AN ASSESSMENT OF THE MAASAI RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON TOURISM IN THE MAASAI MARA NATIONAL RESERVE, KENYA

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study was to survey the residents' attitudes on the impact of tourism on Maasai Mara National Reserve and to identify critical issues and tourism development concerns of the Maasai residents associated with the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

Methodology: Data for this study was collected from June-October 2015. The participants were residents, 18 and older, from three group ranches. Data were collected using single-stage cluster sampling to identify three group ranches, *Koyiaki*, *Olkinyei*, and *Siana*, in the Maasai Mara region. A semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire was used for face-to-face and photo-elicitation interviews of 24 respondents. Data were subsequently analysed using the Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) technique.

Main Findings: The study identified six overarching themes; conservation, cultural change, community development, employment, livestock, and small business. This study found that residents perceived tourism with mixed feelings, both negative and positive. More specifically, residents living closer to the tourism destination experienced direct and tangible benefits as compared to those who live far away.

Applications of this study: The results of this study are important for tourism planners, practitioners, and conservation managers in developing holistic strategies that promote sustainable tourism development in the Mara region of Kenya.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The success of the tourism industry depends on the involvement of the local people. Lack of cooperation of the local communities in tourism development projects could lead to anger and mistrust, influencing perceptions of tourism and its three basic areas of benefits and costs: social, environmental, and economic. This study, for the first time, attempted to describe the resident's attitudes towards tourism development in the Mara, results which can be used to improve the participation of local residents to ensure sustainable tourism development in destinations.

Keywords: *Maasai, Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya, Tourism, Residents' Views.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important sector worldwide with enormous direct and indirect benefits. In 2018, the tourist international arrivals remain largely robust with a 5% growth towards the end of the year over the same period the previous year, an indicator of a continued strong economic landscape worldwide (UNWTO, 2017, 2018). Furthermore, it is expected to steer the economic development needed to make the Vision 2030 Development Plan a reality. One of the most popular destinations, and hence most lucrative in Kenya is the Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR).

One of the areas in Africa with a boom in tourism in Kenya, which lies along the East African Indian Ocean coastline. With an estimated area of 582,350 sq. kilometres, it has a population of more than 30 million people (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). In addition, it has a rich diversity of tourism attractions, including beaches, prehistoric sites, wildlife diversity, and unique geographical landscapes.

The Maasai Mara National reserve (MMNR) received tourists ranging from 102,000 – 166,000 during the period 2012 – 2017. In 2017, 132, 700 tourists visited the reserve (KTB 2017) MMRR is, therefore, an important tourism destination in Kenya. Even though tourism is viewed as a tool to steer economic development in Kenya, especially in the MMNR, it is argued that it makes little or no contribution to the overall empowerment and socio-economic development of the local people (Bhandari, 2014; Omondi et al., 2000).

To address this situation, tourism developers and managers of protected areas need to strengthen the involvement of the host residents in tourism planning, management, and development by gaining the knowledge needed to understand the factors influencing residents' attitudes and perceptions (Pretty and Smith, 2004); Reid et al., 2009; Daniels and Walker, 2001).

In addition to potentially gaining the support of the host community for tourism development, such increased involvement will aid in mitigating the resulting sustainability issues (Githiru and Lens, 2007), especially important since in recent years, the MMNR has experienced complex environmental and socio-economic management challenges associated with this lack of collaboration. The loss of habitat and thus biodiversity because of a lack of local stakeholder involvement has been a major problem in the protection of the area's natural and cultural resources (Githiru and Lens, 2007).

Furthermore, since the economic profits accrued from tourism in the MMNR often do not benefit poor rural host communities (Homewood et al., 2009; Honey, 2008), the formation and inclusion of broader collaborations will also help improve equity in resource allocation and policy development as well as reduce the power imbalances in tourism planning (Bhandari, 2014).

Since the operationalization of the principles of sustainability in tourism development and management in the MMNR should be the joint responsibility of all stakeholders represented in the collaborative partnerships developed for the tourism planning process (Healey, 1998), it is important for the resulting revenue to be injected into local communities (Homewood et al., 2009; Honey, 2008). Doing so would allow community members to feel and see direct tangible financial benefits, thus enabling them to appreciate tourism development and its relationship with the natural resources in their region. The resulting increase in the involvement of the Maasai will strengthen and enhance the long-term sustainability of both natural and cultural resources in the MMNR (Homewood et al., 2009; Honey, 2008).

