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Rural Tourism under Apartheid South Africa: The Case of Transkei

Abstract. Rural tourism scholarship has greatly expanded over the past two decades. One aspect of rural tourism that is undeveloped in literature is the historical evolution of rural tourism destinations. This paper uses an historical approach and archival documentary sources to examine the evolution of rural tourism under apartheid in one of the former Bantustans of South Africa, namely Transkei. It is shown tourism became a sector of policy interest because of disappointments associated with national government programmes for industrial decentralization. Early tourism promotion centred on leisure tourism around the natural beauty and attractions of Transkei's coastal areas. With the grant of 'independence', however, a new institutional environment emerged which resulted in the Transkei becoming a focus for casino tourism at a time when casino gambling was prohibited in South Africa. The growth of casino tourism was, however, linked to corruption which occurred between South African tourism capital and the leadership of this Bantustan.

Keywords: rural tourism, apartheid, South Africa, tourism geography, historical approach, Transkei, casino tourism

1. Introduction

For Brij Maharaj (2020, p. 39) South Africa's geographical landscape was profoundly moulded by the policy of apartheid "which constitutes an unparalleled example of state-directed socio-spatial restructuring". Several scholars view the policy and implementation of apartheid as a massive exercise in (mis-) applied geography (Lemon, 1976; Smith, 1982; Christopher, 1994). Anthony Lemon (1998, p. 1) describes it as "an ambitious but doomed attempt to remould the social, political and economic geography of South Africa". Arguably, its core intent was to provide a philosophical rationale for entrenching white privilege and power in the

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core areas of the South African space economy. Between 1948 and 1991 the cornerstone of apartheid planning in South Africa became the geographical segregation of the country's different race groups (Christopher, 1994). At the urban scale this involved the designation of separate residential areas or spaces ('Group Areas') for the different racial groups as well as the creation of racialized spaces in terms of, for example, separate racially defined hotels or different spaces on the country's beaches (see eg. Lemon, 1991; Rogerson, 2016, 2017; Maharaj, 2020; Rogerson, 2020; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020; Rogerson, 2022a). At the macro-scale of 'grand apartheid' the centrepiece of government planning surrounded the attempt to forge separate geographical territories and political spaces with the establishment of the Bantustans or Homelands. According to Laura Phillips (2017, p. 1) the making of South Africa's ten Bantustans "was perhaps one of the most infamous cases of racial segregation in the 20th century". The Bantustan system began with the designation of 'self-governing' territories which subsequently were to be guided to an 'independent' status (Laurence, 1976). By 'self-governing' it was meant that the homelands were granted limited powers whereas an 'independent status' granted these territories with sovereign rights on certain issues that were previously controlled by the apartheid government (Southall, 1983). From 1948 Black Africans were systematically stripped of their South African citizenship and forced to accept "false nationalities" and become citizens of one of the ten ethnically-based and nominally self-governing Bantustans or Homelands which have been styled as 'artifices' of the apartheid state (Ally, 2015). Kim Wildman (2005, p. 38) points out these geographical spaces were officially "championed as areas where, due to black people's historical connection to the land, they could maintain their 'customs' and 'traditions'". In practice, however, the territories of the Bantustans functioned merely as geographical reservoirs of cheap labour or became a 'dumping ground' for South Africa's unwanted or 'surplus' people (Platzky & Walker, 1985).

Undoubtedly, during the period 1959–1991 "the bantustans were the central pillars of the apartheid edifice, designed to preserve white minority rule in South Africa" (Jones, 1997, p. 31). The aim in this paper is to examine the evolution of rural tourism under apartheid in one of the former Bantustans of South Africa. The focus is on Transkei which was the first Bantustan to be granted self-governing status and, in many respects, was viewed as the showcase for apartheid planning. In terms of tourism scholarship, research concerning tourism in the Bantustans can be looked at as an unusual, if not special, case of rural tourism. Doris Carson (2018) considers that geographers have contributed substantially to literature on rural tourism. The paper represents a contribution to the limited international literature on rural tourism in its historical dimensions as well as to evolving rural tourism scholarship in South Africa. For historical geographers the importance of

a wider intellectual concern for tracing the past in Southern Africa is recognised (Roux & Parnell, 2020). Arguably, this paper contributes to strengthening a new 'tradition' of studies which has consolidated in South African tourism geography and focuses on applying an historical evolutionary approach to destination development (see Knight & Rogerson, 2019; Rogerson & Visser, 2020). Furthermore, it provides an historical lens on issues of tourism and geographical change in the environment of the Global South (Saarinen & Rogerson, 2021).

The research was undertaken by utilising an historical approach in terms of methodology and draws upon a range of different archival documentary sources, most importantly material housed in collections at the South African National Library, Cape Town depot. Jarkko Saarinen, Christian Rogerson and C. Michael Hall (2017) advocate for a growth in the application of historical approaches to unpack tourism pasts and to deepen our understanding of tourism and hospitality studies. Gordon Pirie (2022) argues that the exploration of archival material is the raw material of history and represents an important methodological approach for advancing the frontiers of understanding in tourism research. Archival research is a much underused yet potentially highly effective research strategy for qualitative research in tourism and hospitality research (Power, 2018). The remainder of the paper is structured into two uneven parts of material. The next section situates the research as part of the development of international writings in the field of rural tourism. Attention then moves on to the major section which investigates the case of Transkei and the chequered evolution of this Bantustan as a rural tourism destination under apartheid.

2. Rural Tourism — International Research Directions

It is generally accepted that academic writings on rural tourism first began to appear during the 1970s with descriptive monitoring studies of tourism that was taking place in rural areas (Lane, 1994; Lane & Kastenholz, 2015). An expansion in scholarly interest is recorded from the 1980s. Nevertheless, Stephen Page and Donald Getz (1997, p. 3) asserted during the 1990s that "rural tourism has continued to suffer from a neglect among tourism researchers" and "remained peripheral to the focus of tourism research". Useful early surveys of academic research concerning the topic of rural tourism were authored by Page and Getz (1997), Richard Sharpley and Julia Sharpley (1997), and by Richard Sharpley and Lesley Roberts (2004). In an extended review of the 'state of the art' of international rural tourism research it is observed that a 'take-off' in academic writings occurred during the 2000s decade (Karali et al.,

2021). Similar findings are offered in other bibliometric studies (Ruiz-Real, Das & Roy, 2021; Aydin, 2022). Undoubtedly a burst of international writings and research has occurred on rural tourism with an accelerating tempo of academic interest (Gabor, 2015; Lane & Kastenholz, 2015; Karali, Das & Roy, 2021; Rosalina, Dupre & Wang, 2021). This growth was underpinned by recognition of the significance of rural tourism for local and regional development and in particular remote rural regions (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Kastenholz & Lima, 2011). Issues surrounding rural tourism and its development impacts in Europe were a major catalyst for growth in scholarship (Gabor, 2015). The recent review of advances in rural tourism research undertaken by Oshi Singhania, Sampada Swain and Babu George (2022) demonstrates that the field gathered considerable momentum post-2010 with China, Spain and Italy appearing as the strongest foci for research. Taken together these several systematic reviews on international directions in research on rural tourism show that it "has been a key research area over the last few decades" (Karali, Das & Roy, 2021, p. 1).

The content of rural tourism research has matured and advanced beyond the early phase of descriptive case studies. Within the emerging literature on rural tourism in the 1990s an array of themes and issues can be observed including social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts, research on different niches in rural tourism and the implications of rural tourism for rural development (Page & Getz, 1997; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997; Roberts & Hall, 2001). The findings from a systematic analysis of papers published since 2000 pinpointed a major interest in tourism management, economic considerations, environment/ecological issues and themes in regional development and concerns surrounding sustainability (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015). A scan of the literature discloses that by the decade of the 2000s academic debate was occurring on topics such as management and conservation, resource control, economic regeneration and even the ramifications of climate change (Dashper, 2014; Lane & Kastenholz, 2015; Ruiz-Real et al., 2021; Karali, Das & Roy, 2021). In the review of studies on rural tourism which was produced by Putu Rosalina, Karine Dupre and Ying Wang (2021) the major identifiable research foci relate to sustainable development, the role of local communities, the importance of 'authenticity' and 'experience' for the rural tourism product, and the challenges facing rural tourism development including rural tourism entrepreneurship.

Geographers stress that in discussions of rural tourism and its impacts there is the need to differentiate between different kinds of rural spaces (Carson, 2018; Carson & Koster, 2019). In particular it is relevant to include studies of 'in-between' rural spaces or 'non-tourism places' (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021a). The essential character of 'in-between' rural spaces is that they are not sufficiently attractive to establish tourism as a self-contained major local sector (Carson, 2018; Carson & Koster, 2019). The asset base and development prospects of 'in-

between' rural spaces therefore contrasts with the major categories of fringe rural spaces and remote or exotic rural spaces. The limited linkages of in-between spaces in terms of distance from major urban core regions, challenges of transport access, and sometimes a difficult physical environment combine to create particular constraints on rural tourism development in these areas and in particular as compared to the other two categories of rural space (Carson, 2018; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021a).

Looking across four decades of rural tourism scholarship a recent thematic analysis pinpoints major issues around the impacts and management of rural tourism as well as the role of stakeholders with most research on impact studies, stakeholder-community relationships, and performance-related issues (Karali, Das & Roy, 2021). Entrepreneurship and small enterprise development challenges in rural tourism are critical themes highlighted by Jonathan Yachin (2019, 2020, 2021), Isaac Mantey (2021) and Ingeborg Nordbø (2022). In particular the issue of lifestyle entrepreneurs in rural tourism has attracted much attention (Cunha, Kastenholz & Carneiro, 2018). The significance of 'community resourcefulness' in resource-constrained rural environments has been identified (Qu, McCormick & Funck, 2022). Tourism route planning has been a commonly applied planning approach to energising rural tourism destinations (Rogerson, 2007; Kovács & Nagy, 2013; Herman & Blaga, 2022; Pedrosa, Martins & Breda, 2022). The planning challenges for rural tourism in sub-Saharan Africa are interrogated by Jarkko Saarinen & Monkgogi Lenao (2014). The potential for heritage and of storytelling to contribute to rural tourism destination development is acknowledged (Rogerson & van der Merwe, 2016; Kim, Chhabr & Timothy, 2021; de Beer, van Zyl & Rogerson, 2022). Of note is that in terms of the geographical distribution of studies there has been a spreading of research interest on rural tourism across many countries. It is evident rural tourism now has a literature with contributions from various parts of the world (Alim et al., 2021; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Chen, Clarke & Hracs, 2022; Darabos, Kömíves & Molinar, 2022; Rocca & Zielinski, 2022; Senyao & Ha, 2022; Shen & Quan, 2022; Silva, 2022). Recently, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic for rural tourism inevitably have garnered considerable attention (Kastenholz et al., 2022). Rural tourism has been observed to be one of the more resilient sectors of tourism in the wake of the pandemic (Marques, Guedes & Bento, 2021; Grandi, Macdonald & Tankibayeva, 2022). With COVID-19 triggering changes in consumer travel preferences towards open spaces, solitude and nature, potential opportunities opened for rural tourism in several countries, albeit with challenges to reach that potential (Giddy, Rogerson & Rogerson, 2022; Kinczel & Müller, 2022; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2022a; Rogerson & Sixaba, 2022; Rogerson et al., 2022).

What is evident in all the recent reviews of international research on rural tourism is that little serious attention had been devoted to researching *historical* issues surrounding the evolution of rural tourism destinations. The major exceptions are works produced by tourist historians such as those magisterial works which have investigated the establishment of the English Lake District as a prime rural tourism destination (Wood & Walton, 2016). Smaller-scale studies, however, recently have appeared on the broad evolutionary pattern of rural tourism in South Africa as a whole (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021c) and the beginnings of rural tourism occurring in the spaces of former Bantustans (Wildman, 2005; Drummond, Drummond & Rogerson, 2021, 2022; Rogerson, 2022b). This study therefore represents a further modest step towards a more comprehensive interpretation of the tourism historical geography of the Bantustans in South Africa. It examines developments which occurred in the rural Transkei during the apartheid years. Figure 1 shows the location of the spaces that formed the basis of ten ethno-states under apartheid. It is apparent that Transkei was the largest in terms of the size of its territory. The majority of the land that made-up Transkei was part of the former Cape Province, one of the four provinces of South Africa.

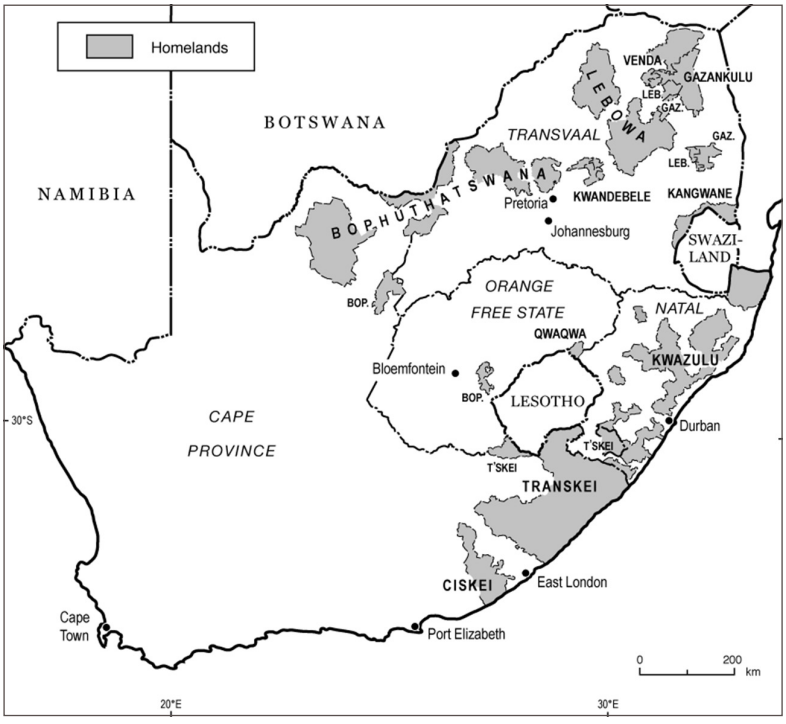

Figure 1: The Geographical Territories of the Apartheid Bantustans or Homelands
Source: Authors

3. Transkei and Rural Tourism

Two subsections of material are given. The first provides a brief account of the historical development of Transkei as a Bantustan and the challenges for territorial economic development. The second section turns attention specifically to the evolution of Transkei as a rural tourism destination during the apartheid period.

Transkei — Historical Context

The historical roots of all the Bantustans are located in the 19th century colonial land dispossessions which resulted in the establishment of 'native reserves' (Phillips, 2017). The early history of Transkei is mapped out in detail by Monica Wilson (1959) and Jeff Peires (1979). During 1894 certain powers to self-govern were granted by the Cape Colony which preceded the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1969). Stone (1969) states that the first official 'territorial authority' for the Transkei can be traced back to 1895. By 1903 the Transkeian Territories were formed and governed by a chief magistrate (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1969). The formation of the 'native reserves' and the empowerment of traditional authorities during the colonial period facilitated the making of the Homelands in the apartheid era (Phillips, 2017).

In 1948 the National Party came to power trumpeting the notion of 'apartheid' — apart-ness — but in the early years of its government "it was unclear precisely what this would mean" (Phillips, 2017, p. 2). The legal framework to create the Bantustans was the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act which "established tribal, regional and territorial authorities that codified the principle that the former 'reserves' were spaces that the apartheid government would continue to ethnicise and use as dumping grounds for removed Africans" (Aerni-Flessner & Twala, 2021, p. 97). According to Laura Phillips (2017) this piece of legislation opened the way for a series of policy changes that ultimately led to the formation of the bantustans. In 1959 the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act was passed "opening another door in the move toward the creation of the bantustans" (Phillips, 2017, p. 4).

Historians argue that the introduction of this Act and the pursuit of a self-governing policy for the reserves in the early 1960s was associated with the changing imperatives of South Africa's cheap labour economy anchored on migrant labour as well as the National Party's growing confidence in its power as a result of the crushing of African resistance and asserting their dominance in the white electorate (Beinart, 2012). By the early 1960s "it was clear that some form of self-rule for the African reserves was on the cards" (Phillips, 2017, p. 5). The apartheid govern-

ment portrayed in its propaganda material the prospects for Transkei in glowing terms. It was styled "a land with high agricultural potential", "colourful people who love nature", "who love the traditions of their forefathers", and "the rhythm of life" (Department of Bantu Administration, 1961, pp. 24–25). The role of the Transkei as a classic demonstration of South Africa's 'decolonization' initiative was emphasized: "The Transkei has shown that the (apartheid) Government's policy of separate development is altogether practical and feasible" (Department of Bantu Administration, 1961, p. 48).

In 1963 the territory of Transkei was granted self-governing status following the preparation of the first homeland constitution which was given approval by the South African parliament (Stone, 1969). The Transkei became viewed as the 'model' for apartheid planning (Southall, 1983). The Transkei led the way as the "model homeland" and was seen as "the blueprint Bantustan" (Phillips, 2017, p. 5). The Transkei Legislative Assembly was made up of 64 chiefs that included five paramount chiefs and 45 elected members from the 26 districts of the Transkei (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1969). The Transkei Assembly elected a cabinet which was comprised of five different ministries. Regardless of the 'self-governance' the South African apartheid government still maintained control over Transkei in terms of components such as the military, external affairs, postal and information services, security, transport, immigration, currency, banks, health and constitution which were controlled by the South African government (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1969). As pointed out by Adolf Stone (1969, p. 30) the entire structure of the government of Transkei "rests on the loyalty of the tribes to the chiefs and theirs to the government in Pretoria.". The Transkei National Independence Party (TNIP) was the ruling party during Transkei's independence led by Paramount Chief Kaizer Matanzima (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1969). The party's objectives were supportive of the separate development policy that was set out by the apartheid government and also approved the governing of chiefs (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1969; Southall, 1983).

In 1976 the territory of Transkei became the first of four South Africa's Bantustans to accede to 'independence'. Patrick Laurence (1976) points out that Transkei independence in 1976 came with hidden constitutional consequences, it resulted in the denial of black persons who had a connection with the Transkei the right of being a South African citizen and making them foreigners in their country of birth. Transkei citizens were defined as persons born in the Transkei or legally resident in the Transkei for more than five years, and also applied to persons who were in South Africa but whose origins were in the Transkei (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1969). As Wildman (2005, p. 42) indicates with 'independence' not only were all Transkeians stripped of their South African citizenship but "Tran-

skeian citizenship was automatically given to more than one million blacks living in areas classified by the apartheid government as white, some of whom had never even set foot in Transkei". The bogus 'independence' of Transkei was not recognised by the international community and condemned by the anti-apartheid movement (Phillips, 2017). For the architects of apartheid, however, the Transkei offered the perfect example, since it was already consolidated and was the first self-governing homeland (Southall, 1983). Indeed, in the propaganda of apartheid the Transkei was presented to the world as "a living example of emancipation without chaos" (Department of Bantu Administration, 1961, p. 48)

The establishment of Transkei as 'self-governing' and subsequently as 'independent' territory was accompanied by changes in the institutional and policy environment that impacted prospects for territorial economic development (Southall, 1983). Prior to 1948 the economies of the "Native reserves" were almost exclusively anchored on agriculture and small-holdings. By the 1950s there was evidence of decline and by the 1970s a total collapse of the agricultural base of many reserves (Phillips, 2017). To address the massive economic development challenges of the reserves the apartheid government appointed the Tomlinson Commission, which was an investigation into social and economic planning in the Reserves (Union of South Africa, 1955). The Commission reported that the major development challenge was the paucity of non-agricultural wage opportunities and recommended a programme to promote industrial development and decentralization to support new job creation. From 1959 the programme was geographically concentrated on areas bordering rather than within the reserves but in 1968 the programme was re-oriented around a series of designated industrial 'growth points' inside the Homelands. In the case of Transkei the major focus was upon Umtata, the territorial capital, and Butterworth where government incentives were made available to attract local and foreign industrial investors (Tomlinson & Addleson, 1987). Further support for economic development was given by the establishment of dedicated development corporations for the various Homelands; in the case of Transkei it was the Xhosa Development Corporation (XDC) and subsequently the Transkei Development Corporations. These development corporations, according to Phillips (2017), represented key sites of elite formation and mandated with creating a capitalist class within the Bantustans by supporting entrepreneurs and business development much of which was in trading and taking-over formerly white-owned businesses.

Ostensibly the fragmented and economically underdeveloped Bantustans were supposed to offer opportunities for the advancement of the Black African population and thereby provide a veneer of legitimacy to white rule in the rest of South Africa (Lemon, 1998; Phillips, 2017). In an effort to provide a cloak of economic

legitimacy to these rural areas from the late 1950s and through to the early 1980s these territories were the focus for the implementation of an regional development programme which included during the 1980s the offer of generous investment incentives designed to catalyse industrial development in these peripheral spaces (Tomlinson & Addleson, 1987; Platzky, 1995). However, the programme achieved limited success in Transkei and job growth in factories fell far short of hopes for employment creation in the Bantustan (Dewar, 1987).

Tourism in Transkei Under Apartheid

With the growing acknowledgement of the disappointments of regional policy for industrial decentralization the potential of encouraging tourism development in the mainly rural Bantustan areas came onto the policy agenda of the South African government (Drummond, Rogerson & Drummond, 2022; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2023). In the case of Transkei it was a *rediscovery* of tourism as a sector for development. During the colonial period from the 1920s into the 1940s the Transkei had been promoted as a destination for international tourists in search of the 'primitive', the 'exotic', or wishing to gaze at 'Native life' (Rogerson, 2022b). Marketing material from 1937 stylized the Transkei territories as "a strange primeval land" with "picturesque Bantu life" (Carlyle-Gall, 1937, p. 75). This type of promotion and attraction to international tourists fell away however in the apartheid years. But, beginning in the 1940s the Transkei coast became a popular focus for small flows of domestic tourists from South Africa's major cities, a favoured destination for (white) domestic tourists and most especially around Coffee Bay. During the 1960s and early 1970s a growth of (white) South African domestic tourism occurred in Coffee Bay (Wildman, 2005).

This emergence of domestic tourism visits to Transkei was occurring in the period of 'self-government' and at a time when the local development corporations were taking an interest in tourism and in hotel properties. During 1970 the XDC was responsible for a three-star Transkei Hotel which was opened in Umtata and was used as a training centre for black hotel managers (Transkei Government, 1975). The XDC expanded its portfolio in tourism by taking over several white-owned hotels and holiday resorts. The opportunities for leisure development at the scenically attractive Wild Coast came under particular attention. The Wild Coast was seen as a space of opportunity that could offer business possibilities albeit there were constraints which involved the limited number of accommodation establishments at the time as the available accommodation needed to be refurbished to tourists standards, and the upgrade of accessible roads also needed to be prioritised (Transkei Government, 1975). As earlier stressed, the focus of the

development corporations was upon building Black-owned businesses as a whole and including in the tourism sector.

A landmark in the tourism development history of Transkei was the territory's accession to 'independence' in 1976 which re-cast the environment for tourism investment and tourism development. It should be understood, however, that there was widespread opposition to 'independence' of Transkei on 26 October 1976 which was viewed as illegitimate and essentially imposed by the apartheid government (Streek & Wicksteed, 1981). The Transkei enjoyed a number of potential assets for leisure tourism development and especially around areas of the Wild Coast with Coffee Bay and Port St Johns as distinctive hubs for leisure tourism.

The Transkei was well known for its natural coastal scenery, waterfalls, green forests and scenic seaside resorts (Wildman, 2005). Other attractions include shipwrecks along the Transkei coast, historical sites, and rock paintings (Transkei Government, 1986). The period of 'self-government' witnessed a number of initiatives for tourism promotion prior to the 'independence' of 1976. These included the creation of the division of Tourism and Nature Conservation to oversee nature conservation and tourism promotion, the encouragement of camping tourism along the coastal zone and building of a tourist centre in Umtata to include a Xhosa museum, cinema and arts and craft centre. Policies were introduced also to control development along the coast line. By the early 1980s greater promotion was undertaken of Transkei's potential as a leisure tourism destination. Indeed, tourism came to be seen as a source of income and planning for the coastal areas was based on the identification of several key nodes with the rest of the coastline left in its natural state (Ashley & Ntshona, 2003). Hiking trails and homestays were innovated. In 1981 the Transkei Department of Planning and Commerce produced an official visitor guidebook which stated: "Transkei is a country of considerable beauty ranging from indigenous forests in its inland mountain areas to a unique coastline which is unequalled for its unspoilt natural beauty. The policy of my Department is to preserve the beauty of the coastline and at the same time to encourage tourist development in selected areas" (Republic of the Transkei, 1981, p. 2). The Transkei government recognised that tourism had the potential to boost investment possibilities, and improve the international image of Transkei (Daily Dispatch, 1985). This said, the post-1986 era of sanctions resulted in minimal international tourism with the exception of (essentially domestic) South African visitors.

As indicated in the above discussion the major issues around tourism policy and planning in Transkei centred around coastal development. It is observed, however, that remarkably little policy documentation surrounds what was the major change in Transkei tourism during the independence period, namely the establishment of casino tourism. For Jennifer Briedenhann and Eugenia Wickens (2004) the growth

of casino tourism is viewed as an important aspect of rural tourism in South Africa. With Transkei 'independence' in 1976, tourism developers were offered new opportunities for casino development as the status of 'independence' was a means to circumvent South African government restrictions towards what was deemed as such 'morally dubious' activities as gambling, inter-racial relations and pornography (Haines & Tomaselli, 1992). Wildman (2005, p. 86) observed the Transkei, as with other subsequent 'independent' Bantustans, "provided the ideal location for white South Africans to indulge themselves". The Holiday Inn group launched in December 1981 the first casino-resort in Transkei which was built at Mzamba on the Natal South Coast with white domestic visitors from the Durban metropolitan area and surrounds the target market.

Several studies confirm that the casino developments that occurred in Transkei were linked to corruption and arrangements which were made between Sol Kerzner and the leadership of Transkei (Streek & Wicksteed, 1981; Wildman, 2005; Phillips, 2017). This situation of corrupt practices in casino-resort developments in Transkei was replicated in other Bantustans (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2022b). William Beinart (2012) shows that the newly available money and resources coupled with new modes of government created an environment for patronage, personalised power and corruption by the ruling elite within the Bantustans as local politics revolved around access to new assets. It is widely recorded that the former leaders of Transkei had a close relationship with the hotel group Sun International and its chairman Sol Kerzner. The Mzamba Development Company was given the right to establish a hotel, casino and recreational facilities. It was also given the right to demolish existing cottages on the condition that the owners be compensated. In 1979 the local community was removed from their land to make way for this tourism development at the time when the Transkei government went into agreement with Sun International to construct the Wild Coast Holiday Inn (Baskin, 1984). At least 77 houses were demolished with impacts for over 1000 people of Mzamba to make way for the construction of the hotel (Baskin, 1984).

The local community were threatened and eventually removed from their land to make way for the hotel development as a result of the agreement between Holiday Inn and the Transkei leadership. Overall, the Matanzima brothers (Kaizer and George) who ruled the Transkei as leaders were known for rampant corruption and mismanagement of state funds. The younger brother George was reputed to have made demands for bribes even from some of his Ministers (Naki, 2017). In an interview conducted with a committee member of the Wild Coast Sun Mbizana Development Trust it was explained as follows:

> Sun International arrived in 1978, and people were removed by Matanzima and Sol Kerzner. They had made promises to the community that people would work for Sun International for the rest of their lives, including their children and future generation. But they were unhappy because their houses were bulldozed, they were forcibly removed… The people left their kraals and plantation, and they lost their value and dignity during that time. All these years from 1978, people got poor more than the time they had their homesteads, during the time people practised farming they had their cows, and goats, plantation of banana, mango, avocados. They came and destroyed everything, Sun International, they destroyed graves and livelihoods (Interview Respondent).

The Bantustan administrations were bywords for corruption (Phillips, 2017). It was during the early 1980s, the period of major corruption surrounding tourism development in the Transkei, when this Bantustan attracted the interest of South African tourism capital. Several hotel enterprises investigated opportunities for casino development mainly in the territory's coastal areas and Umtata, the Transkei capital (Rogerson, 2019). With 'independence' new market opportunities were opened in Umtata to supply the growing market for business tourism as Umtata acquired the status as well as certain of the associated trappings of a 'national' capital by accommodating the steady flow of diplomats and government officials from Pretoria (Rogerson, 2019). By contrast, Wildman (2005) documents that whilst 'independence' for Transkei may have created new opportunities in casino tourism at the same time it dampened traditional coastal leisure tourism. Coastal tourism proprietors reported occupancy rates dropped dramatically following 'independence' as their core base of regular white domestic tourists was nervous if not 'scared' of holidaying in an area with a black government (Wildman, 2005). At Coffee Bay the situation of coastal tourism worsened throughout the 1980s and the image of Transkei became badly tarnished by two military coups and when stories circulated in 1990 of planned attacks on white tourists who might visit the Transkei during the Christmas holiday season (Daily Dispatch, 1990). Although the Transkei authorities sought to assure tourists about safety many visitors cancelled their bookings at Wild Coast hotels (Daily Dispatch, 1990). The consequences for coastal leisure tourism were disastrous with hotels closing and the former popular holiday resort of Coffee Bay becoming a 'ghost town' by the early 1990s (Wildman, 2005). At the end of apartheid and the time of democratic change in 1994, the tourism economy of Transkei still exhibited signs of distress as a consequence of its poor image for the leisure market of South African domestic tourists (Rogerson, 2022b).

Conclusion

Tourism spaces and the landscapes that tourists inhabit inevitably bear imprints of the past. It is essential therefore that tourism geographers expand their understanding of tourisms past and of the historical evolution of destinations. This paper has used an historical approach and archival sources to recover the past tourism development of one of South Africa's Bantustans during the apartheid period. The research on the Transkei represents a study in rural tourism, a field of research which has expanded considerably over the past two decades but with only limited focus on historical issues. It is shown that tourism became a sector of policy interest with the disappointments attached to a national government programme for industrial development and the continuing imperative for employment creation. Tourism promotion initially was focused on leisure tourism around the natural beauty and attractions of Transkei's coastal areas. With the grant of 'independence', however, a new institutional environment emerged which resulted in the Transkei becoming a focus for casino tourism at a time when casino gambling was prohibited in South Africa. It was shown that the growth of casino tourism was, however, linked to corruption which took place between South African tourism capital and the leadership of this Bantustan.

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Turystyka wiejska w RPA w czasach apartheidu na przykładzie bantustanu Transkei

Streszczenie. W ciągu ostatnich dwóch dekad można zauważyć wzrost zainteresowania badaniami na temat turystyki wiejskiej. Jednym z aspektów tej turystyki, któremu nie poświęca się wiele miejsca w literaturze, jest historyczna ewolucja obszarów turystyki wiejskiej. W artykule wykorzystano podejście historyczne i źródła archiwalne, aby przeanalizować ewolucję turystyki wiejskiej w okresie apartheidu w jednym z byłych bantustanów w RPA, a mianowicie w Transkei. Autorzy wykazują, że turystyka stała się przedmiotem zainteresowania ówczesnych władz RPA z powodu rozczarowań związanych z rządowymi programami decentralizacji przemysłu. W początkowym okresie podkreślano zalety turystyki opartej na walorach przyrodniczych i atrakcjach turystycznych obszarów przybrzeżnych Transkei. Jednak wraz z utworzeniem bantustanu i przyznaniem „niezależności" pojawiło się nowe środowisko instytucjonalne, w wyniku którego Transkei stał się centrum turystyki

kasynowej, w czasie gdy w RPA hazard w kasynach był zakazany. Rozwój turystyki kasynowej był jednak powiązany z korupcją, do której dochodziło na styku południowoafrykańskiego kapitału turystycznego i przywództwa tego bantustanu.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka wiejska, apartheid, Afryka Południowa, geografia turystyki, podejście historyczne, Transkei, turystyka kasynowa

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Motives for Participating in Study-Abroad Programmes and the Impact of the Pandemic on Selected Universities in South Africa

Abstract. The article explores the motivations of students participating in study-abroad programmes and the effects of pandemic-related travel restrictions and associated regulations at three universities in South Africa. The author analyses the policies of universities in the Western Cape province regarding study-abroad programmes when pandemic restrictions were in place and once they were lifted. The discussion is based on quantitative data collected during a survey involving 75 foreign students and qualitative data obtained during interviews with 5 programme coordinators at the international offices of the selected universities. The majority of foreign students surveyed were from Europe. While anxieties and uncertainties exist, university representatives were found to be hopeful about the future of study-abroad programmes.

Keywords: study abroad programmes, tourism, South Africa, COVID-19, travel motivations

1. Introduction

In recent years, the number of students selecting to study abroad globally has increased. According to UNESCO, internationally mobile students are those who cross international boundaries to participate in educational activities at receiving destinations (Tomasi, Paviotti & Cavicchi, 2020). Consequently, educational tourism (edu-tourism) has emerged as one of the fastest-growing sectors of the travel and tourism industry, since study-abroad programmes offer benefits not only to students but also to host destinations (Abrahams & Bama, 2022) in the form of additional revenue from international students' expenditures on accom-

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modation, food and beverages, entertainment, and leisure activities, and, in certain programmes, tuition fees and taxes (Tomasi, Paviotti & Cavicchi, 2021; Samah & Ahmadian, 2013). Benefits derived by international students are not limited to their educational activities, but also include interactions with local communities and experiences that foster their personal and professional growth. The whole study-abroad experience is also associated with numerous opportunities for experiential learning and tourism (Tomasi, Paviotti & Cavicchi, 2021).

