Enhancing Sustainable Tourism In The Maasai Mara National Reserve- Kenya

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Abstract

This paper looks at the impact that tourism has had, and may have, on the Narok county of the Mara Conservancy,the national park of the Maasai Mara, Kenya. The purpose was to generalize from a set of sample interviews and make inferences on the participation of local communities and the conservation authorities in organizing and implementing the policies needed for tourism sustainability. In this way, the study reported on in this paper could help to enhance sustainable tourism through policy planning and implementation. The study employed correlation analysis to determine how sustainable tourism is enhanced through such measures. The study results show that to make communities conscious enough of the impacts of tourism and understand their effects, governments should design and to operate educational programs and raise sensitivity, which in turn will make communities question the development of sustainable tourism. To obtain this valuable outcome, the development and implementation of guidelines in all categories of governance is required.

Keywords: communities, the industry of tourism, sensitivity, governance, sustainability

Introduction

Tourism is one of the most rapidly growing and dynamic economic sectors in the world. This sector has an important role in offering the opportunity for sustainable development in numerous countries and in numerous communities. At the same time, this sector must be managed well so that it benefits both local communities and the natural environments on which it depends (World Tourism Organization, 1997). In turn, management must be based on the sustainability of the sector and its social, economic and natural environments.

Goodwin (2011) affirms that sustainability is a concept that is regularly used in relation to tourism development. Although a common definition of sustainability does not yet exist, many researchers agree that sustainable development must be based on long term positive economic, social and environmental outcomes; the triple bottom line approach(Hunter, 2004; Goodwin, 2011; UNWTO, 2012). Thus, in relation to tourism development, sustainability now frequently enters the discussion concerning the various

forms of tourism that might be promoted. For example, conventional mass tourism is now acknowledged to have various negative socio-cultural and environmental impacts; while at the same time, the supposed economic benefits are also often not enjoyed by local communities(Telfer and Wall, 2006; Torres, 2009). On the other hand, more than a few alternative types of tourism, such as ecotourism and cultural tourism, have been initiated because they are said to be more sustainable and beneficial for local communities(Brohman, 2002; Scheyvens, 2006), but have also shown themselves to be fraught with impact problems.

This paper looks at the impact that tourism has had, and may in future have, on the Narok county of the Mara Conservancy, the national park of the Maasai Mara, Kenya. The purpose was to generalize from a set of sample interviews to make comment on the participation of local communities and their conservation authorities in organizing and implementing the policies needed for sustainable tourism in this area of Kenya. In this way, the study reported on in this paper could help to enhance sustainable tourism through providing the tools for policy planning and implementation. The study employed correlation analysis to determine how sustainable tourism is enhanced through such measures.

Sustainable Tourism Planning

Resource management and maintainable development planning are normally characterized as a societal decision - as expressed at a fundamental level in the environment approach of the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP, 2005). When these activities are in appropriately organized ,or overseen, our analysis of impacts often ends in the impression that the economic value of tourism is the only goal. The unfettered economic progress of tourism can take away the influence of residents, and produce structurally insipid environmental protection. Inadequate control of impacts and of promotion emerges from free enterprise and the absence of planning controls at the national and local level. The governments and private partners in tourism have the duty to guarantee that the long-term the progress of tourism prospers and its sustainability in future periods are not threatened by today's actions (Dwyer and Edwards, 2010).

Advancement of long-lasting tourism demands a type of planning and management which combines the interests and the concerns of a multitude of different partners in a practical and key way. It is this approach with multiple facets that asks for a methodology based on multidimensional and deliberately integrative planning. Tourism planning needs an understanding of the importance of practical development and the qualities of environmental protection to be able to take forward feasible tourism. This requires that all groups have to take into account the impact of tourist activity, and that they have the power to understand their impact, as well as mastery of the various procedures to join and participate in participative planning in search of consensus, and to be involved in the determination of the conflicts between all

the partners (Dwyer and Edwards, 2010).