Despite tourism being viewed as a tool to achieve the Vision 2030 Economic Development Plan in Kenya, and particularly in the Maasai Mara region, its success is heavily dependent on the goodwill of the local people (Honey, 2008). Their support and inclusion in tourism planning and management are essential for social-cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability to be realized (Honey, 2008). Without the cooperation of the resident community, any tourism development project can lead to anger and mistrust, influencing perceptions of tourism and its three basic areas of benefits and costs – social, environmental, and economic (Gursoy et al., 2000).

The current failure to involve locals in the planning and management of tourism and conservation programs in the MMNR has, for example, increased conflict with wildlife and park management over the utilization of crucial resources, such as water and pasture (Hart and O' Connell, 1998). Specifically, failure to allow the Maasai livestock access to critical resources in protected areas during the dry season has led to local resentment of conservation and tourism development, increasing conflict along with wildlife dispersal and migratory corridors (Mwale, 2000; Okello and Kiringe, 2004). However, past research has found that positive perceptions of local people toward tourism and conservation can significantly be enhanced by the fair distribution of the benefits accrued from tourism ventures (Mwangi, 1995). In addition, research has found that involving the locals in the policy and decision-making process can significantly affect their opinions of tourism development and, hence, encourage sustainable tourism (Homewood et al., 2009; Honey, 2008). This form of partnership can promote and encourage community projects that compensate locals for losses, such as property damaged by wildlife (Beresford and Philips, 2000; IUCN, 1990; Mwale, 2000).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. To survey the residents' attitudes on the impact of tourism in the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

2. To identify critical issues and tourism development concerns of the Maasai residents associated with the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attitude is defined as a negative or positive feeling towards people or ideas (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). Residents' attitudes can be used to explain peoples' views and perceptions. The local communities are key stakeholders in the tourism industry as they play a big role in branding a destination. In this study, residents' attitudes towards tourism activities in the Maasai Mara game reserve were used to identify the impacts of tourism.

Kenya's tourism industry is often criticized for its top-down planning process, imposed on the local community from outside groups or planning bodies (Keogh, 1990). Alternatively, the functional view approaches tourism as a proactive force that, if developed with broad, integrated strategies, seeks to maximize positive returns for a community's overall growth while minimizing the costs to the environment and culture. In a functional approach, it is argued that all parties or stakeholders interested in or affected by this business within a particular market or community should collectively manage the tourism system.

This co-operative approach toward development is advocated in research involving collaboration and development (Keogh, 1990), with Jamal and Stronza (2009) defining these collaborative efforts as a process of joint decision-making among autonomous key parties and stakeholders to resolve planning and management problems in areas like the MMNR as a tourism destination (Bhandari, 2014).

Social exchange theory and residents' attitudes

Most studies related to relationships between different stakeholders in destination development, resident attitudes and perceptions have utilized social exchange theory, which is considered the most appropriate framework for developing an understanding of resident perceptions and attitudes (Ap,1992; Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012). This study is no exception. Social exchange theory was used to articulate and explain how local communities react to tourism development (Ap, 1992; Yoon et al., 2001). Social exchange theory was used to guide the research and to articulate and explain how local communities react to support tourism development (Ap, 1992; Yoon et al., 2001). Ap (1992) defined social exchange

theory as "a general sociological theory concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interactive situation." From a tourism development point of view, social exchange theory assumes that stakeholder attitudes towards tourism in their communities will be influenced by their evaluations of the actual and perceived outcomes (Andereck et al., 2005). According to Andereck and others, "social exchange theory suggests people evaluate an exchange based on the costs and benefits incurred as a result of the exchange" (Andereck et al., 2005). If the social exchange does not result in positive outcomes for the local communities, they will have negative attitudes (Gursoy et al., 2002).

Tourism impacts

Sustainable tourism as a business can bring benefits to communities. However, tourism is known to have other impacts (Ameida et al., 2015), which can be divided into three categories; social-cultural, environmental, and economic impact Figure 1 (Weaver & Lawton, 2006).
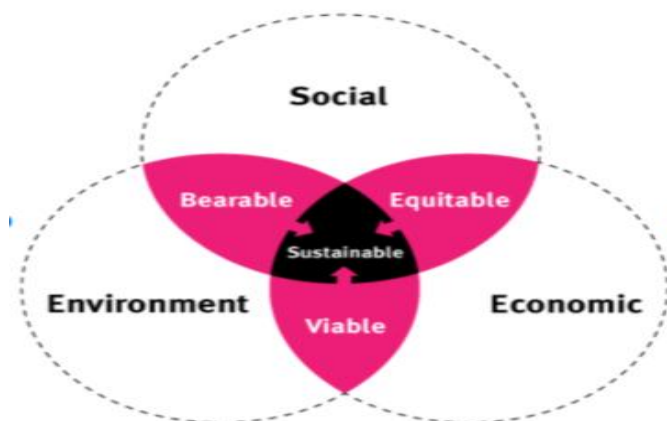