There is no doubt that study-abroad programmes were seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many students chose to either cancel or defer their plans to study in other countries. Although higher education institutions (HEIs) were quick to adapt to the situation by substituting in-person lectures with virtual options, pandemic restrictions ultimately impacted students' academic performance, exam results, the sense of safety and legal status in their host countries. In South Africa for instance, an Indonesian student on a brief visit to Cape Town during of the outbreak of the pandemic expressed his experience in the following words: "I was by myself, in a foreign country with no one I knew, in the middle of a pandemic" (Imanda, 2020).

International students are classified as educational tourists (Abdullateef & Biodun, 2014). Subcategories of edu-tourism include spring/winter break trips, study abroad trips, educational cruises, seminar vacations, school trips, and skill-enhancement retreats (Tourism & More, 2010). The current study focuses on the study-abroad segment, which can include "anything from six-week intensive study sessions to a full year of cultural and linguistic involvement" (Tourism & More, 2010).

Globally, there are an estimated twenty thousand universities, and twelve of them (three of which are in the Western Cape province of South Africa) are ranked in the top two thousand, (South Africa – The Good News, 2021; Center for World University Rankings, 2022). These are the University of Cape Town (UCT) ranked 270th, Stellenbosch University (SU), ranked 441st, and the University of the Western Cape (UWC), ranked 1186th. Though not ranked in the top 2000, another university situated in the Western Cape province of South Africa is the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). These institutions are frequently selected by international students wishing to study in South Africa (Abrahams & Bama, 2022).

Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, attempts were made to critically examine the future of international higher education and the pandemic emphasised the importance of these issues (Mok et al., 2021).

The following study focuses on the motivations of international students enrolled at three of the four universities in the Western Cape province. In addition to contributing to the literature on the motivations of international students in

general, the study addresses the question of motivations in the context of the pandemic in the hope that the results could inform strategies that could facilitate the recovery of the study-abroad sector in South Africa.

2. Motivations to Study Abroad

There are various reasons why students decide to study abroad and a number of factors need to be considered, such as which country and which university to choose (Eder, Smith & Pitts, 2010). While there is a wealth of literature on international students' motives (Casas Trujillo, Mohammed & Saleh, 2020; Harazneh et al., 2018; Ozoglu, Gur & Coskun, 2015; Anderson & Bhati, 2012; Ivy, 2010; Lu, Mavondo & Qiu, 2009), there are very few studies about reasons for studying in the Global South, particularly from the African perspective. By invoking four theories of motivation (Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1970), Dann's theory of push and pull motivations (1981), Crompton's socio-psychological motivations (1979) and Pearce and Lee's travel career patterns (TCP) (2005)), the authors propose a conceptual model describing students' reasons for studying abroad (Figure 1). The model illustrates how the different theories can be linked to explain students' reasons for studying, including the desire to develop academically, mentally, and physically. Compared to other travel decisions, Mazzarol and Soutar (2002, p. 84) argue that the decision to study abroad is influenced by push factors, which help students decide "whether to go," and pull factors that explain why they are attracted by a given

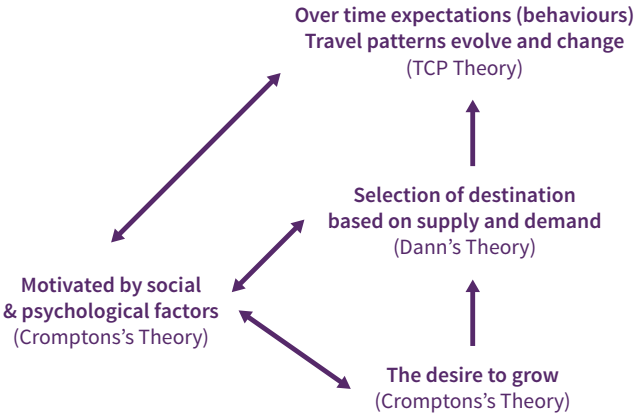

Figure 1: A conceptual model of students' motives for studying abroad
Source: Adapted from Maslow (1970); Crompton (1979); Dann (1981); Pearce and Lee (2005)

location, i.e., "where to go" (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Kim, Jogaratnam & Noh, 2006). The desire to study abroad is frequently sparked by social and psychological factors, as well as considerations regarding supply or demand. Because travel expectations and behaviours change over time, these theories can be used to explain constantly changing trends with respect to motivations associated with studying abroad.

3. COVID-19, International Higher Education, and Study Abroad Programmes

Loss (2019) notes that internationalisation and diplomatic ties between nations have made international travel more popular. The same trend can be observed with regard to educational tourism.

The educational tourism industry was obviously affected by the pandemic, especially in countries that are among the most popular destinations for foreign students, such as Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, France, China, Japan, and the United States of America (UNWTO, 2022). Even though the adverse effects on edu-tourism and student mobility have been well documented in the Global North, some scholars remain optimistic that international student mobility will remain strong after the COVID-19 pandemic if efforts on the part of educational institutions are combined with appropriate tourism policy measures (Johnston, 2021; Mok et al., 2021; Zubrytska, 2021). However, these negative impacts have not been adequately analysed in connection with study-abroad programmes at universities in the Western Cape province and are therefore discussed in the next section.

4. Impacts of COVID-19 on International Higher Education

4.1. Psychological Impacts

In a survey report looking at the psychological impact of COVID-19 on study-abroad programmes in 2020 (Educations.com, 2020; Pang, 2020), it was found that 78% of prospective students were planning to begin studying in the next two years. Only 3.9% of prospective students said they were planning to cancel their future study-abroad plans because of the pandemic. In a study conducted at the start of 2022 among Indian students (Roy, 2022) found that around 50% of study-abroad aspirants intended to postpone their plans until the next academic year, while oth-

ers explored study options in a different country in the hope of being able to travel overseas and continue their studies.

4.2. COVID-19 and Edu-tourism in South Africa

South Africa established itself as an international higher education hub and had been hosting increasing numbers of international students until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (Jooste & Hagenmeier, 2020). In a report published by Wesgro (2020), the global student travel market was valued at $33 billion, representing 23% of the global travel market in 2019. According to the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA), mobility for international students to universities in South Africa was seriously affected by the pandemic restrictions imposed by the government (IEASA, 2020), with a 100% drop in the early stages of the pandemic (Abrahams & Bama, 2022). To curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the South African government implemented a 5-level alert lockdown regulation (Cape Town Travel, 2021; Nyikana & Bama, 2023). The five-stage risk-adjusted strategy was implemented at various times during the pandemic until they were discontinued in April 2022 (Table 1).

Table 1: South Africa's Risk-Adjusted Strategy for Phasing out COVID-19 Lockdowns

Alert Level	Description	Implementation period	Measures
Level 5	High virus spread and/or low health system readiness.	27 March for three weeks but later extended to 30 April 2020	Full lockdown
Level 4	Moderate to high virus spread with low to moderate health system readiness	30 April – 30 May 2020	High restrictions
Level 3	Moderate virus spread, with moderate health system readiness	31 May – 16 August 2020	Moderate restrictions
Level 2	Moderate virus spread with high health system readiness	17 August 2020 – 31 January 2021	Moderate to low restrictions
Level 1	Low virus spread with high health system readiness.	28 February 2021 – 25 July 2021	Low restrictions
Level 3	Moderate virus spread, with moderate health system readiness	26 July 2021 – 12 September 2021	Moderate restrictions
Level 2	Moderate virus spread with high health system readiness	13 September 2021 – 30 September 2021	Moderate to low restrictions
Level 1	Low virus spread with high health system readiness	01 October 2021 – 4 April 2022	Low restrictions
National Health Act: Regulations: Surveillance and control of notifiable medical conditions: Amendment			
None	Low virus spread with high health system readiness	4 April 2022 – 22 June 2022	Low restrictions

Source: Adapted from Rogerson and Rogerson (2020)

5. Method and Data

The main purpose of the empirical study described in this section was to examine the motivations of foreign students at three universities in the Western Cape province: CPUT, SU and UCT. The study was conducted using a mixed-method approach. Quantitative data were collected between September 2020 and October 2021 using a questionnaire developed after an extensive literature review and other similar studies on study abroad motivations. The questionnaire was distributed to all foreign students via the international offices of each university using Google Docs. It contained questions about respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, their tourist activities during study-abroad programmes and reasons for choosing South Africa. Since the average population of foreign students at the universities in the Western Cape province between 2019–2021 was 726, the minimum sample size was 131. However, because the majority of international students were absent because of the pandemic, only 75 questionnaires were returned.

Qualitative data were obtained from 5 respondents employed at the international offices of three of the four universities during semi-structured in-depth interviews held between November 2020 and December 2021. Additionally, given that the biggest group of foreign students at the four universities was from Germany, interviews were also conducted with employees of international offices at two German universities in the state of Baden-Württemberg. After producing transcripts of the recorded interviews, content analysis was conducted to identify common themes and sub-themes associated with the study's aim.

6. Results and Discussion

Table 2: Demographic profiles of respondents (*n*=75)

Characteristics	Category	% of total
Nationality	German	36.0
	French	27.0
	American	13.0
	Dutch	7.0
	Italian	3.0
	Swiss	3.0
	Hungarian	1.0
	Norwegian	1.0
	Ukraine	1.0
	Finnish	1.0
	Belgian	1.0
	Austrian	1.0
	Slovenian	1.0
	Brazilian	1.0
	Multi-national	1.0
Sex	Female	56.0
	Male	42.7
	Non-conforming	1.3
Age	18–24	84.0
	25–34	16.0
Current university	CPUT	27.0
	SU	58.0
	UCT	15.0
Current place of residence	Renting with strangers	38.7
	University residence	25.3
	Renting by myself	24.0
	Renting with family members	9.3
Study major	Business	53.0
	Social Sciences	17.0
	Other (Automotive Business/Economics, Foreign Trade)	8.0
	Natural Sciences	7.0
	Communication, journalism, media studies	4.0
	Engineering	3.0
	Education	3.0
Main source of funding	Self-funded	60.0
	Scholarship	12.0
	Both	20.0
	Other (financial aid from a US university, partial student funding, parents)	8.0

Source: Survey data

6.1 Previous Visits and Tourist Activities in South Africa

Only 16.0% of respondents indicated that had previously visited South Africa. 75% of them had visited South Africa once while the rest — two or more times.

Table 3 shows tourism-related activities the respondents engaged in during their stay in South Africa.

Table 3: Tourist activities

Tourism Activities	Number of respondents *n*=75	%
Visiting key tourism attractions	64	85.3
Wine tasting	61	81.3
Shopping	66	88.0
Enjoying the sun, sea, and sand	44	58.7
Participation in cultural and historical activities	41	54.7
Multi-day tours	39	52.0
Hiking	62	82.0
Nightlife and casinos	48	64.0
Water sports	28	37.3
Safaris	44	58.7
Festivals and concerts	35	46.7

Source: Survey data

6.2. Respondents' Views about the Western Cape as a Study-Abroad Destination

Asked if they would recommend South Africa as a study-abroad destination, 90% of the respondents answered affirmatively, while the remaining answers were split between 'maybe' (9%) and 'no' (1%).

6.3. Reasons for Choosing Study Abroad Programmes In the Western Cape (Push Factors)

The next part of the questionnaire was designed to elicit respondents' reasons for choosing to study abroad. Respondents had to indicate how important a given reason was by choosing one option from a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all important' (1), 'unimportant' (2), 'neither important nor unimportant' (3), 'important' (4), and 'very important' (5). In the analysis, pairs of similar responses were combined into "Important" (important + very important) and "Unimportant" (not at all important + unimportant).

The most frequently mentioned reasons for choosing to study abroad included the prospect of a different cultural experience (97.3%), living in another country (97.3%), international experience (96.0%) and a chance to make new friends (81.4%).

Reasons considered to be unimportant by the majority of respondents included being with one's partner" (89.3%), lack of available programmes in their home country (82.7%), funding received (78.7%) and "that's where my friends are going" (78.3).

Furthermore, factor analysis was performed on the raw data (using the Oblimin rotation with Kaiser normalisation). Five factors that push students to study abroad were identified (Table 4). The factors accounted for 64% of the total variance, with an acceptable to high level of reliability (RC ranging from 0.55 to 0.77) indicating that each of the factors was internally consistent. Lastly, correlations between the factors and their component items (AIC) were all above 0.3, so can be regarded as acceptable. To ensure that the factors could be interpreted in relation to the original 5-point Likert scale, factor scores were calculated as mean values (M) of all relevant items. Standard deviations calculated for these values ranged from 0.799 to 4.339.

Table 4: Push factors motivating students to study abroad

Motivational Factors and Items	**FL**	**M**	**RC**	**AIC**	**SD**
Factor 1: Quality and networking aspects		3.34	0.73	.471	4.133
To improve career prospects	0.79				
International exposure in the field of study	0.69				
To obtain quality education	0.69				
Parental encouragement	0.49				
To make new friends	0.47				
Factor 2: Marketing and financial considerations		2.39	0.77	.460	4.339
Cost of study	0.79				
Funding received	0.70				
University marketing activities	0.66				
University counsellor influence	0.61				
To become independent	0.47				
Factor 3: International exposure		4.82	0.64	.472	0.799
To experience life in another country	0.82				
To gain international experience	0.70				
Factor 4: Socio-cultural		2.47	0.56	.406	2.324
This is where my friends are going	0.76				
To be with my partner	0.54				
Factor 5: Regulatory		1.57	0.55	.383	1.768
Expected as part of university programme	0.84				
Lack of available programme in my home country	0.53				
Total variance explained:	64%				

Source: Survey data. KEY: FL= Factor loading; M = Mean; RC = Reliability coefficient, AIC = Average interitem correlation; SD = Standard deviation

6.4. Reasons for Choosing Study Abroad Programmes in the Western Cape (Pull Factors)

The most frequently indicated reasons for choosing South African universities included natural and environmental factors (93.3%), favourable climate and weather conditions (86.6%), use of English as the language of instruction (82.6%), common language (65.3%) and the lower cost of living in South Africa (56.0%). Results of factor analysis are shown in Table 5. As can be seen, the five factors identified in the analysis accounted for 66% of the total variance, with an acceptable to high level of reliability (RC ranging from 0.65 to 0.88), indicating that each of the factors was internally consistent. Correlations between the factors and their component items (AIC) were higher than in the case of the push factors and ranged from 0.449 to 0.798. Mean values of all relevant items were calculated for each factor (M) and their standard deviations ranged from 2.946 to 6.570.

Table 5: Pull factors motivating students to study in South Africa

Motivational Factors and Items	FL	M	RC	AIC	SD
Factor 1: Quality		2.77	0.88	.653	5.393
Qualified and friendly academic staff	0.80				
Expertise and specialisation in area of study interest	0.75				
Availability of labs and research instruments	0.67				
Accreditation and reputation of the country and its institutions	0.62				
University services	0.62				
Factor 2: Socio-Political		2.12	0.86	.688	6.570
Low rate of discrimination	0.84				
Safety and security	0.75				
Favourable government policies	0.67				
Familiarity with own culture	0.62				
Closeness to the home country (proximity)	0.49				
Political or historical ties with South Africa	0.48				
Easy to get visa/visa free	0.46				
Factor 3: Marketing		2.45	0.83	.516	5.604
Referrals from friends, family members and social media	0.76				
Domestic websites	0.69				
Media advertising	0.67				
Overseas websites	0.65				

Motivational Factors and Items	FL	M	RC	AIC	SD
Lower cost of living in South Africa	0.54				
Easy admission	0.51				
Factor 4: Environmental	4.13	0.74	.798	2.515	
Natural and environmental factors e.g., landscape and beach	0.89				
Favourable climate and weather condition	0.88				
Factor 5: Social		3.58	0.65	.449	2.946
English as the teaching medium	0.84				
Common language, and travel	0.69				
University ranking	0.50				
Total variance explained:	66%				

Source: Survey data. KEY: FL= Factor loading; Mean= M; RC = Reliability coefficient
AIC = Average interitem correlation ; SD = Standard deviation

6.5. Effects of Covid-19 on Study Abroad Programmes in South Africa

The second part of the study is based on data collected during in-depth interviews with 5 respondents employed at the international offices of the three universities (CPUT, SU and UCT). The purpose of these interviews was to get a better understanding of how the educational tourism sector in the Western Cape province was affected by the pandemic and the socio-economic impacts of programme cancellations and suspensions, travel restrictions and bans for universities.

Provided below are some of the responses given by the interviewees.

> COVID-19 has immensely affected study-abroad programmes and exchanges; as a result of international travel bans at our university has stopped all physical exchange programmes and E+ funded projects. Funds cannot be used up because the requirement is for students and staff to travel to another country.
> Student intake and recruitment of students were heavily affected by COVID-19 because of mobility and travel restrictions.

In 2019, South Africa was the world's 8th most popular foreign student-receiving destination, with 2.2% of the global share and 40,712 foreign students (Galal, 2022; Oyeleye, 2023). The majority of those students come from Sub-Saharan Africa (Oyeleye, 2023; South Africa, 2020). As regards universities in the Western Cape, 13,139 foreign students were enrolled in 2017 (South Africa, 2020). One of the interviewees noted:

> Before COVID-19, our numbers were significantly higher … because it is a very highly sought out tourism destination, so location is probably a very big deal. Students are coming for the experience, so it was a massive thing when things went online, and the numbers of international students declined significantly.

Nonetheless, the interviewees were quite optimistic about the future and thought that the pandemic would not have a significant long-term impact on study-abroad programmes because the situation would change thanks to vaccination rollouts and the destination's reputation.

> From what I have seen, a lot of students still want to come Western Cape, Cape Town. I am not sure about the rest of South Africa though. We had students that wanted to come during the pandemic though not many. I have seen an increase in the numbers of students, they want to travel here they want to come, and I think it is because of the destination… Also, students have seen the advertising, they've seen the university and what it has to offer. I think the pandemic will pass and we will recover from it, our numbers will pick up. However, the pandemic has shown us that we do have a lot of work, such as the need to digitise these programmes and digitise education and programmes. Students took a bit more time to make their decision to travel to South Africa because of the pandemic. At the beginning, the restrictions were very strict. But South Africa is a good destination, foreign students still want to come here, and I am hoping they will keep wanting to come.

The interviewees pointed out that effective and efficient communication was necessary to maintain such a positive outlook and consideration, particularly in the face of controversial media discussions surrounding the course of the pandemic and the various viral mutations, which occasionally were thought to have originated in South Africa (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2022).

6.6. The Future of Study-Abroad Programmes after the Pandemic

The interviewees' suggestions and expectations concerning the future of study abroad programmes after the pandemic are summarised in Figure 2. All of them are intended to make it easier for foreign students to come to South Africa. All interviewees agreed that more attention should be paid to communication policies for example by intensifying marketing efforts to promote South Africa as a safe study-abroad travel destination.

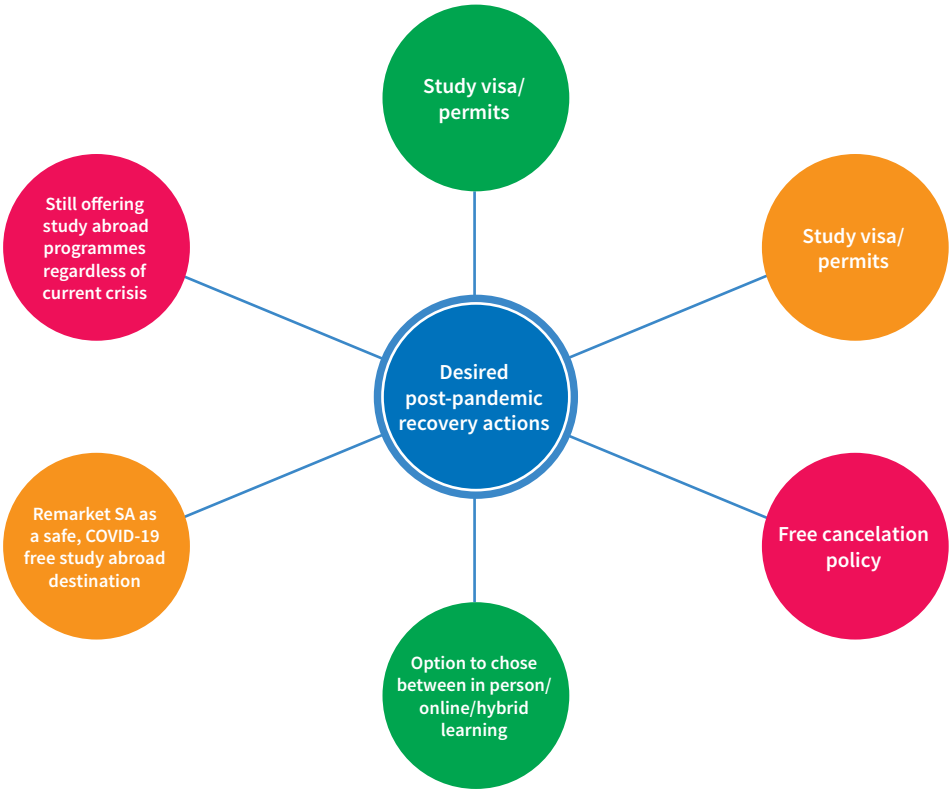

Figure 2: Post-pandemic recovery actions expected/proposed by the interviewees.

One interviewee suggested using augmented reality (AR) as a marketing tool to attract foreign students to come to the Western Cape.

> I think augmented reality (AR) can be used as a tool to influence students' decisions. Especially now with COVID. I think it can make a difference. I was [actually] a part of this; I went to a tourism event in Cape Town, and they were exploring the possibilities of AR. So, I think it can make a difference.

In addition, and supporting the previous position, one of the coordinators from a German university indicated that:

> VR/AR might not be the first motivating factor to select a destination, but it supports the decision to go somewhere (1 part of the decision).

Furthermore, another interviewee made the following suggestion:

> If I saw an informative video about the campus and destination featuring the contact person speaking it would be very useful.

Marketing efforts associated with future study abroad programmes should highlight key attractions identified in the current study, such as cultural experiences, and the allure of the Western Cape in general.

> Study-abroad programmes are about the experience of course, it is exciting to go to another country but there is also the educational aspect, the quality of the courses. So, in the case of courses that require a lot of social engagement, how can they be done virtually? Presence would be required.

Another interviewee from a German university that sends students to the universities in the Western Cape, said that students choose the destination because it is an English-speaking country, stating that:

> Students want to go to a country where people speak English, which is an attractive destination because of its weather, climate, and seaside; students want to go somewhere they haven't been to before. Also, because South Africa is probably more developed than other African countries, students feel safer and that's why they keep wanting to go there.

The interviews confirm that foreign students are interested in countries that provide both good quality educational and tourist experiences.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The pandemic presented many challenges for study-abroad programmes and the wider educational tourism and tourism industries. Nonetheless, the universities in the Western Cape remain quite optimistic about the future of study-abroad programmes. However, their successful resumption will require cooperation between the government, universities and international partners.

The results of the study show that South Africa and the Western Cape in particular remain popular edu-tourism destinations despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The main push factors motivating foreign students to choose South Africa as a study-abroad destination include diverse cultural experiences, inter-

national experience and making new friends; among the key pull factors were environmental factors, the English language and the lower cost of living.

Interviewed respondents employed at the international offices remained optimistic that international student mobility would remain strong after the COVID-19 pandemic if efforts on the part of educational institutions were combined with appropriate tourism policy measures, such as positioning South Africa, and the Western Cape in particular, as a safe destination, greater transparency in the management of pandemic-related issues, simplifying visa procedures for international students and focused marketing campaigns (Johnston, 2021; Mok et al., 2021; Zubrytska, 2021). From the marketing perspective, effective and efficient communication is required to maintain such a positive outlook and consideration, particularly in light of controversial media discussions surrounding the management of the pandemic (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2022).

With current student mobility in Sub-Saharan Africa standing at 430,000 and predicted to double by 2050, South Africa's position as a popular destination for international students remains important for the country's economy (Kigotho, 2023; Oyeleye, 2023).

This study has obvious limitations. Firstly, due to lockdown restrictions and university anti-pandemic policies, the author had to use university call centres and switchboards to reach the desired offices because it was difficult to visit the universities in person. The result was an exceptionally low response: students who were not physically present in South Africa could not often be reached by email and asked to respond to the questionnaire. The second part of the study concerning the effects of COVID-19 on study abroad programmes was only based on the views of programme coordinators and did not account for the perspective of foreign students.

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Motywacje studentów zagranicznych oraz wpływ pandemii na wybrane uczelnie w RPA

Streszczenie: Tematem artykułu są motywacje studentów zagranicznych studiujących na trzech uczelniach w RPA w świetle ograniczeń spowodowanych pandemią. Autor analizuje politykę uczelni w prowincji Western Cape w odniesieniu do studentów zagranicznych w okresie obowiązywania restrykcji związanych z pandemią oraz po ich zniesieniu. Rozważania opierają się na danych ilościowych uzyskanych za pomocą ankiety z udziałem 75 studentów zagranicznych oraz danych jakościowych zebranych w czasie wywiadów z 5 koordynatorami studiów zagranicznych pracującymi na wybranych uczelniach. Większość ankietowanych studentów pochodziła z Europy. Pomimo obaw i niepewności przedstawiciele uniwersytetów wyrażali optymizm co do przyszłości programów dla studentów zagranicznych.

Słowa kluczowe: programy studiów za granicą, turystyka, RPA, COVID-19, motywacje do podróży

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Challenges of Planning and Developing an Urban Ecotourism Destination in South Africa

Abstract. Ecotourism is a major driver of tourism in rural, usually remote peripheral regions in several African countries including South Africa. The aim in this article is to examine challenges associated with planning and developing an urban ecotourism project in South Africa. The study focuses on the Dinokeng Game Reserve, which is located on the boundary of one of South Africa's major metropolitan areas and in the country's economic heartland. This ecotourism project offers a new niche product for urban tourism development. Using literature sources and information collected during 27 semi structured interviews the author analyses the key steps in the planning of this innovative urban tourism product. The study contributes to the growing body of research on South African tourism and to the broader international literature on the role of distinctive niche products in the development of urban tourism in the Global South.

Keywords: ecotourism, urban tourism, Dinokeng game reserve, urban eco-tourism, South Africa

1. Introduction

Ecotourism emerged during the late 20th century with the growth of policy interest in conservation and environmental matters (Ceballos-Lascarain, 1993). Conservation managers acknowledged the importance of tourism as a logical component of sustainable development and the need for a careful planning of ecotourism destinations (Wood, 1999). Nevertheless, the concept of ecotourism has been the subject of much debate that has given rise to numerous definitions (Spenceley and Rylance, 2021). The International Ecotourism Society defines it as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of lo-

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cal people" (Bricker, 2017, p. 1). Ecotourism is therefore associated with tourism development that follows a set of principles promoting social, environmental and economic sustainability (Bricker, 2017). For Spenceley and Rylance (2021) ecotourism is an essential element that contributes to achieving several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Ecotourism can be traced back to the 1960s and is associated with six key elements: (1) it is nature-based; (2) it preserves conservation; (3) it promotes education; (4) it encourages sustainability; (5) it distributes benefits, and (6) it is ethically responsible or aware (Donohue and Needham, 2006; Reimer and Walter, 2012; Ballantyne and Packer, 2013). Based on these key characteristics, Weaver and Lawton (2007) conceptualise ecotourism as follows: attractions should be predominantly nature-based, visitor interactions with those attractions should centre on learning or education, while experience and product management should follow principles and practices associated with ecological, social-cultural and economic sustainability. A further definition regards ecotourism as the promotion of appropriate and environmentally sensitive development, and as a way of achieving social justice and enhancing the quality of life and stability, especially for communities in the immediate vicinity of protected areas.

South Africa is one of the leading international destinations for ecotourism (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2018a; Litheko, 2022). It is rich in ecological assets and ranks as the world's third most biodiverse country (Ferreira, 2007). The expansion of nature-based tourism has proven an effective strategy for improving the quality of life for households in rural settlements, which surround protected areas and game reserves, the most well-known being that of Kruger National Park (Ferreira and Harmse, 1999; Ferreira, 2004). The historical origins of these spaces of ecotourism and struggles around the establishment of protected areas are documented in studies by Carruthers (1989, 1994). Arguably, the establishment of Kruger National Park was a critical moment in the historical evolution of ecotourism and sustainable tourism debates in South Africa (Carruthers, 1989, 1994, 2008). For several decades Kruger National Park was the focal point for conservation initiatives and incipient ecotourism developments in South Africa. This leading role continued into the apartheid period from 1948–1991. Following the fall of apartheid and the democratic transition in 1994, there was a change of focus with regard to the establishment of protected areas and sustainable tourism, with more attention paid to ecotourism impacts (Ferreira, 2003, 2004; Carruthers, 2006, 2008; Büscher and Ramutsindela, 2015). One significant example of this shift in the post-apartheid period was the establishment of peace parks and transfrontier parks, which would play a vital role in ecotourism development across the broader region of Southern Africa. Peace parks are large conservation areas

that cross international state borders with a goal to saving biodiversity, enabling community development and aiding international collaboration (Ramutsindela, 2004, 2007).

As can be seen, ecotourism and nature-based tourism in South Africa has an extended and chequered history. One common thread, however, is that the development of ecotourism projects in South Africa — as is the case with most of the world — has been associated with rural spaces, which are often remote locations in peripheral regions of the space economy. It is against this backdrop that the aim of this article is to examine challenges surrounding the development of an *urban* ecotourism project in South Africa. The study concerns the Dinokeng Game Reserve, located within one of South Africa's major metropolitan areas and in the country's economic heartland. Two sections of discussion and analysis are presented. The next section provides the wider context within the literature on urban tourism in general, and on tourism in South Africa in particular. This section is followed by the analysis of the challenges encountered in the process of planning and establishing this urban ecotourism destination in South Africa.

2. Literature Review

Urban tourism remained an unrecognised category in research until the 1980s (Law, 1993), since it was not viewed to be significant enough to merit consideration in policy, frameworks and planning. Nevertheless, cities in the Global North, such as Amsterdam, New York, Hong Kong, London and Singapore were slowly being recognised as vibrant urban tourism destinations (Rogerson and Visser, 2006). Arguably, the topic of urban tourism remained a poorly understood research category during the 2000s despite its global importance and growing role in modern urban management (van den Berg, van der Borg, and van der Meer, 1995). A surge in urban tourism was driven by two important factors. First, tourists became increasingly interested in urban destinations to experience their heritage sites, cultural attractions (such as museums) and events/festivals. The second impulse came from urban policy makers aiming to revitalise urban economies through urban tourism as part of place-based economic development programmes (Rogerson and Visser, 2006, 2007). As van der Borg (2022, p. 1) points out, "many cities started to understand that the continuously expanding tourism market offered them concrete possibilities for enlarging their economic bases which had been eroding rapidly because of deindustrialization". These developments significantly strengthened urban tourism as a major gateway for different types of activities (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2021b).

Cities offer a range of attractions for business and leisure tourists (including day trippers) as well as those visiting friends and relatives (Law, 1992; Page and Connell, 2006). Tourism initiatives are encouraged by local (and national) governments as they can serve as an opportunity to expand the market and encourage social and economic development of cities (Law, 1992). This can be enhanced through three basic elements: a city's image, the quality of the tourism product, and the expected effectiveness of tourism development over time (Law, 1993). As noted by van der Borg (2022), many urban centres in the Global North began to systematically pursue policies for tourism development to make themselves more attractive for both tourists and local residents. Efforts focused on developing strong brands to enhance city images and new tourism products including waterfront developments, museums, festivals, events, sports complexes, heritage and entertainment centres (Law, 1993). As a whole, this was the making of an 'infrastructure of pleasure' that would assist in building urban tourism destinations (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2017, 2021a).

As pointed out by Van der Borg (2022, p. 2), the result was that urban tourism "grew to become one of the most important segments in the global tourism market". One outcome of its emergence has been an expansion of research interest and a surge of publications about urban tourism in many cities in the Global North. The research often concerned issues of urban regeneration, rebirth, reinvention and re-imaging (Aall and Koens, 2019; van der Borg, 2022). Rogerson and Rogerson (2021b) note that the growing number of studies on tourism and cities was a response to, on the one hand, booming tourism in cities and, on the other hand, the growing policy significance of tourism in urban planning. In pre-COVID-19 times a burst of research on urban tourism was triggered by concerns about the impacts of 'overtourism' and its management in cities like Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Copenhagen and Venice. Rogerson and Rogerson (2021b) mention scholarly debates surrounding 'overtourism' and 'tourismphobia' in many European cities including Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Dubrovnik, Florence, Lisbon, London, Palma (Majorca), Paris, Seville and Venice. Important studies were devoted to overtourism and protest movements taking place in cities of the Global North (Milano, Novelli, and Cheer, 2019; Diaz-Parra and Jover, 2021; Pasquinelli and Trunfio, 2020).

Similarly, many cities in the Global South have also become tourism destinations (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2021c). However, national tourism policies in this region, and specifically in sub-Saharan Africa, often tend to focus on nature-based tourism and its impact on rural development and therefore tend to overlook issues of urban tourism (Rogerson and Visser, 2004; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2018a). In sub-Saharan Africa, the development of urban tourism has mainly occurred in South Africa's cities (Rogerson and Visser, 2004; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2017,

2021a). Urban tourism — both in major cities and small towns — has a long history in South Africa as has been documented in several articles by Christian Rogerson and Jayne Rogerson (see Rogerson, 2002, 2006, 2019, 2020; Rogerson, 2011a, 2011b, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2021d, 2022). Arguably, historical research on urban tourism can greatly enrich our understanding of contemporary events (Saarinen, Rogerson and Hall, 2017; Rogerson and Baum, 2020).

