

Cultural and Heritage Tourism as an Alternative Rural Livelihood Diversification Strategy for Communities Living Adjacent to the Sehlabathebe National Park in Lesotho

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Abstract

Risk, uncertainty and impoverishment of the factors for production have changed rural development strategies which were traditionally based on agricultural activities. The objective of the study was to examine the impact of cultural and heritage tourism as a basic strategy for rural survival and active social process in which households construct diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities for survival and well-being in Sehlabathebe National Park. The study adopted a mixed method design. Through stratified random sampling researchers administered questionnaires to 286 households in 12 villages and conducted in-depth interviews to a snowball sample of 11 experts. The results show that diversification of rural livelihoods using cultural and heritage tourism was found to be an important element in catering for tourist's interests. Despite the importance of cultural and heritage tourism in livelihood diversification, its impact was found to be low in reducing house vulnerability and poverty. This paper contributes to the current discourses on cultural and heritage tourism as a tool for reducing shocks, vulnerability and poverty in the rural areas as to achieve household food security. Hence, the ownership of property such as land or livestock or a collection of different activities can give sufficient remuneration for survival.

Keywords: Diversification; livelihoods; development; cultural and heritage tourism; poverty

Introduction

Livelihood diversification is recognised as a basic strategy of rural survival and an active social process in which households construct an increasingly diverse portfolio of activities and diverse social support capabilities for survival and improvement of their well-being (Avila-Foucat & Rodrigue-Robayo, 2018; Jayaweera, 2010; Khatun & Roy, 2016; Loison, 2015). It is a pervasive and enduring phenomenon which involves a sectorial shift from farm to non-farm activities within the rural areas (Ellis, 2000; Loison, 2015). It is increasingly viewed as one of the tools for poverty alleviation and economic growth in developing countries (Nyathi et al., 2018). Traditional rural livelihoods are fast disappearing because of natural resource decline, population explosion and modernisation, hence 40-45% of an average African household income is generated from non-farm activities (Booyens et al., 2018; Olayiwola, 2013). Diversification is a positive strategy for reducing vulnerability, shocks and poverty and is an effective mechanism for reducing the depletion of resources (Moshi, 2016). It is a strategy for coping with income variability, surviving distress under abating conditions and climate variability and change (Adiya et al., 2017). It is an important strategy used by rural people for sustainable livelihoods. However, in spite of what is known about the extent to which

diversification is a necessary and ongoing strategy employed by rural people, it is not yet clear how diversification contributes to survival and asset accumulation (Hussein & Nelson, 1998).

While the poor are forced into diversification to cope with risk, the rich diversify to increase their welfare because they have capacity to access them (FAO, 2015). Diversification, therefore, is an involuntary response to crisis to the poor, but to the rich it is a proactive household decision to reduce risk by accumulating wealth. Livelihood strategies in the rural economy are usually a combination of natural resource use and natural assets, and land is the main factor to the transformation of livelihood strategies for poorest peasant households (Lepper & Goebel, 2010; Yang et al., 2018). Traditional rural livelihoods are disappearing due to natural resource decline, climate pressure and, also modernization (Nsom et al., 2022; Massoud et al., 2016). Agricultural production levels can no longer adequately cater especially for the teeming African population with currently 223 million people malnourished while climate change has further reduced Sub-Saharan Africa to the lowest producer of food in the world (Oluwatayo & Ojo, 2016). The task of poverty alleviation in Africa has become a moving target as the number of poor and malnourished people keeps on increasing (Oluwatayo & Ojo, 2016).

In the past, communities were able to survive through subsistence farming but now because of population and climate change, it is harder to survive, as a result, there is an urgent need for an alternative sustainable livelihood strategy (Snyman, 2012). Though tourism is not a panacea for poverty reduction in Africa, there is evidence that it has brought more benefits to the poor than critics often assert (Overseas Development Institute, 2006). Hence, this paper focuses on Sehlabathebe National Park (SNP) which belongs to the Government of Lesotho as per the Land Act of 1979. However, its control, management and administration is done by the Ministry of Tourism Environment and Culture (ICOMOS, 2013). The Park has a superlative natural beauty and the pre-glacial weathering of sandstone has naturally sculptured the rocks in amazing forms and shapes. The spectacular meandering rivers with oxbow lakes flow into a gorge forming a beautiful waterfall. The beauty and diversity of plants with colorful flowers grace Summer and Spring. The Park is well known as a Global Centre of Plant Diversity and endemism, exceptional natural beauty with its rolling high altitude grasslands and pristine steep-sided river valleys (IUCN, 2013; MTEC, 2017). High altitude makes the Park an important centre of plant endemism with 515 plant species (MTEC, 2017). Sehlabathebe National Park (SNP) is a nesting habitat for the globally endangered Bearded Vulture and Cape Vulture and is part of the biggest protected area (249.313ha) in the Southern Africa's Great Escarpment. The capacity to manage the park especially on the tourism aspect is very limited. Whilst the presence of a park manager is acceptable, but observations are that technical and support staff are hardly available onsite. Currently, there is a joint management plan in place, however its implementation has been impeded by inadequate staffing and financial resources (IUCN, 2013). The promulgation of a national park has threatened rural livelihoods, no benefits have accrued to the community and the failure for local communities to participate in conservation and tourism activities.

