



Residents' perceptions of the economic benefits brought by religious tourism: A case study of Quigney, East London

Dr Dinesh Vallabh*, Sindisisisa Maxongo and Lwazi Apleni
Walter Sisulu University
Buffalo City Campus
Republic of South Africa
Email: dvallabh@wsu.ac.za

Corresponding author*

An exploratory study based on religious tourism was conducted in Quigney. The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether residents are aware of the economic benefits brought to their community by religious tourism. In addition, it sought to ascertain if participants in religious tourism are aware that they bring added value or elevate the economy, with specific reference to Quigney in East London, South Africa. Religious tourism is an ancient phenomenon that has recently received considerable attention in both academia and the public at large. In addition religious tourism is sometimes referred to as spiritual tourism which has grown immensely and this has resulted in a huge increase in numbers of people visiting religious sites all over the world. However there are number of religious events that take place throughout the world, that alone show how serious people are about their religion. Additionally, tourists who visits pilgrimage sites, missionaries or general tourist who fellowship have assisted the local economy to grow and also provide locals with sorely needed jobs. Both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used in this study so as to get more clarity. A sample size of 379 was drawn based on the population size of Quigney area. A total number of 60 questionnaires were administered to Quigney residents, by means of a simple random sample technique. The data was captured and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Software. The study will expectantly assist by contributing towards the body of knowledge on religious tourism and religious events. Furthermore, the residents will not just participate in future but will likely have more information on what is brought in to their area by religious tourism. This article may also stimulate the interest of the public at large.

Keywords: Religious tourism, economy, residents, perceptions, East London

Introduction and background to the study

Religious tourism is as old as religion itself and is the oldest form of tourism in the world (Karar, 2010; Rinschede, 1992). Religious tourism is an ancient phenomenon that has received considerable attention in both academia and the public at large recently due to increases in the numbers of people visiting religious sites all over the world. For instance, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (2011) identified that each year around 330 000 000 tourists visit the world's key religious sites. Religious tourism is growing in direct relation to people's curiosity for knowledge and a thirst for understanding religions other than their own; travelling to places all over the globe that are considered holy and worshiped as such in their search for the sacred and spiritual guidance (Madalina, 2008; Nicolaidis, 2016).

Religious Tourism is a foreign exchange earner through investments in new infrastructure and other economic industries. Through direct, indirect and induced effects it generates employment and increases income, causes positive exploitation of economies of scale in national firms (Cohen, 1984; Karar, 2010; Pratt, 2011; Vukonic, 1998). While the state in many instances seems to be focusing on enabling local communities only in agriculture, Rotherham (2007) contends that



religious tourism is ignored as being an important engine for improving the local economy. From a religious heritage conservation point of view, religious tourism development could be a source of income as well as heritage conservation. Hence religious tourism should be taken as an alternative to improve the local community's economy and conserve heritage sites of the area (Rotherham, 2007).

Ambroz and Ovsenik (2011) contend that spiritual travelling is an effective way of finding one's true self. Thus, spiritual travellers put a concerted effort in their search for information when they are fully motivated to experience a deeper spiritual state of holy pilgrimage (Ambroz & Ovesenik, 2011). Major factors that influence the number of religious and spiritually motivated travellers are travel cost and ease of the travelling process (Ward, 2012). Religious Tourism is now an important segment of international tourism and in the last five years has developed into a full-fledged component of tourism (Ward, 2012; Nicolaidis, 2016). Many major tourism spots such as the Golden Temple, Rum's tomb in Turkey and Bodi tree have developed largely because of their connection to sacred people, sacred places, or spiritual events. Following is a synopsis of major religious festivals globally.

Religious tourism throughout the World

All over the world Muslims engage in the annual fast called Ramadan which is considered to be the most holy and blessed month in Islam. Fasting is considered an important part of Ramadan which provides the following benefits to Muslims: it helps Muslims to draw closer to God and has the dual physical and spiritual aspect of withdrawing from food and drink and withdrawing from impure thoughts and actions (Musbeen, Mansoor, Hussain & Qadir, 2012). Many who are exempt from fasting will donate food to the poor instead and travellers are expected to make up the days they miss (Musbeen at el, 2012). Charity is very important in Islam and Ramadan is a time for increased philanthropy (Erdbrink, 2008).

