

Residents' perceptions towards the impacts of tourism development: the case of Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The primary objective of this study was to assess residents' perceptions towards the impacts of tourism development in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. The questionnaire was based on Kim, Uysal & Sirgy's (2013) research. In order to meet the survey goals, the residents' perceptions towards the environmental, cultural, social, and economic impacts of tourism development were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The empirical results show that the highest perception score was for "traditional local activities" (4.92), whereas the lowest perception score was for "prostitution" (1.09). In general, the local residents were found to support tourism development, but there were signs of wear that ought to be taken into consideration by planners and decision-makers. For instance, using the paired samples t-test the results indicated that nine attributes, namely "environment and ecosystems protection"; "preservation of sites with historical, cultural and aesthetic value"; "drug use and trafficking"; "criminality"; "prostitution"; "moral values"; "price of land"; "price of houses"; and "price of basic staples" were statistically significant (Sig. 0.1529), meaning that these attributes require more attention in terms of changing the negative perceptions of residents towards tourism development. If the tourism planners do not take measures in order to change the negative perceptions of residents towards these attributes, the population will tend to experience increasing levels of wear and saturation, with a consequent decline in the support of the development of the tourism activity. The implications for the study are that national tourism policymakers should redefine the policy to ensure that the factors currently impacting negatively on tourism development are addressed.

Keywords: Impacts, local residents, perceptions, planning, tourism, tourism development

Introduction

Tourism is widely perceived as an economic development tool for the local community, providing factors that may improve the quality of life, such as employment and investment opportunities, tax revenues, restaurants, accommodation services, natural and cultural attractions, festivals, and outdoor recreation opportunities (Kandampully, 2000; Andereck, Valentine, Knopf & Vogt, 2005; Kiriakidou & Gore, 2005). Its effect, in terms of the macroeconomic growth of developing countries is undeniable, especially in those countries with no industrial or value-added production, and with few qualified population. In such countries, selling the local physiography and culture contributes towards economic growth and wealth generation and, if well guided, it can also become an engine for economic and social development (Tosun, 2002). Tourism has therefore become a tool for economic development by means of improving the standard of living of the local population (Simao & Partidario, 2012).

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism is often considered to be the major industry on a

global scale, contributing to about 9 per cent of total employment (WTTC, 2013). Different empirical studies have shown that tourism is a tool that enables the improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the population (Fayissa, Nsiah & Tadasse, 2008; Rosentraub & Joo, 2009; Sanchez-Rivero, Pulido-Fernandez & Cardenas-Garcia, 2012). In an initial state of development, tourism does not require high qualification in terms of technology and labour, and it has significant indirect economic impacts. Such impacts have resulted in sustained and attractive growth throughout the last few decades (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011). Therefore, the industry has great potential to affect the life of community residents (Mason & Cheyne, 2000).

Community leaders and economic development specialists have increasingly come to treat tourism as an important industry that can enhance local employment opportunities, tax revenues, and economic diversity (Park & Stokowski, 2009). Tourism can play a significant role, particularly in terms of addressing issues of extreme poverty and hunger, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and global partnership (WTTC, 2013). Consequently, it is a smokeless industry that generates social, cultural,

environmental, and economic impacts, some of which are permanent and irreversible (Partidario & Jesus, 2003).

However, the impacts of tourism on development vary from one country to another, which means that this economic activity does not always lead to increased economic development, especially in the less developed countries, as a result of the different types of impact that it has (Williams & Lawson, 2001). The dark side of tourism activity can be particularly intense in developing countries, due to their typical economic, social and environmental fragilities. The counterparts of significant international receipts per capita are known and well referenced in the literature: neo-colonialism and external dependence; the accentuation of territorial, social and economic imbalances that are derived from an unequal distribution of income and public investment; environmental pressure and damage to ecosystems; and the commoditisation of local nature and cultures (Huh & Vogt, 2008).

Andereck and Vogt (2000) assert that, once a community becomes a tourist destination, the life of residents in that community become affected by tourism activities. The effects involved can take the form of crowding, traffic and parking problems, increased crime, increased cost of living, friction between tourists and residents, and changes in the hosts' way of life (Andereck et al., 2005). Therefore, the importance of researching the impacts of tourism cannot be overestimated (Mason & Cheyne, 2000; Yen & Kerstetter, 2009).