The main objective was to examine the impact of cultural and heritage tourism as a basic strategy for rural survival and active social process in which households construct diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities for survival and well-being in Sehlabathebe National Park. More specifically the paper sought to explore the impact of cultural and heritage tourism on livelihood diversification with particular focus on the economic component of tourism. Therefore, this paper contributes to livelihood diversification discourse as it explores the issue of cultural and heritage tourism as a livelihood diversification strategy at a mixed World Heritage Site.

Literature review

The sustainable rural livelihoods framework

Diversification as a livelihood strategy is defined as a process in which the person or the rural family unit builds a group of activities and goods looking for better ways of living (Padilha & Hoff, 2011). There are many ways in which a household can be empowered to achieve sustainable livelihood security. The ownership of property, such as land or livestock, acquiring fishing or grazing rights and getting steady employment that gives sufficient remuneration or through a collection of different activities. The increased emphasis on rationalisation and the emphasis on profit and efficiency has forced rural communities to adopt certain strategies in order to survive. Thus, rural households have either abandoned farming and migrated or adjusted to the new economic realities. For instance, some rural households have abandoned the rural areas and migrated to urban areas. However, those who chose to remain in the rural areas, the challenges of making a living still persist (Leu, 2019).

Rural households that are endowed with a mix of available economic opportunities have used tourism entrepreneurship to complement the existing economic opportunities. For instance, tourism is often seen as a tool for poverty alleviation and community development. The use of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is now perceived as a strategy for rural livelihoods diversification by supplementing insufficient agricultural productivity (Giampiccoli & Kalis, 2012; Lenao, 2014). CBT is a form of sustainable tourism whereby tourism is locally owned, managed and controlled for the benefit of the local community in which tourism occurs (Jugmohan, Spencer & Steyn, 2016; Lusby & Eow, 2015). The approach actively promotes local communities' participation in the tourism sector because tourism occurs on their land and is based on their cultural and natural assets (Jugmohan *et al.*, 2016; Lusby & Eow, 2015). Therefore, CBT can be viewed as a strategy for livelihood diversification due to its capability and strength to provide diversified economic sources to the local community (Amir, Osman, Bachok, Ibrahim & Zen, 2017). Nonetheless, many CBT projects in developing countries lack capacity building in accessing market and financial management which are often the key challenges in the implementation stage.

Regeneration of rural areas through livelihood diversification

Sub-Saharan Africa is peculiar for the much diversity of its environment and people; and its cultural heritage and natural areas are key value propositions to tourists (Gumede & Ezeuduji, 2021). In most African destinations there is a lot of competition for heritage products which are usually similar making the environment highly competitive. Certain countries have geopolitical and historical backgrounds that are unique for the growth of heritage tourism. Tourism has long been considered a potential means for socio-economic development and regeneration of rural areas through livelihood diversification and mention in particular is made of those affected by the decline of traditional agrarian activities (Kuuder, 2021). Most rural areas have used tourism as a means for local economic development due to its environmental and socio-cultural benefits. Hence, tourism development has become a key for community sustainability. Thus, tourism has been documented as an economic development agent as it creates employment within the rural communities and creates small and medium size tourism enterprises (Matiku, Zuwarimwe & Tshipala, 2020).

Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) is designed to empower poor communities to set priorities and make decisions for the development of their natural assets to promote conservation and sustain livelihoods at the same time (Dressler, Buscher, Schoon, Brockington, Hayes, Kull, McCarthy & Stresthay, 2010). The approach is based on the assumption that local communities conserve a resource only if it generates benefits that enhance their quality of life. Some studies have indicated that local communities are concerned

with their identity and livelihoods. For instance, Nsom et al., (2022) concluded that small-scale fishing, perceived as a way of life for fishers, was under threat, yet there was limited evidence of concerted efforts to plan and manage the potential diversification processes into tourism. Nonetheless, tourism is favoured as a diversification strategy since it combines conservation objectives with the generation of economic benefits for rural communities.

CBNRM opts for economic benefits although the initial motivation for the programme was conservation (Thakadu, 2005). The approach seeks to empower and diversify the livelihoods of the local communities through giving them back the stewardship of natural resources. However, some scholars complain that the design and implementation of CBNRM is so reconfigured that it is now failing to engage in complex issues of sustainability and social inequality and instead focuses on transferable, measurable and predictable outcomes. Consequently, poverty alleviation and conservation are compromised. In Nepal, CBNRM worsened poverty while in Zimbabwe initially, it was successful under Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) before it was hijacked by the local elite (Dressler et al., 2010).

The market-based approach of public private partnership (PPP) is still embryonic in national park management but so far has promoted vibrant national parks and associated sustainable tourism (Ngwakwe & Mokgalong, 2016). PPP has provided a new alternative way of heritage financing coming from private sector (Jelincic et al., 2017) by establishing and promoting small entrepreneurs with multiple employees, small tour companies, creating considerable employment in certain communities. In the process local and sustainable jobs are created to enhance the quality of household livelihoods and reduce poverty (Larsen et al., 2019). However, the challenge is some WHSs are often better known globally than locally, hence the potential for sustainable livelihoods is often wrongly conceptualised and practised (Brown & Hay-Edie, 2013). The solution to diversify livelihoods lies in improved tourism infrastructure and robust marketing (MTEC, 2017). The key strength of this strategy is in the nexus of people, parks and poverty. It enhances, improves livelihoods through a diversity of income-generating activities.

