Towards Establishing Zimbabwe Tourism Destination Brand Equity Variables through Sustainable Community Involvement

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Abstract

The study investigated the contribution of local communities to Zimbabwe tourism destination brand equity through sustainable tourism practices, with a view of developing a model. A comparative investigation of two popular resorts in Zimbabwe which are Victoria Falls and Domboshava Curves was carried out. A sequential mixed method was used to get research data. Results from in-depth interviews showed that sustainable brand equity through community involvement can be developed from the following: maintaining culture; attractive traditional villages; traditional music and dances; unique traditional dressing; provision of indigenous food and drinks; guiding tourists and provision of transport and accommodation. A further survey then produced variables that were used to construct a community based sustainable brand equity model for the study. These variables were then grouped into two that is, household activities and service provision. Household activities included: providing indigenous food and drinks; attractive homesteads; and unique dress code. The service provision was discovered as guiding tourists in their activities and provision of transport. The study then recommended local eco-responsibility, destination manager partner with locals, cultural tourism focus and customisation of sustainable tourism.

Keywords: Community involvement, branding, sustainable, tourism, brand equity

Introduction

Despite the growth and economic impact of the tourism industry across the globe, combining destination marketing and sustainable tourism has become an important issue for the overall tourism industry's sustainability (Hartwell, Fyatt, Page, Ladkin & Hemingway, 2016). In this

regard, stakeholder involvement has become inevitable in the development of sustainable tourism (Hardy & Pearson 2017). It was the thrust of this study to understand the impact of community involvement as a key stakeholder in Zimbabwe's sustainable tourism and destination brand vibrancy. As announced by Goodwin and Chaudhary (2017), the tourism sector is a driver for economic growth, of which Zimbabwe as a country is currently aiming to improve its economic status together with the social and political demise through tourism. The Zimbabwe tourism destination is endowed with various natural resources in its evolution dating back to the 1800s which calls for coming up with Sustainable practices in their management. In support of the thrust of this study, Ardahaey (2011) informed that the combination of natural and cultural resources provides an attraction to tourists. Thus, the tourism industry identifies these tourism attractions for an economic benefit. This is confirmed by Tao (2010) that natural-based tourism has become a strong contributor to the growth of tourism in the world.

Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe makes one of the worlds' reckoned natural heritages which has attracted millions of tourists around the world over the years. This makes it a good focus for this study from its popularity and carrying capacity perspective. Also, it is situated where it is surrounded by low- and high-density communities. It is therefore, patronised by different types of tourists ranging from the locals to the world's most famous and rich who come for both scenic viewing and adventure. Mason (2003) supports the intensity of physical visits by millions of people across the world as for both domestic and international tourism which has become highly evident for the wonders in Victoria Falls.

Comparatively, Domboshava Curves also carry an attractive and unique landform which has been positioned a tourism monument together packaged with historical rock paintings and balanced rocks. Tourists have also visited the Curves in their numbers including domestic and international travelers. Like the Victoria Falls this landform is surrounded by communities with both low and high densities. Surrounding communities became have therefore became a common factor for both natural heritages which then encouraged this study. The study therefore focused on interrogating local community engagement in sustainable tourism for Victoria Falls and Domboshava Curves. Tsaur, Lin and Lin (2006) postulated that in order to augment tourism for the economic benefits of its people they should also understand how to sustain these tourism resources. Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) concurred by informing that tourism in its practice is a built from the interaction of tourists, host communities, business suppliers and host governments as they host the tourists. Shapira, Ketchie and Nehe (2015) further informed that human activities can destroy the basis of livelihood in various communal projects.

Globally, tourism has been identified as one of the most vibrant pillars for sustainable social and economic growth. This is mainly seen from its supremacy in creating employment, being a source of foreign currency and immense contribution to the Gross Domestic Product of the country (Wattanakuljirus & Coxhead, 2008). It is the only industry where exports are done within the boundary as the tourists themselves come to the country instead of the opposite. The years after Zimbabwe's independence have witnessed massive influx of tourists from all corners of the world particularly those from western part of the globe (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2011). The realization of the effect of tourism to economic performance meant that some commitments have to be done in order to safe guard the golden goose that lay the golden eggs through sustainable tourism and conservation mechanisms. As propounded by Campbell (2002), tourism helps in generating supplementary finances for local communities through effective conservation. Even with the growing demand for community involvement, there is little attempt in researching how sustainable tourism helps in improving attractiveness of resorts and a tourism destination as a whole. This study further looked at how a positive brand equity can be built through community based sustainable tourism. As announced by Gartner

