

# Tourism in the SADC region and challenges facing the youth market: the Mozambican experience

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## Abstract

This paper examines the challenges that face the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in promoting tourism between its member states. The paper argues that tourism should be used as a catalyst to increase the socio-economic well-being and improve the standards of living within communities in member states. However, challenges, specifically in relation to policies, poor infrastructure, inadequate information and signage, language differences and lack of awareness and marketing hinder the growth of cross border tourism in the region, therefore defeating the goals of Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (RETOSA). Cross border movement gained popularity through migration of labour to countries such as South Africa but not much research has been conducted. Little attention has been given to movement of youth tourism market in different SADC member states. This paper presents a qualitative and quantitative case study of youth tourism market in Mozambique. The findings present data generated from surveys conducted with 19 Tourism students from Eastern Cape Province, South Africa who detailed the experiences gained from a field study in Mozambique. The findings indicated that despite the adoption and implementation of strategies, policies and initiatives to enhance tourism development in the region, several challenges such as policies versus implementation or mismatch of the latter, continue to affect the youth tourism market.

**Keywords:** cross border movement, challenges, socio-economic, policies, migration, youth market

## Introduction

Cross border movement in the SADC arguably emerged a hundred and fifty years ago. However, this was due to search for employment opportunities in areas such as South African mines, rather than travelling for tourism purposes. These migrants came from countries including Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia to name a few (Crush, Williams & Peberdy, 2005). Other migrants looked for work in Namibia and Botswana. Today, the focus in this region is the promotion of tourism development to address poverty and inequalities which resulted from colonialism and apartheid policies. SADC was established in 1982 with the aim to develop and promote the region as a single, but multi-faceted tourism destination internationally and locally. This aimed to encourage economic cooperation in general among its member states (Madava, 1999). According to the Hospitality and Tourism Association of Botswana (2006), tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors and foreign exchange earner in the SADC region. There is a belief that tourism has a potential to create jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities in this region. Although tourism brings so much hope to SADC member states, there is an imbalance in tourism growth which differs from one country to the other. Hence, among all member states, South Africa is the most visited country, followed by Botswana. Other SADC countries such as Namibia, Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Madagascar are on maturing stage in terms of tourism development. Nevertheless, tourism, coupled with the development of infrastructure and eco-tourism is expected to grow in this region. Some of the programme of actions that SADC agreed with the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) includes the harmonisation of the

classification of hotel standards. Mozambique, for instance, was reported to have a low quality and quantity of accommodation as well as recreational facilities (Mozambique National Tourism Strategy (1995-1999). Perhaps such collaboration will assist Mozambique's hotel industry to improve. Moreover, the region looked at the development of Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA) to replace the traditional national accounts that failed to capture the growth and contribution of tourism. Besides this, SADC focuses on the development of research capacity in tourism, increase participation of Small Medium Micro Enterprises (SMME's), marginalised communities, youth and women in the tourism industry as well as improving quality, competitiveness and standards of services and infrastructure of tourism industry for the entire region (United Nations' Development Programme (UNDP), 2007).

In order to promote the region as a tourist destination, SADC established RETOSA in 1997. Although it is almost two decades since the inception of this regional marketing body, RETOSA is facing many challenges such as an increase of HIV/AIDS infection in the region, which in some cases results in few active people to participate in the tourism industry. The area is also a long haul destination for tourists, as such the region has less chances to attract international tourists that have limited travelling time period. There is also lack of international flights to other member states, especially during the peak season (Radebe, 2006). Since national markets for air transport remain small, SADC member states signed the Protocol on Transport, Communication and Meteorology, acknowledging the importance of air transport in serving the interests of the region and agreeing to support a safe, reliable, and efficient industry based on the International Civil Aviation Organization Standards and Recommended Practices. By signing this Protocol, member states commit to cooperate to ensure that regionally- owned airlines remain competitive in a liberalized, commercial market. Therefore, the Protocol urges member states to invest in improving human resources and technical capacity in the region, to enable privatized aviation to succeed on a commercial level (SADC, 2012). However, at the launch of new Mozambique national brand in 2009, it was announced that the country was planning to open skies in order to reduce fares on key air routes, thus making air transport more accessible (Chapman. 2009).

Although this sounds good, for those who travel by road; there is a highly poor road network generally between SADC regions, as well as long waiting periods at the border posts. Despite all these problems encountered by the region, there are some developments that take place to address these issues. RETOSA was expected to establish a working group to look into coming out with a tourism visa protocol – UNIVISA - to facilitate easy movement for international tourists and abolish or waive visa exemption for regional tourists. The working group consists of Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. At the moment some countries have bi- or tri-lateral agreements to ease the flow of tourists at immigration and customs, national parks and cross-borders of participating countries' border posts, so long as travellers use the same border posts for entry and exit (Vanhenkelom & Bertelsman-Smith, 2016). This idea was proposed almost a decade ago. Other challenges facing the region include the image portrayed by the media which creates a negative perception of the region, and the perception resulting that the region is malaria endemic.