Promoting sustainable livelihoods through tourism

Researchers such as Matiku et al. (2020) have analysed livelihood diversification using direct and indirect approaches to economic capital contribution of community-driven tourism project. On one hand direct income is classified as the income received from the direct provision of services by either the seller or service provider. On the other hand, indirect income is made up of group savings earnings, shares or dividends or even trust funds. In order for communities to fully benefit from tourism, they need to go beyond the simple management of their own resources but control them. So, through community based tourism communities can be self-reliant, financially stable and become empowered. However, most community based tourism projects have failed due to the failure to reap maximum benefits. Other reasons for failure include external control mechanisms and external management. In some cases, communities have no capacity to manage and operate community projects. Despite the above mentioned challenges, community projects can be economically viable if they are initiated and controlled by the community in order to sustain livelihoods and reduce poverty. In South Africa, tourism has been used in promoting development and conservation of natural resources in various development platforms. The Makuleke community pursued an eco-tourism joint venture with private lodges to conserve the pristine nature of the park and generate employment and significant economic benefits for the community (Matiku et al., 2020).

Methods

This study adopts the philosophical underpinning of pragmatism which supports work that combines quantitative and qualitative methods (Doyle et al., 2009; Morgan, 2007). Fundamentally, pragmatism is a philosophy which enjoys re-formulating methods and principles to solve concrete social problems (Kalolo, 2015). The mixed method design chosen for the study is the Convergent Parallel design, whose purpose is to obtain different but complementary data to answer a single research question. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected concurrently and given equal weight, analysed separately and integrated at the level of overall interpretation (Halcom & Hickman, 2015; Salmon, 2016).

The complexity of human behavior can only be more accurately portrayed by the use of mixed methods design because it is not only rewarding and rich in data, but also powerful in explanation (Gallaher & WinklerPrins, 2015; Yee-Lee et al., 2011). The research population which comprises 12 rural villages of Sehlabathebe National Park constitute a complex social setting which requires analysis that is supported by diverse perspectives which can only be derived from mixed methods research (Sammonset al., 2005). The targeted population comprises 12 rural villages with 792 households of Khomo-Phatsoa Council (Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, 2006). These are the villages that are adjacent Sehlabathebe National Park.

The study adopted stratified random sampling, a probability sampling technique which is utilised when the population on which sampling is applied is heterogeneous as a whole but can be divided into homogenous strata (Pirzadehet al., 2011). The population of the study has 792 households which comprises 12 villages. The population is heterogeneous. Each village has a different distance from the Park and is headed by a different chief. However, there is relative homogeneity in each village which forms a stratum which makes the stratified random sampling technique for this household survey appropriate. From a population of 792 households, according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970)'s table of sample size determination, the sample size is 260 with Confidence level of 95%. When 10% (26) non-response rate was added, the final sample amounted to 286 (Gillet al., 2010). The Krejcie and Morgan (1970)'s formula below was also used to get the sample.

$$s = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

Where;

s = required sample size.

X = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (0.05 = 3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 since this would provide the maximum sample size)

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as proportion (0.05)

For qualitative sampling, the researcher used both purposive and snow ball sampling respectively. Snowballing is a good sampling technique when the study is on perceptions and the participants are elites as is in this study (Dragan & Isaac-Maniu, 2013). The total sample size reached for interviews was 11. Interviews provided the interviewer with an opportunity to ask extra questions in the event that a new line of inquiry propped up during the interview. This enabled the researcher to determine whether or not participants were comfortable with the questions, also to establish their understanding of the questions. The instrument used for collecting quantitative data was the researcher-administered questionnaire. A questionnaire is a set of structured questions designed to be answered by participants on their own or through face-to-face interviews. Permission letters were sought from the Ministry of Tourism,