(2014), destination brand equity evaluation should not only focus on the economic returns but also the overall well-being of a destination. Since the increasing mobility of people has resulted in a rise in marketing of place (Keller, 2003), there is a need to balance with issues of sustainability practices such as carrying capacity management and conservation of natural resources. The reason being that a tourism destination might also differentiate itself from competitors through sustainable tourism and be branded from that perspective. Jobber (2004) acknowledged that branding can be used as a differentiation tool. Zimbabwe tourism destination brand has failed to attract tourists over the years and this might be due to the fact that it did not consider aspects of sustainable tourism and community involvement in its formation. Orth & Tureckova (2001) informed that a tourism destination of choice can be built by focusing on improving the natural resources together with socio-cultural and physical attractions. Therefore the study looked at sources of sustainable tourism through community involvement that might be used to improve Zimbabwe tourism destination brand equity with a focus on Domboshava Curves and Victoria Falls as communal areas of touristic activities.

Statement of problem

Zimbabwe tourism destination is gifted with various natural resources of flora and fauna. Despite the country's tarnished destination brand image in its traditional tourism source markets, the tourism industry has managed to survive. Its survival has witnessed a negative skewness of tourists' arrivals and revenues over the last two decades (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2011). The reason why Zimbabwe tourism industry has managed to withstand the mishap might be due to an irresistible attractiveness of the existing natural resources. This therefore calls for maximum preservation and sustainable management of these natural resources as a future stop-gap measure. However, in the present tourism marketing and management sustainability is not clearly understood and valued by tourism marketers internationally (Fernandez et al., 2015).

This study focused on community involvement in sustainable tourism practices and their effect on the overall destination brand in Zimbabwe. This is because local communities can support tourism development when they believe that it will benefit them (Allen et al., 1993). Mihalic (2014) also pointed out that issues to do with natural resources and social environments have attracted many researches and debates. For this research, the aim was to establish specific community based sustainable tourism variable(s) that would be used to build a stronger brand equity for Zimbabwe tourism destination. Gartner (2014) supported this view by announcing that brand equity and sustainable tourism go hand in hand. Jurado et al. (2012) looked at tourism destination sustainability from a carrying capacity perspective, but did not assess relationship with destination branding.

In support of this study Buckley (2012) propounded that a plethora of researches in sustainable tourism have evolved with conceptualisations and critiques, whereby Zimbabwe tourism destination brand legacy might be restored through community based sustainable tourism practices. Even Smith and Kranninch (1998) having asserted that there is a closer link between tourism development and the local people, Cvelbar et al. (2016) concluded that there is still a gap in promoting and achieving a sustainable tourism. This study was then carried out in two phases that is by first understanding the role of communities in sustainable tourism and secondly by establishing the relationship between their sustainable practices and sustainable destination branding brand equity in order to come up with sustainable brand equity variables through community involvement. According to Gezon (2014) equity in tourism can be improved by deeply understanding community equity. The research was then carried out as a comparative study between Victoria Falls and Domboshava Curves. This is supported by Mutana and Zinyemba (2013) who informed that community involvement in Victoria Falls is

still lowly practiced. Also, Woyo & Woyo (2016) agreed that Domboshava is highly patronised by tourists, which threatens its sustainability.

Literature review
Tourism and destination practices
Tourism is a social practice that involves movement of people outside their permanent places of residents for a temporary stay (Chang & Katrichis, 2016). For this study, it was mainly focused on people moving into Zimbabwe for their touristic experience but also affected by surrounding communities in their sustainable practices. In its essence, tourism has become a habit of living and a common practice (Neto, 2009). It has gone to an extent of not only enhancing economic well-being but also sociological, psychological and cultural state of a destination (Marujo & Santos, 2012). Therefore, a tourism destination can be viewed as a well-defined geographical unit that has a brand name, with various tourism products, services and environments that provide experience to the consumers (Hartwel et al., 2016). Tourism as an industry has the potential to contribute to sustainable development through creating employment and uplifting marginalised groups (Cukier, 2002). This is because when tourists visit a tourism destination they create and enhance circulation of money (Ardahaey, 2011), which can be used for further investment in tourism and non-tourism related industries. This informs that tourism can be a driver for community development (Freytag & Vietze, 2013).