It has been shown that the modern phase of urban tourism development only started in post-apartheid South Africa thanks to local and regional strategies formulated to support the development of cities and small towns (Nel and Rogerson, 2005; Rogerson and Visser, 2007; Butler and Rogerson, 2016; Visser, 2019; Donaldson, 2021). Interest in urban tourism research was sparked in response to the development of the tourism infrastructure, i.e. the construction of new museums, flagship projects such as waterfront entertainment complexes, sports stadia, heritage projects, and the hosting of a range of events and cultural festivals (Ferreira and Visser, 2007; Rogerson and Visser, 2007; van der Merwe, 2013; van der Merwe, 2019; Hartzenberg and Rogerson, 2022). Johannesburg's hosting of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 is considered a landmark event that led to the construction of conference centres in other South African cities (Rogerson, 2002; Rogerson and Visser, 2004, 2007).

Urban tourism is now an established segment of South Africa's contemporary tourism economy. It is associated with the global rise and change in lifestyle patterns: heightened work stress prompts people with limited amount of leisure time to look for short-haul breaks (van der Borg, 2022). As regards tourism policy, South African cities mimic global trends of establishing strategies to enhance or develop urban tourism centres (Law, 1992, 1993). The growing body of research on tourism in African cities addresses a number of different topics. These include the development of accommodation services, events and festivalisation, heritage and urban development, informal sector tourism, poverty tourism, the discovery of the importance of understanding past urban tourisms, and COVID-19 impacts (Rogerson, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Greenberg and Rogerson, 2015; Tichaawa, 2017; Greenberg and Rogerson, 2018, Rogerson and Rogerson, 2018, van der Merwe and Rogerson, 2018; Booyens and Rogerson, 2019; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2019, 2020; Visser and Eastes, 2020; Booyens, 2021; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2022; Hartzenberg and Rogerson, 2022). As regards sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of publications concerning urban tourism focus on South Africa. Indeed, over the past 20 years for South African tourism geographers, urban tourism has been one of the growth areas in research (Visser, 2016; Rogerson and Visser, 2020). Arguably, the key topics in recent research on urban tourism in South Africa include

the role of tourism in urban economic restructuring, initiatives for employment creation, and poverty reduction (Visser, 2019; Rogerson and Visser, 2020). With increasing rates of unemployment and the stagnation or decline of manufacturing activity, the majority of urban local governments across South Africa have shifted towards supporting competitive tourism economies, which are expected to foster local economic growth, employment creation and small enterprise development (Nel and Rogerson, 2016; Kontsiwe and Visser, 2019; Visser, 2019; Rogerson, 2020).

Innovation and innovative product development are of critical importance to maintain and strengthen urban tourism economies (Booyens, 2012; Booyens & Rogerson, 2017). Innovation can be built upon local tourism assets (Rogerson, 2020; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2020). In the post-apartheid period all South Africa's major cities started using local assets to develop tourism, create new jobs and stimulate inclusive growth (Rogerson, 2013; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2014; Rogerson, 2020). These urban tourism projects target international and domestic tourists (Rogerson and Visser, 2006, 2007). It can be observed that in the search for more competitive tourism offerings, the development of urban tourism in South Africa has followed different pathways (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2017). The product base of South African urban tourism has been strengthened by the emergence of niche forms of tourism, such as food and drink tourism, heritage tourism, poverty tourism, creative tourism, volunteer tourism and adventure tourism (van der Merwe, 2019; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2021b). One highly distinctive niche has been the establishment of a game reserve in the city as an ecotourism destination.

3. The Planning and Establishment of an Urban Eco-tourism Destination

3.1 Methods

The following study is based on the analysis of documents, including planning reports, official government reports produced by the Gauteng Provincial Government as well as existing studies on this ecotourism project. These sources are supplemented by qualitative data collected in 2017–2018 during 27 semi-structured interviews with land owners and accommodation service establishment operators — mainly of game lodges — in the Dinokeng Game Reserve. Detailed information concerning these interviews is provided by Burton (2023).

3.2. The Dinokeng Project Planning

The Dinokeng project was part of a broader economic development plan developed in the early 2000s by the Gauteng Provincial Government through its agency Blue IQ and seeking to implement several new economic zones with a goal of providing the basis for holistic and sustainable programmes through spatial development (Pillay, 2004). The Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site (COH WHS) and Dinokeng were sister projects, which concentrated on the development of geospatial tourism within the Gauteng Province (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2006). The policy development and planning of these two projects was undertaken by the Gauteng Provincial Government. Challenges encountered by public-private partnerships involved in the infrastructural development of the Cradle of Humankind project have been documented elsewhere (Rogerson, 2016). The focus of this study is specifically on the Dinokeng Game Reserve, which served as the anchor project for the Dinokeng area, located within the Tshwane metropolitan area, with Pretoria, the country's capital city at its heart. The project was led by

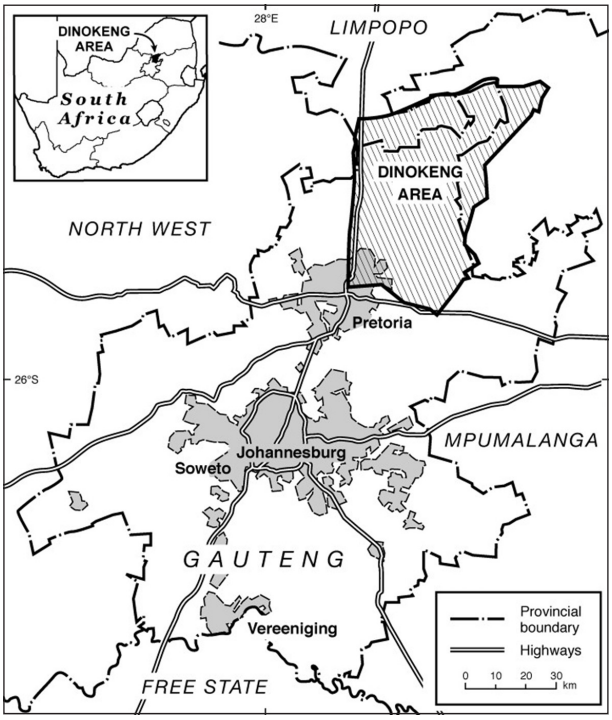

Figure 1: The location of the Dinokeng project
Source: Authors

the Gauteng Department of Economic Development and aimed to create jobs and work opportunities while alleviating poverty and unemployment through investment in bulk infrastructure (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2017). The goal of the project was to create a number of natural, cultural and historical attractions encompassing a variety of thematic tourism experiences (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010, 2011).

Planners of the Dinokeng project wanted to establish a premier tourism destination on a 240 000 hectare site in the north-east of Gauteng Province, neighbouring the provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010, 2011). The goal was to offer potential tourists and investors a range of leisure and business opportunities while encouraging conservation, sustainability and economic growth for those who lived and worked within or around the Dinokeng project area. According to the policy documents, the rationale for the project was to contribute towards economic growth and employment creation within this most economically backward and impoverished zone of South Africa's wealthiest province (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2014, 2015). The project involved a range of tasks and activities to encourage investment in visitor facilities, strategic economic infrastructure and private sector tourism (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010, 2011). Furthermore, in line with national government objectives for Black Economic Empowerment, the project was to promote the development of small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMME). An important element for SMME development was the creation of a number of tourism routes which would connect a network of existing and planned attractions in the area (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010, 2011). The Integrated Tourism Development Master Plan (ITDM) for Dinokeng was launched in 2001 and envisaged the development of three themed tourism hubs and five themed tourism nodes, linked by a set of scenic routes that would create a destination that provided an "Africa in One Day" tourism experience (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010, 2011, 2015). The primary attraction was the Dinokeng Game Reserve featuring the 'Big Five' species (lion, rhino, leopard, elephant and buffalo); the other two tourism hubs were the Roodeplaat Dam Nature Reserve and Cullinan (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010, 2011, 2015). The Roodeplaat Dam offers a variety of recreational opportunities, including bird watching, game viewing and a range of water sports including freshwater angling. The Cullinan area is a long-established tourism area with a diamond mine and numerous heritage attractions (van der Merwe and Rogerson, 2018).

The project area is located between two national highways, which are in close proximity to the metropolitan areas of Pretoria and Johannesburg (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010, 2011). During the 1990s, this area was the most economically depressed region of the province, characterised by semi-rural set-

tlements and experiencing high levels of poverty and unemployment (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010, 2011). Despite being situated within the bushveld biome and deemed unsuitable for agricultural practices, the Dinokeng area was home to a large number of landowners who were engaged in some kind of farming (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010). Understanding the area's history from the perspective of farmers and landowners who lived through and witnessed the development of the reserve provides added insight of the area's historical spatial transition.

Throughout the 20th century the area that would become Dinokeng experienced a range of land use changes and development. At the end of the Second World War, between 1944 and 1946, the government subdivided the land into 1000 hectare sections. According to one interviewee (a lodge owner and former vice-chair of the land owner's association) these portions of land "would be sold to people coming back from the war at reasonable rates and conditions." The most significant development of land occurred between 1985 and 1989, when the apartheid government expropriated 4000 hectares of land which was to be incorporated into one of the Bantustans or homelands designated for the Black African population. Nevertheless, according to another interviewee, with the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, after 27 years of imprisonment, the planned incorporation of these areas was abandoned and the 4000 hectares of land remained undeveloped. It is this land that would later be used in the first phase of the Dinokeng Game Reserve as it officially belonged to the government. During an interview, an operations manager of another lodge described the area during the 1990s as characterised by brothels, low income dwellings and farms. According to the respondent, "the area was earmarked for celebrities as a safe haven or a place to hide".

It is evident from these accounts and documentary sources that for over a decade the Dinokeng project area remained relatively undeveloped, which is why it was later identified as having the potential to serve as an eco-tourism destination (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010). During the 1990s the North Eastern Gauteng region was predominantly agricultural and with some pockets of land used as public resorts, residential clusters, small-scale mining operations and light industry (DACEL, 1999; Moeng, 2004). This rural area included 123 small to medium-sized farming units and about 60 farms with mixed land-use activities. Nevertheless, the region is not well suited for intensive agricultural production as it receives little rainfall and does not have fertile soils. Many farms were limited to a certain area for irrigation purposes, which meant the majority were producing vegetable crops and only a handful of farms were engaged in animal husbandry or dairy farming (Moeng, 2004). As most farmers in the area believed agriculture to be barely profitable, they sought to diversify their activities and for many this would

involve discontinuing agricultural practices (such as cultivation and grazing) and instead to maintain a conservancy (Moeng, 2004).

Overall, the area's location in the vicinity of South Africa's major urban centres and its environmental conditions made it an ideal space for the planned development of a game reserve. The ultimate goal behind increasing the number of conservancies was to promote landowners' switch to conservation and improve opportunities for tourism by removing fences between farms and replacing domestic animals with game species (Moeng, 2004). In this way, landowners would focus on non-agricultural activities that would conserve the natural environment and its resources whilst increasing the economic viability of the area by benefiting from opportunities for tourism (DACEL, 1999). Indeed, this gradual shift by landowners away from agriculture to conservation practices (through the creation/joining of these conservancy groupings) encouraged the province's Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Land Affairs (DACEL) to investigate alternative land uses in the area (DACEL, 1999).

3.3. The Unfolding Project

A marketing strategy report by DACEL included results of feasibility studies regarding the development of a tourism initiative using the existing infrastructure and tourism assets, namely 13 private game and resort lodges, the Roodeplaat dam and the diamond mine at Cullinan, which attracted significant numbers of tourists (DACEL, 1999). This led to the inception of the North-Eastern Gauteng Initiative (NEGI), which sought to establish a viable pilot project on state land to serve as an indicator of interest in the area. The plan was that after a successful pilot DACEL would move to establish a 'Big Five' game reserve, encompassing state and private land without the need for any forced removals or property buyouts from unwilling owners (Moeng, 2004; DACEL, 1999). Thus, individuals not interested in taking part in these conservation/tourism activities could continue with their normal practices. The difficulties of engaging with large numbers of landowners were acknowledged in one interview with a lodge owner who stated that "there was not a model in the world that we could copycat" because "we have so many landowners with so many views". The reason for so many landowners was because the area had been divided into very small 21–23 hectare farms, which practiced cattle or game farming.

The viability of the project would be demonstrated by the effect it had on the landowners, many of whom indicated their broad acceptance of the project (Moeng, 2004). When the Dinokeng Project was launched in 1995, a number of landowners immediately applied to the local municipality, mostly for permissions to

establish new lodges or for exemptions to own and farm game. It turned out that the majority of landowners (56 out of 99) were positively influenced by the establishment of the reserve as numerous applications for proposed land use changes utilised the potential of the project to their advantage (Moeng, 2004). Many landowners believed that once Dinokeng was established and functioning, it would limit land use and restrict development and encourage landowners to adapt their land use practices to the project's goals rather than waste time and resources trying to contest the project (Moeng, 2004). This belief was confirmed by the establishment of additional conservancy groups consisting of landowners interested in joining the project (Moeng, 2004). Most of these new conservancies were not yet part of the project albeit had applied for town planning permits to build and operate lodges on their properties, where many landowners already owned game (Moeng, 2004). One of the earliest conservancies created as a result of the Dinokeng Project was Amakulu. Many of its members discontinued farming practices to develop the conservancy's management structure (DACEL, 1999). However, these members and other landowners were later unhappy as the initial central core area of the Dinokeng Project excluded their conservancy (Moeng, 2004). This became a problem as the DACEL had entered into a collaboration with two private landowners in order to establish the reserve and put forward proposals to incorporate neighbouring farms, some of which were part of a land reform pilot project (DACEL, 1999). Several state land portions/parcels had also not yet been added to the project or allocated to any particular department, despite their potential to strengthen the project as a whole. The seeming lack of government commitment discouraged the area's major private enterprise Elandsdrift Game Ranch, which had restocked 12 000 ha with elephant, rhino and buffalo (Moeng, 2004; DACEL, 1999). It was argued that the government needed to commit to the project by stocking their farms with the 'Big Five' species and other game before approaching this major private landholder and investor. (Moeng, 2004). Further dissatisfaction with the role of the government was due to the fact that the relevant local government had not considered any of the land use change applications submitted between 1995 and 1997 due to its lack of capacity. Seemingly, the local authority also was waiting for clarity from DACEL regarding processes to ensure there would be no detrimental effects on the project. This sluggish response by provincial and local government administrators has a negative impact on the pilot project and ultimately limited landowners' involvement (Moeng, 2004).

Disagreements mounted between government and landowners about the slow implementation of the project. During the late 1990s many landowners complained about the lack of adequate progress relating to the proclamation of the project and identification of the pilot site. One of the biggest issues was choosing a pilot site

based on the availability of state land and surrounding private properties (Moeng, 2004). At one point there was concern that the project might be scrapped by the DACEL, which had sidelined the Dinokeng conservation project in favour of focusing on other projects (Moeng, 2004). Since its inception in 1995, the project had been unable to demonstrate tangible positive results, with no progress on state properties or any implementation consideration by major private property stakeholders. By 2000 it had been expected that agreements between government, state land user departments and private landowners would make it possible to designate the area as a biosphere reserve. During an interview, a manager of a bush lodge said that the serious government commitment to the project was sealed only after a visit by the Premier of Gauteng Province in the late 1990s, who flew over the area in a helicopter and recognised that "this is a great place for a game reserve".

A critical turning point in the project's unfolding history was the drafting and publication of the Dinokeng Integrated Tourism Development Framework (DITDF) in 2001, which cemented the government's conviction to initiate the Dinokeng project (DACEL, 2001). This framework would be utilised as a tool for detailed planning, to guide tourism development and intended to inform key management decisions as well as furnish technical advice (DACEL, 2001). The DITDF was considered the second phase of addressing the tourism potential of the Dinokeng Project. This new framework recognised that the previous first phase strategy was tedious and failed to produce any significant results due to a lack of medium — and long-term planning (Moeng, 2004). It was determined that the project should reach its medium-term operation status by 2012 and long-term operation status by 2022 (Moeng, 2004; DACEL, 2001). Failure of the DACEL's initial plan to establish the project through a stand-alone approach or go-it-alone strategy demonstrated the need for the involvement of landowners, surrounding communities and a facilitation entity, which was initially known as the Dinokeng Tourism Company. Administratively, Dinokeng was paired with the Cradle of Humankind (COH) project through a shared Chief Directorate. This new concept plan for Dinokeng aimed to re-kindle interest of the area's disaffected landowners as DACEL shifted from its former failed approach and re-opened negotiations with landowners. These negotiations also included the Mpumalanga and Limpopo provincial governments in order to broaden the project scope beyond Gauteng and thereby forge a tri-province operation. This change was an attempt by DACEL to regain landowners' confidence and acceptance by addressing several of their complaints (DACEL, 2001).

The Dinokeng Game Reserve was planned as a 'Big Five' location, which was to comprise a mosaic of state — and privately-owned properties to show the dedication of the government, landowners and neighbouring communities to work

together in a partnership (DACEL, 2001). The project was expected to contribute to economic growth, alleviate poverty, maintain a pristine 'African' appearance, and stimulate the development of a wildlife-based tourism industry (DACEL, 2001). Tourists were to be exposed to 'authentic' African landscapes and biodiversity through game-viewing and nature-based experiences. The project was supposed to maximise income streams, foster job creation, small business development and investment opportunities while helping to distribute land by resolving land claims and offering benefits and opportunities to locally disadvantaged communities (DACEL, 2001). A phased development approach was adopted to focus on geographical areas where implementation might be most practical. The decision was taken to concentrate on two areas. The first one was situated in the western part of the Dinokeng Game Reserve (approximately 22 143 hectares) and consisted of land used by an air force base, a provincial nature reserve, cattle and game farms and some successful ecotourism ventures; most private landowners in this area expressed interest in joining the project (DACEL, 2001). The second, larger area was situated in the eastern part of the reserve (approximately 53 854 hectares), which consisted mostly of state-owned properties located across the three provinces of Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo and included two existing provincial nature reserves (DACEL, 2001). The greatest challenge in this area was the lack of a clear and determined direction from the government to resolve long-standing land reform issues (DACEL, 2001).

The conversion of Dinokeng into a premier tourism destination would be achieved by establishing trading entities within the Gauteng Department of Economic Development (GDED). The most significant one was the Dinokeng Trading Entity, which was derived from Blue IQ Investment Holdings (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2017). The Dinokeng Trading Entity is managed by the GDED, which used to be the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Agriculture and Rural Development (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2015, 2017).

Initially, the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment (GDACE) was responsible for both the Cradle of Humankind and its sister Dinokeng project (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2015). Eventually, the supervision over the Dinokeng Project was taken over by the GDED in April 2016 (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2017). The GDED's vision was to radically transform and modernise Gauteng's economy through a 10-pillar programme stressing equity and economic inclusion (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2015, 2017). The Dinokeng Trading Entity was therefore required to operate in a complex and challenging institutional environment, which called for partnerships with various departments and stakeholders, within and outside of the government (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2015, 2016, 2017).

3.4. The Establishment of the Dinokeng Reserve and Implementation Challenges

Dinokeng was established in January 2006 after extensive negotiations with 200 landowners (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2006). Legal agreements reached during these negotiations laid out certain conditions that had to be met by the Dinokeng Game Reserve Management Association (DGRMA) (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2006). Among other things, Dinokeng was obliged to comply with targets for Black Economic Empowerment, implement socio-economic plans (to promote the interests of current occupants and workers) and invest a certain percentage of profit into community development programmes to support local/surrounding communities (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2006).

The establishment of this game reserve as a potential urban eco-tourism destination faced many challenges. One of them was the physical expansion of the game reserve to ensure sustainability. In 2006, the area of the game reserve was expected to exceed 25 000 hectares and potentially reach 45 000 by 2011 (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2006). However, by 2009 only 13 500 hectares had been consolidated as part of the start-up area (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010). A significant portion (5 000 hectares) was added a year later, after incorporating some private land and a military base (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010). Fence construction commenced in 2006 and was completed by 2010 (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010), the first internal infrastructure element to be established. The fence was necessary in order to enable the introduction of rhino, lions and elephants into the reserve.

Dinokeng opened in September 2011, with 18 500 hectares of land, which was much below the target size of 40 000 hectares required to ensure ecological and economic viability (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2014). Four of the 'Big Five' species had been introduced at the time of the reserve's official opening; the fifth — buffalo — was introduced in 2012. The expansion of Dinokeng to 40 000 hectares depended on the willingness of potential landowners to incorporate their pieces of land into the reserve. Another issue were frequent resignations of members serving on the Expansion Subcommittee, which delayed the finalisation of the share model (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2015). By 2014, the perimeter fence had been extended to a total length of 206km (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2014). The construction of the five planned gates was completed in 2010 (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010). A further development took place in 2014, with the implementation of a ticketing system (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2014). In terms of ecological management, the Dinokeng Game Reserve maintains an open natural landscape for ecological continuity and rehabilitation operations (Gauteng Provincial

Government, 2015). Ecological field assessments and bio-monitoring (e.g. veld[1] condition, game counts, river health) serve as tools to reinstate former ecosystem health and ensure sustainability (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2015). The establishment of self-drive tourist routes was an opportunity to utilise state land, situated within Dinokeng, to choose community projects that could be developed along the routes (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2014). The routes which cross private properties and government-owned land, with a total length of 66 km, were created between November 2014 and January 2015 (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2014, 2015).

An application to declare Dinokeng a protected area (Formal Protected Status) was submitted for approval in 2009 (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2010). However, despite constant engagement, the granting of a protected area status kept being delayed because of unresolved land claims (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2015, 2018). According to the 2019/2020 Gauteng Provincial Government Report, the "Dinokeng Game Reserve has not been declared a protected area because of the lack of funding and delays caused by unresolved land claims. The issue of funds will still need to be addressed". The most recent annual report issued by Gauteng Provincial Government (2021) states that in the next five years the size of the Dinokeng Game Reserve would be increased to the 40 000 hectares as required to ensure self-reliance and self-sustainability. In addition, it was stated that the authorities had secured a renewed commitment from public and private land owners to incorporate their land into the Reserve (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2021). Consequently, during the period of the COVID-19 crisis formal protected status had still not been granted to Dinokeng Game Reserve.

4. Conclusion

Product development and innovation is essential to the success of urban tourism destinations. This study has explored the complex planning challenges associated with the establishment and development of an innovative tourism product, namely a 'Big Five' ecotourism destination located on the periphery of the Gauteng Province. It is a case study in the area of collaborative tourism development in a Global South destination. The analysis of the key steps in the development of the Dinokeng Game Reserve, situated in close proximity to a major metropolitan centre, contributes to the body of research on urban tourism in South Africa and provides new perspectives on game reserves and national parks.

[1] The term used to describe open country in southern Africa

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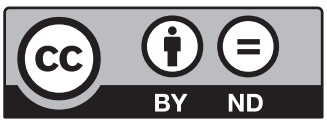
Wyzwania związane z planowaniem i tworzeniem miejskiego projektu ekoturystycznego w RPA

Streszczenie. Ekoturystyka stanowi główną siłą napędową turystyki na peryferyjnych obszarach wiejskich w kilku krajach afrykańskich, w tym w RPA. Celem tego artykułu jest opisanie wyzwań związanych z planowaniem i realizacją miejskiego projektu ekoturystycznego w RPA, a mianowicie rezerwatu dzikich zwierząt Dinokeng, który znajduje się na granicy jednego z głównych obszarów metropolitalnych RPA i w gospodarczym sercu kraju. Celem projektu było stworzenie nowego produktu niszowego w ramach turystyki miejskiej. Korzystając ze źródeł literaturowych i informacji zebranych podczas 27 częściowo ustrukturyzowanych wywiadów, autorzy analizują kluczowe kroki procesu planowania tego innowacyjnego produktu turystyki miejskiej. Badanie stanowi wkład do rozwijającej się literatury poświęconej turystyce południowoafrykańskiej oraz do międzynarodowej literatury dotyczącej roli produktów niszowych w rozwoju turystyki miejskiej na globalnym Południu.

Słowa kluczowe: ekoturystyka, turystyka miejska, rezerwat dzikich zwierząt Dinokeng, ekoturystyka miejska, RPA



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Protected Areas and Rural Livelihood: An Overview of the Mediating Role of Wildlife Tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa

Abstract. The present article deals with problem of the conservation of protected areas, in particular the role of nature-based tourism in strengthening the relationship between protected areas and rural communities. The article draws largely on the Sustainable Livelihood Framework developed by the UK's Department for International Development in 1999. The study is mainly based on a review of the literature and documents published by major international and national organisations. It can be concluded that benefits arising from protected areas in the form of revenues from nature-based tourism tend to accrue largely to the international community, national governments and the private sector, while a large amount of conservation costs are borne by local communities living in the vicinity of these areas. If a significant part of revenues from tourism is not returned to local communities, they will continue to view wildlife as a threat to their livelihoods and develop resentments against conservation of protected areas.

Keywords: tourism, protected areas, rural livelihoods, Sub-Saharan Africa

Introduction

Recognizing the connections between rural livelihoods and conservation of natural resources in protected areas (PAs) in developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, is becoming increasingly important (Mbaiwa, 2021; Spenceley et al., 2010; Turner, 2013). With approximately 70% of the world's PAs inhabited by poor rural communities, and many others threatened by encroachment across their borders, issues surrounding rural livelihoods and conservation of PAs cannot be ignored (Terborgh & Peres, 2002). In some areas, PA authorities have created buffer zones as a way of reducing human-wildlife conflict and PA encroachment problems. However, buffer zones have failed to be sustainable solutions owing to

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many factors such as growing populations, climate change, land use change, etc. (Oliver & Morecroft, 2014).

In many parts of the world, where governments have been more involved in nature conservation, people have been driven (e.g. in Kenya, Uganda, Namibia, Botswana, Ethiopia, South Africa, Argentina, Chile and Ecuador) out of their ancestral lands to create room for protected areas (Mukasa, 2014; Vidal, 2016). Traditional user rights of local populations, such as firewood collecting and hunting, have often been severely restricted by conservation laws and tourism interests. A forceful movement of people has been always associated with a lot of conflicts between local communities and governments. For example, Neumann (1992) shows that relocation of Maasai from the Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) triggered retaliatory response that involved spearing of rhinos and setting fire to the park area. Eviction of ethnic tribes from their ancestral land shows that the global interest in conservation has worked against the interests of local people, who were evicted without meaningful compensation (Domínguez & Luoma, 2020). In most cases, a top-down management approach has been employed in such areas, neglecting local community participation, particularly in the decision making process regarding their resources and their livelihoods (McCabe, 2003). For example, Kaltenborn et al. (2008) show that through the entire period between the First World War and the UN's Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted on 14 December 1960, all nature management in Tanzania was strictly top down, often including forced translocation of groups of people who happened to be in the way of hunting and conservation interests. Clearly, early conservation practices in Sub-Saharan Africa seem to have neglected the fact that effective protection of threatened areas needed the cooperation of local communities. A high level of poaching activities in many PAs in Sub-Saharan Africa was a clear indication of the lack of local community support for conservation initiatives (Duffy, 2001). More recent studies indicate that in most PAs in Sub-Saharan Africa poaching has always been one of the major conservation challenges (Assogba & Zhang, 2022; Knapp, 2012; Kideghesho, 2016a; Ramesh et al., 2017).

Over the years, there have been conflicts between local communities and PAs management over the use of resources from PAs. In an attempt to resolve these conflicts, PAs managers and planners have been attempting to achieve conservation objectives by soliciting support from local communities, especially those residing next to PAs (Rylance & Spenceley, 2013). Park managers have been supporting local communities directly or indirectly by providing them with socio-economic support including direct provision of funds generated from tourism (Rylance, Snyman & Spenceley, 2017; TANAPA, 2012). The goal has been to increase local communities' support for conservation by addressing their needs and spreading benefits to

residents (see e.g. Okumu & Muchapondwa, 2020; Rylance, Snyman & Spenceley, 2017). Theoretically, PA authorities support local community livelihoods in various ways through revenues generated from tourism, which eventually can make local community aware of the economic benefits of wildlife and conservation in general (see e.g. Rylance & Spenceley, 2013, 2016; Snyman & Bricker, 2019). Studies suggests that the receipt of benefits from PAs can make communities more open to conservation (Goodman, 2002; Sekhar, 2003), However, the link between PAs, tourism and rural livelihoods is always contentious and unclear. While there are many policies and strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa aiming to support the sustainability of tourism development, the relationships between the tourism industry and local communities are often complex, requiring more inclusive approaches to support more resilient tourism and tourism-dependent communities in the region (Saarinen, Moswete & Lubbe, 2022; Snyman & Spenceley, 2019). While local communities acknowledge the contribution of tourism in their livelihoods, they feel that the costs they incur due to conservation is higher than the benefits they receive (Bwalya & Kapembwa, 2020; Kideghesho, 2008a, 2008b).

Given the aforementioned background of tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa, this article reviews the concepts of PA conservation and rural livelihood and explores the mediating role of wildlife tourism in enhancing both PA conservation and rural livelihood. The author identifies factors that prevent conservation from contributing to sustainable rural livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa and recommends ways in which these problems could be solved.

Research Method

This article presents an analysis of theoretical, conceptual and empirical knowledge in the literature on Sub-Saharan Africa in order to put the past and recent discussions on the topic within the broader context of sustainable development. It largely draws on the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF), which is a holistic approach that tries to provide a means of understanding the fundamental causes and dimensions of rural livelihood and poverty without collapsing the focus onto just a few factors (Conroy & Litvinoff, 2013; DFID, 1999; Kunjuraman, 2022). In addition to analysing articles on topics related to tourism, natural resources conservation, PA conservation and rural livelihood, which are stored in electronic databases such as Google Scholar, SAGE Journals online, JSTOR, Elsevier Publishing and CABI, the review included documents published by major international and national organisations focusing on tourism, natural resources conservation

and other issues related to PAs and rural livelihood, including the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the African Development Bank (AFDB), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) and the World Bank.

Rural Livelihood and the Dependence on Natural Resources

According to an old adage, "a problem well defined is half solved", so the first step in examining the concept of rural livelihood and natural resources conservation is to define these terms from the perspective of developing countries. This is important, first of all, because the degree of dependence on natural resources in developed countries is different from that of developing countries (Thomas & Twyman, 2005). Secondly, with issues such as climate change, population pressure or land use change affecting and disrupting the development process and calling for adaptation processes will only exacerbate inequalities in well-being between winners and losers (Kates, 2000), the majority of losers are again likely to be among developing countries. High levels of natural-resource use and dependence observed in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa create vulnerability to climate change (World Bank, 2000). Although many development partners around the world have pledged resources and efforts to minimize factors contributing to climate change, its effects continue to exert pressure on livelihoods of many rural communities, thus, jeopardizing natural resources conservation (Amoah & Simatele, 2021).

According to Ellis (2000, p.10) rural livelihood can be defined as "a process by which households construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities for survival in order to improve their standard of living". Therefore, "a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and the activities required for a living" (Chambers & Conway, 1992, p. 6). SLF treats rural livelihood as a means to an end, rather than an outcome. In this context, poverty is viewed as a typical outcome of livelihood strategy. In supporting this view, Sen (1999) shows that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that arises when people lack adequate income, access to resources and education, suffer from poor health, insecurity, low self-confidence, a sense of powerlessness and the absence of rights, such as freedom of speech and development.

The SLF is a poverty alleviation approach aiming at improving stakeholders' understanding of the livelihoods of the poor. The importance of this approach is that it shows the relationship between factors that constrain community livelihood

opportunities. When the SLF is appropriately used, it can be useful for planning rural development activities and assessing the contribution that existing activities have made to sustaining livelihoods (Serrat & Serrat, 2017). According to the SLF, "a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets, and activities required for a means of living. It is deemed sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities, assets, and activities both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base" (Ellis, 2000, p.10). The SLF has been widely applied to inform the design of policy and development interventions aimed at reducing poverty in less developed countries (Allison, 2005). At a practical level, the SLF starts with the community livelihoods assessment and how they have been changed over time. The SLF is people centred, and "fully respects their views, and it takes into consideration the influence of policies and institutions upon decisions of people or households" (DFID, 2001, p. 7).

The connection between poverty and biodiversity conservation is highly acknowledged in the literature. A study by Fisher & Christopher (2007) concluded that the overlap between severe multifaceted poverty and key areas of global biodiversity is great and needs to be acknowledged. A study by Sunderlin et al. (2007) found that there was an important overlap between extreme poverty and key areas of global biodiversity. As local communities are severely hit by poverty, their livelihoods are likely to depend on illegal activities (e.g. illegal fishing, poaching, illegal mining) from surrounding PAs.

Most rural livelihood intervention strategies are geared towards attaining sustainable rural development (Lisocka-Jaegermann, 2015), which is defined as "a historical process of social change in which societies are transformed over long periods of time" (Thomas, 2000, p. 29), or a process through which societies change to a better condition. Development may also be viewed more pragmatically as plans, policies and activities of those organizations, voluntary sector agencies that facilitate development or work to support or encourage social change. Studies indicate that most livelihood activities in rural areas are linked to habitat fragmentation and the destruction of biodiversity and ecosystem services (Cobbinah, Black & Thwaites, 2015). For example, rapid expansion and intensification of agriculture in rural areas is considered to be a major driver of biodiversity losses and decrease in ecosystem functionality (Mendenhall, Daily & Ehrlich, 2012).