A very important pilgrimage for Muslims is visiting the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Annually approximately thirteen million Muslims visit Mecca. Another important Muslim pilgrimage takes place during the final month of the Islamic calendar where annually approximately two million Muslims go to Mecca for Hajj (Haleem, 2013). The Hajj is taken as an opportunity to clean away past sins and start afresh. Many deepen their faith during the Hajj, where women take on the Islamic hair covering known as hijab upon returning from the pilgrimage (Haleem, 2013).

Two of the most popular Tshechus in India the country are the Paro and Thimphu Tshechus in terms of participation and audience. Besides the locals, many tourists from across the world are attracted to these unique, colourful and exciting displays of traditional culture (Buddhist Festivals, 2016). The Tshechu which is a religious festival meaning tenth day, is held annually in various temples, monasteries and dzongs throughout India. It takes place on the tenth day of a month of the lunar calendar corresponding to the birthday of their Guru Rimpoche (Guru Padmasambhava). However, the exact month of the Tshechu varies from place to place and temple to temple. Tshechus are grand events where entire communities come together to witness religious mask dances, receive blessings and socialize (Buddhist Festivals, 2016). In addition to the mask dances Tshechus also include colourful Bhutanese dances and other forms of entertainment. It is believed that everyone must attend a Tshechu and witness the mask dances at least once to in order to receive blessings and wash away their sins. Every mask dance performed during a Tshechu has a special meaning or a story behind it, and many are based on stories and incidents from as long ago as the 8th century during the life of Guru Padmasambhava. In monasteries, the



mask dances are performed by monks and in remote villages they are performed jointly by monks and village men (Buddhist Festivals, 2016).

The Ganges River Basin is the third largest river basin in the world found in India and is sacred to Hindus being regarded as a goddess in Hindu mythology (Baca, 2015) and receives approximately twenty million visits yearly. The story of the Ganges River is about a belief that the goddess poured herself down from heaven upon the ashes of King Sarge's sons. Baca (2015) further explains that it was believed that it was this cleansing and self-sacrificing move that raised the King's sons to dwell in peace in heaven. Additionally, it is believed that anyone who touches these purifying waters even today is cleansed of all sin (Baca, 2015).

The Catholic News Agency (2016) observes that the second most visited Catholic Church in the world after Saint Peter's Basilica (Italy) is the one in Mexico City which sees about ten million people visitors every year visiting Our Lady of Guadalupe for religious purposes. In 1531 a Lady from Heaven surrounded by a ball of light occurred to a subservient Native American at Tepeyac, a hill northwest of what is now known as Mexico City. The Lady from Heaven apparently identified herself as the Virgin Mary, the Mother of the true God and the Creator of all things who gives life and maintains its existence (Nicolaidis, 2016). The Lady from Heaven made a request that there be a church where the people could experience and worship her and be at peace. However, the Bishop was sceptical and requested her to offer a sign and the Mother of God acceded without question to the local Bishop, and sent her native messenger to the top of the hill in mid-December to gather an assortment of roses for the Bishop (Nicolaidis, 2016). Additionally, a sign was given as the Bishop requested. She also left an image of herself imprinted miraculously on the native's tilma, a poor quality cactus-cloth, which should have deteriorated in 20 years but shows no sign of decay 476 years later and still defies all scientific explanations of its origin (Catholic News Agency, 2016).

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (2011) asserts that Religious Tourism in Japan is a blend of the old and the new. Motivation for travel is a relatively new phenomenon since the Japanese have become more secular, probably as a result of modernisation. However, many are now discovering the virtues of traditional religions such as Zen with its appeal to harmony and meditation. Furthermore, attention is being paid to Christianity and churches and to the places of Buddhism and Shintoism especially Shinto shrines which exist in modern Japanese society. Japan also has its own indigenous religious practices such as Syugendo, which is a unique combination of animistic mountain worship with Confucianism, Taoism and Tantric Buddhism and motivates both domestic and international tourist to travel (UNWTO, 2011).

