

Introduction

The aim of this paper suggests a model for sustainable tourism in accordance with the findings in Drammeh, (2014) developed from Sharpley's (2010) destination capitals model. The components of the proposed model are derived from the perceptions of managers of SMEs on sustainable tourism development in The Gambia. The following sub research questions provided the answers leading to the development of the proposed model:

- 1 What does sustainable tourism development mean for managers of SMEs in The Gambia?
- 2 What is the role of indigenous/local knowledge in SMEs to induce development and specifically in tourism development in The Gambia?

The paper elaborates on the findings in Drammeh (2014), and proceeds to present a model of sustainable tourism development that could be applicable for LDCs. It provides the research implications and contributions to sustainable tourism development and business administration literature, to practitioners as well as for policy. The limitations, recommendations, and finally the suggestions for further research are also presented.

Meaning of sustainable tourism development to SMEs.

With examples from The Gambia, the meaning of sustainable tourism development, for local SMEs puts emphasis on the destination capitals in LDCs (Drammeh, 2014). To support a sustainable tourism development, Drammeh (2014) suggests that the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism development is central for the success of the concept in LDCs. Drammeh, further suggests, and in accordance with the perception of managers of SMES, who generally agreed that:

- Sustainable tourism development will provide better economic benefits.
- Sustainable tourism development will improve the environment.
- Sustainable tourism development will improve living standards.
- Sustainable tourism development will bring socio-cultural awareness.
- Sustainable practices will reduce negative impacts of tourism development.

Although all the components of the destination capitals; environmental, human, socio-cultural, technological, economic and political capital' are all needed in the efforts for sustainable tourism development, it is specifically found that the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism development seem to be more relevant followed by socio-cultural dimensions. Whilst technological, economic and political capital' are also needed, and plays a crucial role in the practice of the concept of sustainable tourism development, they might not be easily accessible to the poor and marginalized locals. The findings in Drammeh (2014) shows that:

- Managers of SMEs are fragmented in their perceptions of what sustainable tourism is.
- Hence, the emphasis on the environmental dimensions, the three destination capitals are fundamental for sustainable tourism development in LDCs.
- Indigenous knowledge within SMEs is central to sustainable tourism development.
- Reliance on the three destination capitals is the way forward for the development of for sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

(Drammeh, 2014).

These findings when interpreted in destination capitals model, sustainable tourism development practices seem to be strongly connected to the environmental capital of the destination serving as a filter for local participation in tourism development. Such a component is available and easily accessible to the local people, demonstrating the high presence and representation of locally owned SMEs in the tourism business environment utilising the nature, built environment and socioculture on the destination as the bases of the tourism industry in LDCs. These can be important elements for poverty alleviation in LDCs as they tend to encourage entrepreneurial skills geared towards exploring available resources from the destination capitals to satisfy community needs as well as the tourism industry. In essence, the environmental, socio-cultural and human capital is the strength in the destination for a sustainable tourism industry in LDCs. This seems to encourage the existence of local SMEs who are empowered to develop products and services from the local environment which is more easily accessible to them, some of which might not even be meant for tourism, but gradually becoming part of the tourism experience. The environmental, socio-cultural and human capitals seem to motivate local investors to integrate economic, cultural and social policies on the destination to invest in tourism. This encourages the use of both the local and scientific knowledge for the production, protection and preservation of the local environment. Local technology drawn from the local environment, using the socio-cultural and human capital in the provision of facilities, local engineering and building of wells for water supply, recycling, preservation and resource protection methods seem to be important elements for a sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

The use and matching of local and modern technology thus seems to be important for sustainable tourism development, and requires Knowledge of the local

environment, socio-culture and human capitals to support the use of technological capital on the destination.

The role of indigenous knowledge in SMEs to induce development and specifically in tourism development.

The World Bank (1998) suggests that a country's ability to build and mobilize knowledge capital, is equally essential for sustainable development as the availability of physical and financial capital. The knowledge capital of a country is said to be derived from the indigenous knowledge of the ways of living of its people and its environment, which includes knowledge passed down from generation to generation, experiences and association of meanings of the local people that defines their daily activities and existence. Thus, the skills, roles and people are what are referred to as the human capital on the destination. Local investment in tourism development in The Gambia seems to be largely dependent on such knowledge, and tend to manifest the importance of indigenous knowledge in SMEs in tourism development. Such enterprises contain a unique knowledge of the destination based on a long history of practices, norms and beliefs passed down from generation to generation as opposed to western/modern knowledge and belief systems. They operate in contexts where social interaction occurs through networks of relationships in local proximity (Grängsjo and Gummesson, 2006). The people and their distinct traditions, cultures, beliefs, ways of living, language and spiritual links with nature became the gateway for local participation in tourism development. This seems to be supported in the findings of the research showing the importance of the environmental, sociocultural and human capital. The skills, knowledge and abilities (human capital) within such firms are intertwined with organisational culture to form unique resources that other firms cannot acquire or apply (Armstrong, 2001).

The indigenous knowledge in SMEs seems to be important for tourism development and seems to contribute to formation of economic activities that have potentials to create direct employment in the tourism industry and thus contributing to industrial development (Drammeh, 2014).

It is suggested that entrepreneurial activity will involve a perception of needs in one economic sphere and of opportunities in another economic sphere (Andersson, 1987:132). SMEs seem to understand local community needs and factors, and can thus explore opportunities within their disposal to participate in tourism development. Their activities are undertaken for the benefit of indigenous people (Lindsay, 2005). Tourism is an easy route for many locals without capital or formal training to engage in providing products and services to the industry, often based on knowledge of the destination, its history, cultures and traditions, people and the environment. The emphasis on local products is a reflection of such needs, providing opportunities for product development and minimising the much talked about economic leakage of tourism development in LDCs. As such, tourism also aids in regional development (Sindiga, 1999). It thus seems that indigenous knowledge in SMEs can facilitate the expansion of the tourism business activities, and especially to the rural areas. Such knowledge tends to contribute to poverty alleviation, employment and absorbing women in the sector, as well as creating domestic markets for local production.

