

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM IN PORT ST JOHNS – SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate community perceptions of opportunities for local economic development (LED) in the town of Port St Johns (PSJ), using tourism as a conduit. PSJ is situated at the mouth of the Umzimvubu River along the Wild Coast region in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. A sample of 307 residents of PSJ responded to a questionnaire on the effects of tourism in their community. Overall, the findings reveal a tourism policy gap regarding the LED strategy and implementing a tourism development plan for PSJ. Therefore, the recommendation is to initiate a stakeholder consultative process, culminating in developing a strategic tourism plan for PSJ. This study contributes to the literature on including tourism in the general development plan of communities such as PSJ. At the same time, it provides strategic direction on how community livelihoods can be improved using the natural and cultural resources in PSJ.

Key words: Community involvement, host community, Port St. Johns, LED, rural tourism

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INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, tourism has gained worldwide recognition as a leading growth industry (Astina et al., 2021; Safarov and Janzakov, 2021). Before the general economic meltdown orchestrated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the tourism sector accounted for R130,1 billion (3%) of direct contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) and contributed 4,5% of total employment in South Africa (Stats SA, 2020). Acha-Anyi (2020) asserts that tourism is seen progressively as an attractive growth preference for several tourist regions in emerging economies such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

In the light of this, it comes as no surprise that countless tourist destinations and host communities have adopted the industry as a one-stop panacea to meet their economic challenges (Iorio and Wall, 2012). Nevertheless, Canh and Thanh (2020) point out that the misconception of tourism as a panacea for improving the economic profile of destinations has never survived the scrutiny of its benefits. Furthermore, tourism leans towards aggravating the problems of host communities by degrading the environment, promoting illicit monetary transfers and exposing their internal problems (Dieke, 2009). Atzori et al. (2019) support this view by saying that instead of yielding the expected outcomes, more pressure is exerted on the existing scarce resources. There is even a possibility that conflicts could be triggered due to inadequate forecasting and maladministration of tourism growth in certain instances, such as tourist arrivals in a tourism destination and acceptable limits of environmental responsibility. Hence, tourism awareness programmes in the local community are essential to ensure that host communities benefit from their assets, such as indigenous resources, characteristics and uniqueness. Host communities must be encouraged to take part in decision-making platforms.

Arintoko et al. (2020) explain that rural areas already have an abundance of national botanical gardens, adventure areas, highlands, lakes, and cultural attractions, mostly found in the outlying towns and cities that remain leading tourist destinations. Hence, the rural economy in these areas is already strategically positioned as a critical feature because of tourism. Xu et al. (2019) also highlight that natural and cultural resources create a competitive advantage in South Africa, which has led to tourism's economic potential and development, now a significant contributor to growth and development.

BACKGROUND

Port St. John is one of the leading tourism destinations on the Wild Coast of the Eastern Cape Province, particularly for adventure tourists and nature lovers (Apleni and Henama, 2020). The area has many natural resources, such as the healing sulphur springs (Figure 1) and the eco-friendly Indian Ocean coastal activities (Figure 2).

Over the past two decades, the area has experienced an upsurge in tourism activities with several private entities introducing shark-diving activities, a zipline, mountain climbing, and aircraft air shows on the airstrip. Tourist souvenir

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stalls run by the host community mushroomed in and around the small coastal town (Dicken, 2010). As a result, PSJ contributed 0.71% to the GDP of the Eastern Cape and 0.06% to the GDP of South Africa in 2013 (Eastern Cape Province (ECP), 2014). Adversely, triple social ills (poverty, inequality and unemployment) prevail simultaneously with the upsurge in tourism, which raises the question of the effectiveness of tourism as the driver of LED. In contrast, the community services sector in 2016 was the largest in PSJ, accounting for R862 million or 40.6% of the total Gross Value Added in the local municipality's economy. Both the agriculture and mining sectors are generally characterised by volatility (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC, 2021). The host community is not directly involved in the tourism programmes throughout the area, such as accommodating tourists and providing recreational activities. In time, tourism could generate income for the host community. In contrast, the town no longer hosts the abovementioned activities that used to be on offer, such as the aircraft air shows. Furthermore, PSJ is among the top three most impoverished Eastern Cape towns (ECSECC, 2021). Many opportunities exist, especially when recipient individuals participate in the policymaking forum and when the economic empowerment of the host community is encouraged and investigated to find solutions to problems. There are opportunities to create a conducive environment for small- to medium-tourist enterprises (SMTEs) to grow, thrive, and promote an environment for private-public partnerships in sub-Saharan Africa to develop.



