

Suppliers' perceptions of the significance of local community demand in sustaining township tourism in Atteridgeville

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Abstract

The world has become a big corporation that is driven by profit. In the 1980s, embracing sustainability as a response to social, economic, and environmental challenges meant that development no longer had to be driven by economic objectives only. In tourism, this development paradigm meant that the needs of local communities and their environment should be placed at the centre of development strategies. The reality is that it is difficult to pursue societal gain in areas that are not economically viable. This situation has resulted in many third-world countries being locked in the vicious circle of poverty. This study addresses the issue of poverty by investigating the significance of local demand in sustaining township tourism in the township of Atteridgeville. Descriptive statistics were used to present the sustainable tourism variables identified for the 144 tourism suppliers, which were then tested for relationships using Freeman-Halton's extension of the Fisher's Exact Test. The study found that local demand as opposed to tourist demand, provides a more significant and reliable source of income and community support, which are fundamental to the continued existence of township tourism in Atteridgeville. The study presents local governments with insights that could assist in pursuing township tourism primarily from a social perspective.

Key words: sustainable tourism, township tourism, local demand, Atteridgeville

Introduction

Township tourism is one of the fastest-growing niche tourism segments in the world. It is considered a new phenomenon that has emerged over the past two decades, and which owes

its growth to critical changes in favour of sustainable tourism practices since the 1980s (Steinbrink, 2012:215).

Usually named after the type of area visited, 'township tourism' in South Africa, 'favela tourism' in Brazil, or 'slum tourism' in India and Kenya, this type of cultural tourism can be seen as a sign of maturity within the tourism industry, which causes tourists to increasingly demand for unique, authentic and meaningful experiences (Lorentzen, 2009). As the 'Rainbow nation', South Africa presents a rich and diverse cultural heritage which makes it suitable for township tourism. Popular townships in the country include Soweto and Alexandra (Johannesburg), Atteridgeville and Mamelodi (Pretoria), Kayelitsha and Langa (Cape Town), and New Brighton (Port Elizabeth).

Despite the growing international demand for township tourism and the authentic and diversified cultural resources available in the country, township tourism initiatives are short-lived in certain areas for various reasons, including seasonality of tourism demand. One major challenge is that many industry stakeholders still look at township tourism as just another cultural tourism product (commercial perspective), rather than a sustainable development strategy set to help the poor (social perspective). One example is the case of 13 townships within the City of Tshwane (CoT), which have been prioritised for township tourism development and promotion during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, as international tourists travelled to South Africa for this mega event. However, shortly after the 2010 FIFA World Cup, this development strategy lost momentum despite the positive impacts it had in promoting entrepreneurship, economic activities, cultural understanding, and social cohesion in townships. All that was left behind were township residents feeling that they have been exploited, township entrepreneurs in financial crisis, and serious damages to the trust of local communities towards the tourism industry.

Against the above background, it can be observed that tourism demand (mainly international), has the tendency to influence the decisions on township tourism initiatives. Thus there is a need to investigate the significance of local demand in sustaining township tourism in an area, in particular the township of Atteridgeville.

Literature review

Sustainable tourism development

For centuries, development has been undertaken with a view to economic gain. The outcomes of this unilateral vision were globally addressed in the opening statement of the preamble to Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) of 1992, which concluded with consensus about the need for a global partnership for sustainable development (Hall, 2008:20).

As an agent of development, tourism has inherited the overemphasised focus on economic gain, without considering holism, equity, and futurity (Sharpley, 2009:39). The adoption of the sustainable imperative in the tourism industry has contributed to tourists becoming more responsible, and has also shifted the focus of tourism to the interests of local people and their environment (Fennell, 2008:4-5). Consequently, tourism has been identified as a key strategy that can address the outcomes of unsustainable development practices and lead to economic upliftment, community development, and poverty reduction (Binns & Nel, 2002:235).

Township tourism

Township tourism has emerged over the past two decades and can be taken as a sign of maturity within the tourism industry. Booyens (2010) states that as tourists evolve, they move into Maslow's self-actualisation level and increasingly demand unique, authentic and meaningful experiences.

Township tourism essentially takes place within the cultural environment of a destination. This new type of cultural tourism incorporates cultural diversity and authenticity as central aspects (Ramchander, 2007a:41). From a demand-side perspective, it can be defined as the activities of a person travelling to underdeveloped residential areas created by the social engineering policies of the former South African government, to gain first-hand experience of the practices of another culture, and an insight into post-apartheid progress and development (Ramchander, 2004:40; Swartz, 2009:185; Goldstein, 2011:78). The demise of apartheid is one of the factors that have contributed to the rapid expansion of township tourism in the Republic of South Africa. In effect, since the mid-1990s, tourists' motivations for visiting South Africa have changed, showing a growing eagerness by international tourists to see the 'new South Africa' and its townships, which reflect past and present human experiences and their cultural heritage (Lubbe, 2003:96; Ramchander, 2007b:150).