Emerging Market Group in Ezeuduji and Rid (2011), for instance, suggests in the context of The Gambia that cultural heritage and natural areas of different communities are being considered as key selling value propositions to the tourists beside sun-beach tourism for which the nation has built up a reputation in the tourism sector so far. The unique competence and indigenous knowledge in SMEs are widely recognised as an important part of the economy in poor

countries, acting both as the backbone of local economies and as consumers of natural resources (Ubribe and Lofthouse, 2006). The perception of the majority of respondents in this research seems to buttress such importance by suggesting the presence of a large number of SMEs in the tourism business environment providing local products and services as the core of their business activities. This participation base on human capital and knowledge of the destination capitals also seems to support the provision of tourism facilities and infrastructure in rural areas by thereby enhancing the expansion of the economic benefits of tourism development in LDCs.

A common theme of sustainable tourism is thus having stakeholder support (Wilson, Fesenmaier, and Van Es (2001), and the involvement of different stakeholders in the early stage of the tourism planning process is essential (Gunn 1988; Inkeep, 1991). In The Gambia for instance, many people depend on subsistence farming as a source of living. They also depend on the natural environment as a source of income and other forms of subsistence, for instance collecting firewood, building material, medicine and food can bring both income and other benefits to locals. Thus, support for the use of traditional knowledge, practices and innovation systems relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources and promote actions on different levels to eradicate poverty, protect human rights and conserve the environment while working in tourism (CSD, 1999). This assumption is supported in the findings of this research suggesting that indigenous knowledge is very important in sustainable tourism development.

Critical views on sustainable tourism development in the context of LDCs

Sustainable development is said to be based on Western philosophy and concept of development, ways of living and value systems which seems to assume that the

world is just one place to live in with identical resources (both human, economical and environmental) as a concept for protecting global resources. Sustainable development as a whole may thus be regarded as a philosophy, and its lack of precision has helped disguise the fundamental orientation that is required if sustainability is to be sought and gained (Wall, 2006). "It primarily tends to be a symbolic rhetoric, with competing interests each redefining on it to suit their own political agendas, rather than serving as an influential basis for policy development" (Andrews, 1997:19). To enable this research to make a critical view of sustainable tourism development, it is essential to relay its findings with a reflection on the pillars of the concept, such as the economic, environmental and socio-cultural to understand the possibilities that are available for LCDs and the ability of local SMEs to have influence on dimensions of the destination capitals that support sustainable tourism development on the destination. Values that people assign to a given resource, and their perceptions of that resource, will influence the pathways deemed appropriate to achieve outcomes that are considered sustainable (Hall, 1998).

A reflection on the literature on tourism development in LDCs and its related impacts, the participation of local SMEs, the concept of sustainable tourism development, inclusive development relating them to the findings of the research, it is truly conclusive that a sustainable tourism development practice lies within the destination capitals that are available and accessible to locals for tourism development. Hence the assumption that the practice of sustainable tourism development should be responsive to the economic, socio-cultural and environmental preservation for the longevity of the destination, more emphasis is required on the local resources that make the destination attractive and accessible on the destination.

The concept of sustainable tourism development advocates the enhancement and prolonged use of the nature, ecosystem and the socio-cultural fabrics of destination countries in a sustainable manner that is economically, socio-culturally and environmentally viable from generation to generation. Within the industry, there is now an increasing trend towards nature based tourism, contributing to the growth of the ecotourism industry (Eagels and Hoggins, 1998; Fernell, 1999). This has led to a number of development models attracting tourists to nature areas for economic growth (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1989). Ecotourism has been particularly successful in attracting private investments for the establishment of privately owned natural parks and nature reserves in an increasing number of developing countries, such as Costa Rica, Ecuador, Malaysia and South Africa (Neto, 2003). In The Gambia for instance, ecotourism camps and other forms of locally oriented tourism facilities are becoming significant in rural areas attracting tourists to the country side.

However, whilst efforts are being made to encourage the participation of local SMEs in tourism development, it also seems that little has been done to promote education and training in hospitality and tourism geared towards sustainable practices. The findings of this research show fragmented perceptions of what sustainable tourism is. This seems to show that indigenous practices and values for sustainable tourism development might be different from the western concept of what sustainable tourism development is. In some cases, in an attempt to preserve environments for ecotourism, traditional resource uses and users have been eliminated, thereby depriving local people of their livelihoods (Wall, 1997).

Lack of control by governments over the volume and nature of tourism development has led to a country's dependence on foreign products, foreign investment, and foreign skills (Brohman, Clancy, and Harrison in Scheyvens, (2002:165). Some

forms of tourism development have been criticised for the degree of external control and for failing to deliver on promised economic benefits while causing severe social disruptions (Britton; Rodenburg; O'Grady in Pears, 1989). For instance, mainstream "ecotourism", as promoted after the Rio Earth Summit, hasn't always enjoyed a good reputation, and even tour operators have used the concept of sustainable tourism merely as a "greenwash" marketing tool (UNCSD, 2002).

According to Peric (2005), in a purely economic sense, globalisation means increasing the interdependence of markets and production in different countries through trade in goods and services, cross-border flows of capital, international strategic alliances, cooperation, mergers and exchanges of technology. WTO observes that, The General Agreements on Trade regulated by The World Trade organisation with the provision of a broad range of services such as accounting, legal services, road and rail transport, maritime services, education and tourism needs to be subjected to a sustained process of regulatory slackening (WTO, 2001).

Sustainable tourism development is thus said to contain a mechanism of politics in an international scale (Castafieda and Burtner, 2010). In a paper presented to the United Nations, Simon (2003) suggests that the orientation of wealthy countries' policies regarding aid, trade, and other global issues can profoundly influence on the drivers of development, and are of paramount importance to the challenge of enabling developing countries to develop successfully. Simon further illustrates that developed countries' positions with respect to aid, trade, and other global issues have an impact on development of such countries.

The availability of finance and technology are important mechanism that triggers the need for the internationalisation and globalisation of the tourism industry seem

to be acute problems in LDCs. Thus, sustainable tourism standards do not cover the complexity of the tourism products and services, as most standards are specific to environmental issues for accommodation and few standards for tourist destinations and attractions exist (Front and Bendell, 2002). As such, many local SMEs operating in the tourism industry in LDCs tend to follow the homogenization process described by DiMaggio and Powell, (1983) as isomorphism; a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environment (Hawley in DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). This can be recognised in the hospitality and tourism sector with different certification programs that operations associates with to demonstrate international best practices and for legitimacy. They seek to legitimise themselves by incorporating institutional features valued in the external environment (Clarke and Newman, 1997), providing legitimacy rather than improve performance, (Meyer, and Rowan 1977).