Given the considerations mentioned above, it is clear that any discussion about conservation in and around PAs, particularly in rural areas, should view challenges facing rural community livelihood from a broader perspective. Harrison (1988) maintains that the prevailing livelihood and development paradigms are Western-centric and have little or no impact upon the developmental challenges faced by developing countries. Such challenges include persistent poverty (relative and ab-

solute), unmet basic needs (food, sanitation, health care and so on), unemployment, low levels of education and literacy, restriction on political and cultural freedom, gender inequalities and environmental problems.

The link between rural livelihood and biodiversity loss has been studied by numerous researchers. For instance, Sharpley (2009) notes that increasing poverty, inequality, lack of opportunities, environmental damage and biodiversity loss in many parts of Africa are generally due to the failure of development as a global project and outcomes of development policies based upon the western economic ideology. While developing and developed countries may be using the same definition of development and livelihood, their implied meanings are in fact different. For developing countries and rural communities in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, development may mean the ability to meet their daily basic needs such as food, shelter and health care. Any development initiative in rural areas should first address these basic needs because these needs are the main stressors of the ecosystem and tend to hamper conservation initiatives.

Researchers and development organisations demonstrate that the rural poor tend to be disproportionately dependent on natural resources such as forest compared to rich urban communities (World Bank, 2000). A higher proportion of incomes earned by members of rural poor communities comes from forests. Moreover, most inhabitants of poor rural areas maintain diversified livelihood strategies because they cannot obtain sufficient income from any single strategy to survive. This is why most small farmers are not actually solely small agriculturalists, i.e. many depend on forest and wildlife products in their livelihood systems (Sunderlin et al., 2005). Generally, livelihood diversification reflects the precariousness of rural communities to survive in developing countries (Ellis, 2000). The concept of diversified livelihood suggests that any development project that seeks to promote conservation, should conceptualize interventions in terms of their effects on rural livelihood systems in general rather than assessing specific income-generating activities.

In rural settings, natural resources provide a number of benefits (ecosystem services). "Wild resources are known to provide famine foods following crop failure, and money earned from the sale of forest products has been shown to subsidize agricultural incomes" (McSweeney, 2004, p. 39). Studies indicate that many people in Sub-Saharan Africa turn to forest resources as a form of natural insurance (Wunder, 2001). "Overall, the 'natural insurance' concept has led to increasing recognition that even small amounts of forest-derived earnings help to bridge income gaps and so play a critical role in livelihood security (McSweeney, 2004, p. 40)". Other uses of wild resources from ecosystem include, food, fibre, fuel, genetic resources, biochemical, ornamental resources and fresh water (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005).

Sustainability and Resilience of Natural Resources: Why DoesIt Matter for Rural Livelihood?

Contemporary debates on conservation have focused on depletion of non-renewable resources as a major obstacle for future development and threat to the existence of humankind. In recent decades, concern has grown globally over threats to natural resources and corresponding rates of species extinction. Studies indicate that changing social and economic conditions, as a result of rapid population growth, technological advancements, poverty, and the pressure to exploit natural resources, have substantial implications on the state of the environment of the developing countries (Spiteri & Nepalz, 2006). The use of natural resources in developing countries is particularly important because immediate livelihoods of many people in these countries depend heavily on the surrounding natural resources. There is an increasing awareness and acceptance that if the natural resource base is to be sustained, this must be done in a productive manner that also benefits local populations. As Gow (1992) put it, respect for natural resources must be accompanied by respect for human resources, failure to do so will always jeopardize the sustainability of natural resources especially in rural poor communities where there are few livelihood options.

Most natural resources are not resilient to anthropogenic activities so they must be conserved in a sustainable manner (Mistry, 2014). Generally, resilience is defined as the ability to return to an equilibrium following a perturbation; it is quantified in terms of return time (Tilman & Downing, 1994). Understanding resilience of natural resources is highly significant because some species (both plants and animals) have very low or even zero resilience. As a result, a number of species have either already become extinct or are at the brink of extinction due to unsustainable anthropogenic activities in and outside PAs. (Verma & Sadguru, 2022). Kaltenborn et al. (2008) show that livelihoods can become sustainable when they are adaptive, resilient and provide sufficient resources for decent living. Therefore, PA outreach programmes need to assess if they somehow contribute to more sustainable rural livelihoods down to the individual level.

Conservation of Natural Resources and Tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa

In the context of livelihood improvement, natural resources conservation can be viewed as an exercise in contradiction because stakeholders are frequently working at cross purposes (Sunderlin et al., 2005). A number of studies have shown that natural resources are central to the survival of all human beings (see e.g. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). Natural resources conservation has created significant social, economic and environmental benefits to urban as well as rural communities in different parts of the world (Kideghesho, 2008a; Mbaiwa, Mbaiwa & Siphambe, 2019; Oldekop et al., 2016). Conservation has undeniably supported the survival of populations of many species and habitats (Leverington et al., 2010). Without conservation efforts many visitors to PAs could probably not see many species we see today in many parts of the world (IUCN, 2003). By the same token, future generations will not be able to see many of these species without conservation efforts (UNWTO, n.d.). For example, a report by IUCN shows that black rhino poaching started in East Africa in the 1960s and spread rapidly to the west and south. Poaching pressure escalated during the 1970s and 1980s as a result of the rising demand for rhino horn in Asia and the Middle East. Economic and political instability in a number of rhino range states gave commercial poachers the freedom to hunt rhino with little chance of being caught (Kideghesho, 2016b; 2019; Lopes, 2014). The IUCN report shows further that the population of black rhinos, estimated at 100,000 individuals in 1960s, drastically declined to reach a record low of 2,410 in 1995, but subsequently doubled by the end of 2010 as a result of conservation efforts (IUCN, 2012).

Conservation contributes significantly, both directly and indirectly, to the generation of employment and foreign exchange earnings in many Sub-Sahara African countries through international and domestic tourism (Snyman, 2012; Spenceley & Meyer, 2012; UNWTO, n.d.). Tourism and natural resources conservation activities are frequently linked because nature-based tourism often takes place in protected areas of high biodiversity, which are home to local communities. In other words, nature-based tourism depends on natural resources conservation and vice versa. Scholars like Ulfstrand (2002, p. 71) believe that "tourism is the only hope for African wildlife". This view is supported by many scholars (see e.g. Rylance, 2017; Spenceley, Snyman & Rylance, 2019; Steven, Castley & Buckley, 2013; Whitelaw, King & Tolkach, 2014), who argue that management of many PAs in Sub-Sahara Africa depends on revenues generated from tourism. For instance, the South African National Parks (SANParks), a public entity responsible for managing South Africa's national parks, raises more than 80% of its funding from tourism (Biggs, 2014).

Emphasising the link between tourism and natural resources, Uddhammar

(2006, p. 662) points out that "from a global-local perspective, the 'commodity' in eco-tourism is, on the one hand highly local and thus cannot be exported along any commodity chains other than by bringing the consumers to the actual places where protected natural resources are located". However, the contribution of tourism to livelihood and conservation of natural resource largely depend on proper formulation and implementation of national policies, regulations, strategies and action plan (Rylance, 2012; Spenceley & Rylance, 2019). Therefore, tourism can be both an opportunity for conserving nature and a threat if it is done improperly.

Both consumptive (e.g. hunting tourism) and non-consumptive uses (e.g. photographic tourism) of wildlife have the potential to generate significant amounts of economic income and contribute to the livelihoods of rural people (Mbaiwa, 2015). For instance, reports about the development of conservancies in Namibia and Zimbabwe show that wildlife has played a central role in land-use change and income generation. In Namibia, the Community-Based Natural Resource Management programme (CBNRM) comprises a major portion of all communal lands in the country, so that large areas are now allocated to wildlife uses, alongside livestock (Spenceley & Barnes, 2005). In Zimbabwe, revenues generated thanks to the presence of rhino on private land catalysed the change in land use from livestock to wildlife (Spenceley & Barnes, 2005). Nevertheless, many scholars seem to agree that unless major structural reforms of the tourism industry take place, the sector is unlikely to improve rural livelihood, aid poverty reduction or reduce inequality (e.g. Rylance, 2012; Saarinen, Moswete & Lubbe, 2022; Snyman & Spenceley, 2019).

Some tourism scholars (e.g. Duffy, 2001, Wilson, 2017) argue that tourism is frequently seen as a new kind of colonialism, a view that expressed by some African scholars about two decades ago (see e.g. Manyara & Jones, 2007; Mbaiwa, 2005). Some scholars also view tourism as an industry that exploits workers and resources of less economically developed countries (LEDCs), commodifies traditional cultures, entrenches inequality and deepens poverty (Duffy, 2001; Schilcher, 2007).

Despite these criticisms, myths and the view that tourism is not a worthwhile or 'serious' local economic development strategy (Roe et al., 2004), tourism has continued to be one of the pillars of conservation and socio-economic development in many countries in Sub-Saharan African. For instance, a recent study by Rylance, Snyman & Spenceley (2017, p. 139) shows that "park management agencies in many Sub-Saharan Africa do not have sufficient funds to finance their conservation management activities, and that most governments do not fund PAs budgets fully". Another recent study by Spenceley & Snyman (2017, p. 52) shows how "a private luxury safari lodge (Mombo Camp) and its holding company (Okavango Wilderness Safaris) within the Okavango Delta of Botswana" "has influenced the destination's quality standards" and "conservation of endangered species". A more recent

study by Mbaiwa & Mogende (2022, p. 236) in Botswana concluded that "despite the differences between the Global North and South, trophy hunting provides incentives for wildlife conservation and rural communities' development" and that "any policy shifts such as ban on trophy hunting that affect wildlife conservation and rural livelihoods need to be informed by a socio-ecological approach".

Similarly, in many African countries the objective behind establishing national parks was mainly conservation and tourism. For instance, in Tanzania the mandate of national parks as stated in the national park policy is "to manage and regulate the use of areas designated as national parks by such means and measures to preserve the country's heritage, encompassing natural and cultural resources, both tangible and intangible resource values, including the fauna and flora, wildlife habitat, natural processes, wilderness quality, and scenery therein and to provide for human benefit and enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for future generations" (URT, 1994). The Tanzania national park mandate demonstrates clearly that there is a direct relationship between tourism and conservation and that conservation should support livelihood of the people and vice versa as depicted in Figure 1.

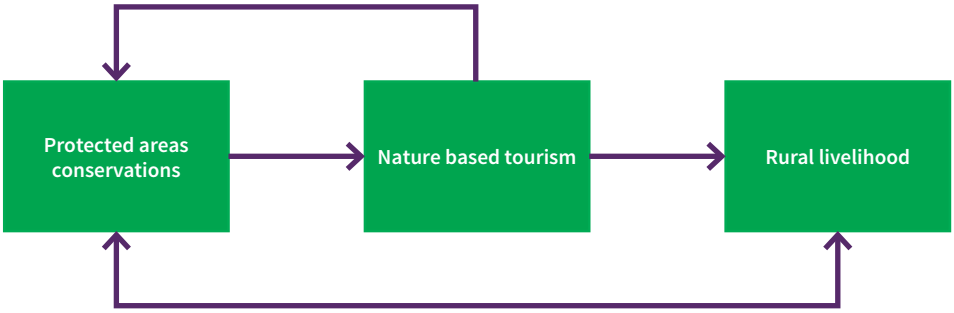

Figure 1: The mediating role of tourism

Protected Areas and Tourism in Sub-Saharan African: the Case of Tanzania

Nature and adventure travel and tourism have emerged as two of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry in Sub-Saharan Africa (AFDB, 2012). Despite the ongoing global recession, "tourism has repeatedly shown itself to be an incredibly resilient industry that bounces back quickly" (Sustainable Tourism Concepts (n.d, p. 6). Taking an example of Tanzania, tourism is clearly of great economic

significance to economic growth and development. Tanzania is commended for possessing unmatched biodiversity, wildlife populations and wilderness scenery, with around 30% of the country's total land area set aside in exclusive state-PAs (Nelson, 2012). In total, Tanzania has 22 national parks, 2 marine parks, 44 game-controlled areas, 28 game reserves, several forest reserves, and 1 conservation area (Ngorongoro Conservation Area), hosting the world's renowned biodiversity, wildlife, and unique ecosystems (TANAPA, 2022; Wamboye, Nyaronga & Sergi, 2020), which annually attract many international tourists from all over the world. In general, Tanzania is a fast growing global tourism destination, with approximately one million visitors annually that account for approximately 10.6% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (WTTC, 2022). In 2019, the industry created 1,53 million jobs, which is equivalent to 6.1% of the country's total employment (WTTC, 2022). "The tourism sector in Tanzania is also instrumental in the fight against abject poverty through job creation and the development of a market for traditional products" (Kyara, Rahman & Khanam, 2021, p. 1). The tourism industry is also important in the development of other sectors, such as transport, hospitality and agriculture (Wamboye, Nyaronga & Sergi, 2020; World Bank, 2021).

In an attempt to improve rural livelihood through conservation, in 1988 TANAPA initiated a community conservation service (CCS) programme in the Serengeti National Park as a pilot project. In 1992, CCS became a permanent department in TANAPA. CCS has six objectives: (1) improving relations between individual parks and local communities; (2) ensuring that the interests of the national park regarding conservation and community welfare are presented and well known in society; (3) facilitating the sharing of benefits with target communities; (4) assisting local communities in getting access to information, resources and services which are important for promoting sustainable development; (5) strengthening local institutional capacity, including Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in addressing conservation issues, and; (6) developing professional and collaborative linkages with all community conservation stakeholders and to conduct community conservation education programs (URT, 1994, p. 38; Wordpress, n.d).

The COVID-19 pandemic either stopped or suspended most PAs activities, with negative consequences to conservation finances, tourism businesses and the livelihoods of people who supply labour, goods and services to tourists and tourism businesses (Cumming et al., 2021; Spenceley et al., 2021). However, recent studies show that visitor traffic in certain PAs has now almost bounced back to normal (Caetano, 2022; Sharma, Thomas & Paul, 2021)

Conclusion and Way Forward

This paper proposes that the Sustainable Livelihood Framework can be a useful tool in improving policy and decision makers' understanding of the wildlife tourism sector in Sub-Saharan Africa and can provide a sound basis for improved policy design and decision making. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework can help policy and decision makers to build a better understanding of the role of the wildlife tourism sector in enhancing livelihoods of rural communities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

As has been demonstrated, PAs not only support rural livelihoods but also offer opportunities to support other economic activities often linked to private sector businesses including tourism. Therefore, sound conservation of natural resources is necessary to promote long term sustainability for the benefits of all.

The major challenge to conservation in many Sub-Sahara African countries, however, is that, while the benefits of natural resources accrue to all, the conservation costs are mainly paid by few people, mostly poor, local people living adjacent to PAs (see e.g. Kideghesho, 2008b). Moreover, some PAs in Sub-Saharan Africa were established by evicting local populations from their ancestral lands. This raises an important question about who should pay for conservation services (see e.g. Kideghesho, 2008b). Despite the economic importance of wildlife and conservation in general, local communities have arguably not derived enough benefits to offset the costs they have had to sustain. This has greatly diminished incentives for local people to support conservation efforts (see e.g. Kideghesho, 2008b).

It is undeniable that there have been some efforts from PAs management (e.g. through initiatives like the community conservation service program) to support rural livelihoods in an attempt to mitigate continuous conflicts and meet conservation objectives in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, it is clear that there is a substantial difference between the benefits provided through PAs outreach programs (e.g. CCS) and what is needed by local communities in terms of livelihood and poverty reduction. The little benefits provided to local communities do little to improve livelihoods of local communities, who bear most of the conservation costs. Generally, local people value community projects that are initiated by PAs management; however, they feel that PAs management should pay more attention to direct services at personal level because poverty level differs from individual to individual within the same community. This suggests that any livelihood improvement strategy designed by PAs management should involve local communities in assessing their pressing needs. Such a strategy should further try to identify community members who are more vulnerable to poverty so as to support them equitably. One of the approaches that can be used to achieve this goal is through joint venture operations, where local

community entities can become formal partners in the business as described by Snyman & Spenceley (2019).

Contemporary studies show that any attempt to gain local community support for conservation programmes is unlikely to succeed if the benefits of conservation cannot exceed the costs. This view is supported by many authors (see e.g. Barnes, Burgess & Pearce, 2019; Mbaiwa, 2018; Snyman, 2017), who show that unless there is a significant domestic economic gain associated with wildlife, there will be insufficient arguments and incentives for conservation and local involvement (see e.g. Butler & Rogerson, 2016; Mbaiwa, (2017). Kideghesho (2008b), Sindiga (2018) and Hariohay et al., (2018) argue that the benefits, which are not focusing on immediate needs for the survival of the people, will rarely change people's hostile attitude towards conservation. Kideghesho also points out that support in the form of social amenities cannot offset the costs incurred by individuals or households and cannot overcome their vulnerability. Any support provided to local communities in their villages (e.g. infrastructure construction) cannot be a substitute for fuel wood or grazing land they had to give up for the sake of conservation. Thus, long-term benefits cannot be appreciated by local communities if pressing problems in their daily lives are not thoroughly addressed.

The studies reviewed in this article indicate that local communities acknowledge the contribution of tourism and PAs conservation to their livelihoods. However, they feel that they are not benefiting enough from tourism, particularly from wildlife tourism, which means the conservation costs exceed the benefits. To change this situation, the following measures should be taken by PAs authorities; improve relationships between PAs and local communities through CCs in order to reduce unnecessary conflicts, improve mechanisms of profit sharing so that financial benefits from PAs can reach the majority, improve a compensation payment rates to lessen the effects caused by wildlife to local communities, find better ways of dealing with human-wildlife conflicts, find better ways of integrating local community in tourism business e.g. building community lodges; provide more employment to local community members living close to PAs and also improve the visibility PAs boundaries so that all rangers are aware of where the boundaries are to avoid harassing local community.

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Obszary chronione i źródła utrzymania na wsi: przegląd literatury na temat pośredniczącej roli turystyki przyrodniczej w Afryce Subsaharyjskiej

Streszczenie. Niniejszy artykuł porusza zagadnienie ochrony obszarów chronionych, a szczególnie roli turystyki przyrodniczej we wzmacnianiu relacji między obszarami chronionymi a społecznościami wiejskimi. Rozważania w dużej mierze bazują na założeniach Sustainable Livelihood Framework, opracowanej przez brytyjskie Ministerstwo ds. Rozwoju Międzynarodowego w 1999 roku. Praca opiera się głównie na przeglądzie literatury i dokumentów opublikowanych przez czołowe organizacje międzynarodowe i krajowe. Można stwierdzić, że beneficjentami korzyści płynących z istnienia obszarów chronionych w postaci dochodów z turystyki przyrodniczej są zazwyczaj przedstawiciele społeczności międzynarodowej, rządy i sektor prywatny, podczas gdy duża część kosztów ochrony ponoszona jest przez społeczności lokalne żyjące w pobliżu tych obszarów. Jeśli znaczna część dochodów z turystyki nie zostanie zwrócona społecznościom lokalnym, nadal będą one postrzegać dziką przyrodę jako zagrożenie dla swoich źródeł utrzymania i przejawiać niechęć do działań mających na celu ochronę tych obszarów.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka, obszary chronione, źródła utrzymania na wsi, Afryka Subsaharyjska

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"Transformation" and Tourism Small Firm Development in South Africa: Evidence from Eastern Cape Province

Abstract. Since democratic change South Africa has pursued a series of programmes which are targeted at empowering groups and individuals who had been disadvantaged under apartheid. In the tourism sector government initiatives for "transformation" include a commitment to promote new entrepreneurship opportunities for Black-owned small medium or micro-enterprises. This article examines the challenges facing transformation through a study of the constraints operating on Black-owned tourism enterprises in South Africa's Eastern Cape province. The research is situated within the international literature on small firms in tourism and specifically of the challenges of small tourism entrepreneurs in the Global South. The analysis draws from a survey of 79 Black-owned accommodation establishments as well as semi-structured interviews with tourism entrepreneurs. The results reveal a range of constraints. In this resource-constrained environment several challenges around transformation relate to finance, human resources and knowledge which have been identified as limiting tourism small firm development both in the Global North and South. Other constraints speak to the specificities of the South African experience. Tourism entrepreneurs must confront historical legacies of the apartheid past as well as corruption practices which are widespread in the local tourism economy and must be acknowledged as obstacles for the advancement of transformation.

Keywords: tourism small firms; transformation; South Africa; Black Economic Empowerment

1. Introduction

Over recent years the "transformation" of tourism has been a hotly debated topic in international tourism scholarship and most especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (Buhalis, 2022; Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby, 2022). The central focus of discussion surrounds changes in travel behaviour and, for many observers,

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the "re-setting" of tourism and its reshaping into a potentially more sustainable, inclusive and caring industry in the post-pandemic period (Smith, 2017; Ateljevic, 2020; Brouder, 2020; Cheer, 2020; Lew et al., 2020; Rogerson & Baum, 2020; Sigala, 2020; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021a; Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby, 2022). In South Africa, however, the term "transformation" has an alternative and more widely understood meaning. The persistence of historical economic inequalities means that the majority of South Africans "still exist in a position of relative disempowerment" (van der Watt, 2022, p. 90). Since democratic transition in 1994 the South African government has pursued a series of programmes targeted at empowering groups and individuals who had been disadvantaged under apartheid (Ponte, Roberts & van Sittert, 2007; Nomnga, 2021). Changing the racial complexion of the ownership of enterprises and patterns of economic participation is seen as critical for the structural transformation of the post-apartheid South African economy (Vilakazi & Bosiu, 2021). The "transformation" of the national economy in South Africa therefore refers to central government commitments to confront the apartheid legacy of the exclusion of Black communities from participation as entrepreneurs in the mainstream economy (Rogerson, 2004; Abrahams, 2019; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019).

The post-1994 policy agenda seeks "to right imbalances and advance just development through equitable participation of black persons in the economy" (van der Watt, 2022, p. 90). It is argued that South Africa's emphasis on racial transformation as an integral part of economic policymaking is "similar to the context of affirmative action and indigenization policies in other countries addressing a colonial legacy, such as Malaysia" (Vilakazi & Bosiu, 2021, p. 191). More broadly, it is observed that policies for transformation and Black Economic Empowerment are "not that different from many policies in other countries that are designed to improve the economic position of marginalized groups, including South Africa's apartheid-era policies for the empowerment of Afrikaners" (Vilakazi & Bosiu, 2021, pp. 191–192). The policy goal of national government concerning transformation targets equitable participation in all economic activities, including tourism. In addressing the historical legacy South Africa's national tourism strategy calls for a broadening of the economic beneficiaries of tourism development (Department of Tourism, 2018a). Historically, South Africa's tourism economy emerged with the domination and control by White-owned businesses (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021b). The policy document stresses the need to attract and support the involvement of more Black entrepreneurs in the tourism sector (Department of Tourism, 2018a, 2018b; Abrahams, 2019). One avenue of "transformation" and for the achievement of greater inclusivity in South Africa's tourism economy is through the promotion of new entrepreneurship opportunities for Black-owned small me-

dium or micro-enterprises (SMMEs) (Kirsten & Rogerson, 2002; Rogerson, 2004; Giddy, Idahosa & Rogerson, 2020). Strategic initiatives have included expanding finance support for Black entrepreneurs, targeted promotion of specific forms of niche tourism (most notably of township tourism), the launch of business incubators, and the leveraging of public procurement to advance business opportunities for Black tourism entrepreneurs (Rogerson, 2008; Abrahams, 2019; Giddy, Idahosa & Rogerson, 2020; Rogerson, 2020a; Nomnga, 2021; Quesada & Boekstein, 2021). Issues around small enterprise development represent one of the essential "knowledge domains" and strands of writing concerning sustainable tourism in South Africa (Rogerson, 2020b) as well as a vibrant focus for recent research by the country's tourism geographers (Rogerson & Visser, 2020).

It is against the above backdrop that this paper investigates the challenges that face transformation initiatives through the lens of the constraints operating on the development of Black-owned tourism SMMEs in South Africa's Eastern Cape province. The research is situated within the international literature and theoretical moorings on small firms in tourism and more specifically of the challenges of small tourism entrepreneurship in the Global South. Two major sections of material follow. The next section reviews the progress of international research on tourism small firms and of debates concerning constraints on their growth in literature relating to the Global South. This leads to the discussion and analysis of the South African case study of Eastern Cape province. Results are presented from a survey undertaken in 2018–2019 of the business challenges and constraints on enterprise growth of a total of 79 Black-owned small accommodation businesses. These findings are supplemented by a set of semi-structured interviews conducted with select accommodation providers.

2. Research on Tourism Small Firms and Their Challenges

According to Jonathan Yachin (2020, p. 17) one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the tourism industry "is that it is composed of small-scale enterprises". Among others Álvaro Dias (2021, p. 14) argues therefore that "the study of small business is crucial due to their share in the total numbers of tourism firms". The group of small and medium-sized enterprises have exerted a long-standing numerical dominance of the tourism industry (Shaw & Williams, 1994; Getz & Carlsen, 2005; Nordbø, 2009). Yet for Stephen Page, Pip Forer and Glenda Lawton (1999) it was observed that with certain exceptions the domain of entrepreneurship and small business development was still *terra incognita* in tourism. A decade later only

limited progress seemingly had been made with Ingeborg Nordbø (2009, p. 15) pointing out that within mainstream tourism scholarship "small and micro-sized businesses are not a highly prioritized theme and in most cases only sporadically addressed" (Nordbø, 2009, p. 15). An increase in research on aspects of tourism small firms has been observed since 2010 and is evidenced within a number of recent reviews which have been undertaken on the state of the art of tourism studies concerning entrepreneurship and small firms (Işik et al., 2019; Yachin, 2020; Dias, 2021; Trip et al., 2021). Gaps persist and particularly with regards to research and theorisation concerning small tourism firms in resource-scarce contexts such as the Global South (Saarinen & Rogerson, 2021; Sixaba, 2023). For example, it was recorded that despite the importance of small firms for tourism development across Africa only "limited analysis about the role and challenges faced by entrepreneurs within the tourism sector has been conducted" (Mantey, 2021, p. 7).

The development challenges of tourism small firms have been the focus of considerable scholarship and international debate (Fu et al., 2019; Isik et al., 2019; Rosalina, Dupre & Wang, 2021; Giddy, Rogerson & Rogerson, 2022). In the environment of the Global North strategic internal weaknesses of tourism small firms have been identified. These include lack of financial resources, poor marketing, weak human resources, limited application of new technologies, limited access to business skills and knowledge of the business environment, and constraints on networking. Much scholarship argues that small firm entrepreneurs require institutional help to overcome these intrinsic managerial disadvantages in the internal operational environment (Yachin, 2020). In an early contribution Jovo Ateljevic and Stephen Doorne (2004) direct attention beyond the internal characteristics and managerial weaknesses of small tourism firms and focus attention also on the constraints in the external institutional environment. Key identified issues include policy infrastructure, government support, the regulatory environment, and relationships with the financial sector. In addition, another of the core questions facing tourism and hospitality small firms as noted by Rhodri Thomas, Gareth Shaw and Stephen Page (2011) is integrating into the hyper-competitive framework of the globalized economy.

As a whole, the international literature indicates the central constraints are a highly competitive environment amongst small firms; lack of market demand; high expenditure on operational costs; high interest rates; lack of skilled employees; and, competition of large businesses (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2004; Rosalina, Dupre & Wang, 2021). Issues of seasonality were also revealed as a further major developmental constraint to especially the cohort of rural SMMEs in remote areas (Yachin, 2020). Lack of finance is a critical development constraint for SMMEs especially in the start-up phase (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2007). Shortages of finance as well as of skilled employees can hinder innovation and new product developments

(Yachin, 2019). For tourism firms "innovations are means of creating a meaningful contribution to customer experience and a key to success and survival in a highly competitive global market" (Yachin, 2019, p. 47). In addition, Ateljevic and Doorne (2004) showed that enhanced marketing was an issue for tourism small firms. For other contexts in the Global North red tape and bureaucracy was viewed a hindrance on business performance (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2007). The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted questions surrounding crisis management in tourism small businesses (Durst, Dinler & Ulvenblad, 2022). Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic an emerging scholarship examines the adaptive responses undertaken by tourism small businesses (Booyens et al., 2022).

As tourism small firms assume a critical role in rural development for many parts of the Global North the particular challenges that confront lifestyle entrepreneurs and tourism small development in rural areas are the focus of much attention (Rosalina, Dupre & Wang, 2021). In an influential contribution Stephen Page and Donald Getz (1997) identified several constraints on tourism rural businesses. These include access to businesses in remote areas, the embeddedness of tourism businesses into the locality, seasonality, the high operational costs of running a business, labour, retaining authenticity by preserving rural ambience, and infrastructural issues in terms of both quantity (limited electricity or water) or of quality (poor roads, internet connection). Internal challenges can concern limitations of internal resources, poor planning and management resulting in an inability to capitalise local assets and absence of marketing strategies, inadequate financial support, limited physical amenities, and absence of sustainable strategies (Rosalina, Dupre & Wang, 2021). External challenges relate to "unstable tourism demand, threats from competitors and potential conflict with external resources, such as investors outside the destination" (Rosalina, Dupre & Wang, 2021, p. 141). For the success of rural tourism small businesses Jonathan Yachin (2021) stresses the significance of personal relationships and local networks. Indeed, for tourism small firms in rural areas "networks constitute a potential to pursue opportunities and compensate for lack of resources, missing skills and relevant education" (Yachin, 2021, p. 319). As a whole, therefore, networks and their functioning are a significant theme in the mainstream of international research on tourism small firms centred on the Global North (Łobejko, 2022).

The literature on tourism small firms in the Global South began to evolve in the late 1990s and early 2000s with the appearance of influential studies produced by Heidi Dahles and her colleagues (Dahles & Bras, 1999; Dahles, 2000; Dahles & Kuene, 2002), Mark Hampton (2003) and William Gartner (2004). Several scholars drew attention to tourism small firms as contributing to pro-poor approaches towards tourism development and the making of a more inclusive development

trajectory (Rogerson & Saarinen, 2018). Research in Indonesia demonstrates how small tourism enterprises can offer a resilient pathway to sustainable development (Dahles, Prabawa & Koning, 2020). Nevertheless, in terms of policy frameworks, it was argued that governments in many countries fail to acknowledge small businesses as a critical component of national economic development and often view the operations of small business in a negative light (Dahles & Bras, 1999; Akama & Kieti, 2007). The presence of "tourism enclaves" can lead further to the marginalization of small local entrepreneurs and positioning them as the "other" in their places of origin (Shaw & Shaw, 1999). As a whole the state across much of the Global South therefore prioritises the needs and support for large scale tourism enterprises over those of small businesses. A cluster of challenges for small firms in tourism environments of the Global South relate to their subordinate and dependent role in the economy as compared to the power of large enterprises.

With the weakness of government mechanisms and an institutional environment to support the development of tourism small businesses across many countries in the Global South the issue of networks and networking becomes of critical significance. For the resource-scarce contexts of the Global South business and structural resources are shown positively related to the success of tourism small firms and point to the need to nurture social networks and ties to offset the lack (or weakness) of government support (Campbell & Kubickova, 2020). Many challenges faced by tourism small business entrepreneurs in the Global South parallel those with reference to countries in the Global North such as lack of access to finance, minimal support services as well as inefficient institutions and low skills of the workforce (Hampton, 2003; Njinyah & Pendati, 2021). In Ghana the greatest difficulties of tourism small entrepreneurs for their operations occur when seeking grants, funds or incentives to aid business development (Mantey, 2021). Key business challenges of tourism entrepreneurs in the Central Region (Cape Coast) of Ghana related to low patronage, financial constraints, high competition for limited numbers of customers, high government taxes and high interest rate charges by institutions that provide loans to business operators (Mantey, 2021). In many countries the majority of small business entrepreneurs do not own the land or building from which they operate businesses (Abdul, Awang & Zaiton, 2012). Isaac Mantey (2021, p. 24) points to another difficulty experienced by small tourism firms in Ghana, namely "the inability to practice the best international practices in tourism operation". In an earlier Ghana study by Joseph Mensah-Ansah (2011) the constraints facing small tourism accommodation service providers related to weaknesses in the institutional environment and poor physical infrastructure with unstable power supplies, inadequate water systems and telecommunication networks. Such infrastructural shortcomings are widespread problems that limit

tourism small firm development in many parts of the Global South including South Africa (Rogerson & Sixaba, 2022).

Beyond the common issues of securing funding for their business, government regulations, and minimal government support women entrepreneurs confront the issues of playing multiple roles with household and business responsibilities (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2016). Another challenge troubling to women tourism entrepreneurs is the fear of harassment and of gender-based violence (Nomnga, 2021). In sub-Saharan Africa Michael Ngoasong and Albert Kimbu (2019) point out that extended family and relationships connected to tribal and religious groups can be an additional constraint for women entrepreneurs in a sense that it may lead to expectations of financial contributions amongst these members and the fear of these women entrepreneurs being perceived (or labelled) as unwilling to help or as "selfish" people. Issues of corruption are also a hindrance for business development of women tourism entrepreneurs (Ngoasong & Kimbu, 2019). Arguably, whilst corruption practices that impact tourism are not confined to the Global South there is evidence from studies in Nigeria and South Africa of the negative impacts of corruption for small tourism entrepreneurs (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020; Alola et al., 2021; Andzenge, 2021; Osinubi et al., 2022). One finding is that South African local municipalities can be a breeding ground for corruption and that tourism as an economic activity can be a basis for corrupt practices particularly if connected to land issues around tourist development (Giddy, Rogerson & Rogerson, 2022).