Religious Tourism in South Africa (SA)

South Africa is dominated by one of the biggest churches, namely the Zion Christian Church (ZCC). The ZCC was formed by Engenas Lekganyane in 1910 and has an estimated membership of about 20 million people. The church became popular as it resonated with old traditional rituals of the indigenous people. Every year during Easter holidays ZCC members go to Moriah for prayers. People come from as far as Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique for spiritual healing (Prominent people, 2016).

Similarly, the Shembe annual gathering brings people from all over Africa to a remote corner of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa to celebrate their faith, a faith shared by more than one million worshippers. This faith was founded in 1911 by Isaiah Shembe of the Nazareth Baptist Church. Shembe devotees blend traditional Zulu belief systems with elements of Old Testament



Christianity. Their annual gathering is a key event on the Shembe religious calendar. In October each year tens of thousands of the Shembe faithful gather at Judea Village, near Eshowe. The village is a temporary one that does not exist outside of the month of the gathering. It is made up of hundreds of family-run shops selling food, clothing and Shembe icons. During the festival, a busy religious programme combines with social and cultural events, including Zulu dancing and singing. For these aspects of the gathering, clothing changes from the white robes used for prayer to traditional Zulu attire. Men dress as warriors while women either clothe themselves in modest black or beautifully beaded dresses and headgear, making it a colourful spectacle to experience (South Africa.net, 2016).

Christianity is arguably one of the most popular religions in the world with over two billion adherents. Approximately 42 million British residents see themselves as nominally Christians with 6 million actively practising. Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that God sent his Son to earth to save humanity from the consequences of its sins. One of the most important concepts in Christianity (Religious Festivals & Events Calendar, 2016) is that of Jesus giving his life on the Cross the Crucifixion and rising from the dead on the third day the Resurrection. Christianity is divided into five principal families, Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Independent or Pentecostal.

Economic benefits of Religious Tourism

Asia is a continent of all different religions and beliefs and therefore holds lots of Religious practise. All major religions such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism trace their roots in this region of the World (Henderson, 2011). India, Iran, China, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Israel, and South Eastern countries are examples of holy cities in Asia (Henderson, 2011). Most of the countries in Asia are multi religious because of these origins and by extension benefit from religious tourism. For example, Kumbha Mela in India attracted seventy five million tourists in 2001 alone (Fischer, 2001). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (2011) reported that 60% of the world population practices a religion and these believers form the demographic base of Religious Tourism.

In recent years, the number of worldwide pilgrims and religious tourists has increased greatly (Blackwell, 2007 & Collins-Kreiner, 2010). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (2011) has estimated the number of religious tourists in the world to six hundred million of which 50% are in Asia and the Pacific respectively and 40% in Europe. Every year about 28 million Hindu pilgrims go to the River Ganges in Northern India (Singh, 2006). In Saudi Arabia approximately 11.6 million foreign tourists that visited the country in 2008. Interestingly, 50% of those tourists were motivated by religion. Lastly, in 2008 Mecca attracted 6.6 million tourists most of them were religious tourists (Euromonitor, 2009).

It is estimated that millions of tourists visit some of the most famous pilgrimage centres in Europe. For instance, the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes (France) is the most visited shrine in all Christendom with between four and six million arriving each year (Reader, 2007; Nicolaidis, 2016). Moreover, it is estimated that approximately 200 million pilgrims have visited the site since 1860. Medjugorje (Bosnia) is another pilgrimage site in Europe visited by more than one million pilgrims annually (Nicolaidis, 2016; Reader, 2007).

Interestingly, Romania attracts around five hundred thousand people in religious tourism each year. Furthermore, up to seven hundred thousand Christian pilgrims travel to Israel every year (Reader, 2007). Development of Religious Tourism can have a strong economic impact on the



local community as well as socio-cultural, political and environmental implications (Collins-Kreiner, 2010). For example, Lourdes a small town in Southern France with a population of 15,000 had in 1987 more than 300 shops, 370 hotels, 28 camping sites, 45 restaurants in the town itself and the surrounding countryside eight banks, and 18 big service garages (Vukonic, 1998).