The institutionalisation of sustainable development is primarily symbolic rhetoric, with competing interests each redefining it to suit their own political agendas, rather than serving as an influential basis for policy development" (Andrews, 1997:19). Consequently, the many adverse effects of tourism are over-looked due to economic growth (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). The concept of sustainable development seems to put much focus on the environment to suit western values that also seem to be economical for tour operators. In the context of this research the environment and people on the destination are very important elements in the practice of sustainable tourism development. Thus, if the concept is to prove meaningful in LDCs, it seems that increased attention must be given to the destination capitals with attention on the economic and social wellbeing of people that are most affected by the tourism industry.

Research methodology

A case study was proposed to collect data for this type of investigation (Beeton, 2005). The exploratory approach was adopted and focused on seeking to discover existing research which might throw light on specific questions (Veal, 1998:84). In this regard, the destination capitals model proposed by Sharpley (2010) as a model to understand sustainable tourism was the centre of attention to capture the perceptions of managers of SMEs in regards to sustainable tourism in The Gambia. A similar approach was used in Zapata-Campos, (2008) referring to it as a simplified representation of reality. Models identify basic concepts and describe what reality is like, and the conditions by which we can study it (Clark, 2005).

Reflections on the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development

It seems to be difficult to think about sustainable tourism development without thinking about the resources that make up the destination. Sharpley's (2010) destination capitals model for understanding sustainable tourism development includes a variety of capitals; environmental, human, socio-cultural, technological, economic and political capital', all of which seems to entail features of life that SMEs in the LDCs are part of. The pillars of sustainable tourism development; the economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability are also built upon similar components just like that of the destination capitals model. Thus, when sustainable tourism development advocates that the economic, socioculture and environment should be protected, or managed in a manner that promotes its usage in a sustainable manner, it is essential to put emphasis on the destination's resources. From an analysis of the literature on tourism development combined with the findings of the research, a thorough reflection on the destination capitals seem to show the importance of all the components of the

model in the efforts for sustainable tourism development. However, despite this, the findings show that the model is more supportive of the environment, socio-cultural and the human capital on the destination for a sustainable tourism development. For instance, an important component of sustainable tourism development is its *economic sustainability* which involves both finance, technology and to more extend, political is very essential in the efforts for sustainable tourism development. However, despite the usefulness of the destination capitals model for sustainable tourism development proposed by Sharpley (2010), the model has not thoroughly considered the limitations of some of its components with realities for LDCs.

LDCs seem to have limited access to the economic, technological and political capitals at the international level. As such, the tourism in LDCs tends to be controlled by foreign investment, both in terms of technological and financial investment capital. This seems to have had impacts on how the industry in LDCs is being operated and managed. Tourism industry in such countries is characterised by a high degree of monopoly, which implies a concentration of services and profits into very few big transnational corporations (Song, 2004). Such destinations display external political and economic structures that maintains their dependency on the metropolitan centre; they are unable to develop unless 'permitted' to do so by the West (Sharpley, 2003:248). They do not only lacked the finance to operate a sustainable tourism industry, but also the transportation, infrastructure, power generating capabilities and the telecommunications network necessary for efficiently conducting commerce, international trade and social and economic development (Soobrain, 1993).

Countries taking part in GATS are required to open up their markets and allow foreign investors to take part in tourism businesses in their countries. This also means that tourism related sectors such

as accommodation and tour operating are liberalised to the disadvantage of poor local investors competing with multinational corporations with access to finance, technology and ability to conduct business within the framework of international regulations. The internet for instance as a medium of communication which does not seem to be easily accessible to the vast majority of SMEs in LDCs, is now playing a crucial role as a global market. It is an important element of the technological development and capital that that is making great impact on tourism development and playing a major role in the changes taking place in the tourism market. Tourism suppliers for example, have traditionally used intermediaries such as travel agents and tour operators to market, promote and sell their products, but with the advancement of technology and growth of the Internet as an e-commerce medium has led to the emergence of online travel intermediaries (or Agencies), online marketing and promotion ventures, and even availability of online booking, payment facilities and e-tickets. Travel suppliers (e.g. airlines, hotels and tour operators) are encouraging consumers to book flight tickets, hotels, car rentals and excursions directly through their own web sites in order to reduce distribution as well as other expensive operating costs. Such facilities and opportunities do not seem to be easily accessible in LDCs and especially in remote rural areas where most local tourism investment seems to take place.

It seems that the *economic, finance, technology and to more extend political capital* are all needed to support the success of the practice of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. However, LDCs seem to have limited access to these principal capitals to support a sustainable tourism development on the destination. At the international level, they seem to have little possibilities to make any meaningful impacts affecting the economic, technological and political capitals for their tourism development challenges. They therefore rely on

multinational corporations who seem to have easy access to such important resources such as airplanes, access to international trade fares for the marketing in the international arena.

However, it could also be argued that such challenges LDCs are facing are only limited at the international level where they seem to play an essential role in supporting sustainable tourism development in LDCs. Despite LDCs' limited access to the economic, technological and political capital, it seems that there are possibilities within the *environmental, socio-cultural and human capitals* on the destination that seem to support and contain the local *economic, finance, technology and political capital* required for sustainable tourism development.

A model for sustainable tourism development in LDCs

Sustainable tourism research seems to be typically generalized from other contexts to be application to LDCs portraying different development needs, capabilities, and resources that are unique to them. To understand possibilities within the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development, a thorough reflection of the destination capitals in LDCs that are available and accessible to local investors is essential.

Despite international issues that seem to limit LDCs access to the economic, technological and political capitals, there are opportunities on the destination that serves similar purposes at the local level to support sustainable tourism development in LDC. This research thus suggests a conceptual framework based on the findings of the study that allows the identification of the components of sustainable tourism within the destination capitals that posed challenges, and those that are likely capable of contributing to a sustainable tourism in LDCs (Drammeh, 2014). The framework facilitates an understanding of the possibilities within

destination capitals as a model for sustainable tourism development.

To make sense of the economic sustainability of the destination, both the natural and built environment which is the base of production for tourism must also be functional. This agrees with the perceptions of the majority of respondents in this research suggesting that sustainable tourism development will improve the environment. Thus, since the natural environment is part of the tourism resources on the destination, as well as a traditional source of food, medicine, energy, shelter, and tourism development, the economic, political and technological capital will seem to support the environmental sustainability of tourism on the destination. At the destination level, political capital for instance might be needed on decisions concerning traditional land ownership sorting the consent of the village elders, family elders or village chief on decisions concerning ownership or use of an area for tourism development.

