

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES ON RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE

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Abstract: This study sought to determine the sociodemographic influences on residents' perceptions of tourism development in Zimbabwe. The study emanates from a concern over the lack of such a research angle in the context of sub-Saharan African tourism research. Adopting an explorative quantitative design, a structured survey was used to generate 246 valid responses from the residents in Harare. The results obtained showed that there were both similarities and differences in the perceptions of residents with different sociodemographic characteristics. The study brought to light that sociodemographic characteristics are an important variable in determining the influences of residents' perceptions of tourism development. This article offers developing destinations augmented insight into the influence of demographic characteristics on residents' perceptions of tourism development, as well as discernments respecting tourism planning, policy formulation, strategy implementation, and tourism marketing in transforming communities and enhancing destination's image.

Key words: Socio-demographic profiles, residents, tourism development, Zimbabwe

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INTRODUCTION

An investigation of how the sociodemographic characteristics of residents influence their perceptions of tourism development is a neglected phenomenon within the context of tourism development in a developing destinations context. The existing research has shown that a key shortcoming in the tourism development process is the lack of involvement of the residents in the tourism planning and development stages. However,

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the research foci on the residents' perceptions of tourism development and tourism impacts, in both the developing and the developed context, have gained the attention of a number of scholars (Brougham & Butler, 1981; Dieke, 1989; Ap, 1992; Jurowski et al., 1997; Chen, 2000; Chen & Hsu, 2002; Lui, 2003; Dyer et al., 2007; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Mutanga et al., 2015; Tichaawa & Mhlanga, 2015; Moyo, 2016; Makoni & Tichaawa, 2017), who, in their studies, suggest that, as the residents are an integral part of tourism development, their perceptions can be of great value in developing the relevant developmental strategies. Surprisingly, though, scant analysis exists of how sociodemographic characteristics influence such perceptions of tourism development (Brougham & Butler, 1981; Allen et al., 1993; Lindberg & Johnson, 1997; Andereck et al., 2007). More worrying than the above is the fact that much of the existing literature, in the same regard, has been conducted from a developed community perspective. Wang (2013) identifies the lack of interest in sociodemographic characteristics when studying residents' perceptions, especially from a developmental perspective. Within the context of sub-Saharan Africa, there is a limit of empirically based studies that have been conducted focusing on the above-mentioned research angle. Moreover, sociodemographic variables, and their influence on the perceptions of tourism in the African context, have been largely researched from a tourist point of view (Mhlanga et al., 2015; Tichaawa & Makoni, 2018). Consequently, the current study sought to examine the influence of the sociodemographic characteristics of residents' perceptions and attitudes on tourism.

In the extant literature, sociodemographic characteristics have been viewed by a number of scholars (Easterling, 2004; Byrd, 2007; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017), as the size, distribution, and structure and development of the human population, taking into account issues of gender, age, racial background, marital status, place of residence, educational background, occupation, and economic status, and/or a combination thereof. Sinclair-Maragh (2017) is concerned that very few studies have made the above-mentioned characteristics the focal point of their research inquiry. Sinclair-Maragh (2017: 5) argues that it is important to study specifically how demographic profiles influence perceptions, because their "individualistic nature" makes doing so a complex activity for destination planners to undertake in developing tourism development strategies that cater for all. Moreover, Sinclair-Maragh et al. (2015) argue that such profiles are useful when understanding perceptions, and the level of support, of tourism development. Furthermore, examining residents' demographic characteristics is very important in terms of developing destinations, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, since, in recent times, they have become heavily dependent on tourism (Sinclair-Maragh et al., 2015) for economic transformation (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2018; Rogerson & Saarinen, 2018). Consequently, the current study aimed at investigating how the residents' sociodemographic characteristics influence their perceptions on tourism development, using Zimbabwe as a case study. The broader objective of the study was to supplement the extant studies with the same focus with a sub-Saharan African example. The theoretical contribution relates to articulating how the changing demographics influence the views held by the concerned residents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Significance of the residents' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, tourism development