Whereas research into the impacts of tourism is both substantial and ongoing, few studies deal with residents' perceptions of tourism impacts in African countries (Deery, Jago & Fredline, 2012). Furthermore, most studies are written with a particular focus, and, thus, only refer to studies that align with this specific focus (Andriotis, 2005; Easterling, 2004; Harrill, 2004; Yen & Kerstetter, 2009). As such, a study to assess residents' perceptions

towards the impacts of tourism development in Victoria Falls is envisaged. In order to achieve this goal, the current article arrangement takes the following form: the introduction is followed by a review of the related literature, after which the problem statement and research objectives are presented. Then, an explanation of the research methodology is presented, followed by a discussion of the results, and the recommendations based thereon are furnished. Finally, the conclusions and limitations of the study are presented.

Literature review

A plethora of studies exist that address tourism impact as an important component of tourism development (Kim, Uysal & Sirgy, 2013). Tourism planners typically consider the nature of the impact of such development, and how it can be managed so as to ensure the attainment of optimal outcomes (Gunn & Var, 2002; Beeton, 2006; McIntosh, Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). Community planners have criticised tourism officials for failing to establish a clear framework that can facilitate the determination of what factors should be considered in their decision-making (Gunn & Var, 2002).

In their pioneering work, Wall and Mathieson (2006) synthesised much of the research on the impact of tourism. Their literature review revealed that the impact of tourism can be analysed from different perspectives: economic, social, cultural, and environmental. Firstly, the economic impact of tourism has commonly been viewed as a positive economic force, although it can be both positive and negative. With respect to the positive economic impact of tourism, the evidence suggests that tourism can help improve the standard of living (Tosun, 2002), and increase investment, as well as business activity. In regards to the negative impact of tourism, the evidence suggests that property taxes tend to increase as a result of tourism, with the price of goods and services increasing (Weaver & Lawton,

2001), and with the price of land increasing too.

Secondly, there is the social perspective on tourism impact, which can be both positive and negative. Focusing on the negative impact of tourism, studies have shown that communities that are in the growth stage of the tourism development cycle experience traffic congestion problems, crowdedness in public areas, and other social problems (Upchurch & Teivance, 2000). The evidence also suggests that tourism contributes to such social ills as begging, gambling, drug trafficking, and prostitution, as well as the uprooting of traditional society, and the causing of deterioration in the traditional culture (Chen, 2000; Andereck et al., 2005). In contrast, evidence exists that support the notion that tourism can have a positive social impact. For example, studies have shown that tourism brings about additional opportunities regarding the upgrading of such facilities as outdoor recreation facilities, parks, and roads, thus reducing crowdedness at theatres, cinemas, concerts, and athletic events (Gunn & Var, 2002).

Thirdly, there is the cultural perspective on tourism impact, both positive and negative. Focusing on the negative impact in this regard, some tourism scholars have argued that tourism is a "culture exploiter" (Spanou, 2007). Tourism has frequently been criticised for disrupting traditional cultural structures and behavioural patterns (Vargas-Sánchez, Porrás-Bueno & Plaza-Mejía, 2011). Looking on the bright side, tourism has also been viewed as a means of revitalising cultures, where dying customs have been rejuvenated for the tourists (Wang, Fu, Cecil & Avgoustis, 2006). Tosun (2002) found that the cultural impact varied, based on the residents' social relationships with tourists, and concluded that regional differences in the social relationship might be related to the residents' level of education, their ability to communicate with the tourists, and their image of the international tourist.

Lastly, there is the environmental perspective on tourism impact, both

positive and negative. Kim et al. (2013) assert that studies of the environmental impact of tourism focus on tourism development, stress, and preservation. With regard to the positive impact, some believe that tourism helps create a greater awareness of the need to preserve the environment than there might otherwise have been, by means of capturing its natural beauty for tourist purposes, and by means of increasing investments in the environmental infrastructure of the host country (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011).