However, in the marketing of touristic products, it should be noted that it does not only result in increased consumption but other spill-over effects such as pollution, depletion and destruction of rare species (Nickerson, Jordenson & Boley,2016), which are drawbacks in sustainable tourism development. Even with Donohoe (2012) alluding that the purpose of tourism marketing is to sell tourism sites to a potential customer base, did not consider the impact to sustainable tourism development. It should be noted that tourism destinations are key to the development of a tourism industry and consideration of sustainability will help to encourage repeat visits to the same destination by the tourists (Kozak & Kazol, 2016).

Sustainable development in tourism
The concept of sustainable development dates back to 1987 when it was first mentioned in the World Commission on Environment and Development report (Our Common Future, 1987). Weaver (2006) then mentioned that sustainable tourism development originated in early 1990's with various academic researches. Its core function as according to the United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization (2005) is to promote sustainable tourism looking at the needs of visitors, environment, tourism industry, and the host communities while maximising the best for current and future socio-economic and environmental impacts.

Even with such a traceable long existence still the concept of sustainable tourism development is viewed as rocket science (Tyrrell & Johnston, 2012). However, Swarbrooke (1999) clarified the three main dimensions of sustainable development as environmental, social and economic. Oriade & Evans (2011) went on to inform that the concept of sustainable tourism should not only focus on socioeconomic issues but also ensuring that life support systems, biological diversity and cultural integrity are well-maintained. It therefore shows that in tourism sustainability has become an important guiding principle for managing destinations (Lopez-Sanchez & PulidoFernandez, 2014).

As a main focus of this study, the attitudes and perceptions of local communities towards development of tourism have become a concern for sustainable tourism development (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006). In this perspective, sustainable tourism is not only developed but maintained in a community or environment such that it will exist over an infinite period and

not degrading the same environment where it exists (Butler, 1991). It the means that the direct with local communities in their active participation is a significant step in coming up with a comprehensive plan for sustainable tourism than in the past (Hall, 2010). The importance of community-based tourism is that it improves cooperation of stakeholders in protecting the natural environment (Su, 2011). This concurs with the United Nations Sustainable Development (1992) that sustainable tourism reducing over-consumption, wastages and help in maintaining diversity supporting local economies and their involvement while marketing tourism responsibly.

In contrast Pomering et al., (2012) raised a concern that to date, tourism marketing is viewed as an enemy of sustainability as it focuses on increasing tourist numbers, thus compromising quality of natural resources. This makes it difficult to adopt and implement strategies that can address and yield sustainable tourism (Ali & Frew, 2010). According to Andrews (1997) the concept of sustainable tourism tends to be a political agenda rather than serving as foundation for policy development. Also, Marson (2011) concurred by divulging that tourism products are not essentially sustainable since they carry both positive and negative impact on sustainable development. To another extent Bowers (2016) announced that tourism marketing development is a driver for transforming societies and the environment of which these are the factors that affects sustainability of tourism destinations. It therefore shows that more should be done in order to understand the relationship between sustainable development and tourism destination marketing. This is because the concept of sustainable tourism is socially constructed (Bramwell, 2004) same as the destination marketing concept. Even with a number of recent researches having focused on gaps and problems between tourism and sustainability (Hall, 2011; Moscardo & Murphy, 2014), little has been done in relation to sustainable tourism and destination branding. Table 1.1 below provides focus of some previous researches carried out in the area of sustainable tourism. It mainly shows the concepts in sustainable tourism development that they are mainly anchored on corporate social responsibility, ethical tourism, government planning, demand modeling, rural tourism and energy.