Among the endless objectives that are outlined by SADC, the region also focuses on increasing the participation of youth in the tourism industry. A SADC country such as South Africa encourages the youth to take part in the tourism industry. The Sho't Left Campaign aimed to promote domestic travel among South African youth. The South Africa White paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa (1996) supports youth travel market and emphasises that the tourism stakeholders should motivate the youth to travel by providing special prices, accommodation establishments such as youth hostels, summer

camping and exchange programmes. The government of Mozambique also urges the tourism industry to develop and promote youth tourism in the country. A government paper calls on Mozambicans to instil tourist culture among the youth while promoting the country's tourism (Republic of Mozambique Country Paper, 2006). In addition, the country promotes youth camping and encourages youth associations to spend their free time in the camping facilities. The youth market's flexibility in the choice of accommodation provide an opportunity for SMMEs to establish small scale accommodation businesses such as backpackers, youth camps and hostels. According to Minciu and Moisa (2009), young travellers consider travel cost as the most important factor for their choice of tourist destination, while choosing a familiar place is the least of their worries. However, *Tourism and Development: Agendas for Action* (2007) reports that in Mozambique, low quality tourism accommodation establishments, specifically, backpacking, is not well welcomed. As a result Gilberto (2004) reports that youth market especially backpacking is not present in Mozambican islands such as Bazaruto. This paper is therefore seeking to unpack the challenges that youth market faces while travelling in the SADC region.

### **The concept of youth tourism market in the SADC region**

Internationally, the youth are considered an essential active group in tourism since they travel for varied reasons including business and leisure (The World Bank, 2014). Travel Manitoba 2014-2017 Business Plan considers the youth market as the largest segment internationally (Travel Manitoba, 2014). Although youth tourism market is well represented globally, there have not been a widely accepted definition of youth travel market (Taiyab, 2005). However, The City of Cape Town (2008) explains youth tourism as travelling of young people at the age of thirty and less outside their family homes not for business nor visiting family and friends. It also involves, volunteer tourism and edu-tourism. Keyser (2004) explains edu-tourism as travel in which learning occurs within the normal structure, in which students attend schools in another country to learn language and culture of such destination. According to Taiyab (2005), youth tourism is divided into two categories, namely; group travel and independent travel. The group travel is further broken down into subgroups, school-based youth travel and non-school-based travel youth group. The school-based travel is a travel that is supported by school's syllabus to undertake activities that pertain to studies while students are accompanied by the lecturer or teacher. The non-school based youth group travel is organised by groups outside the school for sports or youth clubs. In Australia, backpacking is considered as youth tourism where the youth make use of cheap accommodation, meeting other people, organising travel schedules and long holidays. This backpacker travel pattern shows that youth tourism contributes to the economic importance of Australia's tourism industry (Locker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). According to Thrane (2015), factors such as length of stay, type of accommodation, trip destination and time of booking by youth tourism, contribute towards expenditure in tourism. The City of Cape Town's (2008) study on backpacking and youth tourism states that there has been a significant drop globally in international tourist arrivals in 2008, which then increases competition among tourist destinations. The study suggests that countries should work hard to get tourists in their shores, especially the low cost market. Therefore, proactive marketing is necessary such as targeting the niche sectors, such as, youth tourism. Mozambique National Tourism Strategy (2010) acknowledges that the promotion of tourism in the country needs to capitalise on targeting niche market such as backpackers and youth market in general in order for the country to gain a competitive edge.

Youth tourism is becoming popular and more lucrative market and cannot be ignored any more by tourism marketing agencies. This group travels more often, explore a lot of destinations, while staying longer at a destination (City of Cape Town, 2008). Taiyab (2005) mentions that the importance of youth tourism has been the priority of policy makers and researchers and it

was cemented at the first WTO conference of youth tourism held in New Delhi in 1991. According to a new research by World Youth Student and Education Travel Confederation (WYSE) there has been an increase of interests in young people especially aged 16 and 24 to take a year gap between their schools and the start of university or work (Richards, 2007). The youth market is known to be more flexible, have high level of cross cultural interactions and more free time for travelling. Young travellers are interested in adventure, action, fun and excitement. The youth market is more informed and relies mostly on internet and social media platforms to search for information than their friends and families. These platforms have become effective tools for African destinations to increase their marketing initiatives (Africa Tourism Monitor, 2013). This market likes to interact with locals to learn local culture, language and experience new things. Most importantly, this market often guarantees repeat business and seeks visits to other destinations as well. If a region such as SADC introduces marketing and development strategies that aim at this market, the region may receive an increase of tourist arrivals in the short- and long-term. Currently this market is overlooked by most members of the region.