Township tourism has many social and economic advantages for the host. Essentially taking place in poverty-stricken areas, it gives local communities an opportunity to improve their living conditions through the provision of pro-poor tourism benefits (Ramchander, 2007a:41; Roday, Biwal & Joshi, 2009:46). For that reason, the government, the private sector, and community organisations have increasingly placed emphasis on the role of township tourism as a catalyst for social change and healing (Ramchander, 2007a:39). Conversely, many people regard township tourism as voyeuristic, unethical and exploitative; arguing that it allows the suffering of local communities to be displayed for the pleasure and entertainment of visitors, that the interaction between tourists and locals is extremely limited, and that it has very few benefits for locals (Woods, 2006:107; Booyens, 2010; Frenzel, 2012:53).

Tourism demand

There are various approaches to defining tourism demand, including the economic, the psychological, and the geographical approaches (Khunou, Reynish, Pawson, Tseane & Ivanovic, 2009:119). In line with the context of this paper, the geographical perspective defines tourism demand as the number of people travelling or wishing to travel, and making use of services and facilities located at places away from their home environments. Taking into consideration the spatial and temporal elements that differentiate tourism from other forms of human mobility (Hall, 2008:5), one could end up observing that firms that produce commodities for tourists also serve non-tourists. For instance, taxis may be used by residents, restaurant meals may be consumed by local residents, and local attractions may also draw local residents (Smith, 1995:34; Debbage & Ioannides, 2005:50). Mullins (1991:326) also acknowledges local residents' demand at destination level and argues that goods and services are only classified as tourism goods and tourism services if they are consumed by tourists. If they are consumed by residents, they form part of 'normal' consumption.

Methodology

This study is based on quantitative research methodology, for which an interviewer-completed questionnaire was used. The research was done in Atteridgeville, where suppliers operating in

various sectors of the tourism industry were targeted. The sectors included accommodation, attractions, intermediaries, food and beverages, merchandisers, and transport suppliers. The data was collected over a period of four days by a supervised team of 12 trained B Tech students from the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). The targeted sample size was N=210 tourism businesses, but only N=144 responses were received.

Sampling

Sampling is defined as the means by which study units from the target population are included in the research study (Jennings, 2010:136). Two sampling methods were used to include township tourism suppliers in this study, namely convenience sampling and stratified random sampling.

Study area sampling

Convenience sampling takes geographical and financial factors into consideration. This sampling method involves selecting participants based on their proximity to the researcher and ease of access (Jennings, 2010:139). The City of Tshwane has about 13 townships. Thus, convenience sampling helped the researcher to choose Atteridgeville over the other 12 townships, given that its proximity to the researcher made the data collection process safe and cost-effective.

Study population sampling

Once the study area had been identified, snowball sampling was initially chosen as the preferred sampling method for including Atteridgeville's tourism suppliers in the study. This sampling method consisted of identifying respondents, who were then asked to refer the researcher to other potential respondents (Miller & Brewer, 2003:274). The reason for deciding on snowball sampling was the inadequacy of the sampling frame, which did not make known the number of tourism suppliers operating in the study area. In that regard, Grant Thornton (2005:61) explains that developing a reasonable database of tourism suppliers in the City of Tshwane presents considerable challenges, due to the high volume of informal operators wishing to remain anonymous. However, when the researcher paid a preliminary visit to Atteridgeville to confirm the validity of the constructed sampling frame, it was found that 85% of suppliers on the list no longer operated. Thus, stratified random sampling was selected as an alternative sampling method.

The stratified random sampling method was selected in view of the diversity of tourism businesses in Atteridgeville. This random sampling method consists of dividing the study area into strata, and assigning each element of the population to a stratum (Jennings, 2010:142). Consequently, Atteridgeville was divided into six sections, where fieldworkers were required to randomly survey tourism businesses in the accommodation, attraction, intermediary, food and beverages, merchandiser and transport sectors. The transport, food and beverages and other businesses were limited to 30, in order to maintain a balance between the tourism sectors.

Primary data collection

Primary data was collected by means of a descriptive survey. The questionnaire used was structured, pre-coded, and completed by the interviewing fieldworkers. Questions were written in English and fieldworkers had the ability also to communicate with locals in South African

official languages. The questionnaire consisted of 57 questions which were divided into two sections, namely suppliers' demographics and suppliers' perceptions.