Literature review

Religious tourism is as old as religion itself and therefore the oldest form of tourism in the world (Gedecho, 2014); existing long before Christianity (Rojo, 2009) and a phenomenon motivated by the faithful journeying to a religious place where they identify with a spiritual being: an individual and their prophet or god (Nicolaidis, 2016). As such, religious tourism is often identified as faith-based travel of an individual, often of an international nature and continues to grow year by year (Apleni, Vallabh & Henama, 2017). Gedecho (2014) states that Christianity, Islam and Hinduism are the three major religions in the world garnering approximately 33%, 21% and 14% of worldwide followers respectively and therefore making up the highest proportion of religious tourist. Gedecho (2014) contends that followers of the three major religions are the backbone of tourism worldwide but this excludes Buddhists who make up a sizeable percentage as well.

Pilgrimage

A Pilgrimage can be defined as travel that is undertaken to a site with religious significance and that fulfils the religious or spiritual need of tourists (Griffin, 2007; Ambrosio, 2007; Raj & Morpeth, 2007). Vorzak and Gut (2009) note that in the past pilgrimages were often associated with asceticism and physical penitence, but today most pilgrims like to travel more comfortably. Wright (2007) adds that pilgrims have changed their spending habits and are not as frugal as in the past. Tourists spend more on shopping than any other group of travellers (Bar & Hattab, 2003). Lately many people attend Pilgrimages out of curiosity and to find out more about unknown places (Josan, 2009). For example, Lourdes is a small town in France which has about 6 million pilgrims visiting every year and about 80 000 ill believers visit this place to appeal for healing and also visit a shrine of the Virgin Mary (Nicolaidis, 2016).

A pilgrim visits a religious site as part of his duty for being a faithful member of his or her religion or to fulfil a spiritual need (Kreiner, 2010; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Nicolaidis, 2016). Tourists visit these sites not for their religious significance but rather for their cultural, architectural or historical importance (Griffin, 2002; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Noland & Nolan, 1992; Raj, 2008; Richards & Fernandes, 2007; Santos, 2002). Often times the visitation of religious objectives is combined with other forms of tourism and even shopping (Vukonic, 1996; Swatos, 2006). For instance, it has been estimated that Sri Lanka's Buddhist pilgrimages bring approximately 100 000 tourists annually (Gedecho, 2014). In recent years this kind of tourism has increased significantly (Blackwell, 2007; Collins-Kreiner, 2010). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (2011) estimated the number of religious tourists in the world to be 600 million of which 50% take place in Asia and the Pacific, and 40% in Europe. For instance, it was predicted that the number of foreign tourists to Saudi Arabia would increase to reach 21 million in 2015 alone (which happened) driven mainly by the growth of religious tourism to Mecca and Medina (Euromonitor, 2011).

Different Pilgrimage Sites

Darvill (2016) reveals that the concept of pilgrimages is widespread in many cultures, past and present. Pilgrimage sites involve a physical journey of tourists to a site of significance, which alone



allows tourists to associate with the supremacy of the place or have a distinct view of the archetypal beings. Visiting a pilgrimage sites allows a tourists to go through a spiritual renewal, emotional enrichment, renunciation of the past, guidance about the future, performing a rite of passage and spiritual healing (Darvill, 2015).

Kreiner (2010) contends that a pilgrimage is one of the religious and cultural phenomena well-known to human society and a crucial feature of the world's major religions: Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Christianity. In addition, a pilgrimage is also a crucial matter due to its scope and spatial influence (Kreiner, 2010). In Christianity there are two important pilgrimage sites, such as namely Mt Sinai and St Catherine's Monastery found in Egypt. For Christians Mt Sinai is a holy mountain where God called Moses to collect the 10 commandments (Spiritual Travel, 2010). St Catherine's Monastery is a small community of Greek Orthodox monks, built with massive stone walls in the sixth century to protect the monastery from attack (Spiritual Travel, 2010). Lastly, Jerusalem in Israel, is premeditated as one of the crucial pilgrimage sites, which has the Church of the Holy Sepulchre which is believed to be a place where Jesus was buried and resurrected and is only one of many pilgrimage sites found in Jerusalem (Spiritual Travel, 2010).