Figure 1: Categories of tourism impacts

Source: Ng, & Ow (2017); all answers, 2018)

Socio-cultural impacts of Tourism

Tourism activities in a destination can influence the lifestyle and beliefs of the local people (Ameida et al., 2015). For example, the interaction of tourists with the local people can influence religious beliefs and their traditional lifestyle. On the other hand, tourism can result in the preservation of traditions and culture (Cooper et al., 2008). Although the Maasai community has been living in harmony with their environment and wildlife for many millennia, the introduction of tourism development in Maasai Mara and the resulting interaction or relationship with the outside world has brought changes to their lifestyle, customs, and traditions (Weaver, 2002).

Although indigenous populations like the Maasai are globally known to have resisted change from foreign visitors for centuries, it is almost inevitable that their cultures will experience irreversible changes, especially given the globalization of today (Burns and Holden, 1995). Therefore, it is important to embrace and enhance responsible tourist behavior, those that appreciate and respect the culture of the local community, for tourism to be sustainable.

Environmental impacts of Tourism

The environment, which includes geographical aspects such as wildlife, mountains, beaches among others, is an important parameter to consider. Tourism has contributed to the conservation of the environment with local communities involved in the protection of wildlife which attracts tourists (Weaver and Lawton, 2006). On the other hand, According to Wang et al., (2006), tourism is a double-edged sword, that without proper planning, can kill or destroy the natural resources which visitors come to experience in a destination. In most cases, tourism development increases pressure on the environment (Cooper et al., 2008). Therefore, compromises the future use of the same resource by present and future generations. Scholars such as Glasson argue that the impacts of tourism, although a driving force for change, can be controlled with an integrated management approach for environmental sustainability (Glasson, 1994).

The host population's support for protected areas such as the MMNR is critical for biodiversity conservation to be realized. Even though these areas are being conserved for people to utilize, it is also critical that they should significantly contribute to improving the livelihood of the resident community adjacent to them.

The economic impact of tourism

Positive economic impacts of tourism are directly correlated to the economic gains of tourism through jobs, and foreign exchange. Currently, tourism in Kenya accounts for 10 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), making it the third-largest industry after agriculture, manufacturing, tea, and horticulture.

However, as argued by Honey (2008) almost fifty percent of the tourism revenue leaves the developing world headed to developed countries in Europe and North America (Honey, 1999). This loss of revenue can contribute to a community's negative attitudes towards tourism and by extension the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

In order for tourism businesses to thrive and for sustainability, it is necessary to have local people's opinions and involvement in addressing critical issues affecting the tourism industry (Andereck et al., 2005). If the local residents feel marginalized in the planning and management process, they may refuse to cooperate in conservation efforts (Nyhus et al., 2000).

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative approach to understand resident's attitudes towards tourism in the study area. Semi-structured interviews and respondent-provided photographs of places or things positively or negatively impacted by tourism were used to identify and define the critical issues and tourism development concerns of these host residents. In addition, this study incorporated the researcher's field observations of the influences of tourism to complement the face-to-face interviews and photo-elicitations.

The researcher spent time with the respondents in their villages, participating in their ceremonies, eating with them, and sleeping in their homes. Thus, this research was exploratory and descriptive in nature, based on qualitative inquiry, a powerful source of grounded theory that is inductively generated through the researcher's observations, and interviews in the field (Patton, 1999).

Description of the Maasai Mara National Reserve Area

The area of interest for this research was the MMNR, situated in the southwest of Kenya along the Tanzanian border in the Rift Valley Province (Figure 2). It occupies the northern portion of the 30,000 km2 Mara-Serengeti ecosystem that extends from Tanzania into Kenya. Supporting one of the world's richest diversity of wildlife (Sinclair and Norton-Griffiths, 1979), it is in the southern area of the Kenyan portion of the ecosystem and covers an area of 1500 km2 (Sinclair & Norton-Griffiths, 1979). The MMNR is a wildlife protection area under the jurisdiction of the Narok county government.