Tourism is handsomely embraced in developing countries, due to its power to transform economies and livelihoods (Sinclair-Maragh, 2017). Therefore, it is of great significance for any future-oriented tourism development to be planned in cognisance of the residents' perceptions and attitudes, so as to enable their influence to be felt in terms of their support for any future development of tourism (Choi & Murray, 2010; Canizares

et al., 2016; Deng et al., 2016). Elsewhere in the literature, some studies (Sharma & Gursoy, 2015; Makoni & Tichaawa, 2017) opine that, since the residents are those who are employed directly/indirectly in the tourism sector, and who reside in the environments within which tourism performs, the need to examine their perceptions of, and their attitudes toward tourism development is vital. Besides, such residents are directly impacted on by tourism developments (Easterling, 2004), and hence, their attitudes toward tourism are crucial for the tourism developers to bear in mind (Lankford & Howard, 1994; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Latkova & Vogt, 2012; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017). In the light of the above, Byrd (2007) considers residents as the most important tourism stakeholder group, and argues that their support for tourism is required if sustainable tourism development (STD) is to be achieved.

Tourism, with its associated benefits and shortcomings in relation to a specific community, plays a significant role in shaping the perceptions and attitudes of residents on its impacts (Wober et al., 2003; Aliaskarov et al., 2017; Turanligil & Altintas, 2018; Tuzunkan, 2018). In view of the above-mentioned finding, Sharma and Gursoy (2015) advance that the positive influences of tourism result in the residents' support of tourism development, whereas conversely, negative influences detract from their support in such regard. The primary determinants of the residents' support of tourism development are their perceptions towards, tourism (Sharma & Gursoy, 2015). Therefore, the residents' perceptions and attitudes must be monitored on a regular basis by the destination's tourism authorities (Sharma & Gursoy, 2015). According to Gursoy et al. 2011, monitoring perceptions helps in the development of appropriate plans, initiatives and strategies to influence their perceptions, as well as motivating them to support tourism development. Wang (2013) maintains that the residents must be given priority in tourism development, because their involvement can result in achieving sustainable tourism development. In addition, taking into consideration the residents' perceptions of tourism is seen as an assurance of the enhancement of existing livelihoods (Wang, 2013). With regards to the above, the tourism authorities must develop a sound understanding of the residents' perceptions of tourism development, as a way of gaining their support on tourism projects (Harrill, 2004). The factors that affect residents' perceptions of tourism development are worthy of identification (Sharma & Gursoy, 2015). These factors are argued to be: the distance of the residents' homes from the tourism attractions concerned (Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004); the type of tourism destination in which they reside (Dogan, 1989); their length of stay in the community (Gursoy et al., 2002); and their sociodemographic characteristics (Pizam & Pokela, 1985). The present study, however, focuses on the sociodemographic characteristics involved as factors influencing the residents' perceptions of tourism development.

Residents' sociodemographic characteristics versus their perceptions of, and attitudes towards, tourism

To determine the residents' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, tourism development, and their level of support of tourism, it is important to assess how their sociodemographic characteristics influence their perceptions. Sharma and Gursoy (2015) argue that the possibility of gaining the residents' support for tourism is influenced by their sociodemographic characteristics. For example, the residents' involvement in tourism with the aim of enhancing their socioeconomic benefits influences their perceptions of, and attitudes towards, tourism (Sharma & Gursoy, 2015). In addition, Deery et al., (2012) argue that the educational background, employment status, ethnicity, and marital status of residents affect their perceptions of tourism development. According to Brougham and Butler (1981), age and gender are two of the most important sociodemographic characteristics influencing residents' perceptions. In addition, Long

and Kayat (2011) argue that age plays a significant role in influencing residents' perceptions of tourism development, in terms of which they indicate that young people tend to participate more in tourism than do older people, with the perceptions of the former being likely to be more positive than are those of the latter.

Some studies (Chen, 2000; Teye et al., 2002; Long & Kayat, 2011) agree that the relationship between the residents' sociodemographic characteristics and their perceptions is non-conclusive, due to the age, gender, occupation, and economic status differences among them. Concurring views from other studies (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011; Sharma & Gursoy, 2015) advance the proposition that, inasmuch as the sociodemographic characteristics of the residents tend to influence their perceptions, no consistent relationship exists between the two, perhaps owing to their changing nature. In their study, Sharma and Gursoy (2015) found that the economic benefits of tourism for the residents have a relatively great impact on influencing their perceptions. In other words, the residents whose positive economic status is due to tourism usually have positive perceptions of tourism, compared to those whose status is not. In addition, the earlier research conducted by Irwin et al. (1990) shows that people with different sociodemographic characteristics have different needs and wants, as well as perceptions and attitudes. Thus, sociodemographic characteristics affect perceptions through the associated values (Lindberg & Johnson, 1997). Wang (2013) opines that such sociodemographic characteristics are relevant to the determining of similarities and differences regarding various geographic segments of a resident population. Various views have been presented in relation to how the sociodemographic profiles of residents influence their perceptions and attitudes towards tourism.