In Islam, Mecca and Medina are considered the most important pilgrimage sites. All Muslims are required to visit these pilgrimage sites at least once in their lifetime (Spiritual Travel, 2010). For Buddhists, Bodh Gay is considered to be the most visited pilgrimage site believed to be the Bodhi there where Buddha realised enlightenment and Buddhahood. In addition, Lumbini is also another pilgrimage site which is believed to be the birth place of Gautama Buddha and is found in Nepal (Buddhist Pilgrimage, 2016).

Religious Motivation

Raj (2012) states that over the last few decades Muslim, Hindu, Christian and other pilgrimage sites have seen increasing number of visitors. While Raj (2012) believes that tourists visit religious sites due to their strong religious beliefs Nicolaidis (2016) feels that religious tourists seek to escape and release themselves from the stresses of daily work and life in general, similar to all tourists. Gedecho (2014) points out that religious tourists are motivated by 'foreign cultural exchange' experiences that assists them on seeing opportunity through investing in new infrastructure. For Raj (2014), religious tourists are attracted by history, architecture, classicistic and theological events contained in their sacred texts.

Indeed, travellers visit pilgrimage sites to learn about their faith, find pleasure, love and dedicate themselves anew to their faith. For example, Muslims go on pilgrimage to pray in the holiest Mosques in Meccah, Medinah and Jerusalem (Raj, 2014). Apleni et al (2017) state that for Christians the idea of undertaking a pilgrimage is undoubtedly linked to the belief that "the Church is a pilgrim promoter" and a way of people following God. The religious sense of the people has found the sacramental life of the church, including the pilgrimage. Nonetheless, travelling can be multifunctional because many people attend pilgrimages simply out of curiosity about the unknown as much as out of faith (Egres, Bagram & Kara, 2012).

Research Methodology

Research questions

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- What motivates people to participate in religious tourism?



- Are residents aware of the economic spinoffs brought about by religious tourism?
- What can be done by the Quigney residents to develop and to sustain religious tourism?

Research design

Creswell (2009) contends that research design is the research process that encompasses the overall goal of the research study, as well as detailing the method of data collection and analysis to explore and understand the phenomenon under study. Research design can be presumed as the work out of any scientific research from the first step to the last step Creswell (2009). In the same vein, Blanche and Durrheim (2004) contend that research design as a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution, or implementation of the research strategy. For Mitchell and Jolley (2012) research design should include all the main features of the anticipated research. In addition, research design should be capable of being understood by another researcher who is not necessarily familiar with the subject area and methodology (Mitchell & Jolley, 2012).

Whittermore and Melkus (2008) elucidate that research design is a comprehensive plan for conducting research and makes it clear for the researcher to achieve the study purpose and attain accurate results. However, when conducting research, the research design must be done attentively and the research should be carried out methodically to ensure that authentic results are received (Whitmore & Melkus, 2008).

Veal (2007) reveals that research design involves two approaches which are qualitative and quantitative approach to research. The qualitative approach to research encompasses a collection of information that is generalizable, and that the information gathered is generally not presentable in numerical form. Additionally, quantitative research is the collection, analysis and presentation of statistical information and is most often used in leisure and tourism research (Veal, 2007).

Research Methodology

The methods that were used for the current study were both qualitative and quantitative so as to add a combination of facts and understanding on the subject (Ritchie, 2003).

Qualitative Research

Veal (2007) explains that a qualitative approach to research entails collecting a great deal of information about a large number of people and does not usually include numerical measurements, but rather observation studies or interviews. Corti and Thompson (2004) elaborate that the details gathered are normally not presentable in numerical measurement form. On the other hand, Kumar (2005) underscores that a quantitative approach desires to gather data that is in numeric form and which can be analysed or separated using tables, charts, figures, histograms, graphs and statistics. In this study, qualitative methods were used in the form of both closed-ended and open-ended questions to collect qualitative data for the study.