The major characteristic of customary tenure is that the land is regarded as belonging not to the individual but to the whole social group (Fisher, 1993). Thus, urban areas require systems of tenure and rights which create security for investment not only by individuals, but also by companies, to create employment (Payne, 1996). This *political capital* seems to be linked to *socio-cultural capital*, referring to the social network and cultural capital on the destination. Issues of land ownership are handled locally at such levels. Therefore, land ownership and property rights over an area that can be of interest for tourism development can be an important *political capital on the destination* that seem to be accessible to local investors and traditional land owners. It thus seems that the *socio-cultural capital* on the destination is an important component of the *destination capitals* that is linked to the *political capital* taking decisions on land ownership and permission to use land for tourism development.

Although there is a split in perceptions of the respondents concerning the importance of SMEs knowledge of the local environment, specific knowledge within the *human capital* seem to be a reflection on the perceptions of respondents that “local investors play an essential role in sustainable tourism practices”. The sophisticated knowledge of the natural and socio-cultural environment is part of the economic capital that enables local SMEs to create products and services as a base of their products. Thus, the natural and built environment from which tourism in LDCs is highly dependent upon seem to be one of the most important components of the concept of tourism development in such countries as it contains the tourism product that has to be protected from exploitation to maintain its economic usefulness for the destination.

The perception of the majority of respondents in this research is that, “sustainability will provide better economic benefits”. This assumption seems to reflect upon the high presence of local SMEs in the tourism business environment as a manifestation of the importance of indigenous knowledge of the destination acting as a strategy to strengthen the economic sustainability of tourism on the destination. They seem to provide products and services based on opportunities, tourism demand and needs that benefits local communities. It is for instance found that local investors in The Gambia are directly or indirectly involved in more than 68% of tourism operations.

Financial and investment capital challenges faced by local SMEs are minimised through family savings and contributions, small loans from friends, local networks and credit facilities such as “Susu”; a microfinance scheme normally organised by women in Gambia and thought to have originated from Nigeria and spread to Gambia in the early twentieth century. Such networks are important in support of the economic

component of the destination capitals that support sustainability, and have facilitated possibilities for many local investors to start tourism businesses.

Economic activities involved in tourism are products sold to tourists, drawn from the local environment; natural or built environment developed as attractions. However, the perception of managers of SMEs in this research is that multinational corporations are not utilising local facilities adequately. This might be a reflection on the assumption that hospitality and tourism operations are institutionalised in a bit to suit the desire of multinationals. As such, the perception of the majority of respondents in this study is that sustainable tourism development requires the cooperation of all stakeholders. The matching of indigenous Knowledge of the destination capitals and meanings associated to such resources by locals and outsiders or scientific knowledge seem to be essential for the success of the concept sustainable tourism development in LDCs. Most of the local resources that required for tourism development are readily available and accessible to local SMEs. The perception of the majority of respondents is that SMEs puts emphasis on local products. They suggest that *“economies like the Gambia’s is highly driven by local small scale businesses and cultural products are the dominant goods... We are very well connected with the local people”*.

Such opportunities seem to be important elements of sustainable tourism development in LDCs emerging from the *human capital* on the destination which seem to empower locals to manage the destination’s resources thereby contributing to poverty alleviation on the destination. It also seem to be instrumental in innovativeness with local technology that takes in the social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors that can strengthen a sustainable tourism development.

Thus, despite the fact that modern technology is not easily or freely accessible to local SMEs in LDCs, local technological capital seems to be playing a vital role in the concept of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. SMEs seems to contribute to the innovativeness in providing local technologies such as donkey carts, wells and other forms of local technical products that support tourism development on the destination. Some local technologies even seem to part of the tourism experience.

Hence the importance of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development, this research therefore identified the components included in the model that are unique to LDCs, namely; the environmental, socio-cultural and human capital which readily available to local SMEs. The study therefore proposed a model of sustainable tourism development built upon Shapley’s (2010) that would be more enabling for LDCs, hereafter to be referred to as the “destination three capitals model for sustainable tourism development”.

The proposed model is based on the findings of this research, making emphasis on the destination capitals that LDCs are available and easily accessible to locals on the destination; the environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals. These three components of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development are important in tourism consumption, local community needs and industrial development with direct participation and involvement of local SMEs who are largely members of the local community themselves. An alternative model for sustainable tourism development for LDCs based on the destination capitals model revised after the findings of this research is proposed in figure 1.