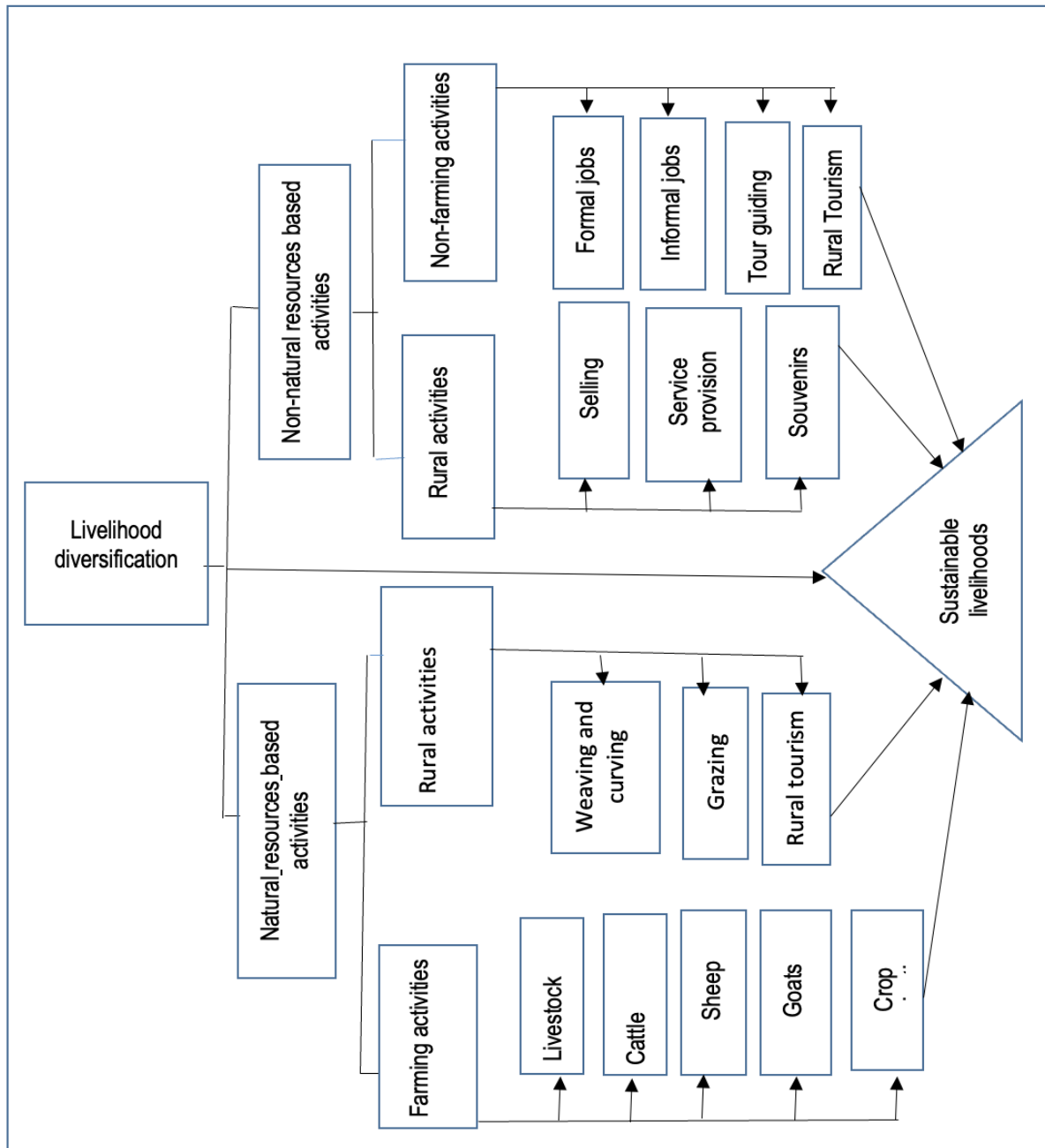
Environment and Culture, village chiefs and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Apart from that, all respondents were asked to sign informed consent forms. Data was analysed using SPSS and thematic analysis.

Results

Respondents' major sources of livelihoods

The following Figure 1 shows the sources of the community's livelihoods.

Figure 1: Sources of community's livelihoods



Source: Researcher's construction

According to Matiku et al., (2020) a household may be empowered to achieve sustainable livelihood security in many ways. It may be through ownership of property like land, livestock or having rights to grazing, fishing, through steady employment with adequate remuneration

or through varied collection of activities. In projects that have community driven tourism projects, at least one member of the family should be involved in the project. This section presents an analysis of responses on the major sources of livelihood. Figure 1 shows the participants' major sources of livelihood in 12 villages of Sehlabathebe. From the figure below, it is evident that the most common source of livelihood is livestock husbandry and the least source of livelihood is tourism business. This suggests that Sehlabathebe is largely a livestock grazing area and cultural and heritage tourism was not perceived as a major source of livelihood.

The Figure 1 above shows that households at Sehlabathebe can be empowered to achieve livelihood diversification in many ways. Livelihood diversification can be split into natural resource based livelihoods and non- natural resource based livelihoods. The natural resource based livelihoods can be further split into farming activities and rural activities. The farming activities include livestock, cattle, sheep, goats and sheep. Rural activities include, weaving and curving, grazing and rural tourism. The non-natural resources can be split into rural activities and non-farming activities. Rural activities include selling, service provision and souvenirs. The non-farming activities comprise of formal jobs, informal jobs, tour guiding and rural tourism.

One tourism-related source of livelihood is handicraft and the rest of activities were not related to tourism. This means that the majority of people survive on agricultural related activities (animal husbandry, crop farming and garden cultivation). Despite being located very close to the National park, only 2 participants cited tourism activity as a major source of livelihood. The pattern was the same across all the other 12 villages. However, tourism is a potential market for agriculture and provides business opportunities for small enterprises (Wetteji & Zerihun, 2018). A nexus between agriculture and tourism can be developed for the benefit of all Sehlabathebe villages. Arguably, such linkages have the potential to decrease absolute poverty and promote small-scale entrepreneurship (Norhazliza, 2014). From the above figure, it is evident that after seven years being designated a world heritage site, Sehlabathebe National Park has not been fully exploited.

Distance from the Sehlabathebe National Park

Table 1 below shows the selected 12 villages located within a radius of about 8 kilometers from the Sehlabathebe National Park. The ones which are very close to the park are Sehlabathebe-Lebenkeng, Letlapeng and Ha Katela and those that are far away are Ha Moshebi and Ha Sephelane.