Quantitative Research

According to Yilmaz (2013) quantitative research can be defined as a research method that describes data according to its numerical significance which is analysed by means of mathematically based methods, particularly statistics. Furthermore, Veal (2004) adds that



statistical analysis relies on mathematical evidence to draw closure or test hypothesis. Veal (2004) further explains that in order for the researcher to be sure of the accuracy of the results it is often mandatory to study relatively large numbers of people and to use computers to analyse the data. Interestingly, Remler and Van Ryzin (2011) and Veal (2006) define quantitative research as a research approach that collect data, which is numerical in form and can be analysed or presented using tables or charts of figures, graphs, or statistics.

Data Collection Methods

In this study both primary and secondary data were collected. These methods are discussed in detail below:

Primary Data

Primary data refers to information that is collected for the exact research problem at hand by means of channels that match the research problem best (Hox & Boeije, 2005). However, the generally accepted methods of collecting primary data are through interviews, surveys and focus groups, which show straightforward relationship between two groups (Veal, 2006). Hox and Boeije (2005) further elucidate that on every instant that primary data are collected, inexperienced data are added to the present store of social knowledge. The survey method was applied for the current study. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed by the researcher. The data was collected during weekends as it was believed that most residents go to their religious places during the weekend as they might be working or studying during the week.

Secondary Data

Veal (2006) states that secondary data is data collected by someone else for different reasons and which then help other researchers in their related research endeavours. Secondary data sources that were used for the study included but were not limited to the following:

- Academic books & journals;
- newspapers;
- policy briefs; and
- monographs and dissertations.

For instance, tourism related books, sources related to religious tourism, religious events and factors that determined impacts of religious tourism on host communities were consulted. In addition, information was taken from books range of journals, and texts published on the internet were used.

Study population

The targeted population for this study were some residents in the suburb of Quigney. Those who attend religious events in Quigney were primarily targeted. The researcher assumed that the targeted population could have sufficient experience of numerous religious events and could also elaborate on the positive and negative impacts of the religious events.



Sampling Design

Veal (2006) highlights that sampling is the application of taking out a portion of the population as subjects for a certain study. Oliphant (2012) concurs with Veal (2006) that it is not performable to aggregate data from all the people who are central to the research. The random sampling method was used in the study.

Sample Size

A total number of 60 questionnaires were distributed to the residents of Quigney, using the sample theory that was formulated by Isaacs and Michaels (1981).

Validity and Reliability

Phelan and Wren (2005) elucidate that validity is a test which measures what it is supposed to be measured ensuring that it does so clearly without including other factors. The formulation of the questionnaire was taken from previous studies which dealt with similar topics as the research topic. In order to ensure validity, the researcher applied the following approaches:

- The questionnaire was checked by the supervisor to assess the level of relevance of the questions asked, and
- The questionnaire was peer-reviewed, which assisted the researcher to identify errors.

The researcher took the following measures to ensure reliability in the current study:

- The formulation of the questionnaire was based on the research problem, objectives and research questions. This enabled the researcher to obtain the relevant information; and
- Literature from previous studies was consulted in order to formulate a reliable questionnaire.

Questionnaire Survey

The structured survey questionnaire was presented to respondents with both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The closed-ended questions provided the respondents with options to choose from a fixed set of answers. In the same vein, open-ended questions gave the respondents a platform to express themselves freely. The survey questionnaire consisted of the following:

Section A: Focused on respondents demographics data such as age, race and income;

Section B: Aimed at gathering data based on the understanding of respondents' level of awareness of economic benefits brought by religious tourism in the Quigney area. The respondents were given statements where they could express the level to which they either agreed or disagreed;

Section C: Focused on the respondent's religion and what motivates the respondents to participate in a religious events; &

Section D: Documented the respondents' understanding of where religious events take place in their area and the duration of these.

