



The impacts of coastal tourism on the Wild Coast community: a case study of Elliotdale

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Abstract

Tourism plays a significant role in generating employment for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled people within communities. Coastal tourism has been identified by the government a niche area with potential to create employment, particularly in the context of rural communities. The purpose of the study was to explore coastal tourism impacts on the Wild Coast community of Elliotdale. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research methods. A simple random sampling was employed in the study. A questionnaire was administered to collect data from the local community of Elliotdale. The findings of the study underscore that there is lack of awareness in relation tourism amongst the community members of Elliotdale. Consequently, the lack of facilities to enable tourism development were identified as an impediment to accommodating high number of tourists. The lack of community involvement in tourism development processes was also identified as one of hindering factors to the socio-economic prosperity of the Elliotdale community. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the majority of the local community members do not have access to the Wild Coast tourism products. This study contributes to the largely under researched area of coastal tourism. The environmental, economic, socio-cultural impacts can potentially bring about positive impacts to the tourism value chain of the destination.

Keywords: Coastal tourism, Wild Coast, impacts, community, South Africa

Introduction

Honey, Vargas and Durham (2010), underscore that coastal tourism encompasses the full range of recreation, tourism and leisure activities that occur along the coastal zone and the offshore coastal waters. Moreno and Becken (2009) agree that, coastal and marine environments are generally very popular areas for outdoor recreation and tourism. Dennison (2008) asserts that the Wild Coast, which is situated in the Eastern Cape Province, has long been recognized as having vast potential for the development of the Eastern Cape Province and for the country of South Africa in general. The Wild Coast has for a long time been a neglected area of the country: as a result the region suffers from poor infrastructure provision, the slow pace of the rural economy and a high rate of unemployment (Dennison, 2008). Elliotdale (Xhosa: Xhora) is the case study area and it is a town in Amatole District Municipality in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The town lies 50 km south of Mthatha and 22 km south-east of Mqanduli. It was named after Sir Henry Elliot, who was a Chief Magistrate of the Transkei from 1891 to 1902 (HSRC, n.d.).

Honey (2007) highlights that, the theoretical nature of the development of coastal areas has implications for the social and environmental impacts of this development. The basic fundamentals to successful coastal tourism are healthy coastal habitats, clean water and a safe, secure, and enjoyable environment. The natural resources and attractiveness of coastal areas have made them popular destinations for tourists and visitors. Honey (2007) added that a healthy natural environment is a huge asset: however tourism generates an immense deal of pressure on the local environment and ecosystems, such as increased waste generation, high water usage, and emissions from road, air, and sea transport during peak seasons. The Wild Coast is



seen as an area that is economically suffering in terms of the very high levels of unemployment and poverty that is being experienced (Robinson & Philip, 2014).

Cocks, Dold and Vetter (2012) contend that, the Wild Coast is currently seen as a developmental challenge due to the combination of contradictory conditions; however despite this the Wild Coast still remains enriched with plentiful opportunities. The area is very beautiful and has one of the most unspoiled and untouched eco-systems in the world. The Wild Coast's has the potential to frequently attract new tourists to the Eastern Cape because of its natural splendour. Moreover, Dennison (2008) adds that the Wild Coast is a terrain of sheltered beaches, clifftop walks, rocky bays, rich indigenous forest, rolling hills and waterfalls. The challenge being that the area is trying to sustain and protect its natural assets while developing its potential to tourists and visitors.

A number of governmental programmes are being implemented, specifically for the region of the Wild Coast. Bennie (2011) avers that these government programmes include a wide series of programmes, with the main focuses on infrastructure development, poverty suppression, developing and sustaining of small-crafts centres and institutional development. The approach to development the Wild Coast strategy to build an interface and develop collaboration with the Spatial Development Initiatives programmes (Breetzke, Moore & Meyer, 2013). The Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) development strategy is intended to foster the community, as well as the public and private sector partnerships. Coleman and Kenyon (2017) mention that the high levels of poverty, structural weaknesses in the economy underdevelopment, and high levels of unemployment require a multi-sectoral development approach. Coleman et al. (2017) maintain that, there are a few successes in the Wild Coast due to investments from the local investors and the private sector that acknowledge local land-rental agreements and profit sharing between the investor and local community.