For the achievement of convincing outcomes, the development of policy must spread throughout all levels and categories. At the government level, effective governance should be able to bring together other affected parties to collectively define the needs that affect and influence tourist operations in an area. Together with such partners they ought to attempt to construct frameworks favor action that guarantee viable activities in any environment, and the ceaseless exchange surrounding them. These structures are required for a better profile of the feasible advancement of tourism businesses, guaranteeing the impacts their fullest consideration (EC, 2013).

Well-coordinated sustainable tourism plans ought to have the capacity to allow the opinions on the advancement and management of tourism of those whose obligations are influenced by its impact to be made known. Instituting perpetual connections with working structures ought to unite both information and skills on all matters that are pertinent to tourism, and guarantee approaches and activities in different parts of the influences on turism. In this way, it is possible to ensure that they are facilitated and considered. This will avert clashes and upgrade collaboration along these lines; empowering wide support and providing assets to programs (UNEP, 2005).

Coordinated Linkage Structures in tourism planning

At the national level governments have departments with various obligations regarding the strategies and activities that have a solid bearing on the sustainability of tourism. The levels of felt need given to various parts of this situation depend on which part of government is in charge of tourism. For instance, a Ministry of Tourism holds the upside of having the capacity to make pertinent associations among different services and activities, yet it does not convey much weight in general (UNEP-IETC, 2003). On the other hand, connecting tourism to the Ministry of Environment can bring attention to ecological sustainability, and fortify connections in regard to the advancement of nature oriented tourism (UNEP 2005).

At the regional level, structures uniting tourism, the natural environment, communities, tourists, and more extensive improvement interests are additionally required. To reinforce the manageability of tourism, components should be built up that energize signed up observers and activities inside regional and local governments, by co-opting a few or all elements of the national government at these levels. Through such structures, organizations that include government and private spheres of interest can be built up to advance sustainable tourism (Barrow, 2015). A few nations now have ongoing tourism policy bodies, which are basically dialog and counselling bodies. These can be important instruments for advancing the sustainability of tourism, gave that their participation is usually all around adjusted to mirror the distinctive measurements of manageability (UNEP 2005).

To make this process effective though, what is required is a lasting discussion or standing meeting of an expansive number of welcomed partners speaking to

various interests. Such a multi-partner structure ought to speak to the environment, among other stakeholders. The stakeholders are: Government Departments and tourism offices, communities; NGOs and social legacy bodies, locals and occupants (nearby groups), tourism suppliers; hoteliers, eatery proprietors, vacation guides, visit administrators, instructive foundations (schools, colleges), and the media (UNWTO, 2014). Such gatherings ought to be concerned with all parts of tourism and ought to concentrate on sustainability by setting up committed working gatherings particularly for this reason. Any tourism goal without arrangements for advancement that address the financial, social and natural elements of the business is not likely to be able to cope with the effects of guests, cataclysmic occasions, or authorize the building up of particular market strengths (Wu, 2009).

Sustainable Tourism Implementation

After plan composition, the next step is to gain full comprehension by circulating the plan to everyone involved. Thereafter, different components of the agreed model should be circulated and executed by the organizations in charge of the implementation of the various activities that have been agreed. Actualizing such tourism plans however, requires the collaboration and consolidated assets of numerous people, agencies and associations (Dwyer and Edwards, 2010). In the usage phase of any practical tourism plan, government, industry, and the tourist assume imperative supporting roles.

The role of National and Regional Government in tourism policy implementation

Governments at all levels have a part to play in supporting the usage of practical tourism. This is through promotion of coordination, legislation, education and monitoring. Fortunately, the promotion of cooperation and coordination is a fundamental goal of National and Local governments or authorities. This can take various forms. One way it can be achieved is by approving tourism plans that accept obligations for undertaking actions to encourage activities by different government bodies (EC, 2013). This can be accomplished through outlining and actualizing open interview methods and process with a specific end goal, and including all partners in settling on tourism related choices. This process can be used to bring issues to light in terms of manageable tourism and its execution. Governments should guarantee that nature attractions and the local people that live near them are commonly included in the 'local' by means of participation and interaction to build up regular ways to deal with incentives, ecological approaches and incorporated tourism development plans (Dwyer and Edwards, 2010).