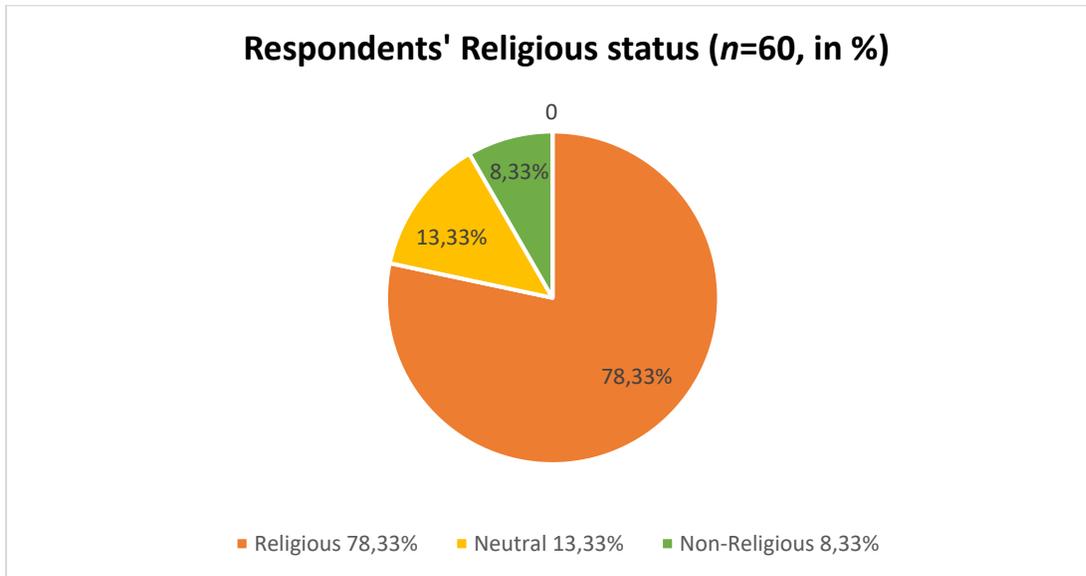


Research findings

Respondents' religious status

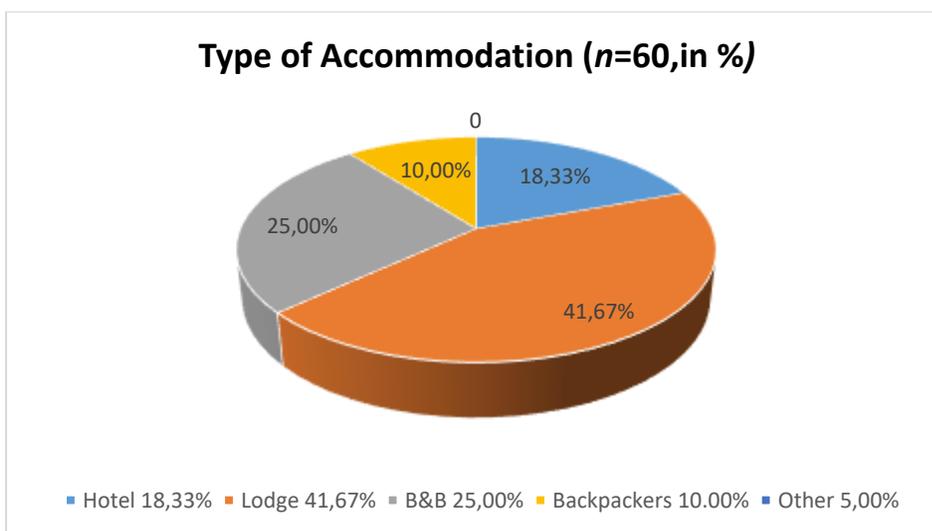
In this section residents were asked to respond with their knowledge of religion and which religious events they had attended, as well as the mode of transport used. Figure 1 depicts the respondent's religious status

Figure 1: Respondents' religious status



In Figure 1, it could be observed that most (78.3%) of the interviewees described themselves as religious, whereas 13.3% were neutral. Only 8.3% described themselves as non-religious.