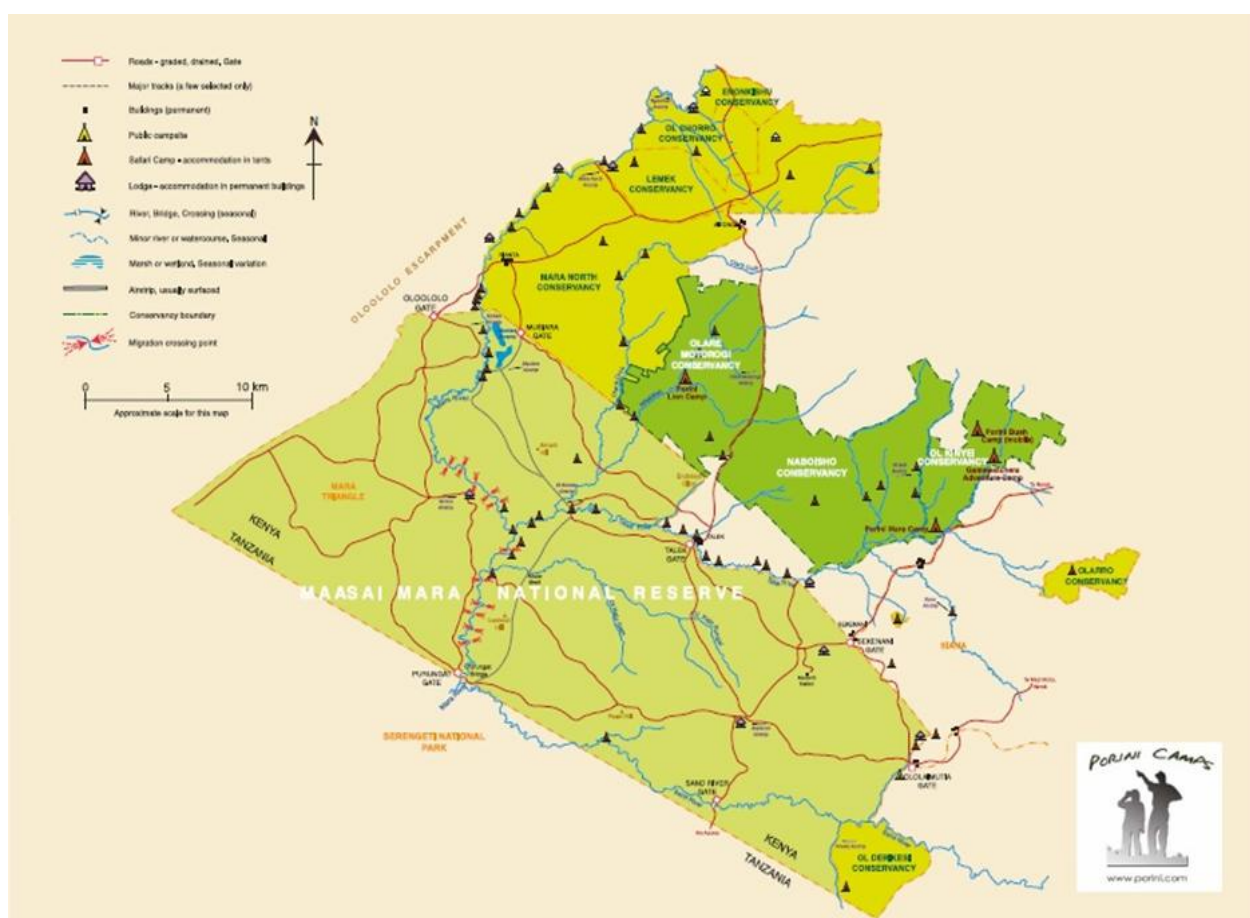**Figure: 2:** Map of Maasai Mara National Reserve and adjacent conservancies

Source: Porini camp

The Maasai Mara region is a critical element in the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem. Its high rainfall, permanent water sources, and grassland productivity make it a dry-season refuge for wildlife, especially the vast herds of migrating wildebeest. However, it alone cannot support all the wildlife in the region, and the adjacent group ranches, Koyiaki, Olkinyei, and Siana, owned and managed by the pastoral Maasai, form the primary wildlife dispersal area for both resident and migrant wildlife species (Sinclair and Norton-Griffiths, 1979). The area represents one of the few terrestrial regions in the world with large mammalian species that migrate in herds and patterns reminiscent of pre-colonial Africa, hosting approximately two million wildebeest, zebras, and other migratory wildlife annually during the months of June-October.

In the last few years, conservation agencies and tourism developers have initiated and supported projects that involve local communities to link conservation, community, and tourism development in the Mara. In response to this initiative, the Maasai have allowed wildlife on their group ranches, creating conservation areas such as Olare Orok, Naboisho, and Olkinyei that provide tourism revenue to the local landowners (Kiyiapi, 2005; Ondicho, 2005).