Table 1: Distance from Sehlabathebe National Park

Name of village	Frequency	Distance from the park in km
Mavuka	30	About 2
Sehlabathebe-Lebenkeng	22	Less than 1
Letlapeng	28	Less than 1
Koung	11	Between 3 and 4
Ha Moshebi	28	Between 6 and 8
Mpharane	29	About 2
Ha Semenyane	34	Between 3 and 4km
Ha Edward	27	About 5
Ha Sephelane	25	Between 6 and 8
Thamathu	37	Between 3 and 4
Ha Katela	8	About 2
Mafika-Lisiu	7	Between 3 and 4
Total	286	

The socio-economic impact of the National Park on communities is generally determined by the distance between the village and the park usually because the park provides a market to the communities. Hence, proximity to market has a significant influence on livelihood diversification and increases non-farm employment for adjacent communities and probability of a household diversifying in non-farm activities (Khatun & Roy, 2012; Rahut & Scharf, 2012). It is, therefore, expected that those villages closest to the park (Sehlabathebe-Lebenkeng and Letlapeng) should have a higher likelihood of livelihood diversification than those furthest (Ha Moshebi and Ha Sephelane).

Cultural and heritage tourism and livelihood diversification

This section is based on the analysis of responses on the extent to which Cultural and heritage tourism has diversified the community's livelihoods. The statement was based on a Likert scale in which the respondents had to rate on a scale 1-5 where, 1 = strongly disagree (SD), 2 = disagree (D), 3 = neutral (N), 4 = agree (A), or 5 = strongly agree (SA).

Table 2: Summary of statistics on livelihood diversification through cultural and heritage tourism (in %)

Number	Name of village	Our livelihoods have been diversified through cultural and heritage tourism					Total
		SD	D	N	A	SA	
1	Mavuka	46.6	16.6	6.6	3.3	26.9	100
2	Sehlabathebe- Lebenkeleng	32	54.5	9.0	4.5	0	100
3	Letlapeng	3.5	64.2	7.1	17.8	7.4	100
4	Koung	45.2	27.7	18.1	9.0	0	100
5	Ha Moshebi	10.7	60.7	3.5	18.0	7.1	100
6	Mpharane	48.2	27.5	3.8	13.7	6.8	100
7	Ha Semenyane	2.9	50.0	11.7	32.5	2.9	100
8	Ha Edward	11.1	48.2	7.4	33.3	0	100
9	Ha Sephelane	24.0	12.0	12.0	40.0	12.0	100
10	Thamathu	10.8	29.7	13.5	21.6	24.4	100
11	Ha Katela	0	37.5	12.5	0	50.0	100
12	Mafika-Lisiu	0	71.4	0	14.2	14.4	100

The Table 2 above shows the extent in frequency to which study participants concurred with the statement that cultural and heritage tourism has diversified their livelihoods. Overall, the participants disagree to the statement that cultural and heritage tourism has diversified their life 174 (60.8%) compared to 87 (30.4%) with 25(8.7%) indicating a neutral view. There is significant difference between those villages whose livelihoods were diversified and those not diversified. As reflected by Table 2 above, they are only 2 (17%) villages, Ha Sephelane (40%) agreeing and Ha Katela (50%) strongly agreeing out of 12 which had greater proportion of households agreeing that their livelihoods were diversified by cultural and heritage tourism. The other 10 (83%) villages' view was that cultural and heritage tourism did not diversify their livelihoods. However, both villages (Ha Sephelane and Ha Katela) have indicated (in Table 2 above) that their major source of livelihoods is Livestock husbandry. It is possible that cultural and heritage tourism can contribute to livelihood diversification without being a major source of livelihood. Ha Katela village includes buying and selling and other sources which suggests an element of livelihood diversification. Ha Katela village is within 2 kilometre radius of the Sehlabathebe National Park. However, Ha Sephelane village is one of the furthest. This suggests that distance had no effect to this village.

Livelihood diversification statistics by village

This section presents summary statistics for participation in tourism and conservation. The Table 3. below shows the statistics.



Table 3: Community participation summary statistics

Community participation in tourism			Community participation in conservation		
	Median	IQR		Median	IQR
Q1. Taking leading role as entrepreneurs	3	[2-4]	Q8. Taking leading role in conservation	4	[2-4]
Q2. Taking leading role as workers	2	[2-3]	Q9. Taking leading role as workers	2	[2-4]
Q3. Having a voice in decision making	4	[2-4]	Q10. A voice in decision making in conservation	4	[2-4]
Q4. Community is consulted	4	[2-4]	Q11. Community is consulted	4	[2-4]
Q5. Final decision by Park	4	[3-5]	Q12. Final decision by Park	4	[3-5]
Q6. No participation in tourism	2	[2-4]	Q13. No participation in conservation	2	[2-4]
Q7. Financial support	2	[1-2.25]	Q14. Financial support	2	[1-3]
Median score for all items	3	[2-4]	Median Score for all items	3	[2-4]

The above statistics reflect very similar views between participation in tourism and conservation activities. However, there are some slight differences. For instance, the respondents were taking a leading role in conservation (Q8) as indicated by median 4 while there were not in tourism (M-3). While the participants were not taking a leading role as workers in both categories (M-2), there was more agreement in responses to tourism participation (Q2) as indicated by a smaller IQR (2-3). Another variation is in response to financial support (Q7 & Q14). The IQR (1-2.25) for the tourism category again shows that the situation was worse than in conservation. However, the general view as reflected by all the statistics (M-3) was that there were problems in involving the villagers in both tourism and conservation activities. On the one hand a village livelihood diversification median score of 1 or 2 indicates that the study participants generally “disagree” to the statement that Cultural and heritage tourism diversified their livelihood. On the other hand, village medians score of 4 or 5 shows that the members of the village generally “agree” to the statement. The Table 4 below represents the median and Interquartile Range (IQR) of the diversification of livelihood scores for the 12 villages. The Table 4 below presents the participation summary statistics for each village to establish their respective participation levels.