Tourism is also thought to be a relatively clean industry, with fewer pollution problems than other types of industry (for example, manufacturing) tend to have. The relative cleanliness of the industry helps improve the physical appearance of the community and its surroundings (Weaver & Lawton, 2001). However, others believe that tourism causes environmental pollution, the destruction of natural resources, the degradation of vegetation, and the depletion of wildlife (Upchurch & Teivance, 2000; Toh, Khan & Koh, 2001).

Problem statement

After independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's tourism source markets were mainly Eurocentric. However, after the controversial land reform programme took place in 2000, the European Union (UN) imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe (Mutenga, 2011). Consequently, tourist arrivals plummeted to unprecedented levels (Mhizha, Mandebvu & Muzondo, 2012). In a bid to revive the ailing industry, in 2005, the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) devised a new Tourism Master Plan, in terms of which they adopted a 'high volume, low value' strategy that targeted the Far East, and China in particular. Consequently, tourist arrivals have been on the upsurge, with new tourism developments catering for the burgeoning source markets (Mutenga, 2011).

However, to date, the residents' perceptions towards the impacts of

tourism development in Victoria Falls are unknown (Mhizha et al., 2012). Various scholars note that it is common for tourism planners and decision-makers to omit, or to devalue, other tourism impacts, opting to focus on the economic impacts of tourism activity, rather than on recognising the residents as part of the consultation and decision-making processes involved (Haley, Snaith & Miller, 2005).

Tourism policymakers tend to hide the negative impacts of tourism from the host communities, and they largely strive to develop the industry at all costs, so as to solve chronic macroeconomic problems, and so as to maximise the interests for a small number of local people (Tosun, 2002).

As such, a study assessing residents' perceptions towards the impacts of tourism development on Victoria Falls has been visualised. The results of this study are aimed at helping the tourism industry stakeholders to understand how the residents in Victoria Falls perceive the benefits and disadvantages of tourism, because of the potential hostile response to tourists if a balance is not achieved. The results would also help national tourism policymakers to support, or to redefine, policy.

Research objectives

The primary objective of this study was to determine the residents' perceptions towards the impacts of tourism development on Victoria Falls. In order to achieve the primary objective, the following secondary objectives were formulated:

- to study the perceptions of the Victoria Falls residents towards tourism development, particularly in terms of the environmental, cultural, social and economic impacts generated by the activity; and
- to deliver some recommendations, based on the findings, and suggestions for further research.

Research methodology

Research strategy

In this study, the researchers employed the questionnaire technique to gather data to fulfil the study's objectives. According to Veal (2011), a case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context. Consequently, given the study focus, such case study approach was adopted incorporating the quantitative technique.

Justification of case study area

The town of Victoria Falls lies on the southern bank of the Zambezi River, at the western end of the falls in the province of Matabeleland North in Zimbabwe (ZTA, 2009) (See Figure 1). The town is named after the famous falls which has been acknowledged globally as the largest curtain of falling water in the world, hence one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The town is home to superb wildlife safaris, a rich culture, and friendly citizens (Rogerson & Visser, 2011), which makes it a haven for tourists.