Table 1.1 Previous researches on sustainable tourism

Author(s)	Concept	Sustainable tourism focus
Nicolaides (2020)	Ethical Sustainable Tourism	Sustainable Ethical Tourism (SET) and Rural Community Involvement
Matev & Assenova (2012)	Tourism and development	Sustainable tourism development and corporate social responsibility
Bramwell & Lane (2010)	Governance and Policy-making	Government planning and Sustainable Tourism
Divino & McAleer (2009)	Tourism demand modelling	Sustainable Tourism Demand
Gossling (2003)	Rural based tourism	Rural based sustainable tourism
Michalena & Tripanagnostopoulos (2010)	Energy in tourism development	Solar Energy in the Sustainable Tourism Development

However, as presented in Table 1 above there is a clear indication that little has been done with regards to community based sustainable tourism and destination branding. In summary, most of these studies have been done in relation to policy making, general tourism consumption and practices. This study therefore looked at how community based sustainable tourism might lead to improved destination brand equity.

Tourism destination branding

The relationship between marketing and branding highly intensified in the twentieth century and customer increasingly started to a brand with a number of product attributes such as performance and supremacy in relation to other brands (Souza & Nemer, 1993). Similar with tourism destinations, tourists now visit them as brands that reflects a certain higher level of performance and in the case of this study brands that respects community based sustainable tourism. Similarly, Bond (2013) underscored that branding is not only about using a name or symbol but what it reflects in the mind of the consumers. In this regard, a brand should reflect its connection with the buyer (Schultz & Barnes 1999). Image is one important factor in brand development and marketing of places (Jamrozy 2007). As announced by Risitano (2009), brand image is built from associations, knowledge and perceived equity by the tourists. Gartner (2014) went on to inform that brand equity and sustainable development are a hand and a glove such that they can be viewed as a same concept. On that note, destination marketers have a strong role to play in order encourage sustainable actions in their tourism destination marketing of processes (Jamal & Camargo, 2014). Even Baker (2012) supported the same view by specifically looking at place branding informing that it is made of various thoughts, expectations and feelings a person comprehends about a destination. For this study it is how tourists conceive Zimbabwe tourism destination brand from a community based sustainable tourism perspective. Pike (2007) postulated that products, services and places are increasingly related to their brands which also creates identity and differentiating them from competitors. This study intended to brand Zimbabwe tourism destination as a best practice in sustainable tourism through community involvement. To this extent brand associations with countries must be based of differentiation elements of a place (Ruzzier & de Chernatony, 2013).

Community involvement as a basis for sustainable tourism

Host communities are those people that resides in areas surrounding a place of touristic activities and are not only directly or indirectly involved in the tourism but also affected by tourism (Smith, 2012). However, in community tourism, the main aim for sustainable tourism development is to improve quality of life for the members through provision of economic benefits, preserving natural resources and providing environments with high quality for visitor experience (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Park & Yoon, 2009). In this perspective, the concept of community participation has gained popularity in literature since the 1970s gaining recognition by various international bodies such as United Nations and World Bank (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012). Therefore, in its essence the community is a key driver for the development of tourism (Mitchell & Reid 2001). Stakeholder involvement is crucial when branding a destination (Baker & Cameron 2008). The same view was supported by Zhang, Inbakaran and Jackson (2006) who postulated that community is the most vital party as it is positively or negatively affected tourism in it planning and development (Zhang et al., 2006). Other researches have looked at the positive relationship between local communities and cultural tourism (Mitchell & Ashley 2010; Smith & Richards 2013). Some assessed cultural tourism, community based and economic well-being (Lapeyre 2011; Moswete & Gary 2014). This agrees with studies by Bialostocka (2014), Moswete, Manwa and Saarine (2016) that many studies in Southern Africa on community-based tourism were more inclined to cultural tourism. A few have been done in relation to sustainable tourism and destination branding.

It is important to note that the local communities on themselves are also particular and concerned about the impact of tourism in their living setups even when they get some economic benefits from the tourism (Besculides et al., 2002; Bestard & Nadal, 2007). According to Weaver (2001), participation in tourism by the local communities improves their economic stability. This shows that sustainable tourism through community involvement is high of

interest as a source of survival for the locals. Ritchie and Crouch (1993) however made an assessment that the development of tourism has negative and positive impacts which affects both the host communities and the tourists. Considering the positive impact of local communities in sustainable tourism development is therefore important in the marketing and branding of a tourism destination. Local communities should there be regarded as important stakeholders in tourism development. This was supported by Waligo, Clarke and Hawkins (2015) who postulated that a destination is a network of interdependent stakeholders. Jamal & Stronza (2009) then expressed that there is need for flexibility by various stakeholders to empower community involvement and their collaboration. Hultman and Säwe (2014) went on to call for a tourism planning that recognise the complexity and political dimensions within stakeholder involvement in sustainable tourism. Even with various studies have looked at the relationships between tourism and attitudes of the communities (Harrill, 2004), there is still a gap with regards to how their sustainable practices influence destination branding. This therefore became a basis of this study since local communities are increasingly appreciating tourism as a driver for socio-cultural, economic and environmental well-being (Beeton, 2006).