Table 4. Community participation summary statistics by village

Number	Name of village	Participation in tourism average scores		Participation in conservation average scores	
		Median	IQR	Median	IQR
1	Mavuka	2	[1-5]	3	[1-5]
2	Sehlabathebe-Lebenkeleng	2	[2-4]	2	[2-4]
3	Letlapeng	3	[2-4]	3	[2-4]
4	Koung	2	[2-4]	2	[2-4]
5	Ha Moshebi	3	[3-5]	4	[3-5]
6	Mpharane	2	[2-4]	2	[1-3]
7	Ha Semenyane	3	[2-4]	4	[2-4]
8	Ha Edward	4	[2-4]	4	[2-4]
9	Ha Sephelane	4	[2-4]	4	[2-4]
10	Thamathu	4	[2-5]	3	[2-5]
11	Ha Katela	3	[2-5]	3.5	[2-5]
12	Mafika-Lisiu	3	[2-4]	4	[2-5]

The level of participation in both tourism and conservation activities was lowest (M-2) in Sehlabathebe-Lebenkeleng, Koung and Mpharane while it was highest (M-4) in Ha Edward and Ha Sephelane. Sehlabathebe-Lebenkeleng (M-2) and Letlapeng (M-3) are both adjacent to the park yet their participation levels were lower. Interestingly, the furthest villages, Ha

Moshebi (M-3; M-4) and Sephelane (M-4; M-4) were among those with high participation levels. Another outstanding statistics is Mavuka village’s IQR (1-5) which is the highest for both tourism and conservation participation. This is evidence of mixed views with regard to participation which is consistent with a neutral median (3) for conservation. It also suggests inequality in participation opportunities. Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar, Marzuki & Umar (2018) warn that such lack of participation is typical of the fortress approach, where there is a difference in values between locals and conservationists, hence local communities are never invited to participate in tourism leading to perpetuation of poverty.

Factors influencing diversification in Sehlabathebe villages

Multivariate Logistic regression model is used to find the relationship (association) and quantify the strength of association between some independent variables and the dependent variable when the dependent variable is Binary (has two outcomes). In this case, the two outcomes are livelihood diversified and not diversified. Its main strength is that it takes into account the presence of other independent variables that may obscure the relationship between an independent variable and dependent variable. The technique was chosen for this study because the dependent variable is dichotomous, and the model does not require normality of distribution (Hyeoun-Ae, 2013). The two villages that had their livelihood diversified were Ha Sephelane and Ha Katela and the selected villages that did not have their livelihood diversified were Sehlabathebe-Lebenkeng and Koung since they had similar number of residents. Therefore, the data for these three villages was used to build the Multivariate Logistic Regression model. The regression coefficients are interpreted as odds ratios in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Odds Ratio (OR) interpretation of Logistic Regression parameters

Odds Ratio (OR)	Interpretation
<1	Factor reduces the likelihood of Livelihood diversification
=1	Factor has no effect on Livelihood diversification
>1	Factor increases the likelihood of livelihood diversification

Table 6: Logistic Regression model results

Livelihood Diversification	Odds Ratio(OR)	Std. Err(SD)	Z	p> z	[95%Conf. Interval]
Age Group					
18-35(base)	1(empty)				
36-55	2.03	1.01	7.37	0.024	[1.11-4.95]
>56	0.72	0.14	5.65	0.010	[0.58-0.94]
Education					
None(base)	1(empty)				
Primary	2.47	1.97	5.34	0.04	[1.50-7.8]
Secondary	4.14	1.34	3.18	0.03	[2.09-6.56]
Diploma/certificate	8.5	3.23	4.23	0.01	[3.27-19.9]
Degree or higher	10.2	10.03	3.79	0.02	[5.77-14.84]
Distance from SNP					
1km or less(base)	1(empty)				
2-4km	0.88	0.03	3.24	0.002	[0.55-0.97]
5-6km	0.57	0.12	5.34	0.003	[0.26-0.75]
7km or more	0.39	0.02	2.11	0.002	[0.07-0.86]
Land Size					
1ha or less(base)	1(empty)				
2-5ha	5.13	1.23	0.01	0.981	[2.02-7.12]
6-7ha	8.19	0.21	0.20	0.860	[3.81-13.14]
8ha or more	11.7	2.78	1.67	0.633	[7.24-22.36]
Constant	0.12	0.89	1.09	1.781	[0-3.24]

The odds of an event are the ratio of the probability that an event will occur to the probability that it will not occur. Odds Ratio (OR) therefore is comparative measure of two odds relative to different events (Hyeoun-Ae, 2013). The results for the Logistic Regression model are presented in Table 6 above.