The Worldwide Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2011) indicates that tourism is seen to be the biggest economic contributor and the largest employment creator, not just on the Wild Coast or in South Africa but worldwide. It is also said to bring cultural pride to many communities, whereas environmentally it is seen as a tool for sustainable environment. These impacts are also known as the triple bottom line. However, the impacts of coastal tourism can either be positive or negative.

Lekaota (2017) recognizes tourism's positive impacts on education, environmental awareness, conservation, increased local economic and infrastructure development. On the other hand, tourism negatively impacts in terms of a lack of knowledge among communities about coastal tourism, a lack of community participation in the development of tourism, environmental degradation and competition over the local resources between communities and Wild Coast development. Turner (2015), states that tourism provides the economic motivation to allow for employment diversification, development of resources within the community and the potential of income. Improvements in infrastructure and services can benefit both the local communities and the tourists. Moreover, Fagence (2013) argues that the socio-cultural impacts of tourism provide opportunities for understanding of tourism by communities and also education. It is not only the volume of tourism that is important in this context, but the types of social interactions that occur between tourist and hosts. Moghimohfar and Halpenny (2016) indicate that the environmental impacts of tourism include certain typologies of tourism, such as ecotourism, wildlife tourism, nature tourism and adventure tourism, all taking place in places such as rain forests, high alpine (mountainous areas), wilderness, rivers and lakes, the marine environment and coastlines, including coastal resorts as well as rural villages. With the desire for people to experience more dependable, trustworthy and challenging experiences, their desired destinations become more remote and occupy a small amount of remaining unspoiled and natural environment left on the planet.

Water pollution, sewerage and dumping of waste in the tourism areas of the Wild Coast are problematic (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2014). Local communities can benefit from tourism along the areas: however owing to a lack of participation and a minimal understanding of



tourism, they have become part of the pollution problem. Therefore this study attempts to close the gap by opening the eyes of local communities and to familiarize the communities about the perceived benefits of tourism

Research Methodology

Research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. The research design of the current study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Creswell and Clark (2011) outline that quantitative studies generally depend on quality criteria for instance internal validity, generalizability, and reliability whereas qualitative studies have roughly comparable quality criteria of credibility, transferability, and dependability. In the current study a qualitative research technique was used to examine the attitudes, views and perceptions of communities on the impacts of coastal tourism on the Wild Coast in Elliotdale. The quantitative method was also applied to analyze the total number of respondents.

Data Collection methods

The study made use of existing data such as journals, academic books, articles and government publications. Primary data for the current study was gathered using a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was used to collect the views of the communities along the Wild Coast in Elliotdale. The study questionnaire consisted three sections; section one focused on obtaining the demographics of the residents. Their age, gender, and educational level were established. Section two aimed at analysing the tourism impacts. The aim was to analyse whether the communities benefited and point out challenges encountered by the communities. Finally, section three focused on assessing the community's participation towards the impact of coastal tourism on the WC at Elliotdale. The aim was to assess the factors that contributed to the impacts. The questionnaire comprised close-ended and open-ended questions.

Sampling

The respondents were randomly selected and the target population included local community residents who were available during the study period. The simple random sampling technique was utilised to collect data. Thompson (2012) defines simple random sampling as a sampling technique in which distinct units are selected from the population in such a way that every possible combination of units is equally likely to be the sample selected.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of the current study the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 software was utilised to analyse the results of the study. Descriptive statistics was used to explain community's perceptions regarding economic, social and environmental impacts of coastal tourism on communities of Wild Coast in Elliotdale.

Validity and Reliability

For the purpose of the current study, the measures that were embraced to ensure the findings of the study were valid and reliable are as follows:

- The questionnaire was designed based on the research questions asked in the study.
- The questionnaire was submitted to the study supervisor for editing before the data collection.
- The fieldworkers were adequately trained in administering the questionnaire efficiently.
- Ethical clearance for the research was obtained.