Figure 1. Bubbling healing sulphur spring in Port St. Johns
(Authors primary data, 2021)



Figure 2. Mainly unspoilt coastal landscape of Port St. Johns
(Authors primary data, 2021)

Previous studies (Apleni and Henama, 2020; Mukwada and Sekhele, 2017) reveal strategic issues of tourism destination management and marketing in Port St. Johns. Such challenges are evident in the absence of a coordinated stakeholder approach and a focused market driven tourism product development in the community of Port St. Johns. Hence, questions have been asked about the market readiness of PSJ as a tourists' destination (Dicken, 2010). The reason for this is the slow development taking place relative to tourism. First, natural and man-made attractions are abundant, such as deep-sea shark diving and sardine run migration tours during the winter season. Second, because tourism is seasonal, there seems to be limited input from private-public partnership investments. Hence, the town remains overcrowded, overbooked and tourists stay for shorter periods (Mtshokotshe and Mxunyelwa, 2020). Moreover, there is limited marketing coverage of the existing tourist products, so the outside world is unaware of the available resources (Dicken, 2010).

According to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT, 1996), many communities, especially among previously disadvantaged groups in rural areas, have not actively participated in the tourist industry, yet they possess significant tourism resources. The DEAT (1996) further laments the absence of adequate transport services because this limits the participation of rural communities in the industry. Acha-Anyi (2020) asserts that the cornerstone of the tourist industry is the conservation of community cultural and natural heritage and that host communities should be the prime beneficiaries of tourism development. Similarly, Arintoko et al. (2020) reiterate that tourism cannot be sustainable as a tool for development if the host community does not have a vision of self-development. However, PSJ as a host community is not benefitting from tourism and has developed apathy towards tourism, particularly the individuals who perceive tourism as no benefit to them (Mtshokotshe and Mxunyelwa, 2020). While studies on community-based tourism are readily available, the same cannot be said of research on the involvement, benefits and perceptions of local people concerning tourism development in their communities Lee et al. 2018; Swart et al. 2018; Woosnam and Aleshinloye, 2018). This study aims to yield content that deals explicitly with the perceptions of marginalised host communities on opportunities of LED through tourism. Secondly, the study uses empirical evidence from the community of PSJ to illustrate the level of involvement of host communities and tourism stakeholders and how this can be improved in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rogerson (2019) affirms that tourism can serve as a tool with which communities can generate income and, in turn, can improve the lives of residents for the better. Similarly, Kauppila et al. (2009) posit that tourism is often considered a vehicle for regional development due to the positive economic impacts of the industry. Mukwada and Sekhele, (2017) emphasized that the travel industry is a potent tool for the promotion of LED as it creates employment particularly in rural communities. There is ample empirical evidence from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to

illustrate that economic benefits from tourism actually accrue to local communities (Rogerson, 2019; Apleni and Henama, 2020). Látková and Vogt (2012) pointed out that many host communities have experienced the benefits of tourism as a new way to improve the country's economic outlook. Mtshokotshe and Mxunyelwa, (2020) argue that the tourism industry could play a significant part in the Transkei Wild Coast LED programme.

Giampiccoli et al. (2014) bring to light the possible gap between policies and practices that must be closed to facilitate community-based tourism development for the benefit of communities. It is pertinent that the impact of tourism on LED as an approach for poverty mitigation is analysed to understand better the extent of alleged and expected benefits thereof (Mbaiwa and Hambira, 2020) Municipalities have broadly recognised the importance of tourism as an economic panacea in South Africa through which success can be achieved by bringing benefits to the recipient communities (Rogerson, 2019). Woosnam and Aleshinloye (2018) believe that rural tourism is another source of income that protects host communities from social ills. Therefore, a community like PSJ could benefit from tourism development that the host community can share. The researcher believes that the potential of tourism in areas such as PSJ requires particular attention. It has also been discovered that the major constraint to tourism development in PSJ is the limited involvement of host communities.

