of travel behaviours, such as age, income, gender, social class, education, nationality, social influences, attitudes and values (George, 2012; Lee, Liu, Chung & Ho, 2015). These variables are expected to mediate the impact of crime-risk perceptions on travel intentions. There are also external and behavioural variables including destination image, purpose of visit, past travel experiences, length of stay at the destination, assessment of objective/subjective risks, availability of travel information and sources, among others (Pizam, et al., 2004; Kozak et al, 2007).

Thus, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) helps to explain travellers' intentions (e.g., Quintal, Thomas, & Phau, 2015; Ye, Soutar, Sneddon, & Lee, 2017). Nevertheless, some researchers advocate that individuals' perceived frequency of occurrence of salient facilitating or inhibiting factors (such as crime-risk) can also explain their travel behaviour (e.g., John & Park, 2016; Murphy & Dweck, 2016; Park & John, 2012). Thus, the question as to whether there is any link between travellers' intentions and perceived crime-risk remains unanswered. This study uses travellers' perceptions of crime-risk to explain the travellers' intentions constructs in the TPB. Hung (2018) argued that travellers' perceptions are vital to the development of travel and should be explored continuously. To sum up, perceptions of crime-risk are expected to influence future travel intentions, and this is also expected to be intermediated by travellers' socio-economic factors. Significantly, the current study fills a gap in the literature by incorporating crime-risk perception and socio-economic factors into the TPB, to establish the impacts on travellers' intentions to travel to a Sub-Saharan African megacity. From the foregoing, it is hypothesised that:

H_1 Crime-risk perceptions impact travellers' future travel intentions;

H_2 The impact of crime-risk perceptions on travel intentions are mediated by socio-economic factors.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopted a case study and quantitative research approaches. The following subsections, therefore, discuss the study area, data collection, and analysis procedures.

Contextual Setting

The study area, Lagos, is located in the South-western part of Nigeria, in West Africa and on the narrow coastal flood plains of the Bight of Benin. Geographically, it lies approximately between longitude 2º42'E and 3º22'E and between latitude 6º22'N and 6º42' N. The megacity is bounded in the North and East by Ogun State of Nigeria, in the West by the Republic of Benin, and in the South by the Atlantic Ocean (See Figure 2). Territorially, Lagos encompasses an area of 358,862 hectares and over 40% of its total land area is covered by water bodies and wetlands (Aderogba, 2012). The climate of Lagos is within the tropical zone and enjoys a truly

seasonally damp and very humid climate, which is dominated by the West African monsoon system. The average annual temperature is about 28ºC and rarely falls below 20ºC. With an estimated mean annual rainfall of about 1830mm, there is a seasonal variation of about 6ºC in the city temperature (Nigerian Meteorological Agency, 2016). The weather condition is moderately cloudy and windy. The average annual wind speed for the area is between 1-4m/s while relative humidity is high all-year-round, i.e., within a range of 70% to 89 % (Nigerian Meteorological Agency, 2016).

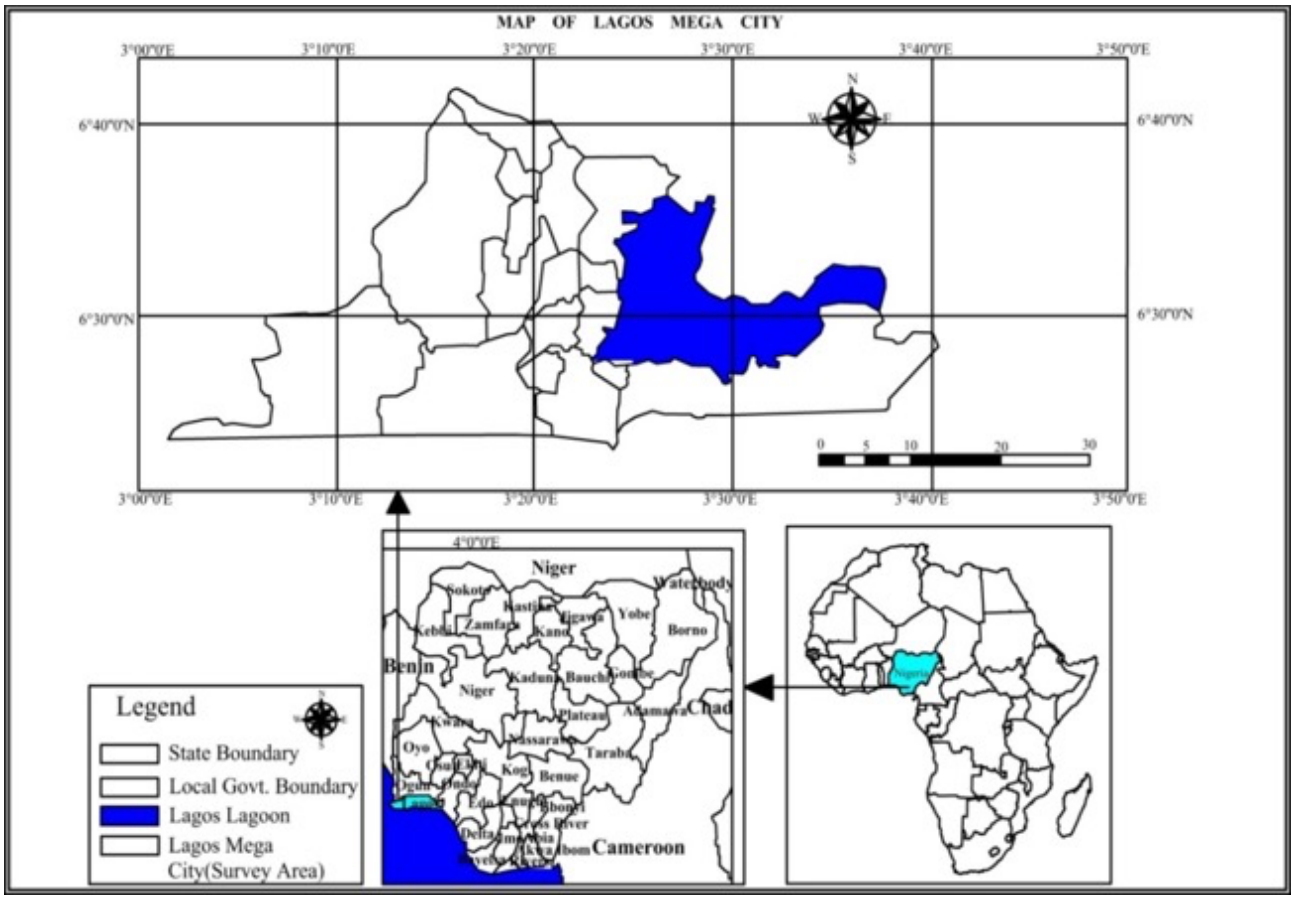

Figure 2*:* Lagos Mega City in the Contexts of Nigeria and Africa

Source: Author

Lagos is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. Its population has exploded from 270,000 in the 1950s, to 2.7 million in the 1960s and 20 million today (United Nations, 2020) even though it is hard to come up with the exact number since most residents live in suburban slums. In terms of megastructures and urban design (See Figure 3), Lagos has often competed for indispensable global positioning among megacities, alongside places like Chennai, Chicago, Dhaka, Mumbai, Cairo, Istanbul, Bangalore, Bogota, Kinshasa, Manila, Tianjin, and Rio-de-Janeiro. It is currently the seventeenth largest city in the world. About 2,000 people move to live in the city every day (United Nations, 2020) while the city receives more than one-hundred and twenty thousand travellers daily (The Cable News, 2016: September 12) for businesses, holidays, professional services, conferences, researches, education, sight-seeing, and employment opportunities, among others. According to a study by the Global Cities Institute of the University of Toronto, if this trend continues, by 2100, the most populous megacity in the World will be

Lagos, with 88 million inhabitants (Asianews, July 25, 2018)

Figure 3: Aerial View of Lagos, Nigeria

Figure 4: Lagos International Sea Port (largest in Africa)

Lagos is an exciting place for local and international travellers seeking to do business and take a vacation among others (New York Times, 2014). The city offers numerous opportunities for individual and corporate prosperity. Lagos has the fourth-highest GDP in Africa and houses one of the largest seaports (see Figure 4) on the continent. Besides, more than half of the country's commercial and financial businesses are carried out in Lagos (New York Times, 2014). Lagos is a major Information Communications and Telecommunications (ICT) hub of West Africa and potentially, the biggest ICT market in the African continent (Zeng, 2008). The city boasts of numerous tourist attractions, such as sandy beaches by the Atlantic Ocean, including Elegushi Beach, Lufasi Nature Park Alpha Beach, and Inagbe Grand Beach Resort. Lagos has a variety of first-class hotels and restaurants. Besides, Lagos has become an important location for African and "black" cultural identity (Appiah & Gates, 2010). Many festivals are held in Lagos, some of which are Eyo Festival, Lagos Black Heritage Carnival, Eko International Film Festival, and Lagos Seafood Festival.

The population of Lagos surpasses the city's infrastructure capacity and its current urban design and planning efforts. Moreover, the city authorities appear to have a problem of effectively increasing security and stability in the foreseeable future (US Chief of Staff of the Army, 2014). Thus, going by the Hot Spots Theory which proposes that travellers are most likely to be victimised in places where they cluster most, Lagos was chosen on the strength of its patronage. This city is the most visited metropolis in West Africa and it collectively receives a disproportionately higher number of the total number of traveller arrivals in Nigeria. Besides, in 2019, Lagos had the highest crime rate in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2019). While many of these crime incidences made international newspaper headlines, Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) reported that there were some abductions involving travellers. It was further reported that many people, mostly travellers, had been victims of other forms of violent crimes, including armed robbery, assault, carjacking, theft, rape, and extortion (OSAC, 2019). Based on this, OSAC (2019) places Nigeria at Level 3, indicating travellers should carefully consider travelling to the country due to crime, terrorism, civil unrest, and kidnapping. In contrast, the Information Minister, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, said in 2019 that "Nigeria is indeed a safe

destination for travellers and business people alike. Yes, there are security challenges here and there. But our country is safer today than it was before" (The Vanguard, November 6, 2018). The implications that these statements will have on future travels can be weighty and beg the empirical validation from a sample of Lagos visitors.

Sampling Procedure

To select respondents, a list of holiday and travellers' accommodation in the study area was acquired from the city travel management and land-use map. Information from the survey revealed that there are 3,291 holidays and travellers' accommodations in and around the study area, with a minimum of 20 rooms each. A multi-stage sampling technique was used in the selection of research participants. In the first stage, the hotels where travellers were to be surveyed were selected using systematic random sampling. This technique is conducted by sampling every Kth hotel after the first is selected at random from the list. Thus, the first hotel was selected randomly from the list while the subsequent unit of investigation was every fourth hotel on the list. A total of 823 holiday and travellers' accommodations were selected. This represented 25% of the tourist accommodation in the study area and its environs. In the second stage**,** the rooms where respondents were surveyed were selected using the same technique. However, the subsequent investigation unit in this case was every twentieth room. This represented 5% of the rooms in the sampled hotels. In a study conducted in the same city, the value of K (at 3%) and above had been proposed to adequately represent a homogenous population sample such as this (Oduwaye, 2013). A traveller in each of the rooms was selected. Based on this, a total number of 823 respondents were sampled in this study but only a total of 514 questionnaires were retrieved and analysed, representing a 62.5% response rate.

Data Collection and Variables

Data collection was carried out in the months of February, May, August, and September 2019 in the selected hotels. Managers of the hotels were approached to allow their facilities and visitors to participate in the study. Once they agreed, the questionnaires were placed in the selected rooms of the hotel with their assistance. Visitors occupying the selected rooms were briefed on the purpose of the study and provided with directions on completing the questionnaire by one of the hotel staff who had been well briefed by the researcher. The questionnaires were later picked up after 24 hours. The interview instrument was a self-administered questionnaire, prepared in English. Only travellers who understand English and those with personal assistants who understand English and could help them to answer the questions were sampled.

In order to test the instruments, a pilot study was conducted on a convenient sample of 22 travellers. The rule of thumb is to test the survey on at least 12 to 50 people prior to full-scale administration (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Feedback was obtained on the length of the instrument, the format of the scales, content validity, and question ambiguity. The instrument was revised and further administered to 15 travellers**.** Before its application, a social psychology expert reviewed the instrument and offered suggestions for improvement. Improvements were made on the overall style and content of the instrument. Only relevant and necessary questions were retained. Also, the number of questions were reduced to ensure the seamless flow of the questionnaire and to increase the response rate.

For analyses of the internal reliability of the items on the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha values were tested with a cut-off value of 0.75 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). A reliability analysis revealed the instrument used was acceptable, with an alpha coefficient of 0.82 which exceeded the recommended

satisfactory level of 0.70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The final instrument had five sections: (a) socio-demographic characteristics, (b) perceptions of Lagos as a travel destination, (c) perception of safety and crime-risk, and (d) future travel and recommendation intentions.

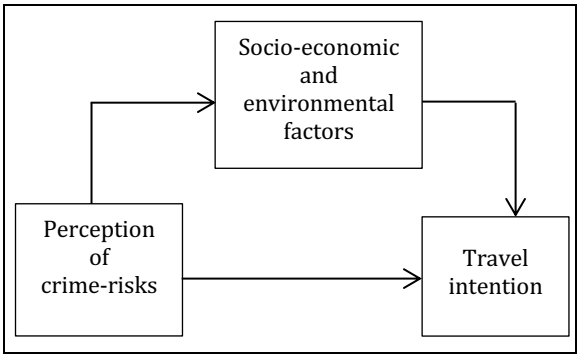

Figure 5: Conceptual Model of Relationships between Variables

Following George (2012), Badiora and Bako (2020), the first set of questions captured socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Earlier travel experience was assessed by asking respondents whether they had previously visited any megacity in the world. After, they were asked whether they had previously visited Lagos. Respondents were then asked how many times they had visited Lagos and how many days they were staying in Lagos. The second set of questions elicited respondents' perceptions of Nigeria following Badiora and Bako (2020). Respondents appraised the safety and crime risks of Lagos based on responding to eight statements using a 5-point Likert scale [1 = strongly agree – 5 = strongly disagree] (Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Floyd et al., 2004; George, 2012, Badiora & Bako, 2020), including how safe they thought Lagos was as a megacity, whether or not they are aware of crime incidences or had encountered crime while visiting Lagos. Following George (2012) and Quintal et al. (2015), respondents answered four 5-point Likert scale questions on their intentions to recommend Lagos to others and to return.

Three groups of variables were considered in this study: dependent variables, independent variables and control variables. The dependent variable, "travel intention", denotes the expectation to travel to a particular destination. The other dependent variable, "perceived crime-risks", designates the subjective judgment made by respondents about their safety in the study area while the control variables used in the analysis were the socio-economic and environmental factors. The contextual links among these variables are illustrated in Figure 5.

Data Analysis Method

Statistical package SPSS 16.0 [IBM 22] (Dennis & Cramer, 2008) was used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics were used for the socio-economic and demographic characteristics, as well as international travel experience variables. The Perception Mean Index (PI) was used to summarise the Likert Scale. The following scale measurement was used regarding mean scores, where 1 = strongly disagree (≥1.00 and ≤1.80); 2 = disagree (≥1.81 and ≤2.60); 3 = neutral (≥2.61 and ≤3.40); 4 = agree (≥3.41 and ≤4.20), and 5 = strongly agree (≥4.21 and ≤5.00). To accomplish an overall measure of travellers' perceptions of crime-risk, nine (9) questions from the questionnaire were summed up to form a single measure. Likewise, four (4) questions were combined to form a single measure in order to gain an overall measure of travellers' intentions. A series of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models were computed to determine whether the indicators of perceived crime-risk affect the travellers' intention after accounting for the control variables. This was estimated in six different models. This has the advantage of identifying any mediating influence of these socio-economic variables on the effects of perceived crime-risk on future travel intentions.

In the final analysis, travellers' travel intentions were calculated based on an index that counted the number of significant risk variables to

which each respondent was exposed. This likelihood was calculated by first identifying the perceived crime-risk variables that significantly reduce the travel intentions to Lagos. The sample mean of each one of these variables was compared to each individual's score of the perceived crime risk factors identified. Cases with values above the sample mean of the perceived crime-risk variables identified were coded as having that perceived crime-risk factor. The mean of the travel intention index was used to calculate the likelihood that respondents would travel to Lagos, Nigeria. Cases with values above the sample mean were coded as high probability (1), and cases with values below the mean were coded as low probability (0). Logistic regression (Wooldridge, 2002; Esbensen, Peterson, Taylor, & Freng, 2009) was used to assess the effect of the number of perceived crime-risk factors on travel behaviour.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey findings are discussed under various subheadings. Unless otherwise stated, the tables and charts used to summarise the findings are the products of the survey carried out in 2019.

Socio-Economic and Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Out of 514 respondents, 63% were domestic travellers while the remaining 37% were international travellers. The principal clusters of the domestic travellers were from the south-east and south-south (25% each) geopolitical zones of Nigeria while the largest cluster of foreign travellers (33%) was from America (i.e. the North and Southern America). China, India and Korea formed the second largest group (22%) while the third-largest group (19%) was from Europe. The findings are expected, considering America and China's significant economic investment stake in Nigeria. The proportion of foreign travellers who are from African countries was 17% while the Middle East and other Asia countries had a share of 8% each. The findings show that travellers were in Lagos for different purposes. The most important was business and professional services. This accounted for 22% of all arrivals. Next to this were foreign diplomats, consular staff and security experts (18%). Purpose of arrival was further distributed as follows: holidays, leisure and recreation (17%); education and training (14%); health and medical care (10%); visiting families and friends (7%); religion and pilgrimages (6%); shopping (5%) and others, including nomads, and refugees (1%).

The findings show that 52% of the respondents were male. The majority of the respondents (72%) were between the ages of 41 and 60 years. All the respondents had formal education. The dominant race was black descent (56%) while others like Caucasian and Asian accounted for the remaining 44%. Three-quarters (77%) of the respondents had at least one person travelling with them (including business associates/partners, personal staff, family members like wife, husband and children as well as a friend). The average monthly income of the travellers while in Lagos was put at 1,050USD, with the majority (51%) earning between 1,000USD to 10,000USD on monthly basis. Many of the respondents (87%) had to use public transport. Besides, some 32% of the respondents confirmed having to go about the streets of Lagos with some cash.

The results show that one-quarter of the respondents were visiting Lagos for the very first time, 7% for the second time, 12% for the third time, 9% for the fourth time, 24% for the fifth time, while

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

Item	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	371	72.0
	Female	143	28.0
Type of travel	Domestic	324	63.0
	International	190	37.0
	Other countries	041	08.0
	America	134	26.0
	Middle-East	041	08.0
Purpose of visit**	Business/professional services	159	22.0
	Foreign diplomats and consular	130	18.0
	Holidays, leisure and recreation	123	17.0
	Education and training	101	14.0
	Health and medical care	072	10.0
	Families, friends and social functions	051	07.0
	Religion/pilgrimages	043	06.0
	Shopping	036	05.0
	Others	007	01.0
Age distribution	18 – 40	154	30.0
	41 - 60	267	52.0
	Above 60 years	093	18.0
Educational level	No formal education	000	0.00
	Basic education	087	17.0
	Post-basic education	170	33.0
	Tertiary Education	257	50.0
Average monthly income	Less than 1000USD	134	26.0
	1000USD – 1000USD	262	51.0
	Above 10000USD	118	23.0
Race	Black descent	288	56.0
	Non-black descent	226	44.0
Usage of public transport	Yes	396	77.0
	No	118	23.0
Number of visit	One time	129	25.0
	Two times	036	07.0
	Three times	062	12.0
	Four times	046	09.0
	Five times	123	24.0
	More than five	118	23.0
Length of stay	Less than a week	046	09.0
	One week	118	23.0
	Two weeks	103	20.0
	Three weeks	098	19.0
	One month	057	11.0
	More than a month	093	18.0
Travel (experience) to megacities	Yes	134	26.0
	No	340	74.0

***More than total counts (514) because of multiple purpose of visit*

23% of the respondents had been to Lagos more than five times. Furthermore, the results show that 23% of the respondents had been in Lagos for one week, 20% for two weeks, 19% for three weeks, 11% for a month, and the remaining 18% for more than a month. The results further show that some 26% of respondents had not been to any other megacity while the remainder had been to at least one or more megacities. Among those who had been to other megacities, the majority were from America (40%) while those from Europe and China were 31% and 23% respectively. Interestingly, the megacities mostly visited by the respondents were in America, Europe, and China. Only 9% have previously visited other megacities in Africa.

Perceived Safety and Travel Intention Rating

Concerning travellers' perceptions of crime-risk (see Table 2), when asked whether they feel safe while going out at night, the majority of the respondents strongly disagreed (PI = 1.01: strongly disagree [≥1.00 and ≤1.80). On the contrary, the majority of the respondents strongly disagreed to feeling unsafe while walking on the streets of Lagos during daytime (PI = 1.80: strongly disagree [≥1.00 and ≤1.80). Respondents, however, had mixed reactions (that is neutral or unsure) when asked whether Lagos is a safe place, whether they might fall victim to crime and whether they feel safe while using public transport. Furthermore, respondents agreed that they had personally witnessed or seen someone experience crime in the city. However, only a few (24%) respondents had this experience. Similarly, they also agreed to feeling worried about their personal safety. Respondents also agreed to being cautioned about attacks from terrorists and kidnappers while in Lagos. This finding is not surprising, given that Nigeria is currently experiencing some form of terrorism and an increasing rate of abduction. Despite being satisfied with personal safety while on the streets of Lagos during daytime, respondents were worried about the safety of those accompanying them on their trips, including associates, partners, family, and friends. This finding is related to what Trickett (2009) calls "altruistic fear," a fear that individuals feel for other people whose safety they hold in high esteem (Ceccato & Tcacencu, 2018). Overall, respondents were unsure about their safety while in Lagos.

Regarding their future travel intentions, respondents were mainly uncertain (see Table 2). For instance, respondents were unsure whether they will recommend Lagos to others (PI = 2.99: Neutral (≥2.61 and ≤3.40). Similarly, respondents were not sure whether they were likely to revisit Lagos in the nearest future ((PI = 2.91: Neutral (≥2.61 and ≤3.40).

While 51% came to the awareness of Lagos megacity crime rate through associates, partners, friends, and families, 37% became aware through the media. Out of the listed crime types, kidnapping (30%) was reported as the major concern among the travellers. Those who showed this concern the most were mainly whites.

These findings are consistent with the results of a related study by Badiora and Bako (2020), where kidnapping was identified as the most dreaded crime among non-black tourists who attended Nigerian cultural festivals. Travellers were also concerned about property theft, as 28% had had their phones, laptops, cash and other personal items stolen while in Lagos. Hence, the findings align with the literature (e.g. Holcomb & Pizam, 2006; Fuchs & Reichel, 2011; Boakye, 2012; Overseas Security Advisory Council [OSAC], 2019) as thefts were also reported as one of the major crimes against travellers.

Similar to the findings of Mawby et al. (2000), George (2003) and Holcomb and Pizam (2006), some respondents promised to return to the study area despite the perceived safety and crime incidence.

Table 2: Respondents' Perceived Safety and Behavioural Intentions

Item	N	PI (Mean)	(SD) Standard Deviation
Perceived crime and safety			
Feel safe while going out at night	514	1.01	0.86
Lagos is safe place[b]	514	2.51	0.85
Might fall victim to crime in Lagos, Nigeria	514	2.69	I.91
Feel unsafe while walking in streets of Lagos during daytime	514	1.80	0.99
Feel safe while using public transport	514	2.89	0.95
Witnessed and/or experience crime while in Lagos	514	3.42	1.22
Feel worried for personal safety in Lagos, Nigeria	514	3.88	0.99
Feel concerned for safety of accompany associates, family and friends	514	3.99	1.03
Advised about terrorist and kidnappers attacks	514	4.05	1.09
Overall travellers' perceived safety[c]	514	2.89	0.72
Behavioural intention			
Likely to recommend Lagos as destination[b]	514	2.99	1.14
Will not return because Lagos is unsafe	514	2.49	1.03
Will return to Lagos despite fear of safety	514	2.52	1.93
Likely to visit Lagos again in the nearest future[b]	514	2.81	0.98
Overall likelihood of returning to Lagos or recommending the city[d]	514	2.91	0.79

[a]Based on 5-Point Likert scale where, 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree
[b]Reverse coded item
[c]Summated scale (Questionnaire item: 20-28).
[d]Summated Scale (Questionnaire items: 33-36).

Nonetheless, most of the respondents were businessmen and professionals (32%), foreign diplomats, consular staff and security experts (28%) and those who had their associates, families, partners, and friends in Nigeria (21%).

Multivariate Analysis

The influence of the independent variables on future travel intentions was estimated in six different models. The first model in Table 3 shows the influence of the socio-economic characteristics such as gender, age, level of education, purpose of travel, average monthly income, number of visits, country of origin, and race among others. The second model includes the same variables as the first model, with the addition of a variable that is considered to promote future travel intention, i.e., Lagos is a safe place. The third model includes the same variables as the second model, with the addition of a perceived crime-risk variable, i.e., I might fall victim to crime in Lagos, Nigeria. The fourth model includes the same variables as the third model, with the addition of another perceived crime-risk variable, i.e., I witnessed and/or experienced crime in Lagos while the fifth model includes the same variables as the fourth model, with the addition of another perceived crime-risk variable, i.e., I feel worried for the safety of associates, family/ friends. The sixth model includes the same variables as the fifth model, with the addition of a perceived crime-risk variable, i.e., I was advised about terrorism and kidnapping. This stepwise progression has the advantage of identifying any mediating influence of the socio-economic variables on the effects of perceived crime risk on future travel intentions.