Findings of the study

In order to deliver a perfect tourism service or product it is imperative to understand the demographic profile of the community members, particularly those that would likely be directly



involved in the planning and delivery of the product. Therefore, this study sought to ascertain the demographic profile of the community of Elliotdale. The results are presented in the next section.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	Category	Percentage (%)
Age	18-25	18%
	26-35	14%
	36-45	12%
	46-55	53%
	56-65	3%
Gender	Female	56%
	Male	44%
Education	Primary	51%
	Secondary	29%
	Certificate/diploma	20%
Monthly income	None	56%
	R1000<	4%
	R1001-5000	18%
	R5001-10 000	22%

Table 1 depicts that 53% of the respondents were in their middle ages, ranging from 46 and 55 years of age. More than half 56% of the respondents were females. The ethnic group of the respondents was found to be African which constituted 100%. With regards to educational levels just over half of respondents 51% had primary school education. However, 29% of the population had secondary school educational qualification, while 20% fell in the category of those that hold a certificate/diploma qualification. An astonishing 56% stated that they do not receive any monthly income.

Table 2: Tourism environmental and socio-cultural impacts descriptive analysis

Factors	SA	A	N	D	SD
Lack of facilities to cope with high number of tourists	11	74	13	2	-
Tourism raises awareness about environmental value	7	21	34	37	1
The community is involved in tourism development	-	-	3	94	3
Local community is dependent on tourism	-	1	5	73	21

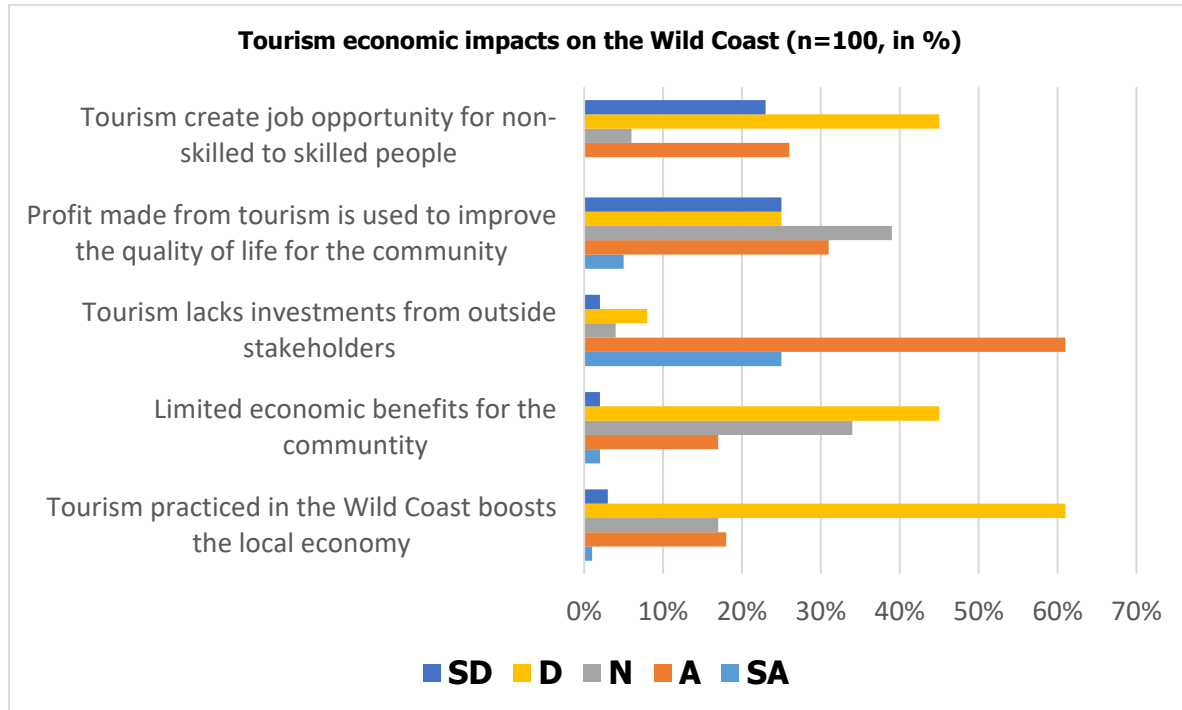
The findings underscore that majority 74% of the respondents agreed that the lack of facilities is one of the challenges that hinder the development of tourism in the Wild Coast. Furthermore, 37% of the respondents disagreed that tourism raises awareness about the environmental impacts of tourism within a tourist destination.