According to Gilberto (2004), this market may experience difficulties in engaging with local communities as the tourism industry in Mozambique had never incorporated the locals in the tourism development or encouraged locals to learn English as their second language or given them a chance to become shareholders, yet there is a potential for growth in tourism SMMEs such as artisans, and community products (Gilberto, 2004; Tourism and Development: Agendas for Action, 2007). As a matter of fact, the country acknowledges that English is considered as a tourism language yet most locals are unable to access training in English, which hinders the local community from interacting easily with visitors (Tourism and Development: Agendas for Action, 2007). According to Correia (2011), youth tourism is gaining popularity among international scholarship. The author encourages language travel among the youth, and this should be supported by governments. Perhaps the problem is lack of recognition on youth tourism. Richards (2007) states that although youth tourism is the industry's fastest growing sector, only one-third of countries have policy that directed at the youth market while less than this function has a marketing policy.

In contrast Mozambican government established the youth tourism policy which aimed at encouraging youth to exchange experiences, culture, and sport while camping away from their homes (Republic of Mozambique Country Paper, 2006). Although tourism was established in 1950s in Mozambique, its growth and development has been hampered by political unrest which resulted in wars. Firstly, it was war for independence in 1964-1974 and secondly destabilisation war which took place in 1976 to 1992. The wars resulted in a major damage to infrastructure such as roads, airports, hotels and railway system (Gilberto, 2004). Moreover, Mozambique National Tourism Strategy (1995-1999) reports that the service offered at airports and borders of Mozambique, particularly, was poor due to limited number of check-in points and personnel. Moreover, poor development of these facilities hinders the growth of tourism in Mozambique. In the case that the youth market experienced poor service delivery generally, this may lead to poor repeat business as this market may not encourage their friends and family members to visit the region.

## **Methodology**

The research technique used was a qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Qualitative research methodology assisted in obtaining opinions and views of the youth market, while quantitative methodology provided the researchers with quantifiable inputs and outputs. For reliability and validity, the research instruments used included a mix of semi-structured questionnaires, unstructured interviews and participant observation. The validity

and the reliability of any research project depends to a large extent on the appropriateness of the instruments used. Whatever procedure one uses to collect data, it must be critically examined to check the extent to which it is likely to produce the expected results (Annum, 2015). These research techniques were used to explore the youth tourism market which is becoming very popular and lucrative but becoming a missed opportunity for some countries in the SADC region, including Mozambique. Perhaps this is because Mozambique, to some appreciable extent, has failed to create conducive atmosphere to take advantage of this tourism sector.

### **Population and sampling aspects of the study**

The research survey was conducted in May 2014 to ascertain the impact of youth tourism market in promoting tourism between the 15-member states of Southern African Development Community (SADC). The population for this study was derived specifically from nineteen (19) students of Baccalaureus Technologiae (B-Tech) degree in Tourism Management at Walter Sisulu University in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, who undertook a ten-day educational tour to Mozambique as part of their Tourism Management degree programme requirements. The respondents, whose average age was 24 years, fall within the youth age bracket, and they were travelling out of South Africa to Mozambique for the first time as visitors. The United Nations' General Assembly, by its resolution 50/81 in 1995 that adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond, defined youth as the age cohort of 15-24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States (United Nations, 1995). The authors of this article who were part of the tour, conducted this survey to establish also the general impression of the students as youth tourists in Mozambique and their thoughts on youth tourism as a potential niche market within the tourism industry.

Purposive sampling research method was utilised to evaluate the students' travelling experience in Mozambique and their knowledge and understanding of tourism development and marketing. Semi-structured questionnaires were given to the nineteen students that undertook the trip, as an inquiry document containing systematically compiled and well organized series of questions intended to elicit information which will provide insight into the nature of the problem under study (Annum, 2015). The authors used participant observation also as an instrument to measure the subjects' (the respondents) general behaviour in their interaction with their hosts, while keeping notes of the attributes of these subjects that were being researched. The data collected from the 19 respondents was transcribed and analysed using computer software, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 22, to assist the researchers in generating frequencies on tourism awareness, disposable financial resources, communication, accessibility and signage and health and other related issues concomitant with their travel experiences in Mozambique. These five overlapping themes that came out in the findings will now be discussed in the following section.