In the first model presented in Table 3, seven variables were found to have a statistically significant influence in predicting the travel intentions of the respondents. These were country of origin, purpose of visit, age, and level of education. Others are average monthly income, number of visits, and length of stay in the study area. Specifically, respondents from China, India, and Korea are likely to return to Lagos. Likewise, younger respondents are likely to revisit the city in the nearest future. Similarly, respondents with higher levels of education are more likely to visit the city in the nearest future. Besides, the findings show that having a higher income is a significant predictor of future travel intentions among the respondents. These findings are similar to the findings of many researchers (e.g., Hsieh et al., 1992; Taylor et al., 1993; Teaff & Turpin, 1996 Kotval-K, & Vojnovic, 2015) that age, level of education, and income are predictors of travel intentions. Furthermore, in line with the findings of George (2003, 2012), Boakye (2008, 2010), Badiora and Bako (2020), the findings show that the frequency of visit and the longer the length of stay in the destination, the more the likelihood to revisit the city in the nearest future.

In the second model, the results show that perceiving a place as safe has a significant positive impact on travel intentions. Thus, travellers would be encouraged to revisit when they feel the destination is safe. Similar findings have been reported in related studies (e.g., George, 2012; Boakye, 2010). However, there are some new findings in this study. For instance, gender (particularly, being a female) had a significant effect and positive regression coefficient. Similar to Lepp and Gibson (2003) and Pizam et al. (2004), this result suggests that females are encouraged to travel when they perceived the destination as safe. However, this finding differs from those of Sönmez and Graefe (1998), George (2003), and Lepp and Gibson (2003), where gender had no significant impact. The type of travel was also significant in this model and had a positive coefficient, suggesting that international travellers will only return to Lagos if they perceive the city as safe. Besides, the regression model reveals that travellers aged 60 years and above would consider travelling to the study area again only if they perceive the city as safe. Unlike Boakye's (2012) findings, this finding is similar to that of Gibson and Yiannakis (2002), Lepp and Gibson (2003), George (2010), Hope and Sparks (2000), and Badiora and Bako (2020), who found that travel intentions and perceptions of crime-risk are linked to the stage of life of travellers or age whereby older travellers consider themselves most susceptible to crime-risk. Also, the findings indicate that non-blacks will only return to Lagos if they perceive the city as safe. Furthermore, the model reveals that having visited once and stayed for a week in Lagos were significant and had negative coefficients, suggesting that newer and infrequent travellers will not return to Lagos as long as they perceive the city as unsafe.

In the third model, the perception that respondents might fall victim to crime was introduced and had a significant influence, predicting future travel in the negative direction. Specifically, the findings show that the perception that one might fall victim to crime reduces future travel intentions to the city. Previous findings have shown that perceptions that one might become a crime victim have a detrimental effect on travellers' behaviour (e.g., George, 2003, 2010; Badiora & Bako, 2020). In contrast, previous findings have shown that travellers who perceived they might become crime victims would still return to the same destination (e.g., Mawby et al., 2000; George, 2003). It is also important to note that the variable "Lagos is a safe place" was insignificant in the third model and its regression coefficient decreased from 1.08 to 1.03 (4.6% decrease). This suggests that the effect of perceiving a place as safe and whether to revisit is partially facilitated by whether or not one might become a

crime victim. Furthermore, gender and age (particularly, females and those above 60 years) remain significant, however, in negative directions and with an increase from 0.22 to 0.28 (27.1%) for females and 0.27 to 0.54 (27.1%) for respondents above 60 years. Thus, in line with Gibson and Yiannakis (2002), Lepp and Gibson (2003), Pizam et al. (2004), George (2010), Boakye (2012), and Badiora and Bako (2020), this finding indicates that female travellers and those above 60 years may not return to the city if they perceive they might become crime victims. Also, the findings indicate that travellers on holidays, leisure, and recreation will not return to the city if they perceive they might become crime victims and so do non-black and first-time visitors.

In the fourth model, having witnessed and/or experienced crime was introduced. Interestingly, this was not a significant predictor of future travel. Likewise, Mawby et al. (2000) and George (2003) found that visitors who experienced crime would still return to the same destination. Surprisingly, the perception that one might become a crime target remains significant and its regression coefficient increased from −1.38 to −1.59 (15.2%). This suggests that the effect of perceiving that one might become a crime victim and whether to travel or not is partially mediated by whether or not one has witnessed and/or experienced crime at that destination. Moreover, having controlled for the socio-economic variables, gender (particularly, female) remains significant but in a negative direction. This indicates that female respondents are not likely to return if they witness and/or experience crime. Besides, the findings show that international travellers are not likely to return to the city where they witnessed and/or experienced crime, particularly, those from America, the Middle East, and Arabian countries. Travellers' purpose of visit was significant in this model as well. Nevertheless, while it had a positive regression coefficient for those on business and professional services, it was negative for those on holidays, leisure, and recreation. Thus, travellers on business and professional services are likely to return, perhaps, because of their business and investment at the destination while those on holidays, leisure, and recreation purposes are not likely to return if they witness and/or experience crime. Thus, leisure travellers are more crime-sensitive than their business counterparts. Similarly, non-black travellers and one time visitors are not likely to return to the city if they witness and/or experience crime.

Concern for the safety of associates, family, and friends was introduced in the fifth model. The findings show that this crime-risk factor was a significant predictor of future travel intention but in a negative direction. Thus, those who are concerned about the safety of their associates, family, and friends are not likely to return to the city. This finding is related to that of Trickett (2009), and Ceccato and Tcacencu (2018) who argued that the fear that individuals have for people whose safety they hold in high esteem may influence their travel decisions. Particularly, this factor is significant in the negative direction for women, travellers above 60 years of age, and those whose purpose of travel is to visit families and friends. Furthermore, having witnessed and/or experienced crime and the perception that one might be a victim of crime remain significant in this model in the positive direction. This suggests that the interaction between future travel intentions and being worried for the safety of associates, family, and friends is partially mediated by whether or not one has witnessed and/or experienced crime and the perception that one might fall victim to crime in the study area.

In the sixth model, being advised about terrorism and kidnapping was included. Interestingly, this was not a significant predictor of future travel to Lagos. Nevertheless, it mediates other perceived

crime-risk factors and socio-economic characteristics. For instance, the perception that one might fall victim to crime remains positively significant in this model and so also is the perception of Lagos as a safe place, albeit in the negative direction. Thus, it is likely that those who have been warned about terrorism and kidnapping are not likely to perceive the destination as a safe place. They are also likely to believe that they might fall victim to violent crimes. Furthermore, the findings show that being warned about terrorism and kidnapping would significantly influence the future travel intentions of women, international travellers (particularly those from America, China, India, and Korea) as well as those who travel for the purpose of business and professional services, holiday, leisure, and recreation. Besides, being warned about terrorism and kidnapping would significantly influence the future travel intentions of high-income earners and first or one time visitors.

Table 3: OLS regression models predicting future travel intentions

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	b	s.e	b	s.e	b	s.e	b	s.e	b	s.e	b	s.e
Female	0.82	0.74	0.22**	1.63	−0.28**	0.79	−0.82**	0.74	−0.42**	1.63	0.58**	0.79
Male	1.23	0.73	0.20	0.99	0.74	0.73	1.23	0.73	0.20	0.99	0.74	0.73
Domestic	0.79	0.67	0.34	0.59	−1.08**	1.02	0.79	0.67	0.34	0.59	1.08	1.02
International	1.31	1.36	0.34***	1.18	−0.48*	0.40	1.31	1.36	0.34	1.18	1.48***	0.40
America	0.34	0.65	0.38*	0.36	−1.18*	0.24	−0.34**	0.65	0.38	0.36	1.18**	0.24
China, India and Korea	1.77**	0.84	1.41	0.21	1.47	1.54	1.77	0.84	1.41	0.21	1.47**	1.54
Europe	2.03	1.18	0.71	0.43	0.04	0.27	2.03	1.18	0.71	0.43	0.14	0.27
Middle-East/Arab countries	0.36	0.59	0.18	0.69	−1.26*	0.40	−0.36**	0.59	0.18	0.69	1.26	0.40
African countries	0.36**	0.59	1.47	0.43	1.14	0.41	0.36	0.59	1.47	0.43	1.14	0.41
Other countries	0.34	0.35	0.04	0.35	0.18	0.38	0.34	0.35	0.04	0.35	0.18	0.38
Business/professional services	0.03*	1.70	1.07**	0.24	1.08	0.36	−0.03**	1.70	1.07	0.24	1.08**	0.36
Foreign diplomats and consular	1.30*	0.38	0.78	0.17	1.07	0.29	1.30	0.38	0.78	0.17	1.07	0.56
Holidays, leisure and recreation	0.40*	0.28	1.00*	2.61	−0.14**	0.67	−0.40**	0.28	1.00	2.61	0.14**	0.99
Education and training	1.18**	1.27	0.08	1.21	0.26	0.16	1.18	1.27	0.08	1.21	0.26	0.16
Health and medical care	0.03	0.17	0.07	2.31	0.23	0.46	0.03	0.17	−0.07	2.31	0.23	0.46
Families, friends and social functions	1.09**	0.55	0.04	1.49	1.54	0.48	1.09	0.55	−0.04**	1.49	−1.54	0.48
Religion/pilgrimages	1.04	1.17	1.08**	2.87	0.17	0.22	1.04	1.17	1.08	2.87	0.17	0.43
Shopping	0.16	1.14	1.14	0.36	1.15	0.70	0.16	1.14	1.14	0.36	1.15	0.70
Other purposes	1.03	1.09	0.19	0.21	0.17	0.05	1.03	1.09	0.19	0.21	0.17	0.05
18 – 40 year	0.66**	1.38	1.09	0.43	1.14	3.21	0.66	1.38	1.09	0.43	1.14	3.21
41 – 60 years	1.55	0.41	1.45	0.69	1.19	0.04	−1.55**	0.41	1.45	0.69	−1.19	0.04
Above 60 years	0.67	0.71	0.54**	0.17	−0.27**	0.28	−1.67**	0.71	−1.54*	0.17	0.27	0.28
No formal education	0.12	0.73	1.57	0.12	0.23	0.34	0.12	0.73	1.57	0.12	0.23	0.34
Basic education	0.85	0.74	0.14	2.31	1.08	0.15	0.85	0.74	0.14	2.31	1.08	0.15
Post-basic education	0.34	0.99	1.45	0.02	1.07	0.04	0.34	0.99	1.45	0.02	1.07	0.04
Tertiary Education	1.67**	1.63	1.23**	0.22	0.40	0.77	1.67	1.63	−1.23	0.22	0.40	0.77
Less than 1000USD	1.07	0.22	1.08	0.70	1.18*	3.29	1.07	0.22	1.08	0.70	1.18	3.29
1000USD – 1000USD	1.08	0.70	0.07*	0.05	1.03	1.13	1.08	0.70	0.07	0.05	1.03	1.13
Above 10000USD	0.19*	0.05	1.14*	3.21	−0.09**	0.86	−0.19*	0.05	1.14	3.21	0.29**	0.86
Black descent	1.46*	3.21	0.26	0.04	1.04	0.22	1.46*	3.21	−0.26	0.04	1.54	0.22
Non-black descent	0.12	0.04	0.11**	0.28	−0.16**	0.70	−0.12***	0.04	−0.11	0.28	0.16**	0.70
One time	1.07	0.28	0.13*	0.34	−1.06**	0.35	−1.07**	0.28	−0.13	0.34	1.06***	0.35
Two times	1.78	0.34	1.17*	0.15	−1.09**	1.70	−1.788	0.34	1.17	0.15	1.09	1.70
Three times	1.00	0.15	1.09	0.04	−1.05**	0.38	−1.11**	0.15	1.09	0.04	1.05	0.38
Four times	0.08	0.04	1.08	0.77	0.03	0.28	0.08	0.04	1.08	0.77	0.03	0.28

Table 3 continued

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	b	**s.e**	**b**	**s.e**	**b**	**s.e**	**b**	**s.e**	**b**	**s.e**	**b**	**s.e**
Five times	1.07	0.77	1.19	3.29	1.30	1.27	1.07	0.77	1.19	3.29	1.30	1.27
More than five	1.04**	1.29	0.46*	1.13	1.40	0.17	1.04	1.29	0.46	1.13	1.40	0.17
Less than a week	0.18	1.13	1.12**	0.86	1.18	0.55	−0.18**	1.13	1.12	0.86	1.18	0.55
One week	1.47	0.86	0.36**	0.08	−1.03***	1.17	1.47	0.86	0.36	0.08	1.03	1.17
Two weeks	1.04	0.22	1.36	0.04	−0.09**	1.14	1.04	0.22	1.36	0.04	0.09	1.14
Three weeks	1.26	0.70	1.12	5.89	1.07	1.09	1.26	0.70	1.12	5.89	1.07	1.09
One month	1.07	0.05	1.09	2.45	1.49	1.18	1.07	0.05	1.09	2.45	1.40	1.18
More than a month	1.40*	3.21	0.38*	4.29	1.18	0.59	1.40	3.21	−0.38	4.29	1.18	0.59
Lagos is safe place	--	--	1.08**	0.77	1.03	0.28	1.78	0.34	1.78	0.34	−1.17*	0.15
Might fall victim to crime in Lagos, Nigeria	--	--	--	--	1.38	4.29	−0.38*	4.29	0.31*	1.13	1.40*	0.17
Witnessed and/or experience crime in Lagos	--	--	--	--	--	--	1.33***	1.69	0.78*	1.53	0.04	−1.05**
Worried for safety of associates, family/ friends	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	−1.04*	1.29	1.46	1.13
Advised about terrorism and kidnapping	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1.08	1.29
Intercept	6.09	5.11	4.33	6.88	8.41	9.06	4.22	5.77	3.33	4.22	3.22	4.06
F-Test	0.022		0.014		0.000		0.001		0.000		0.101	
Adjusted R^2	0.003		0.197		0.506		0.431		0.321		0.034	

p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .01; ***p ≤ .001

Table 4: Prediction of future travel intention by number of perceived crime-risk factors

No. of Risk Factors	N	Travellers per risk factor (%)	Odds Ratio	Std. Error
0	120	23.35	---	---
1	115	22.37	2.98	1.77
2	105	20.43	4.77	7.29
3	88	17.12	9.06**	12.67
4	46	8.95	13.09***	17.66
5	40	7.78	19.51**	25.41

F-Test = 0.000; Pseudo-R^2= 0.241

**$p \leq .01$; ***$p \leq .001$

Note: *The Odds Ratio presented is relative to the first category (0 perceived crime-risk factors).*

From the summary presented in Table 4, the findings show that travellers with higher numbers of significant perceived crime risks have a higher probability of not returning to Lagos in future. Travellers with three, four, and five perceived crime-risk factors have 906%, 1,309% and 1,951% higher odds respectively for not returning or recommending Lagos, compared to travellers with zero and one perceived crime-risk factor. In summary, the findings show that perceived crime risks significantly impact future travel intentions. Furthermore, exposure to a higher number of crime-risk factors significantly increases a traveller's prospect of not returning or recommending Lagos as a destination.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examines travellers' perceptions of crime risk using Lagos, Nigeria as a case study. A total of 514 travellers were selected through a systematic sampling procedure. The results of the study show that travellers were unsure about the safety of Lagos. That is, they were uncertain that Lagos was a safe place to visit, although very few had witnessed and/or experienced crime. Also, they were uncertain

about revisiting and recommending the city. The results further show that perceived crime risks significantly predict future travel intentions. Nevertheless, travellers' socio-economic characteristics partially mediate these impacts.

This paper brings an important theoretical contribution to the literature. It demonstrates that perceived behavioural control (due to perceived crime risks) of the TPB model explained travel intentions among travellers to a Sub-Saharan country reasonably well, as perception of crime risk and socio-economic characteristics were found to significantly impact the intention to travel to Lagos, as a megacity travel destination. Previous studies that analysed travel intentions through a TPB perspective had been conducted in more developed countries (see, for instance, Quintal et al., 2015; Ye, Soutar, Sneddon, & Lee, 2017; Rai & Lin, 2019). A cross-cultural understanding is essential because findings from developed nations are not automatically transferable to developing nations (Adu-Mireku, 2002), thus, limiting the generalisation of findings. Moreover, the current study contributes to theory and literature by incorporating crime risk perception and socio-economic characteristics into the TPB. Specifically, the study found that the impacts of perceived crime risks on future travel intentions are partially mediated by the socio-economic characteristics of travellers.

In travel practice, this study indicates that destination marketers would benefit from investigating the views of travellers and incorporating the factors influencing travel in their travel marketing programmes. The findings of this study support the argument that a particularly important responsibility of managing a travel destination is related to crime-risk perception. Thus, concern for the safety of travellers is an important aspect of destination management. Although the promotion of safety is not enough to reduce perceived crime risk, crime reduction should be addressed to motivate crime-risk sensitive travellers to revisit and/or recommend the destination.

While crime is multidimensional, crime risks such as kidnapping and violent crime are considered major risk dimensions in the travel markets of Lagos. The fact that some 24% of the travellers confirmed that they had experienced crime in Lagos is an indication that the megacity is not immune to crime. Besides, travellers were unsure about their safety and were uncertain about revisiting and recommending the city. To this end, the Lagos city Police force must take responsibility for the travellers' crime challenge, build and empower a community of interest, and formulate new strategic, operational and tactical approaches to address the travellers' security concerns. Such may include working with the Lagos travel industry to identify and address travel crime-related concerns, and having a special police unit dedicated to travellers' related crime (Special Anti-Travellers' Crime Squad [SATCS]) with specially-trained personnel to recognise and address travellers-related crime and safety concerns.

The city travel industry should manage efforts to further implement crime prevention measures to further reduce travellers' security concerns. For instance, by creating a website with a dedicated traveller menu that provides crime and safety tips and/or on arrival, travellers could be provided with security information brochures which would inform them about security measures, safe public transport, the various routes, and hot spots among other things. Security measures also need to be increased to make it safer for travellers (particularly, international non-black arrivals) to go out at night. Since safety concerns were higher while on the streets at the night, improvements in security patrol and lighting within the city and tourist areas like hotels, business districts and attraction sites would help enhance the personal safety of travellers. Furthermore,

public transport needs to be made much safer. This can be achieved by attaching security personnel to vehicles and terminals and installing surveillance devices such as CCTV with the capacity to send fast crime alerts or signals to the nearest SATCS. Furthermore, the city planning department together with the police and the city travel industry should enforce and encourage developers of holiday and travellers' housings to adopt design practices that will reduce guest crime-victimisation such as requiring that travellers show identification, fixing special security door locks, installing security cameras, and employing well-trained security officers in their accommodations.

Also, the media needs to be more professional in broadcasting crimes, as concerns for safety may be affected by the image portrayed of a travel destination by the media. The response to a threat emanating from a megacity requires the collaborative efforts of different agencies. In essence, a coordinated effort by all (including residents) is required to work toward providing a peaceful place for travellers. Nonetheless, the police force and travel industry must take the lead in preparing the population to execute this apparent, if not inevitable, task.

Implications for Future Studies

While the current study is an important first step toward understanding crime-risk perceptions as predictors of travel intentions to Lagos Megacity and specifically the mediating effects of socio-economic characteristics, there are a number of limitations that suggest possibilities for future research. In future studies, a comparative study between megacities could identify city/country-specific factors that influence travellers' perceptions of crime risk and travel intentions. It would also be valuable to conduct a pre-and post-arrival study, where travellers are surveyed at entry and exit points of the destination. Future researchers could also replicate this study at other megacities abroad, particularly in Africa, India, and Southeast Asia and use other individual, behavioural, and environmental factors such as financial, health, physical, political instability, psychological, satisfaction, social, terrorism, and time as well as their mediating effect on travellers' concerns for safety and travel decisions.

In order to improve the analytical precision, future studies should introduce a more rigorous analysis (e.g., robust regression methods, constrained linear regression, regression with censored and truncated data, regression with measurement error, and multiple equation models among others) such as to validate the concepts and theories, beyond OLS regression and descriptive analyses. Another limitation in this study is the relatively insignificant impacts of advice about terrorism and kidnapping. Better measures would likely have resulted in its significant impact on travel behaviour. Future research could disaggregate study areas using population, geographical, or political regions to gain more insights in an attempt to unearth spatial patterns and employ more targeted marketing strategies. Since not all places in a city are prone to violent crimes, terrorism, and kidnapping, future research could also focus on travellers' concerns for safety at different places within a city, particularly "hot-spots" and locations within these areas such as, for example, car parks, night clubs, private clubs, events, concert halls, liquor stores, supermarkets, state stores and central business districts, restaurants and bars.

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2

EXAMINING THE DETERMINANTS OF LOCATION ATTRIBUTES AND THEIR EFFECT ON HOTEL PRICING IN THE PERIOD OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN AN EMERGING MARKET

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Abstract

The emergence of COVID-19 and the consequent travel restrictions have led to a decrease in the patronage of hotel services in nearly all economies in the world. In this circumstance, location attributes have become even more important in hotel pricing and investment decision-making. It is even more interesting to see how this plays out in emerging economies such as Ghana. The study assesses the effect of location attributes on hotel pricing during the COVID-19 pandemic period in Tamale. A sequential mixed research design including Mixed Spatial Hedonic Price Approach, Exploratory Factor Analysis and key informant interviews was employed. A sample of 815 tourists and 163 hotels was used. Hotel class, road accessibility, age of building, and hotel rate are the key determinants of hotel pricing. Among these, the hotel class showed more significance in influencing pricing decisions in the COVID-19 period. The models show that the hotel class with positive coefficients are located outside the city centre of Tamale. This has resulted in increased Yield To Maturity because the hotels located outside the city centre received more clients, with grade one hotels showing a huge net income and good post-COVID-19 investment drive. The results show that potential hotel investors should consider hotel class as a major entry decision factor during and after periods of the pandemic.

Keywords: geographic weighted regression, hotel investment, hotel pricing, location, Ordinary Least Square

INTRODUCTION

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy has been wide, extensive and far-reaching. In particular, the hotel industry is one sector that has been hard hit by the pandemic. Studies have reported the impact of COVID-19 on hotels to include a significant reduction in patronage and the consequent impact on incomes, employment, reduction in prices, and decline in investment (Nikolić & Mitrović, 2021; Wu et al., 2020). The impact of COVID-19 has been worsened by restrictions to movement imposed by many governments. Like countries such as China, America, England, Italy, India, and Brazil, Ghana had to lock-down parts of the country for several weeks. In addition, Ghana had to tighten its land borders to control entry and the spread of the disease (Agyeman & Ofori, 2020). All these restrictions have had an immense effect on the patronage of hotels, their competitiveness and, therefore, their pricing. Therefore, the decision to invest in the hotel industry requires a thorough analysis of financial requirements, location attributes, franchising options, market size, environmental scanning and local economic conditions (Adam & Amuquandoh, 2013; Mensah et al., 2014; Sami & Mohamed, 2014). Studies by Mihir et al. (2021), Rogerson and Rogerson (2020), and Salem et al. (2021) confirm that the location of hotels has impacted their operations in the COVID-19 era. Location attributes have been classified as the major determinants of pricing and investment in hotels (Aboelmaged, 2018; Cró & Martins, 2017; Lado-

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sestayo et al., 2018; Tavitiyaman et al., 2017). Location attributes affect guests' satisfaction (Yang et al., 2018), taxes and recruitment of workers (Rasciute & Downward, 2017), pricing and demand (Conroy & Gibson, 2019), as well as value creation (Peiró-signes et al., 2012). Even though these studies focused on the effects of location attributes on hotel pricing, these attributes did not take into account the effect of the COVID -19 pandemic on the economies of the study areas. It is anticipated that the pandemic will negatively impact investment returns in the hotel industry.

As a result, the focus of hotel pricing and investment research should incorporate the effects of location attributes during the COVID-19 period. However, the knowledge of the impact of a pandemic on location attributes in hotel pricing is scanty. According to Merchant (2015) and Li and Du (2018), providing investors with knowledge of the effects of location attributes on pricing during a pandemic contributes significantly to growth in client demand and accessibility. In addition, it will fill the knowledge gap in this area. While location attributes such as hotel accessibility, structural age, hotel rating, and availability of building services impact pricing (Hung et al., 2010), the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic might intensify their effects. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the determinants of location attributes and their effect on hotel pricing in the period of COVID-19.

Methodologically, the geographically weighted regression model and the spatial autocorrelation model have been used to assess the impact of location on hotel room prices in developed countries (Cró & Martins, 2017; Fang et al., 2019; Lee & Jang, 2012). The study is situated in the city of Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region of Ghana. Tamale is one of the fastest-growing cities in West Africa. The annual increase in urban growth is about 2.9% (Fuseini et al., 2017). This urban growth generates problems associated with urbanisation such as overcrowding, human traffic, poor sanitation, and high crime wave but it also presents an opportunity for the growth and development of the hotel industry because of the increased demand. This study examines the effects of location attributes on hotel pricing in the period of COVID-19 in Tamale.

The study provides a theoretical contribution in two major ways. First, methodologically, the integration of the Geographic Weighted Regression Model, Ordinary Least Square, Exploratory Factor Analysis and Yield To Maturity contributes to knowledge in heuristics aimed at guiding hotel pricing and investment decisions during periods of a pandemic. Secondly, this study contributes to the literature from the perspective of an emerging economy context, given that most of the studies on the effects of location attributes on hotel pricing have been from the developed city context. The paper is divided into five sections. The next section reviews the literature on Spatial Hedonic Models and location attributes studies. The third section presents the study methodology. Section Four presents and discusses the results, while Section Five presents the conclusions and recommendations

LITERATURE REVIEW

Spatial Hedonic Pricing Models

Hedonic price models (HPM) are based on the assumption of Gorman (1980) or Lancaster (1966, 1979) that products are appreciated for the utility impact of their attributes, which became a focal economic analytical tool by Rosen (1974). The Hedonic pricing theory posits that customers have inherent satisfaction from each element that has a more desirable price. Spatial Hedonic Pricing Model (SHPM), a type of spatial data integrated HPM, has been applied in the hospitality industry in two ways. First, the spatial attributes influence the estimation of

the value of real estate (Kaur & Arora, 2020; Lee & Jang, 2012; Mccord et al., 2012). Thus, SHPM assumes impartiality when predicting property values based on occupancy, location, and spatial amenities linked to the hotels. The second one is the assumption that suitable consumers' offer price for a hotel room is based on a bundle of attributes such as type of accommodation, hotel ratings and location (Gavilan et al., 2018; Mohaidin et al., 2017). Studies have used Geographic econometric models such as Geographic Weighted Regression models, Spatial Autocorrelation, and Spatial Ordinary Least Square Regression models to estimate the effects of location impacts on hotel pricing and sales. Xu et al. (2019), using Ordinary Least Square (OLS) and Geographic Weighted Regression (GWR) analysis, found that hotels in London were spatially non-stationary and associated with higher transportation accessibility. Soler and Gemar (2019), using GWR to study 57 hotels using room rate, location and hotel size as assessment variables, found that using GWR alone to estimate the model coefficient was misleading. They further used the OLS to improve the model and found that spatial correlation generates different patterns of room rate which affect location decisions. Again, Latinopoulos (2018) used the Geographic Weighted Regression model to assess the local effects and spatial variability of locations such as room rate and sea view. Their analysis found a significant spatial variability regarding the impact of sea view on room rates. This implies that the use of few locational variables makes the GWR significant and shows spatial variations across the study locations. Olfert (2014) supports the earlier claim but found significant spatial heterogeneity in the regression coefficients when estimating hotel location variables in some U.S metropolitan cities. Jin et al. (2019) in a study on the spatiotemporal connection of location variables in some regional tourism economies in China found that GWR was superior when analysing the spatiotemporal relationship at the global and local levels. The nature of development and investment locations in African countries makes it difficult to quantify spatial variations in pricing decisions. Therefore, GWR and OLS were adopted in this study.