Mbaiwa and Hambira (2020) indicate that tourism could contribute immeasurably to LED and poverty mitigation. The representation of the new dispensation for municipal functions summarises the progressive responsibilities of a municipality in subdivision 153 of the law of South Africa (DEAT, 1996). Additionally, the municipality must structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to prioritise the community's basic needs and promote social and economic development. Acha-Anyi (2020) contends that the link between tourism and LED in the municipal tourism policy still upholds various assumptions. In the case of the Eastern Cape, the promotion of sustainable economic growth and the contribution of LED does not introduce new thinking that is likely to produce an environment that will enable tourism to exploit its potential. Furthermore, Khumalo (2014) maintained that rural tourism in the Eastern Cape has remained unexploited despite the potential and contributions towards LED. According to Dicken (2010) PSJ has received much attention as a possible hub for tourism improvement in the Wild Coast region in the preceding years. Such motivation has arisen because PSJ is part of the most biodiverse tourism routes in the Eastern Cape and perhaps in the whole of South Africa (Giampiccoli and Kalis, 2012). Mtshokotshe and Mxunyelwa (2020) add that deep gorges, mangrove swamps and impenetrable forests are found mainly in PSJ on the Wild Coast Route. Thus, the PSJ municipality was adopted as a case study to examine the prospects for LED through tourism in the Oliver Reginald Tambo District Municipality. Swart et al., (2018) point out that more than one-third of rural areas are in arid and semi-arid regions, and up to 75% of the world's disadvantaged people live in this environment. Látková and Vogt (2012) asserted that rural tourism in this development context could be adopted as a conduit for revitalising rural areas. Marginalised areas need to develop an alternative approach to help foster a viable means of support by using LED initiatives (Rogerson, 2019).

The absence of infrastructure, such as roads, and the lack of host community awareness are among the factors that are stifling the growth of tourism in PSJ (Apleni and Henama, 2020). The potential of natural resources to attract more tourists could become a significant contributor to the local economy of PSJ. With its unspoilt, underdeveloped but naturally beautiful terrain PSJ has the potential to attract much-needed tourist traffic. It is in this light that natural areas require the necessary attention from relevant stakeholders. Failure to attend to this will lead to sustainable tourism in the area being compromised (Pandy and Rogerson, 2021). The decline in South Africa's tourist arrivals from all regions could be related to the Covid-19 pandemic (Stats SA, 2020). The level of growth is estimated to last, particularly as a consequence of globally falling oil prices. Therefore, from an international perspective, the economic sector of tourism has proved to be critical in generating decent employment in all sectors, formal and informal, improving the quality of life, and attracting foreign exchange earnings (Meyer and Meyer, 2015; Ap, 1992). The contribution of tourism in growing the economy, creation of jobs and revenue generation is widely acknowledged (Reddy et al., 2014). In this light, tourism plays an integral part in improving the financial strength of numerous developing and developed countries. The Organization for Economic Coordination and Development (OECD) (2010) commented that the tourist sector has a labour-absorptive capacity because tourism offers numerous low-skilled jobs. For example, many people are employed indirectly as guides, drivers, gardeners and laundry staff. Tourism tolerates the freedom of participation in the mainstream marketplace, with limited hurdles, such as lack of knowledge, inadequate transportation systems, and government support. Moreover, the potential of tourism's meaningful contribution to rural community development and growth is discussed adequately in this study's literature, and the findings of the study are in agreement with the socio-economic benefits of tourism (Lee et al., 2018).

Impact of tourism on economic development

Meyer and Meyer (2015) assert that the economic capabilities of the travel industry to subsidise LED significantly depends on the sectors' exclusivity. Tourists need to travel to destinations for them to consume the tourist products, for example. Bosworth and Turner (2018) clarified that these distinctive factors embrace the diversity of the economy, allowing the growth of exports and the attraction of people towards the most far-flung settings offering unique cultural and natural attractions. Furthermore, tourism supports local skills from white to blue-collar expertise. Mbaiwa and Hambira (2020) assert that skills are essential for growth and development. Moreover, tourism promotes the expansion of small, medium to micro-enterprises in tourism. Consequently, the development of fibre networks and associated infrastructure is likely to improve (Junaidi et al., 2019; Andereck et al., 2005). Rural tourism, in particular, has attracted increasing attention from tourism planning experts and academics due to its potential to improve peripheral destinations (Acha-Anyi, 2020). Mariani et al. (2014) indicated that established tourist destinations are experiencing a paradigm shift in target markets, and new markets are rapidly emerging. The competition is significantly increasing, not only in tourist destinations but also

between destinations. Lee et al. (2018), in agreement with this view, maintain that the development of rural tourism offers an improvement in the host community’s livelihood, although some effects are more beneficial than others; namely, cultural, environmental and socio-economical aspects. Hence, the support and involvement of the host community is indispensable for tourism sustainability (Gursoy et al., 2010; Laut et al., 2021)).