### **Findings**

From the findings it is apparent that the 15-member Southern African Development Community is doing its utmost to integrate tourism development in the region for the benefit of regional development. The establishment of Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (RETOSA) as SADC body responsible for the development and promotion of tourism and regional destination marketing across the 15 Southern African countries, was a move in the right direction. However, its member states' commitment to regional integration in tourism is very low and varies from one country to another. Manasoe's (2009) evaluation of member-states' commitment to RETOSA, quantifies South Africa's commitment at 20.6 per cent,

followed by Zimbabwe at 12.9 per cent and Mozambique, third at 7.9 per cent (Manasoe, 2009).

Although RETOSA is a well-established tourism development and marketing body for the region, SADC region has a number of common challenges that hamper the development, growth and marketing of tourism in the region. For instance, the youth tourism which is made up of a market that is very flexible and eager to interact with locals and experience community-based tourism and could be promoted as a niche market for regional tourism, is becoming yet another missed opportunity. Radebe (2005) believes that adequate tourism education and training of the general public constitute the bedrock for the development and integration of tourism in the region. However, Chingono and Nakana (2009) think that challenges such as lack of infrastructure, financial and technical resources are a major problem in the area. These factors pose a serious threat to the development of tourism, in general, and youth tourism, in particular, as a niche market in the SADC region. For young people to be able to travel within the region, all these tourism development constraints would have to be addressed. The 19 respondents were asked to identify the major hurdles that constrained their visit to Mozambique, and a number of challenges were put forward and these will be covered in the following discussions.

### **Lack of tourism awareness**

The students were asked if they have ever visited any other SADC countries before their visit to Mozambique. The results indicated that only 16 per cent had visited other countries, out of which 67 per cent visited Botswana and 33 per cent mentioned Swaziland. A total of 84% had never visited any of the SADC countries. A question was posed to the respondents to indicate the type of accommodation they used during their stay in Mozambique, based on information from the media and Internet. The results indicated that out of 16 per cent of respondents that had travelled to other SADC countries, other than Mozambique, 66 per cent of them stayed in motels and the other 34 per cent in self-catering apartments. All the 19 surveyed students (100%) were visiting Mozambique for the first time. The respondents were asked to indicate how they got to know about Mozambique as a tourism destination and to rate the level of information that was provided to them. Most of the students 72 per cent specified the Internet, while 28 per cent mentioned other media. Majority of the respondents, 62 per cent highlighted that the information received was good. The use of Internet and other social platforms including the media has become a major source of information among the youth in the SADC region, as clearly supported by the current results. The respondents depended on these sources for information to gain knowledge on Mozambique. This is not surprising at all as it confirms Richards' (2007) assertion that the youth market generally is more informed by the Internet. This means the youth market regards the internet as a reliable source of information. However, this poses a challenge to the SADC region to train and make Information and Communication Technology (ICT) easily accessible to the youth. Perhaps other SADC countries might not have taken advantage of ICT to market their tourism products hence the less popular these countries are among the youth market

Since it was the first time the respondents were travelling outside their home countries, they mentioned such as financial problems, limited travel opportunities, and lack of exposure and obliviousness of the international travel demands. This created a lot of anxiety among them since they did not know what was required of them in terms of international travel protocols, and all the regulations to be followed before, during and after the trip. Due to the nonchalant attitude of youth tourism market towards compliance with regulations to detail and understanding of international or regional policies, about 16.7 per cent of the respondents wished they had not travelled. The problems encountered at the points of entry and the

bureaucracy at immigration and customs offices, were unbelievably surreal. It was trouble-free going through Swaziland from South Africa, through Golela on the north-eastern border of South Africa into Lavumisa, the south-eastern border post of Swaziland and through Lomahasha Border Post, on the north eastern border of Swaziland with Mozambique. The problem was at the Mozambique side of the border, in Namaacha, where, artificial bottlenecks were created by civilians fronting for government officials just to extort money from travellers. These civilians demanded we take insurance on the vehicle they were using, regardless of the fact that the university had a comprehensive insurance on the vehicle and all legal documentation presented to indicate that all international protocol had been observed. The respondents were delayed at the border post unnecessarily for over five hours. An overwhelming 89.5 per cent of the respondents believed that inter-government intervention was very crucial. The remaining 10.5 per cent indicated they were too distraught to even comment on that incident because it was unfair to have been subjected to such inhumane treatment. They were of the opinion that the respective governments should put in place some protocols that could facilitate youth travels between countries. The lack of such protocols caused untold hardships and a great disappointment for SADC regional tourism development.

The respondents were then asked to identify tourist attractions that they were aware of prior to their visit to Mozambique. About 21 per cent indicated Catholic Cathedral, followed by 17.52 per cent for wildlife Museum and 17 per cent of the respondents indicated the beach. A total of 10 per cent of the respondents mentioned none, while 1.06 per cent talked of Kaylun Square, public parks and train station, respectively.