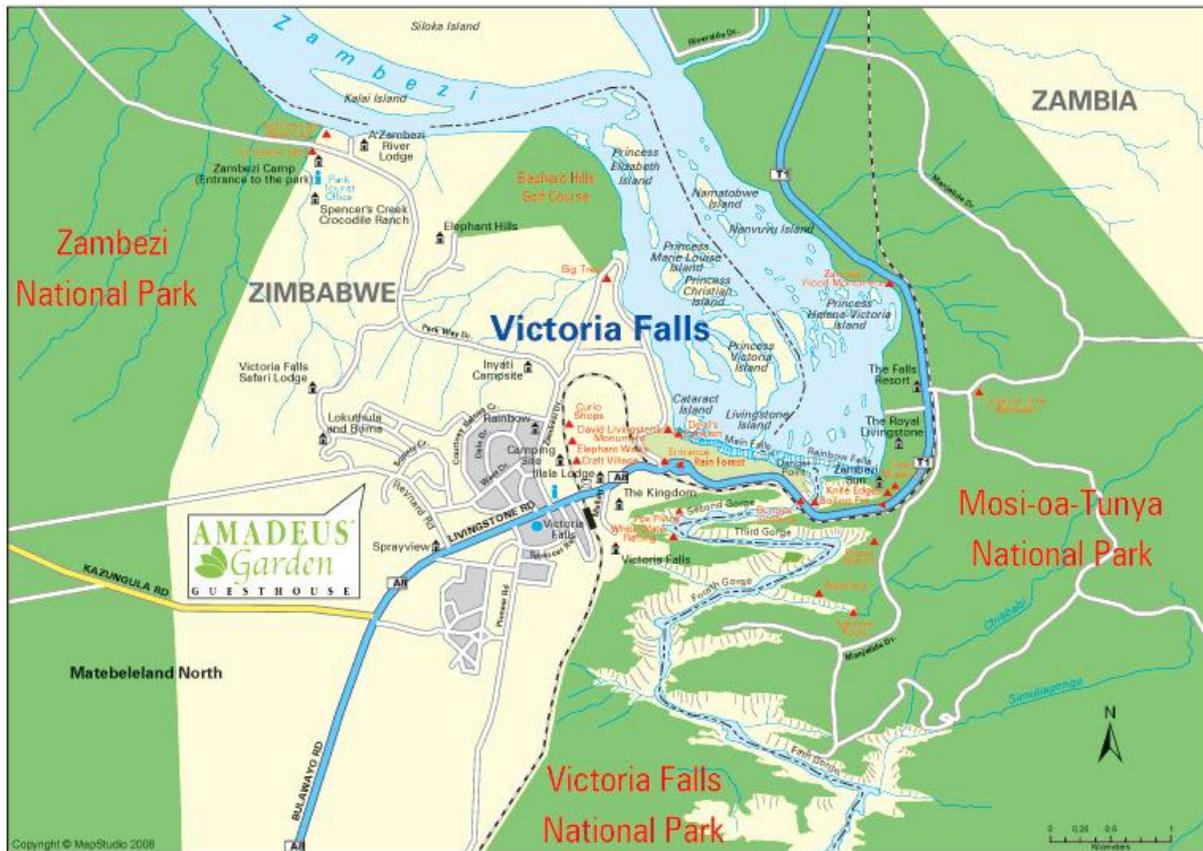


Figure 1: Map of Zimbabwe and the geographical location of Victoria Falls.

Source: <http://www.amadeusgarden.com/Resources/VicFallsMapA-Garden1.jpg>

Victoria Falls is predominantly urban in nature, with it being known to provide employment to many of the local inhabitants through tourism (ZTA, 2009). The ZTA (2009) further claims that the geographical location of Victoria Falls as a tourist destination, is ideal in so far as contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction among the residents goes, due to the attractions that are in and around it. According to Mutana and Zinyemba (2013), the neighbourhood of the Hwange National Park to the south-east, and of Zambia to the west to north-west, promotes long stays by tourists. Many scholars highlight the fact that the town offers opportunities for the undertaking of a great number of activities, including bungee jumping, swinging on the gorge swing, abseiling, rafting, sightseeing, elephant-back trails, and walking with cheetahs. Indeed, it is the best tourism spot in Zimbabwe, being flanked as it is, by the fascinating Zambezi

River, where all sorts of adventure – both soft and hard – are carried out at full kilter (United Nations, 2013).

Hence, the potential of the area to make a meaningful contribution to the economy, and the favourable weather that tends to prevail in the area, attracted thriving human settlement (Nyaruwata, Mhizha & Mandebvu, 2013). However, the ownership of tourism in the town has drawn much attention from many Afrocentric scholars, who have shown that the local residents' concerns, values, voices, and platforms as hosts have often been neglected in the past. The majority (75%) of successful businesses are foreign-owned, resulting in high profit expatriation and leakages (Muchapondwa & Pimhidzai, 2011). However, although profit movement appears to be a far-fetched idea, the failure of tourism developers to involve the local residents at grassroots level in the decision-making

and planning concerned still remains a big challenge, in terms of the development context (Mkono, 2011). Therefore this article considers that, conducting an assessment of tourism impacts on the host community might further justify how the local residents have been undermined, in every aspect, in regard to the resources that they own as hosts, without sufficient emphasis being placed on how they could be involved in the development concerned.