Location Attributes

The location of a hotel gives it a competitive advantage over others in the industry and an inherent driver of investors' choice to invest (Hilmi & Hadi, 2016; Oliveira et al., 2013; Yang et al, 2018; Yang et al., 2016). The location of a hotel is very significant because it encompasses the neighbourhood of the investment, the distance to the central business district (CBD), recreation centres, education, transportation and health facilities (Qi et al., 2017). Other studies have also revealed that potential locations serve as the buying power of demand point by clients, Euclidean distance between investment facility, and potential location of the investment (Neves et al., 2014; Xie et al., 2018). The distance affects entry into the investment market of hotels because it augments transport costs (Santos et al., 2016). For instance, Cró and Martins' (2018) study on hotel location strategy revealed that accessibility to transport services was more crucial than cultural attractions. The study further found that high-class hotels were located in newly rehabilitated city areas classified as safe and far away from commercial areas (Cró & Martins, 2018). Their study further found that low-class hotels do not have any significant difference in pattern, hence benefit less from agglomeration effects. Egan and Nield's (2000) study on the spatial distribution of hotels using concentric circles found that high-quality hotels are located in the city centre. However, their study failed to determine accessibility based on hotel quality. Shoval (2006) argues that proximity to the centre is associated with a hotel's location and the kind of clients targeted (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990; Lee & Jang, 2007). In support, Lado-sestayo and Fernández-castro (2019) and Shoval (2006) assessed the performance of hotels by analysing the impact of

location and accessibility of transport services using geographic models. Their study (Lado-sestayo & Fernández-castro, 2019; Shoval, 2006) found that relying on the centrality of the hotel does not provide a good model fit, but accessibility to transport routes ensures easy access to hotels. Additionally, McCann and Folta's (2009) study confirmed that tourists living in the city centre feel safer and more secure. Hotels clustered in the city centre mean an increase in occupancy rates and returns.

Location of hotels closer to each other also ensured spill-overs aimed at improving performance (Rodríguez-Victoria et al., 2017). The age of hotel building affects the pricing of hotels because of the high maintenance and remedial costs involved such as plumbing and drainage systems (Ali et al., 2010). However, Huang et al. (2010) argue that building age affects customers' willingness to book a hotel and influences its ratings. Other location attributes including sea view, the proximity to an airport, beach and natural protected zone and the distances among similar hotels affect their prices. A study by Alegre et al. (2013) that examined the effects of location attributes on hotel price packages identified an increase in prices for rooms with sea view, and an increase in price with proximity to airport and beach. Furthermore, the extent of attraction and the types of commercial land-use close to hotels correlate with the spatial distribution of upper-grade hotels and inform their prices (Li et al., 2015). Also, Mandic and Petric's (2021) study revealed that protected natural zone location and its attributes had positive links with hotel prices. The neighbourhood characteristics of hotels such as the availability of swimming pools or sports facilities have different influences on their prices (Salo et al., 2014). Distance constitutes a major location attribute of hotels (Alegre et al., 2013) and distance affects price competition among hotels where competition increases with distances among comparable hotels (Lee, 2015).

COVID-19 Related Research on Hotel Pricing

Recent studies point to contradictory results on the effects of COVID-19 on hotel pricing (Denizci Guillet & Chu, 2021; Lai & Wong, 2020; Nikolić & Mitrović, 2021). The importance of hotel pricing strategies has gained prominence in the period of COVID-19 (Denizci & Chu, 2021; Spanaki et al., 2021). However, the crisis management practices in the hotel industry have downplayed the significance of COVID-19 on hotel pricing (Lai & Wong, 2020). In another study, personalization strategies also served as drivers of hotel pricing and had more potent effects on hotel pricing (Nikolić & Mitrović 2021). COVID-19 also has effects on hotel pricing through price-dropping (Majumdar, 2021), which is differentiated by hotel rating (Wu et al., 2020).

METHODOLOGY

The study used a sequential mixed methods design to collect and analyse data. This includes quantitative and qualitative data acquisition approaches. The study used quantitative approaches, in particular, spatial hedonic regression models including Ordinarily Least Square (OLS) and Geographic Weighted Regression (GWR) model, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Yield to Maturity (YTM) to determine location drivers and their effect on hotel room price in the COVID-19 period in Tamale. The qualitative aspect involved the use of interviews to collect qualitative data to confirm quantitative results.

Study Location

Tamale is the capital of the Northern Region of Ghana (see Figure 1). It lies between the longitude of 00˚51'12'W and latitude 09˚24'7N. It is the third city with the highest population growth rate (2.9% per annum) in Ghana. About 36.5% of the population of the Northern Region resides in Tamale. Tamale is also described as the fastest growing city in Ghana (Fuseini et al., 2017). The city serves as one of the busiest regional capitals in terms of education, business, sports, and agriculture. Also, the Tamale Teaching Hospital serves as the only tertiary health facility for the Northern sector of the country. It also served as the only testing and referral centre for COVID-19 during the first wave of the disease. The city has about 163 registered and unregistered hotels (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2019). These features make Tamale a suitable area for a study related to hotel pricing in the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

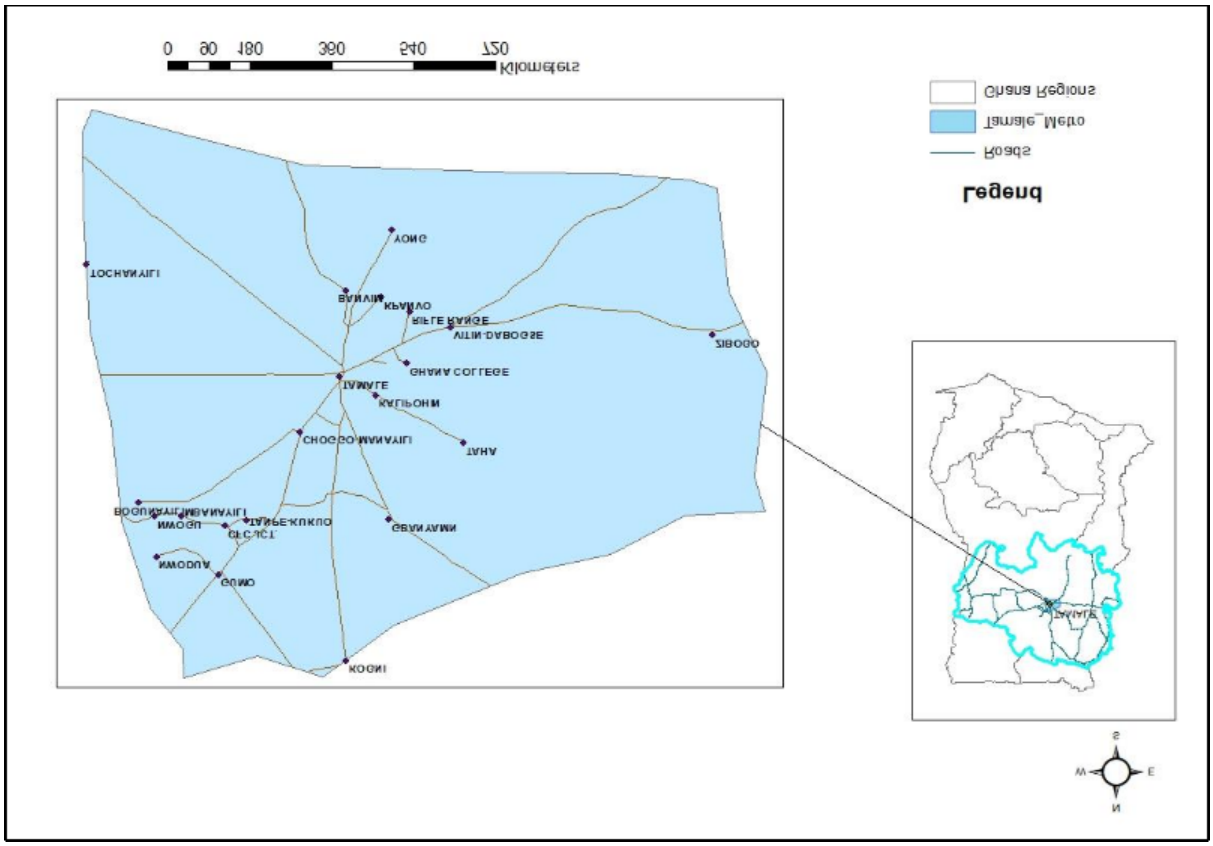

Figure 1: Map Showing the Study Area

Research Design

The study used the sequential mixed methods research design with four phases of data collection and analysis. During the first stage, geographic ground control points of all hotels in Tamale were collected. Considering the geographic variations, the study assessed hotels in the city centre and the periphery. The second phase involved the collection of hotel room rates of all contacted hotels from each location and assessing the accessibility of the hotels by considering the distance to a major road network and transport services. The third phase involved a survey of tourists on the location variables to confirm the spatial effects of location on hotel pricing in Tamale using Exploratory Factor Analysis. The last stage involved key informant interviews of hotel investors

in Tamale to confirm the results of Yield to Maturity (YTM).

Sampling and Instruments

The study adopted both convenience and purposive sampling methods. Data were collected from all the 163 hotels in the city. Using convenience sampling, questionnaires were administered to 815 visitors who were willing to participate in the study. The kobo collect application was used to collect data, using the questionnaire. The questionnaire sought information on location variables including road accessibility, transport services and so on. The responses to the questions across the hotel categories are presented in Table 1. The results helped to confirm the spatial effects of location on hotel pricing in Tamale using Exploratory Factor Analysis (see Table 6). The purposive sampling approach involved conducting semi-structured interviews with hotel investors to confirm the results of the Yield to Maturity (YTM). Consequently, five key informant telephone interviews were conducted among the leadership of the hotel association.

Table 1: Age and Gender of Respondents

	Age and Gender								
Class of Hotel	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70+	Total	Male	Female
Class 1	21	95	91	48	9	5	269	173	96
Class 2	45	60	52	74	24	17	272	152	120
Class 3	37	109	29	38	28	33	274	204	70
Total	103	266	172	160	61	55	815	529	286

Measurement of Variables

The study adopted the classification of hotels by the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA). GTA classifies hotels into Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3. In using the Geographic Weighted Regression Model and Ordinary Least Squares, the selected dependent variable was the hotel room price, with road accessibility, building age, and hotel class as independent variables (see Conroy & Gibson, 2019; Kim et al., 2018; Li & Du, 2018; Yang et al., 2018). Considering the EFA, the variables were measured using a four-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Model Definition and Analysis

The study defined the GWR and OLS model by assuming that the relationship between defined variables of location and pricing affects investment returns. The OLS-GWR models can be defined as:

$$HP_i = \beta_0 + \sum_{l=1}^{c} \beta_l M_L + n_i$$

where HP_1 represents the hotel room rate or price at the ith location, i is the number of hotels, l indicates the number of location points (l=1,2,3…..,c), M_l is the location variable that truly explains the hotel room prices, n_i denotes the random error term of hotel price, and β_l is the associate parameter explaining the hotel room prices. The data analysis involved three phases.

Using the ArcGIS software version 10.8, the study conducted three analyses during the first phase. The first analysis was to find basic descriptive statistics including mean, minimum value, maximum

value, and standard deviation among hotel location variables. In the second analysis, the study used spatial autocorrelation to estimate the distance (p-value and z-score) effect on hotel location as a measure of spatial dependency and reliability (see Table 2). The third analysis involved an estimation of the relationship between hotel room prices and the location variables using the OLS regression model. Using the same dependent variable, GWR was used to identify variations in the relationship between hotel price and its location variables. The R-square, Adjusted R-square, and local coefficient were analysed and compared with the GWR and OLS as a measure of location effect on hotel pricing.

In the second phase of the analysis, the study used the EFA to determine the differential significance among the location variables. The EFA is normally used at the early stage of research to confirm specific theories as a basis for providing sound conclusions and also to examine the inter-relationships among variables (Child, 2006). The study first conducted data suitability tests to avoid multicollinearity and to ensure acceptable internal reliability of constructs using Cronbach's Alpha (Momen et al., 2020). The study used the Varimax approach, Bartlett's test of sphericity and Kaiser Normalisation of values to extract the correlation matrix and the ratio of correlation among variables.

In the third and final phase of the analysis, the study estimated the Yield to Maturity of the hotels considering the location effects of city centre proximity to hotels. Here, we analysed the average room rate, fixed cost, variable cost, average number of rooms per hotel class, number of rooms occupied per annum, total revenue, and net income. This model was used to estimate the effects of location on hotel yield in the city of Tamale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tables 2, 3, and 4 present descriptive statistics, EFA, GWR, and Global Moran's data reliability test results for hotel locations in Tamale. Table 2 shows that the average room rate was GH₵172.5 and a range of GH₵50 to GH₵350. In terms of location attributes, the average distance to the city centre is 2.3km, with a maximum distance of 5.2km and a minimum of 1km away from the hotels. The average age of a hotel building in Tamale was 6.9 years. The range is 17 years for the oldest and one year for the newest. The average class of the hotels was 2nd class, with 3rd class being the highest and class 1 the lowest. The test for spatial collinearity shows that there is not much difference between the local R square and the adjusted R square (see Table 4). This implies that there is collinearity and spatial variation among the independent variables of location in Table 2. These results show that the explanatory variable of the model was not stationary across the study area, hence affecting pricing decisions. The global Moran's test produced a z score of 1.79, showing a confidence level of 95% and a p-value of 0.734. The random spatial variations among the hotel locations are presented in Figures 2, 3, 4, 5 which give the visual display of the spatial pattern of the variables from the GWR test. Again, the Exploratory Factor Analysis data suitability test results (Table 3) showed Bartlett's Sphericity Test of 1979.9 at a significance level of 0.00. The Cronbach's Alpha and model determinants showed a score of 0.714 and 0.548, indicating good reliability and absence of data multicollinearity among the location attributes (see Table 3).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Location Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Max	Min
Hotel_Rate	172.5	64.546967	350	50
Trans_Access	2.329878	0.944185	5.2	1
Building_Age	6.932927	2.763285	17	1
Hotel_Class	2.16	0.81	3	1

Table 3: Data Suitability Test Results of Location Attributes

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.761
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1979.9
	df	21
	Sig.	.000
Cronbach's Alpha		.714
Determinant		0.0000548

Table 4: Data Reliability Test for Hotel Location in Tamale

	GWR	Global Moran' Summary
AIC	1752.8578	
R^2	0.42168	
R^2 Adjusted	0.40123	
Residual Squares	395057.38	
Sigma	49.691	
Moran's Index		0.088651
Expected Index		-0.00614
Variance		0.00280

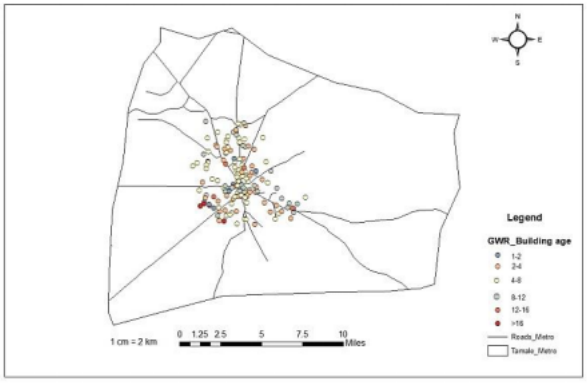

Figure 2: GWR Results of Age of Hotel Building

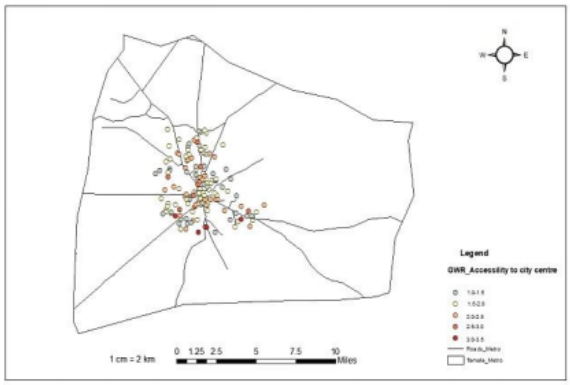

Figure 3: GWR Results of Hotel Accessibility (Km)

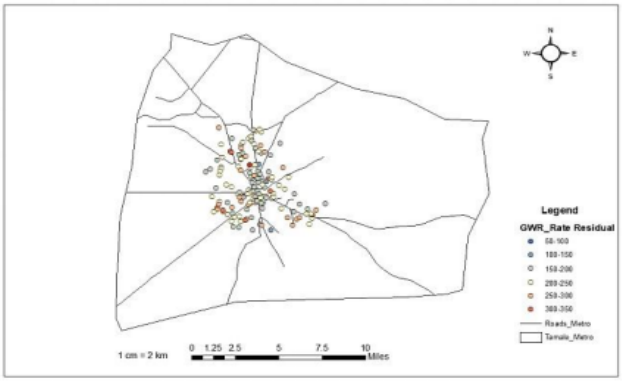

Figure 4: GWR Results of Hotel Rate

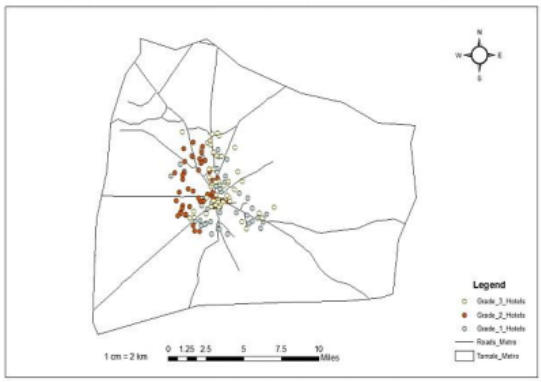

Figure 5: GWR Results of Hotel Class

What Location Attributes Influence Hotel Pricing?

Using the OLS model results, Table 5 shows spatial variations of hotels and their location variables. Considering that location influences the purchasing power of clients, Euclidean distance between investment facility, and potential location of the investment (Neves et al., 2014; Xie et al., 2018), the current results show that all independent variables are significant in determining hotel prices, except the age of hotel building and road accessibility. Road access contributed -2.99 to the variance while hotel class contributed 49.144, and age of hotel building -2.3. This implies that hotel class is positively associated with room price, compared to the other variables, which confirms the results of Wu et al. (2020) where hotel rating was determined by room pricing. The results of the survey conducted on tourists confirmed that the perception of hotel class as a significant determinant of price reflects the capabilities of adhering to COVID-19 protocols. This is because the bundle of services is commensurate with the class of the hotels. Aside, the bundle of services varies with the class in terms of facilities and amenities across the study location. Geographically, maps showing the spatial distribution of the coefficients in the OLS tables (Figures 6, 7, 8) confirm that hotels with positive coefficients are located outside the city centre. Hotels showing negative coefficients were located in the city centre. It may be assumed that visitors perceived the city centre to be congested and crowded, therefore, not allowing for the effective observance of the COVID-19 protocols. Comparing the GWR and OLS models, the results show little variations in Adjusted R square (ranging 0.50123 – 0.51096). This differs from the results of previous studies by Latinopoulos (2018) and Xu et al. (2019) in developed countries where there was a vast variation in adjusted R when assessing the spatio-temporal regional development of hotels.

COVID-19 Determinants Effect on Hotel Pricing Decision

Among the attributes, hotel class and road accessibility mostly explained the spatial impacts of location on hotel pricing (see Table 6). Concerning the hotel class, visitors based their decisions on hotels with a sanitised environment to avoid easy spread, good mechanisms for distributing food and other services, innovative means for management-client communication (for example, contactless checkout), and willingness to address a health concern. All these contribute to the variance explained for the hotel class. On the aspect of accessibility to a road, 17.029% contributed to the total variance explained.

Table 5: OLS Model Showing the Impact of Location Attributes, on Hotel Pricing in Tamale

Summary of OLS results								
Variable	Coefficient(A)	Std._Error	T-Stats	Probability(B)	Robust_Se	Robust_T	Robust_Pr(B)	Vif©
								……
Intercept	269.888	18.13086	14.8856	0.0000*	17.31309	15.5887	0.0000*	….
Road_Access	-2.997072	4.134801	-0.72481	0.4696	4.121489	-0.72718	0.4681	1.012313
Hotel Class	49.14451	4.865086	10.1015	0.0000*	4.649339	10.5702	0.0000*	1.040586
Age_Building	-2.304075	1.423948	1.61809 1	0.1076	1.464289	-1.573511	0.1175	1.028324
Model Diagnosis								
Multiple R^2	0.521802							
Adjusted R^2	0.51096							
Joint F-stats	0.0000*							

* indicates statistically significant p-value (p<0.01)

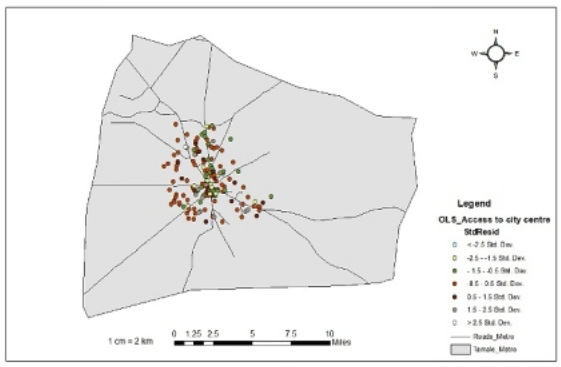

Figure 6: OLS Results of Hotel Accessibility to City Centre

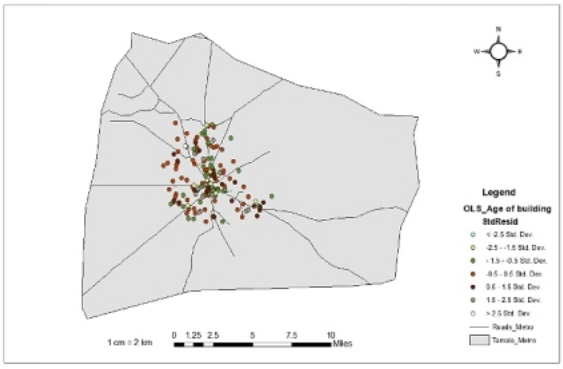

Figure 7: OLS Results of Age of Hotel Building

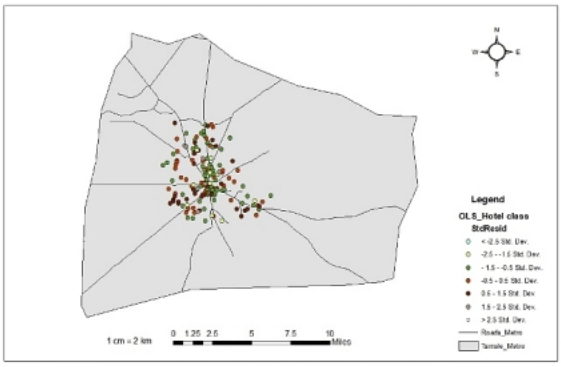

Figure 8: OLS Results of Hotel Class

The convenience of transport services was the highest variance that explained road accessibility. The ability to reach the hotel on time and easy access to the city centre contributed less to the total variance explained by road accessibility. These are intervening factors that influence the determination of hotel room price and deviate from the results of a study by Spanaki et al. (2021) who found that aggressive pricing strategies were determined by management and not clients.

Effect of Location on Hotel Investment for Post-COVID-19 Recovery Using YTM Approach

The locations of hotels have largely affected investment in Tamale in the COVID-19 period. Table 9 shows five possible cases of hotels in the city centre that recorded different YTM levels of 45%, 59% and 54% (Table 9) and 67.30%, 47.70 and 14.90 (Table 10) respectively. The results in Table 10 indicate that Class 1 hotels are making a good investment impact in YTM compared to those in the Class 2 category.

Table 6: Major Locational Attributes Influencing Pricing

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.937	41.962	41.962	2.937	41.962	41.962	2.865	40.933	40.933
2	1.120	15.999	57.962	1.120	15.999	57.962	1.192	17.029	57.962
3	.933	13.329	71.291						
4	.694	9.919	81.210						
5	.557	7.950	89.160						
6	.518	7.403	96.563						
7	.241	3.437	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7: Factors Attribute Loading Results of Location Drivers among Hotels in Tamale

Factors influencing pricing	Attributes loadings	Variance explained
Factor 1: Hotel class		40.933%
Hotels that observe the COVID-19 protocols	0.980	
Hotel with a sanitized environment to avoid easy spread of the virus	0.563	
Hotel prioritizes food and other services distribution mechanisms to tourists	0.911	
Innovations employed in management-tourist communication such as contactless checkout	0.990	
Willingness to address health concern	0.880	
Factor 2: Road accessibility		
The ability to use a convenient transport system	0.626	17.029%
Easy access to hotel to avoid COVID exposure	0.698	
The ability to access the city centre is a concern	0.547	

There is, however, a reduction in YTM in both models. This is reflected in the net income between Class 1 and 2 hotels in terms of location. The average room rate in Tables 9 and 10 show that hotel room rates for Class 1 hotels do not change compared to Class 2 and 3 as compared to other studies where COVID-19 has affected prices and incomes of hotels through price-dropping (Majumdar, 2021). Additionally, it can be observed that Class 1 hotels make a significant contribution in the number of rooms patronised and net income when located outside the city centre. An investor added a contribution to this by stating that:

> …I see the city centre as the easy place for my clients to get a car to any village around us and other parts of the country, but the patronage has reduced because of the COVID-19 as such it affected our ability to pay workers and to cover our operational cost (Hotel investor, 2020).