In relation to the country being supposedly renowned for adventure tourism activities, as high as 61.1 per cent disagreed with the statement and only 22.2 per cent supported this statement, and 16.7 per cent were neutral. Contrary to the perception that Mozambique is not an adventure tourism destination, the government has called on the Mozambicans to make available camping facilities for tourism development. This means the potential for adventure tourism exists in Mozambique to complement its cultural tourism offering. The development of adventure tourism and the concomitant facilities will provide a high leverage for Mozambique to capture its fair share of the youth market. According to Adventure Tourism Development Index (ATDI) ranking of developed and developing countries on the principles of sustainable adventure tourism, Botswana is the only country in the high ranking cluster (ATDI, 2015). An approach to developing and marketing tourism in the SADC region, most especially the youth market, needs to be taken into consideration the reality that within the SADC region, each country has its own competitive advantage that needs to be capitalised upon. However, tourism in some areas of the SADC region is still considered underdeveloped. In Mozambique, for example, issues of safety, accessibility, services and facilities, and most importantly signage to attractions were considered to be inadequate and detrimental to tourism development. This is important to take note of, as the youth market is likely to explore new products that may not be safe or even accessible.

The statement that Mozambique is a destination with appealing man-made attractions, such as resorts, international convention centres, and others, was completely rejected by more than half of the respondents (55.5%), while the remaining 44.5 per cent were indifferent to this statement. About 31.3 per cent agreed that Mozambique's beaches provide safe and warm bathing and other marine activities for tourists, 37.5 per cent disagreed and the remaining 31.2 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed. A response to the question as to which attractions offered the respondents maximum enjoyment in Mozambique, most of the respondents (31.8%) indicated that riding on the ferry between the Point and Catembe peninsula was the highlight of their experience in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. About 21.2 per cent chose shopping experience at the flea market; 15.9 per cent enjoyed general shopping; 15.8 per cent

had an awesome experience with the city tours, and the rest, 15.3 per cent, enjoyed socializing at the Point.

Respondents felt that poor education and training could be attributed to the behaviour of some staff at certain destinations. About 15.9 per cent of the respondents felt that some service providers either lacked common etiquette or were plainly rude. This problem is just too worrisome in the sense that there could have been some mitigating factors, such as communication or lack of capacity that created a misunderstanding between them and their hosts. Regardless of the mitigating factors, education and training cannot be taken for granted in an industry that is as dynamic as tourism. Government must ensure that workers and service providers are given much attention in the same way as the other stakeholders because, they ensure that the tourism engine runs smoothly at all times towards the realization of the tourism business development goals (Acheampong, 2015). The workers should be empowered to grow in the industry through training and refresher tourism programmes, and those who prove their mettle should be acknowledged and rewarded with promotion. If possible, workers should be encouraged to be partners in the tourism companies they work for. This will encourage them to develop great interest, as partners, in the growth and development of the business for their own benefit. Employers should extend their social responsibility programmes into the communities from which their employees come and forge good relationships with such communities so that they jealously support and protect those businesses (Acheampong & Tichaawa, 2015; Tseane-Gumbi, 2016). Any unfortunate feeling of discontent that culminates in the perception of lack of etiquette or rudeness is not healthy for tourism development initiative for the country, particular, and the region, as a whole.

Another problem is that there is a dearth of research data to support tourism development in most SADC countries. For instance, Manasoe, 2009, quoting from United Nations' World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Tourism Highlights, (2004-2007) indicates that some of the SADC member states such as Mozambique did not have any data recorded in 2005 and 2006 (Manasoe, 2009). Search for information on the availability and the location of certain tourism products in Mozambique by two of the respondents responsible for the group's logistical needs, was a nightmare. There was no website with a database of what tourism products were available and how to access them. The little data available was either not conclusive enough for easy access or was in Portuguese that could not be understood. If a country like Mozambique, with such a huge potential for tourism development, is to succeed, the government in partnership with all stakeholders will have to work together in developing a solid database of the type of tourism products are available in the country, where they are located, how to access these products and the costs. According to an investigative study in 2008 on backpacking and youth tourism, the City of Cape Town argues that proper research has to be done in order to understand the particular needs, demands and travel patterns within the region (City of Cape Town, 2008).

The last challenge mentioned was the weather. About 10.1 per cent of the respondents complained about the weather. They felt that the local weather was too hostile for any meaningful tourism activities. However, the remaining 89.9 per cent of the respondents felt that the weather was most conducive for marine activities, such as swimming, surfing and fishing. Regardless of their considerations, a natural phenomenon such as the weather is beyond anybody's control. For that matter whatever activities tourists intend to pursue must take into consideration the climatic season and the prevailing weather conditions. Probably, the country's tourism marketing arm, if there is any at all, could study and capitalise on the weather patterns in the development and marketing of the country's tourism resources.