Data gathering technique: Questionnaire

The questionnaire was informed by the variables impacting on tourism, as they are cited in the literature review. The research instrument consisted of three parts, of which all contained close-ended questions. The first part of the questionnaire contained five questions. The questions focused on the respondents' demographic characterisation, in terms of their residence status with respect to Victoria Falls, the length of time that they had lived in Victoria Falls, as well as their mother tongue, occupation, and age. The fifth question dealt with the respondents' perceptions on whether tourism has had more negative or positive impacts on Victoria Falls, based on 'true/ false' answers. The second part of the questionnaire had one question that was based on 29 variables or statements informed by the literature.

A five-point Likert scale was used. Since each point in the Likert scale had a descriptor, a fully anchored rating scale (Johnson & Christensen, 2004) was applied. The five response alternatives were: (1) significantly worsen; (2) worsen somewhat; (3) neutral; (4) improve somewhat; and (5) significantly improve. The respondents' answers were considered to be favourable when the values were equal or above 3.5, and unfavourable when they were below 2.5. Values between 2.5 and 3.4 corresponded to the neutral perceptions of the respondents.

The last part of the questionnaire contained two questions. The questions were aimed at knowing the general opinion on tourism at Victoria Falls, and the levels of involvement of the respondents in the tourism activity planning. For that purpose, questions requiring dichotomous or categorical answers were used.

Population, sampling procedure and data analysis

Victoria Falls residents constituted the targeted population in the study. The sample size was drawn from a total population of 33 710 people (ZimStats, 2014), with the sample size concerned being based on Isaacs and Michael's (1981:193) table, which allows to determine how a randomly chosen sample from a given finite population should be done. According to the table, Isaacs and Michael (1981) postulate that if the population size (N) has a 95% level of confidence, the sample size (S) proportion would be within 5% of the population value, which enables all samples to be drawn at random. A sample size of 378 was therefore drawn from the whole population in Victoria Falls. The team of trained fieldworkers distributed the questionnaire to Victoria Falls residents using a spatially based stratified random technique. The researchers obtained 607 returned valid and usable questionnaires, which amounted to a well over 100% response rate. The data were captured and analysed, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 19.0, which allows for the generation of percentages and descriptive statistics (i.e. mean scores, and the standard deviation).

Findings

Reliability and validity

Reliability in quantitative studies can be defined as the extent to which test scores are accurate, consistent or stable (Struwig

& Stead, 2001). Taking into account that McMillan and Schumacher (2006) regard the use of the Cronbach α coefficient as being the most appropriate method for investigating the reliability of survey research where a range of possible answers exists, and there is not only a choice between two items. Consequently, the internal reliability of the index was tested using this measure. A Cronbach's α coefficient of higher than seven is acceptable (Pietersen & Maree, 2007). The Cronbach's α coefficient for the total index was high (0.8791), while moderate to high reliability coefficients were calculated for environmental impacts (0.8619), cultural impacts (0.8171), social

impacts (0.8016), economic impacts (0.8244), and residents' perceptions (0.7815). The high alpha values indicate good internal consistency among the items. Pietersen and Maree (2007) describe validity as the extent to which an empirical instrument "measures what it is supposed to measure". In order to ensure content and face validity (Babbie & Mouton, 2008), a literature study was undertaken, and the survey instrument was scrutinised by academic and tourism experts before being finalised.

Results and discussion

Table 1: Gender composition of residents' perceptions, giving the means and standard deviations

Gender	n	%	Perceptions	
			Mean	SD
Male	278	45.80	4.17	0.64
Female	329	54.20	4.08	0.77
Total	607	100.00	-	-

In this study, of the 607 respondents, 45.80% (n=278) were of the male gender, whereas 54.20% (n=329) were of the female gender. The former had the highest mean in the perceptions (4.17) regarding tourism impacts.

Residents' perceptions towards the impacts of tourism development

Table 2 shows the results for the residents' perceptions towards the impacts of tourism development. The table also reflects the means, the standard deviations, and the t-values for residents' perceptions towards the impacts of tourism development.