This result contradicts the findings of Susana et al. (2018) in which transport accessibility was crucial in determining hotel pricing and investment. Similarly, class two hotels located outside the city centre have high prices, which are about GH₵20 higher than those in the inner city. This result parallels that of McCann and Folta (2009) who found that tourists living in the city centre feel safer and more secure. However, there is not much change in net incomes. The responses of some investors seem to corroborate this assertion:

> …..For us [hotel investors], we are ok because some tourists who usually book rooms outside the city centre now love to live in class two hotels away from the city centre. After all, outside the city centre, you can use other alternative transport to the city centre at ease and safely (Hotel investor, 2020).
>
> ….I think that living in hotels outside the city centre reduces the risk of contracting the COVID-19 disease. So, I think that is why a lot of the people turn to patronise our services more these days than before. You know, we have also put measures in place to ensure the safety of our visitors (Hotel investor, 2020).

The results further show that Class 3 hotels are making positive returns compared to Classes 1 and 2 in Tables 9 and 10. In Table 10, Class 3 hotels are making losses that impact the average number of rooms recorded in a year. The results confirm the claim by Lado-sestayo and Fernández-Castro (2019) who found that the centrality of a hotel does not provide a good model fit, but accessibility to transport routes ensures easy access to hotels. The models show that cumulatively, Class 2 hotels are making higher investment returns compared to Classes 1 and 3 hotels.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The location of hotels has always been an important factor in hotel investment decision-making, but it has become more imperative in this period of COVID-19. This study examined the location attributes that influence hotel pricing and investment in the period of COVID-19 in the context of a city in an emerging market, Tamale. Using the GWR and OLS, the study established that accessibility, age of building, hotel room price, and hotel class are important local factors that affect hotel pricing.

According to Spatial Hedonic Price Model, combining OLS and GWR enables the determination of the local effect and variations in location attributes that influence hotel pricing and investment decisions. The two models have shown in this study that during the period of COVID-19, hotel location has little effect on average room price. The study concludes that factors other than location explain the patronage of hotels.

Table 9: Modelling Pricing and Investment Decision in the City Centre (Model A)

Hotel Class	Average room rate (GH₵)	Number of rooms sold	Total revenue (GH₵)	YTM	Variable cost (GH₵)	Fixed cost (GH₵)	Net Income (GH₵)
Class One	300	1,712	37,356	45%	14,380	20,000	2,976
Class Two	180	2,357	63,141	59%	28,565	20,000	14,576
Class Three	100	5,378	74,856	54%	35,117	20,000	19,739

Table 10: Modelling Pricing and Investment Decision Away From The City Centre (Model B)

Hotel Class	Average room rate (GH₵)	Number of rooms sold	Total revenue (GH₵)	YTM	Variable cost (GH₵)	Fixed cost (GH₵)	Net Income (GH₵)
Class One	300	3,428	59, 523	67.30%	17,885	12,000	29,638
Class Two	200	1,101	38,727	43.70%	12,647	12,000	14,080
Class Three	100	912	12,111	14.90%	9,313	12,000	-9,202

The study found that Class 1 hotels located away from the city centre observed increased patronage and consequently an increase in net income. That explains the reason why the OLS model showed a reduction effect on hotel pricing. However, the model did not show much change in pricing even though COVID-19 had affected patronage. This study also found that hotels located in the city centre experienced increases in returns but a reduction in patronage within the COVID-19 period. This confirms that OLS is a good measure, to quantify the spatial variation and its drivers on hotel pricing. However, combining OLS and YTM models provides practical and theoretical knowledge into heuristics aimed at guiding hotel pricing decisions in other emerging markets.

The paper recommends that future studies consider non-location attributes in applying these methods to a problem situation during the COVID-19 period. Furthermore, it recommends that investors focus on investing in Classes 1 and 2 hotels on the fringes of the city since that appears to yield better returns on investment even in a problem situation such as a pandemic. Given that road accessibility influences hotel prices, it is also recommended that city authorities improve road access to hotels to promote local competitiveness.

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3

LANDOWNERS' PERCEPTIONS AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF KYABOBO NATIONAL PARK, GHANA

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Abstract

This study examines the perceptions of landowners of fringe communities of the Kyabobo National Park (KNP) about their involvement in the creation and management of the KNP. Four KNP-fringe communities namely: *Shiare*, *Odomi*, *Gekorong*, and *Keri* which are less than a kilometre from the boundary of the park were selected for the study. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to establish the relationship between landowners' perceptions and their involvement in the management of the park. A systematic sampling method was used to select 212 landowners for interviews using a structured interview schedule. The study found that some landowners in the KNP-fringe communities were employed at various levels in the management of the park but were not managing partners of the park. Landowners also benefited from selling handicrafts to park visitors. The physical infrastructures in the communities have remained poor. It is recommended that landowners in park-fringe communities are given the opportunity to become managing partners of the park to guarantee the successful operation of the park. Government should also provide modern physical infrastructure in the KNP-fringe communities as was promised prior to the establishment of the park.

Keywords: community involvement, ecotourism, Kyabobo, landowners, perceptions

INTRODUCTION

An emerging trend in resource conservation is community involvement in the establishment and management of national parks (Acharya, Maraseni, & Cockfield, 2019). National Parks (NPs) are often surrounded by communities that rely heavily on forest resources for their sustenance. Consequently, experts have predicted that the exclusion of local people in the creation and management of NPs will lead to the loss of commitment by the fringe communities to protect the NPs (Dei, 2008; McLaughlin, 2011). The involvement of fringe communities in decision-making, programme implementation, as well as sharing of the benefits of developing and evaluating programmes sustain conservation objectives (Aikins, Gbogbo, & Owusu, 2018).

Economically, NPs enhance the economic wellbeing of park-fringe communities through nature-based tourism. According to Dei (2008), NPs attract eco-tourists to countries that earn revenue to fund development projects. For instance, Kenya's Amboseli National Park (ANP) earns US$ 40 per hectare per year and this is fifty times more than her revenue from agriculture (Mwato, 2019). Governments, therefore, consider eco-tourism as a panacea to ailing economies (Segbefia, 2008). Similarly, NPs create direct employment for neighbouring communities as rangers, administrative staff and indirectly in the sale of souvenirs (Vodouhe, Coulibaly, Adegbidi, & Sinsin, 2010).

These benefits encourage local support for the parks, ensure sustainable management of biodiversity resources and resolve misunderstandings between the managers of NPs and fringe communities (Asiedu, 2002). Park-fringe communities are motivated to undertake resource conservation only if

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they are actively involved in the creation and management of the parks. According to Aikins et al. (2018), community participation in resource conservation serves as a boost to protect natural resources.

The concept of community involvement in NPs is particularly important in developing countries because NPs encroach on lands that are owned by groups in fringe communities. In Ghana, community forests and lands are held in trust by chiefs for the people as *stool* or *skin* lands. Therefore, park-fringe communities must be involved in the management of forests which are technically located on their lands.

In reality, however, park-fringe communities are hardly involved in the creation and management of NPs in many countries (Abukari & Mwalyosi, 2018). This has often led to indigenous people expressing concerns about their exclusion from the planning, administration, management, and sharing of revenue from entrance fees (Ashiagbor & Danquah, 2017). Governments of many developing countries often acquire lands in pristine areas for the creation of NPs without appropriate consultations or payments of compensation to landowners for loss of property. What is evident is the eviction of the locals from their traditional homes to make way for the creation of NPs (Ayivor, Gordon, & Ntiamoa-Baidu, 2013). Perhaps, the reason underlying the forced eviction is the belief that government owns all lands in the country. But Kludze (2013) was of the view that every piece of land in Africa as a whole and Ghana, in particular, belongs to three generations: the ancestors, the living, and future generations.

Park-fringe communities face a number of challenges following the creation of NPs. They are refused game hunt, lumbering and performance of rituals on the parks by-laws which established the NPs. Besides, residents in park-fringe communities are often not partners or part of the day-to-day management of the parks. Local communities whose lands are taken by governments receive promises of compensation which are often not paid in full (Vondolia, 2009). Finally, the creation of NPs often brings about high expectations of development projects, yet, park-fringe communities have been characterised by poor road networks, poorly equipped clinics and the absence of potable water (IUCN-PACO, 2010).

Furthermore, understanding landowners' perceptions and involvement in the management of NPs makes it possible to create management strategies for the NPs. Such management strategies built on park-fringe communities' positive perceptions and their willingness to be involved in the management of Protected Areas (PAs) mitigate negative attitudes (Allendorf, 2007).

Many studies have been undertaken on fringe communities' perceptions and attitudes toward PAs in Ghana. Amuquandoh (2010) undertook a study on residents' perceptions of the environmental impacts of tourism in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin, Ghana. Results of the study showed that residents expected both positive and negative effects after the development of the PAs though they were highly motivated by the positive side. Besides, Akyeampong (2011) also examined pro-poor tourism particularly residents' expectations, experiences and perceptions in the Kakum National Park (KNP) area of Ghana and concluded that some expectations were too high. Nevertheless, other expectations had been met.

These notwithstanding, most studies on NPs have been skewed toward other concerns to the neglect of the perceptions and involvement of the park-fringe communities in the management of NPs. For instance, Larsen (2006) explored the butterfly population and composition in the Kyabobo National Park (KNP) and found that KNP holds almost 80% of the total butterfly population in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. Besides, Bruku (2016) undertook a case study of perceived risks and management

strategies in protected areas of KNP in the Nkwanta South District of the Oti Region.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that many of the studies on perceptions and attitudes of fringe communities toward PAs and NPs did not examine perceptions and involvement of the fringe communities in protected areas (Abukari et al., 2018; Acharya et al., 2019; Aikins et al., 2018; Akyeampong, 2011; Amuquandoh, 2010; Ashiagbor et al., 2017; Bruku, 2016; Larsen, 2006). It can be concluded from the above that very little has been done on perceptions and involvement of park-fringe communities toward NPs in spite of the fact that the issue of community perception and involvement is important to the economic sustenance of the park-fringe communities.

This study, therefore, fills a gap in research between findings which emphasise community participation in the management of NPs *vis-a-vis* perceptions of landowners in park-fringe communities which perhaps prevent them from participating in such activities. In addition, it is hoped that reasons underlying landowners' willingness or otherwise to be part of park management will be exposed to bridge the perceived gap in research. The main objective of the study is to examine the perceptions of landowners in KNP-fringe communities about their involvement in the management of the KNP. Specifically: (i) to assess the levels of involvement of landowners in the management of the park and (ii) to examine landowners' expectations of benefits from the park.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The framework of Consensus Planning with Communities (Figure 1) was developed in line with the decentralisation policy of Ghana. It allowed the participation of local communities in the decision-making processes of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (Dei, 2008).

The framework of Consensus Planning with Communities uses: top-down and bottom-up approaches to solve problems involving park-fringe communities. It thrives on the interactive nature of development planning at various regional levels and recognises landowners in the creation and sustainability of parks. The framework also explores consensus to eliminate the imposition of parks on fringe communities.

According to the framework, the establishment of NPs first began as a top-down approach emanating from central government decisions (Vodouhe et al., 2010). For example, the creation of the KNP was integrated into a broader national development plan aimed at controlling the illegal entry of Ghanaian nationals into the Fazao-Malfacassa National Park in the Republic of Togo. Benefits derived by fringe communities from NPs have been assessed in various studies in communities surrounding NPs through the *trickledown* effect on local communities (Aikins et al., 2018; Allendorf, 2007).

The framework of Consensus Planning with Communities has been used to explain agreement among stakeholders of NPs (Dei, 2008). However, it stops short of identifying the factors which influenced landowners' perceptions about the management of NPs. Hence, the framework for Understanding Park-fringe Communities' Perceptions based on a study on the Masoala National Park in Madagascar (Ormsby & Kaplin, 2005) was adopted.

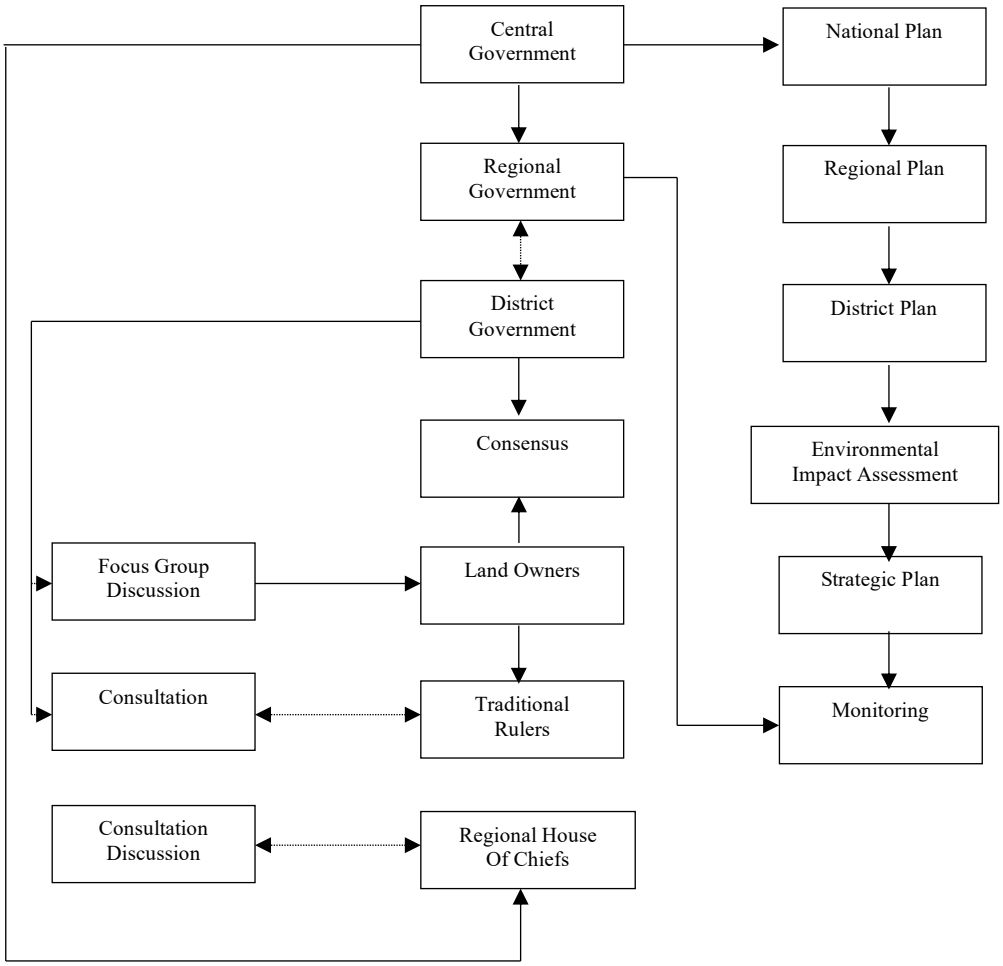

Figure 1: Framework of Consensus Planning with Communities

Source: Dei (2008)

The framework (Figure 2) assumes perceptions of park-fringe communities affect their level of participation in park management. Also, conflicts between park authorities and local communities affect the effectiveness of park management. The framework focused on: factors which influenced perceptions of park-fringe communities about the Masoala National Park.

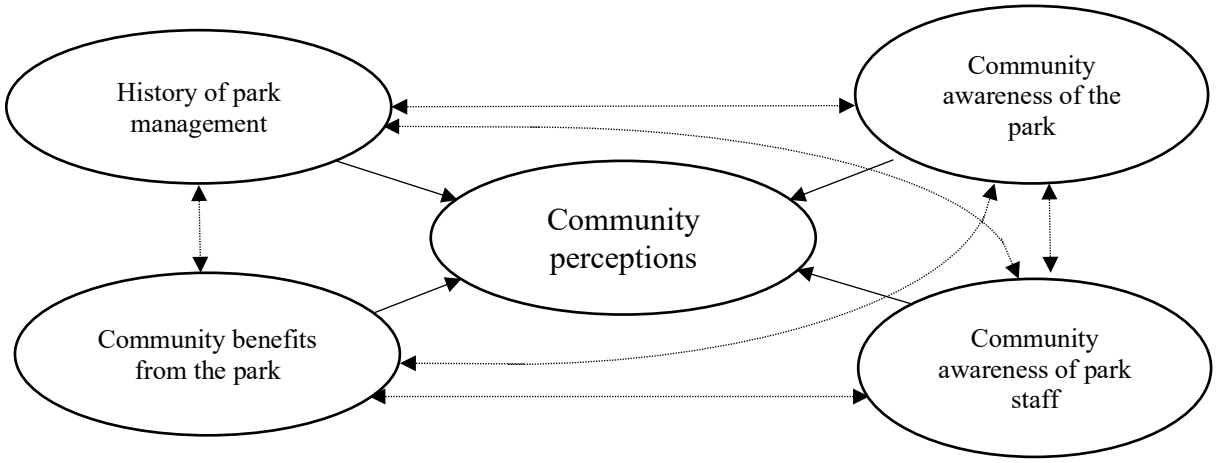

Figure 2: Framework for Understanding Park-Fringe Communities' Perceptions

Source: Ormsby and Kaplin (2005).

Park-Fringe Communities' Involvement in the Management of National Parks

Efforts to promote NPs after independence in many countries did not succeed because the programme failed to include park-fringe communities in the creation and management of the parks (Abukari et al., 2018; Vodouhe et al., 2010). Prior to 1993 in Benin, the Pendjari National Park (PNP) was centrally managed by the government using coercion to keep fringe communities away from the park. Today, the incorporation of park-fringe communities in the management of parks has been seen as a means of satisfying the vital ethical empowerment of local people and ensuring successful conservation (Abukari et al., 2018; Holmes, 2003). Hence, park-fringe communities' involvement was set within the context of their participation in the creation and management of NPs.

Indeed, the involvement of park-fringe communities in the creation and management of NPs was crucial to legitimising the parks. Conflicts erupted between park authorities and fringe communities when the natives perceived parks as projects that served the interests of outside elites and foreigners (Chan, Pringle, Ranganathan, Boggs, Chan, Ehrlich, Haff, Heller, Al-Khafaji, Macmynowski, 2009). Hence, the participation of park-fringe communities in park creation and management had helped to diffuse such tensions (Ashiagbor et al., 2017). Besides, traditional knowledge of park-fringe communities in park ecology became important in the scientific understanding of the ecological functioning of NPs. In the past, natural scientists that were in charge of NPs lacked a complete understanding of social issues which affected NPs. As a result, the involvement of park-fringe communities in management brought such ecological information to the fore in addition to the needs of the communities which needed to be addressed by park management.

From the foregoing, it is hypothesised that there is no significant relationship between perceptions of landowners in KNP-fringe communities and their involvement in the management of the KNP.

Typology of Community Participation

Community participation describes the involvement of fringe communities in the management of NPs. Fringe communities' participation could be classified based on the degree of community involvement in park management. It takes the forms of manipulation, consultation or genuine participation as well as power-sharing between fringe communities and park management. Tosun's (1999) view of community participation was set within the context of community participation in tourism development. The ideal considered community participation as a categorical term which permitted the participation of people, citizens or the host community at different levels (local, regional or national). Accordingly, Tosun (1999) classified community participation in tourism development into coercive participation, induced participation and spontaneous participation.

Coercive participation represents the lowest form of community participation which manifests in manipulation. Local residents who wield power participate in park management only as educators of fringe communities to prevent possible and actual threats to NPs. Park management may take decisions to provide basic needs of fringe communities by consulting with local leaders with an actual motive to lessen risks such as encroachment associated with park management. Coercive participation epitomises the non-involvement of local residents in park management processes. According to Rasmussen and Pouliot (2021), coercion of local residents in Patagonian Protected Area communities in Argentina gave way to the inclusion of the indigenous peoples in the management of PAs. Rasmussen et al., (2021)

noted that management of PAs in Argentina previously merely ended in an unequal share of power, knowledge and social identities with park-fringe communities.

Under induced participation, local communities have a say in the creation and management processes of NPs but cannot enforce their views on park management. The government was not bound by a legal obligation to consult identifiable stakeholders such as park-fringe communities in establishing or enforcing park management decisions. This is common in developing countries where local communities merely approve of decisions of government regarding the creation and management of parks. Induced participation is typically top-down, passive and indirect management type. Consultation with local communities is for the sake of it. In Ghana, the Mole National Park (MNP) is a good example of a government-managed NP.

Finally, spontaneous participation represents a perfect form of community participation in which managerial responsibility and authority are shared between fringe communities and park management. They recognized the legitimate entitlements of each other to manage NPs. Examples in Ghana included the Tafi-Atome and the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuaries. Hence, spontaneous participation is based on power-sharing with fringe communities. Similarly in Argentina, PAs specifically Patagonian Protected Area had seen a surge in co-management strategies by which Patagonian Protected Area-fringe communities were given access to decision-making which hitherto were denied the park-fringe communities (Rasmussen et al., 2021). These new initiatives sat oddly with past and current park management policies which were marked by repression, dispossession and forced resettlements. Co-management as a principle for Patagonian Protected Area governance had occurred alongside the advent of multiculturalism in Argentina, a nation whose history was stained by its ideals of European whiteness to the detriment of indigenous people.

Co-management enabled the management of NPs to have control of park resources as well as easy access to decision-making processes involving local residents in the park-fringe communities. Co-management signified an important step towards greater inclusion of park-fringe communities in NPs decision-making processes. Co-management policy largely remained within the logic of science-based conservation. Finally, the involvement of park-fringe communities in biodiversity conservation served the good of the park-fringe communities and promoted their development. Integration of park-fringe communities in park management helped to achieve park objectives.

Conceptual Framework

In order to analyse the perceptions of landowners of park-fringe communities at the KNP, key factors in the framework for Understanding Park-fringe Communities' Perceptions were incorporated into the conceptual framework of this study (Figure 3). Factors in the conceptual framework were determined based on the literature of related studies in other countries (Obeng, 2017).

Moreover, the factors and their interactions in the framework emerged as important influences on landowners' perceptions about the management of the KNP (Figure 3). For instance, management positions occupied by landowners in the management of the park interacted with the effects of KNP on the livelihoods of landowners and increased landowners' knowledge of park management activities. In addition, landowners' involvement in the management of the KNP which included the provision of facilities such as toilets and wells for park-fringe communities interacted with landowners' expected benefits from the park leading to positive perceptions of the park. Further interaction between communities' expected

benefits from the park equalises with effects of the park on the livelihoods of the local people. Hence, this conceptual framework offered a systematic way to conceptualise important factors which influenced the perceptions of landowners.

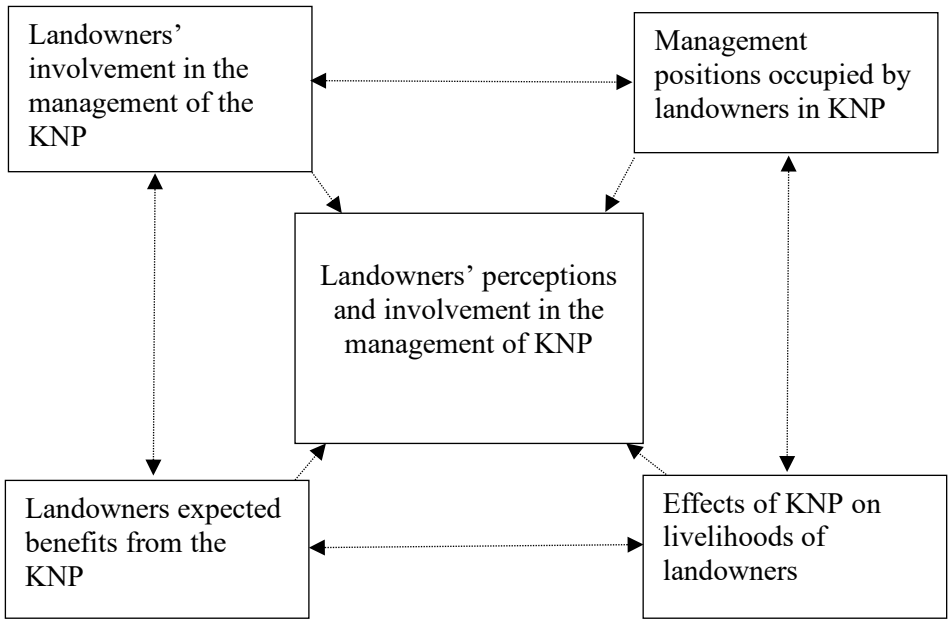

Figure 3: Framework of Factors which Influence Landowners' Perceptions and Involvement in the Management of KNP

Source: Adapted from Ormsby and Kaplin (2005).

This framework has been useful in discussing perceptions of landowners of fringe communities about the park. As stated by Amuquandoh (2010) and Aikins et al. (2018), levels of local communities' participation in the management of NPs affected their perceptions. In the Executive Instrument and Development Plan which established the KNP, the aim of the government was to restrict Ghanaians from poaching on the Fazao-Malfacassa National Park in the Republic of Togo. That followed a complaint by the government of the Republic of Togo against the Republic of Ghana at the International Criminal Court in the early 1990s that Ghanaians illegally hunted game in its Fazao-Malfacassa National Park (IUCN-PACO, 2010). Consequently, the International Criminal Court directed Ghana to establish NP on its side of the border to control Ghanaians from poaching on the Fazao-Malfacassa National Park in Togo and to ensure peace between the two neighbouring countries. Hence, the creation of KNP was prioritised by the government.

The framework of factors that influenced perceptions of landowners of the KNP-fringe communities provided the right basis for analysing perceptions of the landowners. This is an important reason for the use of the framework for this study. KNP was established because chiefs in the *Shiare*, *Odomi*, *Gekorong* and *Keri* communities approved of it following consultations and negotiations with the government for compensation.