## **Financial constraints**

About 38.6 per cent of the respondents presented financial constraints and affordability of tourism and its related products as one of the major challenges that blighted their experience in Mozambique. The pricing of products seems to place Mozambique out of reach of the youth market, with about 73.7 per cent of them thinking that some products were too expensive and beyond their reach. Only 21.1 per cent felt that the products were affordable; but then as fewer as 5.2 per cent considered products to be cheap. This means majority of the respondents felt that it was too expensive visiting the country. During the visit, all the respondents checked into a hotel. They were asked to indicate their most serious concern in Mozambique. Accommodation was one tourism products that was singled out as the biggest challenge because it was just too expensive and unaffordable, if they were to travel to Mozambique on their own. They were asked if they would have chosen a different type of accommodation rather than a hotel, if they were to travel on their own. About 78 per cent responded on the affirmative that they would look for an alternative because hotels were just too expensive for them, while 11 per cent said 'no' and 'may be' respectively. The respondents were further asked to detail what other related issues would inform their choice of accommodation establishments. About 31.8 per cent indicated affordability as the main consideration for their choice; 26.5 per cent of the respondents indicated that their choice of accommodation would be based on neatness; while 21.2 per cent based their choice on good facilities; and 20.5 per cent centred on the friendliness of staff. The problem of pricy accommodation is exacerbated by the fact that budget hotels, backpacking units, camping facilities and self-catering dormitories that are supposed to be affordable, were seriously limited, and even the few available, were very expensive. Besides the fact that pricing of products was considered to be out of the reach of the youth, the quality of some of the products were below standards and yet very expensive.

A follow up question on pricing of products in Mozambique, yielded some varied responses. About 23.3 per cent were of the opinion that there were a lot of fake products on sale in that country, and the same percentage felt that the products were of low standard in terms of quality. About 18 per cent considered products to be of good quality; the same percentage rated goods to be of satisfactory quality, and 17.4 per cent think there is room for improvement in the quality of products.

## **Communication in English**

Another problem that needs serious attention from the Mozambican government is the level of communication between the hosts and tourists. Communication seems to be a major problem for the youth market, considering the fact that Mozambique is one of the few Lusophone African country surrounded by only Anglophone countries in the mainland SADC region. This tends to affect service delivery to non-Portuguese nationals visiting the country. The researchers found it important to establish the general impressions of respondents with regards to the level of communication and its influence on service delivery and other ancillary facilities and amenities in Mozambique during their stay. Majority of the respondents (68,4%) were disappointed with the level of communication and type of information provided, respectively, at various information centres in Mozambique. This was followed by disappointment on the level of service offered (42.1%) at various attractions they visited. A total of 26.3 per cent mentioned lack of security, followed by poor service level that they received at different public places (21.1%). One respondent commented that they were forced to use some sort of sign language to get what they wanted or look for somebody that could understand some English language for assistance. Perhaps sign language could also be explored by the region for its citizenry. This supports Gilberto's (2004) concern that this youth

tourism market may experience difficulties in engaging with local communities because the tourism industry in Mozambique had never incorporated the locals in the tourism development, or encouraged locals to learn English as their second language, or given them a chance to become shareholders, yet there is a potential for SMMEs (Gilberto, 2004; Tourism and Development: Agendas for Action, 2007). This communication problem is an area that requires government policy intervention. As a matter of fact, the country acknowledges that English is considered as a tourism language, yet most locals are unable to access training in English, which hinders the local community from interacting easily with non-Portuguese speaking visitors (Tourism and Development: Agendas for Action, 2007). Perhaps the problem is lack of recognition of youth tourism as a niche market.

Communication is an important tool for bringing stakeholders together including staff and tourists to emphasize on the important role the tourism industry plays in improving the living conditions of the population of the Mozambique as a whole. As noted by Habermas (1989), communication needs to be a powerful instrument which must be used to facilitate the social transition processes from one of separation and domination to integrated decision making for sustainable development. Mozambique tourism officials need to provide the tourism business owners with periodic information concerning the role of development policies in social change in general. The officials need to organise workshops periodically to indicate to the tourism business owners their importance in raising the output of the economy of the country. In the same way, the business owners, their workers and service providers also need to be provided with deep knowledge on the contents of the Mozambican tourism score card and when they need to be implemented. It is important to encourage communication and cooperation among all key stakeholders in order to grow tourism through institutional linkages, strategic partnerships and alignment of tourism stakeholders in the industry (Acheampong, 2015)

### **Accessibility and signage**

Accessibility and signage to destinations came up as a major challenge at 21.2 per cent. The conditions of some of the roads and bridges were such that some of the tourism products were not accessible at all or required four-wheel motor vehicle, which was far beyond the reach of the respondents and the youth market if they were to travel on their own. Signage to some destinations was either non-existent in some cases or was in Portuguese and incomprehensible to the respondents who did not speak or understand Portuguese. It was also very expensive and unaffordable for the youth market, operating on a string budget, to secure the services of an interpreter either way. The respondents expressed disappointment in this unfortunate situation and felt they would have enjoyed a lot, if not for those bottlenecks.