Table 2: Means and standard deviations for residents' perceptions towards tourism development

Impacts		Perceptions		
		Mean	SD	t-values
Environmental impacts				
V1	Noise pollution	3.51	1.14	1.31
V2	Air pollution	3.88	1.12	1.57
V3	Soil pollution	3.91	1.04	1.26
V4	Environment and ecosystems protection	2.36	1.01	7.51*

V5	Movement of people and vehicles	3.91	1.07	2.32
V6	Water and energy supply	3.86	1.13	1.06
V7	Management of protected areas	3.93	1.03	2.41
V8	Cleaning and hygiene of public spaces	4.41	0.99	1.85
	Cultural impacts			
V9	Preservation of sites with historical, cultural and aesthetic value	1.78	0.73	6.06*
V10	Changing lifestyles of the population	3.89	1.09	1.01
V11	Traditional local activities	4.92	0.62	1.30
V12	Local art production	3.97	1.13	1.62
V13	Traditional cuisine	4.07	0.68	1.48
	Social impacts			
V14	Drug use and trafficking	1.82	0.94	6.33*
V15	Alcohol consumption	3.64	1.09	1.89
V16	Criminality	2.69	1.03	7.69*
V17	Vandalism	3.51	1.15	1.81
V18	Prostitution	1.09	0.80	8.13*
V19	Moral values	1.38	0.71	7.60*
V20	Population stress	3.41	1.06	1.23
V21	Quality of public services	4.15	0.89	2.35
V22	Leisure alternatives	4.78	0.74	1.49
V23	Standard of living of the population	4.51	1.20	1.51
	Economic impacts			
V24	Price of land	1.29	0.85	6.01*
V25	Price of houses	1.85	0.67	7.41*
V26	Price of basic staples	2.23	0.91	8.25*
V27	Infrastructures	4.28	0.83	1.08
V28	Personal income	4.02	0.61	2.46
V29	Employment opportunities	4.71	0.70	1.69
	Overall mean for 29 attributes	3.37	0.89	-

Notes: *What impact do you think the current level of tourism development has on the following issues? Scale: 1 – significantly worsen, 2 – worsen somewhat, 3 – neutral, 4 – improve somewhat, 5 – significantly improve; SD – standard deviation $p < 0.05$

Residents' perceptions towards the impacts of tourism development were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. An initial glance at the data reveals that the overall mean score for

the perceptions items was 3.37, indicating the existence of the rather neutral perceptions of the residents regarding the impacts of tourism (Spanou, 2007). The highest perception score was noted for “traditional local activities” (4.92), whereas the lowest perception score was noted for “prostitution” (1.09).

The perceptions toward environmental and cultural impacts were not statistically significant, apart from for the negative impact of “environment and ecosystems protection” (V4) and “preservation of sites with historical, cultural and aesthetic value” (V9). Conversely, the perception of social impacts can be seen to have been much clearer for the Victoria Falls residents. The impacts concerning “drug use” (V14), “trafficking” (V16), “criminality” (V16), “prostitution” (V18) and “[decay of] moral values” (V19) were perceived as being negative. Regarding the positive perception of the social impacts, those that stand out relate to “leisure alternatives” (V22) and “the standard of living of the population” (V23). The results obtained synchronise with Mósso’s (2013) findings that the attitudes toward environmental and cultural impacts were not statistically significant, except for the negative impact of “environment and ecosystems protection” and “preservation of sites with historical, cultural and aesthetic value”.

The economic impacts were found to have been clearly perceived by respondents. The main positive impacts were: “personal income” (V27), “infrastructure” (V28) and “employment opportunities” (V29). The negative impacts concern the general increase of prices: “land” (V24), “housing” (V25) and “basic staples” (V26). The results are consistent with the findings made by Kim et al. (2013), who found that the negative impacts of tourism on residents largely consisted in the general increase in the prices of land and housing. Furthermore, using the paired samples t-test, the results indicated that 20 tourism attributes were not statistically significant, meaning that the attributes did not require more attention than at present in order to improve the residents’ perceptions

towards the tourism impacts. Only nine attributes, namely “environment and ecosystems protection” (V4), “preservation of sites with historical, cultural and aesthetic value” (V9), “drug use and trafficking” (V14), “criminality” (V16), “prostitution” (V18), “moral values” (V19), “price of land” (V24), “price of houses” (V25), and “price of basic staples” (V26), were found to be statistically significant (Sig. 0.1529). This meant that the attributes in question require more attention in terms of changing the negative perceptions of residents towards tourism.