Data collection

Data collection and analysis for this research took place between February to October 2015. Data was gathered using face-to-face and photo-elicitation interviews with 24 participants from 3 community group ranches within and around the MMNR. The Siana, Koiyaki, and OIkinyei group ranches were randomly selected from the 11 group ranches in the area, and from these three group ranches, 24 participants were selected using purposeful sampling. All participants were 18 years of age or older and members from these ranches who jointly owned the lands. All three ranches are adjacent to MMNR. In addition, field observations of Maasai culture and tourism were used to complement the interviews, adding validity, context, and, in some cases, explanations of the interview results. The ethical research procedures involving confidentiality, informed consent, anonymity, and right of withdrawal were followed.

During the initial interview, which lasted approximately 30 minutes, each respondent answered questions related to his/her views about tourism development in the MMNR. These oral interviews, conducted by the researcher, were based on a script and conducted in the Maasai (Maa) language because most participants do not speak or write in English. Their responses were recorded in writing by the researcher. Rapport was quickly established in each interview as the researcher had been born and raised in these communities and had worked with them in the past. After the sessions, the researcher provided the respondents with a Kodak or Fuji disposable camera with a 24-exposure film and trained them on how to use it. These participants were asked to take photographs over one week of places or things in their area that they felt had been impacted positively or negatively by tourism. At the end of the week, the researcher collected the cameras from the respondents and printed the photos.

The researcher returned to meet with the respondents at a pre-arranged time, place, and venue to conduct the photo-elicitation interviews using a second script. During these interviews, the respondents were asked to select 5 photos for discussion to determine the reasons and the significance of their selections.

Data analysis

Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) (Rakic and Chambers, 2010), an inductive thematic analysis process was used to identify themes through "careful reading and re-reading of the data" (Rice and Ezzy, 1999) to analyze the interview notes and photographic images. This process identified categories/themes found in the data collected. The resulting patterns are, thus, grounded in specific cases and their contexts as suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This process was iterative: as thematic structures and overarching constructs emerged during the data analysis process, the researcher returned to the field observations notes (For example, "grazing cows at night in the park, Maasai women were more conservative than men"), photographs, and interview manuscripts, working from the specific to the general, remaining grounded in the foundation of the case following Patton (2002). The specific categories/themes were determined using an open coding system, an analytic technique based on the analyst's interactions with the data.

The basic unit of analysis used was a direct quote or a photograph. This open coding involved looking at the data multiple times using simple visual observation by the researcher to deconstruct them into fragments (for example, keywords, phrases, similarities, dissimilarities, or terse descriptions). The coding process began as soon as data was collected, and as additional information was collected, previously coded data were revisited for the generation of additional possible codes and comparisons. In addition to the primary researcher, a second independent researcher also read and reviewed the interview notes several times to verify the consistency and accuracy of the generated themes.

A discursive, thematic Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) method was used as a tool to examine and assess the six themes. This method involves performing a manual analysis in which the researcher spends a considerable amount of time going through the data repetitively by hand to generate the codes, emergent themes and patterns (Banks, 2001; Rakic and Chambers, 2010). Through this process, the researcher becomes familiar with the data analysis as well as develops a deep feel for the information while identifying underlying innovative and creative patterns as they emerge (Banks, 2001; Rakic and Chambers, 2010). This method was used to help produce context-rich information on socio-cultural phenomena such as symbolic actions and social interactions between residents and tourists when they come in contact at the destinations visited. QDA as used in this study to help examine and assess the visual and discursive data

has been found to be a valuable tool that has been employed successfully in many tourism research projects using photo-elicitation (Rakic and Chambers, 2010). Although a QDA method can be deductive, inductive, or a combination of the two, here an inductive approach was used to generate themes and explanations to extend theories and to contribute to applied practices.

In addition, like most studies in the literature related to relationships between different stakeholders in destination development and resident attitudes and perceptions, they have utilized social exchange theory (Ap, 1992; Perdue et al., 1990), this study utilized social exchange theory as the most appropriate framework for developing an understanding of resident perceptions and attitudes towards tourism development (Ap, 1992; Perdue et al., 1990). According to this theory, an exchange should be assessed based on the costs and benefits incurred because of it (Ap, 1992; Um and Crompton, 1990).

Thus, the data collection process in the field constituted the beginning of data analysis (Patton, 1999). These data collected from interview scripts, photo-elicitation, field observation, and the related literature and emerging themes were frequently compared and revised as needed to ensure the validity of this study, with QDA being used as a discourse-centered thematic mode of analysis to integrate both the visual and discursive data, a technique applied in recent tourism research (Rakic and Chambers, 2010).