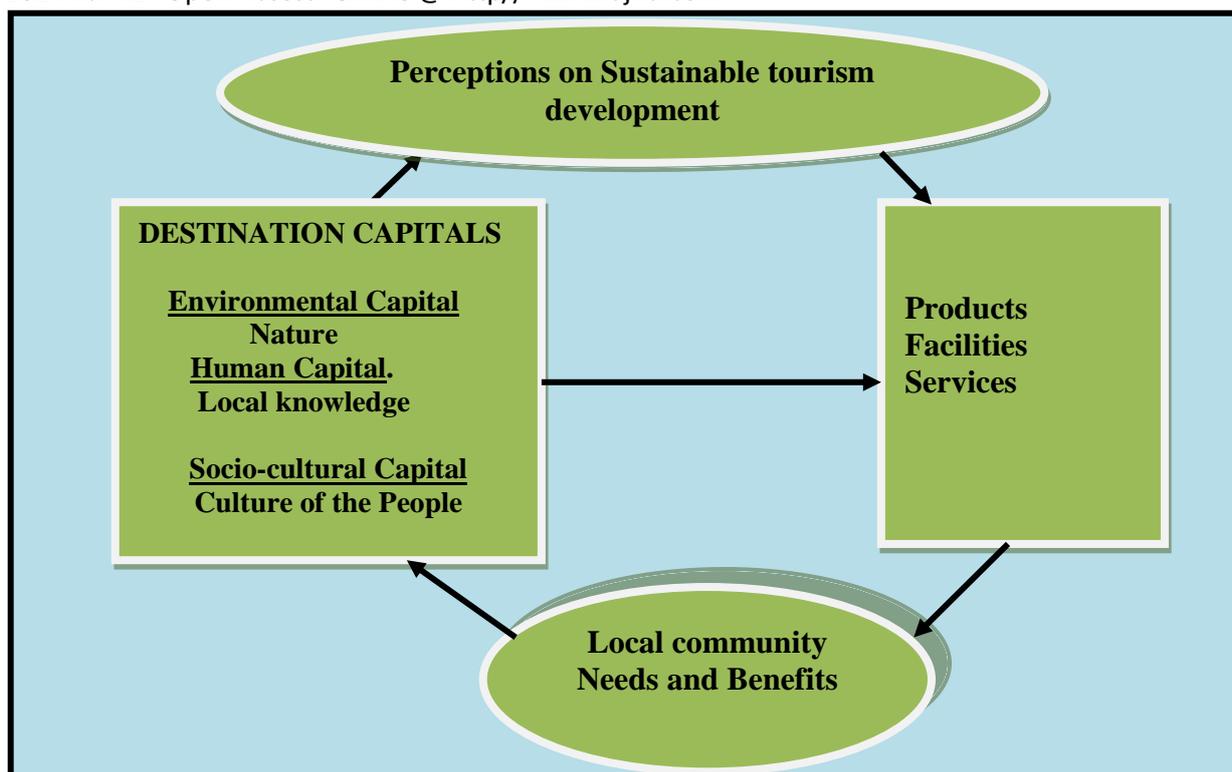


Figure 1. The destination three capitals model for sustainable tourism development in LDCs

Figure 1 presents the components of the destination capitals that seem to be important for the practice of the concept of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. The proposed model suggests that, in the absence of technological, financial and political capital, through local knowledge of the destination, local SMEs could utilise the three destination capitals; *environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals* that they seem to be available and easily accessible to locals enabling them to create tourism products and services in accordance with local community needs thereby encouraging sustainable tourism development in LDC.

LDCs seem to rely on *the environmental, socio-cultural and human capitals* on the destination to create tourism products and services that are utilised by tourists. Knowledge of these components of the destination capitals seem to have some influence on the *economic, political and technological capitals* at the local level and are all important in tourism development in such destinations. This seems to reflect on the perception of the majority of respondents in the research, that SMEs puts emphasis on local products. It will

enhance the inclusion of locals in tourism development, thereby helped to minimise the risk of economic, socio-cultural and environmental degradation caused by tourism on the destination. This seems to be important for sustainable practices, because as part of the tourism product, Morrison, (2002) suggests that cultural symbols include language, religious rituals and art whose shared meanings are from the unique fingerprint of a particular society.

The modified model of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development for LDCs in figure 8 suggests a strong connection between the environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals on the destination on which tourism is heavily dependent upon. Perceptions on sustainable tourism development in the context of this research seems to be influenced by *community needs* and expected benefits, triggering the need to explore the destination capitals for opportunities to create products and services that are utilised by the tourism industry. This seems to be facilitated through *Human capital containing indigenous knowledge*

of both the natural and built environment (*environmental capital*) on the destination providing opportunities for *product development, provision of facilities and services* to tourists that could help fulfill local *community needs*. This is anticipated to enhance expected socio-economic benefit by encouraging local production and support for the success of the economic dimension of the practice of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. To a wider extent, the environmental, socio-cultural and human capital seem to encourage innovative ideas developed into local technology. The specific and unique knowledge in local tourism enterprises concerning tourism resources embedded in *the environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals* on the destination also seems to determine the economic, political and technological capitals that are needed for sustainable tourism development.

Environmental capital

The parental paradigm of sustainable tourism development connotes the interconnection between environmental protection, social and economic development. Leisure tourism for instance is heavily dependent on the local environment mostly drawn from the natural environment on the destination and includes land use and modification, attractions in the local vicinities for instance the eco-system, animal life, forest areas, ponds and other natural resources. Most products provided by local SMEs in the tourism industry are either based on such resource or culture and traditions of the people on the destination. The model for sustainable tourism development in figure 1 suggests that the environmental capital on the destination is an important component of sustainability as it contains both the built as well as the natural environment which are all important for the survival of tourism in LDCs, as well as the human existence and survival on the destination.

The local environment is part of the community's means of survival which they also share with tourist who use it for amusement. For instance, traditional places for worship, heritage sites and homes that were not originally meant for tourism are now opened and accessible for tourists to experience. The environmental capital is not only important as tourists' attractions but also for its traditional use as source of food, medicine, energy, shelter and place of worship. Local knowledge of the environment facilitates opportunities for locals to invest in tourism. This could also enhance preservation practices in accordance with indigenous practices thereby prolonging such opportunities. Thus the environment serving both as a source of income from tourism activities with traditional importance as life sustenance for locals would likely encourage SMEs to make responsible decisions that will minimise the negative impacts of their business activities on the natural environment. Preservation of such a resource thus requires local knowledge of the natural environment which is contained within the human capital as suggested in figure 1.

Human capital

Indigenous knowledge is part of the human capital that contains knowledge about the destination. It is an important component of the destination capitals with ability to discover, create and preserve production factors. With the growth of tourism coupled with tourist's demand for additional products and services, it become encouraging for locals to use their knowledge of the local resources and create tourism products that are utilised by tourists. They scout around the destination capitals to provide tourism development needs and create business ventures as part of the tourism experience on the destination. Knowledge of products and services provided to tourists is unique to indigenous/local people as investors on the destination. Broadly speaking, this

knowledge is used by local people to make a living in a particular environment (Warren, 1991). With tourist demand, it can now be used to be part of the tourism industry. Thus, not only does new knowledge contribute to technological opportunities, but it also provides opportunities for third party firms, often new ventures (Azoulay and Shane, 2001; Archibald, Betts and Johnston, 2002). The use of radio, TV, mobile phones and the internet is an example of such a development facilitating opportunities for businesses and their partners to communicate within and with the outside world easily.

On the destination level, this can be said to be part of the technological capital that seem to help in increases in productive efficiency arising from the use of mobile telephones in LDCs (Jensen, 2007). A number of people has access to telephony, radio and TV; as many as 80% of the population in the developing world listens to radio at least once a week (Eltzroth and Kenny, 2003). The human capital on the destination recognises these needs and organise the resources in such a manner that even such imported items becomes an important element of sustainable tourism development as it facilitates economic benefits, and with the technology mentioned facilitates easy communication for locals. It is also thought to have the ability to play an important role in improving the local environment, improve living standards for locals, and provide better socio-cultural awareness of local communities on the destination.