3. The Eastern Cape Study

The research setting of the Eastern Cape is the poorest of South Africa's nine provinces. Arguably, it would be described in a parallel with other African studies of what is termed as a "resource-scarce" or "resource-constrained" environment (Ngoasong & Kimbu, 2019; Dayour, Adongo & Kimbu, 2020). The province provides an instructive case study in "transformation" of the South African tourism sector as the first Black-owned hotels in the country were established during the late 19th century by local entrepreneurs in towns that form part of modern-day Eastern Cape (Sixaba & Rogerson, 2019). The province of Eastern Cape was constituted only in 1994 at the time of South Africa's democratic transition. Its largest urban centres are Gqeberha (former Port Elizabeth), East London and Mthatha, the "capital" of the former Transkei. In terms of economic and social development much of the province would be classed as a "distressed" region and especially the rural areas of the former Transkei and Ciskei Bantustans which make-up a large

share of the land of the province. These areas are observed as the location for the largest clusters of Black-owned tourism establishments within the province (Rogerson & Sixaba, 2021). An understanding of this particular geographical concentration of Black-owned accommodation businesses must be rooted in the historical constraints imposed on Black entrepreneurship in urban areas during the apartheid era when these areas were seen as exclusively "White spaces" for business development (Hart, 1971). The acceptance of a bogus "independence" by the administrations of Transkei (1976) and Ciskei (1981) created a changed policy environment for the establishment and ownership of tourism businesses by Black entrepreneurs in these spaces (Rogerson, 2022).

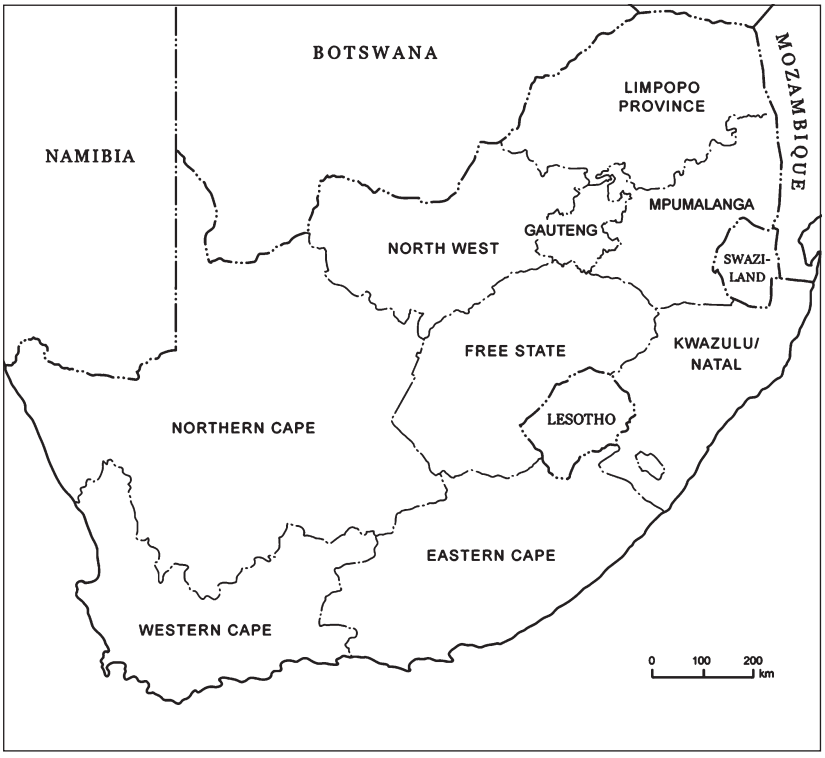

Figure 1: South Africa's nine provinces 1994
Source: Authors

This study analyses the findings from a structured questionnaire survey that was undertaken in 2018–2019 with 79 Black-owned tourism enterprises across the Eastern Cape (Figure 1). The specific focus was upon small accommodation establishments and issues of focus in the survey encompassed a profile of tourism entrepreneurs and their businesses, the motivations for business start-up, and

operational constraints or challenges for the enterprises. All interviews were conducted in-person. In addition to the survey a set of detailed semi-structured interviews were pursued with a selection of the accommodation providers variously in Bisho (AC1), King Williams Town (AC2), East London (AC3, AC4), Gqeberha (AC5) and Lusikisiki (AC6). The interviews with small accommodation providers were a subset of a larger group of qualitative interviews that included government officials and NGOs in the Eastern Cape; full details of these interviews and research methods are provided by Sixaba (2023).

The qualitative material was analysed through content thematic analysis and key responses are given with the code of each respondent. Based on the survey responses Table 1 gives a summary profile of the Black-owned accommodation entrepreneurs and enterprises in the Eastern Cape.

Table 1: Profile of Entrepreneurs and Enterprises

Characteristic	Key Finding
Gender	81 percent women
Age	85 percent over 40 years and 53 percent over 50 years
Education	Relatively well-educated — 57 with tertiary qualifications in terms of degree/diploma
Tourism Enterprise	44 percent bed and breakfast operations, 32 percent guest houses, 10 percent homestays
Size	70 percent less than 10 rooms
Employees	72 percent less than 5 employees — nearly all establishments would be classed as micro-firms
Start-Up Capital	Majority from own savings, or funds from friends and family
Period in Business	77 percent more than 6 years
Motivation for start-up	Desire for self-employment, own boss, economic freedom — lifestyle considerations of minor significance

Source: Own Elaboration

A central aspect of the survey was to identify and rank the challenges which confront the development of these mainly women-owned tourism SMMEs operating in Eastern Cape province. These development challenges must be read as a set of issues which confront the transformation of the tourism industry in this part of South Africa. It should be noted the timing of the survey and interviews and the results reflect a pre-COVID-19 situation. Based upon a literature survey of business constraints/ challenges identified in international and local research, the respondents were asked to rate the relative importance according to a Likert scale of 1–5 for the different challenges to their business development. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Challenges of Small Firm Tourism Business Development

Challenges	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Funding (N=76)	6	3	5	8	54	4.33
Competition from large business (N=75)	12	9	16	11	27	3.43
Lack of skilled employees (N=77)	5	7	19	18	28	3.74
Income flow (N=76)	6	5	13	22	30	3.86
Lack of government support (N=78)	4	5	8	15	46	4.21
Off peak (N=77)	7	9	15	14	32	3.71
Historical (N=76)	9	4	13	18	32	3.79
Resources (N=74)	5	4	11	15	39	4.07
Bureaucracy (N=78)	6	5	13	18	36	3.94
Business environment (N=76)	8	10	20	16	22	3.45
Gender (N=77)	21	13	21	10	12	2.73
Training (N=77)	7	4	16	21	29	3.79
Awareness (N=77)	6	8	19	18	26	3.65
Market access (N=77)	5	7	14	18	33	3.87
Marketing (N=78)	3	4	17	20	34	4.00
Infrastructure (N=76)	7	7	6	18	38	3.96
ICT (N=78)	4	13	13	19	29	3.72
Experience (N=78)	7	11	18	17	25	3.54
Crime (N=77)	3	6	15	18	35	3.99
Mentoring (N=77)	7	4	9	23	34	3.95

Source: Own Elaboration based on author survey
Note: Likert Scale in Degree of Importance 1–5 with 5 Very Important; N=number of responses

Several themes emerged as leading constraints. As a whole, the survey disclosed the most pressing challenges as relating to funding and resources with the lack of or insufficient government support (Table 2). Overall the respondents scored most highly the challenges of funding (4.33), government support (4.21), lack of resources (4.07), marketing (4.00), crime (3.99) and infrastructure (3.96). By contrast, the challenges which ranked as the least significant surrounded gender (2.73), competition from larger enterprises (3.43), the business environment (3.45) and entrepreneur's lack of experience (3.54). The qualitative responses received in the semi-structured interviews provided further insight into the mean scores generated by using the Likert-scale. Applying content thematic analysis to the qualitative findings, seven groups of constraints on the operations of tourism entrepreneurs were discerned. These relate to funding, government, human resources, limited knowledge, historical legacies, gender issues, and crime/corruption. Each will be discussed in turn.

Finance

In the Eastern Cape the financial challenges of tourism small businesses are associated with four major issues, namely, funding support, access to finance, financial institutions, and, cash flow or money management. In terms of funding support a large segment of respondents highlighted the minimal financial support from government was a major constraint upon business development. A guest house owner asserted how lack of access to capital is a constraint: "When you are running a business it is the problem of access to capital. You will find out that with our white counterparts, they always have someone. They have got access to money they can borrow you know, unlike us, we mostly reliant on banks you know more than family and friends" — AC1. Most accommodation providers admitted that government funding is a challenge, "I think that funding has got to be more open. I know places that do assist with funding but what is really sad is that it is always about who you know because most people would love to be in business but they do not have the funds to start the business" — AC4. Access to funding from commercial banks posed obstacles to entrepreneurs in terms of collateral requirements: "The biggest problem is that you go to a commercial bank and they want collateral. They want a rand for rand collateral so if you were to borrow from them 7 million they want 7 million collateral somewhere, you know." — AC1. In relation to cash flow, a bed and breakfast entrepreneur explained how they experience difficulties in managing the operational costs of the business "The cash flow becomes a problem…I operate on a very limited cash flow." — AC2. Further, entrepreneurs indicated cash flow problems that arose with delays in payment for services rendered for government departments:

> The state does not pay well, it does not pay on time, for the type of business we are in if you do not get paid this month, we might end up next month not being able to accommodate other people because we have run out of things. Look, in our business the reason we like people who enter the through the door is the fact that they give us money, directly to you. Cash flow is there so you can do daily expenses…Now the government states in its bylaws or what not that you should be paid at least in 30 days of service rendered which never happens, there are always delays" — AC3.

Delayed payments was not, however, an issue confined simply to government clients: "Cash flow sometimes is a huge challenge because you will get travel agents that say give us 30 days to pay, then they will end up paying after like 60 or 80 days, so meanwhile, you still have costs that you must cover. You must buy groceries, you must repair lights, salaries and whatever else." — AC4. Overall, this first cluster of

finance challenges impact the development of these small tourism businesses and of transformation in the Eastern Cape tourism economy.

The Role of Government

Several constraints exist on the development prospects of Black-owned tourism SMMEs in the Eastern Cape because of a range of problems associated with government actions or inaction. These challenges relate to lack of support from government and inadequate understanding of the needs of small businesses, bureaucratic processes and failure of government to supply or maintain basic infrastructure essential for the functioning of tourism small businesses.

The accommodation owners stressed continually how the group of emerging black entrepreneurs are marginalised and how their needs are not addressed particularly by the local tier of government: "The black-owned SMMEs are way behind. So we still need to catch up, so the system is not assisting us to catch up. They say they will do programmes but I find that the programmes that they offer do not really assist us where we need assistance." — AC4. The respondents highlighted a lack of understanding and support from the local municipality in terms of providing initiatives that support their businesses. The institution of local government was accused in particular of lack of support implementation: "Look, strategically those things are there, if you look at most institutions they got brochures that say this and that, but when it comes to implementation it does not happen." — AC2. The absence of a tourism department within local municipalities was a reason for the limited understanding by local government of the business challenges of emerging entrepreneurs. Accommodation entrepreneurs often had no sense of direction as to whom or where the owners can seek support from or report their business challenges. A guest house owner identified this as a major constraint "There are challenges, lots and lots, firstly we are situated around a municipality that is not us…The infrastructure is very bad. It is not our fault it is the municipality that is supposed to look at that, and they do not have a tourism section within the municipality itself." — AC6.

The bureaucratic procedures that are posed by the government on small businesses negatively impact development, specifically the regulations on protocol and process. The challenges that were pointed out by the owners relate to the lack of urgency or action from government departments when seeking support and inflexibility when dealing with processes and regulations. Regarding the delays and time it takes to process requests from accommodation owners one asserted as follows: "For the government to do simple things it just takes too long, like this thing of grading fees, I mean this thing I have submitted like six months ago

and they said they are going to pay us and they have not done it and then when you ask them the lady says she does not know, or the payment is with her bosses and they have to make a decision and yes the money is there but she does not know when the payment will be made…that is another thing about the government that can get frustrating…" — AC1. Further, government bias against small businesses and a preference for larger enterprises was raised as a matter of concern. Respondents consider that policy tends to favour big businesses rather than SMMEs: "The policies should start with SMMEs. The bigger enterprises are already established…but I think at the end of the day it all boils down to who brings in more money…and right now policy is prioritising the bigger fish because they want a bigger cut" — AC3.

Infrastructural challenges emerged as a further problem in relation to inaction by local government or its failure to maintain infrastructure. Although this is a province-wide issue the infrastructural issues are particularly acute in certain coastal settlements and rural areas of Eastern Cape. Asked to elaborate on these challenges they indicated that the roads have deteriorated and have not been maintained. Additional issues surrounded the cleanliness of towns and shortcomings of municipal services delivery which were a major hindrance to the business. One entrepreneur explained how infrastructural shortcomings by local government impacted their tourism business: "We are situated in a municipality that does not support us… The gravel roads — when our guests come here they complain a lot… and the problem of water, scarcity of water it is a problem because you cannot run a business without water…Our water is managed by the municipality and anytime they want to switch it off they just do that and without even telling us, so that is the challenge we are facing because our guests need water to bath." — AC6.

Human Resources

The survey respondents identified lack of access to training in professional skills, mentoring programmes and the lack of skilled employees as human resource barriers to development (Table 2). As regards training programmes four key issues were identified as challenges to small businesses. These comprised the need for training, the costs for training employees, the irrelevance of content provided within government training programmes, and time limitations. With respect to the need for training it was highlighted as follows: "We need support in terms of training programmes done by Buffalo City Municipality" — AC3. This said, the costs for external employee training are a problem: "I think we did in-house training solely because at the time the business could not afford to go and train employees, and we still did not afford to get one who is already trained, so we needed to use our own

skills that we have learnt through the years to actually train our employee." — AC3. Entrepreneurs flagged as another human resource issue the nature of the content provided in government training programmes. The question was raised whether the training programmes address the needs of accommodation business owners: "We really do not go out for training, We have not found anything that I feel is suitable. They [Government] do not offer what we need. For example, they will say they have got training and then you find it is so basic. It is stuff that people already know, so you want something that will take these skills up. But we are not getting this from the government, and I think they need to find out more from us what is it that we need if they want to assist us." — AC4.

The business owners also pointed to time constraint issues and not having the time to attend training because their business operations would be neglected during the period they attend training sessions and with lack of personnel to manage the business for that duration. Indeed, in terms of skilled employees, a major constraint is the lack of workers with the necessary skills to assist in operating the business. For instance, relating to the lack of skilled employees an east London guest house entrepreneur stated: "Human capital is an issue, because there are so many people that are unemployed but you struggle to find good quality people that are willing to work." — AC4. Employee retention was another related problem: "Staffing issues. Like let us say a housekeeper just decides today that she is quitting. Then you are left with a big gap because you are not going to cope, and then you must try to recruit someone, which is not an easy process because you must interview them and be satisfied before you let them in, so that is a huge challenge." — AC4. Concerning mentoring what emerged from the research is both the lack of productive mentoring programmes and that the actual mentors facilitating these mentoring programmes lack quality standards. As a consequence it was reported that "We were part of some mentoring programme, but you just find that even these mentors, they sort of give a you handout and they feel like that's it." — AC4.

Limited Knowledge and Access

An understanding of the tourism industry and being aware of the surroundings is an important factor to help enhance the business and to meet the needs of the tourists. An East London based accommodation provider commented on how limited knowledge can be a barrier to business development "We had a Russian who was staying here…I told him where to go, where to eat and everything…that was something very new and we are not exposed and that is also one of the things that is holding us back as Black business is that we are exposed to the same culture. So you end up focusing on giving a certain service to a certain people only to find

out there is a whole other world." — AC3. The interviews reveal a lack of awareness about operating and managing a tourism business which is associated with limited access to information and information-providing platforms. The bed and breakfast entrepreneur emphasised: "So the access to information we do not have. None of the Eastern Cape websites work, and if you check their website the information was last updated in 2012" — AC3.

In addition, the barriers associated with the marketing of the business contribute to limiting business progress for emerging Black tourism entrepreneurs. The interviews provided insight into marketing challenges experienced by these entrepreneurs: "I think firstly just general knowledge on how to market an accommodation establishment, because it is not like any of us went to do the guesthouse course. Just that information on how to market a place." — AC3. Another constraint mentioned was costs of marketing: " I think it goes back to getting resources to actually do some of these things because marketing can be cheap but very expensive as well…marketing in newspapers, magazines is costly." — AC3.

The Legacy of the Past

The critical argument can be made that the current challenges which are faced by Black-owned tourism SMMEs in the Eastern Cape cannot be fully understood without an historical perspective and in particular of the impact of apartheid (Rogerson & Sixaba, 2021). The legacies of the past were recognised and raised by interviewees in various ways including issues around sense of ownership, land, inequality, and racial perceptions and attitudes. In addition, the historical legacies underpin the market dominance of established White-owned tourism businesses in several parts of Eastern Cape.

At least one interviewee recognised how apartheid legislation affected black entrepreneurs in terms of mental state, ability to have a sense of ownership and to freely participate in the economy "I would say even apart from talking about the land issue, I think there is a deeper problem of confidence and self-esteem, I think if I can mention in my view I think the apartheid laws had taken away the confidence and self-esteem of black people because when you are in a business, you need to believe in what you are doing" — AC1. Additionally, the accommodation business owners conveyed their experiences on the perception and attitude that society has of Black-owned businesses and pointed particularly at racist attitudes. A King Williams Town based bed and breakfast entrepreneur reflected: "There are some people like those government officials that without even coming to the place .. They say no its black-owned and have got the perception that it would not be up to standard…it is those stereotypes" — AC2. An East London guest house owner

indicated that acts of racism also have a harmful role to the business: "This [tourism] industry is still new to us because we are only having the confidence and the finance now, so we still have a long way to go because definitely those laws still are affecting us now. Even sometimes you will find that someone will come, a white guest and the minute they see they see it is black-owned they sort of start to have an attitude without having any bad experience. It is the legacy of apartheid, so we still living with that most definitely" — AC4.

Land issues were critical in a province that is mainly rural. The land question has been a feature in government policy for many years since democratic change in 1994 and several entrepreneurs expressed their challenges with acquiring property: "Land is the most essential thing in my particular business which is accommodation. You have to have land to build a house…Land is not on our side as black people, so you always find that there is less black people with homes that are big enough to have a B&B, there is less black people that have been given loans to buy properties where they can renovate and develop into a guesthouse and lodges." — AC3. Further the entrepreneurs also pinpointed historical inequalities of resources and opportunities in terms of economic participation and the marginalisation of Black entrepreneurs: "The Black B&Bs came much later stage in business, you will find the oldest one is probably like only 10 or 12 years, but the oldest white establishment B&B in East London could be something like 60 years and at a higher level." — AC3. It was pointed out that Black entrepreneurs are relatively new in terms of participation in the tourism economy, and the majority of the businesses were established post-1994. On that basis a guest house owner flagged a lack of opportunities for black entrepreneurs and expressed the difficulties of exclusion within the tourism economy "You will find white-owned guesthouses they have been doing it for 20, 30 or whatever years so their systems are established, even business names are established. Also, when you are approaching the travel agents for business, there are still a lot of white-owned travel agencies, so you find that they are able to penetrate a lot easier or a lot quicker and also, they just have more capital than we do" — AC4.

Competition from existing businesses also can be viewed as a legacy of past policies. The historical development of tourism in major centres of the Eastern Cape was associated with white entrepreneurs establishing businesses which dominate the local tourism industry. These white-owned businesses were initiated at a time when apartheid legislation largely blocked any participation of Black entrepreneurs in South Africa's tourism economy (Hart, 1971). The results of the interviews indicated that large businesses are a major competitor: "The hotels here in King Williams Town have more rooms, now they are our competitors in unimaginable ways and the challenge were are experiencing is pricing, because they have got

quite a lot of rooms right so their prices are lower." — AC1. A further signal of the competition from established enterprise was given by a bed and breakfast operator as follows: "The large hotels have been in the industry for too long…and they have that added advantage of becoming cheaper on pricing because they have got their deals, they have negotiated rates whereas when you come as a young entrepreneur like me, they would not even entertain the chance of negotiating, they will just give me a flat rate." — AC2.

Gender

As Lukhona Mdluli (2020) points out in South Africa female entrepreneurship in tourism has been constrained not only by discriminatory apartheid legislation but also as a result of gender oppression rooted in patriarchy which has disempowered Black women. In the Eastern Cape, South African women entrepreneurs are still confronted with socio-cultural challenges because of "the traditional role of women being identified primarily by the family purely for domestic responsibilities due to socially constructed norms of the place of women in society" (Mdluli, 2020, p. 12). Nevertheless, it was striking that the mainly group of female respondents ranked gender issues as the least significant of their multiple challenges for developing their tourism accommodation businesses (Table 2). Even excluding the responses of all the group of male tourism entrepreneurs the average score for gender issues was only 3.00 (n=64) which remains the lowest of all the 20 issues that were addressed to respondents in the survey.

A follow-up question was posed, however, to the 64 female respondents concerning whether there were any specific issues that they confronted as women tourism entrepreneurs. The theme that attracted the highest proportional share of responses relates to the safety and security of women entrepreneurs in running their business. In particular, with late-night bookings, women entrepreneurs risk falling victim to gender-based violence and crime. This problem was followed by concerns of being "disrespected" and of male dominance within the small business sector. Several women considered that female entrepreneurs in tourism were viewed as inferior to their male counterparts and that the local tourism industry was patriarchal in character and with unequal business opportunities as preference in terms of support was given to male-owned businesses. Overall, a lack of commitment by government to support the implementation of women's empowerment in tourism was also viewed as of concern by female respondents.

Crime and Corruption

Crime has a negative impact on the image of tourist destinations and affects small businesses in the Eastern Cape as is the case for all of South Africa. Among the 79 survey respondents crime was rated highly as a major constraint on business development (Table 2). Typically, one entrepreneur in the small town of Lusikisiki stated how crime impacted their business as follows: "Another thing is the crime, it is not normal. People in our area — they are doing crazy things and things we cannot think of doing. It was last year when we had that thing of Amavondo. It was killing of people that were associated with witchcraft. It was all over the news. It hit at our business hard because our guests, they were so afraid to come to Lusikisiki, the business was shaken." — AC6.

Beyond crime equally significant is the pervasive impact of corruption in the business environment of tourism small businesses in the Eastern Cape. Corruption has been identified as among the most critical barriers to the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems in South Africa (Madzikanda, Li & Dabuo, 2022). Several aspects of corruption conducted by individuals in positions of power were identified as negatively affecting the growth of the businesses of tourism entrepreneurs. The interviewees showed considerable insight about corruption that takes place around the accommodation sub-sector and expressed the impact it has on their business. The phenomenon of corruption occurs mainly through government procurement processes. It involves department heads or government officials and travel agencies that demand rewards for providing business in the form of guests or clients to the accommodation establishment. The individuals involved in this illegal activity are known to refer to the reward as "idrink", "ukukhapha" or "unyoba", which can be interpreted as a bribe. A Bisho guest house owner contended: "There is a lot of corruption that is another bad thing about this province. People are employed to work as supply chain officers at different levels and somehow they think that because they give you business therefore you owe them money…They feel that you have to give them some sort of reward and they call it "idrinki"… They say do not forget about that idrink…they call it all sorts of names." — AC1. Travel agencies are also involved in these illegal activities and play a part in coercing the establishment owners to give them money: "You are already paying commission to the travel agent, now the consultant wants to get paid and she even says you must pay me R 50 per person that I am giving you." — AC4.

One entrepreneur in Bisho provided details of how a government official approached their accommodation establishment in the persuasion of providing guests in exchange for a sum of money: "Well there was a guy that came here with people from the Department of Public Works, so he said he wanted a bribe for each

one of them. There were about five people, so he is going to organise for me to get money straight from the travel agent and so when I get that money he wants his portion for himself then I said no I cannot and obviously I lost that business." — AC1. In addition, other entrepreneurs signalled their fears associated with this type of corruption and that their business would not receive future guests from the government if they did not participate: "Sometimes they will sabotage you and not give you the business because you are not doing it." — AC4. Another aspect of corruption is price fixing amongst the owners. This involves accommodation establishment owners agreeing on certain prices for their service in order for one of them to secure a government contract for guests. It was explained how this illegal activity takes place: "There is also other stuff in terms of collusion in pricing. For example, I am a B&B and there is two other B&Bs and I hear that there is a department that wants a quotation, then I go and collude with my other B&Bs then say okay I am going to make the price for my B&B to be R 1 200 and to another B&B please make it R 1 300, and another B&B make R 1 400…This happens a lot, it is called "ukukhapha." — AC1.

An added corruption-related issue which is a burden for the accommodation owners is government officials demands that they exchange meal vouchers for cash. This impacts the profits of the tourism establishments. A guest house owner described how government visitors demand money from them: "There is this new thing that they do now where they book a person at a B&B and when they arrive the first thing that they do is to cancel all their meals and want a refund of all meals. So in other words if they are booked here and costs them R 900, then say my home is R 700 or R 650, then the R 250 goes towards the meals and they want that cash. I have complained about it because the government contract I entered into did not stipulate that agreement" — AC1. Further corruption is recorded as entrepreneurs who have connections with family and friends within the government receive more business due to these networks and associations. Several of the tourism entrepreneurs are affiliated to the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and secure business based on those political connections. In addition, municipal linkages can be important: "So there are establishments here in Lusikisiki ….they get more business because the father from the establishment is linked with the municipality." — AC6. When the owners were asked if within their associations they engage and discuss how they can combat corruption, one Bisho-based respondent stated: "It is going to be difficult because some of these accommodation owners are involved in it." — AC1. In terms of reporting corrupt activities, it was made clear that no one attempts to report such incidents. Indeed, when one entrepreneur wrote a formal letter to the Chief Financial Officer of the Premier no response was received from the government regarding the complaint regarding corrupt practices.

4. Conclusion

The society and economy of modern-day South Africa bears the scars of its colonial and apartheid past dominated by a sustained process of systematic empowerment which created a fundamentally unjust and unequal society (van der Watt, 2022). During the period of apartheid, entrepreneurship by Black South Africans and engagement in tourism was discouraged by legislation. Since 1994 as part of broader planning for Black Economic Empowerment a major focus in government tourism policy has been upon "transformation" in the sector. The results of this research undertaken in South Africa's poorest province isolated a range of constraints upon the advancement of Black-owned accommodation enterprises. In this resource-constrained environment several transformation challenges are shown to relate to issues such as finance, human resources and knowledge which have been identified as constraints on tourism small firm development in many studies both in the Global North and South. Other constraints, however, speak to the specificities of the South African experience. It was shown tourism entrepreneurs must confront certain historical legacies of the colonial and apartheid past. In addition, the study reveals the workings of a number corruption practices which are widespread in the local tourism economy and must be acknowledged as obstacles for the advancement of transformation. Overall, in terms of international scholarship around tourism small firms the South African record is of special interest because of the national government's commitment to its policies of transformation and the upliftment measures for Black entrepreneurs in the country's tourism economy.

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„Transformacja" i rozwój małych firm turystycznych w RPA na przykładzie prowincji Eastern Cape

Streszczenie. Od czasu przemian demokratycznych Republika Południowej Afryki realizuje szereg programów, których celem jest wzmocnienie pozycji grup i jednostek, mających w okresie apartheidu ograniczone prawa i możliwości. W sektorze turystycznym rządowe inicjatywy na rzecz „transformacji" obejmują zobowiązanie do wspierania możliwości działania średnich, małych i mikroprzedsiębiorstw należących do osób czarnoskórych. Autorzy analizują wyzwania związane z transformacją, zwracając uwagę na ograniczenia, z jakimi borykają się przedsiębiorstwa turystyczne należące do osób czarnoskórych w prowincji Eastern Cape w RPA. Badanie wpisuje się w nurt lit-

eratury międzynarodowej dotyczącej małych firm w turystyce, a konkretnie wyzwań stojących przed małymi przedsiębiorcami turystycznymi w krajach globalnego Południa. Analiza opiera się na danych z badania 79 obiektów noclegowych należących do osób czarnoskórych oraz na informacjach uzyskanych podczas częściowo ustrukturyzowanych wywiadów z przedsiębiorcami turystycznymi. Wyniki ujawniają szereg trudności. Działając w środowisku o ograniczonych zasobach, przedsiębiorcy mają problemy m.in. z uzyskaniem środków finansowych, odpowiednich pracowników oraz wiedzy. Te same czynniki ograniczają rozwój małych firm turystycznych zarówno w krajach globalnej Północy, jak i na Południu. Inne ograniczenia wynikają ze specyfiki doświadczeń RPA. Tamtejsi przedsiębiorcy turystyczni muszą się mierzyć z historycznym dziedzictwem apartheidu oraz praktykami korupcyjnymi, które są szeroko rozpowszechnione w lokalnej gospodarce turystycznej i które należy uznać za przeszkody w postępie transformacji.

Słowa kluczowe: małe firmy turystyczne, transformacja, RPA, wzmocnienie ekonomicznej pozycji osób czarnoskórych

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Tourism Businesses Management Practices in the Plateau State, Nigeria, during the 'New Normal': A Chaos Theory Approach

Abstract. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic businesses in the travel and tourism industry were pushed to the edge of chaos and bifurcation and restrictions resulted in unprecedented and far-reaching impacts. Using a qualitative method, chaos theory is applied to investigate 24 tourism business managers in Plateau State in Nigeria on the business management practices employed for their businesses to promote tourism activities following the post-pandemic reopening of tourism businesses. Results reveal that most of the tourism businesses survived the pandemic with businesses gradually 'bouncing back' due to human resources and the overhauling of business operations. Bifurcation caused tourism businesses to be on paths that led to their closure (destruction), while some gained new market segments thanks to reorganization to reach self-organization facilitated by strange attractors. The incorporation of chaos theory in business management practices during the pandemic further confirms that crises are complex and unpredictable.

Keywords: tourism, business management practices, new normal, chaos theory, Plateau State

Introduction

The tourism industry is predisposed to external forces and crises ranging from infectious diseases to social events (Ritchie, 2004). Although the world's tourism system has, over the years, enjoyed relative stability, this steadiness can be disrupted without warning (Ritchie, 2004; Speakman & Sharpley, 2012; Boukas & Ziakas, 2014). In the recent past, and even now, the world has been plagued by crises and disasters so that nations around the globe are grappling with the challenges these incidents present to the tourism industry. The global tourism

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industry is susceptible to a growing diversity of events like earthquakes, floods and hurricanes, social and political instability, oil crises, wars, financial and economic crises, terrorism as well as outbreaks of contagious diseases characterized by pandemics and loss of life (Kim, Chun & Lee, 2005; Mansfeld, 2006; Rosselló, Becken & Santana-Gallego, 2020).

The tourism literature has reported on a wide range of crisis events such as hurricanes (Higgins, 2005), flooding and tsunamis (Cheung & Law, 2006; Calgaro & Lloyd, 2008), earthquakes (Huang & Min, 2002), volcanic eruptions (Carlino, Somma & Mayberry, 2008), bush fires (Armstrong & Ritchie, 2008) and cultural conflicts (Su, Lin & Liu, 2012; Yang, Ryan & Zhang, 2013; Ye, Zhang & Yuen, 2013; Malikhao, 2017; Tsaur, Yens & Teng, 2018). Other tourism related studies have looked at other events such as outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease (Keeling et al., 2003; Rodway-Dyer & Shaw, 2005), severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) (Brug et al., 2004; McKercher & Chon, 2004; Cooper, 2005; Au, Ramasamy & Yeung, 2005; Colizza et al., 2007), zika virus (Gray & Mishtal, 2019), Ebola (Sifolo & Sifolo, 2015; Maphanga & Henama, 2019) and, currently the SARS-COV-2 virus (COVID-19) (Cori et al., 2020; Dube, Nhamo & Chikodzi, 2020). These events have created tensions that impacted tourism businesses and the COVID-19 pandemic created transformations in the tourism industry and the world order. This transformation can be viewed as "an evolving chaotic ordering from a chaos theory perspective" (Boukas & Ziakas, 2014, p. 192). The chaotic transformations in the tourism system led to a new order due to the pandemic with massive losses of jobs in the tourism industry.

It has been estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic has removed over 50 million jobs globally and USD 2.1 trillion in tourism business revenues thus posing serious humanitarian challenges to regions and countries worldwide (UNWTO, 2020). African countries had by March 2020 lost USD 4.4 billion in revenue with the refunds of airline tickets increasing by 75% in comparison with 2019. Nigeria lost about 2.2 million overseas-bound passengers and revenue of USD 434 million as the coronavirus spread continued to escalate (Oyebade, 2020). This decline in revenue and passengers are the aftermath effects of unexpected events (Drakos & Kutan, 2003; Richards, 2007; Kapuscinski, 2014; Adeloye & Brown, 2018). For instance, Nguyen & Imamura (2017) and Ichinosawa (2006) opined that crisis events such as terrorism, conflicts and pandemics change tourists' behaviour towards a destination. This causes shifts in demand that affect the economy of destinations and tourism businesses.

The experiences of tourism business managers especially during and after a health pandemic can be explained using the chaos theory. For this paper, tourism business managers include hired managers and owners of tourism businesses

managing their businesses themselves. The tourism businesses considered are specifically restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions. The aim of this paper is to use chaos theory to highlight the business management practices employed by tourism businesses in Plateau State during the COVID-19 pandemic following the post-pandemic reopening of tourism businesses in Plateau State, Nigeria.