Age and livelihood diversification

The odds of livelihood diversification for residents in the 36-55 years' age group are 2.03 times that of the residents in the baseline category of 18-35 years (OR = 2.03, 95% CI = (1.11-4.95) after controlling for education, distance from the Park and Land size. This is statistically significant at 5% level of significance ($z = 7.37$, $p\text{-value} = 0.024$). However, the odds of livelihood diversification for older residents above 56 years are 28% lower compared to the baseline category of 18-35 years (OR = 0.72, 95% CI = (0.58-0.94). This was statistically significant at 5% level of significance ($z = 5.65$, $p\text{-value} = 0.01$). Therefore, age is a significant predictor of livelihood diversification with residents in the middle age group of 36-55 more likely to experience diversified livelihood choices due to cultural and heritage tourism compared to the 18-35 years. The odds of experiencing diversified livelihood choices for residents with primary level of education are 2.47 times that of residents with no formal education (OR = 2.47, 95% CI = (1.50-7.8)) after adjusting for age, distance from the National park and land size. This is statistically significant at 5% level of significance ($z = 5.34$, $p\text{-value} = 0.04$). The likelihood of having diversified livelihood choices had higher odds among residents holding a degree or higher qualification (OR = 10.2, 95% CI = (5.77-14.84) when compared to people with no formal education. Distance from the National Park is a significant predictor of experiencing diversified livelihood choices. Residents who stay 2-4 km had [1-0.88 = 12%] lower odds of experiencing diversified choices compared to those who stay close to the National Park in the 1km or less distance radius (OR = 0.88, 95% CI = (0.55-0.97) after controlling for age, education and land size. This is statistically significant at 5% level of significance ($z = 3.24$, $p\text{-value} = 0.002$).

Residents staying furthest from the National Park, 7 km or more had the least odds of experiencing diversified livelihood choices compared to those residing in the 1 km or less distance radius (OR = 0.39, 95% CI = (0.07-0.86). This is also statistically significant at 5% level of significance ($z = 2.11$, $p\text{-value} = 0.002$). Overall, there is an inverse relationship between increasing distance from the National Park and experiencing diversified livelihood choices. However, residents with large hectares of land [8 hectares or more] had increased odds of having diversified livelihood choices compared to those with smaller pieces of land, that is, 1 hectare or less (OR = 11.7, 95% CI = (7.24-22.3). This was not statistically significant ($z = 1.67$, $p\text{-value} = 0.633$). This is contrary to Avila-Foucat & Rodriguez-Robayo's (2018) findings which revealed that those households with more land are less likely to diversify into non-farm activities, but instead intensify farming.

Discussion and implications

Livelihood diversification is a very important strategy in reducing shocks, vulnerability and poverty in the rural areas (Nyathi, et al., 2018). For instance, climate vulnerability can be used for climate mitigation and vulnerability. Tourism is a very important livelihood asset that can be used for solving rural economic and social problems. In this case, tourism entrepreneurship is frequently promoted as a livelihood strategy for indigenous people living in areas with limited economic opportunities (Leu, 2019). Thus, rural communities have used tourism for diversifying their livelihoods. In this study, communities want to be involved in village tours, horse riding, heritage conservation, handicrafts and providing homestays. Exploring tourism as a diversification strategy has a potential to change the community's perceptions on the use of physical, natural and human capital (Nsom et al., 2022).

The ability for the communities to improve their livelihoods is dependent on access to markets whereby tourists are able to stop and buy products and services from the community. Currently there is no functional craft centre. For instance, most existing approaches to tourism entrepreneurship in the Swedish north look at tourism through a rural restructuring lens where

tourism is investigated through its ability to provide steady full-time employment and take over declining sectors (Leu, 2019). Communities should be allowed to hire out their horses and be given an opportunity to earn a living out of crafts and arts. In that way, they will have job independence, in the form of control over working hours, which is considered as a contributing factor in choosing to become tourist entrepreneurs (Nsom et al., 2022). For instance, in Europe there has been an increase in the demand for indigenous products and experiences. Home stays can be provided as a unique community based tourism product which is popular for tourists on the South African side (Gumede & Ezeuduji, 2021). The use of multiple ways of income generation is important for local people.

In order to have a truer understanding of tourism as a livelihood strategy, the entire physical and human environment should be taken into consideration including the activities and social relations of a place. Once the community understands the value of rural tourism and its contributive potential to their livelihoods, they are likely to preserve the environment (Padilha and Hoff, 2011). The odds of having diversified livelihood choices increased with increasing level of education compared to the baseline of residents with no formal education. Access to existing capital, such as knowledge of the surrounding nature and access to fishing waters, an indigenous right in parts of the Swedish mountains, was also a driving factor for starting a tourism venture (Leu, 2019).

Distance from the park has implication on the market accessibility. Proximity to market has a significant influence on livelihood diversification and increases non-farm employment for rural households (Khatun & Roy, 2012; Nyati et al., 2018). Market access and proximity increases the probability of a household diversifying in non-farm activities. However, the poor are likely to engage low-return non-farm activities while the rich go for the high-return (Rahut & Scharf, 2012). Market accessibility is enhanced by improved transport and communication infrastructure in rural areas (Loison, 2015). Easy access to market is important for both buying and selling of goods and services (Khatun & Roy, 2012). Rural households with small landholding enjoy better opportunities in diversification because such poor people tend to diversify more towards various livelihood activities for them to earn subsistence income (Swain & Batabyal, 2016). However, Rahut & Scharf (2012) argue that households with small pieces of land in developing countries are not necessarily poor because they can diversify in remunerative non-employment opportunities while those with more land are likely to diversify or intensify within the farming sector provided they have the necessary physical capital for the production (Avila-Foucat & Rodriguez-Robayo, 2018; Rahut & Scharf, 2012).