Figure 2: Type of accommodation





In figure 2, the majority (41.7%) of the people used a lodge and 25.0% of the respondents used Bed & Breakfast facilities. On the other hand, 18.3% of respondents used a hotel. While 10.0% used backpacker accommodation. These accommodation establishments would likely receive an economic boost during religious events.

Respondents' motivation on religious events

Respondents were given an option to identify what motivates them to participate in religious events. The option had four categories provided to choose from: To gain knowledge and information which garnered a response of 26.7%. While others seemed to be motivated by the spiritual upliftment, which made up 48.3% of the responses. In the same vein, 15.0% were motivated because they gained blessings. Lastly, a minority of 8.3% stated that they participated in religious events because of family/friends.

Religious event once attended

The responses below were given by people that attended religious events. 36.7% of the people interviewed revealed that they attended church conferences and conventions every year. Furthermore, 30.0% of the respondents indicated that they attend youth church gatherings, while 11.7% of the interviewees indicated they attend other religious events such as cleansing ceremonies, traditional ceremonies, and so forth. In addition, 11.7% of the respondents; had undertaken a pilgrimage.

Table 1: Religious event once attended

Table 1 Religious event once attended. (n=60, in %).	
Level of agreement with statement	Total (n=60)
Visited a pilgrimage	11,7
Youth Church gathering	30,0
Church Conference and convention	11,7
Other Religious Events (Cleansing ceremony's, traditional ceremony's etc.)	11,7

Limitations of the study

This study focused on only the Quigney area. Therefore, the major challenge to the study was the limitation of recent sources that were available on religious events, in terms of academic literature. There is a paucity of secondary information available on the religious tourism phenomenon. Moreover, the lack of recently published local and national statistics on tourism, especially statistics and information relating to the study of religious tourism should not be overlooked. Lastly, lack of resources made the study somewhat limited, thus, the study was confined to Quigney, East London.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current study could play a big role in growing and assisting religious tourism in the EC province. Based on the conclusions made in the study, a few recommendations have been proposed as follows:



Land transport seems to play a major role in their preferred method of transport. This significant relationship could be strengthened and streamlined to make transport to religious events easier and cheaper. This could in turn encourage more religious participation. The majority of the respondents identified themselves as being religious, but not all earned a high salary. This could open up tourism opportunities to a larger public and increase economic activity. Approximately 30% of the respondents were undecided about the money spent by tourists in religious events and were unsure if it helps at all to stimulate the economy of East London. It could be seen that the respondents are not fully aware of tourism as an economic booster for their area. There should thus be more awareness campaigns by the Department of Tourism, especially at local government level, so that the locals can be aware of tourism and how they may benefit from it.

The current study focused on the economic benefits brought by religious tourism into the Quigney area. Nonetheless, it could be recommended that researchers take this study to another level by looking at one of the second largest townships in South Africa which is Mdantsane, as it is the host of the Apostolic Faith Mission church events, as well as other parts of the Eastern Cape province. In the same vein, the National Department of Tourism (NDT) can look at the religious tourism area in a broad way as it plays an influential role in the development and enhancement of the country's economy. The Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM) together with Local Economic Development should strive to develop a strategy that can address unemployment, through organising religious events as locals seem to be very interested in attending such events. Also, this is likely to be successful considering the fact that South Africa is dominated by people who predominantly identify themselves as Christians. The Metro can also build more venues that have a bigger carrying capacity, to attract big tourism events.

The public sector should partner with the private sector and come up with different strategies that can boost the local economy. Local economic development is extremely important for metros like BCMM. In the same vein, the Department of Arts and Culture should consider adopting and supporting diversity in religious activity by assisting in the annual hosting of the Rastafarian gathering in East London, which is normally held in the Western Cape. This is just one event that could boost tourist inflows all over the Eastern Cape province, even from other provinces and create additional needed job opportunities. For example, Quigney could be an ideal place for such an event because of its proximity to the sea and the unique and outstanding international conference centre in the area.

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