COVID-19 and Tourism Research in Africa

The year 2020 witnessed the global emergence of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) which is an entirely new threat described as a 'black swan' (Adam & Kimbu, 2020; Zenker & Kock, 2020). No crisis in recent history has imposed the intensity and global-scale impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Beirman, 2021). The pandemic's debilitating impacts on the survival and functionality of the tourism industry are crucially affecting the vital contributions by the sector that is undergoing an overhaul of operations (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021; Visser & Marais, 2021). A 'tsunami' of research has been undertaken so far in Africa on the pandemic (Persson-Fischer & Liu, 2021; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021) findings of "which is changing African tourism and the directions of African tourism research" (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021, p. 1027).

Across Africa, "various perspectives have been applied to investigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and hospitality" (Visser & Marais, 2021, p. 1685). Exploratory studies have been carried out on governments responses and policies during the pandemic and how the lack of such policies impacted on tourism (Nyawo, 2020; Mensah & Boakye, 2021). The responses by governments to the pandemic in Africa remained problematic due to policy responses devoid of local and national realities (Ezeh & Fonn, 2020). In Nigeria, these policies put strain on the operations and revenue generation and deprived ecotourism and leisure related nature tourism businesses of their patrons (Bello & Bello, 2021). Undoubtedly, this led to a massive sale of tourism and hospitality business facilities due to bankruptcy "worsened by poor government support and weak business recovery policy for hospitality business owners" (Bello & Bello, 2021, p. 424).

Tourism in Africa is one of the most important and fastest developing economic industry, with certain protected areas and many local populations strongly reliant on tourism and the benefits it provides. However, the COVID-19 pandemic adversely impacted these local and marginalized communities across the African continent (Dube, 2021). Consequently, the impact in Botswana was typified as "a socio-economic and ecological emergency" (Hambira, Stone & Pagiwa, 2021,

p. 1). In South Africa, small and medium enterprises in the tourism sector suffered severe economic losses from the COVID-19 shock (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020; Booyens et al., 2022). Rogerson and Rogerson (2022) found that there was a notable change in the spatial pattern of tourism during 2020. The trend to concentrate tourism development in the South Africa's major cities appeared to have been halted and reversed by the impact of COVID-19. In addition to this, evidence document that Safari and wildlife tourism were brought to a standstill (Dube, 2021; Visser & Marais, 2021). Tourism suffered devastating impacts along with communities involved in conservation and management of natural tourism resources accompanied by losses in income and employment (Nyaruwata & Mbasera, 2021; Visser & Marais, 2021). More so, most iconic tourism attractions in Africa were shut down as the "deserted pyramids of Egypt lit up at night messaging people to 'stay home, stay safe', motionless cable cars at Cape Town's table mountain, the cessation of tours along Ghana's forts and castles as well as empty safari lodges across several countries in Eastern and Southern Africa are powerful symbols of COVID-19 ravages" on the economy of countries of Africa (Rogerson & Baum, 2020, p. 728).

Tourism in Africa faced revenue losses and a slow recovery for tourism businesses and their workforce (Fletcher et al., 2020). Admittedly, these lost revenues are "specifically due to governments making decisions that undermined two essential components of the tourism industry: the mobility to travel, and social interactions between tourists and the host populations" (Visser & Marais, 2021, p. 1686). Technology and digital transformation are a recovery route for tourism in Africa (Masaki, John & Abel, 2021; Musango & Rusibana, 2021). In Zimbabwe and Ghana, virtual tourism, ecotourism and domestic tourism have been explored as alternative means to contribute to sustainability (Chirisa et al., 2020; Soliku et al., 2021). Coping strategies and adaptive responses emerged from Ghana and South Africa (Dayour et al., 2020; Giddy & Rogerson, 2021; Rogerson, 2021; Bandoh et al., 2022) whereas a shift in mobility patterns in Africa from larger travel groups to smaller groups to reduce the risk of infection is also reported in the literature (Giddy & Rogerson, 2021; Nair & Mohanty, 2021).

Although the future of tourism research is unpredictable, however, "tourism related themes in an African context will clearly require a major reset and recalibration in the post-COVID era" (Rogerson & Baum, 2020, p. 733). This transformation follows that there should be a "considerable value for African scholars to learn lessons from past experience and undertake historical tourism research studies which might resonate with contemporary debate" (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021, p. 1029).

Chaos Theory: Order out of Disorder ('New Normal')

Events causing chaos continue to affect tourism destinations (Rindrasih et al., 2019; Aldao et al., 2021; Park, Kim & Kim, 2022). Chaos factually "implies a complete lack of order" (McKercher, 1999, p. 428). However, in the context of tourism, chaos occurs when "a system is dislodged from its steady condition by a triggering event that is as random and unpredictable as the outcome" (Russell & Faulkner, 2004, p. 557). Chaotic and extremely complex systems such as the tourism industry can be studied constructively using the chaos theory (Russell & Faulkner, 1999; Sellnow, Seeger & Ulmer, 2002; Zahra & Ryan, 2007; Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). Russell (2006, p. 110) suggests that "chaos theory reflects the change-proneness, the dynamism, and the self-healing properties of living organisms. Chaos theory and "numerous instances of recent events have demonstrated that, if anything, the only certainty about the future is that the unexpected will happen" (Faulkner & Valeiro, 1995, p. 33). Chaos theory explains non-linear complex systems (McKercher, 1999; Russell & Faulkner, 1999) and it recognizes "the random, complex, unpredictable and dynamic nature of systems" (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012, p. 68). There is agreement that chaos theory provides an insightful paradigm for investigating the changing situations that influence a non-equilibrium system and it focuses on changes that accumulate over time and that accelerate alterations in the system (Scott, Laws & Prideaux, 2008).

The butterfly effect of chaos theory described by McKercher as sensitive dependence on initial conditions (SDIC) explains how significant developments may lead to profound chain reactions that can alter or shift the system structure (McKercher, 1999). Similarly, Russell (2006) observed that tiny alterations come suddenly and can produce large catastrophic outcomes. The inability to adequately measure the impact of the disaster further complicates the situation, as single events can lead to chain changes at destination locations (Boukas & Ziakas, 2014). For example, the COVID-19 pandemic started in Wuhan, China, and spread to over 200 countries. The reaction is that it altered the tourism system and impacted tourism businesses because of the lockdown. In the tourism context, the COVID-19 is the butterfly effect that grew exponentially (McKercher, 1999) and disrupted global systems because of the travel restrictions and ban on social gatherings bringing about new protocols and guidelines referred to as 'new normal' (Ozili & Arun, 2020).

Furthermore, the lock-in effect explains how, in chaotic systems, certain past innovations that have been inherited can have a lasting effect even though the initial response has become expendable (McKercher, 1999; Russell & Faulkner, 2004; Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). As observed by McKercher (1999, p. 429) this

justifies "why accidents of history are still current today." Implying that certain incidents of the past may still be useful today. This explains why the same non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) that were used during the SARS crisis were also implemented in the COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2003; WHO, 2020). In the context of tourism, tourists repetitive behavioural pattern describes the impact of the lock-in effect which McKercher describes as 'brand loyalty' or 'our family has always gone there'. This explains "why some destinations still retain a level of appeal that would normally not be warranted" (McKercher, 1999, p. 429). This attraction or familiarity gained through previous visits influences long-term relationships that inspire repeat visits (McKercher, 1999; Tsai, 2012). Experiences of the past shapes tourists' image about a destination and improves destination image for tourists (De Nisco et al., 2015). The lock-in effect of past experiences can therefore be an important determinant of crisis management.

According to Speakman & Sharpley (2012, p. 70) "a system is always on the edge of chaos when a trigger event may directly or indirectly induce a crisis." This may be due to the existence of the possibility of system disruption despite the stability in time past. In a bid to control the uncontrollable, organizations are faced with the threat of losing control which can be frightening for the organization (McKercher, 1999). However, chaos recognizes that the frightening period of instability of the system is necessary for further change to occur in complex systems (Boukas & Ziakas, 2014). Scholars argue that instability is intrinsic to complex systems and stability can be disrupted unexpectedly (McKercher, 1999; Speakman & Sharply, 2012). Hence, systems must be ready for radical changes once they reach the point of tenuous equilibrium (steadiness) (Russell & Faulkner, 2004; Russell, 2006). This stage is the edge of chaos where dynamic complex systems evolve towards the edge of chaos taking up extreme changes to return to normal.

Bifurcation is a critical point where changes that emerge in response to a chaotic environment can lead to a breakdown or a breakthrough in a system (Paraskevas, 2006). Sellnow, Seeger & Ulmer (2002, p. 271) describes bifurcation as "the flashpoints of change where a system's direction, character, and/or structure are fundamentally disrupted." This implies that bifurcation is the point of unexpected system stability breakdown or breakthrough. Sellnow, Seeger & Ulmer (2002) further argue that all intricate systems have the potential for bifurcation despite the appearance of stability and order. During the COVID-19 pandemic most tourism businesses got to the point of breaking down or breaking through due to the impact of the pandemic.

Systems are thrown into chaos and disequilibrium like Faulkner's emergency phase of the disaster life cycle and no organization is completely insulated from crises (Faulkner, 2001). Unexpected events (UEs) can leave tourism systems irreparably

damaged. Conversely, a system can emerge stronger if the system responds to the corresponding changes. The quick response by global, regional, national tourism organizations, tourists and stakeholders determines the bifurcation of the tourism system (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). Turbulences in the tourism system are not predictable, however these turbulences allow the system to re-emerge into a more competitive system. Self-organization is a consequence of bifurcation where order and new stability emerge from a random and chaotic phase (Sellnow, Seeger & Ulmer, 2002). Sellnow, Seeger & Ulmer (2002) posits that the relationship between chaos and order is complex and dynamic. Despite the chaos, tourism operates with some order for the achievement of a new stable and adaptive system (McKercher, 1999). For example, during a crisis, information dissemination is co-ordinated and information can be assessed on daily basis. In a complex tourism industry tour organizers and managers of hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions can self-organize to satisfy the needs of customers (McKercher, 1999). Additionally, managers can prepare, train and equip workers to handle the challenges of initial conditions teaching them to 'organize the chaos' (McKercher, 1999; Lemonakis & Zairis, 2019).

Sellnow, Seeger & Ulmer (2002, p. 272) observed that "through self-organization, new forms, structures, procedures, hierarchies and understanding emerge, giving a new form to the system, often at a higher level of order and complexity." Self-organization changes the goals, activities, resource layout and directions of the system. Lemonakis & Zairis (2019) agree that self-organization leads to significant improvements in efficiency, upgrade of human resources, improves performance and increases the value of the system. They maintain that for an organization to self-organize, assessing the current state of the business must be through identifying the self-organization goals and preparing the work plan. The implementation of the work plan and evaluation of the results helps in successfully repositioning the system through the self-organization process (Lemonakis & Zairis, 2019).

Study Area and Methods

The spatial scope of this study is limited to the Jos North local government area (JNLGA) and the Jos South local government area (JSLGA) in Plateau State, Nigeria (Figure 1). These two LGAs were selected for study owing to their being home to well-established, developed and properly managed tourism businesses (hotels, guest houses and restaurants) and physical tourism attractions such as the Kurra falls, Assop Falls, Riyom rock formation, Solomon Lar amusement park, Rayfield holiday resort and the Jos Museum complex.

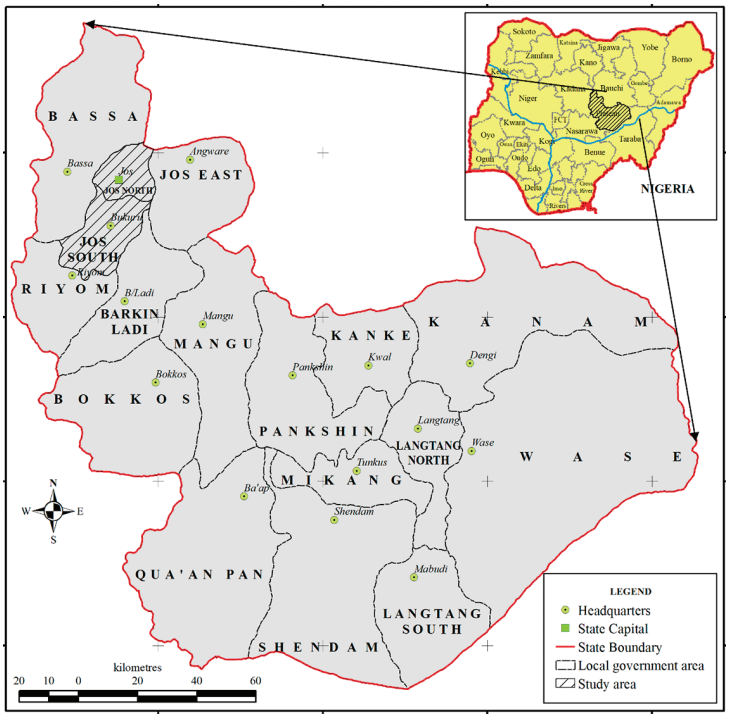

Figure 1: Plateau State, Nigeria, showing the study areas, Jos North and Jos South local government areas
Source: Compiled in 2021 by the GIS Lab, Department of Geography and Planning, University of Jos, Nigeria

Purposive sampling of the most popular hotels, guest houses, tourist attractions and restaurants was used to choose the tourism business managers (TBMS) for interviews. The sample frame was used to choose a stratified random sample of 24 tourism accommodations (hotels and guesthouses), 10 restaurants and 10 tourist attractions in the study area. Interviews were performed with the managers who agreed to participate. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to determine the meanings, behaviors, situations, and perspectives of participants (Neuman, 2003). Participants were requested to sign a written informed consent form after giving their approval and assent. Interviewing was used because it allowed the interviewers to provide clarification to the respondents and obtain personal replies that would not have been feasible with a questionnaire survey. Interviewing also allowed the researchers to delve deeper into the responses of participants. This is critical for gathering pertinent information that may not have been considered or fully considered. Face-to-face interviews with consenting TBMS were undertaken to determine their roles in influencing tourism promotion in Plateau State.

The size of the sample was based on previous qualitative tourism and hospitality studies in which samples ranged from 14 to over 30 interview participants (Yap & Ineson, 2009; Phelan, 2015; Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021). In this study the 44 TBMs originally approached for participation were reduced to 24 consenting participants. Face-to-face and telephone interviews were carried out at the time of the first contact, at the option of the participants. Eighteen interviews were conducted face-to-face while six were conducted telephonically. A semi-structured face-to-face interview lasting about 50 minutes was conducted with each participant and detailed notes were taken by the researchers and the conversations were audio-taped for verbatim transcription. The telephone interview lasting about 40 minutes was conducted with each participant and the conversations were recorded for verbatim transcription. The style of questioning was formal to elicit information from the participants' perceptions and experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Protocol of ethics of confidentiality and anonymity was followed. The information obtained from the interviews was later subjected to thematic analysis, findings of which are reported in turn.

Business Management Practices

The business management practices put in place to manage a business during a natural disaster, terrorism, conflicts, non-natural events or a financial crisis play vital roles in the continuity of a business (McKercher & Chon, 2004; Au, Ramasamy & Yeung, 2005; Cooper, 2005; Higgins, 2005; Rodway-Dyer & Shaw, 2005; Cheung & Law, 2006; Armstrong & Ritchie, 2008; Calgaro & Lloyd, 2008; Carlino, Somma & Mayberry, 2008; Su, Lin & Liu, 2012; Yang, Ryan & Zhang, 2013; Ye, Zhang & Yuen, 2013; Malikhao, 2017; Tsaur, Yens & Teng, 2018; Gray & Mishtal, 2019; Maphanga & Henama, 2019). Crises and disasters affect the current and future performance of most tourism businesses. Cook (2015) found that 75% of businesses without sustainability or continuity plans fail within three years after a crisis or disaster. Aside from the lack of sustainability plans, factors like loss of income due to absence of workers and declines in cash reserves continue to impact businesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Fabeil, Pazim & Langgat, 2020a). Business management practices work well with a business survival strategy. This position is supported by authors who call attention to the importance of a survival strategy for organizations during a crisis (Fabeil, Pazim & Langgat, 2020b) who call attention to the importance of a survival strategy for organizations during a crisis.

The interviews revealed that many business managers began to diversify and shift to alternative business management practices to continue operating and sus-

taining their businesses. Table 1 summarizes the business management themes and practices that were identified in the study.

Table 1: Emerged themes of business management practices identified by the interviewed business managers

Theme	Practice
Strange attractors	Providing multiple promotions
Self-organization	Overhauling of human resources and the business operations
Government intervention	Getting tax holiday and government intervention fund
Lock-in effect	Quality and good manager-customer mutual relationships Rendering tailored products and services
Maintenance	Developing maintenance plans for strategic cost reductions through cost cuts by limiting services

Source: Field survey, 2021

Five themes emerged during the interviews with participants about the business management practices employed by businesses during the pandemic namely strange attractors, self-organization, government interventions, lock-in effect and maintenance practices. These practices are described in turn in the following five subsections. To preserve the anonymity of the participants in the descriptions, they are referred to by participant numbers, for example P1, P21 and P8.

Strange Attractors

The concept of the strange attractor in chaos theory points to techniques that can be used during a crisis to encourage order from chaos (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). The use of various strange attractors by tourism business managers is an indication that stability can be brought to a chaotic situation by facilitating methods that will help the tourism industry work in unison towards achieving its common goals (Zahra & Ryan, 2007). Various promotion strategies were introduced. While some managers reduced their promotional costs, others saw the crisis as an opportunity to explore new segments. A participant described it as an opportunity "to market tourism products and services to domestic tourists with a major focus on the specific attributes of the location such as the beautiful scenery, unique weather of Jos, the waterfalls, hills and mountains" (P6). Another participant said that the pandemic expanded "our thinking faculty to play around with new products and food menu. We introduced specials such as the naman ridi (sesame seed or benniseed coated meat), fresh palm wine and dry fish pepper soup. This has become

a big bait for the surge in our big clients from the government reserved area [GRA]. We even receive orders for the naman ridi and the fresh palm wine from clients outside Jos" (P21).

The promotion of price drops on special offers and a reduction in list prices enhanced patronage as attested to by most of the respondents: "We lowered prices to compensate for the reduction in demand during the COVID-19 pandemic period, this in a way increased patronage" (P8). Promoting domestic tourism and encouraging Nigerians to travel within their own country, especially to Plateau State, all the interviewed managers affirmed that they began aggressive promotion of new products and services to new segments. There was a surge in conference tourism by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the corporate industries because the pandemic was not as great a threat in Plateau State as in Lagos State where most of the conferences were cancelled and rescheduled to be hosted in Jos.

One of the respondents affirmed that "we saw an explosion in the number of conferences that were moved from Lagos, Port Harcourt, Abuja and Warri to Jos. Plateau State in this period has become the centre of conference tourism" (P2). Confirming this, another respondent stated that "there was a sudden surge in our bookings and reservations for rooms and conference halls" (P4). Other strange attractors introduced are discounts, social media promotion of products, deliveries, airport pick-up shuttle services for clients arriving from outside Jos, and the adoption of cash on delivery (COD) which hitherto was not available to clients. These stimulated the domestic market with offers that exploited the lock-in effect.

Self-Organization

A major component of chaos theory is the ability of tourism businesses that have gone through a chaotic event to self-organize into "communicative structures and relationships, understandings and procedure" (Sellnow, Seeger & Ulmer, 2002, p. 274). Plateau State is known as the *Home of peace and tourism* that houses diverse and complex tourism sectors. The study found that most of the tourism businesses have survived the pandemic with businesses gradually 'bouncing back' thanks to human resources and the overhauling of business operations. This did, however, create some problems that involved workers being laid off to reduce the size of the labour force, using unpaid leave, rotating workers per week, reducing salaries (salary cuts) and reducing the number of workdays per week. Providing multiple responses, Figure 2 highlights some of the problems reported by the respondents.

Confirming that tourism businesses faced some challenges, a respondent stated that "we had to reduce overhead costs, put all investment on hold, reduce workers by 70% and reduce salaries by 50% as our monthly income drastically fell from N20 million to N2 million" (P12). Some respondents had to put up their businesses for sale while others resorted to partial business operations. The accommodation sector suffered the major brunt of the problems. A similar scenario with the case in South Africa (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020).

The PSTC (Plateau State Tourism Corporation) initiated a 'tourism rescue plan' "which acted as a strange attractor in a way and as a means of harnessing a common vision, sense of meaning, strategy, or value system that drives people to achieve a common goal" (Zahra & Ryan, 2007, p. 855). In a bid to keep businesses and workspaces safe for employers and employees during the pandemic, the Plateau State government (PSG) also organized risk management training for tourism business managers. Forty-five per cent of the interviewed managers attended the course while the remaining managers did not attend. Those who had not attended and all those who had attended confirmed their eagerness to attend any future training seminars and workshops on the COVID-19 health crisis and its impacts on tourism businesses. Eighty-three per cent businesses that did not have any plans for contactless transactions and payment options were considering the option to keep in line with the physical and social distancing prescriptions to minimize human contacts.

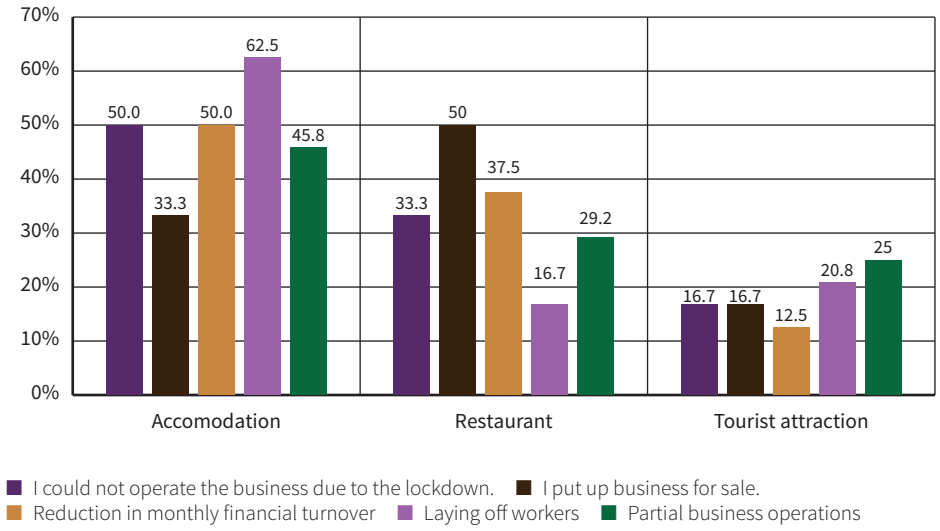

Figure 2: Problems faced by tourism businesses
Source: Field survey, 2021

Self-organization is vital in addressing an extremely disorderly occurrence like the pandemic which affects the dynamism and complexities in the tourism system where activities are inextricably linked (Sellnow, Seeger & Ulmer, 2002). Tourism managers create and implement specific contingency plans with protocols for the entire organization as effective crisis management practices to salvage their businesses. Studies have shown that in crisis management practices employees can also self-organize to handle any crises impacting tourism businesses (Israeli, Mohsin & Kumar, 2011; Hao, Xiao & Chon, 2020). This study identified certain human resources measures that were put in place by tourism business managers, namely training programmes to ensure employees' and clients' safety and security; improved communication channels; and an emergency communication network that was open for employees to stay informed during the pandemic. This is consistent with other research findings (Hao, Xiao & Chon, 2020; Garrido-Moreno, Garcia-Morales & Marin-Rojas, 2021) and they offer managers a framework to react appropriately to crises (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012).

Government Interventions

Despite the enormous potential of the tourism industry in developing countries, the sector can suffer internal and external shocks and governments can wade in to salvage the industry. For example, De Sausmarez (2004, p. 168) suggests that government measures during a crisis may include "incentives to stimulate foreign investment, tax relief and extended credit to tourism businesses, increased funding to national tourism organizations, and the stimulation of domestic tourism in the absence of international visitors."

Three out of four interviewees reported having asked the government for a grace period on tax payment, tax holidays or cancellation of taxes during the lockdown period as there was no steady income as usual. The remaining 25% did not ask for grace periods on tax payments because their businesses were not affected as they offered essential services during this period. Four out of five respondents requested a grace period on local government tax payments. Only nine (37%) managers or owners had benefited from the government intervention fund. The application procedure to apply for the recovery funding was available online on a designated federal government website where basic credentials of the business had to be inputted, including bank details of the business and contact telephone number. Although the respondents complained about the prolonged delays in receiving funds, the few tourism business managers who received the funds injected

these back into their businesses, principally to pay workers' salaries. In April 2021 a respondent (P21) pointed out the low rate of government intervention through the fund:

> There was a sort of government intervention and funding tagged 'COVID-19 relief fund' for businesses. I can confirm that it is not all tourism businesses that were helped but only selected businesses received the funds. I have called my fellow managers that I know asking them if they received the fund. So far, all the responses have been negative.

Although the Nigerian government rolled out a COVID-19 intervention programme, it was adjudged by most of the respondents to be lopsided in favour of government-owned businesses. This contrasted with the situation in other parts of the world as reported in the literature where private businesses received bailout funds. According to respondent P7:

> The government acknowledged that businesses needed interventions and asked managers to compile a list of 10 workers to receive palliative (salary or wage) from the government. The selection of beneficiaries was done selectively and haphazardly. Up till today, none of the staff here received anything after submitting their information online on the government portal.

The answers given by most (58%) of the interviewees confirmed that the Nigerian government's intervention was for selected households, while 42% confirmed that the intervention mainly entailed a wage subsidy for selected businesses for their employees. This is consistent with the verdict by Edokwe (2021) that the move was aimed to enrich a few and curry favour going into the 2023 election year. Respondent P23 argued in June 2021 that:

> We have not received any government assistance during this COVID-19 pandemic. Of all the names and bank information of 10 employees the government asked us to send, up till today I am having this conversation with you, not even one person has received any cash transfer or alert. This government can make fake promises. This N5000 monthly cash transfer I heard they said they are doing, is far less than the current poverty line of N11 450 (USD 28) per month, which is not even enough to ensure a decent standard of living anywhere in Nigeria. They just do not care about the masses, raising our hopes in this difficult time. This is far from what is happening in other parts of the world.

According to respondent P24:

> I do not know where Nigeria is heading to. There are a lot of injustices in the system. There are no rights to common food which we are producing. There is even no right to life as insecurity has gone over the roof. There is no adequate standard of living. The cost of living and doing business in Nigeria is so high. Compared to 2015, the inflation rate was 9%, this year 2021 it is 18.12%. The unemployment rate was 8.19% in 2015, in 2021 it is 33.28% while the GDP growth rate was 2.79% in 2015, in 2021 it is 0.51%. I am a businessman I follow the trends and these key indicators to help me plan (Interview in May 2021).

The continued echoing of the threats to life and security by the respondents in the tourism industry in Plateau State in particular but also in Nigeria generally, amplify the already dire situation in which the tourism industry is languishing.

Lock-in Effect (Brand Loyalty)

Lock-in effects are activated by the strange attractors that bring and retain customers as a driving force for competition. "Repeat purchases or recommendations to other people are mostly referred to as consumer loyalty" (Yoon & Uysal, 2005, p. 48). Brand loyalty is characterized by behavioural or attitudinal loyalty with a sequence of customers' repeat purchases, the proportion of patronage or the probability of purchase with a form of commitment or statement of preference (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Pike et al., 2021; Stavrianea & Kamenidou, 2021). This commitment is enhanced by "developing a mutually beneficial relationship between the businesses and customers" (Chen & Gursory, 2001, p. 80).

Confirming Chen & Gursory's (2001) statement, interviewee P4 stated that their businesses thrived based on quality and mutual benefit. Another manager (P11) asserted that they treated customers importantly and therefore have very loyal customers with positive attitudes towards their businesses who will always patronize them despite the circumstances. Corroborating good manager-customer mutual relationships, respondent P8 stated that "our customer services and relational experiences keep bringing back our customers for revisits, not just the facilities alone."

Return visits, enhanced by quality offerings, increase patronage as "quality is a determining factor for brand loyalty" (P17). In order not to miss the quality they received from the business, some managers revealed that their loyal customers were the ones who gave them the option of product delivery. Consequently, some of the interviewed managers at restaurants started food delivery during lockdown. The study found that a way of appreciating loyal customers and sustaining brand loyalty was for managers to gather information about the preferences of

their loyal customers and then use the information to win customers' loyalty by rendering tailored products and services. This is consistent with research findings by Chen & Gursory (2001), Kusdibyo (2021), Li, Liu & Soutar (2021) and Pike et al. (2021).

To maintain business appeal, customers were given 'loyalty rewards' of one-night free hotel accommodation on their next visit (this varied among respondents as some made it a two-night giveaway); free entrance tickets at tourist sites were made available to customers who presented receipts for at least three past visits within the month; and free meals were offered at restaurants to customers who had eat-ins or take-aways or deliveries five times within a specified period.

Such offers encouraged the habit of keeping receipts where most customers were tended to discard their receipts after the purchase of products and services. The introduction of these strange attractors and the lock-in effect impacted the patronage by customers positively as attested to by respondent P4:

> We witnessed a surge in bookings due to these loyalty rewards the management introduced. You know, a lot of people like freebies especially now that many Nigerians are suffering a reduction in cash flow and purchasing power. The clients are happy with the development and they feel valued for rewarding their loyalty. This way, we are sure that our clients will remain indebted to us (Interview in June 2021).

The lock-in effect introduced in the form of brand loyalty for customers during the pandemic is emphasized in the literature regarding that which brings and retains customers in the tourism business, especially during a pandemic. This is also consistent with the global trend as a means of sustenance for businesses.

Maintenance

Facilities are integral parts of the tourism industry that promote tourism development by increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of tourism businesses (Mandić, Mrnjavac & Kordić, 2018). These facilities are amenities that help make tourism products enjoyable, reliable and sustainable (Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2007). The maintenance of these tourism facilities and infrastructures is important for businesses to thrive and compete because maintenance is a key to business prosperity and economic growth. Maintenance does not connote just maintaining production as it also requires minimizing maintenance costs and ensuring a safe environment (Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2007).

Consistent maintenance is vital to preserve the functionality of infrastructures and facilities and to ensure that they remain high-value assets for businesses (Abdullah, Razak & Jaafar, 2014). The lack of maintenance, on the other hand, can lead to deterioration or damage of facilities. Abdullah Razak & Jaafar (2014) point out that inadequate maintenance can cause premature deterioration of facilities. However, the interviews revealed that because of the economic impacts of the pandemic, most of the respondents did not continue with their 100% maintenance schemes but developed maintenance plans for strategic cost reductions. These included cost cuts by limiting services such as shortening the hours of using generators during load shedding and power outages, postponement of the physical maintenance of business buildings and postponing maintenance of the engineering systems of the businesses. According to respondent P1 this was "necessitated to cushion the financial burden and constraints on business operations" because "financial resource is a great constraint to effective maintenance of business facilities" as claimed by respondent P15.

Despite the reduction in maintenance due to financial constraints, respondent P11 contended that "there should be a revival of maintenance culture. Once business facilities are maintained regularly as at when due, then those facilities will be sustained. We should stop paying eye and lip services and singing 'maintenance culture' like a mantra, we need to mean it and act it." Tourism businesses have resorted to cutting extra costs on maintenance expenses to save money due to the uncertainty surrounding future lockdowns.

Since crises are inevitable and unpredictable, and business organizations not immune to potential crisis, businesses should expect the unexpected. All businesses are susceptible to a crisis, therefore crisis preparedness and decisions made during a crisis are crucially important to avoid what could be an irreparable downfall. Although decisions about business management practices during a crisis are described as complex because they are made quickly, the components of chaos theory can be infused into this complex decision-making process of what managers can do during a crisis. Through the application of strange attractors, tourism businesses quickly self-organized, became creative and searched for new brand stories to retain, market and attract new customers.

The government's role in mitigating the impacts of a crisis is vital in the business recovery process. The foregoing findings shed light on the business and crisis management practices instituted by tourism business managers and owners in Plateau State. These practices were put in place to increase long-term operational efficiency and competitiveness through innovative thinking aimed at business survival by ensuring safety and maintaining profitability during the pandemic.

Recommendations

During the COVID-19 crisis, tourism business management methods in Africa faced a number of challenges, including knowledge, financial, and organizational limits. Furthermore, limited technological application and development impedes the implementation of technology and innovation mechanisms to address Africa's crisis. During the pre-crisis period, we propose working on and developing these areas.

According to the findings of this study, many (75%) tourism businesses lacked proper crisis planning and readiness. Natural catastrophes, terrorist attacks, and health problems should all be included in crisis readiness and tourism preparedness. Extant literature focuses on individual crises situations rather than crisis management practices as a broader phenomena and area of concern. This gives an important overview of areas related to the pre-crisis period, such as tourism and travel sectors' readiness and preparedness, which leads to research fragmentation and limits our understanding of an integrated viewpoint of tourism crisis management research in Africa. Future research "should move away from identifying existing response practices and evaluating the effectiveness of alternative approaches identified in the literature" (Senbeto, 2022, p. 5).

Conclusion

This study found that the vast majority (92%) of tourism business managers employed self-rescue practices to confront the uncertainty of the impact of COVID-19. Management practices identified are lower operating costs, closure of certain facilities, flexible staff assignment or rotation, and halts to further investment. Tourism companies invested in promotion campaigns to attract new markets while creating a new set of weird attractors. These strange attractors were introduced by tourism business managers to keep their regular clients and to hopefully get new ones. The attractors are new products and services, loyalty and reward programmes, promotions, updated and improved channels for contacting, attracting and selling to customers, and digitized media channels. These strange attractors are consistent with those reported in the literature on what is happening in the tourism sector around the world (Israeli, Mohsin & Kumar, 2011; Hao, Xiao & Chon, 2020; Heredia-Colaco & Rodrigues, 2021).