About 66.6 per cent rejected the statement that attractions in Mozambique are easy to reach or visible to tourists, 27.8 per cent did agree to this statement but 5.6 per cent were indifferent. The question of signage seems to be one of the biggest problems in the Africa, as a whole, and the SADC region, and Mozambique was no different. An overwhelming majority of 94.4 per cent of the respondents felt that signage was woefully inadequate in Mozambique, while 5.6 per cent did not comment.

In tandem with accessibility and signage, is the problem of under-development of some destinations in Mozambique. About 15.9 per cent of the respondents were disappointed about the poor state of basic tourism facilities and total negligence of a number of destinations. They all agreed that Mozambique has the potential to rival South Africa and other SADC countries in tourism deliverables, if the basics could be achieved. Most of the destinations lacked basic infrastructure such as roads and bridges, electricity, pipe-borne water and proper sanitation. They did acknowledge that the effect of the long liberation wars and the subsequent political

instability might have contributed to the fact that most infrastructure in Mozambique was in disrepair. However they felt that the conditions of some facilities supporting tourism required serious and urgent attention to prevent any health hazard. They were of the view that excellent and healthy tourism infrastructure could be a catalyst in bringing in the required revenue for further infrastructure development.

### **Health issues**

Health issues in Mozambique were not spared as some of the challenges. The fear of disease, especially, malaria, cholera and typhoid fever, did not augur well for the respondents. About 21.2 per cent of the respondents indicated that the fear of diseases, especially malaria, and other water-borne diseases, were the reasons why they would not recommend Mozambique as a destination. Since Mozambique is a malaria-endemic country, the respondents, who were from a malaria-free region, were required to go into extra expenditure to secure prophylactic malaria treatment and other mosquito-repellent creams and aerosol sprays to prevent mosquito-bites and consequent contraction of malaria. It was quite a challenge for them to wear long clothes, especially at night, or sleep in mosquito nets, so as not to expose their bodies, in that extremely hot weather conditions. All the respondents felt restricted in actively enjoying Mozambique because of the fear of mosquito-bites and the prevalence of malaria. However a strong awareness campaigns about diseases such as malaria could lessen the frustration.

Access to ablution facilities in some destinations was a mission and in some extreme circumstances, respondents had to resort to bushes for comfort break, which to them was unhygienic and risky. This was unfortunately, not a very ideal situation for the female-respondents. However, 42.1 per cent of the respondents rated sanitation as relatively good over most facilities and amenities rated. Public places were also rated as fair at 63.2 per cent, as well as, mode of transport at 52.6 per cent as being relatively clean and hygienic. Very few respondents rated service quality as excellent in communication, security and public places. This is strengthened by Mfune (2010), who believes that SADC's community-based tourism is facing factors such as inability to access other markets, poor service delivery, inappropriate product quality, lack of basic understanding of the tourism industry, lack of effective management and marketing skills. Mozambique, in particular, this situation is attributed to political instability and long civil wars that resulted in major damage to infrastructure such as roads, airports, hotels and railway systems (Gilberto, 2004) and other tourism-based facilities, as indicated earlier.

In view of the discontentment among respondents on certain attractions and the general impressions on certain facilities, about 14 out of the 19 respondents (74%) still said "yes", when they were asked if they would recommend Mozambique as a tourism destination to friends and relatives. About 21 per cent said "no", and five per cent were non-committal. They provided a wide range of reasons for their decision. About 31,1 per cent sited Mozambique as an interesting destination, 21,2 per cent gave good weather as their reason, 15.9 per cent indicated that Mozambique is an affordable destination and 10,6 per cent felt that Mozambique offers a unique experience in one's lifetime. The researchers asked the respondents if they would visit Mozambique again and the results showed a total of 89 per cent agreeing that they would do repeat visit to the country, given the opportunity, while 11 per cent said "no". The reasons given by the repeat visits ranged as follows: about 31.8 per cent stated that they would visit the country again in order to promote the SADC region, the same percentage indicated they will visit again to participate in tourism activities, another 31.8 per cent mentioned the need to contribute in the development of tourism and 5.3 per cent referred to the need to promote peace in Mozambique and the SADC region.