Despite these ideals and the stated potential of rural development, Gao and Wu (2017) highlighted that rural tourism in traditional tourism destinations experienced a universal crisis over the past four years, specifically in emerging destinations. With rural culture and the conventional agricultural sector being subjected to the assimilation of modernisation, rural tourism can ensure that such assimilation does not impede the equitable development of the host community. Similarly, Apleni and Henama (2020) assert that most of the skills base in PSJ has moved to the major cities of South Africa.

Tourism and economic development in South Africa

Academic discourse relating tourism to economic growth is comparatively new on the African continent (Richards, 2018). In the growing body of international scholarship around tourism, the most undeveloped literature and research base refer to sub-Saharan Africa (Rogerson, 2019). Lee (2013) was also of the view that the potential of Africa’s tourism is generally unexploited. According to the DEAT (1996), tourism was declared a missed opportunity for South Africa as a whole. Three key themes emerge from an analysis of the South African tourist economy. First, the industry has a long history of racial polarisation. That is, tourism was conceived of as an industry catering to the recreational and leisure needs of White residents (most of whom live Gauteng, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal) and colonial expatriates who reside north of South Africa’s borders (Rogerson, 2019). Second, as South Africa also practised spatial apartheid, the provision of tourist products was almost entirely confined to designated ‘White spaces’ with minor exceptions made in the late apartheid era for tourism products to be built in certain spots in the so-called ‘homelands’ (Rogerson, 2019).

The share for the Eastern Cape is limited to a one or possibly a two-night stay in Port Elizabeth (Mtshokotshe and Mxunyelwa, 2020). The advent of malaria-free private game reserves has increased the province’s profile, but with a minimal spread into the eastern half of the province. The sharp decline observed in regular tourism is further compounded by shortening itineraries, further reducing receipts to the Eastern Cape (ECSECC, 2021). However, after setting out a somewhat bleak prospect, there is a glimmer of hope. The Eastern Cape is featured widely in almost all leading tour operator brochures (Apleni and Henama, 2020). The intuitive hypothesis is that the Eastern Cape is sold more easily to a repeat visitor who has exhausted the iconic path and is looking for a different set of experiences and products.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research methodology

The aim of this study was to assess community perceptions on the development of tourism as a means of orchestrating local economic development in communities. In achieving this goal, the study employed the quantitative research paradigm through the use of a questionnaire to collect data from community members on their perceptions on the use of tourism as an instrument for local economic development. The community of Port St. Johns in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa was used a case study to conduct this study based on the availability of unique tourists’ attractions in the area such as healing springs, relatively undisturbed forests and Ocean resources. Therefore, the case study approach was deemed appropriate based on the suitability of the natural resources and the aesthetic qualities of the environment in Port St. Johns which make it favourable to the phenomenon of local economic development through tourism (Brink, 2018). The method employed in carrying out this research is summarised in figure 3 below.

Target population

Neuman (2014) viewed the population as a representative view of many complex situations from which the researcher takes a sample and where the sample results are produced.

The survey population in this study comprised the residents of Port St. John community. Hence, all the 178, 000 inhabitants of the community (Eastern Province, 2014) were considered eligible for the study.

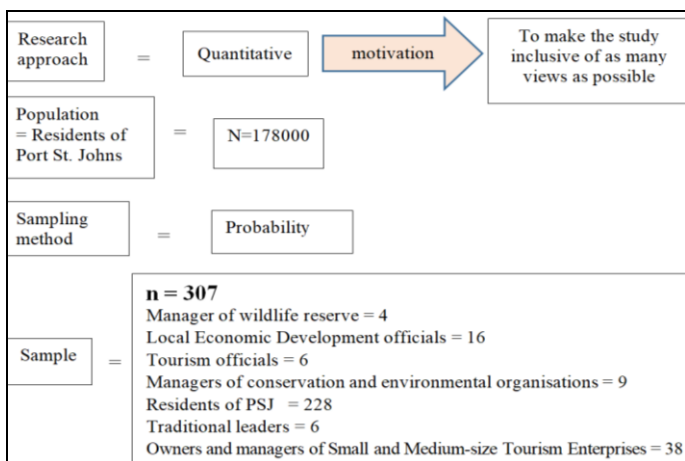


Figure 3. Research design (Authors’ compilation)