RESULTS

Description of the sample

Gender: of the 24 participants, 11 (45.8%) were female and 13 (54.2%) were male. Approximately 21 percent of the respondents were in their twenties, 42 percent in their thirties, and 38 percent older than 40 (Table 1).

Table 1: Age group of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	5	20.8
30-39	10	41.7
40-49	3	12.5
50-59	2	8.3
Over 60	4	16.7
Total	24	100

The inductive thematic analysis yielded the following six dominant themes: conservation, cultural change, employment, community development, livestock, and small businesses. For each, the percentage expressing positive or negative attitudes was determined as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Themes and the percentage positive and negative attitudes towards tourism in the Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya

Themes	% positive attitudes	% Negative attitudes
Conservation	25	75
Cultural change	20	80
Community development	79	21
Employment	67	33
Small business	62.5	37.5

Source: Authors

Theme 1: Conservation

Positive Impact: A quarter of the respondents (25%), particularly individual landowners, had a positive attitude towards conservation. This study also revealed that a small number of landowners (12.5 %) have leased their land to create conservation areas that provide them with a guaranteed monthly revenue to supplement their livestock-based income. They felt that these areas have enhanced biodiversity conservation projects, for example, the planting of indigenous trees in the region as evidenced by one respondent's photo. In addition, the respondents interviewed contend that tourism development in these conservation areas had increased their opportunity to sell crafts to the tourists for profit, which they used to purchase livestock. This increase in the dependency of residents on tourism as an additional source of revenue supplementing their livestock operations was supported by one of the Maasai women from the Kolong village who said during her interview that "tourism development in the area has increased their participation through the selling of handmade crafts directly to the tourists for profit, and as an additional source of livestock employment."(Source: Respondent: 14 (2015).

Negative Impact: A larger proportion of respondents, 75%, however, believe strongly that the creation of more conservation areas for tourism on the community ranches has significantly reduced grazing space for their livestock and restricted them from freely accessing critical resources like water and pasture. As a result, they believe that tourism brings economic benefit for only a small group of people, specifically those whose land is leased for conservation. Additionally, they indicated that new tourism development must include a more equitable conservation component to be sustainable. The current approach is a strategy that further marginalizes or displaces residents from their land so that they can no longer legally access the water needed for their livestock.

Ignoring this restriction results in the livestock being confiscated and the owners fined heavily and sometimes jailed for trespassing or illegal grazing. One of the warriors interviewed at Empopongi village, Siana group ranch, summed up this situation saying that "the creation of more conservation areas for tourism on the community ranches has significantly reduced grazing space for their livestock and restricted them from accessing critical resources like water and pasture. This new development has forced us to graze cows at night in the MMNR to avoid being arrested by park rangers in the day time." (Source: Respondent: 3 (2015).

Theme 2: Cultural Change

Positive Impact: Some respondents (20%) indicated that tourism has encouraged meaningful interaction between different cultures as visitors meet local residents. They also expressed that tourists enhanced their appreciation of the value of their own Maasai culture as a priceless heritage found nowhere else on earth, one that must be preserved. Other respondents contend that tourism has provided incentives for the Maasai to preserve their ancient culture and traditional ways of life that would otherwise have been lost under the influence of modernity. In addition, tourist demand for Maasai handicrafts has helped rekindle interest in producing traditional goods and preserving traditional skills, which otherwise would have been forgotten. One respondent's photo of a visiting tourist dressed in traditional Maasai dress confirms this perspective as do the words of an elderly woman among those interviewed at Oloolaimutia village, Siana group ranch, who expressed that "tourism has encouraged meaningful interaction between different cultures as visitors to come in contact with local residents, and this has enhanced tourist experience in addition to adding to the residents' appreciation of the value of their own Maasai culture as a priceless ancient heritage found nowhere else on earth." (Source: Respondent: 17 (2015).

Negative Impact: Most of the respondents, 80%, strongly believe that tourism has significantly contributed to the commercialization of Maasai culture by foreigners, particularly tour drivers who bring tourists to the Manyattas, cultural villages with huts constructed and plastered with cow-dung for tourists to visit and interact with the local residents, including buying hand-crafted souvenirs. The exploitation felt by some of the residents was expressed by one of the youths interviewed who was working at the Nkoilale Cultural Manyatta: "Tour drivers who bring tourists to our Manyattas and charge each 20 US dollars, but only pay us 300 Kenya shillings, an equivalent of 3.60 US dollars as entrance and entertainment fee for the whole group of tourists." (Source: Respondent: 5 (2015). Although sympathetic, respondents explained that cultural change resulting from tourism will eventually suffocate their culture and traditional ways of life.