In the first section, information on the demographic profile of respondents was collected by means of multiple-choice and dichotomous questions. In the second section, a four-point Likert scale was used to determine respondents' perceptions from 1 = (Strongly disagree) to 4 = (Strongly agree).

Analysis of data

The gathered data was captured using Microsoft Office Excel 2007, and then analysed by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) v.17.0. Key sustainable variables identified for the analysis included the following: Level of income generated (economic viability), community support (involvement), target market (demand), continuation of operations (futuraity), and age of the business (survival).

Descriptive statistics such as percentages and raw counts were used to help describe the body of the data in such a way that patterns emerged from it (Ormrod & Leedy, 2010:265).

Fisher's Exact Test of Independence

The relatively small size of the sample used in this study (N=144) increases the probability of obtaining cells with expected values lower than 5 in cross-tabulations. In this scenario, the Fisher's Exact Test is a suitable statistical test of independence. Thus, the categories in some contingency tables were collapsed to two rows and three columns in order to increase the expected frequencies (Argyrous, 2011:451), and the Freeman-Halton extension of the Fisher's Exact Test was performed. When testing at a 5% level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected if the p-value of the test is less than 0.05, but if the p-value>0.05 the null hypothesis is not rejected. The hypothesis tested in this paper is as follows:

- H_0 : Target market and sustainability variables are independent of each other.
- H_1 : Target market and sustainability variables are not independent of each other.

Results

The purpose of this investigation was to evaluate the significance of residents' demand in sustaining township tourism in Atteridgeville. The findings of this investigation are discussed below.

Targeted demand

Respondents were asked to state which demand was targeted by their businesses. They were given a choice between tourist demand, local community demand, and both.

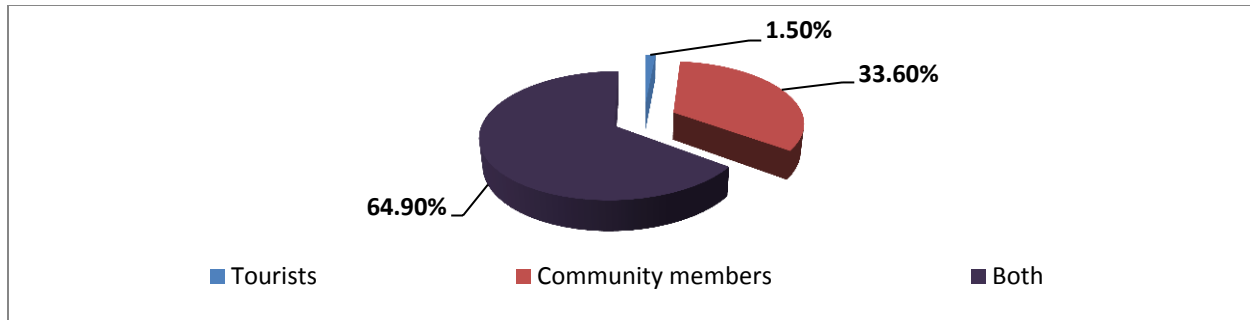


Figure 1: Target market

The results shown in Figure 1 indicate that tourist demand is the least targeted by suppliers (1.50%), as compared to the demand from the local community (33.60%). However, the largest portion of suppliers (64.90%) consists of those who targeted both tourists and community members.

Sustainable tourism variables of suppliers

Respondents were requested to provide information on the income they generate per month, the level of community support they receive, and their willingness to continue their operations.

Table 1: Sustainable tourism variables

KEY SUSTAINABLE VARIABLES	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY (N)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Economic viability	Below R8000	44	51.2%
	Above R8000	42	48.8%
Community support	Not receiving	21	16.4%
	Receiving	107	83.6%
Continued existence	Closing down	9	6.4%
	Continue	131	93.6%

The results in Table 1 indicate that the number of respondents who generated less than R8 000 per month is slightly higher than the number who generated more than R8 000 per month. Table 1 also reveals that most suppliers were supported by the community and were willing to continue their operations.

Test of independence between targeted demand and economic viability

A test of independence between targeted demand and monthly income generated was aimed at testing the economic criterion of sustainable tourism. The test would determine whether local demand or tourist demand was the most economically viable for township tourism suppliers.

Table 2: Targeted demand vs economic viability of businesses

			MARKET			Total
			Tourist	community	Both	
INCOME	Below R8000	N	1	21	22	44
		%	100,0%	70,0%	40,0%	51,2%
	Above R8000	N	0	9	33	42
		%	0,0%	30,0%	60,0%	48,8%
Total		N	1	30	55	86
		%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
FISHER'S EXACT TEST			p-value = 0.0091			

The results in Table 2 indicate that suppliers who targeted community members generated a better income than those who only targeted the tourists visiting Atteridgeville. However, suppliers who chose to target both markets generated an even higher monthly income.