Family characteristics also do influence livelihood activities. Family size is a key factor for livelihood diversification, in a larger household, some family members remain in traditional farming while others may engage in non-farming activities (Khatun & Roy, 2012). According to Anshiso & Shiferaw (2016), if the total family size increases by one member, the probability of diversifying into non-farm activities increases by 6.2%, but if the added member is a dependant, the probability of diversifying decreases by 1.95%. Social capital enhances access to information and social networks that may facilitate entry into market niches and credit and savings opportunities (Avila-Foucat & Rodriguez-Robayo, 2018; Rahut & Scharf, 2012). Credit facilities can also be availed by the rural policy development framework because it plays a significant role in fostering or constraining rural livelihood diversification and well-being of the rural poor (Loison, 2015). However, the overarching determinant is the strategy adopted by the local authority.

Community members suggested that the Park should give back to the community through financial support to start businesses. The above quote suggests that even that little was not forthcoming. Hence, lack of financial capital can cripple livelihood diversification. Availability of at least credit facilities enhances household participation in non-farm activities

(Nyathi et al., 2018). Heritage tourism has the capability to promote empowerment because tourism revenue has the potential to stimulate entrepreneurial development that is compatible with biodiversity conservation (Borgeset al., 2011; Ndoro, 2015). It is, therefore, a catalyst for socio-economic development and enhancement of poor rural area regeneration (Jaafar et al., 2014). The villagers said that for cultural and heritage tourism to diversify their livelihoods, they need to be involved in decision making of the National Park. They further claimed that currently new tourism policies are introduced without being consulted.

Cultural tourism encourages local communities to preserve their cultural heritage and increases their awareness of other cultures, enhances an interest in native arts and crafts and a desire to protect and restore their cultural landmarks (Nkwanyana et al., 2016; Omar, 2013). It also increases awareness of their heritage and interpretation of the historic image and importance of saving local historic resources (Green, 2010; Kim, 2016). Heritage tourism avails an opportunity for peace, understanding and greater knowledge and gives support to handcrafts and cultural activities (Saikia, 2015; Turker, 2013). Establishing heritage tourism in a rural area can foster pride, create a sense of ownership of a place and help reduce rural-urban migration (Muthembu & Mutambara, 2018). According to Ondicho (2017), tourism has the potential to promote women entrepreneurial skills, increase their capacities and reduce their vulnerabilities.

Heritage tourism promotes increased availability of recreation and public facilities and connects locals with the outside world (Latip et al., 2018; Ndoro, 2015). It improves skills and rural infrastructure and provides an opportunity for people to experience their culture in depth. Effectively managing the diversification process ultimately ensures the adoption of better livelihood strategies which will produce sustainable outcomes instead of outcomes that may not be sufficient to reverse livelihood crisis resulting from the uncertainties and complexities associated with diversification (Kimbu et al., 2019). The conceptualisation of livelihood with emphasis on material aspects and analysis of livelihoods in neo-liberal terms of economic investments and gains reduces livelihood to the mobilisation and deployment of social and organisational resources for the pursuit of economic and environmental goals (de Haan, 2012).

The assets are also perceived in a very economic and materialistic way which neglects the relational, socially embedded and contested nature of assets (Sakdapolrak, 2014). But poverty is not necessarily a matter of income or material well-being, many livelihood strategies are in fact efforts to address both social and material goals. This tendency to focus on material assets underplays the importance of institutions and policies. The overall concept of livelihood is ethnocentric, therefore is not easily translatable into livelihood interventions to alleviate poverty although it tends to offer a comprehensive analytical tool (Hautala, 2013; Levine, 2014; Mdee, 2002). SLF is not specific on how capital assets can be analysed and measured and how the relationships among assets may change from time to time. This paper contributes to the current discourses on cultural and heritage tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation. The use of heritage tourism as a livelihood diversification strategy is very important in reducing shocks, vulnerability and poverty in the rural areas in order to achieve household food security. Hence, the ownership of property, such as land or livestock, acquiring fishing or grazing rights and getting steady employment or a collection of different activities can give sufficient remuneration for survival.

Conclusion

Agriculture has traditionally been the main factors of production in the rural areas. However, uncertainty and climate change risks have changed the basic strategy of rural survival. The conceptualisation of livelihood with emphasis on material aspects and analysis of livelihoods in neo-liberal terms of economic investments and gains reduces livelihood to the mobilisation

and deployment of social and organisational resources for the pursuit of economic and environmental goals. The assets are also perceived in a very economic and materialistic way which neglects the relational, socially embedded and contested nature of assets. But poverty is not necessarily a matter of income or material well-being, many livelihood strategies are in fact efforts to address both social and material goals. Despite the huge potential of cultural and heritage tourism, the major sources of livelihood in Sehlabathebe were livestock husbandry and crop farming. The factors significantly influencing livelihood diversification were age, education level and distance from the park, market accessibility, funding, infrastructure and community involvement. Land size was insignificant. The respondents wanted to be involved in tourism activities like village tours and employment which they believed would promote livelihood diversification but they were not involved. Market gardening and gastronomy among others are potential businesses that can be generated by the community to diversify livelihoods. The impact of cultural and heritage tourism on livelihood diversification was therefore overall insignificant. A substantial number of households remain impoverished yet they are the traditional custodians of the mixed World Heritage Site, Sehlabathebe National Park. The paper recommends the provision of education, awareness and funding opportunities to local communities to enable them to showcase and sell their services to the tourist and start generating significant supplementary income. In light of this, as part of the inclusive tourism product, the park management should organise village tours with tourists in order to give local communities opportunities to sell their wares. This could increase local communities' autonomy and reduce dependence on the park resources.

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