Legislation and policy development in tourism

Legislation is the procedure of the production of suitably lawful, institutional, financial, social and natural structures to bolster the production of sustainable tourism. This should make it possible to set up models of land use, tourism facilities, management and investment in tourism to achieve this goal. Moreover, the objective of legislation is also to uphold actions against il lcit

activity while in the meantime advancing moral business behavior with intense punishment for resistance (Bushell and Staiff, 2003).

The best blueprint for development thus includes characterizing long-term instructions that support the idea of sustainable tourism. Such established policies are an aid in safeguarding the environment by setting clear all-encompassingecological quality norms and controls on inappropriate activities that would harm the environment, to control all activities including tourism, and avert development in regions where it would be improper (Dwyer and Edwards, 2010). Policy guidelines should likewise also support systems that enable the determination of conflict between communities, financial specialists, tourists, and wildlife. These are essential techniques for financial and ecological appraisal checking of potential tourism developments. Such approaches are necessary to guarantee consistency with development plans for sustainable tourism (Hall, 2008).

Education, training and monitoring to promote sustainability

The government should conceive, implement and enforce learning programs raising the knowledge level of sensitive groups of individuals on the question of the development of sustainable tourism development. It should facilitate the teamwork with in communities and the industry to expedite acceptance at every level of the process of upgrading tourism to bring forth awareness of the advantages in enhancing sustainable tourism. All these elements should be combined in a realistic policy planning framework, designed to detect any problems quickly to prevent the risks of greater damage (UNEP, 2003).

Role of the industry in tourism policy planning and implementation

The industry itself should outline steps to curb the environmentally competing strategies in tourist growth. The concerned activities are: environmental protection, education and training, and the use of local data in the engendering of tourist commodities. The activities relating to ecological care concentrate on the implementation of approaches of eco-efficiency to reduce the environmental impacts associated with the tourist and tourist activities. It understands the sustainable use of lands and water, the need for better waste management, and the minimization of environmental and sanitary risks (Bushell and Staiff, 2003). Private companies could offer basic principles on practices in the sustainable tourism, and also improve the general knowledge of their workers. Thanks to well established frames of commitment, this sector can often recommend the sustainable use of properties, services, and local materials, to reduce the losses from the leakage of tourist spending and maximize the economic revenue from the tourism in a destination (Dwyer and Edwards, 2010).

The Maasai Mara Study: Research Design and Data Collection

To test the above propositions a small study of the Maasai Mara National Park, Kenya, was undertaken during September 2016. The intention was to contact and survey the members of the executive committee on tourism in the

study area. Information was gathered from the travel organization of the Council of the County of Narok, and from the Mara Conservancy itself. The conservancy manages the national park of the Maasai Mara, the popular detached houses of the community leaders in the region, and the lodges within the local community. The purpose of the study was to make inferences on the participation of the local powers, the preservation bodies, and the communities involved in the organization and implementation of the policies of tourism sustainability in the Conservancy (Table 1).

This study gained essential information from the respondents. Cooper and Schindler (2008) characterize essential information as information gathered from direct involvement. The information was both quantitative and subjective. The participants were divided into several sections which aimed at collecting both general information, and the data emerging from the different responsibility areas. Every questionnaire included closed questions and open questions. Restricted interrogations were applied to estimate the reply to simple questions, where a simple checkbox is enough for facilitating the classification of the respondents. Also, by taking into account the small specific population implied in this investigation, a series of explanatory questions could be added to produce a qualitative and explorative fact source which added deeper understanding of the answers.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

Population	Number
Officials of Narok County Council	30
Officials of Mara Conservancy	35
Local Community Group Representatives	20
Lodges/Guesthouses/Hotel Officials	10
Local Retail Businesses	5
Total	**100**

Research Procedures

A random pilot study was carried out with 9 respondents; three from each of the top, the environmental, and the administrative staff of the Conservancy operations group. It was a question of verifying the adequacy of the tool (questionnaire) before administering this in the study. The pre-test allowed the researchers to refine the questionnaire and to improve its objectivity and the efficiency.