In addition, they indicated a fear that this change will result in an over-dependence on the tourism dollar, especially in the young men and, thus, they will rely on tourists, no longer helping their families tend livestock or take on other family or community responsibilities. Instead, they will play cards for money while waiting for tourist dollars like the youths seen in various photographs taken by the respondents and end up engaging in crime, drugs, and alcohol activities to support this foreign habit. Respondents further indicated that tourism has increased the school drop-out rate, evidenced by photos of primary and secondary students who have dropped out of school to chase the tourism dollar. However, those dropping out of school can neither find work in traditional livestock operations nor be hired for reasonable wages in the tourism camps and lodges since they have no formal education or experience.

Theme 3: Community Development

Positive Impact: Most of the respondents (79%) agreed that the Maasai have benefited directly or indirectly through infrastructural development financed from tourism income. The most commonly mentioned projects were schools, health clinics, and water projects. In addition, road and transport services have improved, opening access to shopping centers and livestock markets in remote areas formerly inaccessible during the wet season. Good examples include Olesere village on the Koyiaki Group ranch as mentioned by one respondent and the comment of one of the local area chiefs interviewed at Talek Village who said that "the Maasai residents have benefited directly through infrastructural development such as schools, health clinics, and water projects financed from tourism income." (Source: Respondent: 20 (2015).In general, these facilities and projects were perceived by residents as benefits resulting from tourism that affected the entire community, further evidenced by the respondent photos showing a school funded by tourism providing an education for children who otherwise would not be able to afford it, and a local woman fetching water from a local water pump.

Negative Impact: A small portion of respondents (21%) felt that the tourism contribution was minimal compared to the amount of money being made from their local resources. For example, they mentioned that conservation, non-governmental organizations in the community are foreign-owned, with much money being spent buying and maintaining

expensive vehicles, such as the Toyota Land Cruisers seen in their photos, as well as in salaries for expatriates. Several respondents argued that instead of buying heavy-duty vehicles, more water wells should be built at designated areas for humans, livestock, and wildlife to minimize the conflict over water.

However, more wells alone will not eliminate the resource conflict issue because an increasing number of people with more cattle depend on them. These views were reflected in the comments of one of the local rangers interviewed who worked in a conservancy: "the tourism contribution is minimal compared to the amount of money being made from our local resources." He went on to mention "that foreign-owned and -operated conservation NGOs in the area spent much money buying and maintaining expensive vehicles as well as paying huge salaries to their managers in the name of expatriates, instead of drilling more water wells at designated areas for human, livestock, and wildlife to minimize the conflict over water." (Source: Respondent: 9 (2015).

Theme 4: Employment

Positive Impact: Most of the respondents interviewed (67%) agreed that tourism had created job opportunities for the local residents and encouraged the development of skills, specifically training as tour guides, thus enabling them to work in the industry. Those working with tourism or with family members in the industry contend that tourism has contributed to improving the quality of life. As one of the Maasai women tour guides interviewed at Base camp Maasai Mara said, "tourism has created job opportunities for the local residents and encouraged skill development; specifically the training of Maasai women as tour guides have enabled them to work in the industry and thus, helped them improve their quality of life."(Source: Respondent: 4 (2015).

In addition, some residents believe that tourism has brought revenue into the local economy through jobs and the sale of crafts. The respondent photos provide evidence of this perceived benefit as well as the fact that tourism has made a significant contribution to the training and education of the local guides, especially the Maasai girls involved in the tourism sector in the Mara region.

Negative Impact: One-third of the respondents interviewed (33%) indicated that the only employment given to locals in the tourism industry involves such menial jobs as cutting grass, washing dishes and vehicles at the hotels, and working as security guards or watchmen in low-paying jobs. One of the elders interviewed at the Kolong village said, "Out of about 70 hotels and camps in the Mara, there are only two Maasai in management positions."(Source: Respondent: 8 (2015). He believes that tourism investors/businesses must assist the local residents in training and education so that they can work in the management of tourism enterprises as well as in the conservation areas created in their community. Photos taken by the respondents confirm that the locals are primarily employed as security officers/ rangers to help management identify and arrest Maasai herders found trespassing and grazing livestock in the conservation area since they know each family living there.

Theme 5: Livestock

Positive Impact: Most of the respondents interviewed (83%) mentioned that tourism-related conservation has created jobs in the local community. These locals also strongly indicated that tourism has influenced their daily activities necessary for livestock production and for the security of their household and homestead, both of which are organized by age and gender: young men/warriors are responsible for herding cattle, while women tend the young children and the elderly and the sheep, goats, calves, and other sick and weak animals near the villages. More specifically, according to one senior elder interviewed, "tourism revenues allow us to purchase veterinary services to improve our livestock health and productivity as well as water and hay during the dry season. Cattle are more to the Maasai than just an economic resource." (Source: Respondent: 22 (2015). Photos taken by the respondents confirm this attachment to livestock which function both as lifelines and companions.