Sample size

Based on the population of 178, 000 (Eastern Cape, 2014), a sample size determined using the formula (Sarantakos, 2013, p. 14):

$$\text{Sample size, } n = N * \frac{Z^2 * p * (1 - p)}{[N - 1 + \frac{Z^2 * p * (1 - p)}{e^2}]}$$

where,

- N = Population size,
- Z = Critical value of the normal distribution at the required confidence level,
- p = Sample proportion,
- e = Margin of error (Sarantakos, 2013, p. 14)

Therefore, a sample size of 383 was considered appropriate for this study. However, out of the 400 questionnaires that were distributed in the PSJ community, only 307 valid responses were returned. This was noted as one of the limitations on the study.

Sampling approach

The study adopted a probability sampling approach which followed simple random sampling. This meant that each resident of the community of Port St. Johns (population) had an equal chance of being selected to take part in the study. Community members were randomly approached in public areas such as the shopping centre, entertainment places and around the streets and asked if they would be willing to take part in the study. Those who accepted to participate in the study were handed consent forms to familiarise themselves with their rights to anonymity, non-obligation and withdrawal from the study. After these prerequisite formalities, the respondents were then handed the questionnaire with a pen to complete.

Measuring instrument

Research questions were transformed into topics raised during the survey to develop a measuring instrument (Boeije, 2010). Moreover, when selecting the study as a calculating tool, the investigator had drawn up a flawless and fascinating overview of the research, presented himself and the study and requested permission for the study according to Boeije (2010).

Likert scale measurement. Jennings (2010) asserted that the most widely utilised response sets used for tourism and hospitality research are checklists, ranking scales, Likert scales, semantic differential scales, Thurstone and Guttman scales, scenarios and open-ended questions. A 5-point Likert scale was used in all the 35 items relating to the triple bottom line. A score of one represented 'strongly disagree' that expressed greater disfavour than just 'disagree', and a score of five represented 'strongly agree' and expressed greater favour than just 'agree'.

Layout and contents of the survey questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into six sections:

Section A focussed on understanding tourism from respondents in general and determining the degree of involvement of respondents in the tourism sector and the tourism economy. This section contained six questions, three of which required respondents to tick multiple-choice questions/items. Section B required respondents' 'perception of residents' perception of tourism's economic and social effects. The entire section consisted of statements divided into economic, environmental and social impacts to be rated by respondents on a Likert scale. A five-point scale of 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' or 'disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' was also used in all questions in Sections B and C. These sections comprised 36 statements. Respondents were asked to rate their responses at a five-point interval: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' or 'disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. Section C required the level of perception of the respondent's involvement in tourism planning and management initiatives. The entire section consisted of statements to be rated by respondents on a Likert scale, divided into economic, environmental and social impacts. Respondents chose whether to strongly agree with the statements about the effects of tourism in PSJ on one side of the scale or strongly disagree on the other. In Section D of the questionnaire, respondents were required to provide respondent profile information that could serve as independent variables in the study. It contained five questions in which respondents had to tick or comment on the questionnaire.

Data collection

In this research, the information-gathering technique adopted a structured survey, the primary method for collecting data. The survey was conducted with the managers of wildlife reserves, LED officials, tourism officials, conservation and environmental affairs managers, residents of PSJ, traditional leaders, SMTE managers, and owners. The 19 fieldworkers were former students of Walter Sisulu University in tourism, hospitality and sport management. Among the fieldworkers were five postgraduate students from the villages of PSJ, and the survey took place over a period of three months (March to May 2019).

Pilot testing

According to Gray (2014), the pilot study helps to remove confusing and unreliable questions. In the present study, a pilot survey was undertaken with respondents to assess the reliability and validity of the survey problems. The residents were informed in person about the purpose of collecting these statistics. The researcher then conducted surveys with each respondent. One outcome of the pilot study specified that the researcher should adapt the survey questions to include them in the research problems, so some of the questions were redesigned to explain the questions asked more clearly.