Landowners in KNP-fringe communities have been employed in various capacities at the KNP. Apart from benefits that were expected to accrue to individuals and communities, KNP authorities also expected landowners' involvement in the management of the park to result in local protection

against encroachment and destruction. The conceptual framework, therefore, linked landowners' involvement in the management of the KNP to management positions occupied by landowners in the KNP. In addition, the effects of KNP on the livelihoods of landowners were connected to landowners' expected benefits from the KNP in order to assess how these factors influenced landowners' perceptions and their involvement in the management of the KNP.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

Figure 4 shows the map of the KNP and its boundaries. The park is 359.8 square kilometres and lies in both the Nkwanta North and Nkwanta South Districts of the Oti Region of Ghana. It is 230 km north of Ho the Volta Regional capital and 10 km north-east of Nkwanta, the District capital of Nkwanta South. KNP is on the boundary between savanna and forest zones in Ghana where woodland and mainly semi-evergreen forest types intermingle extensively at the western end of the Dahomey Gap (IUCN-PACO, 2010). The government formally acquired the land to establish KNP through Executive Instrument No. 20 of 16th September 1993 (IUCN-PACO, 2010).

The park is surrounded by communities such as *Kyilinga, Shiare, Krumase, Odomi, Gekorong, Keri, Pawa, Kue,* and *Abriwanko* whose main occupation is subsistence and commercial farming of plantain, yam, maize and cassava. Some community members also engage in the hunting of wildlife, beekeeping and grasscutter rearing. The KNP was mapped out because of its unique stock of threatened wildlife species. Most animals are difficult to see in the park as the forest is quite thick while the terrain is difficult. The red river hog (*Potamochoerus porcus*) perhaps, is the most abundant large mammal although the Red-flanked duiker (*Cephalophus rufilatus*) and grey duiker (*Sylvicapra grimmia*) are commonly seen. Other animals include warthog (*Phacochoerus Africanus*), and monkeys *(Cercopithecus Diana*). The park also contains the African forest elephant *(Loxodonta Africana)*. These elephants migrated from Fazao-Malfacassa National Park in the Republic of Togo into the KNP.

There are about 235 permanent species of birds in the KNP although about 102 species are migratory. Among the attractions of the KNP are a few tall hills from the distance called the *Breast Mountains* because, from a distance, they look like the "young breasts of a woman lying flat on her back". The remote location of the park, its scenic beauty, in addition to its reasonable number of wildlife species makes KNP an attractive place for ecotourism, recreation and scientific research.

Research Design

The cross-sectional design is a fact-finding design useful in obtaining descriptive data. It is a scientific tool used in research which involves the determination of the relationship between the factors being studied. According to Obeng (2017), the cross-sectional design is useful in collecting data at a point in time to describe prevailing conditions and relationships between variables at a place. Hence, Obeng (2017) concluded that cross-sectional design is a fast and cost-effective means of data collection to describe prevailing conditions.

In view of diversity in landowners' perceptions about management of the KNP and the nearness of fringe communities to the park, a cross-sectional design was more suitable for data collection. Quantitative research is a scientific process that involves data collection in order to test hypotheses. The process involves data collection, data management, analysis of results and comparison of one set of facts to another. This research design enables in-depth study of perceptions, perspectives and understanding of situations (Obeng, 2017). It was

therefore useful particularly, in assessing the level of landowners' involvement in the management of the KNP, examining differences in perceptions between landowners who work on the park and those who do not, evaluating landowners' expected benefits from the park, as well as analyse effects of KNP on livelihoods of landowners.

Quantitative research in this study involved administering interview schedules. The use of quantitative research allowed increased likelihood of accurate, quantified and representative conclusions which were generalised.

Figure 4: Map of Kyabobo National Park

Sampling and Data Collection

Primary data on landowners' perceptions and their involvement in the management of the KNP were obtained from landowners in the park-fringe communities namely: *Shiare*, *Odomi*, *Gekorong* and *Keri* because these communities are less than a kilometre from the boundary of the KNP. Secondly, much of the land housing the park belonged to landowners whose livelihood activities were likely to be affected highly by the creation of the park.

To obtain the population of landowners in each community, their houses were numbered by the researchers. A total population of 2,106 landowners was obtained. Based on a table of population and corresponding sample size by Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009), a sample of 212 landowners was chosen. The sample size for each community was calculated based on a proportional allocation of 10 percent of the population (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample of Respondents in Selected Communities

Communities	Number of landowners	Landowners selected
Shiare	511	52
Keri	821	82
Odomi	416	42
Gekorong	358	36
Total	2,106	212

A systematic sampling technique was used to select landowners in each sampled community for the study. For instance, in the *Shiare* community, 52 landowners were selected systematically at an interval of ten from 511 landowners. The landowner of the 4th house was randomly selected followed by the landowner of the 14th house then landowners of the 24th house in series: 4th, 14th, 24th, 34th, 44th, 54th,…514th. The 52 structured interview schedules were administered to landowners in *Shiare.* In all, 212 interview schedules were administered during evenings and weekends when respondents were available at home.

Structured interview schedules with open-ended and closed-ended questions were used in data collection. The questions were largely based on a literature review on park-fringe community participation in resource conservation in Ghana and other countries.

Data Analysis

Data from the field were analysed using statistical software: Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) Version 18. SPSS enabled the easy computation of percentages and frequencies to illustrate the analysis. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to determine whether a relationship existed between landowners' perceptions of the KNP and their involvement in the management of the KNP.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Landowners Expected Benefits from the Park

Landowners expected benefits from the KNP are shown below (Table 2). Respondents strongly agreed (mean = 4.98) that they expected KNP to employ them in the management of the park because they owned the land. In further explanation, they contended that such employment could help to hold back the landowners from migrating to urban centres in search of jobs. Most of the respondents agreed that KNP-fringe communities developed positive perceptions about the park when forty-five landowners were employed upon the establishment of the park in 1993. These findings coincide with assertions by Segbefia (2008) and Vodouhe et al. (2010) that NPs provide employment to fringe communities.

The respondents strongly agreed (mean = 4.99) that they expected park authorities to promote trade in local handicrafts, accommodation and local dishes through advertisements on television, radio and in ecotourism magazines. Clarifying their position further, the respondents stated that they expected visitors to the park to buy local handicrafts as mementoes of their visits and for their loved ones back home. Local tourists were also expected to patronise local dishes and accommodation facilities in the communities because of their relatively cheaper prices. In all, 98.1% of respondents expected a higher standard of living in their communities after the creation of the park.

Table 2: Landowners Expected Benefits from the Park

Landowners expected benefits from the park	N	% in agreement	Mean	Standard Deviation
KNP will provide employment to landowners	212	99.1	4.98	0.19
KNP will promote trade in local handicrafts	212	99.1	4.99	0.10
KNP will improve the standard of living of the community	212	98.1	4.98	0.14
KNP will bring about infrastructural facilities which will be enjoyed by the people	212	94.3	4.94	0.23
The creation of the KNP will help conserve the forest	212	99.1	4.99	0.10
KNP will promote my community as a major ecotourism destination	212	94.3	4.94	0.23
KNP will project the cultural values of my community to outsiders	212	74.5	4.75	0.44
Establishment of the park will project the image of my community	212	84.0	4.83	0.40

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = No opinion; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

Respondents strongly agreed (mean = 4.94) that they expected good roads, electricity, pipe-borne water and health posts immediately after the park was established but their infrastructure remain poor. These respondents explained further that *Shiare*, *Odomi*, *Gekorong* and *Keri* communities were characterised by poor road networks and the absence of pipe-borne water.

Hence, the KNP fringe communities felt betrayed by the government when promises of infrastructure never materialised. In their view, the provision of infrastructure was to make their communities very attractive to tourists. This finding supports the findings of Allendorf (2007) that park-fringe communities feel robbed if promises of infrastructure never materialise.

Most respondents expected roads linking their communities to be reconstructed to make accessibility possible for tourists. However, they were disappointed that those expectations had not been realised. For instance, they lamented the continuous neglect of the footpath to *Shiare* community. Again, respondents strongly agreed (mean = 4.75) that they expected KNP to project the cultural values of their communities to outsiders. They stated with pride that their cultural practices: mode of greeting, local meals, traditional clothing and dances were never ridiculed in the past and did not expect that to happen when tourists throng their communities after the park had been established.

Similarly, they expected tourists to learn more about their cultural practices first-hand. Most respondents explained further that criminal acts such as rape and robbery were non-existent in their communities. These findings coincide with the findings of Dei (2008) that NPs have become a major strategy of countries with ecotourism potential through which they demystify cultural misinformation.

Furthermore, respondents strongly agreed (mean = 4.94) that they expected KNP to promote their communities as major ecotourism destinations because of unique landforms such as waterfalls and other physical features associated with the park: its location between savanna and forest belts, flora and fauna and the uniquely projected *Breast Mountains*. The majority of respondents expected the biodiversity of the park to be helpful to scientists and researchers.

Moreover, respondents strongly agreed (mean = 4.99) that the creation of the park would conserve the forest and improve its biodiversity because of restrictions on entry into the park. For

example, four respondents in *Keri* community stated that rivers in the park moisturise the soil and enhance the growth of trees.

Furthermore, 99.1% of the respondents expected the scattered vegetation of the park to transform into a thick forest and provide accommodation for a variety of migrant animals from the Fazao-Malfacassa National Park in the Republic of Togo which shares boundaries with the KNP. These respondents added that they were hopeful that the park would protect its mountains against degradation and prevent Ghanaians' illegal game hunt in Togo's Fazao-Malfacassa National Park. Finally, they stated that control of cross-border crimes such as cocoa and fuel smuggling will abate through strict enforcement of KNP laws which prohibit illegal entry into the park.

Perceptions of Landowners in KNP-Fringe Communities about the Management of the Park

Table 3 shows that respondents (landowners) strongly agreed (mean = 4.98) that the biodiversity of the park improved significantly two decades after its establishment. These respondents constituted 99.1% of the respondents.

Table 3: Perceptions of Landowners in the KNP-Fringe Communities about the Management of the Park

Landowners' perceptions	N	% in agreement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Biodiversity of the park area has improved significantly following establishment of the KNP	212	99.1	4.98	0.19
The size of the KNP is too small	212	0.9	1.27	0.47
The KNP staff are impartial in executing their duties on the park	212	67.2	4.39	0.66
Herdsmen agree with restrictions imposed on livestock access to the park	212	2.8	1.12	0.56

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = No opinion; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

Meanwhile, respondents strongly disagreed (mean = 1.27) that the size of the park was too small and the boundaries should be moved forward to enlarge the park. These respondents (99.1%) explained that much of their arable lands had been lost to the park and will not accept a further extension of park boundaries which would create a shortage of farmlands in the communities.

Furthermore, respondents agreed (mean = 4.39) that the park staff were impartial in the performance of their duties. They identified several duties of KNP staff which included: public education on conservation, protection of biodiversity of the park, environmental protection against degradation and bushfires, and training of local people in alternative livelihoods activities such as snail and grasscutter rearing. This 67.2% of respondents stated their positive impressions about the KNP staff. However, 32.8% had had negative experiences with the park staff such as rude behaviour and violent confrontations.

In further explanation, all respondents stated their disappointment that KNP authorities failed to create an official forum such as a community meeting or conservation awareness programme to interact with them since the park must be protected through public education on conservation benefits. Consequently, they described park staff as mere law enforcers who were unable to educate their communities on conservation. They suggested the shifting of resources from policing the park to public education programmes on conservation. This sentiment and finding were similarly expressed by Allendorf (2007), and Ormsby et al., (2005) that positive neighbourly

interactions in the forms of conservation awareness activities and park-community meetings result in an understanding of park staff.

Landowners' Involvement in the Management of the KNP

Landowners' involvement in the management of the KNP was examined within the context of their participation in the creation and management of the KNP. Information about landowners' involvement in KNP is shown below (Table 4). The majority of respondents strongly agreed (mean = 4.53) that they (landowners) were informed about the government's intention to establish the park. Again, respondents agreed (mean = 4.35) that their opinions were sought before the creation of the KNP. These respondents constituted 74.5% and 62.3% of total respondents. These findings were contrary to the literature that park-fringe communities were hardly involved in the creation and management of NPs (Ashiagbor et al., 2017; Vodouhe et al., 2010). Efforts to promote NPs after independence in many countries did not succeed because the programme failed to include landowners in park-fringe communities in the creation and management of parks. For instance, landowners in fringe communities of Ria Celestun Biosphere Reserve in Mexico were not consulted by the government in the process of its establishment (McLaughlin, 2011). The Biosphere Reserve officials also failed to encourage the participation of landowners in the management of the reserve.

Furthermore, prior to 1993, the PNP in Benin was established and centrally managed by the government using coercion to keep PNP-fringe communities away from the park. Coercive participation represents the lowest form of community participation in park management which manifests in manipulation. Local residents who wield power participate in park management only as educators of fringe communities to prevent possible and actual threats to NPs. Coercive participation epitomises the non-involvement of local residents in park management processes. Such alienation creates discontent among the landowners in park-fringe communities and results in non-compliance with park rules, hostility and conflict between residents and park staff (Rasmussen et al., 2021; Tosun, 1999).

More than half of the respondents agreed (mean = 4.27) that they were allowed to express concerns about the proposed park through their chiefs. Subsequently, the chiefs were involved in negotiations and in the administrative processes leading to the payment of compensation to landowners. The respondents agreed (mean = 4.41) that the interests of landowners in fringe communities were factored into the KNP plan because they were consulted by their chiefs for their views. Also, respondents agreed (mean = 4.54) that their communities were involved in processes that led to the establishment of the park. These findings coincide with the findings of Dei (2008) and Abukari et al., (2018) that the sustainability of ecotourism depends on community involvement in the management. These respondents recounted how the government expected flora and fauna that were near extinction to be regenerated and the promise that stray animals could be killed to supplement the nutritional needs of local people.

Table 4: Landowners' Involvement in the Management of the KNP

Landowners' involvement in the management of the KNP	N	% in agreement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Landowners were informed about governments intention to establish the KNP	212	74.5	4.53	0.83
Opinions of the landowners were sought before the creation of the KNP	212	62.3	4.35	0.88
The landowners were allowed to express its concerns	212	55.7	4.27	0.87
Interest of landowners was factored into KNP plan	212	55.7	4.41	0.74
The landowners were involved in processes leading to establishment of the park	212	69.8	4.54	0.87
Landowners supported the decision to establish the park	212	75.5	4.54	0.83
The landowners are partners in the management of the KNP	212	1.9	2.08	0.34
The park provides employment to local people	212	77.4	4.57	0.80
Qualified landowners work in managerial positions on the park	212	29.2	4.01	0.76
Local residents are allowed entry into the park to do business	212	58.5	4.31	0.88

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = No opinion; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

Nevertheless, few of them expressed their disappointment that they as actual landowners were not directly involved in negotiation with the government. For instance, four respondents in *Shiare* community wrote that their paramount chief, the Late Nana Oberko Agyei II, *Osuwulewura of Akyode Traditional Area*, accepted the agreement reached with the government for the lands which resulted in the loss of their arable lowlands. Consequently, few of them resisted the creation of the park but were beaten and ejected by the military from the area housing the park today. This finding coincides with the findings by Ayivor et al., (2013) that locals were often evicted forcefully from their traditional homes to make way for the creation of NPs because they believed that government owns all lands in the country. *Shiare* community is situated on a scarp opposite the KNP. This notwithstanding, 75.5% of respondents supported the decision to establish the park.

Respondents disagreed (mean = 2.08) that they were in partnership with the government in the management of the park (Table 4). According to the landowners, they were employed in management positions on merit. This finding starkly contrasted assertions by Abukari et al, (2018), Dei (2008), and Mclaughlin (2011) that local community participation in management is now regarded as critical to the success of NPs. The absence of partnership with the government in the management of parks represents induced community participation. Local communities have a say in the creation and management processes of NPs but cannot enforce their views on park management. According to Rasmussen et al., (2021) PAs in Argentina, specifically, PNP had seen a surge in co-management strategies by which fringe communities were given access to decision-making which hitherto were denied the fringe communities. Co-management as a principle for national park governance had occurred alongside the advent of multiculturalism in Argentina, a nation whose history was stained by its ideals of European whiteness to the detriment of indigenous people.

Again, respondents strongly agreed (mean = 4.57) that KNP provides employment to local people and that qualified landowners work in managerial positions at the park (mean = 4.01). The respondents

who agreed to the assertion constituted 77.4% and 29.2% respectively of total respondents. The respondents explained further that young men and women in their communities were employed initially as park rangers after the establishment of the park. However, many of them resigned their posts because of frequent and deadly attacks on them by encroachers who shot and killed their colleague rangers. They were quick to add that those resignations were voluntary. The rangers decided to resign from their posts in order to protect their lives and not because they were fired by management. This finding relates to findings by Chan et al. (2009) that employment of local people prevents encroachment on NPs.

Moreover, more than half of the respondents agreed (mean = 4.31) that they were allowed entry into the park to do business. For instance, 58.5% of the respondents indicated that with permission from park authorities, they entered the park to collect seeds for sale. They explained further that traditional rituals such as sacrifices to ancestors for good harvest and protection against epidemics were performed yearly in sacred groves located in the park under the supervision of park security guards to prevent the killing of animals by residents participating in the ritual.

Relationship between Landowners' Perceptions and their Involvement in the Management of the KNP

The relationship between landowners' perceptions about the KNP and their involvement in the management of the KNP was tested using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient because of the following reasons. Firstly, the data were ordinal, secondly, the data had a normal distribution, thirdly, the data was a parametric statistic (inferential); finally, it determined the relationship or association between the two variables. Therefore, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient established the relationship between landowners' perceptions about the KNP and their involvement in the management of the KNP (Table 5).

Table 5: Correlation between Landowners' Perceptions and their Involvement in the Management of the KNP

		Perceptions	Involvement
Perceptions	Pearson Correlation	1	.726*
	Sig. (2-tail)	-	.000
	N	212	212
Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.726*	1
	Sig. (2-tail)	.000	-
	N	212	212

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (2-tail)

The correlation between landowners' perceptions about the KNP and their involvement in the management of the KNP was tested at a significance level of 0.05. From Table 5, the correlation coefficient for perceptions and involvement is 0.726 and the *p*-value for the two-tailed test is 0.000. Thus, there is a strong, positive and significant correlation between perceptions and involvement (r = 0.726; P = 0.000; N = 212).

Hence, the Null Hypothesis (H_1) that: "There is no significant relationship between perceptions of landowners in the KNP-fringe communities and their involvement in the management of the KNP" is rejected. Similar studies

about fringe communities of Machalilla National Park (MNP) in Ecuador had suggested that fringe communities' perceptions of the park were positively correlated to positive attitudes toward involvement in the park management (Ashiagbor et al., 2017). In Benin for instance, participation of fringe communities in the management of the PNP is based on local communities' appreciation of the objectives of the park and that has helped to achieve PNP goals (Vodouhe et al., 2010).

This finding also coincides with the findings of Amuquandoh (2010) and Vodouhe et al., (2010) that participatory management leads to the renewal of the mindset of park-fringe communities and the positive support necessary to save NPs from encroachment. In addition, conflicts erupt between park authorities and fringe communities when the natives perceive parks as projects that serve the interests of outside elites and foreigners (Chan et al., 2009). The involvement of landowners in fringe communities in park management has helped to diffuse such tensions. Consequently, the incorporation of landowners in park-fringe communities in the management of parks has been seen as empowerment of local people. This ensures successful conservation because participatory management leads to positive support for NPs (Acharya et al., 2019; Dei, 2008).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this study, first, respondents disagreed that they were in partnership with the government in the management of the park. According to the landowners, they were employed in management positions on merit. This starkly contrasted the established park management principle of community participation as suggested by Abukari et al. (2018), Dei (2008), and Mclaughlin (2011) that local communities' participation in the management of NPs is critical to the success of such projects. Involvement of fringe communities in park management is a broad decentralisation strategy that enhances efficiency in the management of NPs. In fact, the involvement of fringe communities in the management of parks is a means of satisfying the concept of community empowerment in successful conservation (Abukari et al., 2018; Dei, 2008; Rasmussen et al., 2021).

In the absence of participation, conflicts erupt between park authorities and fringe communities because the communities perceive parks as projects that serve the interests of elites and foreigners (Chan et al., 2009). Hence, landowners' participation in park management remains important to diffuse such tensions (Dei, 2008).

Landowners in the KNP-fringe communities expected good roads, electricity, pipe-borne water and health posts in their communities immediately the park was established but those expectations were yet to be fully realised (Akyeampong, 2011). When fringe communities' expectations of development projects are not met, their attitudes toward the park turn negative (Allendorf, 2007).

The conceptual framework of the study showed factors which influenced landowners' perceptions and their involvement in the management of KNP. For instance, management positions occupied by landowners in the management of the park interact with the effects of KNP on the livelihoods of landowners. In addition, landowners' involvement in the management of KNP which included the provision of facilities such as latrines and wells for park-fringe communities interacted with landowners' expected benefits from the park leading to positive perceptions of the park. Further interaction between communities' expected benefits from the park coincides with the effects of the park on the livelihoods of the local people. Hence, this conceptual framework offered a systematic way to conceptualise important factors which influence perceptions of landowners and their involvement in the management of KNP.

Factors in the conceptual framework were determined based on the literature of related studies in Ghana and other countries (Obeng, 2017). The factors provided the right framework for analysing landowners' perceptions and their involvement in the management of KNP. The framework was useful because KNP authorities could easily address concerns inherent in the factors of the conceptual framework which were central to the success of KNP and for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made for improving landowners' perceptions about the management of KNP and to encourage landowners' participation in the management of the park for its sustainable development.

Firstly, the government should fulfil its promise by providing physical infrastructure in KNP-fringe communities. The government, through its annual budgetary allocation to the Ministries of Forestry, Lands and Natural Resources, Roads and Highways, Water Resources Works and Housing should provide KNP-fringe communities with roads, pipe-borne water, health posts and electricity. KNP is important because of employment creation, revenue generation and ecotourism promotion. Consequently, good roads should be constructed from Ho, the Volta Regional capital, to connect KNP in the Nkwanta North and South Districts which are largely connected by Class Three roads. The provision of these infrastructural facilities would project the image of KNP in the eyes of the landowners and sustain their support for the park.

Secondly, there should be a conscious effort by the Forestry Commission to involve landowners in KNP-fringe communities as partners in the management of the park. Besides, the Local Government Act of 1993, (Act 462) provided for local communities' participation in the planning processes of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). Hence, the involvement of landowners in the processes of planning is crucial if projects are to succeed. The support and commitment of the landowners are vital for the success of the park project. Landowners in KNP-fringe communities should be actively involved in discussions and debates on infrastructure and other developmental projects in the Nkwanta North and South District Assemblies. Landowners in KNP-fringe communities should continuously be recognised by central and local governments as important stakeholders in the management of the park.

Furthermore, priority should be given to qualified landowners in KNP-fringe communities during the recruitment of park staff. The involvement of the landowners will enhance conservation since they would take the steps necessary to protect their source of livelihood. Income earned by these landowners will improve their standard of living. The impact of ecotourism on landowners will be positive provided local participation as partners in the day-to-day management of the park is allowed. Local participation would encourage the development of income-generating activities and improve the incomes and well-being of the landowners (Abukari et al., 2018; Asiedu, 2002).

Finally, there should be regular research to analyse the challenges faced by KNP in managing park resources *vis-a-vis* the interest of landowners in park resources. Landowners impact the ability of parks to meet conservation objectives. Hence, understanding factors underlying perceptions of landowners in KNP-fringe communities about their involvement in the management of the park could help improve the landowners' participation in the management of the KNP. This recommendation has been successfully implemented in Madagascar and Benin respectively to fill a gap in knowledge necessary for sustaining the development of NPs (Ormsby et al., 2005; Vodouhe et al., 2010).

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4 TOURISM CERTIFICATION FOR PROMOTING TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY IN THE VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

This paper examines and ranks sustainable tourism certification concerns raised by managers of the pilot certified facilities in Zimbabwe. In the broader context, these concerns could be the reasons for the low uptake of these schemes in the country and on the continent. An email questionnaire with a three-item Likert scale and follow-up telephone interviews with 13 pilot test eco-certified facilities in the country were undertaken to collect the data. The results were thematically analysed. A ranked analysis of the concerns revealed a low uptake level of the scheme and the exclusion of guests in the certification process was the most important concern. Thirteen concerns were raised to corroborate previously raised concerns. It is recommended that there should be concerted efforts towards addressing the issue of low adoption levels of this tool both at the country and continental levels.

Keywords: certification, eco-certification, ecolabelling, development, sustainable tourism

INTRODUCTION

The assurance and provision of quality products and services are at the centre of every tourism business (Park & Joeng, 2019). Today, this dimension is increasingly taking a sustainable and climate-smart angle following numerous calls by the United Nations World Tourism Organisations (UNWTO) to ensure that all tourism and hospitality operations are sustainably undertaken (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005). Sustainable Tourism Certification (STC), also referred to as eco-rating or eco-certification is one of the key tools for ensuring sustainability in tourism operations in many countries today. However, of late, this tool has become highly controversial perhaps due to the numerous challenges encountered during its implementation. These challenges have stirred several critical debates and issues on its implementation and its effectiveness as a sustainable tourism development tool (Bendell & Font, 2004). These issues and challenges could also be the reasons for the low uptake of these schemes, especially in Africa, with less than 9 out of the 54 countries having adopted eco-certification (Spenceley, 2018).

Since these schemes are implemented in different contexts, it is critical to discuss these schemes in the contexts in which they are implemented in order to develop tailor-made and home-grown strategies and solutions for them. Ever since the pilot certification in Zimbabwe in 2016, no new tourism organisation has been certified. Others failed to get recertified despite the drive by the authorities to encourage sustainable tourism development in Zimbabwe. This paper, therefore, discusses the concerns raised during the piloting of a sustainable tourism certified programme in facilities in Zimbabwe. A ranking of the concerns was undertaken so that the resolutions to these concerns could also be undertaken in order of priority.