In terms of gender, Harvey et al. (1995) illustrate how the differences between men and women, and their attitudes towards tourism development, depend on the context. For example, on the one hand, women tend to be more negative regarding tourism than are men, due to tourism's perceived negative impacts (Mason & Cheyne, 2000), while, on the other hand, men tend to be sceptical of tourism spinoffs, while women have a high level of perception in such regard (Harvey et al., 1995). In a related study, Harrill and Potts (2003) found that women are more concerned about tourism benefits than are men, which has prompted the argument from Sinclair-Maragh (2017) that the differences in the perceptions of men and women towards tourism could be based on their biological differences. Accordingly, Sinclair-Maragh (2017: 6) states "maleness associated traits are manifested by being agentic and controlling, while female traits are demonstrated through being nurturing and sensitive". In view of Sinclair-Maragh's assertion, Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) and Fischer and Arnold (1994) contextualise that women tend to be more pro-tourism development, due to tourism's associated economic benefits that enable women to take care of their families. Thus, Sinclair-Maragh (2017) argues that women are more supportive of tourism development than are men, in general.

Researchers have also examined the effects of age as a factor influencing the perceptions of tourism. For example, in a narrative on perceptions and implications linked to tourism planning, Harrill (2004) argues that age plays a significant role in influencing the perceptions of tourism development. However, the extant literature reveals a lack of consensus as to the differences in perceptions between young and old residents. While some scholars (see, for example, Cavus & Tanrisevdi, 2002) are of the view that the older a resident grows, the more negative their perceptions of tourism development tend to become, whereas others (Deng et al., 2011) argue that the opposite is true. Tomjenovic and Faulkner (2000) support the view that the older residents tend to have more positive perceptions of tourism development than do the younger ones. The authors further argue that, as people age, they are likely to become more sensitive to the environment, and,

hence, come to support the development of tourism for purposes of environmental protection. In McGehee and Andereck's (2004) study, the most laborious tasks in tourism were noted to be performed by young people, while the more senior individuals were likely to be promoted to higher posts, and/or managerial positions, due to their years of experience in the industry. The above, according to Harrill (2004), suggests that there are more associated benefits of tourism for older people than for younger people, which results in the former being more supportive of tourism development.

Within the context of perceptions of tourism linked to economic status, various researchers (Saarinen, 2003; Moyo, 2016; Makoni & Tichaawa, 2017; Tichaawa, 2017) are of the view that tourism plays a vital role in enhancing livelihoods and in boosting the socio-economic status of the host community citizens. According to Torres and Momsen (2004), tourism development allows for a multiplier effect to take place in communities, which accrues benefits to the residents, both directly and indirectly. Despite the above, Sinclair-Maragh (2017) argues that the benefits differ, as inequality is ever-present in the distribution of the resources and economic spinoffs of tourism among the residents concerned. In addition to the above, Sinclair-Maragh (2017) indicates that tourism businesses tend to use expatriate labour in less laborious and more managerial positions, where they can earn relatively high wages, whereas local labour tends to be used in more strenuous and laborious positions, with low wages, resulting in more of the locals employed in tourism having average, or below-average, economic status. The above-mentioned situation may result in the development of some resentment towards tourism development among the locals, despite its power to create employment (Mbaiwa, 2003), and to raise their economic standing. Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996) hold that the wealthier residents tend to be more pro-tourism development than are the economically average, or less than average, residents.