Table 2 also indicate that the Fisher's Exact Test of the targeted demand in relation to the monthly income generated showed a statistical significance at a level of 0.05, with a p-value = 0.0091.

Test of independence between targeted demand and community support

The test of independence that was conducted between targeted demand and the level of community support received by suppliers was aimed at assessing the criterion of involvement in the context of sustainable tourism. The test would determine whether a relationship existed between the target market and the level of support suppliers received from the community.

Table 3: Targeted demand vs community support received

			MARKET			Total
			Tourist	community	Both	
COMMUNITY SUPPORT	Not receiving	N	2	9	10	21
		%	100,0%	21,4%	11,9%	16,4%
	Receiving	N	0	33	74	107
		%	0,0%	78,6%	88,1%	83,6%
Total		N	2	42	84	128
		%	100%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
FISHER'S EXACT TEST			p-value = 0.0104			

The results in Table 3 indicate that suppliers who targeted community members received more community support than those who only targeted the tourists visiting Atteridgeville. However, suppliers who targeted both tourists and community members received the most support from the community. Table 3 also indicates that the Fisher's Exact Test of Independence between the targeted demand and the level of community support showed statistical significance at a level of 0.05, given that the test produced a p-value = 0.0104.

Test of independence between targeted demand and continued existence of suppliers

A test of independence between targeted demand and the willingness of suppliers to continue operating was aimed at testing the criterion of futurity in the context of sustainable tourism. The test would determine whether there was a relationship between the target market and the continued existence of suppliers.

Table 4: Targeted demand vs continued existence of suppliers

		MARKET			Total	
		Tourist	community	Both		
CONTINUED EXISTENCE	Closing down	N	2	4	3	9
		%	66.7%	9,5%	3,2%	6,4%
	Continue	N	1	38	92	131
		%	33.3%	90,5%	96,8%	93,6%
Total		N	3	42	95	140
		%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100%
FISHER'S EXACT TEST			p-value = 0.0027			

The results in Table 4 indicate that most suppliers who targeted community members were willing to continue their operations, as opposed to those who targeted tourists only. However, suppliers who targeted both tourists and community members were even more willing to continue operating. Table 4 also indicates that the Fisher's Exact Test of Independence between the targeted demand and the suppliers' willingness to continue their operations showed statistical significance at a level of 0.05, given that the test produced a p-value=0.0027.

Discussion

Targeted demand

It can be concluded that, according to the respondents' profile depicted in Figure 1, tourism suppliers perceived the local community demand as being more attractive than the tourist demand. However, due to the seasonality of the tourist demand, most suppliers chose to target both markets in order to supplement their generated incomes.

Test of independence between targeted demand and sustainable tourism variables

The results of the statistical analysis in Table 2 produced a p-value of 0.0091. This value indicates that the test result is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Thus there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_0), and to conclude that there is a relationship between the targeted demand and the economic viability. This deduction further supports the finding that most tourist suppliers chose to target tourists and community members in order to supplement their incomes.

In terms of the community supporting township tourism businesses, the statistical test between the targeted demand and community support yielded a p-value of 0.0104. This value confirms that the test result is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Thus there is sufficient evidence to reject

the null hypothesis (H_0), and to conclude that a relationship exists between the targeted demand and community support.

In terms of futurity, the test of independence between the targeted demand and the willingness of suppliers to continue their operations produced a p-value of 0.0027. This value confirms that the test result is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Thus there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_0), and conclude that a relationship exists between the targeted demand and the willingness to continue operations.

Conclusion

Tourism suppliers exist primarily to cater for the needs of tourists. All tourism suppliers are affected by seasonality of tourism demand. However, the survival of suppliers who only rely on tourist demand is at a greater risk during low season, as compared to those suppliers who target members of the community. This conclusion proves that residents demand is not only more significant, but also more stable than tourists demand at destination level.

Apart from the economic reliability that residents' demand possesses over tourist demand at a destination, this study has also noted the ability of residents' demand to improve the level community support for township tourism and the willingness for tourism suppliers to continue operating. Therefore, it can further be elaborated that the more a supplier responds to the needs of community members, the more support this supplier is likely to receive from this community.

Thus it is recommended that township tourism practices should primarily be approached from a social perspective. Such an approach, which prioritises the needs of the local community, will lead to increased community support for tourism, an improved lifespan of tourism businesses, and more economic benefits to ensure the survival of the industry in the area.

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