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Eco-certification Efforts in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the Government's documented efforts to eco-certify tourism operations started in October 2014 through the ZTA-UK tourism program with Green Tourism UK, a UK-based Company which specialises in Green Tourism Certification programmes. Green Tourism UK is a non-profit organisation established in 1997 whose mission is to encourage and enable people to make sustainable choices that reduce their impact on the planet. It started in Scotland, and they have grown to over 2,000 members across the UK, Ireland, Italy, Canada and Zimbabwe, making it the world's largest sustainable certification program. It has had over 20 years of caring for people, places and the planet in general (ILO, 2010).

The country's green certification initiative was in line with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)`s drive towards sustainable development. The principal elements on which the eco-certification system was based included energy efficiency (heating and lighting), biodiversity and nature conservation, community involvement, procurement, waste management, water conservation and many more aspects. The first Green Tourism Awards Ceremony in Zimbabwe was held in Victoria Falls on the 2nd of March in 2016 with the accreditation of 13 facilities (7 lodges, 2 hotels and 4 camps). The Global Tourism Certification Program (GTCP) criteria were adopted and adapted to take account of the local social, environmental and economic situation in the country. These facilities were only in Matebeleland North and more specifically in the Victoria Falls Hwange area. Out of these facilities, one facility was awarded a Gold label, seven got bronze and five got Silver awards. Each of the facilities was issued with a certificate, logo and plaque for use in their marketing activities and on their websites. The facilities were also expected to enjoy full Green Tourism UK Membership benefits and promotion. In coming up with the ZTA-UK Green Certification Programme, several workshops involving tourism operators and other key stakeholders were held.

Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) established minimum green tourism standards using the Green Tourism UK concept, to help operators reduce operational costs, support the local economy and community, enhance guests' experiences, help combat climate change and meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Green Tourism UK is now working in partnership with other local partners, Environment Africa and a locally-based Green Tourism Advisor to adapt their global standards for tourism to Zimbabwe and the wider KAZA region. These included resource efficiency, local purchasing, waste reduction, water and energy conservation, support for community projects, avoiding the use of damaging chemicals, staff training and welfare and the conservation of natural and cultural assets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ecolabelling and Eco-certification in the Tourism Industry

Ecolabelling and eco-certification in the tourism industry refer to the voluntary process and practice of awarding an identifiable logo or certificate to any tourism organisation for achieving a certain level of pre-discussed and agreed standards of sustainable tourism development over a set period of time (Cerqua, 2018). The awarded logos or certificates demonstrate the environmental credentials of any organisation to other industry operators and customers. It is therefore a self-regulatory sustainable development tool intended to encourage tourism organisations to conduct their businesses in environmentally friendly and sustainable ways (Mechiret, 2011). For such schemes, tourism organisations voluntarily participate with the expectation that some benefits will accrue to them as

a result of adopting such practices and paraphernalia. If an organisation fails to meet its benchmarked and agreed standards, the sanction is typically a withdrawal of the right to use the logo and the consequent loss of any advantage that it confers (Jarvis, Weelen, & Simcock, 2010).

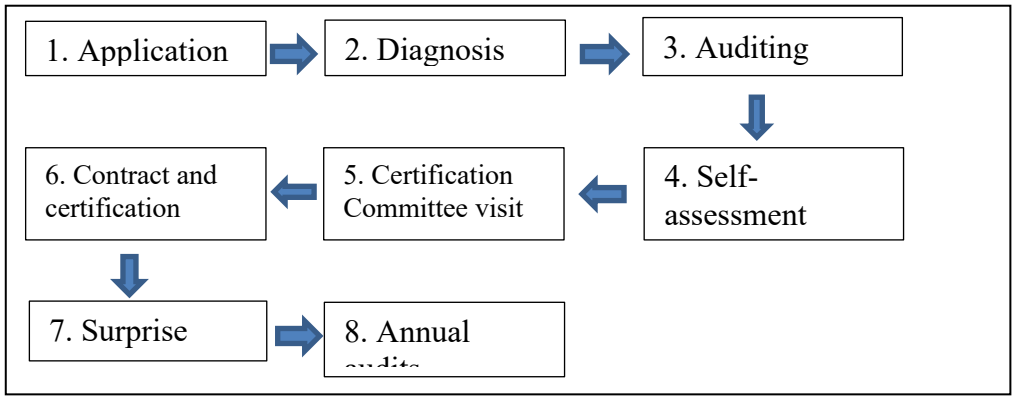


Figure 1: The General Sustainable Eco-certification Process

Source: Author's Compilation

Overall, STC can be described as the process of assuring modern day hospitality operators and consumers that the assessed company has met a certain set of minimum standards. Generally, eco-certification follows an eight-step process (Figure 1). These are application, diagnosis, auditing, contract and certification, certification committee visit, self-assessment report, surprise visits and annual audits. The origins of certification can be traced to the manufacturing industry, where there are greater, direct and measurable environmental impacts, as well as clearer operating systems and larger organisations (Tribe, Font, Griffiths, Vickery & Yale 2000).

The Adoption Levels of Eco-Rating Schemes Worldwide

Today, there are more than 160 eco-labels for tourism and hospitality establishments worldwide (Bocker, 2021). Many of these were developed in the mid-eighties and some of them were mainly developed in the nineties (Tribe, Font, Griffiths, Vickery, & Yale, 2000). In the United Kingdom alone, voluntary tourism certification schemes have developed largely within the hospitality sector, mostly due to these organisations being more easily defined and therefore standardised (Bendell & Font, 2004). Some of the larger certification schemes worldwide include Green Globe 21, a global benchmarking and certification programme for travel and tourism; Green Key, an international eco-label for leisure that operates in more than sixteen countries; and the Certificate for Sustainable Tourism, a programme to encourage environmental practice in hotels in Costa Rica. Additional schemes include Eco-tourism Kenya, Ecotourism Australia and many more. Most of the certification schemes vary in application, region, complexity, price and more. However, most include to a greater extent a focus on energy, water, waste, community engagement, heritage and biodiversity conservation, sustainable procurement, accountability and human resource practices, architecture and design. However, some incorporate all these aspects. A study by International Tourism Partnership (2016) revealed that out of 130,000 hotels studied, only 6.2% of them were green certified.

The Expected Benefits of Eco-Certification as a Sustainable Tourism Development Tool

The expected benefits of eco-rating schemes

can be viewed from four perspectives, namely the operator, the destination, the tourist and the host community as summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: A Summary of the Perceived Benefits of Tourism Eco-Certification Schemes

Operator benefits	**Tourist destination benefits**	**Visitor/tourist benefits**	**Host community benefits**
Flexibility	Control, evaluation and standardisation of sustainable environmental practices	Cost effective in the long run	More physical, social and economic benefits and less negative physical social and economic impacts
Feeling of ownership of the scheme	Improved destination image	Safe activity environment	Safe activity environment
Unlimited scope	Destination marketing tool	Education	Hosts learn new ways of doing things
Proceed at an agreed pace	Controlled changes to the destination	Memorable experiences	Controlled changes to the destination
Room for more rapid changes and innovation	More innovative products and services	More innovative products and services	More innovative products and services
Cost-saving	More expenditure by visitors	More products and services at the same price	More expenditure by tourists

At the operator level, existing literature attest to the fact that several benefits have accrued to tourism organisations that have adopted and implemented these green schemes. According to Spenceley and Bien (2018), the tourism industry uses certification and the logo awarded to the green practising company as 'trademarks' to communicate the environmental credentials of a company. The hope is that customers will develop positive attitudes towards their products or services. The image enhancement effect of eco-rating schemes is demonstrated in several writings from the early 2000s to today, notably by Sasidharani, Sikaraya and Kerstetter (2002), Klein, and Rogers (2018) and Spenceley and Bien (2018).

STC is expected to curb tourism's negative environmental impacts on the natural resource base of tourism destinations by encouraging tourism enterprises to attain high environmental standards (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005). These schemes educate tourists on the impacts of their actions and decisions, thereby prompting them to act in favour of the environment through their purchasing decisions (UNWTO, 2015). Also, Klein and Dodds (2017) noted that these schemes also develop standards for environmentally friendly tourism products and services. Eco-certification schemes such as Green Globe 21 also lead to improved environmental performance in the travel and tourism industry. Graci

and Dodds (2008) noted that these schemes also aid in fulfilling and practising sustainable tourism. UNEP and UNWTO, certification programmes can possibly help to promote and ensure environmental compliance in less economically developed countries, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America where tourism is expanding rapidly but government regulations may be weak (UNEP, 2005). However, a lot of debate has taken place over the potential and merits of certification as a tool for attaining these principles (Mbaiwa, 2011).

With eco-rating schemes, the contribution of tourism activities to sustainable environmental, and socio-economic development of host societies will be more evident, more measurable and more accountable (Jarvis, Weelen & Simcock, 2010). Furthermore, the level of awareness on sustainability issues will be stronger in the host society if the greater majority of tourism organisations at the destinations are certified. The widespread use of ecolabels and certification systems in the tourism industry helps to generate increased environmental awareness among both tourists and host societies and could result in more caring attitudes with respect to the natural and built environments (Cerqua, 2018). Eco-certification enables governments to adopt a flexible approach to monitoring tourism operations, permitting organisations to proceed at a pace they feel most comfortable with while encouraging them to develop innovative approaches to environmental and socio-cultural improvements (Haliouiand & Schmidt, 2016).

The other potential is giving tourism companies greater scope for making environmental and social improvements by exploiting opportunities specific to their individual circumstances, rather than governments having to control and inspect companies in order to check their compliance with general, industry-wide regulations (Jarvis, Weelen, & Simcock, 2010). Eco-certification also allows part of the costs of implementing and monitoring environmental protection measures to be transferred to the industry itself, thereby reducing the financial burden of regulation on the taxpayer (Haliouiand & Schmidt, 2016). National programmes of tourism certification can also enhance the recognition of tourism in the country, national competitiveness and image enhancement in international markets. The potential adoption of a privately run industry certification by public land management agencies illustrates that certification programmes can be used as instruments of government policy as well as mechanisms for consumer choice (Bendell & Font, 2004). Eco-rating and eco-certification can also enable tourism businesses to market their products more effective and improve their public images among consumers, business partners and the host communities. At the same time, engaging in voluntary certification can help companies to signal their specific commitment to environmental, social and even economic improvements, which may in turn help to defer the need for future direct regulation by governments (Klein, Dodds, & Rogers, 2018).

Pursuing sound environmental management strategies prompted by eco-certification can generate substantial cost savings for a company. Chan (2008) reported that the installation of an Energy Management System (EMS) provides 20-45% energy savings. In a guestroom, automatically turning the high-velocity air conditioning, lighting and other devices down or off in the absence of a guest, and also adjusting settings in unsold rooms which would be vacant by default. Also, participation in certification programmes can provide better access to modern techniques, technology and know-how (Hu, 2012). In addition, effective environmental management can help to protect the environmental and cultural assets upon which the tourism industry depends for its continued prosperity. All these advantages of the certification system can benefit consumers by providing them with more information and guidance

for their decisions on travel choices, as well as assurances for product and service quality (Cerqua, 2018). Participation in eco-certification can also help tourism organisations gain recognition from other assessing bodies.

In general, green certification programmes have been recognised as instruments or mechanisms for achieving sustainable tourism (Suratman & Hamzah, 2008). The major aim of green certification which is to ensure environmental and social sustainability in tourism and tourism-related industries has assisted in controlling the destruction of natural resources, especially in host destinations like resort towns like Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe (ZTA, 2016). The role and potential of certification should be extended as it does not only benefit the tourism industry, but also the government, host communities and tourists.

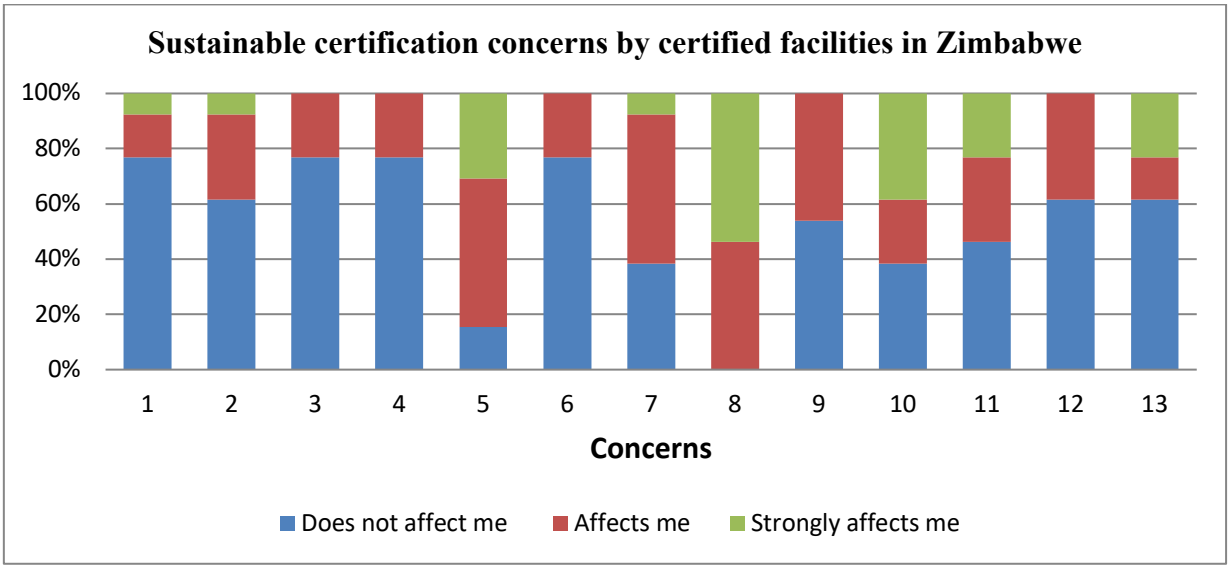
METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research design was adopted for the study. A questionnaire with a three-item Likert scale was developed to collect data on the extent to which existing concerns gleaned from existing literature bothered the respondents and then follow up telephone interviews were undertaken to collect further information. The questions were on uptake of eco-certification, guest involvement, guest experience, return on investment, voluntary, incentives for certification, certification period, the interest of destination marketing organisations and marketing tools in relation to eco-certification.

A questionnaire with a three-item Likert scale was used in order to rank the concerns of facility operators regarding eco-certification. The questionnaires were e-mailed to the 13 respondents selected for the pilot test by the Green Tourism UK team and the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) in 2016. The 13 facilities accredited for the Green Tourism UK certification were selected for the study in order to get their concerns after five years of accreditation during which some had lost the certification and no new tourism facilities had been certified from 2016 to 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant travel restrictions necessitated the collection of data through telephone interviews and email questionnaires. All the selected study units were located in and around the Victoria Falls area which is the country's prime tourist destination. The study respondents were the owners, General Managers or Operations Managers of the selected facilities. The responses collected were thematically analysed along the lines of the concerns gleaned from existing literature. No meaningful statistical analysis could be carried out since the data was mainly categorical and qualitative.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The managers of the facilities were experienced and had worked for the tourism facilities for more than three years. The tourism facilities are among the hotels, lodges and safari registered with the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority. The concerns that were gleaned from existing literature and for which managers and owners of certified establishments indicated the extent to which they were concerned, are summarised in Figure 2. These are discussed in more detail in this section.



Key to the concerns		
1. Its just a marketing tool	4. No guarantee of competitive advantage	7. Compromises guest experiences
2. Inadequate green tourist demand	5. No guest consultation	8. Low uptake of scheme
3. Wide array of certification programme	6. ZTA conflict of interest	9. Return on ivestment long term
10. Fact that its voluntary	13. No home grown certification	
11. No other incentive for certification		
12. Re-certification (2 yrs) too short		

Figure 2: Summary of the Concerns Raised by Certified Facilities in Zimbabwe

STC as a Marketing Tool

It was observed that 77% of the respondents were not bothered by the fact that the green certification programme for the country could have been adopted as a destination marketing tool by the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA). A manager had this to say on this matter;

> *When these programmes were initially developed elsewhere, especially in the UK and the USA, the main goal was to ensure that tourism organisations operate sustainably and that they provide climate-smart products and services. For Africa, the continent seems to have taken a 'me too' and marketing approach to the whole idea but this is not currently a problem and should actually be commended.*

Another respondent had this to say on this matter;

> *The ZTA embarked on this certification programme as an international advertising campaign and also to meet its strategic issue of Zimbabwe attaining a green destination status by 2025. However, this was not worrying us.*

This comment concurs with observations by Klein et al. (2018) who discovered that the Blue Flag certification system was perceived more as a tourism promotional tool rather than an environmental management or protection tool in the Great Lakes region. This finding is contrary to findings by Haliouiand & Schmdt (2016) who found out that the marketing benefits of the Tunisian ecolabel were negligible.

Financing of the STC Programme

All the respondents and participants in the certification programme were grateful that they were not asked to directly pay anything for the certification, except for the accommodation and meal expenses of the certifying team. Therefore, only indirect expenses related to the implementation of sustainable practices were incurred by the organisations. For these costs,

38% of the respondents wondered if there was an adequate clientele base for self-sustenance of STC activities for tourism organisations in Africa since it was based on the assumption that there is demand for green labels.

These organisations, therefore, expected some form of assurance from the certifying team in this regard. The remainder of the respondents (62%), viewed the costs as the opportunity cost of the enhanced image and competitive advantage the organisations expected to enjoy in future. Existing literature on the costs of certification schemes indicates that these depend on the developer and owner of the certifying scheme. As noted by Bendell and Font (2004) certification schemes can be developed by the government, private organisations and NGOs. The costs, therefore, vary accordingly and there is no standard as noted by Petrevska and Deleva (2014). In relation to the adequacy of the clientele base, Karlson and Dolnicar (2016) in their study of eco-certification for Iceland discovered that eco-labelling did not have a big impact on general tourist demand and that only a niche market influenced by eco-labelling existed. This market could hardly sustain the expenses of certification. This market needs to be grown.

A Wide Array of Certification Schemes

Further, 77% of the respondents were not worried about the existence of a wide array of certification schemes worldwide. One of the respondents in the remaining 23% who were bothered posed a barrage of questions to the researcher as follows;

> *Who should set standards for STC programmes? Which STC programmes are suitable for Zimbabwe and Africa? Who sets the standards? Whose standards and to what levels should these standards be pursued by tourism organisations in the country? What criteria should be used to select STC programmes for the country and the continent? As it is now, I have heard that there is a Global Sustainable Tourism Certification and should the continent not formulate its own African Tourism Certification programme? If this were to be developed, to what extent would there be unilateral or mutual recognition of such a continental certification scheme? What are the possibilities that such a scheme will also be adopted by countries in the global North?*

These questions are pertinent and need urgent attention to enhance the adoption levels of certification programmes in the country and the continent. Several authors have raised the issue of diversity of certification schemes and the lack of a standard certifying scheme. As aptly captured by Buckley (2002:76);

> *Ecolabels in tourism are common but are uncoordinated. They can be established by individual companies, industry associations, voluntary organisations and government agencies. They also range in scale from single villages to worldwide, from single activities to entire destinations; and they include voluntary, codes, awards, accreditation and certification schemes. (Buckley, 2002:76).*

This, therefore, explains why, in total there are over 150 STC programmes worldwide today (Kraus, 2016; Jarvis, Weelen, & Simcock 2010).

Guarantee that Certified Facilities Would Perform Better than Non-Certified Faculties

Again, 77 % of the respondents were not worried about whether there was a guarantee or not

that an environmentally certified facility would perform better than those without certification, as it was obviously possible that some uncertified facilities could actually perform better than them. Respondents were quite aware that there were some organisations which did not want to be certified for one reason or another. In this regard, some tourism organisations may not want to pursue certification where a national tourism organisation is involved and where the organisation feels that the certification is being undertaken to gain political mileage or as a destination marketing tool. In relation to the existing literature, Graci and Dodds (2008), noted that there were very limited studies to support the business case for eco-certification and implementation of friendly environmental practices by hotels. Therefore, through their study of Canadian hotels, they provided numerous cases demonstrating that going green was necessary for an economically viable and efficiently run hotel.

Lack of Guest Consultation in the STC Processes

This was the second most significant concern of managers and owners of certified facilities in the country as 85% of the respondents indicated that it bothered them. Existing literature concurs with this finding. As an example, Karlson and Dolnicar (2016) note that in most STC programmes to date, the most important actor in tourism, the tourist, is not consulted**.** Most researchers' opinion is that in the development of STC programmes, the tourist must be involved at all levels. This is because some of the STC recommendations affect them. They are also expected to implement some of the practices such as linen reuse programmes (Bruns-Smith et al., 2015). Therefore, the tourist is an idealist or active supporter of sustainability principles. They therefore should be given a chance to test all experiences against sustainability issues and voice their opinions – a practice that has hardly been adopted so far. Manaktola (2010) notes that little has been done to inform tourists about the existence of certification programmes, their content and their importance and yet the Mohonk Agreement on Global Certification clearly states that the development of a certification scheme should be a participatory, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral process (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2010).

In a study of SCT programmes in Greece and the USA, Choi, Parsa, Sigala, and Putrevu (2009) recommended that tourists should be considered the most important stakeholders and should participate in these programmes because to date, most tourists do not know what eco-certification is. The evidence indicates that many of these ecolabelling programmes have not been very effective in publicising their programmes to consumers. Most STCPs are invisible to the guest at whom such programmes are targeted. Even if the efforts at promoting tourism eco-labelling were considerable, there is a major weakness – the continuing lack of consumer recognition, which reduces the incentive for tourism companies to become involved in such schemes and thus leads to another problem of lacklustre corporate participation as noted earlier by Fairweather et al., (2005).

Possible Conflict of Interest by the ZTA

It was observed that 77% of the certified facilities had no problem with the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority taking a leading role in the country's green certification programme. However, they highlighted the need to co-opt the Environmental Management Authority (EMA), the Hospitality Association of Zimbabwe (HAZ), the Tourism Business Council of Zimbabwe (TBCZ) and local government administrative councils. The remaining 23% indicated that they would rather engage a recognised and credible private player to do the certification without the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority being involved. They felt that the Zimbabwe Tourism

Authority was merely supposed to coordinate the activities of green certification rather than conducting the certification by itself. A perusal of existing literature from the year 2000 to date revealed that the question of who should play the leading role in the sustainable certification of tourism organisations has received very limited attention.

Effect on Guest Experiences

A significant number of respondents (62%) were concerned that some sustainability criteria for certification such as linen change, in-room waste separation and many more had the potential to compromise guest experiences and yet guests were not being consulted. The 38% who were not bothered believed that their guests would finally benefit from the hotels' endeavours to green their operations. In a study by Ratner and Losifov (2017) on the perspectives of Russians on ecohotel services in 2017, the majority of respondents showed interest in eco-hotel services but rather preferred to stay there if the price and the overall quality of their stay remained the same (Ratner & Losifov, 2017).

Low-Level Uptake of the Country's Sustainable Certification Programme

The low level of participation in SCPs by tourism businesses baffled all the respondents and it was the most significant concern. Respondents wondered why many tourism organisations in the country and the continent were not eco-certified. In relation to the existing literature, Spenceley (2016), noted that only a very small proportion of all hotels in Africa were certified (less than 3.%) and that these were patchily distributed across the continent. She attributed the low uptake to several factors including the proliferation of ecolabels, their geographically and topically specialised character, the low profile of most funding and certification bodies and all the concerns raised in this paper. This problem was not peculiar to Africa but also noticeable on a world scale. Ratner and Losifov (2017) also noted that the environmental labelling of hotels and other accommodation facilities is not yet widespread. Baltescu (2017) in his studies on uptake levels in Romania, noted that the reduced number of eco-certified accommodation units in the country was an element which showed, on the one hand, the reluctance of owners to introduce environmental management practices and specific green marketing tools. On the other hand, the lack of tourists' interest to consume green accommodation services.

Return on Investment and other Certification Incentives

More than half (54%) of the respondents wondered whether there was an adequate return on investment after certification. Those who raised this concern were mostly worried that the benefits of eco-certification were quite imperceptible. Aside from the accolades, certificates and other green-related paraphernalia, there were no other significant benefits to entice other organisations to be certified. The organisations wanted concrete and tangible evidence from Africa to prove these benefits. Aside from these criticisms (46%) of the respondents were content with the expected benefits of certification. They cited other advantages like businesses becoming more environmental-conscious, protecting sensitive environmental areas, reducing water usage and improving waste management. Their expressions are supported by Cerqua (2018) in a study in West England where it was discovered that the award of a Blue Flag only positively affected the flow of only domestic tourists.

Absence of a Homegrown Certification Scheme and the Voluntary Nature of the Scheme

Also, 62% of the respondents were in support of a home-grown sustainable eco-certification

programme. The respondents suggested that the government makes the certification a compulsory statutory requirement for every tourism organisation in the country. In this case, the green certification criteria could be incorporated into the current ZTA Statutory Instrument 128 of 2005 for standards and grading. The respondents indicated that this document urgently needed review as it had outlived its usefulness (16 years) and was currently one of the oldest standards and grading instruments in the SADC region.

Re-certification Period

It was also noted that 62% of the respondents were satisfied with the two-year re-certification term proposed by the ZTA. The remaining 38% advocated for an annual re-certification to keep track of changing trends in the industry and also to avoid costly lapses in the greening of their operations. Their sentiments are also echoed by Nowakowsk (2012) in his studies of Costa Rica where hotel owners and managers complained of failure by the responsible authorities to frequently audit hotels to verify compliance. Overall, Table 2 summarises the concerns raised by managers and owners of certified facilities in Zimbabwe, ranked in order of their significance.

These ranked concerns in Table 2 indicate how these concerns should be addressed in order of priority to enhance participation in green certification by tourism establishments in the country. In general, each concern raised clearly indicates what needs to be done to enhance the adoption of sustainable certification programmes by tourism businesses.