The level of skills and education plays a vital role in the ability of residents to understand the phenomenon of tourism. According to Sinclair-Maragh (2017: 6), "one's level of education can influence their ability to communicate any concerns they have regarding tourism development". In view of the above, other researchers (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Sinclair-Maragh et al., 2015) concur that, the better a person is educated, the more likely they are to be able to articulate their tourism development concerns. According to Sinclair-Maragh (2017), as well as Sinclair-Maragh et al. (2015), those residents who are relatively well educated have positive perceptions of, and attitudes towards, tourism because of their level of awareness of the associated spinoffs derived from tourism development. While the above subsection has illuminated what is currently known as far as the perceptions of tourism linked to resident sociodemographic profiles go, the relevant literature can be seen to be dominated by the Global North perspective, and by a focus on the analysis of impacts. Therefore, the need to obtain views from the developing context should be recognised, which is what the current study sought to do.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study was conducted in Harare, Zimbabwe. The country was considered as the study focus, as it is currently involved in efforts to revive the once flourishing tourism industry, which was severely impacted on by the political shenanigans and by the economic downswing (Chibaya, 2013; ZTA, 2014). Specific attention was given to Harare, the country's capital and the main gateway city to the country, as well as the centre of development in the nation. As the study was conducted to examine the relationship between the existing variables, a quantitative design was deemed appropriate. The researchers employed a quantitative research design, as they wanted to refrain from bias and the control of alternative explanations, as well as to be

able to generalise and replicate the findings made. In terms of the variables measured, the study focused only on the residents' gender, age, economic status, educational background, and employment/occupation status. The attributes were used to ascertain their sociodemographic characteristics. In the survey instrument that was developed, the respondents were asked to indicate which item they considered best suited their demographic profile. Gender was measured by the items 'male' and 'female'. An age range with three groups, consisting of groups 1 (24 years old and younger), 2 (between 25 and 34 years old), and 3 (35 years older and above), was used to measure the respondents' age profile. The economic status of the respondents was measured by the items 'below-average', 'average' and 'above-average'. The educational background of the respondents was measured by the items: (1) 'completed primary/secondary school'; (2) 'completed diploma/certificate'; and (3) 'completed undergraduate/postgraduate degree'. Lastly, the respondents' employment status was measured by the items: 'full-time employed'; 'part-time employed'; 'student'; 'I cannot find a job'; 'retired'; and 'business person'. As indicated in Table 1 below, nine variable statements were given in relation to which the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 3 = neutral; 5 = strongly agree), so as to ascertain their perceptions of tourism development.

Table 1. Variable Statements on Residents' Perceptions of Tourism Development

Item	Statement
V1	Tourism creates employment / income opportunities for me.
V2	Tourism development creates opportunities for entrepreneurship / encourages locals to open a tourism-related business.
V3	Tourism development encourages foreign investment and facilitates infrastructural development.
V4	I trust the tourism authorities (ZTA) and the role that they play in my community.
V5	Tourism authorities have identified my community as being an important tourism stakeholder group, and community members' perceptions and expectations of tourism development are being considered in tourism planning and policy formulation.
V6	Tourism development leads to improved standards of living in my community.
V7	Tourism stimulates training and skills development for members within my community.
V8	Public places are maintained at a better standard of hygiene due to tourism development.
V9	Tourism development has contributed to the preservation of the natural environment, and to the protection of the wildlife within my community.

Data collection, capturing and analysis

The data obtained for the current study were collected from the Harare residents. To obtain the relevant data, the researchers used a stratified random sampling technique, in terms of which Harare was stratified into seven strata, with the residents in each stratum being randomly selected to participate in the study. Thereafter, a questionnaire technique was used to obtain the required data from the respondents. In the above regard, the researchers utilised a paper-based questionnaire, because such a questionnaire is known to be the most effective means of data collection, with it providing a high response rate (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). In the above sense, 246 paper-based questionnaires were distributed across the seven strata of Harare (with an average of 35 questionnaires being distributed per stratum), according to the researchers' design, to ensure that the research undertaken represented not only the overall Harare populace, but also the key subgroups in the population, and especially the minority groups in the neglected areas. The SPSS, version 24, software was then used to capture and analyse the obtained data. Firstly, the data were examined to determine both the mean and the standard deviation, based on each sociodemographic profile item. In addition, a cross-tabulation analysis was used to

determine the demographic profile of the respondents, and the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the concept of tourism development, with their agreement level ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’ with the tourism development variable statements indicated in Table 1. Cross-tabulation was used to determine the specific sociodemographic profile who supported, or who did not support, tourism development.