Methodology

The study applied a sequential mixed method by initiating with a qualitative research which was followed by a quantitative research. A qualitative research design helped in building themes from the opinions and views of participants through in-depth interviews. Krauss (2005) supported this research design as of relevance in understanding social life with its meaning and complexities. For this study, it helped in understanding the living set-up of local communities and their complexities in relation to community based sustainable tourism for destination branding. The in-depth interviews were carried out with various stakeholder of the communities, resorts managers and local authorities. These were selected using a purposive judgmental sampling method based on their knowledge of the surrounding communities, expertise in the area of research and industry. The total sample was therefore n=16. The profiles of the participants are as presented in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2 In-depth interviews profile

ORGANISATION	n	POSITION	INDUSTRY TYPE	DURATION	DATE
Domboshava Commuity	3	Residents	Local Community	40 minutes each	4/01/19
Victoria Falls Community	5	Residents	Local Community	30 minutes each	517/ 02/19
Domboshava Local Authority	1	Public Relations Officer	Local Authority	1 hour 11 minutes	5/12/18
Victoria Falls Local Authority	1	Public Relations Officer	Local Authority	1 hour 26 minutes	8/12/18
Parks and Wildlife Authority	2	Principal Officers in Non-consumptive Tourism	Tourism Resorts and Natural Resources Management	45 minutes each	16/01/19
Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality	1	Senior Principal Officer in Nation Branding	Government Ministry	1 hour 6 minutes	14/02/19
Zimbabwe Tourism Authority	2	Principal Officers in Destination Marketing	Destination Marketing Organization	40 minutes each	9/03/19
Victoria Falls Hotel	1	Marketing Officer	Resorts and Accommodation	57 minutes	9/01/19

This was done in communities around Victoria Falls and Domboshava. First the research grouped the communities according to their locations using a stratified random sampling method. Survey questionnaires were then distributed in each strata. Furthermore, a convenience sampling was done in each strata in order to select any respondent who was available at that time of survey. The resulting samples were Domboshava (n=35) and Victoria Falls (n=48). The total sample for the surveys was therefore n=83. Qualitative data was obtained using in-depth interviews and quantitative data was then obtained using a survey questionnaire. For qualitative data, content analysis was carried out which helped in developing the themes for a further quantitative research. Quantitative data was analysed using mean values that were established from a 1 to 5 Likert Scale. These mean values were then tabulated for analysis.