The study sought to identify the level of community involved in tourism development. The results show that an overwhelming 94% of the community disagree that they are involved in tourism development initiatives. Furthermore, 73% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that local community of Wild Coast is dependent on tourism. On the other hand, the respondents were also asked their level of participation in the tourism development in the Wild Coast. The findings suggest that 77% of the respondents indicated that their level of participation was low.



Conversely, the study found that local communities were of the view that they should be involved in the decision-making processes regarding tourism development initiatives.

Figure 1: the tourism economic impacts on the Wild Coast



The study sought to establish the economic impacts of tourism on the Wild Coast community. The results show that 17% of the respondents stated that there are limited economic benefits for the community, whilst 61% of the respondents disagreed with the notion that tourism in the Wild Coast boosts the local economy. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the local community does not benefit from Wild Coast tourism.

The findings generally indicate that communities envisage that tourism planners should involve them in the development of tourism in order to accrued positive economic benefits. In this light tourism empowers and motivates communities to convert local assets such as culture and heritage into viable income-generating projects while offering a valuable experience to visitors (Ndlovu, 2016). In contrast to this statement, the study findings reveal that the majority of the local community members do not gain any individual benefits from the Wild Coast.

Study Limitations

The study was limited to the Wild Coast area of Elliotdale. The limitation was due to financial constraints and limited time. Furthermore, a lack of previous research in the study area made it additionally problematic, because there was no relevant previous literature to consider.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The primary aim of this paper was to explore the impacts of coastal tourism on communities of the Wild Coast in Elliotdale, South Africa. It was expressed that the majority of respondents indicated that the lack of facilities to cope with tourism demand hinders the potential of tourism development in the Wild Coast. Tourism planners in the Wild Coast ought to build more facilities that will enable local communities and visitors to enjoy various tourism benefits. Tourism planners must organise awareness campaigns to educate the local communities about the importance of



conserving and protecting the environment for future generations and formulating programmes that would educate local communities about conserving the environment.

It is recommended that the tourism planners on the Wild Coast should make efforts to involve local communities in the development processes of tourism products or facilities. This will assist with promoting and preservation of these products and facilities. The inclusive approach empowers local communities and they may develop interest in understanding the tourism industry and its intricacies. Consequently, this paper postulates that the lack of essential information that can be useful in encouraging local communities to be active participants in tourism on the Wild Coast can prove to be the hindrance to the development of tourism. Furthermore, the lack of community participation can be viewed as a handicap in maximizing tourism benefits for the local community of Elliotdale. Thus, building capacity amongst the community members of Elliotdale is pertinent as tool to be used cultivate tourism opportunities in the Wild Coast.

Against this background, it is recommended that tourism should be viewed as a key growth sector that creates employment opportunities for local communities and the other stakeholders of Elliotdale. Furthermore, the development of community-based tourism products will benefit the communities, for example, traditional handicrafts, commercial fishing projects, cultural dance groups, traditional food to mention but a few. The tourism industry has potential to attract a large number of tourists that can benefit the local communities economically and socio-culturally respectively (Lekaota, 2015; Ndlovu, 2016).

Tourism is viewed as a prospective economic activity that can make a positive contribution to the local economy by employing local people and preserving rural communities. It is now well recognised by many researchers that for resources to be sustainably conserved, communities living near these areas must also benefit from the income generated by tourism. The findings emanating from the current paper resonates with the priorities of the National Development Plan (NDP), which is a blue print of the developmental trajectory of South Africa. The National Development Plan identifies tourism as one of the industry's that can potentially reduce high levels of unemployment in South Africa.

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