RESULT

Respondents’ demographic characteristics

The respondents’ demographic characteristics are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Respondents’ demographic profile (Data source: Based on fieldwork)

Demographic variable	n=246 (in %)
Gender profile	
Male	42
Female	58
Age profile	
Group 1 (-24)	22
Group 2 (25-34)	39
Group 3 (35+)	39
Economic status	
Group 1 Below average	36
Group 2 Average	50
Group 3 Above-average	14
Educational background	
Completed primary/secondary school	35
Completed diploma/certificate	27
Completed undergraduate/postgraduate degree	38
Occupation /Employment	
Employed full-/part-time	25
Student	22
Cannot find a job	25
Retired	2
Business person	23
Other	3

Cross-tabulation analysis of results in terms of the sociodemographic characteristics and the residents’ perceptions of the available tourism offerings

Gender

As shown in Table 3, the results obtained show that there was a significant difference in the gender-related scores obtained regarding the given nine variables. Evidently, the male respondents tended to be more aware of the implications of the statements involved than were the female respondents. The above suggests that the male respondents rated the preceding statements more positively than did the female respondents. Men and women tend to exhibit different attitudes and behaviour, and, thus, their perceptions might well differ (Sinclair-Maragh, 2017). The study found out that the male respondents were more exposed to tourism development in Zimbabwe than were the female respondents, making them more aware of issues regarding tourism in their communities. The male respondents rated the given nine variables more positively compared to how the female respondents rated them. More women than men participated in the study, resulting in the obtained perceptions being largely negative. The finding does not concur with those made by previous researchers (Ryan et al., 1998; Wang, 2013;

Sinclair-Maragh, 2017), who were of the view that women are more pro-tourism development than are men, on average. However, the previous studies were conducted in a developed context than was the current study. Thus, the above could imply that the men in developed countries tend to have positive perceptions regarding tourism development, compared to the women in developing countries, whereas the situation is vice versa in the case of men. Considering that it is usually the responsibility of women to take care of their families in developing societies, their negative perceptions of tourism, as shown in the current study, could be that tourism has not done enough justice in enhancing the livelihoods of those living in Zimbabwe. Therefore, in developing destinations, the tourism authorities should engage differently with the female and the male residents when developing tourism. Based on the findings made in the current study, strategies need to be developed as to how to transform the female residents' perceptions from negative to positive, while also ensuring that the developments taking place continue to appeal to the male residents.

Table 3. Cross-tabulation results (Data source: Based on fieldwork)

Demographic variable	Responses to variable statements																	
	V1		V2		V3		V4		V5		V6		V7		V8		V9	
	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	SD	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S
Gender profile																		
Male	2.22	0.74	2.29	0.81	2.35	0.69	2.33	0.89	2.39	0.80	1.94	0.94	2.22	0.90	2.86	0.78	2.30	0.84
Female	1.89	0.77	2.00	0.74	2.00	0.73	1.92	0.86	1.94	0.73	1.84	1.02	2.03	0.96	2.62	0.92	2.06	0.88
Age profile																		
Group 1 (-24)	2.33	1.11	2.44	2.02	2.09	0.771	2.11	0.934	1.88	0.988	2.08	0.893	2.72	0.862	2.14	0.793	2.15	0.872
Group 2 (25-34)	1.77	0.76	1.96	0.72	2.09	0.771	2.11	0.934	1.88	0.988	2.08	0.893	2.72	0.862	2.14	0.793	2.15	0.872
Group 3 (35+)	2.31	0.90	2.11	0.784	2.09	0.771	2.11	0.934	1.88	0.988	2.08	0.893	2.72	0.862	2.14	0.793	2.15	0.872
Economic Status																		
Group 1 Below -average	2.02	0.771	1.86	0.795	2.09	0.733	1.84	0.75	1.88	0.988	2.08	0.893	2.72	0.862	2.14	0.793	2.15	0.872
Group 2 Average	2.02	0.771	2.23	0.783	2.09	0.733	2.31	0.75	1.88	0.988	2.08	0.893	2.72	0.862	2.14	0.793	2.15	0.872
Group 3 Above-average	2.02	0.771	2.11	0.784	2.09	0.733	2.11	0.934	1.88	0.988	2.08	0.893	2.72	0.862	2.14	0.793	2.15	0.872
Educational background																		
Completed primary/secondary school	1.67	0.75	1.77	0.81	1.72	0.80	2.11	0.934	1.72	0.934	2.08	0.893	2.72	0.862	2.14	0.793	2.15	0.872
Completed diploma/certificate	1.88	0.78	2.00	0.71	2.18	0.64	2.47	1.02	2.27	1.257	2.47	1.016	2.72	0.862	2.14	0.793	2.15	0.872
Completed undergraduate/post-graduate degree	2.43	0.58	2.52	0.66	2.51	0.51	1.96	0.67	1.88	0.988	1.96	0.665	2.72	0.862	2.14	0.793	2.15	0.872