Table 2: Ranked Concerns on Sustainable Eco-certification in Zimbabwe

Certification concern	Rank
Low uptake of scheme	1
No guest consultation	2
Compromises guest experiences	3
Imperceptible return on investment	4
That it is voluntary	5
No other incentive for certification	6
Re-certification period (2 years)	7
No home grown certification	8
Inadequate green tourist demand	9
Wide array of certification programmes	10
No guarantee of competitive advantage	10
ZTA conflict of interest	10
It is just a marketing tool	13

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that sustainable tourism certification programmes in Zimbabwe, Africa and the world at large are affected by a number

of concerns as reviewed by the operators in Victoria Falls. Thirteen concerns were raised and were in corroboration with previously raised concerns by other authors which are; low uptake of the scheme, no guest consultation, compromises guest experiences, imperceptible return on investment, that it's voluntary, no other incentive for certification, re-certification period, ZTA conflict of interest and it is just a marketing tool. The most significant concern ranked number one was the low uptake of the scheme by tourism and hospitality operators whilst the least concern was that the STC as just a marketing tool.

The paper recommends an all stakeholder inclusive approach to encourage STC in the hospitality industry and to avoid the imposition of the ecolabels by the authorities. The government can offer incentives to industry players that adopt STC which can include reduced taxes levies and annual registration fees. There is a need to develop STC locally in Africa that reflects developments in the tourism and hospitality industry on the continent instead of implanting western models that are not compatible with the local business environment. The study considered 13 tourism facilities that were certified in Victoria by Green Tourism UK, generalising the result to the whole nation and continent at large might be a challenge since the facilities were from one resort town and only certified by one organisation. In future, there is a need to investigate many tourism facilities from other towns and regions outside Zimbabwe against a number of certifying organisations and take into account the best model of STC programmes that can be developed for African countries.

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5 EFFECTS OF RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION: A GROUNDED THEORY

Faithfull Gonzo

Abstract

Tourism has been accredited as a significant sector by the Namibian government because it is one of the highest income earners and ranks third after mining and agriculture. This research paper explores the key determinants of poverty in the Northern region of Namibia (Kunene and Zambezi) and the effects of rural tourism development on poverty alleviation. The research adopted grounded theory and phenomenological approaches and data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with various tourism stakeholders in the two regions. The research findings reveal the importance of all stakeholders in identifying the causes of poverty in each region/constituency before implementing poverty alleviation strategies. This study, therefore, concludes that providing the same tourism strategies to different geographical locations does not work, because some communities are extremely deprived. This research, therefore, recommends a flexible framework which takes a pragmatic approach to move away from the "one size fits all" approach.

Keywords: rural tourism development, poverty alleviation, pro-poor tourism, Namibia, grounded theory.

INTRODUCTION

Namibia has been categorised as an upper-middle income country and it also has vast tourism products. The tourism industry was declared a priority sector due to its potential to generate employment, reduce poverty and contribute to economic growth (Jenkins, 2000). In 2019, Namibia's tourism sector contributed 10.3% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and created 114,600 jobs (WTTC, 2020). The employment numbers are expected to rise to 186,000 jobs in 2025 (WTTC, 2015). Croes and Vanegas (2008) emphasised that tourism has the potential to alleviate poverty hence it should have a direct or indirect influence on the lives of the local people.

Nearly 75% of the world's population live in rural areas (Chaudhry & Gupta, 2010; Holland et al., 2003). More than half (57%) of Namibians live in rural areas (Population and Housing Census, 2011). Namibia's poverty rates are highest in the rural areas (37%) compared to urban areas (15%) and all the poorest regions are in the northern parts of Namibia. (Namibia Planning Commission [NPC], 2015). Although poverty in Namibia as a whole has been decreasing [from 28.7% in 2010 to 17.4% in 2016] (World Bank, 2020). Northern regions such as Kavango, Oshikoto, Zambezi, Kunene and Ohangwena are the poorest with more than one-third of the population being classified as poor (Republic of Namibia, 2015).

This research paper focuses on the two Northern regions in Namibia (Kunene and Zambezi). These two regions have world-renowned tourism resources such as Etosha National Park, yet the two regions have been classified as the poorest regions in the country. Poverty rates in the studied regions are above the national poverty rate (26,9%) whilst the Zambezi region had the highest increment in the poverty rate of 7.2% (Republic of Namibia, 2016). These poverty rates are estimated to increase from 17.4% in 2016 to 18.9% in 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2020a). Considering the fact that Namibia is a small country with a population

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estimated at 2.4 million (NSA, 2018) these figures indicate that poverty is prevalent in the country.

In Namibia, there is limited, research on the effects of rural tourism development on poverty alleviation. Various studies have focused on the impact of tourism development on economic growth (Bilen et al., 2017; Croes & Vanegas, 2008; Ekanayake & Long, 2012; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2013; Saayman et al., 2012). However, these studies did not utilise two regions to investigate the effects of rural tourism development on poverty alleviation. Although rural tourism development has been promoted by many developing countries to encourage economic growth, there is a dearth of research that focuses on rural tourism development. This research paper, therefore, fills this gap by focusing on rural tourism development. The study aims to establish whether rural tourism development in Namibia alleviates poverty in the Northern region of Namibia where poverty rates are extremely higher than in the rest of the country.

The definition of poverty has also been debated by various researchers (Alcock, 2006; Croes, 2014; McCulloch et al., 2001; Giampiccoli et al., 2015; Holden, 2013; Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). Mitchell and Ashley (2010) state that it is important to first understand who the poor are before analysing the effects of tourism on the poor and poverty alleviation. Pleumarom (2012) states that it is imperative for any tourism research to establish the causes of poverty as a precondition in any tourism research. There is also limited research that explores the views/voices of poor people directly (Holden et al., 2011; Pleumarom, 2012; Schiller, 2008; Stronza, 2008). In Namibia, various research has been conducted on poverty alleviation, however, most of the research focused on policymaking (Janis, 2011; Kavita & Saarinen, 2016:79). Other researchers (Muchapondwa & Stage, 2013; Snyman, 2012; Lapeyre, 2010; Nicanor, 2001; Novelli & Hellwig, 2011) exclude the views of the local people and have not explored the causes of poverty specifically in two different regions as is the case in this research.

Therefore, the uniqueness of this research is that it utilises the people's views/voices to develop a framework that will enable rural tourism development to alleviate poverty. It is one of the first attempts to develop a framework that focuses on the "how" than "what" the stakeholders should be doing to reduce poverty. Hence, the developed framework will be used to provide recommendations on the strategies that alleviate poverty in the northern region of Namibia.

The study provides practical and theoretical contributions to the body of knowledge. Firstly, it adopts two methodological approaches, phenomenological approach, and grounded theory, to explore the opinions and experiences of various stakeholders. Secondly, from a practical standpoint, the research developed a conceptual framework that amalgamates rural tourism development, causes of poverty and poverty alleviation. In Namibia, there is a lack of research seeking to develop a conceptual framework linking rural tourism development, causes of poverty and poverty alleviation based on the views of the research participants. It is expected that the framework will influence governments to review their policies and strategies for poverty alleviation. It will also allow communication throughout the whole process of rural tourism development and encourage the active participation of all tourism stakeholders.

Instead of developing countries such as Namibia emphasising economic growth to alleviate poverty, there is a need for an adaptable approach to addressing the causes of poverty and this requires the involvement of all stakeholders in decision making. Based on the above analysis, the research question that ought to be addressed is: *Does rural tourism development alleviate poverty in the northern region of Namibia?*

The research paper provides a review of literature on the concept of poverty, the causes of poverty and the effects of tourism on the poor. An outline of the research methods adopted in this research will be presented in the subsequent section and the discussion of results will be presented after. This study concludes that rural tourism development in Namibia has the potential to alleviate poverty, however, the participants have contradicting views as to who should be considered as poor; this has influenced other community members (who should not be viewed as poor) to benefit from rural tourism initiatives. To implement strategies that effectively alleviate poverty in the studied regions, the determinants of poverty must be addressed in the various communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism has the potential to significantly alleviate poverty in rural areas and most developing countries rely on tourism for the growth of their economies (Croes & Vanegas, 2008; Manzoor et al., 2019; Spenceley & Meyer, 2012). Tourism ranks first in many developing countries, yet poverty remains a critical issue that needs to be seriously addressed. Although poverty is an international subject that has attracted a lot of attention from researchers, nevertheless, partial attention has been provided to the causes of poverty and the approaches on how to determine it (Pleumarom, 2012).

Countries define poverty differently therefore, providing dependable contrasts among countries can be impossible (World Bank, 2022). It is therefore important to identify and understand who should be regarded as poor first before analysing the effects of tourism on the poor and poverty alleviation. It is also imperative that the poverty concept and definition is theoretically robust and suitable to the society in which it is being applied. Croes (2014) defines poverty defines as a lack of basic needs such as hunger, lack of shelter and medical facilities whilst the world bank (2000, p.1) described it as "a situation where an individual lacks command over commodities that are deemed essential to realise a reasonable standard of living". Furthermore, Alcock (2006) classifies poverty into two kinds; absolute poverty where an individual's basic needs (such as food, shelter and clothes) are not included, and relative poverty where the person is regarded as poor when he/she is in an undoubtedly disadvantaged situation (financially or socially) compared to other people in the same community. Consequently, poverty can be viewed as a prescriptive concept that demonstrates an objectionable situation where individuals become disadvantaged and disregarded.

Giampiccoli et al. (2015) mention that poverty is related to inequality and the dispersal of income between households is also becoming more unequal compared to decades ago. The definition of inequality has also been disputed and Todaro and Smith, (2011, p.208) defined it as "an unfair distribution of income across a country which is globally measured by the Gini coefficient that varies from 0 (absolute inequality) to 1 (high degree of inequality) and by the income shares percentile of households". Research on the relationship between growth, inequality and poverty showed that poverty and inequality have diverse characteristics in income distribution, nonetheless, inequality influences growth through poverty (Marrero & Serven, 2018).

Poverty in Namibia is related to inequality as the wealthiest who constitute 10% of the population, own more than half of the economy (UNDP, 2016). Barely 9.1% of the population in Namibia are categorised as middle class and the country is regarded as one of the most unequal countries in the world with 19.7% of the population living on less than US$1.90 per day in 2015 whilst 42.9% live below the US$3.10 per day poverty line (World Bank, 2015; World Bank, 2020b). Although poverty rates in Namibia reduced to

17.4% in 2016, this number increased to 18.9% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2020a).

The sources of poverty differ from country to country (Suntikul et al., 2009) and from a Sub-Saharan African perspective, Obadan (1997) provided a wide-ranging list of the determinants of poverty. The list includes environmental degradation, lack of employment opportunities and lack of physical assets like land and capital. Jauch (2012) points out that poverty in Namibia is more prevalent in rural areas, for example in 2006 the average household income for rural areas was N$6,139 whilst in urban areas it was N$17,898 per year This clearly indicates the existence of regional inequalities. The impact of tourism has been critically debated among researchers and numerous methods have been used to establish whether tourism development has any impact on poverty alleviation. To examine the role of tourism on poverty alleviation and its impact on the livelihoods of communities, the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) was used in a number of studies including that of Ming Su et al. (2019) where SLA was adopted in a study on tea tourism. Laeis and Lemke (2016) also utilised the same approach and confirmed that SLA enables a suitable analysis of the interaction of various stakeholders in tourism.

Luvanga and Shitundu (2003) also adopted SLA in researching the contribution of tourism to poverty alleviation and indicated that tourism generates opportunities for local people and alleviates poverty if there are strong linkages at the national and local levels. Whilst, Lapeyre (2011) examined the contribution of community-based tourism businesses to poverty alleviation in Namibia utilising the same approach, it was found out that the tourism income received encouraged linkages within the area. However, Mutana et al. (2013) contend that for poverty alleviation to be attained, the poor need to be supported so that they are able to manage tourism businesses and create linkages with tourism initiatives.

For SLA to be effectively implemented, it is important to include the local people in decision making and this could be achieved through delegating tourism rights to the community, offering government incentives or ensuring that planning by private entrepreneurs is responsive to local needs (Ashley et al., 2000). The Pro-Poor Tourism approach (PPT) has also been adopted by the tourism sector to study the benefits it provides to the local communities and to reduce the impacts of poverty. Nicanor (2001) explored the effectiveness of the PPT strategies of (NACOBTA) in Namibia and concluded that the poor tend to benefit from tourism in the short term (in terms of income), but livelihood impacts are difficult to quantify since the poor, donors and NGOs do not pay much attention to them.

In Botswana, Manwa and Manwa (2014) studied the opinions of stakeholders on the opportunities unlocked for the poor through the opening up of forest reserves. The researchers analysed the prospects of tourism for poverty alleviation using the PPT approach. The research concluded that opening up the forest reserves will provide both short and medium-term benefits, however, to guarantee sustainability there is a need for continuous enhancement of tourism strategies. Correspondingly, Truong et al. (2014) researched tourism and poverty alleviation using the PPT approach and concluded that poor people's views must be valued so that the approach to alleviating poverty can be successful. Furthermore, PPT should be people-centred, and encourage local participation and bottom-up enterprises for it to benefit low-income groups (Truong et al., 2014; Phommavong, 2011).

Conversely, Halim (2014) utilised the Pro-Poor Value Chain Analysis (VCA) to study the impact of tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation and concluded that rapid economic growth in Malaysia

influenced new types of poverty and unskilled workforces. This is in agreement with Gartner's (2008) interpretation that the impact of tourism on poor people should take into account the socio-cultural and environmental impacts as well, instead of solely focusing on economic growth. Saayman et al. (2012) studied the impact of tourism on poverty alleviation in South Africa utilising the Applied General Equilibrium (AGE) model and indicated that the poor derive very little benefit in the short term from additional tourism inflows. In a related study, Nicanor (2001) reached the same conclusion. Therefore, it is unclear whether tourism can reduce poverty.

Muchapondwa and Stage (2013) assessed the degree of poverty reduction in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana and the economic impact of tourism. The study concluded that the poor appear to receive insignificant benefits from tourism irrespective of the emphasis on CBT in national tourism policies. The study utilised Social Accounting Matrices (SAMs) and highlighted the lack of economic statistics on tourism in Namibia that will allow easy assessment of the actual economic impacts of tourism. This also presents challenges in analysing the impacts of tourism at a provincial level as the country does not currently compile SAMs or input-output data. The country does not also provide data on expenditure patterns of tourists for different regions.

Henceforth, Saayman et al. (2012) propose that future research should explore poverty alleviation at a regional level to analyse which region benefits more from tourism. Poverty reduction has been Namibia's priority over the years, and it has created a lot of interest among researchers. A study by Janis (2011) on Namibian tourism policies and local tourism enterprise policy knowledge, indicated that to reduce poverty in Namibia, the government ought to pay attention to who should benefit from tourism growth and how. The research suggests that there is a need for more research on the relationship between tourism and poverty alleviation. Thus, this study analyses the situation in the Kunene and Zambezi regions to find out whether the development of rural tourism has an influence on poverty alleviation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Areas

According to the World Bank (2020a) Poverty in Namibia has been decreasing from 28.7% in 2010 to 17.4% in 2016 yet the level of poverty in the rural northern region of Namibia remained significantly high with more than a third of the population in the regions classified as poor (Republic of Namibia, 2015). The Zambezi region is one of the poorest regions in Namibia which had a 7.2% increase in poverty while the Kunene region had a 2.1% decline in poverty, which is quite marginal. Poverty in Namibia has increased since 2015, reaching 64% in 2021 (Nakamura, 2021). These poverty rates are also projected to increase in 2022 due to the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2020a).

Namibia has 86 registered conservancies with the Kunene and Zambezi regions having the highest number of 38 and 15 conservancies respectively in the country (NACSO, 2017). This provides an opportunity for the tourism industry to contribute to poverty reduction. The Kunene region has the highest bed-occupancy rate of 46.7% (MET, 2017). However, the highest rates of unemployment are experienced in the northern rural region of Namibia with more than 50% of the population in poverty (Republic of Namibia, 2015). Zambezi's unemployment rate increased from 31% in 2014 to 48% in 2016, which is the second highest unemployment rate in Namibia (Nakashole, 2018), whilst the Kunene region has the highest unemployment rate of 52,2% (Namibia Labour Force Survey, 2016). Therefore, it can be

concluded that these two regions have the highest unemployment rates in the country. This is against the background that these regions have a wealth of tourism resources that could be used as a tool for poverty alleviation as indicated in the Vision 2030, NDP3 and Tourism Policy of 2008 (MET, 2008)

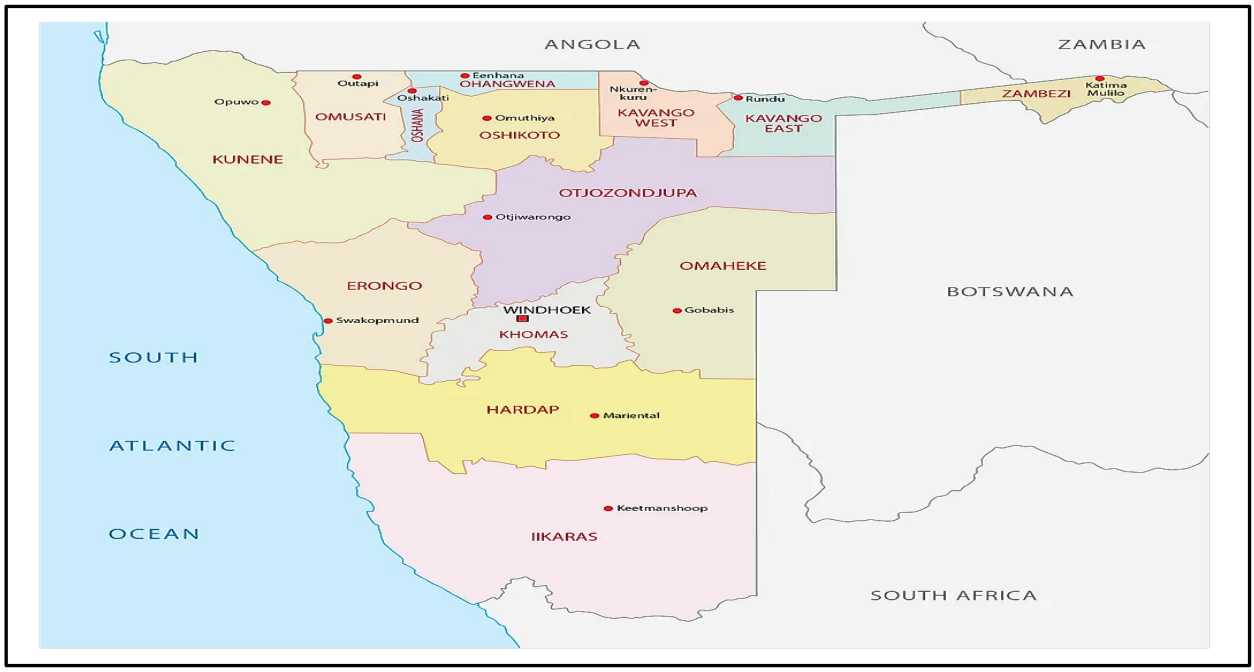

Figure 1: Map Showing the Namibian Regions and Constituencies

Source: www.worldatlas.com/maps/namibia

The qualitative research approach based on grounded theory and descriptive phenomenology designs was adopted. Grounded theory was first adopted with the focus on the development of theory grounded on the data in the field (Charmaz, 2006; Matteucci & Gnoth, 2017) whilst the phenomenology approach was adopted in order to have a clear understanding of the meaning of people's lived experiences. It aimed to identify the phenomena through the perceptions of the players in a situation (Creswell, 2013). This allowed information to be produced from the perspectives of research participants.

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were employed for data collection. Three semi-structured interview guides were developed: the first was for the government officials and non-governmental organisations, the second was for the local community and the third was for other tourism stakeholders including private businesses such as lodges, community-based tourism initiatives and craft centres. To understand the level of knowledge and experiences of local community members in relation to tourism and poverty alleviation, focus group discussions were also conducted. A maximum of eight community members were included in the focus group discussions and participants were divided into groups of six to eight community members. The research participants were varied, thus applying different methodological approaches was plausible. The research utilised a purposive sampling approach to select participants for the interviews. A purposive sampling includes selecting participants based on particular features or attributes they possess (Patton, 2002; Brotherton, 2008).

The research participants included government organisations and representatives of NGOs in Windhoek. These were purposively selected

based on the industry knowledge they had acquired. The government participants selected were directly involved in designing the rural tourism development policies and strategies, whilst the representatives of NGOs directly worked with rural communities in the study regions and the tourism establishments. Some of the NGOs in the Kunene and Zambezi regions were suggested by the NGO representatives in Windhoek. The NGO representatives in Windhoek provided the interviewer with the contacts of NGO representatives in the study regions and three NGO representatives in the Zambezi region provided the interviewer with two contacts of government officials in the same region. Thus, snowball sampling was also utilised. In addition, the convenience sampling method was used in selecting tourism establishments such as hotels, lodges and craft centres.

The focus groups were purposively selected; the interviewer targeted rural communities with more tourism activities and high poverty rates. This research method was ideal for this study because both the Kunene and Zambezi regions cover a large area where human settlements are scattered. However, two communities in the Zambezi region were selected according to their availability. The research began with six broad questions which were grouped into three themes and data collection was conducted in three phases. The first phase included a review of literature however, data was not extensively evaluated prior to the data collection process. Documents such as the Namibia Tourism Policy (2008), Namibia's National Development Plans (1-5), Vision 2030, and tourism statistical reports were reviewed. The second phase was a pre-data collection visitation phase to the research areas which included piloting the interviews and identifying the communities to be included in the study. In the third phase, primary data were collected, this included in-depth interviews with government organisations, NGO representatives and managers of tourism businesses. Focus group discussions were also conducted at this phase. Data was translated and coded continuously due to the grounded theory methodological approach adopted.

In all cases, interviews were halted once knowledge saturation was achieved and follow-up interviews were conducted. These were interviews which were conducted to confirm what would have emerged from the patterns or themes. The views and experiences of the research participants were then utilised to develop a theory. The data collection process was a continuous process until the research reached theoretical saturation.

Kunene region has a population of 87,000 people (Population and Housing Census, 2011) and it is divided into six constituencies. Six focus group interviews were conducted in five of the constituencies. Also, out of the 71 registered tourism establishments including lodges, hotels and campsites, and craft centres in the Kunene region (NTB, 2017), eight in-depth interviews were conducted with the managers and owners of the tourism establishments. Out of the 38 registered conservancies (NACSO, 2017), four in-depth interviews were conducted with the conservancy managers. In addition, twelve in-depth interviews were conducted with managers of Community Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs). Two NGO representatives were also interviewed in the Kunene region.

The Zambezi region, comprising six constituencies, has a population of approximately 91,000 (Zambezi Population and Housing Census, 2014). Out of the six constituencies, five focus group interviews were conducted in five constituencies. Out of the 15 registered conservancies in the region (NACSO, 2017), three in-depth interviews were conducted with conservancy managers. Also, out of the 21 tourism establishments such as hotels, lodges, and camps (NTB, 2017), managers of eight tourism establishments were interviewed. Two government officials and three NGO representatives were also

interviewed in the same region. The study also included government officials and NGO representatives from Windhoek because that is where the head offices for rural tourism development were located. Hence, three government officials and three NGO representatives were interviewed in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia.

Content analysis was used to identify common themes. The study identified comparable statements that were linked to the research question. Due to the grounded theory design (Charmaz, 2006), open coding was employed. The researcher was responsible for coding and this process assisted in engaging with the material and this was a continuous process throughout the research. To analyse the data, all the interviews were recorded and transcribed; however, some interviews were first translated into English, and then transcribed. A research diary, memos, and coding were utilised during the data collection and analysis phase. The data was placed into several categories and any new information that emerged was incorporated into the categories. Any new information/statements that emerged were coded and placed under the categories. Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software was also used to structure and organise the data. The use of Nvivo was to complement personal coding which was the main coding method used. It offers the advantage of being an automated process, it, therefore, provided a way of ensuring the quality of the data coding process. Nvivo was also used to save time and compare any information that might have been missed or overlooked.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The PPT approach was utilised to establish whether tourism has an impact on alleviating poverty in Namibia. The discussions reflect on the participants' responses by analysing the recurring themes and patterns. This section examines the causes of poverty, the impacts of tourism and the PPT strategies. It also evaluates the relationship between rural tourism development, poverty alleviation, the causes of poverty and PPT strategies. Ultimately, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

> *What impact does rural tourism development have on alleviating poverty? To what extent does rural tourism development benefit the local community?*

The Concept of Poverty

To critically analyse the impacts of tourism in the two regions, this research revealed some themes which help to explore how rural tourism development impacts poverty in the Northern region of Namibia based on the grounded theory approach. Further themes on poverty and causes of poverty emerged and these provided an in-depth understanding of the phenomena. Understanding the causes of poverty in different regions could help improve the interventions provided by the government, NGOs and tourism establishments. It could also have an impact on how poverty alleviation methods are chosen, thus the themes identified contribute to the final theoretical framework. These themes are discussed below.

Working Definition of Poverty

The concept of poverty had different meanings to different people in all three different settings rendering it difficult to define. This was because the participants' views on poverty were diverse, this aspect was debated throughout the interviews. The government and NGOs for both regions did not view the people in their regions as poor, they also indicated that this issue always comes up when it comes to the distribution of benefits. Thus, it is important for the government to provide a plausible definition of poverty that is understood by all stakeholders. Most government officials indicated

that *some people who are viewed as poor should not be considered as poor*, highlighting the divergent nature of views. Furthermore, they all agreed that money should not be utilised as a measure of poverty.

One member of a focus group in Kunene stated that *poverty is when you are always at the bottom of the food chain*. One community member added that *people see us as drunkards, so we are always the last ones to hear of anything.* Hence, the issue of poverty prompted a debate because other community members referred to poverty as the lack of money, recognition, health facilities, employment opportunities as well as the way people dress. Some communities seemed to define poverty in terms of the number of livestock one owns, for example, if everyone has ten goats then a person with one goat is poor. This view was in agreement with the opinion of a Chief who quizzed: *how can you sleep hungry when you have your livestock?* The chief emphasised that the system is flawed such that some community members take advantage of it.