Quantitative data analysis

After data coding, data entry and data cleaning, quantitative statistics were analysed. First, a graphic exploration of the demographic outline of the participants was carried out, followed by a factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin equilibrium sample size and the Bartlett sphericity test was used to assess the steadiness and reliability of the measured factors.

Fieldwork

Before data collection, nineteen fieldworkers were trained on general protocols of data collection, especially ethical conduct. All the fieldworkers were originally from PSJ, which made the data collection much more appealing to participants. The fieldworkers had been trained how to collect primary data using questionnaires as study instruments from their studies. Hence, it was simple to inform and explain the tourism terms in the instrument. After that, the fieldworkers themselves completed the questionnaire as a dummy to clarify areas that they did not understand before venturing into the field. The responses from the fieldworkers were not included in the analysis of the study. During fieldwork, the participants completed the questionnaires in the presence of the researcher or one of the fieldworkers. Table 1 indicates that the response return rates were unequal for all respondents. The community member's response rate was 91%. As far as returns are concerned, less than half the tourism business owners responded, and 91% of community members responded because they stood to benefit from the study findings.

Table 1. Respondents’ response rate in the study
(Source: Compiled by authors)

Position	Total questionnaires circulated	Total copies completed
Manager of a wildlife reserve	5	4
LED officials	30	16
Tourism officials	10	6
Managers of conservation and environmental affairs	15	9
Residents of PSJ	250	228
Traditional leaders	10	6
SMTE managers and owners	80	38
	400	307

Table 2. Cronbach’s alpha reliability statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of Items
0.928	37

Reliability and validity analysis

In this study, the scale used was ordinal. The categories used were the various constructs (variables) identified and tested on a five-point Likert scale: ‘strongly disagree’ (1), ‘disagree’ (2), ‘neutral’ (3) ‘agree’ (4), and ‘strongly agree’ (5). Respondents were asked to rate how important the constructs were in their perception of tourism. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), who asserted that reliability and validity affect correlation coefficients, the reliability test revealed that the socio-economic factor scale had an excellent internal consistency. As indicated in Table 2, Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient for the community socio-economic perception measure was 0.928, a highly acceptable level above the minimum 0.5 (Hair, Gabriel and Patel, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections detail results from this study, commencing with a discussion of the demographic statistics, followed by an analysis of the respondents’ perception of the potential benefits of tourism development and the general impacts of tourism development in the community of PSJ.

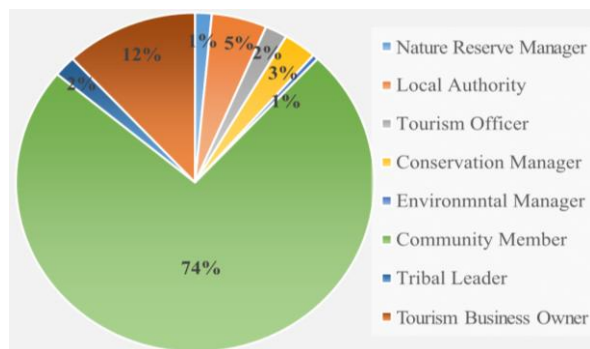


Figure 4. Tourism stakeholder status of the respondents

Table 3. Demographic characteristics
(Source: Compiled from primary data by authors)

Variable	Levels	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	128	42%
	Female	179	58%
	Total	N= 307	100
Age range	18-20	24	8%
	21-30	111	36%
	31-40	84	27%
	41-50	39	13%
	51-60	43	14%
	61+	6	2%
	Total	N=307	100
Monthly Income	None	64	21%
	1000 and below	40	13%
	1001-5000	101	33%
	5001-10000	28	9%
	10001-15000	20	6%
	15001-20000	21	7%
	20001-30000	28	9%
	30001 above	5	2%
Total	N=307	100	

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

This section discusses different variables such as gender, age and monthly household income. The survey revealed that most of the respondents were female (58%), mainly within the age group of 21-30 years of age (36%), who lived on a monthly household income of between R1001-R5000 (33%).

Tourism stakeholder status of the respondents

The study examined the current functions of the respondents to get a perspective on the role the respondents could play in tourism development in the community of PSJ. According to Figure 4, most respondents were community members (74%), while 12% owned tourism businesses, and 5% were local authorities in PSJ.