M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

Age

The subjects were divided into three groups, according to their age (Group 1: 18 to 24 years old; Group 2: 25 to 34 years old; Group 3: 35 years old, or above). Table 3 shows that no statistically significant difference was found in the scores between the different age groups relating to variable statements 3 to 9. The age of the respondents caused no difference in the rating of the various statements. However, there was a statistically significant difference in the scores for the age group concerned, in terms of the first two variable statements provided. However, according to the results portrayed in Table 3, age was also found to play a crucial role in influencing the residents' perceptions of tourism development in Zimbabwe. Noteworthy, the urban areas of Zimbabwe, despite being

found mostly to be resided in by the young, which was typical of African urban areas, exhibited generally negative perceptions of tourism development, as proven by the current study and other contemporary related studies (Moyo, 2016; Tichaawa & Mhlanga, 2015; Makoni & Tichaawa, 2017; Mudimba & Tichaawa, 2017). The above could mean that tourism development has more negative implications for the young, who constitute the majority of the urban populace of sub-Saharan urban areas. The picture obtained portrays a serious threat to the achievement of sustainable tourism development. In the present study, more negative responses in the study were obtained from the younger populace (34 years old and younger), who constituted the majority living in Harare at the time of the study (Countrymeters, 2015). The perceptions obtained in the study were generally negative, since the respondents who were 34 years old or younger outnumbered the older respondents. The above-mentioned finding is consistent with that of Sinclair-Maragh (2017), who indicates that older people tend to be more pro-tourism development than are younger people, due to the earlier remarked upon increased benefits to be gained from tourism as they grow older, as well as due to their comparatively environmentally sensitive nature.

Level of education

The respondents were divided into three different groups according to their highest qualification (Group 1: primary, or secondary, school completed; Group 2: diploma/certificate, completed; and Group 3: undergraduate/postgraduate degree completed). As portrayed in Table 3, the more educated the respondents were, the more negatively they tended to rate the statements presented to them. The respondents with a certificate/diploma rated the statements more positively than did the respondents with an undergraduate/postgraduate degree, who rated them negatively. The above could imply that the tourism development planning that has been undertaken in Zimbabwe up until the present has not satisfied the requirements of the communities concerned. The more highly educated respondents tended to be relatively aware of such concerns, so that their disagreeing with the given variable statements could reflect the current state of tourism development in the country. Therefore, the residents' educational background was found to be a major influence of their perceptions. In the present study, the more educated respondents gave negative responses compared to the responses provided by the less educated respondents.

The socio-economic status of residents in relation to the variables

The respondents were divided into three groups according to their socio-economic status (Group 1: below-average; Group 2: average; and Group 3: above-average). Table 3 shows that more positive responses were given by the respondents whose economic status was above-average, while the respondents who were average and below-average were generally negative in their outlook. The finding is consistent with those made in the previous studies conducted by Ap (1992), Dieke (1989), Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996), Latkova and Vogt (2012), and Mudimba and Tichaawa (2017), which suggests that one of the main indicators of tourism's contribution to communities is its economic impact. With regards to the above, the residents whose economic status had been enhanced through tourism development tended to be more pro-tourism. The negative responses given could indicate a lack of tourism development in Zimbabwe, in terms of enhancing the socio-economic status of the residents. The findings, however, imply that tourism in Zimbabwe has not yet been maximised to the extent that it is capable of transforming the residents' socio-economies, hence the negative responses received. Therefore, in developing destinations, the tourism authorities should engage with the residents differently to how they have engaged with them in the past, based on their current socio-economic status when developing tourism. Based on the findings of the study, tourism strategies need to be developed in such a way that they are capable of

creating employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for the locals, while also ensuring that tourism projects in the communities contribute towards improving their living standards. The above could help change the prevailing negative perceptions of tourism.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

The results of the cross-tabulation analysis showed that those residents who had positive perceptions of tourism were, on average, men. The respondents aged 35 years old and above tended to offer more support for tourism than did the younger people. Further, the respondents whose economic status was above average, and who were highly educated, proved to have a positive perception of tourism development, compared to that of others. The above-mentioned results are important for policy, planning and strategy decisions in the sub-Saharan African countries involved, for they greatly rely on tourism for economic growth and development. In the light of the above, such destinations are advised to take cognisance of the implications of the current study described in the following paragraphs.