Unlike the Kunene region, most of the communities in the Zambezi region had access to good schools nearby with the exception of one community located in one of the national parks. Members of this community indicated that they lacked health facilities, education, income and empowerment. According to Croes (2014), these attributes define poverty. Members of this same community highlighted that: *even if some people have goats, you still need money to pay for the upkeep of your children at these boarding houses; they say it's free but it's really not.* This community shared the same view with communities in the Kunene region confirming that the dimensions of poverty appear to be similar in different settings. In one community, most of the community members were elderly and relied on their grandchildren to cook and fetch water for them. The community did not have any healthcare facility nearby to provide for their medical needs. It seemed they had accepted that poverty was part of their life. The absence of health care facilities in a community whose populace is elderly makes them more vulnerable. According to Sisson (2001, cited in Chang, 2011) and OECD (2001), such a vulnerable community is considered poor.

One tourism establishment in the Zambezi region however indicated that the people in the Zambezi are not supposed to be poor because they have all the resources such as fertile land, rivers, and cattle. Thus, this participant also viewed poverty in terms of material resources. Managers of other tourism establishments in the same region argued that people in the local communities are not poor, one participant emphasized that *it is more of an advantage to be labelled poor in this country because you get more benefits.* This agrees with the views of Janis (2012) who indicated that most cultures and villages are utilising poverty as a tourist attraction. Hence, if rural communities use the income from tourism to improve their livelihoods, they might lose their attractiveness and this will affect their culture. These views clearly indicate that there is a lack of a clear definition of poverty and a lack of clarity on who should be regarded as poor. The lack of common ground on poverty impedes efforts to address poverty through rural tourism development. The local communities understood poverty as a lived experience but were not very clear on the definition. Due to their level of education, this group of participants lacked eloquence in providing a working definition of poverty confirming Croes' (2014) and Holden's (2013) sentiments that poverty also manifests in lack of education among other things. The results of this research prove that poverty is a multidimensional issue which varies from destination to destination as evidenced by how it was defined by participants. OECD (2001) also places emphasis on using both fiscal and non-fiscal terms in defining poverty.

It is important to find common ground on the working definition of poverty. As it stands, the policy formulators and policy implementers view poverty using an external lens while the local communities who have lived experiences of poverty use an internal lens. Consequently, these disparities in viewpoints are making it difficult for efforts on poverty alleviation to take effect. This is compounded by the fact that the driving force behind the agenda of poverty alleviation does not see the importance of alleviating poverty in the way local communities appreciate it.

Barriers to Poverty Alleviation

This research found that the causes of poverty in Namibia varied from community to community. This presents challenges in implementing strategies and understanding the phenomena. This research found that the causes of poverty in Namibia were also political, thus, the benefits system needs to be revisited. All these form barriers to how poverty can be alleviated thus there is a need to address them. The results on the causes of poverty in Namibia were diverse. The viewpoints of the government officials in Windhoek, Kunene and Zambezi regions varied, these are summarised in Table 1. Addressing these common causes of poverty will have a positive impact on poverty alleviation. Some unique causes peculiar to certain communities were identified. These were alcoholism, drought and lack of health facilities. These causes could be a result of the unique demography and geographical location of the communities. Therefore, addressing these causes would require a focused approach.

Table 1: Barriers to Poverty Alleviation from the Perspective of Different Stakeholders

Government officials and NGO representatives		
Policies are based on the old system	Poverty measurement tool is unclear	Discriminatory
Lack of empowerment	Lack of basic needs	Political
Lack of financial support and capital	*Blaming the Government*	Marginalised
Laziness	Lack of funding	*Cultural beliefs*
	Lack of skills (Education)	
Tourism establishments in both regions		
Lack of education	Alcoholism	*Lack of empowerment*
Lack of employment opportunities	*Cultural beliefs*	Laziness
Colonial rule	Drought	*Lack of skills*
Blaming the government	Corruption	

Table 1 continued

Local communities in both regions		
Colonialism	*Lack of educational facilities (Education)*	Marginalised
Social exclusion	Lack of employment opportunities	Lack of health facilities
Favouritism	Inequalities	*Cultural beliefs*
Lack of voice (Empowerment)	*Lack of skills*	Lack of recognition
Blaming the government	Corruption	

This research confirmed that inequality is a significant barrier. It was found that poverty in the Kunene region was mainly caused by relative poverty which is associated with inequality. The participants viewed themselves as poor because they were in a disadvantaged situation (financially or socially) in comparison to other people in the same community (Alcock, 2006; Thobias, 2007). This was quite evident in communities composed of people from different tribes. It is therefore important to embrace diversity in an inclusive way to foster community cohesion and promote one-mindedness. This concurs with Paniagua and Moyano (2007) who concluded that developing tourism in rural areas and deprived communities entails issues of inclusion and exclusion, inequalities, and conflicts amongst social groups.

Marginalisation

Government officials, local communities and some tourism establishments recognised marginalisation as a barrier to poverty alleviation. In particular, the participants in the Zambezi region indicated that they were poor because they were marginalised. In this region, it was indicated that civil war which emanated from the region had caused poverty to persist in the region. The issues of corruption, inequality and marginalisation are interconnected, and this explains the incidental finding on corruption which only emerged in the Zambezi region. The issue of corruption was cited by participants throughout the Zambezi region, in contrast to the generally favourable Corruption Perception Index (CPI) that the country has. The following statements from participants illustrate how they felt about corruption:

> *You see these people are all related, you complain about people in the community who are poaching to the Ministry, they won't do anything because that is his brother. We cannot complain about the noises from the shebeens because that's his brother". "The indunas can choose whether they like you or not, if the induna doesn't like you, you have no chance in the business, so you have to make sure you get along with the indunas.*

The tourism activities available varied from community to community, as well as from constituency to constituency. Some communities in the Zambezi region did not regard tourism as a sector that could help alleviate poverty. The communities were not aware of the government and NGOs' involvement in community development. This highlights the importance of involving the poor in tourism interventions. In this regard, this research agrees with Holden et al. (2011); Pleumarom (2012) and Schilcher (2007) who indicated that PPT strategies do not include the views/voices of poor people.

Measurement of poverty

Measurement of poverty emerged as a barrier to poverty alleviation due to socio-cultural differences that were noticeable in the two regions studied. Most people in the Kunene region are nomads and they do not have permanent homes. Some do not believe in slaughtering their cows for monetary benefits thus making it difficult to use livestock to improve their livelihood. Though cattle are regarded as a sign of wealth and pride, this asset cannot be liquidated. Conversely, the Himba communities did not view themselves as poor, they indicated that their culture is more important than money. They indicated that the

money they get from tourists and from the owner of the village is enough to cover their basic needs. The lack of a consensus on who should be regarded as poor and how to measure poverty impacts poverty reduction. Thus, based on these views, poverty in Namibia can neither be defined in monetary terms

alone nor in terms of available assets alone. A case in point is the Zambezi region where some people are pastoralists who rely on livestock, some families own hundreds of cattle and land. Hence, in such areas where farming is practised, poverty should be measured differently.

Blame culture

The government officials and NGOs in Windhoek and both regions suggested that the issue of laziness had an influence on the persistence of poverty in the regions. This could be viewed as cultural poverty where one is blamed for being poor (Freeman, 1998; Moore, 2012; Silva & Athukorala, 1996). Cultural poverty is therefore difficult to address. Freeman (1998) stated that it is unfair to blame poor people for their poverty because poor people lack resources and opportunities. The private sector blames the local community for causing disruptions that affect tourism in the Zambezi region whilst the local community blames the government for restricting them from activities such as fishing and hunting. This relationship creates a hostile environment which is a disincentive for cooperation between the same stakeholders who are meant to work together towards one goal of alleviating poverty.

There was also a lack of trust amongst participants as they blamed each other for causing negative environmental impacts that consequently impact the development of rural tourism. This lack of trust goes back to the colonial rule, the Indunas who owned the land refused to release their land to make way for tourism, because they felt that their land was being taken by the white minority. Government officials indicated that the blame culture was also evident within the government departments. Some participants blamed other departments for ineffective policy implementation. This rampant culture of blame could be addressed if expectations for each other are effectively managed.

Provision of basic infrastructure

In some areas of the Kunene region such as Outjo and Kamanjab where there were good roads, and good sanitation, the local community benefitted from employment. Other areas which were further from the main roads had limited employment and other opportunities. Also, areas with viable tourism products such as those communities close to Etosha indicated that their source of income was tourism. In the Kunene region, the main cause of poverty is a lack of education due to a lack of schools, this affected the employment prospects of the people. Developing basic infrastructure such as roads will facilitate accessibility to the rural areas, and increase tourist arrivals thus contributing to poverty alleviation. The people who were working in the tourism industry had basic high school qualifications, thus those without good education could not get the opportunity to work in the tourism industry. Hence, rural tourism development in the Kunene region has not been able to tackle the issues of poverty because of the low levels of education. However, IMF (2013) indicated that there is no evidence to show that education can assist in the reduction of poverty.

The Impacts of Tourism Development

This research found that tourism in rural areas offers poor people opportunities, however, instead of focusing on only the economic impacts of tourism, this research also explored the socio-cultural impacts and environmental impacts and identified the following themes:

Income generation

Income generation was highlighted as an important theme by all the stakeholders in both regions. The research however found that opportunities were dependent on factors such as availability of tourism products/resources, size of the

population within communities, educational levels, the level of support from NGOs and attitudes of the local communities towards tourism initiatives. According to Spenceley et al. (2009), the impact of tourism on the poor can be viewed in terms of income generation, and improvement of people's livelihoods. The results of this study confirmed this notion.

Another unique finding that emerged from a particular community was the impact of rural tourism on livelihoods. In response to the question as to whether rural tourism supported local communities to generate income, the participants in Outjo highlighted that their livelihoods were positively impacted. This was attributed to the development of tourism in the region. However, this was mainly linked to the availability of infrastructure within that community.

For those in employment, income generation resonated throughout the regions as a positive impact. Some of the participants from both regions indicated that they had been employed in conservancies for a long time and had been able to buy basic products. They indicated that tourism had changed their lives. The representatives of NGOs pointed out that some communities had been able to make huge profits through tourism initiatives. This is in agreement with Hwang et al. (2012) who indicated that community-based actions play a pivotal role in long-term tourism development. This research, however, observed that those who benefitted more from tourism were those who worked in the tourism industry over a long period of time (i.e. 5-10 years). This research also found that those with skills such as handcrafting benefitted from tourism sales but people who were selling crafts directly to the tourists benefitted more, they indicated that selling their crafts to craft centres gave them reduced profits as they were offered 60% of the sales. Therefore, in this case, the private sector benefited more. The local people do not have the power to negotiate for better prices. This is in line with Janis's (2012) conclusion that the poor do not have the power to negotiate for better wages.

In the Zambezi region, the research found that quite a lot of the communities did not solely depend on tourism as the main source of income or livelihood. This research, therefore, agrees with the above sentiment because the communities visited relied on other economic activities such as farming, fishing, and trading. Thus, most people in the communities did not view tourism as providing enough benefits to them. In comparison to the Kunene region, the economic impacts of tourism in the Zambezi region were minimal. Most tourism establishments including joint ventures employed foreigners, particularly in management roles, thus negatively impacting the local community as the foreigners might not spend their income within the local community. This is also linked to leakages because most tourism establishments did not buy their products from the local communities. One manager from the Zambezi region claimed that: *I have seen people's lives changed; we have people who started as cleaners and moved to being tour guides. These are people who had nothing to do, now they can feed their families.*

Attitudes toward the impacts of rural tourism development

Just like the working definitions of poverty and rural tourism, the responses captured by the researcher showed differences in attitudes toward rural tourism development. This lack of harmony in the attitude of participants toward rural tourism development can be an impediment to the realisation of the benefits of tourism development and consequently poverty alleviation. Moore (2012) and Sawhill (2003) state that poverty cannot be reduced unless poor people change their attitudes and governments design policies that offer support to poor

people. Kosic et al. (2017) who studied residents' attitudes towards the social, economic and environmental impacts and the benefits of rural tourism activities in Serbia concluded that environmental impacts are hardly viewed as negative.

Contrary to Kosic et al's. (2017) conclusion, this study argues that the environmental impacts are viewed as negative if people are not informed about the benefits. The attitudes of community members toward tourism interventions also influence their views on environmental issues. In the Zambezi region, the private sector blamed the local community for causing disruptions that affect tourism whilst the local community blamed the government for restricting them from carrying out activities such as fishing and hunting. These disagreements are because of differing attitudes. Furthermore, responses from all the participants were dependent on their attitudes towards rural tourism interventions. This highlights the importance of ensuring that all the stakeholders are involved in rural tourism development. The causes of poverty such as marginalisation can influence people's cooperation and support tourism interventions.

Effects of Rural Tourism Development on Poverty Alleviation

The effects of rural tourism development are important, and this research found that there was a consensus on their importance to poverty alleviation. There were however differences in opinion as to how well rural tourism development impacts poverty alleviation. In this research, capacity building and empowerment emanated as the most significant activities for ensuring that optimum benefits are derived from rural tourism development. These and other themes identified form the basis for the conceptual framework.

Capacity building

Across both regions, capacity building came out strongly as a vehicle for poverty alleviation. The participants felt strongly that capacity building efforts would considerably increase the impact of rural tourism development on poverty alleviation. However, upon probing whether they felt capacitated, the views were not consistent with the passion shown by participants in responding to the question about its importance. Based on the views expressed by managers of tourism establishments, their contribution is limited to paying taxes and tourism levies. Snyman (2012) concludes that the private sector has a role to play regarding education, skills transfer and training. This viewpoint, however, has not been evident in the findings of this research.

Besides employment, a few tourism establishments have provided training to their employees and ensured that they possess employable skills. Tourism development and upgrading of the skills of employees are linked as the latter offers an opportunity for local people to acquire new skills making them more employable and better candidates for promotion. According to Spenceley et al. (2009), new skills such as technical skills can also be transferred to other sectors. Participants in the focus groups, however, argued that the skills they get will not help them to get jobs elsewhere.

Participants from the government and NGOs insisted that the communities were not well skilled to run the conservancies, citing lack of skills and lack of commitment as the reasons why some conservancies had closed down. This sentiment agrees with NACOBTA's (2002) research which indicated that the region's tourism potential has been affected by mismanagement of funds and poor planning. One representative from an NGO stated that:

> *The problem is of quality and service providing for example sometimes you help them set up something and when you come back you will find the place falling apart. So, you have to*

continuously support them. So, to solve some of these problems what we do especially if it's a good area with a lot of tourism; we link them with the private sector, but the problem is many people haven't grasped the concept of tourism. Sometimes it will be a leaking tap and because of lack of expertise to fix it will be a problem. Tourists want good quality and when they go there, they want to take a shower and there is no water. Even the private sector they might go there to help but there will be no one there. It becomes difficult to help [sic].

Empowerment

Scheyvens (2011) states that PPT strategies should concentrate on capacity building for the poor, empowerment and support for labour rights. The PPT strategies should enable the poor to have more control over tourism activities in their communities (Scheyvens, 2011). The participants from NGOs indicated that they work closely with conservancies to give them guidance on how to negotiate with the private sector. They also provide training on how to run the conservancies. The participants stated that if a private company/owner intends to invest in tourism in a conservancy, they have to seek permission from the conservancy because the conservancies have tourism and hunting rights. However, in a situation where there are no conservancies, they have to go to the traditional authorities for the rights over the land. Thus, the role of the NGOs is to ensure that the process goes on smoothly and that the community is protected. The participants indicated that they also enter into joint ventures to ensure that they do not breach the agreement with the conservancies.

The local community does not fully support tourism strategies implemented by the government such as joint ventures because they are not empowered to make any decisions. This finding contrasts with that of Lapeyre (2011) who found that tourism empowered the local community to contribute to decision making and improved their skills. This research found that the empowerment of the local communities varied from one community to another. In some communities with various tribes, the involvement of the local community was based on the tribe one belonged to. Thus, other participants indicated that the interventions are not worth pursuing as they have caused conflicts amongst the locals.

The participants indicated that they are not empowered to make decisions, hence the tourism development strategies do not reduce poverty in their community as a few individuals are benefitting. One participant highlighted that:

But some stakeholders think empowerment means having the youths owning the lodges themselves. But to us how should they own or manage the lodges when they don't know how to get people to the lodges. So, there are still fights on how we should empower people.

There were three elements related to empowerment that emerged from this theme which help to explore how empowering local communities could help improve rural tourism development and poverty alleviation. These are education and training, funding and benefits-sharing.

Education and training

The government of Namibia introduced the "Education for all" initiative which allowed children to go to school until the age of sixteen (Jauch, 2015). Despite the introduction of this initiative, a lot of communities still do not have educational facilities. On the contrary, those who were working in the conservancies and other lodges had good educational qualifications. The lack of educated people within the communities meant that tourism establishments had no choice but to employ people from outside the regions. Local communities in both regions indicated that the people who are benefitting from rural tourism

development are those from outside their regions. They also indicated the lack of opportunities due to a lack of educational facilities and skills; this makes a case for increasing capacity-building efforts.

This research found that very limited training opportunities were made available to a few individuals in the local communities by various NGOs. The uptake for training opportunities was poor because the targeted audience had no formal education with some unable to write.

Funding

The NGOs are responsible for supporting the communities in sourcing funds for the conservancies, however, according to this research, the NGOs have been facing challenges over the years. One participant stated:

> *Even the development bank does not even understand tourism. Even if you have a nice enterprise in the rural areas you cannot get collateral; you cannot borrow against it. Maybe if the business has a good reputation, but it's very difficult. We tried with one lodge and although we succeeded, it took us years to achieve that. Even small businesses – there is no way they can get a loan. Due to the land one cannot borrow money because the land does not belong to them. You cannot borrow against your piece of land. Maybe there is a need to change the policies.*

Thus, this research found that the development of rural tourism in the Kunene and Zambezi region relies heavily on donor funding. This finding is consistent with Mowforth and Munt's (2003) conclusion that relying on donor funding does not reduce poverty; it rather aggravates it. The participants indicated that the economic crisis has impacted the growth of the conservancies with some areas waiting for years to get funding. Most participants stated that the policies favour joint ventures and this has been presenting developmental challenges.

Benefits sharing

The focus group members indicated that they are not involved in the formulation of any of the tourism strategies whilst some stated that they just attend meetings for food and socialisation, otherwise their voices are not heard. They stated that decisions are already made by the committee members. Conversely, participants from the NGOs stated that when it comes to benefits distribution, the community members are involved in the process. However, they indicated that it had always been a challenge because of the size of the member groups. One participant stated that some conservancies had 4,000 members, hence taking everyone's opinion was impossible because they never agree on the benefits. In some communities, there were 8,000 members in one conservancy. This is in line with the assertion by Novelli and Gebhardt (2007) that analysing CBT in Namibia is quite complex due to the number of stakeholders involved in the decision-making process.

This research found that conservancies can be successful if they have the support of government and NGOs, however, they fail to include the views of the local communities. This has resulted in some conflicts, particularly regarding the issue of benefits sharing. The local communities in both regions indicated that the development of their community is controlled by the government. Thus, this has negatively impacted their attitude towards the interventions. For the PPT approach to benefit low-income groups it should be people-centred, promote local participation, and adopt a bottom-up approach (Phommavong, 2011; Truong et al., 2014).

This research found that interventions to alleviate poverty in rural areas adopt a top-down approach as it is driven by the government and NGOs, and the participation of community members varies

from community to community. However, adopting a bottom-up approach would require the communities to be well educated and equipped with the right skills.

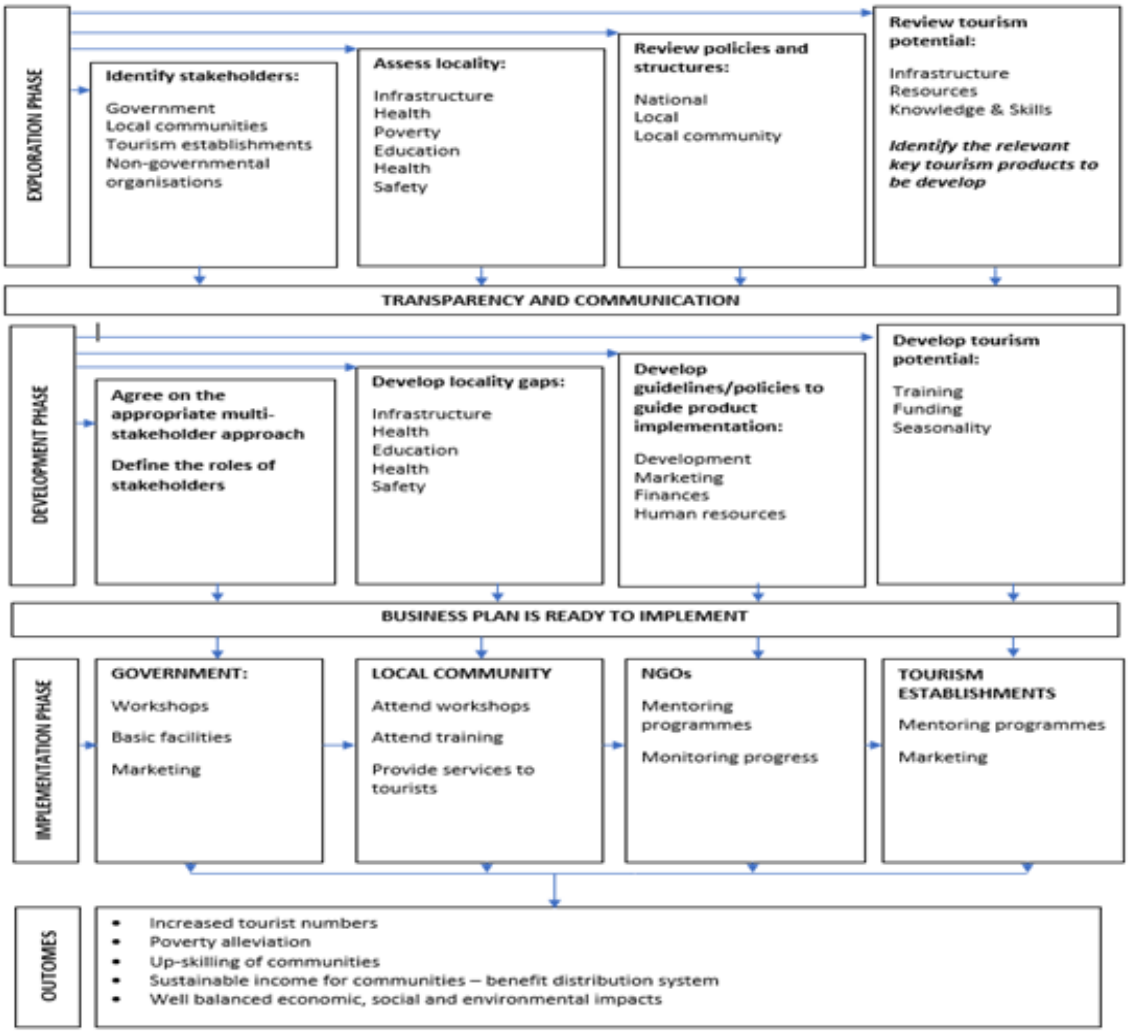

Figure 1: A Framework for Rural Tourism Development and Alleviation of Poverty: A Regional Perspective

Source: Author's compilation

Based on the results, the study provides a framework which takes a pragmatic approach and departs from the "one size fits all" approach. The framework encourages stakeholder involvement from the exploration phase until the designed strategies have been achieved. It is adaptable to different settings and focuses on the "how" than "what" the stakeholders should be doing to reduce poverty. This was made possible by carefully listening to different stakeholders, in particular, the local communities and analysing their responses (see Figure 1).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this study was to analyse the effects of rural tourism development on poverty alleviation in the northern region of Namibia. The study found that although the benefits are minimal, rural tourism development has the potential to alleviate poverty. However, the effect of tourism development on poverty alleviation varied, depending on the size of the constituency and the tourism initiatives available. In the Kunene region, some conservancies had 8,000 members and a few people were employed in the conservancies; benefits were

limited to the few people who worked in the conservancy. The conservancies did not have schools, health-care facilities and good housing facilities. Thus, the percentage of people benefitting from tourism was not large enough to conclude that tourism development has had an impact on poverty alleviation. This was the issue in many conservancies, where the effect of tourism on poverty alleviation was limited to a few people who work in the conservancies. Utilising the PPT approach, this research also found that the benefits of tourism were higher in communities where there were low levels of poverty as well as good tourism products and activities.

The results of this research support Janis' (2012) assertion that tourism is not likely to address the prevailing circumstances behind poverty in rural areas such as low educational levels. This is another factor that accounts for the growing poverty in the northern region of Namibia. Therefore, for rural tourism to alleviate poverty, the government and other stakeholders need to first focus on understanding who should be regarded as "poor" before analysing the effects of tourism on the poor and poverty alleviation. This same sentiment was echoed by Mitchell and Ashley (2010). This research found that the lack of a clear definition led to other groups who otherwise should not be categorised as poor, benefiting from the government's benefits system. The government and other stakeholders should therefore identify the causes of poverty in each region/constituency before implementing strategies to alleviate poverty. This research found that the causes of poverty varied, thus there is a need to vary rural development strategies. However, these causes of poverty should be addressed first before exploring the benefits to be derived by the poor.

This research, therefore, concludes that unless the local communities are empowered, the rural tourism and poverty concept clearly defined, barriers to poverty alleviation removed, and policies that support the development of rural tourism and poverty alleviation implemented, the impact of rural tourism development will remain minimal. Relying on tourism employment alone as a way of alleviating poverty is not sustainable because those who are not educated or without any skills will occupy low paid jobs which do not significantly help in reducing poverty. Capacity building, therefore, needs to be focused on tourism as well as other non-tourism related income generation activities. The northern regions have been developing rural tourism through

joint ventures, thus, there is a need for the communities to have good negotiation skills, and financial management skills to run the enterprises. Thus, for tourism to impact poverty alleviation the communities should be equipped with the right skills, to empower them to be able to run the tourism ventures.

This study, therefore, recommends the above framework (Figure 1) which offers solutions that focus on poverty alleviation by amalgamating rural tourism development, causes of poverty and poverty alleviation. Instead of developing countries such as Namibia emphasising economic growth to alleviate poverty, there is the need for an adaptable approach to addressing the causes of poverty with the involvement of all stakeholders in decision making.

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