Findings and discussions
Results from qualitative research
The presentation in Figure 1.1 below shows the views and opinions that were given by the participants during in-depth interviews. These helped in establishing themes for the research. The participants noted that community based sustainable tourism is achieved when the local communities perform the following: maintain culture; provide attractive traditional villages; showcase traditional music and dances; have a unique way of traditional dressing; and provide indigenous food and drinks. Also, when they guide tourists in their touristic activities, provide transport and accommodation to tourists.
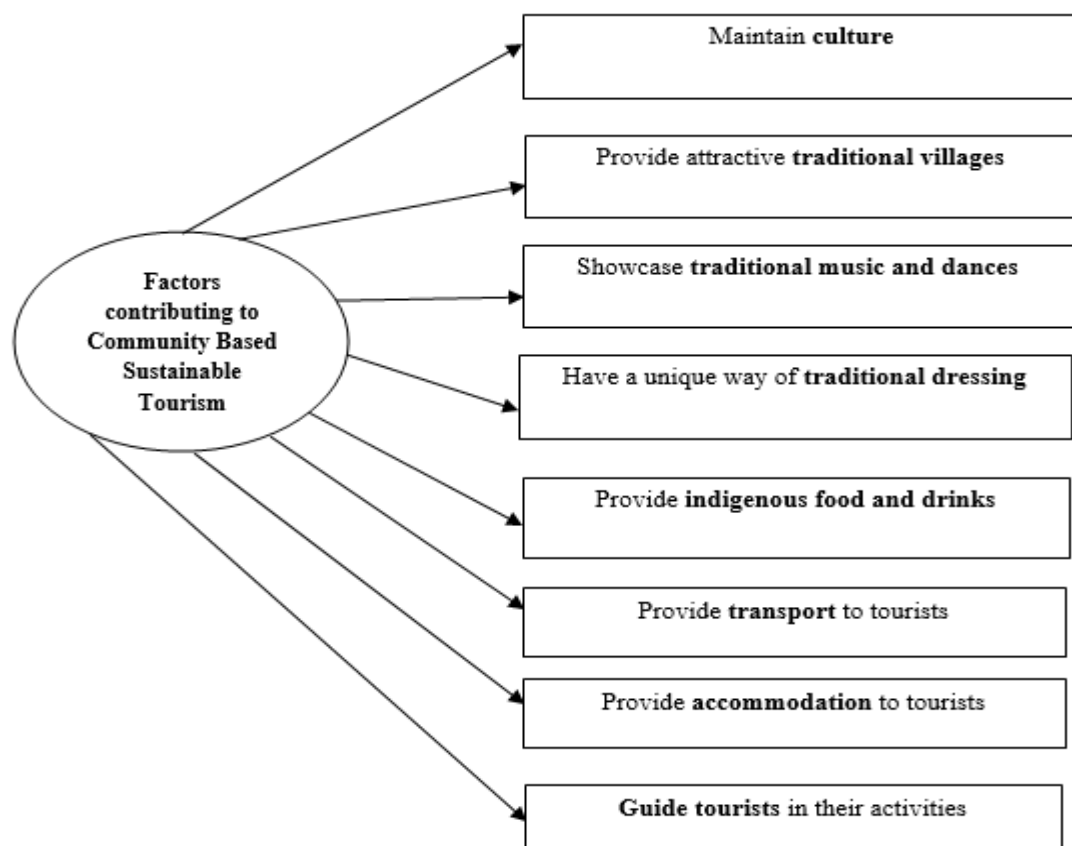

Figure 1.1 Factors leading to sustainable tourism through community involvement

These views in Figure 1.1 were supported by UNWTO (2008) which postulated that issues to do with sustainable tourism can be enhanced by culture, history, music dances, customs, rituals, language and lifestyle. Widyasari & Haryanto (2010) concurred by informing that tourists are

motivated to visit a tourism destination when the communities are environmentally friendly and provide food safety to the tourists.

Results from quantitative research
The results presented in Table 1.3 below shows that the local communities in Victoria Falls highly agreed on the following: local communities provide transport (1.05); provide music and dances (1.05); maintain culture (1.20): guide tourists in their activities (1.20); and provide indigenous food and drinks (1.34).

Results from Victoria Falls local community

Table 1.3 Average mean of community based sustainable tourism brand equity for Victoria Falls

Community Based Sustainable Tourism Brand Equity Variables	Average Mean
1. Maintain culture	1.20
2. Attractive homesteads	2.96
3. Provide music and dances	1.05
4. Unique dress codes	2.60
5. Provide indigenous food and drinks	1.34
6. Guide tourists in their activities	1.20
7. Provision of transport	1.05
8. Provision of accommodation	2.18

***The average mean are in a range of 1-5 (1= Strongly Agree; 5=Strongly Disagree)
Source: Research findings

The presentation in Table 1.4 below revealed the following local community practices as agreed by the community members: guide tourists in their activities (1.11); provide indigenous food and drinks (1.27); and provision of transport (1.64).