The main questionnaire was administered to government officers, environmental conservation agents, local representatives of the resource management groups in the community, and to local businesses, by research assistants hired for this task. The questionnaire contained a letter of introduction which guaranteed the confidentiality of the responses, and this letter also served as permission for the researchers to collect data comfortably. In its

administration, the questionnaire took 15 to20 minutes. The research assistants helped respondents understand the importance of the study, and made sure that the answers were compatible with the objective of the study. They also assured the cooperation of the respondents as well enabling the meeting of the targeted response rate.

Data Analysis Methods

Schindler et al (2008) stated that data analysis is the techniques involved the search for the intention, and explanatory description of the contents of an expression. For the quality of the search in this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied. The data gathered were analyzed by means of the software SPSS, and presented by means of figures showing a clear overview of results of this research. The quantitative tools used covered inferential statistics, which included crossed boards, measures of correlation and analyses of regression. Descriptive statistics were also used when measures of central tendencies like standard deviation, the frequencies and the percentages were required.

Results and Findings

The study aimed at finding out how to enhance sustainable tourism through policy planning and implementation. The study employed correlation analysis to determine how sustainable tourism is enhanced through policy planning and implementation. Table 2 shows that when tourism is not well planned or well managed, it can contribute to the extinction of a destination. To avoid this, the study showed that after designing the plan, it should be widely shared in the community to gain acceptance and support. The study also suggested that the governments should watch that both adventure and nature strengthen jointly at the local level thanks to coalitions and organization from similar origins. Policy guidelines should provide framework for conflict resolution between communities, investors, tourists, and wildlife.

The study revealed that for communities to be able to include and accept the importance of sustainable tourism, the governments and the stakeholders of that sector of tourism have to ensure that, in the development of this form of tourism, the betterment of community life is maintained. So, the governance structures and the stakeholders in this sector of tourism are responsible for making sure the accomplishment of sustainable tourism is not put in danger during its long-term development. Bringing together interests and concerns of a diverse group, this study found that policy guidelines should provide framework for conflict resolution between communities, investors, and wildlife. The study also noticed that planning of tourism requires a clear thought of what continuous improvement mean and real sense of advertising sustainability.

Tourism policy planning and implementation

In Table 3 we can see that, to ensure that communities are conscious enough of the industry of the tourism, and can understand their effects, governments should design and to operate educational programs and raising sensitivity

within the population. This will sensitize individuals to the development of sustainable tourism. To obtain such a valuable outcome, the development and operation of these outlines is required in all categories of governance. The study reveals that promulgated policies should contribute to protect the environment by establishing standards and clear regulations on the quality of those environments.

For the sensitization of people about the issues of sustainable tourism development, the study reveals that well-coordinated sustainable tourism plans should be able to impact the improvement and management of tourism. This study found that, to build-up sustainability of tourism, a system that encourages togetherness and performance in local government should also be developed.