The respondents were further requested to provide their overall experience of Mozambique as a tourism destination. Most of the respondents, 27.4 per cent, highlighted that Mozambique is an interesting tourism destination, rich in culture and agriculture as stated by 19.6 per cent of the respondents. In addition, 15.9 per cent of respondents viewed Mozambique as a beautiful destination which has a lot of potential in promoting tourism. Nonetheless, 15.9 per cent of respondents considered Mozambique as underdeveloped tourism destination, even though it was rated as a friendly destination by 10.6 per cent of the respondents. Lastly, the respondents, 5.3 per cent felt that Mozambique is very expensive and also disappointing, respectively, as a tourism destination.

In view of the fact that majority of the respondents were prepared to visit and would recommend Mozambique to their friends and relatives, is a remarkable sign for Mozambique tourism potential. It is quite significant to note that almost three-quarters of the respondents felt that prospective tourists could still look to Mozambique as a destination to go and unwind. Most of the respondents felt that Mozambique offered them experience that was quite unique from what they were familiar with back home. This positive development offers Mozambique great opportunity for the development of her youth tourism market. The Mozambican government, together with all tourism stakeholders may have to relook at her pricing strategies and develop measures to support the youth tourism market, by considering what South African tourism is doing. South African White Paper (1996) on the development and promotion of tourism in South Africa, supports youth travel market and emphasises that tourism stakeholders should motivate the youth to travel by providing special prices on attractions and accommodation establishments, such as youth hostels and summer camps. This needs to be incorporated in many tourism policies and strategies to enhance the contribution of tourism to the national gross domestic product, through revenue generation, infrastructure development, and creation of jobs and improvement of the standards of living of the citizens of Mozambican.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Tourism development in the SADC region still needs a lot of attention from the various member states. A lot of tourism markets such as youth tourism have not been fully explored by the region. The contribution of tourism towards countries' economic growth is well acknowledged by many countries, including SADC countries, yet this does not measure to the attention given to the industry by the respective governments. For tourism to prosper in the region, and in Mozambique, in particular, governments need to ensure that proper planning is put in place. Tourism planning needs to include the needs of the host countries while also considering the needs of tourists. In Mozambique, in particular, education and training needs to be supported to equip locals with communication and service delivery skills. English could be taught as a second language. This will support the tourism industry and trade, and also enhance Mozambique's membership in SADC, African Union, and that of the Commonwealth of Nations, to which it is the only non-English speaking country. Within the SADC region new tourism routes are being encouraged into other neighbouring countries. For instance, East 3 Route is becoming a popular tourism route in the SADC region. This route starts from Kwazulu Natal in South Africa to Swaziland through Mozambique and Seychelles. Besides this, RETOSA should put pressure on the SADC governments to prioritise youth tourism in particular as their primary focus. A joint collaboration between governments, schools, colleges, universities and private sector should be established to promote youth tourism in the SADC region. There should be an increase in member states' commitment to marketing youth tourism in the region. This could be achieved by providing incentives to those countries that show more commitment to youth tourism. Various governments in the region, Mozambique included, should practice social tourism. In this way even the youth market that is

characterised as a low budget market could afford to travel. Different government grants and educational schemes such as the South African National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) could include educational tours in the budget for those learners and students studying towards tourism, as part of their school fees. A special attention should also be given to ICT facilities and services especially at various schools and universities where tourism courses are being offered. This will increase the level of awareness of tourism in SADC region.

For Mozambique, in particular, the following recommendations are of importance. Culture, heritage, and beach and adventure tourism are found to be the most appealing types of tourism activities among the respondents. The government needs to develop and promote these niche tourism areas to attract more youth tourists into the country. Thus, a strategic approach in developing and marketing tourism in Mozambique and the SADC region is required. Each of the SADC country is geographically different and offers completely different attractions. RETOSA should be able to identify each of these countries' iconic attractions that talk to the youth market. Extensive marketing strategies targeting the youth in the SADC region is very imperative in this regard. A sustainable and sound tourism development is strongly centred on good policy formulation and implementation. Mozambique tourism policies need to address its marketing strategies, while ensuring that there is no mismatch between product quality and pricing within the various tourism attractions and activities. A strong policy intervention is needed as the youth market is known to be very price sensitive. There are still many challenges in providing hustle-free tourism in the region, especially at many border crossings. This is due to bureaucracy at some immigration and customs offices dating from the colonial and apartheid eras which created much divisions in most African countries. Some unscrupulous government officials manning these border crossings, work with civilians to create unconventional protocols just to frustrate and extort bribes from potential travellers. Inter-government intervention among SADC member states is of great importance to tackle such challenges. In a month's time, the African Union (AU) is planning to meet to discuss possible solutions in the issuing of electronic intra-Africa passport (Lagardien, 2016). Although this is currently targeting mainly African diplomats and government officials, this gives much hope that in future such initiatives will filter down to all citizens on the continent with the aim to promote tourism in Africa through the various regional blocs currently in place on the continent.

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