The current study offers the understanding that the residents' experiences with tourism development in their community are largely influenced by their age, gender, economic status, educational background, and employment/occupation status, among other sociodemographic variables. Accordingly, the study presses that, for destinations to achieve STD, they must not only measure the residents' perceptions with regards to tourism offerings and their development, but they must also take cognisance of how the mentioned demographic factors influence the residents' perceptions. The above should be so, because demographic characteristics play a central role in influencing the residents' attitudes and perceptions, thus paving the way for predicting the socio-economic and environmental requirements of communities when developing tourism. The study also gives direction for the improvement of tourism development plans and strategies that appeal to the communities concerned. Through understanding the different sociodemographic characteristics of the residents, the tourism planners should be able to employ strategies that cater for different sociodemographic profiles. In the above regard, tourism planners should come to focus more on catering for the needs of the residents based on their age, gender, income status, educational background, and employment/occupation status, among other variables. Developing tourism so as to cater for the needs of the residents involved could be seen as a way of gaining and sustaining community support for tourism, as well as of it becoming an effective mechanism by means of which to achieve STD. In the light of the above, the findings made in the current study are consistent with those revealed in the previous studies conducted by Andriotis and Vaughan (2003), Mbaiwa (2003), Sinclair-Maragh (2017), and Sinclair-Maragh et al. (2015), which suggest that sustainable tourism development at any destination relies on community support. In addition, community support of tourism should result in providing competitive advantage in relation to the destination, as well as in improving tourists' experiences while visiting it (Mhlanga et al., 2015).

In addition, the current study cautions destinations not to overlook the influence of demographic characteristics on the residents' perceptions of tourism. The findings of the study allow for tourism planners to identify areas of improvement in tourism product development, based on the requirements of the different sociodemographic profiles concerned. In addition, the present study also gives insights into the importance of residents' sociodemographic characteristics on the tourism authorities' plans, policies and strategies. As tourism should be developed to cater equally well for both the residents' sense of well-being, and the tourists' needs and expectations, tourism development in Zimbabwe must be driven to accommodate the needs of both residents and tourists. The above means that the public sector should actively involve the communities in every step along the way of following through on the procedure of

tourism planning, tourism policy formulation and tourism strategy implementation, as well as in establishing positive and viable partnerships between the tourism-related private sector and the host communities concerned. Further, the findings of the current study imply that, for tourism development to be achieved, different views and concerns emerging from the different sociodemographic characteristics of the residents, relative to tourism development and its future at a destination, must be considered and incorporated into tourism planning, policy and strategy. Incorporating such views could provide one of the key pillars of transforming the community livelihoods, as well as of enhancing a country's/region's profile as a tourist destination.

Various studies (see Zengeni & Zengeni, 2012; Chibaya, 2013; Mutana & Zinyemba, 2013; Chingarande, 2014; ZTA, 2014) concur that, despite the economic and political challenges involved, tourism continues to form a major economic sector in Zimbabwe. In the above regard, the findings in the present study have implications for the tourism authorities, as well as for the destination managers, planners and developers concerned. Destination planning and management require taking cognisance of the powerful role that tourism plays in the economic transformation of sub-Saharan countries. As the findings suggest, the negative responses given were likely to have been due to the lack of involving communities in the tourism development processes, as perpetrated by the relevant tourism authorities involved. For tourism in the sub-Saharan region to realise its full potential, the community's resident must be viewed as a central stakeholder group for tourism development, with their perceptions, as well as their expectations, in the above regard being considered in terms of tourism policy formulation and strategy implementation. The findings of the current study show that there is great need for community involvement in every aspect of destination planning and management within the developing context. The findings also imply that the management of destinations must have strong support from the residents concerned, in relation to which plans and strategies should be developed, and implemented, with due consideration of the residents' sociodemographic characteristics. Based on the significant role played by the residents age, gender, economic status, location, and educational background in influencing their perception, the destination managers/developers/authorities must: (1) be consistent in implementing strategies that continue to promote positive perception by the residents; and (2) propose actions that help identify the influences of negative perceptions, and strategise accordingly, in terms of addressing the situation. In the case of Zimbabwe, tourism development should, in short, be community-based. Zimbabwe is, at present, a distressed destination that is engaged with efforts to recover from, among other challenges, political obstructions and an economic downswing. Therefore, at such a destination, the community-based tourism's benefits should be twofold: on the one hand, they should be **cost-effective**, thus allowing for the locals to promote their destination to tourists through "word of mouth, e-marketing and limited advertising" (Wang, 2013: 179), while, on the other hand, they should serve to assist with the **addressing of socioeconomic ills**, as the communities concerned are encouraged to engage in tourism-related entrepreneurial activities.