Table 2: Enhancing Sustainable Tourism Development

		After a plan is written, it is desirable that it be broadly circulated and discussed in the community to ensure that it is widely understood and accepted	Governments are to ensure that tourism and the environment are mutually supportive at a regional level through cooperation and coordination between regions to establish common approaches to incentives	Policy guidelines should provide framework for conflict resolution between communities, investors, and wildlife
Tourism not properly planned and managed can lead to an extinction of a destination	Pearson Correlation	.551**	.670**	.670**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	85	85	85
Governments and stakeholders in the tourism sector have a responsibility to ensure that in the development of tourism the quality of life of future generations are not placed at risk	Pearson Correlation	.595**	.685**	.685**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	85	85	85
Governments and stakeholders in the tourism sector have a responsibility to ensure that in the development of tourism long-term prosperity is not placed at risk	Pearson Correlation	.827**	.642**	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	85	85	85
Sustainable tourism development requires a process of planning and management that brings together the interests and concerns of a diverse group	Pearson Correlation	.613**	.862**	.862**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	85	85	85
Tourism planning requires an understanding of the meaning of sustainable development and the guiding values for promoting sustainable tourism	Pearson Correlation	.770**	.936**	.936**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	85	85	85

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Planning and Implementation

		Governments should design and implement educational and awareness programs which will sensitize people on the issues of sustainable tourism development	Enacted policies should help protect the environment by setting clear ambient environmental quality standards and regulation
Communities should be made to be sufficiently aware of the tourism industry and enabled to understand its impacts	Pearson Correlation	.642**	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	85	85
To achieve effective results, policies must be developed and implemented at both national and local levels	Pearson Correlation	.767**	.767**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	85	85
Well-coordinated sustainable tourism plans should be able to influence the development and management of tourism	Pearson Correlation	.710**	.710**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	85	85
To strengthen the sustainability of tourism, mechanisms need to be established to encourage joined-up thinking and action within local governments	Pearson Correlation	.665**	.665**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	85	85
Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Enhancing Sustainable Tourism Development

Table 4 outlines the coefficients that provided the information on the predictor variable. The coefficients provided the information necessary to predict sustainable tourism development based on policy planning and implementation. From the table, the standardized beta coefficients are 0.198, 0.139, 0.268, 0.308 and 0.152, and all are significant at 0.000. This means that a unit change in the policy planning and implementation process can be tracked using these variables. The study shows that policy planning and implementation has a positive impact on sustainable tourism development.

Table 1.5: Enhancing Sustainable Tourism Development

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	.339	.029		11.59	.00
	Governments and stakeholders in the tourism sector have a responsibility to ensure that in the development of tourism the quality of life of future generations are not placed at risk	.167	.017	.198	10.09	.00
	Tourism planning requires an understanding of the meaning of sustainable development and the guiding values for promoting sustainable tourism	.123	.017	.139	7.119	.00
1	Tourism planning requires that communities be made sufficiently aware of the tourism industry and enabled to understand its impacts	.207	.019	.268	11.13	.00
	To achieve effective results, policies must be developed and implemented at both national and local levels	.236	.018	.308	13.34	.00
	Linking tourism to the Ministry of Environment can underpin awareness of environmental sustainability, and reinforce links with national parks or the promotion of nature based tourism	.074	.004	.152	16.57	.00
	To strengthen the sustainability of tourism, mechanisms need to be established to encourage joined-up thinking and action within local governments for poverty reduction	.091	.018	.089	5.128	.00

Note: Dependent Variable: Sustainable Tourism Development

Discussion

This study aimed to find out how to enhance sustainable tourism through policy planning and implementation. The study revealed that when tourism is not properly planned and managed this can lead to an extinction of a destination. This supports the conclusions of Dwyer and Edwards (2010), which indicated that badly planned and managed tourism can leave permanent tracks on the physical, social, cultural and economic environments of the destinations. On the other hand, a study carried out by EC (2013) concluded that development of long-lasting tourism demands a process of planning and management which includes the interests and the concerns of the whole diversified group of stakeholders in a long-lasting and strategic way. The results of this study also suggest that to have a good tourism plan, mutual understanding among the partners involved is necessary. This understanding is to ensure that the community members capture the total awareness and impacts of the industry.