In Gambia for instance, with the help of the human capital on the destination, locals were able to organise resources that has a history of traditional importance pass down from generation to generation, utilising traditional knowledge and application of local standards that are significant in efforts for tourism development. An important aspect of this development seems to involve local resource preservation techniques involving the adaptation to traditional methods that

are unique to local communities. Notably, sustainability practices can differ from culture to culture; often based on traditional believes of the importance of nature for life sustenance, and meaning of culture and traditions for existence. It thus seems that local knowledge of nature, culture and traditions of local people can be responsive to opportunities for sustainable tourism development. Thus, engaging the human capital on the destination can be important for the success of tourism business, and for the purpose of sustainable tourism development practices in LDCs.

Socio-cultural capital

Most entrepreneurial development in LDCs starts from informal business activities organised by locals from the family level, exploring opportunities and needs at the community level to set up business ventures. Unlike, multinational corporations, whose business activities are likely based on opportunities for business ventures in LDCs, most local SMEs are created out of community needs usually developed from the socio-cultural capital on the destination. Local networks, associations and connections seem to be an important aspect of tourism development in LDCs utilised by local investors. Through local SMEs such a capital could provide opportunities for tourists to have access to certain attractions with a history of traditional importance with ownership attached to a certain family. The socio-cultural capital on the destination is an important tourism resource that has not only benefited the industry but also an opportunity for local communities to benefit from tourism.

In the context of rural tourism, López and García, (2006), suggests that tranquility, nature and familiarization with local customs all play a prominent role in the success of a destination. The assumption herein is that human capital that draws stock from the socio-cultural and environmental capitals on the destination will seem to minimise the dependency on

foreign goods and services that are said to be part of the economic leakage factor of tourism in LDCs. As such, SMEs in LDCs thus seem to have the ability to minimise the external threats of market dominance, minimise economic leakage, minimise negative socio-cultural impacts and threats to the biodiversity that are part of the tourism consumption which also has other meanings to local communities on the destination.

The model herein suggests that local need is what influences *local knowledge* to explore the *environmental capital* of the destination including both the *natural and built environment* in the provision of tourism products and services. Creating tourism experiences base on the culture and traditions of the local people on the destination is thus influenced by the *socio-cultural capital* found within the *human capital* on the destination that is passed down from generation to generation. This capital *contains indigenous knowledge* of the destination that explores the environmental capital containing opportunities for tourism product development with economic opportunities and other social benefits for local communities. The suggested model for sustainable tourism development in figure 8 therefore envisages that the pathway to sustainable tourism development could be encouraged through cooperative approaches that are inclusive, ensuring that local SMEs are included in the management and the decision making processes concerning sustainable tourism development and practices.

Research implications and contributions

With the findings of this research, the destination capitals model could contribute to the debate as an appropriate method for studying sustainable tourism development in LDCs. The findings of the study suggest emphasis on environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism development in LDCs, which consequently encourages human

and socio-cultural capitals of the destination

combined to explore, provide and preserve products that are utilised by the tourism industry on the destination.

The study thus contributes to the understanding that, it is the capitals that are more accessible to local SMEs, and the management of which they can influence that is likely to support the practice of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. It also shows the significant dimensions of the concept of sustainable tourism development in varying degrees; most important is the environmental, then human and socio-cultural capitals of the destination.

The most important capital for sustainable tourism development seems to be *the human capital* which contains not only knowledge of the natural environment, but also the built environment encompassing of the historical heritage and socioculture on the destination. This research thus contributes to tourism research as well as the business administration literature on the contributions of SMEs in Sustainable Tourism Development in LDCs, and to add too to existing knowledge concerning awareness and understanding of the concept in the context of such countries. Based on the destination three capitals as the resources on which tourism depends upon, the study will contribute to current theory by showing that, hence the environmental capital it is the local SMEs that could be the most suitable route for the attainment of the concept of sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

The most important expected contribution of this work would be its ability to add to current understanding of the value of indigenous knowledge of the destination within SMEs and its importance in sustainable tourism development. It clearly shows the fragmented views about sustainable tourism development in LDCs. It will further strengthen our understanding on the limitations of the destination capitals as a solution for sustainable

tourism development. Furthermore, this research has also lifted the potentials of SMEs by showing that they are part of the local communities with distinct cultures and traditions that are useful for both the production and preservation of the tourism product in LDCs. The study has assisted to this understanding uplifting their unique importance in the utilisation of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development. It study can also be a useful tool for policy recommendation to enhance sustainable practices in LDCs.

Implications for practitioners

The tourism industry operates in a manner that is very challenging for LDCs, and displays varying tensions that need to be understood and addressed. Practitioners have argued the need to generate more benefits, and minimise the negative impacts that tourism development in poor destinations comes with. This has been a constant evolving debate at governmental, civil-society and academic level, all propagating a fair distribution of earnings of tourism to enhance better living standard for host communities, thus minimise economic leakages, improve environmental and socio-cultural protection to make the industry sustainable. This research shows that:

- The sustainable tourism development is dependent on the human capital dimensions of the concept of sustainable tourism development, putting Local SMEs in the frontline for the success of the practice.
- Human capital which contains indigenous knowledge of the destination is important for product development and consequently for sustainable tourism development,
- There are fragmented views of what sustainable tourism means in LDCs
- Cooperation is required from all stakeholders in the practice for
-

sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

Theoretical Implications

An implication that is identical with many research findings through the environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals of the destination is that:

- Sustainable tourism development will provide better economic benefits.
- Sustainable tourism development will improve the environment.
- Sustainable tourism development will improve living standards.
- Sustainable tourism development will bring socio-cultural awareness.
- Sustainable practices will reduce negative impacts of tourism development.

However, unique theoretical implications of this research are:

- Review of the destination capitals model reducing it to environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals as a model for sustainable tourism development in LDCs.
- Importance of indigenous knowledge in sustainable tourism development in LDCs.
- Sustainable development in LDCs is different from sustainable development in industrialised nations.

Review of the destination capitals

Although not all the components of the destination capitals are found to be accessible to LDCs or has any form of influence over, this study re-enforces the importance and relevance of Sharpley's destination capitals as a model for sustainable tourism development. It shows the components of the destination capitals that seem to be more relevant to support a sustainable tourism development in LDCs;

the environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals. These capitals are supposed to be the strength of LDCs in the efforts for sustainable tourism development in such destinations.