Uncertainty surrounds business continuity. Existing literature confirms that the complex tourism industry can be thrown off balance by triggering butterfly effect events. Tourism systems have been found presently to be on distinctive ways

compared to where they were some time recently before the COVID-19 pandemic. This study found that bifurcation caused tourism businesses to be on paths that led to their closure (destruction), while some gained new market segments thanks to reorganization to reach self-organization facilitated by strange attractors. Moreover, the incorporation of chaos theory in business management practices during the 'new normal' (COVID-19 pandemic) further confirmed that crises are complex and unpredictable as every crisis is unique and requires a dedicated approach to reach a new order and gain new stability as exemplified by the studied tourism businesses.

The effects of continuous crises may be less visible than the effects of one-time catastrophes. Understanding the effects and solutions to ongoing crises will transform crisis management into a more practical and day-to-day concern. Using chaos theory to strengthen the theoretical foundations will help to develop innovative viewpoints and insights into the existing literature. Chaos theory therefore provides a framework for identifying real-world, pertinent, and operative strategies for the sustenance of tourism businesses during a crisis, especially the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Praktyki zarządzania przedsiębiorstwami turystycznymi w stanie Plateau w Nigerii w dobie „nowej normalności": podejście oparte na teorii chaosu

Streszczenie. W wyniku pandemii COVID-19 firmy z branży turystycznej znalazły się na skraju chaosu i stanęły w obliczu dramatycznej zmiany warunków funkcjonowania ze względu na ograniczenia, które pociągnęły za sobą bezprecedensowe i dalekosiężne skutki. Odwołując się do teorii chaosu, autorzy artykułu analizują dane jakościowe uzyskane od 24 menedżerów przedsiębiorstw turystycznych w stanie Plateau w Nigerii na temat praktyk zarządzania stosowanych w celu promowania działalności turystycznej po ponownym otwarciu przedsiębiorstw turystycznych po pandemii. Wyniki pokazują, że większość badanych firm turystycznych przetrwała pandemię i stopniowo „dochodziły do siebie" dzięki pracownikom i zmianie sposobu funkcjonowania. W wyniku nagłej zmiany warunków, które w teorii chaosu noszą miano bifurkacji, wiele przedsiębiorstw turystycznych musiało zaprzestać działalności, podczas gdy niektórym udało się zdobyć nowe segmenty rynku dzięki reorganizacji. Możliwość zastosowania teorii chaosu do analizy praktyk zarządzania przedsiębiorstwem podczas pandemii stanowi dalsze potwierdzenie złożonego i nieprzewidywalnego charakteru tego kryzysu.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka, praktyki zarządzania przedsiębiorstwem, nowa normalność, teoria chaosu, stan Plateau

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COVID-19, Domestic Tourism and Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Zimbabwe

Abstract. This study aims to determine the role of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in rejuvenating domestic tourism in the context of suppressed international tourism demand. The current study is premised on the thinking that COVID-19 has changed the way countries do tourism and domestic tourism is now recognised for its ability to help the recovery of the tourism industry post-COVID-19. The infusion of IKS in tourism strategies is seen as important in encouraging locals to visit destinations within their countries. The study is based on a review of the literature on the nexus between indigenous knowledge systems, domestic tourism and COVID-19. The study contributes to the existing literature on domestic tourism by suggesting possible solutions to the industry based on IKS. In light of recent COVID-19 events in the tourism industry at large, it is becoming extremely difficult to ignore the importance of domestic markets.

Keywords: COVID-19, indigenous knowledge systems, domestic tourism, Zimbabwe

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic evolved from being a health crisis to a pandemic affecting various facets of life (Galvani, Lew & Perez, 2020). Due to its complexity, several measures were introduced to curb the spread of the disease. These measures include lockdown restrictions requiring people to stay indoors, closure of non-essential activities, ban on travelling and cancellation of major events (Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2021; Musavengane, Leonard & Mureyani, 2022; Mzobe, Makoni & Nyikana, 2022; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2022). The restrictions resulted in a major decline in international tourist arrivals (Arbulu et al., 2021; Mzobe, Makoni & Nyi-

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kana, 2022). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) indicated that due to COVID-19, international tourism arrivals for 2020 plummeted by 71% compared to 2019 levels, 69% in 2021 and 37% in 2022 (UNWTO, 2023).

Currently, attention is focused on the recovery of the tourism industry in the aftermath of the devastating impacts of COVID-19. In this regard, several governments across the world launched blueprints for restarting tourism, and the UNWTO has been leading the way by introducing guidelines for safe travelling (UNWTO, 2020). However, several of these efforts have been hampered by the emergence of new COVID-19 variants, necessitating further restrictions on movement (Cheer, Hall & Saarinen, 2021). Faced with limited international tourism demand, most destinations were forced to look at the domestic market to revive the tourism sector (Arbulu et al., 2021; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2022; Woyo, 2021). Domestic tourism has been noted to be more resilient to external shocks such as disease outbreaks, political crises, global financial crises, and terrorism than international tourism (Kabote, Mashiri & Vengesayi, 2014; Manwa & Mmereki, 2008; Mzobe, Makoni & Nyikana, 2022).

For countries in the global South, particularly sub-Saharan African countries, priority has always been given to international tourism (Dieke, 2003; Woyo, 2021), with little attention paid to domestic tourism. However, Rogerson and Baum (2020) stress the importance of the domestic and regional markets to the growth of the tourism industry. As part of restarting tourism after the initial COVID-19 lockdown, many countries across the globe introduced policies to promote the domestic tourism market (Arbulu et al., 2021). The Zimbabwean government, through the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI) launched the national tourism recovery and growth strategy in August 2020. One of the key pillars of this strategy is the promotion of domestic tourism to counter the devastating impacts of COVID-19 (MECTHI, 2020). Consequently, the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) launched the ZIMBHO targeting domestic tourists and promoting local destinations (Musavengane, Leonard & Mureyani, 2022). Another strategy implemented to promote domestic tourism is the *Shanya/Vakatsha Travel Mukando* campaign targeted at group travel, where individuals pool resources to contribute towards their travelling budget (ZTA, 2023).

Research on the role of domestic tourism in reviving the tourism industry for depressed destinations, in general, is still growing (Woyo, 2021). Several studies have been conducted to determine if domestic tourism is a sustainable post-recovery strategy in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (Woyo, 2021; Mzobe, Makoni & Nyikana, 2022). Manwa & Mmereki (2008) note that little is known about the behaviour of domestic tourists, impacts and their motivation in the African context. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, tourists' travel behaviour

changed (Ivanova, Ivanov & Ivanov, 2020). Sigala (2020) argues that there is a need for research to examine the attitudes and behaviours of tourists to generate proper insights for recovery. In this study, we posit a need for a nuanced understanding of the domestic market to understand how it can lead to sustainable growth during and after a crisis. In particular, an understanding of domestic tourism in the context of COVID-19 is essential to put in place the right strategies to stimulate local tourist traffic.

In trying to understand the domestic tourism market it is critical to appreciate indigenous knowledge systems. Indigenous knowledge refers to knowledge that originates from specific cultural, geographic, and traditional settings, often ontologically linked to self (Picard & Di Giovine, 2014), context-specific community (Schellhorn, 2010; Mapfumo, Mtambanengwe & Chikowo, 2016) and sometimes postcolonial aspects (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). The beliefs, values and perceptions that define indigenous knowledge are unique to a given society (Warren, 1991). They are passed from one generation to the next using "cosmologies, diaspora, storytelling, arts, crafts, spirituality, language and classification systems" (Tribe & Liburd, 2016, p. 52). Indigenous knowledge systems can therefore be defined as 'local, community-based systems of knowledge which are unique to a given culture or society and have developed as that culture has evolved over many generations of inhabiting particular ecosystem' (Onwu & Mogege, 2004, p. 2).

Though IKS are a major determinant of people's behaviour and how they make their decisions (Breidlid, 2009), little is known about the role they play in domestic tourism in Zimbabwe despite a growing amount of research on indigenous tourism (Tribe & Liburd, 2016). Much of the research on indigenous tourism is dominated by colonial perspectives (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature regarding the link between IKS and the behaviour of domestic tourists during and after a crisis like COVID-19. Carr (2020) argues that COVID-19 is not the first pandemic that indigenous communities have faced. Several other pandemics have previously affected indigenous communities, including measles, mumps, smallpox, tuberculosis and the 1918 flu pandemic (Carr, 2020).

This article presents a conceptual study, which is not based on primary data. We review the literature on indigenous tourism knowledge systems and argue that IKS should be part of developing strategies to promote domestic tourism, particularly in order to re-envision the post-pandemic development of indigenous tourism. The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of IKS in rejuvenating domestic tourism in Zimbabwe in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to addressing a gap in the literature, the study can provide directions for future empirical research on this topic, especially to be conducted together with indigenous researchers (Carr, 2020).

Methodology

This study aims to determine the role of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in rejuvenating domestic tourism in the context of suppressed international tourism demand due to COVID-19. As the study seeks to find 'new' trends in the 'unique' environment of COVID-19, a review of the literature was used to obtain data about COVID-19, and indigenous knowledge systems. This kind of analysis is less expensive and unobtrusive (Neuman, 2011; Musavengane & Siakwah, 2020). In the first step, we studied the existing literature on IKS in general and in Zimbabwe in specific, in order to clearly identify the phenomenon. In the next step, we identified relevant literature deemed suitable and relevant for our study focus. Databases were searched using keywords including 'IKS', 'IKS AND tourism', 'IKS AND travel', 'IKS AND culture', 'tourism AND tradition'. To adequately address the research question with respect to IKS and domestic tourism, selected studies were carefully analysed to capture the holistic phenomenon, instead of focusing only on case-specific issues.

Domestic Tourism in Zimbabwe

As is the case in many African countries, Zimbabwean tourism relies more on international tourists, and little attention has been paid to the domestic market (Mutsena & Kabote, 2015; Rogerson, 2015; Woyo, 2021). As a result, research on domestic tourism in most destinations, including Zimbabwe, is limited. While statistics on international tourism arrivals are easily accessible, consistent worldwide data on domestic tourism are not readily available (Eijgelaar, Peeters & Piket, 2008). Even though it was estimated that domestic tourism in Zimbabwe generated US$379 million in 2019 (ZTA, 2019), the absence of a credible and comprehensive tool for tourism accounting makes it difficult to determine how reliable this figure is (ZimStats, 2018).

Although the country is endowed with world-class attractions (Chibaya, 2013; Marunda, 2014; Muchapondwa & Pimhidzai, 2011; Woyo & Slabbert, 2021; Zhou, 2016), most Zimbabweans are not involved in domestic tourism (Mapingure, du Plessis & Saayman, 2019; Mutsena & Kabote, 2015). One of the primary reasons is that tourism products are priced beyond the reach of many domestic consumers (Kabote, Mashiri & Vengesayi, 2014; Woyo, 2021; Woyo & Slabbert, 2020, 2021). For much of the country's population tourism remains a luxury because of the ongoing economic and political crisis in the country since 2000 (Manwa, 2007; Woyo, 2021). The economic crisis stems from controversial government policies, including the land reform programme, indigenisation policy, and human rights

abuse (Woyo & Slabbert, 2020). Because of hyperinflation that has continued for several years, the majority of Zimbabweans find it difficult to participate in tourism activities because they cannot afford them (Chibaya, 2013). According to Manwa & Mmereki (2008), only people with a high disposable income could afford to partake in tourism activities. Thus, it is difficult to improve destination competitiveness for both local and international demand (Woyo & Slabbert, 2021). This begs the question how these destinations can be competitive without domestic tourists when international mobility is suppressed due to a crisis like COVID-19?

The low demand for domestic tourism in Zimbabwe has also been attributed to high unemployment levels (Mutsena & Kabote, 2015). Past research suggests that economic and social conditions in the country, the high unemployment rate and the shrinking middle class have a negative effect on the development of domestic tourism in Zimbabwe (Manwa, 2007). It is clear from previous studies on domestic tourism in Zimbabwe that it is considerably constrained by being largely unaffordable.

In addition to the price barrier, past research also indicates a general lack of a travelling culture among black Zimbabweans (Zhou, 2016). Travelling for leisure purposes is often seen as the preserve of foreigners (Kabote, Mamimine & Muranda, 2017) and affluent members of the society. For an ordinary Zimbabwean, a holiday usually involves visiting friends and relatives (VFR), which, in most cases, means urban dwellers travelling to rural areas. This activity accounts for 49% of domestic overnight visits compared to 3% travelling for leisure (ZTA, 2019). In addition, 66% of overnight trips by domestic tourists in 2019 originated from urban areas (Kabote, 2017).

Most destinations in Zimbabwe are only accessible by road. A major challenge faced by car travellers is roadblocks set up by the police who take bribes for letting people pass (Woyo & Woyo, 2019). Furthermore, the lack of internal airline services within Zimbabwe makes it impossible to reach some of the country's tourist attractions (Woyo, 2021), e.g. the Hwange National Park and the Eastern Highlands, especially Nyanga (Kanokanga, 2019).

Several studies on domestic tourism in Zimbabwe have shed more light on the characteristics and behaviour of domestic tourists. Mapingure, du Plessis & Saayman (2019) found that the primary motivating factors behind tourist activity include novelty, nature seeking and escape, and relaxation. According to Woyo & Woyo (2019), cultural and heritage attractions are popular with domestic tourists. Since international tourism in the post COVID-19 era, will likely take time to get back to the pre-pandemic levels (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020), tourism managers must start thinking about promoting domestic tourism by leveraging IKS. Prasetyo, Filep & Carr (2021) argue that indigenous knowledge in tourism is critical for

sustainable tourism development, and Zimbabwe could benefit from tapping this resource. IKS could also be used to change Zimbabweans' negative perceptions of and attitudes towards urban tourism offerings (Makoni & Tichaawa, 2017).

Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism in Zimbabwe

COVID-19 curtailed global mobility as restrictions were put in place to stop the spread of the virus, and people postponed their travelling plans due to concerns over public health and safety (Bama & Nyikana, 2021; Rogerson & Baum, 2020). Zimbabwe introduced its first lockdown in March 2020, which resulted in the closure of non-essential businesses, such as restaurants, cafes and recreational facilities (Haider et al., 2020). The lockdown measures confined Zimbabwean citizens to their homes, and borders were open to cargo and returning residents only (Nyabunze & Siavhundu, 2020), bringing the tourism industry to a standstill. This resulted in a 72% drop in international tourist arrivals in 2020 (ZTA, 2021).

Zimbabwe began easing the lockdown restrictions in May 2020, and most businesses, including those in the tourism sector, opened their doors to the public, albeit under strict health guidelines. Tourism activities remained constrained even after the restrictions had been lifted, mainly because of travel restrictions in most countries (MECTHI, 2020). In the absence of international tourism, attention turned to domestic tourism, where demand was suppressed for various reasons (Woyo, 2021). To stimulate domestic tourism, the Zimbabwean government exempted domestic tourism services from paying Value Added Tax (VAT) to make travelling more affordable (Sibanda & Tshuma, 2020). This measure enabled tourism service providers to offer affordable tourism packages for the domestic market.

The effect of COVID-19 on indigenous and marginalised people has been largely negative (Carr, 2020; Everingham & Chassagne, 2020). Given the inequalities that COVID-19 has amplified among indigenous people, Carr (2020) argues that there is a need for "socially responsive approaches to the COVID-19 recovery. Balancing the future industry so that tourism activities directly enhance the health and education of indigenous peoples and communities is essential". Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) encompass knowledge embedded in indigenous communities based on their traditional educational processes (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Rather than being static, such knowledge evolves as people's culture changes and interacts with other knowledge systems (Onwu & Mosimege, 2004), helping people make sense of the world they live in and providing the basis for daily decision making (Monaheng, 2015).

The Role of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Promoting Domestic Tourism

Despite the negative impacts, COVID-19 has also ushered in a new way of thinking (Everingham & Chassagne, 2020; Woyo & Nyamandi, 2021). According to Everingham and Chassagne (2020), it is time to admit that the dominance of Eurocentric thinking and systems is not sustainable among indigenous people. Thus, the pandemic is an opportunity for Zimbabwe and other African destinations to incorporate their IKS into the tourism value chain to promote tourism that focuses on the well-being of people and the environment.

Indigenous people acquire their knowledge through interaction with the natural world. This knowledge contributes to IKS and determines the way indigenous people view the world. Since most indigenous knowledge is highly undocumented, it is passed from one generation to another through oral tradition (Tanyanyiwa & Chikwanha, 2011; Tribe & Liburd, 2016, p. 52). In contrast, Western science is well-documented and has spread rapidly to other parts of the world, posing a threat to indigenous knowledge, particularly in Africa. The spread of COVID-19 shows that over-reliance on Western knowledge is not sustainable (Everingham & Chassagne, 2020), and tourism as we know it requires transformation. Past research on COVID-19 and indigenous cultures shows a need to include indigenous values in tourism planning (Carr, 2020). While this approach is new in Zimbabwe, countries like New Zealand have been including indigenous values in tourism planning and the development of strategies (Carr, 2020). The inclusion of indigenous knowledge could help to shape post-pandemic travel behaviour to promote the recovery of domestic tourism.

The Nexus between People and Nature and Their Role in Travel Choices

IKS can affect people's tourism activity and shape their travelling patterns and preferences. Intentions, attitudes, emotions, feelings, ideas, abilities, purposes, traits, thoughts, and memories shape tourist perceptions of destinations (Musavengane, 2019). Past studies show that indigenous cultures and knowledge are critical in developing tourism promotion materials and strategies (Bondzi-Simpson & Ayeh, 2017; Carr, 2020; Hutchison, Movono & Scheyvens, 2021). Niche tourism products developed around indigenous values could drive a sustainable tourism recovery in Zimbabwe after the pandemic. Given the problems of climate change, environmental degradation, and overtourism, there is a need to integrate tourism consciousness and IKS to develop a sustainable tourism future (Carr, 2020). In this way, travellers and stakeholders can be made aware of indigenous "tourism

spaces and activities, and the ability or desire to participate in the tourism system" (Musavengane, 2019, p. 330). Carr (2020, p. 495) argues that "involving indigenous communities in tourism planning processes, or enabling self-governance, can enhance resilience in health, recreation, leisure, education and business settings." He adds that "as with any group in society, indigenous people are not perfect and have been scrutinised for poor environmental practices, nevertheless indigenous values can lead to thoughtful, nature-centric solutions". According to Walter (2009, p. 529) "local knowledge for ecotourism is thus holistic: it is integral to the fabric and rhythms of daily life, to the seasons, to local geography, to the history of the community, its lived traditions, systems of kinship, social relationships, religious beliefs and practices, ways of preparing and eating food, norms of dress, appropriate social behaviour, the community's political and social context and so on".

However, the integration of IKS into the tourism value chain is not without challenges, and one of them is associated with decoloniality, i.e. efforts to delink from Eurocentric knowledge hierarchies, since, as Grimwood, Stinson & King put it (2019, p. 1), "Tourism's entanglement with colonial power is deeply rooted and complex". Consequently, in Zimbabwe, IKS were dominant during the pre-colonial era as they helped people adapt to various survival challenges (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013). Zimbabwe was a British colony from 1890 until it gained its independence in 1980. During the colonial period, white settlers imposed a European governance system on the people of Zimbabwe, which, among other things, marginalised local forms of knowledge (Andersson, 2002). This led to IKS being viewed as inferior to Western forms of knowledge (Muyambo, 2019). Though there is an extensive amount of research and literature on decolonization and tourism, mostly from Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand (Coulthard, 2014; Grimwood, Stinson & King, 2019; Grimwood, Muldoon & Stevens, 2019; Grimwood & Johnson, 2021; Regan, 2010), empirical research on decoloniality and tourism in Zimbabwe remains limited. Zimbabwean tourism and its development are still rooted in colonial patterns. Grimwood, Stinson, & King (2019, p. 1) argue that the production, consumption, and development of tourism continue to "(re)inscribes colonizing structures, systems, and narratives across time and space". Because of tourism development in Zimbabwe, several indigenous people were displaced. As in other countries, especially Canada, New Zealand, the United States and South Africa, settler colonialism was often associated with legislation (Land Apportionment Act of 1930) and policies aimed at removing indigenous people from their cultural territories (Coulthard, 2014; Grimwood, Stinson & King, 2019; Regan, 2010).

Though there has been growing interest in IKS in the post-colonial period in Zimbabwe, as people are trying to re-establish their local knowledge lost due to colonisation (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013), tourism research has not yet recov-

ered from the effects of colonisation. As is the case in Canada (Grimwood, Muldoon & Stevens, 2019; Grimwood & Johnson, 2019), "settler stories still proliferate through tourism and tourism research" (Grimwood, Stinson & King, 2019). For instance, there is a lot of literature about Zimbabwean tourism that argues that David Livingstone discovered Victoria Falls in 1855 (Arrington, 2010; McGregor, 2003; Molyneux, 1905). This is a classic example of misrepresentation since in this case David Livingstone's contribution only consisted in giving the falls its present English name. According to Woyo and Slabbert (2019, p. 151), before the arrival of David Livingstone, the falls were called "Mosi-oa-Tunya (a name that derives from Tonga-speaking people), who have lived around the falls for many years". As argued by Grimwood, Stinson & King (2019), this is a "pervasive story where land discovered by European explorers was deemed unowned, untouched, uncivilized" and unknown.

While Mapara (2009) argues that the growing importance of IKS in post-colonial Africa is seen as a way of dispelling the myth of Western superiority and an attempt to show the world the past achievements of local knowledge, we argue that more needs to be done in this respect. According to Grimwood, Stinson & King (2019), a great part of settler stories border between "the fantasy of entitlement to knowing" and suggest that indigenous people do not know anything. Therefore, the narrative of tourism research needs to change by giving proper recognition to IKS. This, in turn, could help to dispel the myth that tourism is meant for white people and stimulate local demand for tourism. Critically diagnosing how these stories become mobilized concerning specific contexts and positionalities is an important aspect of decolonization (Mackey, 2015). So far, studies on IKS in Zimbabwe have focused on traditional agricultural practices, climate adaptation, disaster management and natural resources management (Mapara, 2009; Mawere, 2010; Rusinga & Maposa, 2010; Mavhura et al., 2013; Ngara & Mangizvo, 2013; Monaheng, 2015; Mapfumo, Mtambanengwe & Chikowo, 2016; Dube & Munsaka, 2018; Mugambiwa, 2018; Kupika et al., 2019). This is why Stinson, Grimwood & Caton (2021) argue for more research on decolonization projects to facilitate the process of decolonizing tourism and tourism research.

Cultural Sites

Since Zimbabweans believe in the existence of a supreme spiritual being, the country has several traditional and cultural sites of spiritual significance (Woyo & Woyo, 2019). Matobo Hills is a place where traditional rain-making ceremonies are conducted during droughts (Ngara & Mangizvo, 2013). Hills, forests, and caves are also regarded as part of the spiritual world and places of worship (Nhamo, & Chikodzi,

2021; Ndumeya, 2019), as evidenced by the existence of rock paintings. Christianity brought to the indigenous people through missionaries has reduced the importance of traditional worship methods. Most people, especially the younger generations, have embraced it and compounded coloniality in Zimbabwe. Though the African Traditional Religion (ATR) is still practised in some parts of the country, more research is needed to establish the influence of Christianity on travel behaviour to sacred places in Zimbabwe. Understanding this relationship could also be crucial in establishing Zimbabwe's position concerning decolonization, tourism, and tourism research (Stinson, Grimwood & Caton, 2021).

Cultural sites can also be attractive destinations for educational tourism (Saarinen, 2015). For example, Great Zimbabwe monuments are regarded as the epitome of the Shona civilisation. The Old Bulawayo cultural heritage site gives an insight into the traditional way of life of the Ndebele people. Zimbabwe has many such cultural sites that exhibit people's culture and connect with their roots. Zimbabwe needs tourism managers and policymakers to integrate indigenous values in tourism planning, strategies, and promotion (Carr, 2020). This can be achieved by allowing indigenous people to participate in storytelling to promote their worldwide views (Hutchison, Movono & Scheyvens, 2021). de Beer, van Zyl & Rogerson (2022) argue that storytelling is widely used in destination promotion, helps to enhance tourist experiences and differentiates destination brands. Storytelling could also serve as a strategy to promote tourism activity among locals, thus contributing to the decolonisation of tourism in Zimbabwe. Such participation is critical (Carr, 2020) in supporting not only the development of tourism but also the well-being, environment, and livelihoods of local people (Hutchison, Movono & Scheyvens, 2021), especially in destinations with perennial challenges (Woyo & Slabbert, 2020).

Festivals and Ceremonies

Traditionally, festivals and ceremonies were part of the life of the Zimbabwean people since time immemorial (Mamimine & Madzikatire, 2015). These events were held to celebrate life and appease the ancestors (*Vadzimu*), who are seen as supreme spiritual beings in the Zimbabwean culture (Maunganidze, 2016; Mawere, 2010). The colonisation of the country by the Europeans disrupted these traditional practices (Muyambo, 2019), such as rainmaking ceremonies, which usually take place at the Matobo Hills (Ngara & Mangizvo, 2013), the Intwasa festival in Bulawayo and the Great Limpopo cultural fair in Chiredzi. These events were used for spiritual and physical healing. However, nowadays, cultural festivals and traditional ceremonies are less commonly practised, which limits opportunities available for

culturally oriented tourists. Therefore, one way of boosting domestic tourism is to promote attendance at traditional ceremonies by people seeking spiritual and mental healing from the COVID-19 pandemic. This, however, requires managers to have a comprehensive understanding of tourism, especially from the perspective of indigenous people. Furthermore, there is a need to allow communities in Zimbabwe to be conceptualised as complex and adaptive systems. This is critical in generating insights into how cultural tourism needs to be designed for the domestic market.

Indigenous Agriculture

Traditional subsistence farming practices like *Nhimbe, Humwe, ilima and Zunde RaMambo*, are now much less common in Zimbabwe (Andersson, 2002). They involve community members working collectively in the fields, usually during the weeding and harvesting season (Muyambo, 2019). After working, they gather to drink traditional beer and eat food. These practices were supposed to ensure food security and foster community cohesion. The resurgence of such practices could be an opportunity to include authentic rural experiences as part of domestic tourism packages. These traditional agricultural practices need to be promoted to attract urban dwellers to rural areas so that they can experience life in the villages. This can promote VFR travel and agritourism and boost the domestic tourism recovery strategy after the pandemic.

Local Cuisine

Indigenous agricultural activities enable local communities to grow food ingredients used in preparing traditional dishes. Zimbabwe has various traditional dishes that have recently become popular in hotels and other catering establishments. Small grain cereals are used to brew traditional beer, which plays a key role in all traditional functions in Zimbabwe (Mugambiwa, 2018). According to Bon Bondzi-Simpson (2017), indigenous foods are critical in promoting cultural practices and festivals of a destination. Zimbabwean tourism establishments, especially hotels, need to increase their reliance on local dishes in their menus. This is a critical element of the process of decoloniality in tourism, and more research is also required in this regard. There is currently not much research on factors that influence menu decision-making, especially the inclusion of indigenous dishes (Bondzi-Simpson & Ayeh, 2017). Therefore, more studies should be conducted to examine the role of indigenous cuisines so that their results can be used to make destination marketing more effective.

Myths and legends

Songs, riddles, dances, folktales, legends and proverbs are part of the tradition of the Zimbabwean people (Mapara, 2009). All of them foster socialisation and cohesion within local communities (Muyambo, 2019). Myths and legends are metaphors that communities use to empower the landscape to protect itself from desecration and point to what communities perceive as significant (Sinamai, 2017). The role of these practices has been obscured by rapid urbanisation, which exposes people to Eurocentric cultures at the expense of their traditional way of life. Several myths and legends are associated with a number of tourist attractions in Zimbabwe (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013), for example, the *Nyaminyami* legend (the river god of the BaTonga people in the northwest of Zimbabwe). Also, in Mount Inyangani (the highest peak in Zimbabwe), it is believed that if one behaves disrespectfully, they disappear, and numerous cases of people disappearing have been recorded in the past (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013). In addition, there is a widely held belief that water from hot springs has healing properties, and if one immerses themselves in the water, they chase away bad luck. Local people believe in these myths and are likely to travel to get first-hand experience. If such legends are amplified, they can generate interest in a place, especially among locals who can relate more to the myths. This can help increase the significance of domestic tourism post-COVID-19.

Conclusion

Several important conclusions can be drawn from the above analysis:

- domestic tourism in Zimbabwe is not well developed because tourism products are priced beyond the reach of domestic consumers and there is a lack of a travelling culture among Zimbabweans;
- for a long time, the country has been focusing on international tourists with little focus on the domestic market;
- the recovery of the tourism industry from the COVID-19 pandemic very much depends on the previously overlooked domestic market;
- colonial mentality is still dominant in tourism, which is seen as a preserve of the white and affluent members of society;
- indigenous knowledge systems could play a significant role in motivating more Zimbabweans to travel and could help to decolonise domestic tourism;

- for this reason, IKS need to be included in the development of the country's domestic tourism policy;
- without a strong policy framework that integrates IKS and domestic tourism development, there is a risk that local consumers will continue to remain at the periphery of the tourism system.

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COVID-19, turystyka krajowa i systemy wiedzy tubylczej w Zimbabwe

Streszczenie. Niniejsze badanie ma na celu określenie roli systemów wiedzy tubylczej w ożywieniu turystyki krajowej w kontekście osłabionego popytu na turystykę międzynarodową. Autorzy wychodzą z założenia, że pandemia COVID-19 zmieniła charakterystykę ruchu turystycznego w poszczególnych krajach, czego przejawem jest rosnąca rola turystyki krajowej we względu na jej potencjał do odbudowy branży turystycznej po pandemii. Włączenie systemów wiedzy tubylczej do strategii turystycznych jest postrzegane jako ważny element zachęcania mieszkańców do odwiedzania krajowych destynacji turystycznych. Badanie opiera się na analizie dokumentacji dotyczącej powiązań między systemami wiedzy tubylczej, turystyką krajową a pandemią COVID-19. Badanie stanowi wkład do literatury na temat turystyki krajowej i przedstawia możliwe rozwiązania dla branży w oparciu o systemy wiedzy tubylczej. W świetle ostatnich wydarzeń związanych z COVID-19 w całej branży turystycznej znaczenie rynków krajowych staje się szczególnie istotne.

Słowa kluczowe: COVID-19, systemy wiedzy tubylczej, turystyka krajowa, Zimbabwe

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Online Response Management: Hotelier Perspectives from a South African Tourist Destination

Abstract. The aim of the study was to understand how hotels in Cape Town manage their online reputation when responding to guests' online reviews and how online response management systems are used for this purpose. This exploratory study is based on qualitative data about seven 4-star accommodation establishments located within Cape Town Central City. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the data were collected during online interviews and by email. The results indicate that the hotels were aware of how negative and positive online reviews could impact the hotel's reputation and were able to use ORM systems to monitor and respond to online reviews in order to maintain good reputation. The authors also propose extending the existing review response framework by the inclusion of positive response actions.

Keywords: online response management, hotel star ratings, ORM systems, COVID-19

1. Introduction

While most enterprises have a tangible offering, intangible offerings in the tourism industry rely on perceived brand image and reputation (Chen & Tabari, 2017). Horwath HTL (2016) notes that accommodation is one of the main factors that determine customer satisfaction in the travel and tourism industries. Within the last decade, tourism companies have started to make increasing use of modern channels of communication, such as websites and mobile applications, for the purpose of customer engagement and interaction (Mugica & Berne, 2020). Web-based

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technologies provide tourists with new and convenient ways of obtaining travel information and trip planning (Mendes-Filho et al., 2018), which is used to reduce uncertainty about tourism products (Pee, 2016). Large amounts of information about travel destinations, travel amenities, and hotels are also generated in the process of two-way communication via online review sites (Williady, Wardhani & Kim, 2022). Since the travel and tourism sector relies heavily on information (Ernst & Dolnicar, 2018), it is important to understand how online reviews affect consumer behaviour.

Online reviews have proven to be a valuable source of information about customer attitudes, routines, and behaviours (Lui et al., 2018). They are also known to boost consumer knowledge and scrutiny of the hospitality sector (Williady, Wardhani & Kim, 2022). The way in which electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is shared has altered marketing strategies employed in the hospitality industry (Sherif, 2018). Online reviews posted by tourists are usually based on traveller experiences and opinions, and may include recommendations (Dissanayake & Malkanthie, 2018).

By making an effort to understand customers and responding to their complaint's, hotels can engage in a two-way communication with their guests about their offerings (Camaide, 2013). Most brands within the tourism and hospitality industries maintain a social media presence to monitor and influence online interactions (Benjamin, Kriss & Egelman, 2016). Although it takes additional resources to track online reviews and respond to them, hotels are motivated to respond as quickly as possible to make sure that negative statements do not reach the broader community on social media (Lovering, 2017). Also, an establishment's online reputation can also be damaged by false reviews (Dellarocas, 2013). This is why a quick reaction on the part of the establishment can reduce negative and potentially erroneous conclusions and enhance positive perceptions (Sparks & Bradley, 2017, p. 1). While it is impossible for hotels to control all information published about them online (Raas, 2015), hotel marketers and managers try to constantly monitor online reviews and comments to identify legitimate issues that need to be addressed, new customers' demands and shifts in behaviour in an effort to improve business performance and customers' overall satisfaction (Oliveira et al., 2019).