The study findings are consistent with those that were obtained in previous studies by Upchurch and Teivance (2000) and by Toh et al. (2001), in demonstrating a positive relationship between the impact of tourism and the residents’ perceptions, meaning that, as residents increasingly perceive the positive social impact of tourism, their sense of satisfaction with the general feeling of community well-being tends to increase. In the studies of Gunn and Var (2002) and of Deery et al. (2012) the residents in the community agreed that shopping facilities that had primarily been built to serve the tourists had also come to serve the residents, that services of all kinds that were offered to tourists, in turn came to serve the local residents, and that tourism had generated the impetus to improve and to develop the community infrastructure further than it might otherwise have been.

Recommendations

Since the negative impacts of tourism on the “environment and ecosystems protection” and “the preservation of sites with historical, cultural and aesthetic value” can be seen in the current study, the researchers recommend that Zimbabwe establish the maximum number of tourists that Victoria Falls can sustain per annum without risking the erosion of the environment and ecosystems. The country might consider reviewing its ‘high volume, low value’ strategy, in favour of the implementation of a ‘low volume, high value’ strategy that is aimed at preserving

the national environment and its ecosystems.

Furthermore, so as to combat drug use and trafficking, criminality, prostitution, and the decay of moral values, the researchers recommend that the existing border control be strengthened, so as to keep drugs out. Tourism may be a vehicle for drug trafficking and abuse, and for other crimes, because of the dependence of the industry on attracting visitors to a destination. The presence of tourists from various countries provides fertile ground for the trafficking of drugs, as some tourists may be drug pushers and barons in their home countries (Mhizha et al., 2012).

In line with another vein of thought, Zimbabwe has a high rate of HIV infection, with tourism presenting a number of health risks to a destination, including HIV (Mhizha et al., 2012). The possibility of some international tourists visiting in order to engage in sex tourism cannot be ruled out, especially given the high levels of poverty prevailing in the country. Therefore, the researchers recommend that the leading players in the tourism industry invest some resources in HIV campaigns targeting the tourists and local residents.

As Victoria Falls was at one time listed among the Seven Wonders of the World, it is positioned as a world-class attraction (Mhizha et al., 2012). The effect of this position is that the prices for accommodation and other recreational facilities in the holiday resort may be beyond the reach of locals in particular, and of Zimbabweans of modest means in general. Therefore, the researchers recommend the government implement price caps on the land and housing, and price controls on the basic staples, so that the locals can have access to, and benefit from, the tourism facilities that are available in Victoria Falls.

Conclusion

This article focuses on the impacts of tourism development in Zimbabwe.

Specifically, the study aimed to unearth the resident's perceptions, using Victoria Falls as a case study. The article has shown that, Victoria Falls residents seemed to be aware of the negative impacts caused by tourism, as well as of the economic benefits brought about by the activity. Apparently, this trade-off still allows for a moderate level of support to be granted to tourist activity development, considering the current intensity of tourism in the country. However, some signs of discomfort were evident, regarding the strong economic dependence on tourism, to the fact that prostitution and some other social ills are now rife, and the prices of houses, land and basic staples are now beyond the reach of the local residents. Consequently, the researchers of this study hold the view that, over time, if the planners and decision-makers do not take measures in order to remedy these shortcomings, the local residents will tend to experience increasing levels of wear and saturation.

The result might well be a decline in the level of support that is granted to the development of tourism activity. The implications for the study are that the national tourism policymakers should redefine the existing policy framework, so as to ensure that the factors currently impacting negatively on tourism development are addressed. This may allow for the re-establishment of a vibrant tourism sector in the country, with the ability to satisfy tourists, while contributing positively to the livelihood of local citizens

Limitations and future research

Despite the importance of this study, it is not free of limitations. Firstly, the research was based on the residents' perceptions towards the impacts of tourism development on Victoria Falls only. Caution is, therefore, required when generalising the findings of this study to other geographic areas of Zimbabwe, considering that a replication of this study in other resort towns or other geographic areas may reveal varying levels of perceptions despite a representative sample. Secondly, this study examined

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