Indigenous knowledge

One of the most important components of the destination capitals found to be relevant for sustainable practices in LDCs is the human capital on the destination. This is because it contains knowledge of the destination from an indigenous perspective including the understanding of the environment, socio-culture, norms and values, ways of living and history of the people on the destination. People are historically and culturally bound and thus have a peculiar knowledge system, which enables them not only to survive, but also to become a civilised community (Ntuli; Vilakavi in Maila and Loubser, 2003).

Environmental, socio-cultural degradation and economic are among the issues tourism is often accused in destination countries. Mostly, it is the local communities who are affected by these negative impacts. The diverse perceptions of respondents on how sustainable tourism is practiced in The Gambia seem to show the relevance of local's understanding and knowledge of the practice of the concept. The majority of the respondents agreed that there is need for cooperation of all stakeholders, reflecting on exploring both indigenous and western knowledge and their integration into the practice of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. Knowledge is a national heritage and a national resource, and it is essential to develop and utilise this form of knowledge too to deal with the challenges at hand (Maila, 2001).

Sustainability in LDCs

An important theoretical implication of this study is that, the practice of sustainable tourism development does not seem to be universal. In The Gambia for instance, the concept seem to have a historical socio-

cultural and traditional bearing where locals have had their ways and means of survivals in regards to conservation practices imbedded in the concept. For instance, in many western countries, where parks are maintained with trees and flowers for relaxation, outing and recreational activities, might be otherwise in LCDs with different functions. In The Gambia for instance, such parks might have a total different meaning with important social, mystical and medical functions. Thus, local communities may also benefit in economic terms as well as create a commitment to conservation and sustainable development (Ezeani, 2015). Where tourism industry is heavily dependent on the environment, preservation for the purpose of sustainable practices might therefore not only be considered as opportunities for economic gains, but also for the prolonged use of the environment in regards to its traditional functions and well being of local communities.

Transferability of the research findings

The criteria to define SMEs in this research is based on the nature of the operations, their small size and been characterised as small or medium by referring to the structured sector that falls under the purview of the organised economic activities within tourism in the country and are registered with The Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA). Therefore, even multinationals/ foreign companies with similar characteristics in terms of employment capacity as local SMEs are included in the survey. The findings of this research are in the context of LDCs.

The Gambia as a typical LDC, shares common characteristics with other LDCs. It therefore seems that the findings of this study can be generalised to similar situations in other LDCs. Although a cause of concern can be the positiveness of the findings, this research can still claim validity by truly claiming to represent the phenomenon being studied and can be

applied in similar situations to other LDCs. A concern is that SMEs might be claiming to have the ability, knowledge of or are practicing the concept of sustainable tourism development, whilst in actual fact these perceptions might concern what seems profitable for their businesses and not be in the best interest of local communities. However, with the model that has come out of this study, sustainable tourism development in LDCs seem to be supported by three destination capitals; environmental capital, socio-cultural capital and human capital.

Recommendations for further research

The findings of this study seems to suggest that a more complete strategy of sustainable tourism development in LDCs should be more focused on three destination capitals that are unique to the destination, the environmental, sociocultural and human capital. Future work on this study should thus apply the suggested conceptual framework that was adopted in this research to expand the current study for an in-depth study of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development in the context of events development in LDCs.

Indigenous knowledge of sustainable tourism development practices, the efficiency and effectiveness of SMEs in regards to resource use are important areas that also need thorough investigation. An extensive use of the three destination capitals model for sustainable tourism in LDCs could therefore serve as a model for LDCs.

References

Andersson, T.D (1987). *Profit in Small Firms: A Model Based on Case-Studies from the Informal Sector in a Developing Country*. Hants, England: Aldershot.

Andrews, R. N. (1997). National environmental policies: The United States.

In M.Jaenicke and H.J. Weidner (Eds.), National environmental policies: A comparative study of capacity building (25-43). New York: Springer Verlag

Armstrong, M. (2001). *A Handbook of Human Resource Management and Practices*. London: Kogan Page.

Archibald, T., Thomas, L., Betts, J. & Johnston (2002). Should Start-up Companies be Cautious? Inventory Policies Which Maximize Survival Probabilities. *Management Science*, V48, N9, 1161-1174

Azoulay, P. & Shane, S. (2001). Entrepreneurs, Contracts, and the

Failure of Young Firms. *Management Science*. V47, N3, 337-358

Beeton, S (2005). Corporate Social Responsibility for Tourism. <http://www.besteducationnetwork.org/documents/ttvi/pdf/Sue%20Beeton.pdf>

Ceballos-Lascuráin, H. (1996) Tourism, Ecotourism, and Protected Areas IUCN Protected Areas Programme. Gland: Switzerland

Castafieda, Q.E. & Burtner, J. (2010). Tourism as "A Force for World Peace" The Politics of Tourism, Tourism as Governmentality and the Tourism Boycott of Guatemala. *The Journal of Tourism and Peace Research*, V1, N2 pp1-21.

Clarke, J. (2005). *Effective Marketing for Rural Tourism, Rural Tourism and Sustainable Business*, Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publications.

Clarke, J. & Newman, J. (1997). *The Managerial State: Power, Politics and Ideology in the Remaking of Social Welfare*. London: Sage

Drammeh, F.Y. (2014). The perceptions of managers of SMEs on sustainable

tourism development in least developed countries (LDCs), using The Gambia as a case study. University of Gothenburg:

GUPEA

https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/35330/1/gupea_2077_35330_1.pdf

DiMaggio, P.J & Powell, W.W.(1983). The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields. *American Sociological Review*, N 48, pp: 147-60

Eltzroth, C. & Kenny, C. (2003) Broadcast and Development: A Role for The World Bank? *World Bank Working Paper* No.11

Ezeuduji, O.I and Rid, W. (2011). Rural Tourism Offer and Local Community Participation in The Gambia. *Tourism: An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism*, V6, N2, 187-211

Eagles, P. and Higgins, B. (1998) Ecotourism Market and Industry Structure, in Lindberg, K., Wood, M.E. and Engeldrum, D. (1998) *Ecotourism: A Guide for Planners and Managers Vol.2*. The Ecotourism Society: Vermont

Engeldrum, D. (1998) *Ecotourism: A Guide for Planners and Managers Vol.2*. The Ecotourism Society: Vermont

Ezeani, P.J. (2015). Sustainable Tourism Development A Panacea for Development. Enugu State, Tourism. <http://enugustatetourismboard.com/p.php?u=sustainable-tourism-development-a-panacea&id=43>

Fennell, D. (1999). *Ecotourism: An introduction*. London: Routledge.