Results from Domboshava local community

Table 1.4 Average mean of community based sustainable tourism brand equity for Domboshava caves

Community Based Sustainable Tourism Brand Equity Variables	Average Mean
1. Maintain culture	2.68
2. Attractive homesteads	3.27
3. Provide music and dances	2.11
4. Unique dress codes	2.95
5. Provide indigenous food and drinks	1.28
6. Guide tourists in their activities	1.11
7. Provision of transport	1.64
8. Provision of accommodation	3.29

***The average mean are in a range of 1-5 (1= Strongly Agree; 5=Strongly Disagree)
Source: Research findings

Commonality in sustainable practice between Victoria Falls and Domboshava communities

Table 1.5 analysis the relationship between responses by local communities surrounding Domboshava Curves and Victoria Falls. This was important in order to come up with the variables that were agreed by both communities so that they will be used to build Zimbabwe tourism destination brand equity from a community based sustainable tourism perspective. The study therefore accepted the variables with a smaller variance to be the most dominant as brand equity variables.

Table 1.5 Comparison of responses by community members in Victoria Falls and Domboshava Curves

Brand Equity Sources	Victoria falls Community	Domboshava Community	Variance
1. Maintain culture	1.201	2.678	1.477
2. Attractive homesteads	2.956	3.269	0.313
3. Provide music and dances	1.053	2.113	1.06
4. Unique dress codes	2.601	2.947	0.346
5. Provide indigenous food and drinks	1.342	1.278	0.064
6. Guide tourists in their activities	1.202	1.114	0.088
7. Provision of transport	1.047	1.643	0.596
8. Provision of accommodation	2.178	3.293	1.115

Source: Research findings

The presentation in Table 1.5 was further ranked using variances of the average mean in order to highlight the most dominant sources of brand equity between the two communities. At the top is provision of indigenous food and drinks (0.06) and at the bottom is maintaining culture (1.48). This shows that Zimbabwe tourism destination brand can be more visible and attractive from a community based sustainable tourism through provision of indigenous food and drinks. This is followed by locals guiding tourists in their activities (0.09), attractive homesteads (0.31), unique dress codes (0.35) and provision of transport (0.60) ranked as the top five most dominant brand equity variables for consideration. These therefore helped in developing Community Based Sustainable Tourism Brand Equity model as presented in Figure 1.2 below.

Towards a community based sustainable tourism brand equity framework
The presentation in Table 1.5 has helped in coming up with variables to develop a Community Based Brand Equity Model. Various scholars (Jansen van Veuren 2004; Saarinen et al. 2014) have supported the construction of systems that link local communities and tourism development. Also, Samimi, Sadeghi & Sadeghi (2011) informed that implementation of such structures can help in promoting sustainable tourism development. For this research the produced model is as shown in Figure 1.2 below.
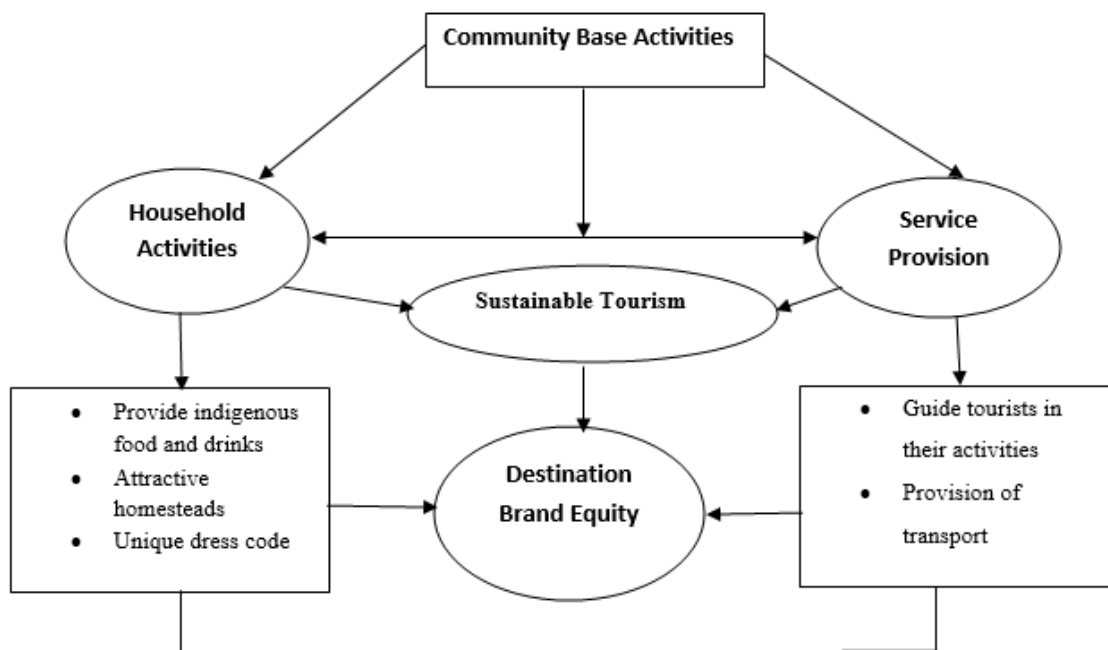
Figure 1.2 Community based sustainable tourism brand equity framework