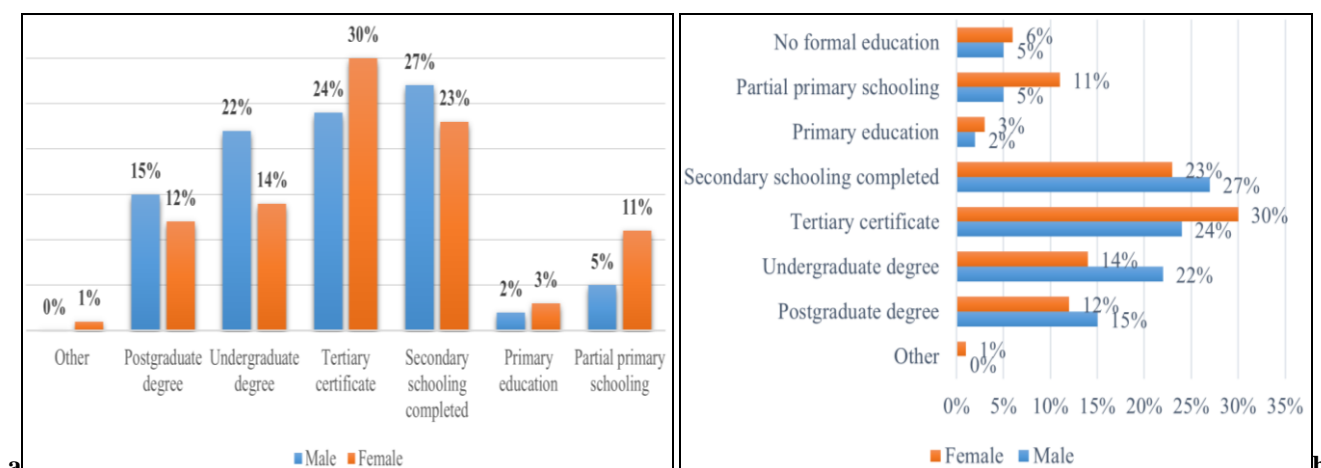


Figure 5. Distribution of Employment Status (a) and level of education (b) by gender

Distribution of Employment Status and level of education by gender

With the importance of employment and education to LED in mind, this study further compared the situation of male to female respondents as presented in Figure 5a above.

Distribution of employment status and highest education level attained

Information from Figure 3 reveals some surprising insights. Although most of the respondents in full-time employment (51%) are females as opposed to 48% males, ironically, there are more females with primary school education or less (20%) compared with only 12% males.

Community perceptions on the benefits of tourism development in Port St. Johns

The principal assumption here is that greater perceived benefits from tourism would result in greater support for tourism development. In this regard, the respondents’ views were sought on the potential benefits of tourism development to infrastructure development, small business development, job creation, tourism awareness and participation in the tourism economy in PSJ. Most of the respondents (69%) agreed that tourism development in PSJ will lead to infrastructure development. Of this percentage, 42% were female, and 27% were male. Similarly, 38% of female respondents and 27% of males supported the idea that tourism development in PSJ will create a low barrier for them to start their own small businesses: This amounted to a 65% positive respondent rate. Regarding job creation, 43% of females and 27% of male respondents agreed that tourism development in PSJ would make it easier to find work opportunities, giving a total positivity rate of 70%. Respondents were further asked to comment on the possibility of tourism development leading to greater tourism awareness among community members. Sixty-six per cent of the respondents answered in the affirmative (39% female and 27% male). Finally, 43% of female respondents agreed that tourism development would increase community participation in the tourism economy, while 30% of males shared a similar view.

From a sustainable tourism perspective, this researcher was interested in understanding the respondents’ views on the potential economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism in their community (PSJ). The results in Figure 6 reveal that most respondents (52%) perceived economic benefits accruing to the community, while 40% and about 37%, respectively, envisioned social and environmental benefits from tourism development.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) results

Further analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the dataset in order to explore the possible effects of age of respondents on perceptions of economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism in the community of Port St. Johns. Following Brink et al. (2018) a p-value of less than 0.05 was considered to indicate a statistically significant difference in the mean levels of the groups. The ANOVA based on the age groups is presented in Table 4 below. The p-value for the statistics for ‘Economic Impact’ (0.116) is greater than 0.05, meaning that there is no statistically significant difference between the different age groups regarding perceptions on the economic impacts of tourism in Port St. Johns. The p-value for ‘Social Impact’ (0.04) is less than 0.05; therefore, indicating a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the different age groups regarding the social impact of tourism in PSJ. The p-value for ‘Environmental Impact’ (0.083) is greater than 0.05; hence, there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the different age groups regarding the environmental impact of tourism in PSJ.