Front, X. & Bendell, J (2002) Standards for Sustainable Tourism for the Purpose of

Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Centre for the Study of Small Tourism and Hospitality Firms, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds, United Kingdom.

Fisher, R. (1993). Tensions and Tenures in Post-Apartheid South Africa. International Land Tenure Conference. December 1993. Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the University of East London

Grängsjo, Y. & Gummesson, E. (2006). Hotel networks and social capital in destination marketing. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, V17, N1, 58-75.

Gunn, C. (1988) *Tourism Planning*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Hall, C.M. (1998). Historical antecedents of sustainable development and ecotourism: New labels on old bottles. In C.M. Hall & A. Lew (Eds.), *Sustainable tourism. A geographical perspective* (13–24). Addison Wesley Longman: Essex, UK

Inskeep, E. (1991). *National and Regional Tourism Planning*. USA: Van Nostrand Reinhold

Jensen, R., (2007) "The Digital Provide: Information (Technology), Market Performance, and Welfare in the South Indian Fisheries Sector", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, N122, 879-924.

Klemm, M. (1992): Sustainable tourism development. Languedoc-Roussillon thirty years on. *Tourism Management*. Vol. 13, No. 2, 169–180

Lopez, E. P. & Garcia, F.J. C (2006), "Agrotourism, sustainable tourism and Ultraperipheral areas. The case of Canary Islands", *Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, VI.4, N1, 85 – 97

Lindsay, N. (2005). Toward a cultural model of indigenous entrepreneurial attitude. *Academy of Marketing Science*

Review Retrieved 12 July, 2005, from <http://www.amsreview.org/articles/lindsay05-2005.pdf>

Maila, M.W. & Loubser, C.P. (2003). *Emancipatory Indigenous Knowledge Systems: implications for environmental education in South Africa*. South African Journal of Education. V 23, N4, 276 – 280

Maila, M.W. (2001). *The assessment of learning programmes for the Senior Phase at Environmental Education Centres in Mpumalanga*: University of South Africa.

Meyer, J. & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized Organisations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, V83, N2, 340-363

Mowforth, M. & Munt, I. (1998) *Tourism and Sustainability: New Tourism in the Third World*. Routledge: New York

Morrison, J. (2002) "British Museum Considers Elgin Marbles 'Swap' to Reduce £6m Debt." www.independent.co.uk/story.jsp?story=350574

Nato, F. (2003). *A New Approach to Sustainable Tourism Development: Moving Beyond Environmental Protection*. DESA Discussion of the United Nations , Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Paper No. 29

Payne, G. (1996). *Urban and Property Rights in Developing Countries: A Review of The Literature*. The Overseas Development Administration. http://sheltercentre.org/sites/default/files/overseas_development_administration_1996_urban_land_tenure_and_property_rights.pdf

Pears, D. (1989). *Tourism Development*. (2nd Ed). London: Longman Group.

Peric, V. (2005). *Tourism and Globalisation. Managing the Process of Globalisation in New and Upcoming EU Members* Proceedings of the 6th

International Conference of the Faculty of Management Koper Congress Centre Bernardin, Slovenia, 24–26 November 2005. <http://www.fm-kp.si/zalozba/ISBN/961-6573-03-9/peric.pdf>

Sindiga, I. (1999). *Tourism and African Development: Change and Challenge of Tourism in Kenya*. Hampshire: Ashgate.

Sharpley, R. (2009/2010). *The Myth of Sustainable Tourism*. Centre for Sustainable Development. Working Papers Series 2009/2010 – No.4 http://www.uclan.ac.uk/schools/built_natural_environment/research/csd/files/CSD_Working_Paper_4_Sustainable_Tourism_Sharpley.pdf

Scheyvens, R. (2002). *Tourism for Development: Empowering Communities*. Prentice Hall, Harlow, Essex, UK

Sharpley, R. (2003). *Tourism, Modernization and Development on the Island of Cyprus: Challenges and Policy Responses*. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol.11, No.2 and3, 246-265.

Song, R. (2004). *Thoughts on Constructing an Ecotourism Accreditation Program in China*. *Journal of Guilin Institute of Tourism* V 15 N1, 56–61.

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2003) *Small and medium size enterprises in countries in transition*. ECE/TRADE/337 OPA/AC.32/1 United Nations, Geneva (Switzerland). http://www.insme.org/insme-newsletter/2004/file_eallegati/newsletter_documents/Small%20and%20Medium-Sized%20Enterprises%20in%20Countries%20in%20Transition.pdf

Uribe, R.V and Lofthouse, V. (2006). Across the pond: A comparison of the Mexican and British SMEs and their dealings with sustainability. Proceedings

at The Corporate Responsibility Research Conference -2006.

UNCSD, (2002). Sustainable Tourism- Turning The Tide. Towards Earth Summit 2002. Economic Briefing No. 4
<http://www.earthsummit2002.org/es/issues/tourism/tourism.pdf>

UN Commission on Sustainable Development, (1999). Sustainable Tourism: A Non- Governmental Organisation Perspective. Seventh Session 19-30 April 1999,
<http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/ngo4.pdf>

Veal, A. (1998). *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism: A Practical Guide*, (2nd Ed). London: Pitman.

Wall, G. (1997). *Tourism Development, and Growth*. Edited by Wahab, S and Piggran, J.J, (2005). Talor and Francis e-Library

Wall, G. (2006). Recovering from SARS: the case of Toronto tourism. Mansfeld, Y and Pizam, A (Eds.), *Tourism, security, and safety from theory to practice*, 143–152. Burlington, MA: Elsevier– Butterworth-Heinemann

World Bank. (1998). *Ingenious knowledge for development: a framework for action*. Knowledge and Learning Centre, African Region, World Bank. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank

Wilson, S., Fesenmaier, D., Fesenmaier, J. & Van Es, J. (2001). Factors for Success in Rural Tourism Development, *Journal of Travel Research*, 40, 132–138.

Warren, D.M. (1991). *Using Indigenous Knowledge for Agricultural Development*.

World Bank Discussion Paper 127. Washington, D.C.

Zapata-Campos, M.J. (2008). *Public-Private Collaboration in Spanish Tourism*. Balancing Legitimacy and Effectiveness in Tourism Partnership. Doctoral Thesis. Alicante, Spain: Departamento De Sociologia II, Universitat d' Alacant.