Previously the available literature and studies have concentrated much on policy development and environmental impact of tourism. Little research has been done on how the concept of community sustainable tourism and destination brand equity. The outcomes of this study produced the above model in Figure1.2 as a contributor to destination brand equity based on sustainable community involvement in tourism resorts. It has been discovered that community-based activities can be classified into two that is household activities and service provision. The household activities are those that originate with the day to day living set-up whilst service provision is commitment made by the community members to work and support tourism industry mainly through employment. Therefore, the household activities include providing indigenous food and drinks, attractive homesteads and unique dress code. The service provision was discovered as guiding tourists in their activities and provision of transport. A combination of these factors will result in improved sustainable tourism destination brand equity. As supported by Richards (1996) & Brundtland (1987) that sustainability of a tourism destination is built on the social, economic and cultural factors emanating from the host community.

Conclusions

The study was based on understanding the variables that would be used as drivers of Zimbabwe tourism destination using community based sustainable tourism. This was done through comparative study of Domboshava Curves and Victoria Falls. The study first used a qualitative research to obtain themes which were used to construct a survey questionnaire for a quantitative research. These further developed a model for Community Based Sustainable Tourism Destination Brand Equity. The constructed model showed that brand equity from a sustainable practice by local communities is a composite of household activities and service provision. The household activities include provision of indigenous drinks and food, unique dress code and attractive homesteads. For the service provision they include guiding tourists' activities and providing transport. Previous studies have failed to realise that surrounding communities in touristic areas have a pivotal role in building brand equity elements. Their concern was more on environment impacts and socio-economic and political relation. However, this research went further into the marketing aspects of sustainable tourism with an aim to revamp the previously borrowed brand equity variable mainly image, awareness, perceived quality, loyalty and association.

There is need to come up with a tourism policy that specify the roles that communities can play in the branding and marketing of the natural heritages. This promotes an eco-responsible citizen who will go further in trying to satisfy the tourists through culturally shared norms and beliefs. This study then agrees with some researches (Chan, 2013; Ogbeide, 2012), that because of the existing cultural shifts amongst tourists, players in the tourism and hospitality industry should consider eco-responsibility in management of natural resources. The reason being that what tourists expect in their visits is uniqueness in offerings. They now patronise destinations that are environmentally friendly more than before.

The government and local authorities must come up with communal synergies that allow even assisting local households in maintaining and developing cultural homesteads that are aesthetic to nature. It seems as if most communal areas in Zimbabwe are being developed to modern structures which is not what the tourist is looking for. Tourists come for adventure and new experiences that are different from the normal day to day living. Destination managers and operators in Zimbabwe should create long-term plans that helps in embracing sustainable tourism practices as agreed by Dwyer et al. (2012), which will help local community engagement and participation in the sustainable tourism issues.

There is need for destination marketers and the government to budget more for cultural tourism events and festivals that are driven by local communities. Chiefs and traditional leaders should be given autonomy to come up with their own localized showcasing strategies rather than being led and directed by destination marketing organisations. Cultural tourism should also be considered as a factor that harmonise all other sustainable tourism practices by local communities as expressed by UNTWO (2008) that cultural tourism is increasingly a fast-going type of tourism globally. There is need for tourism institutions to create partnerships with local communities in the newer types of tourism which are now individualised and customised for a specific type of a tourist. These include village tourism, traditional tourism, African dressing tourism and African cuisine type of tourism. As a limitation to this study, it is difficult to come up with a systematic understanding and formalised community based sustainable tourism. This is because the views and opinions of community members differs from one household to another. Therefore, there is need to further develop a model that systemise a symbiotic handling and management of tourism resources and marketing of the tourism destination.

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