Users of online review sites have a better chance of reaching a wider audience because their posts often remain visible for longer periods of time (Chen & Tabari, 2017). Tourists and hotel guests post online reviews as a form of "post behavioural engagement to indicate their level of satisfaction and inform others about their hotel experience" (Sherif, 2018). Hotels can use social media to better understand the needs of their guests and interact with them directly (Kang, 2011). Begwani and

Pal (2015) add that by connecting with customers via social media, hotels can grow their "digital footprints". Hence, every response to an online review should be used to maintain the brand image of an establishment or organisation (Yazdanifard & Yee, 2014). This important task is now facilitated by online response management systems (ORMS), which are a recent example of disruptive innovation in the hospitality industry (Lui et al., 2018). According to Bi et al. (2019), since large numbers of reviews can be posted in a short period of time, an efficient data extraction method is necessary. According to Galati & Galati (2019), tailored marketing campaigns on social media can be more effective if online reviews are used to track shifts in customer preferences or even segment markets according to their geographical location. Response management is particularly required if a review is negative, emotional, and characterised by customer expectation of improvement (Xu, 2020). Slivar and Bayer (2017) conclude that many hoteliers, especially branded hotels, have already realised this necessity.

Thus, the development and implementation of a correct online response strategy is important to mitigate the impact of negative reviews but also to use positive reviews for improving the establishment's reputation (Mate, Trupp & Pratt, 2019). Studies have focused on developing frameworks to assist in analysing online response strategies (Mate, Trupp & Pratt, 2019). The response process involves evaluation and response actions. During the evaluation process, various approaches are used to investigate a given matter/issue. The aim of the following study is to assess the use of online response management systems in the Cape Town Metropole, which is a major South African tourism destination.

2. The Hospitality Industry in South Africa

The history of hospitality in South Africa dates back to the 1800s when Swiss and German hoteliers travelled to the country, promoting various hotel standards which can still be seen today (Flanders Investment and Trade, 2018). During the iconic South African election period in 1994, South Africa saw an increase in the number of international tourists, which led to the construction of a number of 5-star hotels (Flanders Investment and Trade, 2018). Nowadays, business customers demand high-quality hotel services (Maric et al., 2015). In an effort to gain competitive advantage, South Africa's tourism and hospitality industry attached a lot of attention to quality assurance (du Plessis & Saayman, 2010). In 2000, the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) established its globally accredited quality assurance body for tourism products in South Africa (TGCSA, 2019).

The TGCSA assesses various establishments against a set of criteria and awards star ratings based on available services and facilities (WCG, 2021). The accreditation and grading system were developed for various types of accommodation establishments in South Africa, including "(Hotel, Apartment Hotel, Boutique Hotel, Small Hotel), Guest Accommodation (Bed, Breakfasts, Country Houses, Guest Houses), Self-Catering Accommodation (Exclusive, Shared), Game Lodge, Nature Lodge, Backpackers, Hostels, Caravan, Camping Sites and Venues" (du Plessis & Saayman, 2010). The TGCSA (2019) defines a hotel as an establishment that "provides formal accommodation with full or limited service to the travelling public". Another turning point in the South African hospitality industry in the early 2000s was the formulation of policies to stimulate growth (Olowoyo, Ramaila & Mavuru, 2021), which was particularly evident in 2010, when the industry had to provide affordable and suitable accommodation to visitors arriving in connection with the FIFA World Cup (PricewaterhouseCoopers [PwC].).

According to Airbnb (2018), although guests are discovering places across the country, Cape Town remains the most popular destination in South Africa. The International Congress and Conventions Association (ICCA) chose Cape Town as the best business tourism city in Africa in 2018 (PwC, 2018). South African hotels are the most developed sub-sector of the accommodation industry in Africa: there are more hotels in Cape Town than in other provinces of South Africa (Musavengane & Steyn, 2013). According to Banoobhai-Anwar and Keating (2016), Cape Town is regarded as the most "alluring and diverse tourist city in the country to visit". The oldest and second largest city in South Africa, it attracts international tourists with its Mediterranean climate, urban landscapes, and well-developed infrastructure (World Tourism Cities Federation, n.d.). There are around 4,000 tourism-related businesses in the city, including 2,742 guest accommodations of various types, 389 dining establishments, and 424 tourist attractions (WTCF, n.d.). Voted as one of the top tourist destinations in the world, Cape Town offers accommodation options ranging from budget to 5-star luxury hotels (Cape Town Tourism, 2019). In 2019, there were 3,321 businesses operating within the city's central business district (CBD), 169 of which were accommodation and travel related establishments (CCID, 2018). There are 24 large hotel complexes in Cape Town Central City, situated within walking distance from the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) and the V&A Waterfront. The accommodation and travel sector remains strong (with boutique hotels featuring prominently and Airbnb becoming a feature) followed closely by the information communication technologies (ICT) and telecoms business sector (CCID, 2018).

3. Online Response Management (ORM) as a Tool for Handling Online Reviews (OLR)

Nowadays, faced with a very dynamic, complex, and competitive business environment, characterised by changing customer preferences and the emergence of new technologies, enterprises have to constantly rebuild and reinvent themselves (Toumi, Tussyadiah & Steinmetz, 2021). They are increasingly reliant on sophisticated technological solutions to survive, compete, develop, and grow (Ilic & Nikolic, 2018). The hotel industry was an early adopter of digital technologies, such as computer reservation systems (CRSs), global distribution systems (GDSs), and the Internet (Zeqiri, Dahmani & Youssef, 2020). The tourism sector was among the first sectors to employ information and communication technology (ICT) (Garzotto et al., 2004). One category of ICT that has proved particularly useful in the tourism sector and hospitality industry are customer relationship management (CRM) systems and online review sites (Zamil, 2011), which are gaining popularity as a result of the stronger focus on customer engagement, social listening and monitoring, which can be managed through online platforms (Yasiukovich & Haddara, 2021).

An online review system is an IT-based customer service system (Lui et al., 2018). Online review systems, particularly for high-involvement products, are frequently used by consumers to analyse the quality of commodities and services before making a purchase decision (Gou et al., 2016). When developing an efficient online review system, one has to be aware of how customers' interactions with the system could change their views and behaviour (Gou et al., 2016). Ratings and reviews have become more accessible, ubiquitous, and important with the development of the Internet, e-commerce, and online platforms (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). The capacity of operators to reply to guest reviews is crucial. According to Lui et al. (2018), there is not enough research regarding this critical feature of current online review systems.

Nowadays, tourism is increasingly relying on smart technologies, such as smartphone travel apps; smart hotels, on the use of IT and digital marketing strategies, such as online booking systems, and smart guides (Otowicz, Macedo & Biz, 2022). Third-party service providers are increasingly being used by businesses to manage consumer rating and the review process (OECD, 2020). Hotels have created online apps featuring electronic forms for complaints and reviews to enable direct communication with visitors (Assimakopoulos et al., 2014). More than 83% of all online reservations are influenced by social media, and 49% of customers will not consider reserving a hotel without first consulting reviews (TrustYou, 2013). While online reviews have such a positive and considerable influence on hotel booking decisions, they should be managed as a strategic communication channel (Hafeez et

al., 2019). There are now various technologies for managing the hotel's digital reputation more effectively and efficiently (Chamelian, n.d.). The three main functions of ORM system include monitoring reviews, interacting with customers (responding to and participating in social media communication) and measuring the influence of these activities on reputation and branding (Jones, Temperley & Lima, 2009).

Table 1: Online review sites and online response management systems

Online travel review sites	Online response management systems
Trip Advisor	TrustYou
Booking.com	Revinate
Trivago.com	ReviewPro
Expedia.com	For-sight

Source: Author's construct

3.1 Motivations for Using ORMs in the Hotel Industry

In 2016, Rose and Blodgett (2016) found that there had been few studies regarding the effectiveness of responses to online reviews by hotel marketers. In fact, hoteliers have been criticised for not investing sufficiently in ORM (ReviewPro, 2019). Most existing studies have focused on customers' perceptions of hotels, although Xie, Zhang and Zhang (2014) investigated the business value of online consumer reviews and management response to hotel performance.

Online reviews have changed the way people make decisions in the hospitality sector, making information on 'experience products' like hotel stays accessible to anybody with access to the Internet (Park & Allen, 2013). Thanks to online reviews, the decision-making process is based on consumer perceptions rather than information provided by accommodation establishments. Such reviews reach a larger target audience and remain visible online for an extended period of time. Acknowledging customer concerns and reacting to them online has become a vital activity for the hospitality industry (Chen & Tabari, 2017). According to Sheng, Nah & Siau (2005), most establishments rely on online responses as an intervention strategy to protect or enhance the financial performance of hotels and develop a sustainable competitive advantage.

Trevino and Castano (2013) discusses three basic ways in which online responses can be handled:

- denying: hotel management disagrees with a dissatisfied customer over service failure and claims that the customer is lying.

- accepting: management acknowledges and explains the issue that has generated consumer concern but does not promise to make adjustments in the future.
- changing response: hotel management sincerely apologises and promises that the service will be improved in the future (Trevino & Castano, 2013).

The efficacy of the response is also influenced by the timing and type of preventive actions taken (Ciasullo, Montera & Palumbo, 2020). Online reviews together with responses represent a meaningful discussion between a business and customers, allowing future customers to assess the usefulness of an online review from both the perspective of the company as well as its customers (Anggani & Suherlan, 2020).

3.2. Review Response Framework

Managerial replies are responses provided directly by the hotel management in response to online client feedback (Mate, Trupp & Pratt, 2019). A managerial response strategy should focus on two main aspects: positive opinions and concerns or criticisms (Ye, Law & Gu, 2009). While having an effective online response strategy is particularly important when it comes to mitigating the impact of negative reviews, it also helps to take full advantage of positive reviews to improve the business's reputation (Mate, Trupp & Pratt, 2019). Several research papers have focused on developing frameworks to assist in analysing online response strategies (Mate, Trupp & Pratt, 2019).

The integrated framework shown in Figure 1 addresses Coombs (1999) accommodative and defensive response strategies to initiate various response actions. No action and no response are categorised outside of the response action section. Sparks (2001) focuses on a defensive strategy under response action. The response dimension includes both the defensive and accommodative approach. Customer satisfaction is measured not just in terms of response time and volume, but also in terms of response quality and efficacy (valence) (Ciasullo, Montera & Palumbo, 2020). The framework represents a flow from response to no response and the impact it will have on the reputation of a business (Mate, Trupp & Pratt, 2019). According to Sparks and Bradley (2017), consequences of not acknowledging online negative reviews can include a potentially bad reputation (image), low satisfactory reviews, and decreased brand loyalty. By integrating previous frameworks, businesses are able to develop suitable online response strategies specifically designed for them (Mat, Trupp & Pratt, 2019). The model in Figure 1 only takes into account negative customer reviews. However, as already mentioned (Ye, Law & Gu, 2009), it

makes sense to develop managerial response strategies that in addition to handling concerns or criticisms, also address positive opinions.

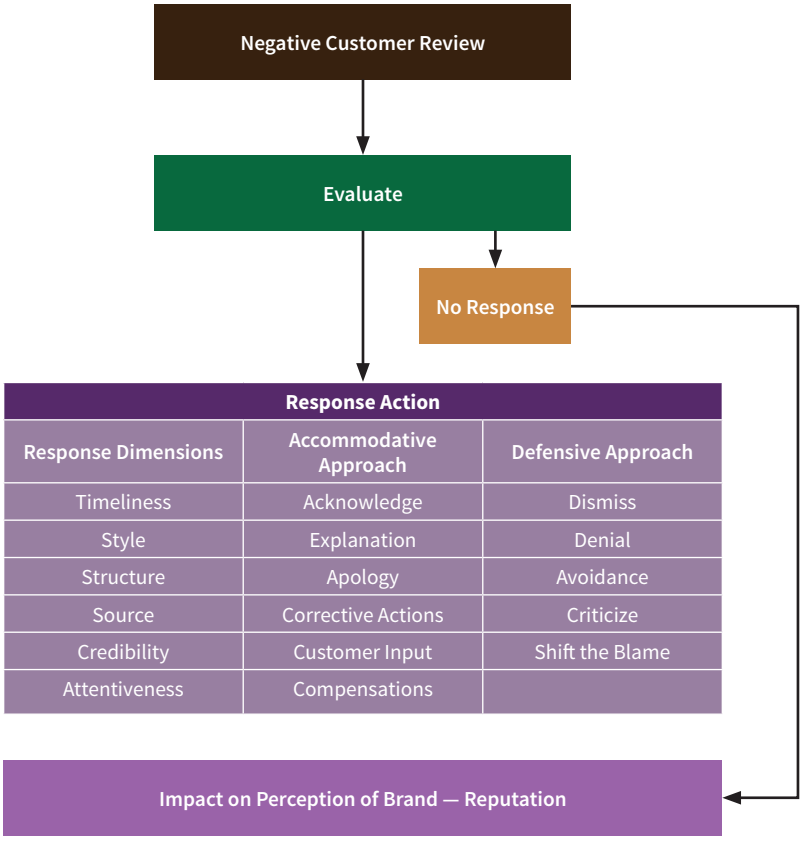
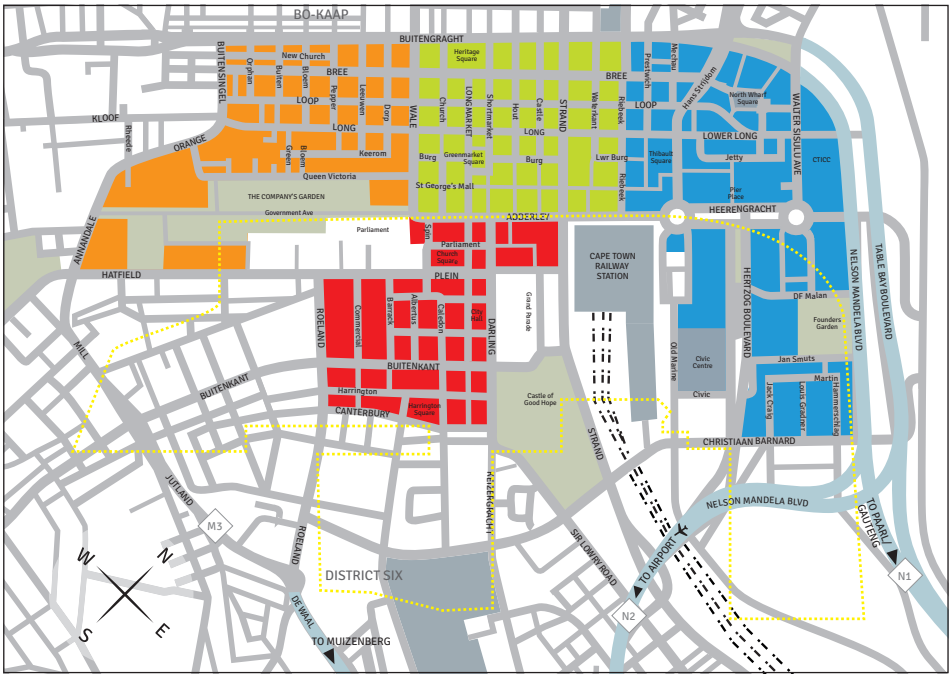


Figure 1: An integrated framework for analysing response strategies
Source: Mate, Trupp & Pratt (2019)

4. Research Method

The following study is based on qualitative, exploratory data collected during online and face-to-face interviews which 7 respondents employed by 4-star hotels located in Cape Town Central City. The sample included general managers, reservation managers, marketing managers, and their assistants. The survey population for this study included 3- to 5-star hotels located in Cape Town Central City (4 precincts within the yellow dotted lines in Figure 2), which are accredited by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA).



Precinct 1 (Foreshore) Precinct 2 Precinct 3 Precinct 4 (East City)

Figure 2: Map of Cape Town Central City
Source: CCID (2018)

The original plan was to select respondents from the population of 22 hotels located within the CBD, but as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of these establishments were either under new management or were permanently shut down. In order to continue the study, a decision was made to include hotels located outside of the CBD area but within the administrative borders of Cape Town.

5. Results

3 respondents were general managers, whose tasks included marketing related roles and being involved in managing online reviews. The rest of the sample included a group marketing manager, marketing assistant, rooms division manager, and marketing coordinator.

Specialisation within an hotel organisational structure boosts the effectiveness with which the organisation manages and supplies its services (Rutherford & Fallon, 2007). However, to make sure that a hotel runs smoothly, employees in dif-

ferent departments need to be able to handle different tasks and depend on one another (CareerTrend, 2018). Table 2 presents roles and responsibilities exercised by each interviewee.

Table 2: Interviewees' roles and responsibilities

Interviewee	Interviewee's title/position	Interviewee's roles and responsibilities	Hotel category and rooms
# 1	group marketing manager	the website and online matters, as well as marketing, i.e., third-party sites' content, influences, social media pages, websites, Google analytics page search, and reputation management.	hotel, 96 rooms
# 2	general manager	for the hotel, for online management, reviews; we're constantly observing clients' behaviour.	hotel, 222 rooms
# 3	marketing assistant	I have access to guest reviews, because I collect them, and I work with the brand manager.	apartment hotel, 35 rooms
# 4	rooms division manager	Front office management, overseeing operations, in-house, monitoring and responding to online reviews, act in the absence of the general manager as well.	hotel, 340 rooms
# 5	marketing co-ordinator	I oversee anything to do with brand and communications, social media, websites, press release, printed media, anything that has to do with media, the hotel group, conference centre, and the restaurant.	hotel, 125 rooms
# 6	general manager	I'm responsible for the whole operation of the hotel.	boutique hotel, 20 rooms
# 7	general manager/ deputy manager	I manage all department heads who report to me, which includes the Food and Beverage manager, maintenance manager. Part of my daily tasks is to answer online reviews. I have to make sure the hotel is profitable.	hotel, 150 rooms

Source: Author's construct

5.1. Information about the Hotels Analysed in the Study

The 7 establishments in the sample included four hotels, two boutique hotels, and one apartment hotel. Three of them were members of international hotel chains, two were members of a local hotel chain and two were locally owned. In 2019, the TGCSA reviewed its criteria for classifying accommodation establishments in South Africa (TGCSA, 2019), introducing three new categories: smaller hotels, boutique hotels, and aparthotels (apartment hotels). To qualify as a *hotel* an establishment must have at least 80 rooms and should be capable of providing guests with a certain range of services, such as 24/7 on-site contact representative, daily service of rooms (housekeeping), bathroom facilities must be en-suite and, where applicable, indicate if any meals and beverages are provided (TGCSA, 2019). A *boutique hotel* should have a reception space, a dining area, and exclusive rooms (TGCSA, 2019). In addition, according to Rogerson (2010), it should provide special "experiential qualities with strong emphasis placed upon the production of high levels of design,

ambience, and offerings of personalised service" (p. 425) and "small properties which are primarily operated by individuals or companies with a small collection" (p. 438). Finally, an *apartment hotel* should have at least 10 rooms and offer services like a hotel, such as a 24/7 on-site representative, housekeeping and bathroom ensuites. Each room must be equipped with a dining area and a kitchen/kitchenette (in more than 60% of the rooms) (TGCSA, 2019).

As already mentioned, all participating establishments were 4-star hotels. The TGCSA awards from 1 to 5 stars depending on the overall standard and the range of facilities available to hotel guests Travelground (2009). To earn 4- to 5-star, all hotel rooms should feature a work area with a desk and bathrooms should be equipped with complete bathroom amenities, including a shower cap, conditioner, shower gel, body lotion, and vanity set, in addition to 3-star facilities. A 4-star hotel should also offer room service for at least 18 hours per day (TGCSA, 2019).

5.2. Online Review Management Systems Used by the Hotels

As can be seen in Table 3, the interviewees used three ORM systems: Revinate (one hotel); ReviewPro (two hotels), and GuestRevu (two hotels). Two hotels did not employ any such system and relied on other tools to review online reviews. Generally, it can be concluded that teach online review management system was used as a tool for collecting online reviews about a particular hotel on various external websites:

Table 3: Benefits of the ORM systems

ORM system	Features	Used by
Revinate	► bespoke marketing tool ► links with hotels internal systems ► rich analytical tool	(Interviewee 1) hotel, 96 rooms
ReviewPro	► a variety of integrated options not offered by ► Revinate, e.g. GRI (Global Review Index) ► internal system integration ► collates universal guest preferences	(Interviewee 2) hotel, 222 rooms and (Interviewee 4) hotel, 340 rooms
GuestRevu	► serves different hotels that are members of one hotel chain ► offers visual data representation ► enables competitor analysis	(Interviewee 3) apartment hotel, 35 rooms and (Interviewee 7) hotel, 150 rooms

Source: Author's construct

ORM systems make it easier for hotels to monitor and manage reviews on various sites and to which engage with the online community by responding to com-

ments, suggestions and complaints (Kim & Kim, 2022). Above all, ORM systems increase hotels' effectiveness in creating, managing, and maintaining their online reputation (Karlsson & Strom, 2020).

The choice of an ORM system depends on its ability to monitor and analyse feedback, respond to customer feedback, and integrate data from third-party sites to improve hotel performance (De Pelsmacker, van Tillburg & Holthof, 2018). Presented below are various benefits offered by each ORM systems, as listed by four interviewees (1, 2, 3, 4 and 7).

One unique feature of Revinate is its ability to link to internal systems used by hotels, such as CRM and property management systems (PMS), which enables seamless integration of reporting (1834 Hotels, 2020). Thanks to its analytic functions, Revinate is a top-rated marketing tool.

ReviewPro offers a universal guests' preference feature, which enables the front desk to record guest details and preferences, which are then shared with all hotels within the hotel chain. While much of ReviewPro's functionality is similar to that of Revinate, it has one unique feature, namely GRI (Global Review Index), which is available exclusively to ReviewPro clients. GRI is used to benchmark a single hotel or a collection of hotels, compare performance amongst establishments or against rival hotels, and monitor a hotel's performance over time. Thousands of hotels worldwide use the GRI as a benchmark for reputation management efforts and to set quality objectives as well as optimise online pricing and distribution strategies (PwC, 2016).

GuestRevu was valued for its convenience as regards data presentation and for its competitor analysis feature. Other systems like Revinate, such as Guest Joy, GuestRevu, TrustYou, are used to monitor external sites for reviews and to set benchmark rankings against competitors (Stringham & Gerdes, 2021). The goal of benchmarking is to create and carry out action plans that will reduce or close the gap between internal operations and competition (Pavlova, 2020).

5.3. Reasons for not Using ORM Systems

Two hotels (interviewees 5 and 6) did not use any ORM systems and preferred to monitor review sites and social media on their own. Interviewee 5 said their hotel managed online reviews directly via online travel agencies (OTAS), such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Hotels.com, other apps like Dineplan and Google Reviews as well as social media accounts. When asked for reasons why their hotel preferred this solution, the interviewee mentioned "direct responses and convenience".

According to interviewee 6, the main reason for not using an ORM system was its cost, which was too high for a boutique hotel. Small-budget hotels generally prefer

to rely on the most efficient and affordable communication channels (Dinçer, Dinçer & Avunduk, 2016), which are nowadays enabled by a low-cost access to the Internet.

5.4. Effects of Covid-19 on Online Reviews and Hotels Future Bookings

The COVID-19 pandemic was accompanied by a number of measures such as lockdowns, social distancing, home orders, travel bans and restrictions (Gautam et al., 2022). Many hospitality establishments were temporarily closed (Gautam, 2021) while others had to deal with booking cancellations. According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) (2020), the hospitality sector contributed R130.1 billion to the country's GDP in 2018 and supported 4.5% of total employment. As a consequence of the pandemic, 36% of tourism and hospitality businesses reported a complete loss of revenue in October 2020, 88% reported that accommodation occupancy in October 2020 was down by more than 50% compared to October 2019, and 38% reported no occupancy at all. 92% of tourism-related businesses, including the hospitality sector, reportedly declines in revenues by at least 50% compared to October 2019 (South Africa, 2021). Live stream conferencing and remote working became very popular throughout the pandemic (Shapoval et al., 2020).

Hotels struggled to switch from a "hospitality approach" to social distancing regulations:

> it's the hardest thing for us … hospitality, it's friendliness, it's handshakes; so how do you run a business where COVID-19 protocols are the opposite of that? (Interviewee 1).

There was also a concern that the pandemic could increase the likelihood of negative reviews: under sanitary restrictions service hotels had to go an extra mile to maintain the same perceived levels of quality.

Analysis of online reviews written during the pandemic made hotels aware of a shift in customer expectations as a result of declining disposable incomes:

> [What] I picked up when I got their online reviews is that people are still wanting value for money even though they're paying much, much, much less than before (Interviewee 2).

According to Interviewee 5, guests were more active online during the pandemic and paid much attention to negative reviews. However, Interviewee 7 said that not much changed during the pandemic in terms of the amount and types of online reviews about their hotel.

6. Discussion

Nowadays, many hotel use web applications containing electronic forms for complaints and comments to enable direct exchange of information with guests (Assimakopoulos et al., 2014). Some interviewees indicated that they did not make use of any ORM systems and preferred to respond directly via online websites, booking platforms, and social media. Meng et al. (2018) emphasises the importance of online reviews, and says it is imperative that hotel managers reply to online reviews, either through ORM systems or directly through booking sites. Overall, the sampled hotels were aware that in order to manage their online presence, they had to engage through ORM systems or social media.

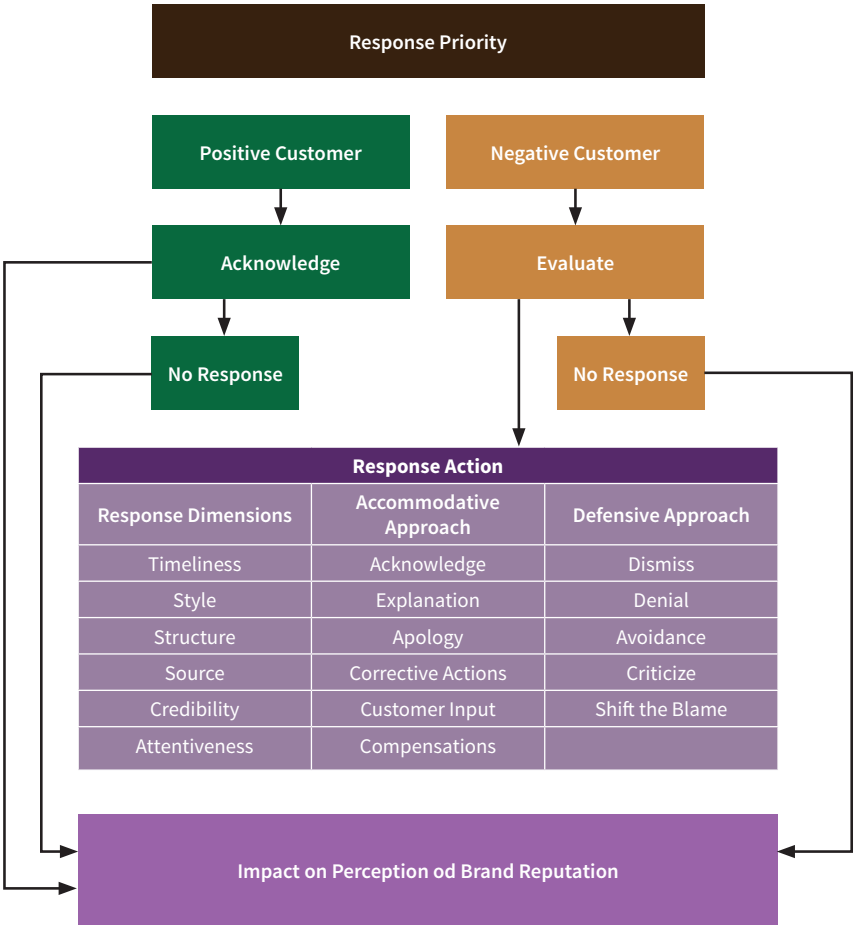


Figure 3: Recommended framework for analysing response strategies
Source: based on Mate, Trupp & Pratt (2019)

However, 5 out of 7 hotels found it beneficial to use ORM systems integrated with their CRM and PMS systems. This meant that information extracted externally could be integrated internally for hotel customer relations management to improve service. In other words, preferences of a guest staying at one hotel would be shared with other hotels in the chain. In addition to helping hotels increase their overall performance, this kind of guest preferences profiling is used to determine which service features are important to guests (Kamalpour et al., 2017). Interviewees who made use of ORM systems particularly valued features such as data representation and competitor analysis. Another advantage offered by the online-management systems are notifications/alerts, which remind hotel employees to check online reviews as soon as they are posted. Notifications are sent by email to a smartphone or computer. The hotels that did not use ORM system had to frequently or regularly check social media or online review websites directly. Regardless of whether they used ORM systems or not, all the hotels in the sample tried to ensure that guests were aware of their online presence.

Lastly, the interviewees were afraid that insufficient interactions on their part would negatively impact their reputation and online reviews. During the pandemic, hotels paid special attention to their safety measures to reassure prospective guests (Kim & Han, 2022). According to Yu, Seo & Hyun (2021), many people's habits and motivations have changed as a result of the pandemic, which had an effect on the purchasing behaviour regarding tourism related offerings. Though the pandemic caused a fall in bookings, the hotels in the sample used their convenient location in the CBD as a competitive advantage to attract guests.

7. Theoretical Contributions

According to Ciasullo, Montera & Palumbo (2020), there is an increasing need to understand review management from an operational point of view, and study how hotel managers handle online reviews by means of online systems and web-based tools.

The study described above showed that online reviews can assist marketing departments to improve customer relationships (CRM) online. By implementing an appropriate response framework in the strategic marketing plan, hotels are able to actively manage both positive and negative online reviews.

This is why the authors of the study recommend a response strategy that includes both kinds of reviews (Figure 3). While responding to negative reviews is definitely more complex and may require various kinds of actions, positive reviews should also be acknowledged in a timely manner. According to Noort and Wil-

lemsen (2012), by promptly addressing online complaints hotels are more likely to appease disgruntled guests and prevent potential follow-up angry comments from other customers. Timely responses to reviews, be that negative or positive, can boost customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive eWOM. According to the interviewees, if a negative online review is dealt with correctly, it could result in a positive outcome for the guest.

8. Conclusions and Limitations of the Study

All hotels analysed in the study made an effort to maintain their online reputation by managing online reviews. They also used their strengths as competitive advantages to secure future bookings. Online reviews created an opportunity for managers to engage with the online community.

The main limitation of the study is that, due to the pandemic, the final sample included only seven 4-star hotels located within the Cape Town. Given the sample size and its composition, the findings may not be representative of the population of 3–5 star hotels in Cape Town. Only 3 interviewees participated in the initial data collection stages, the remaining 4 interviewees responded to follow up emails as a result of work shortages/hotel closures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. Future Research

Future research could focus on how hotels develop and update their response management plans. Data should be collected from establishments in other parts of Cape Town and the rest of the Western Cape province (and possibly other provinces) to assess the use of online response management. A comparative study could also be conducted between hotels that do and those that do not use ORM systems.

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- Pojedyncza strona internetowa

Zawiera: nazwisko, inicjał autora. (rok, miesiąc, dzień). Tytuł artykułu (kursywą). Tytuł portalu internetowego. URL:

Mitchell, J.A., Thomson, M., & Coyne, R.P. (2017, January 25). *APA citation. How and when to reference*. https://www.howandwhentoreference.com/APAcitation

Editorial requirements

I. Size of manuscript
The text should contain up to 9000 words including tables and figures. For drawings, the size of one attachment cannot exceed 20 MB.

II. Required files
1. **Files with the main part of the manuscript** (without authors' data, .rtf, .doc or .docx format):
- title of the article in English and Polish
- concise and factual abstract in English and Polish, from 150 to 300 words, prepared according to structure:
  — purpose
  — methods
  — results
  — conclusions
- keywords in English and Polish (up to 5 words)
- introduction
- body text — organized into chapters/sections, each with a unique title (literature review, methods, results, discussion)
- conclusion (theoretical and practical, research limitations and future work)
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2. **Files with the title page including authors' data** (.rtf, .doc or .docx format)
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- author's first and last name
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3. **Figures, photos and graphics**

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1. **Tabeles** (.rtf, .doc or .docx format)
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- any abbreviations used must be expanded below the table

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- editable (formats: .tif for bitmaps, .eps for vector files, and xls or .xlsx for charts)
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A reference list should be ordered alphabetically by first author's / editor's surname or by title, in the case of works whose author/ editor is unknown, and in the case of authors with multiple works, they should be listed chronologically by year of publication.
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Oppermann, M.J. (2000). Tourism Destination Loyalty. *Journal of Travel Research*, *39*(1), 78–84. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F004728750003900110

- Referencing a book

The basic format is: Author/Editor surname, Initial(s)., (copyright year), Book title (italicised), edition number (in brackets). Publisher. DOI or URL:

Kotler, P., Bowen, J.T., Makens, J., & Baloglu, S. (2017). *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism* (7th ed.). Pearson Education. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0047287507303976

- Chapter in an edited book

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Scott, N.R., & Le, D.A. (2017). Tourism Experience: A Review. In N.R. Scott & J. Gao (Eds.), *Visitor Experience Design* (2nd ed., pp. 30–52). CABI. https://doi.org/10.1080/10645578.2016.1144023

- Referencing an e-book

Mitchell, J.A., Thomson, M., & Coyne, R.P. (2017). *A guide to citation*. https://www.mendeley.com/reference-management/ reference-manager

- Referencing a chapter in an e-book

Troy, B.N. (2015). APA citation rules. In S.T. Williams (Ed.), *A guide to citation rules* (2nd ed., pp. 50–95). https://www.mendeley.com/reference-management/reference-manager

- Referencing an entire website created by a corporation, institution or group

Use the following format: Corporation/group/organization name. (year website was last updated/published, month day if given). Title of website. URL:

WHO. (2014, 14 listopada). World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/

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