From the study, it is realized that governments and partners in tourism accept the obligation of assuring that future generations' quality of life is not harmed. Dwyer and Edwards (2010) confirm that tourism development can indeed be alienating to residents; producing overcrowded, noisy, architecturally tasteless, and place pressures on infrastructure. Inappropriate types and scales of development may arise due to laissez-faire tourism policies, and a lack of national, regional or local planning and regulations. The results confirm that after a tourism plan is written, it is desirable that it be broadly circulated and discussed in the community to ensure that it is widely understood and accepted. Dwyer and Edwards (2010) believe that implementing tourism plans requires

the cooperation and combined resources of many individuals, agencies and organizations. This is supported by a study carried out by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (1995), that indicates that at the implementation stage of any sustainable tourism plan, government, industry, the community and tourists play important supporting roles. The present study found that during implementation, governments are to ensure that tourism and the environment are mutually supportive at the regional level through cooperation and coordination between regions to establish common approaches to incentives.

This study reveals that policy guidelines should provide framework for conflict resolution between communities, investors, and wildlife. Such enacted policies are to help protect the environment by setting clear ambient environmental quality standards and regulation of inappropriate activities that would damage ecosystems from all sectors including tourism and prevent development in areas where it would be inappropriate. However, Hall (2008) revealed that such policy guidelines are usually basic standards and regulations for economic, social and environmental impact assessment and monitoring of existing and proposed tourism development. Conflict resolution is a secondary consideration.

Thus, we can see that effective implementation of tourism plans requires that communities be made to be sufficiently aware of the tourism industry, and be enabled to understand its impacts. To ensure effective awareness within the community about tourism matters, governments should design and implement educational and awareness programs which will sensitize people on the issues of sustainable tourism development. A study by EC (2013) found that to achieve effective results in this area, policies must be developed and implemented at both national and local levels. At the national level the government should be able to bring together other affected parties to collectively define the needs that affect and influence tourist operations in an area. Together they should seek to develop structures that engage all the stakeholders in the formulation of strategies and policies for sustainable tourism by ensuring effective coordination of actions and an ongoing dialogue between them

This study also emphasizes that to achieve effective results, enacted policies should help protect the environment by setting clear ambient environmental quality standards and regulations. A study by UNEP (2005) found that well-coordinated sustainable tourism plans should be able to give a say to the development and management of tourism to those whose interests or areas of responsibility are and will be affected by its impacts. According to the study, enacting permanent engaging working structures should bring together knowledge and expertise on economic, social and environmental issues that are relevant to tourism, and ensure that policies and actions in other sectors or areas of activity affecting tourism are coordinated and taken into account.

Conclusions

Tourism planning requires an understanding of the meaning of sustainable

development and the guiding values for promoting sustainable tourism. This study concludes that sustainable tourism requires that communities be made to be sufficiently aware of the tourism industry and be enabled to understand its impacts; hence governments should design and implement educational and awareness programs which will sensitize people on the issues of sustainable tourism development. The study also found that to achieve effective results, policies must be developed and implemented at both national and local levels.

The study found that, in the near future, tourism in the Maasai Mara is anticipated to take up again its rapid growth. This growth can be harnessed to take full advantage of the expected economic benefits, and increase the living standards of local communities and countries. The growth can also be harnessed for the enjoyment of tourists. At the same time, if no counteractive measures are considered, new development is bound to involve negative socio-cultural and environmental impacts on the communities. The study concludes that the sustainable tourism strategies discussed can go a long way towards reducing the negative effects and making certain that the economic benefits of tourism can support the protection of the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources.

The study also concludes that while environmental sustainability should remain a main element of sustainable tourism strategies, another problem for the tourism agents is to formulate ways and means to position poverty reduction at the heart of tourism planning, development and management. This according to the study requires, amongst other things, technical and financial assistance, genuine community participation, institutional capacity building and human resources development in various developing nations. Given the possible significance of tourism activities on international and national efforts to minimize poverty, there is, therefore, also a strong case for promoting a PPT approach, particularly in developing nations.

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