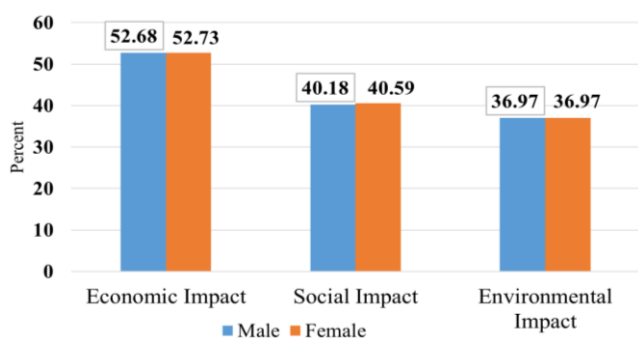


Figure 6. General impacts of tourism development in PSJ

Table 4. ANOVA by age of respondent

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Economic Impact	Between Groups	1036.453	6	172.742	1.720	.116
	Within Groups	30132.746	300	100.442		
	Total	31169.199	306			
Social Impact	Between Groups	632.895	6	105.482	2.231	.040
	Within Groups	14183.900	300	47.280		
	Total	14816.795	306			
Environmental Impact	Between Groups	525.463	6	87.577	1.885	.083
	Within Groups	13940.419	300	46.468		
	Total	14465.883	306			

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore opportunities for using tourism to orchestrate LED in the town of PSJ. By soliciting community members’ perceptions on various aspects of tourism development and using the social exchange theory as a vehicle to ascertain the potential benefits that the respondents perceive as accruing to the community as a result of tourism development, this was achieved. The participants indicated that tourism development would improve the community’s overall infrastructure and unblock certain barriers to small business start-ups. Another potential benefit from tourism development was job creation, as most respondents expressed the view that tourism growth would increase their chances of getting employed. This inclination of community members towards the positive economic benefits of tourism is echoed by Murungi and Mbugua, (2020) and Acha-Anyi, (2020). Following the social exchange theory, the expected economic benefits from tourism should signal support for tourism development in PSJ (Getz, 1994; Hernandez et al., 1996).

However, the respondents do not seem to show the same positive support towards the social impacts of tourism. This response is evident because more than 50% of the respondents do not envisage positive social impacts resulting from

tourism development. Kuuder et al. (2020) and Junaidi et al. (2019) also found that local communities are less enthusiastic about the social impacts than about the economic gains of tourism. Research on the effects of tourism development has often concluded that environmental effects tend to attract the least attention (Lee et al., 2018; Swart et al., 2018; Woosnam and Aleshinloye, 2018). The current study is no different: less than 40% of the respondents perceive environmental consequences arising from tourism development in PSJ. It is also noteworthy that results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) reveal no statistically significant difference between the different age groups regarding perceptions on the economic and environmental impacts of tourism in the community of Port St. Johns. This conclusion is important because it means that there is sufficient consensus in the community to use tourism as an instrument for community development. The conclusion from the ANOVA therefore is that there are no significant differences among community member with regards to developing tourism to generate economic and environmental benefits.

Implications

The results of this study point to both policy and practical implications for tourism development in Port St. Johns because tourism policy informs planning and implementation (Acha-Anyi, 2020; Khan et al., 2020). First, a tourism policy for communities like PSJ needs to consider the importance of attracting local people to participate in the tourism discourse. Despite high poverty levels in the community, very few people seem even to consider the opportunities offered by tourism development. Second, tourism planning should constitute an integral part of general development planning in PSJ. If tourism is to form part of the economic development agenda, it should not be discussed in isolation from overall development issues; otherwise, it may seem like duplicating the economic development process. At a more practical level, this study has revealed the need for an extensive tourism awareness campaign in the community of PSJ. It is evident from the study findings that most of the respondents have a very narrow understanding of what tourism is and the opportunities it offers. Finally, this study also has implications for tourism sustainability, emanating from the relatively low consideration that the respondents have for the social and environmental impacts of tourism. It is vital to emphasise sustainability imperatives to the community at the onset of tourism development (Waitt, 2003).

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