CONCLUSION

The current study gauged how the sociodemographic characteristics of residents influence their perceptions of tourism development within the developmental context, which, until now, has been a neglected phenomenon in terms of the tourism research undertaken in Africa. The study argues that the residents' perceptions of tourism development in the developing communities were, in general, being determined holistically, with no reference to assessing how tourism impacts variably on the different

sociodemographic characteristics of the residents in the same community. In the above regard, a central contribution of the present study lies in it advocating the inclusion of the residents' demographic characteristics in considering tourism development in Africa. In relation to the above, the study argues that the lack of such could be one of the major reasons for tourism development in Africa not yet having been maximised in terms of its full potential to transform the livelihoods of all Africans. Only a limited amount of literature has, until now, focused on the residents' sociodemographic characteristics, and on how the characteristics are incorporated within tourism policy and planning. Bearing such a limitation in mind, together with the scant amount of empirically-based research outputs that have focused on the phenomenon in Africa, the present study should play a significant role in surfacing such issues within the tourism research domain. Further, the current study has been argued from the perspective that tourism is developed around: (1) creating memorable experiences for tourists; and (2) ensuring the development of a positive sense of well-being in the host communities and their environments. With regards to ensuring the latter, which was the central focus of the current study, the research involved illuminated the fact that, for tourism development to be successful, and for sustainability to be achieved, the host communities must be at the centre of every decision that is made. In addition, such critical variables as their sociodemographic status should receive much consideration in the process. In the light of the above, the findings of the current study prove that the residents' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, tourism development are crucial to both tourism policy formulation and strategy implementation. Their sociodemographic characteristics are also seen as being major influences of their perspectives on tourism.

With one of the main findings of the current study having been the vast range of differences existing among the different demographic characteristics with regards to the perceptions of tourism development, the present researchers have explored the implications of their findings not only from a Zimbabwean perspective, but also from a broader African perspective. Tourism policy, planning and strategy have been considered in terms of how to incorporate the ramifications of the residents' sociodemographic influences in relation to their perceptions and attitudes in future. The study has also indicated that incorporating the different residents' perceptions and attitudes, based on their sociodemographic differences, in future policy, planning and strategy is crucial for the African continent to be able to maximise its full potential as a tourism destination, as well as for it to achieve sustainable tourism development. In addition, the study has highlighted that the concept of the sociodemographic characteristics of residents in the developing communities is a key variable that requires being taken cognisance of by the destination managers concerned, as they try to identify areas of improvement in their tourism product development. The key issue of significance that emerges with regards to the above is that tourism must be developed based on the requirements of the residents, in terms of their respective sociodemographic profiles, if the spinoffs are to benefit all members of the host community. In addition, the study exposes the fact that treating residents as a homogenous stakeholder group disadvantages most groups that might, therefore, be exposed to the negative effects of tourism development, and be able to benefit only minimally from tourism development (see also Lui, 2003; Wang, 2013). Considering the scarcity of the available empirically-based studies of the above-mentioned ramifications within the African context, the current study could prove to be a pioneer contribution to the literature regarding the aforementioned phenomenon.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study was limited to only five sociodemographic characteristics of the residents: their geographic setting; their age; their gender; their economic status; and

their educational background. Future research focusing on the residents' sociodemographic characteristics should incorporate other important sociodemographic details that might influence their perceptions. The variables involved could, among others, pertain to: the residents' marital status; their racial category; their length of stay in the local community; their quality of life; and their satisfaction levels with the tourism development taking place in their communities. A similar study focusing on the rural residents in the above regard is also envisaged in the study.

The current study was also limited to the perceptions of residents in only one city. Similar, but more in-depth, research could undertake a comparative analysis of the sociodemographic characteristic influences on the residents' perceptions of tourism development in two or more regions at a single destination. Lastly, future research should also be directed towards determining the tourists' sociodemographic characteristics, and how they influence their perceptions of destinations and travel patterns.

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