Negative Impact: A few of the respondents (17%) interviewed indicated that tourism means the Maasai must reduce their livestock to smaller herds to minimize conflict over essential resources like water as well as to reduce overgrazing. Several mentioned that while leasing their land to create conservation areas for tourism would provide them with a guaranteed monthly income during periods of drought, "it would not provide sufficient income to replace the lost grazing lands." (Source: Respondent: 2 (2015).

Theme 6: Small Businesses

Positive Impact: Almost two-thirds of the respondents (62.5%) were in general agreement that the income earned from tourism has enabled women to improve their public and family responsibilities by giving them the means to buy clothes and food for their families and to pay for school fees and other items for their children instead of depending on the husband to sell cows to meet these basic needs. Revenues from tourism have empowered Maasai women to improve the quality of life for their families.

As several female interviewees mentioned, "tourism has created opportunities for women to operate their own curio businesses, from which they earn an income that they manage themselves." (Source: Respondent: 21 (2015). They also mentioned that tourism has significantly contributed to the development of entrepreneurial skills in Maasai women and youth, allowing them to achieve economic independence through their participation in commercial endeavors.

Negative Impact: More than thirty percent of the respondents (37.5%) indicated that some of the businesses in the local community were owned and operated by outsiders and thus, denied residents full participation in tourism investments. One photo exemplified this situation by showing souvenirs displayed in a curio cabinet owned by one of the hotels in the area. The locals also mentioned that foreigners come here and make large sums of money, which they then take to their home country rather than investing it in the local economy. As one female respondent explained, "Tour drivers outside the community demand from the local business operators a certain percentage of each item purchased by tourists he has taken to the local curio shop." (Source: Respondent: 12 (2015).

DISCUSSION

Residents expressed both positive and negative attitudes towards tourism development in the area. Both male and female residents, on average, expressed similar positive opinions regarding the impact brought about by tourism development with respect to livestock, community development projects, and employment. However, this study also found that those residents living close to the tourism destination believed that tourism had direct and tangible benefits on the community, while those living farther away felt that tourism benefited only a few individuals in the community. Similar findings have been reported in a study conducted in Greece where residents reported positive attitudes, feelings which were as a result of the benefits accrued from tourism. For example, jobs and increased personal income (Mason and Cheyne, 2000; Fredline and Faulkner, 2000). Generally, the creation of conservation areas on communal land was viewed negatively by those Maasai who were deprived of access and user rights to critical resources, in particular, the water and pastures in the protected areas. Past research has found that loss of access to critical natural resources can create community resentment towards new tourism development in the area (Stem et al., 2003; Kiss, 2004).

The results of this study also indicated that the creation of conservation areas on communal land was viewed negatively by most of the Maasai interviewed (75%) who felt that they were then deprived of access and user rights to critical resources, particularly water and pastures. Failure to allow livestock access to critical natural resources can create community resentment towards new tourism development in the area. These findings are similar to those of past research conducted by Stem et al., (2003) and Kiss (2004). Maasai displeasure towards conservation emanates from the fact that while they and their livestock are banned from entering the park/conservation areas, wildlife is allowed to wander freely and to forage on community ranches, thus competing for scarce resources, transmitting diseases and destroying property, and killing or injuring people (Reid et al., 2004).

The results of this study show mixed attitudes towards tourism development in Maasai Mara, results which support the social exchange theory, that those who experience positive interactions with tourism will have positive attitudes towards tourism and vice versa.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that despite tourism being viewed as a tool to achieve the Vision 2030 Economic Development Plan in Kenya, particularly in the Maasai Mara region, its success depends on the understanding and involvement of the local people. Their goodwill, support, and inclusion in policy decision-making and in tourism planning, development, and management are essential for social-cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability to be realized. Without the cooperation of the resident community, any tourism development project could lead to anger and mistrust, influencing perceptions of tourism and its social, environmental, and economic benefits and costs.

More specifically, failure to involve locals in the planning and management of tourism and conservation programs in the MMNR, for example, could increase conflict with the wildlife and park management over the utilization of crucial resources such as water and pastures. For example, failure to allow the Maasai livestock access to these critical resources during the dry season could lead to local resentment for conservation and tourism development, increasing conflict along with wildlife dispersal and migratory corridors on their group ranches/private land.

In addition, this study has established that attitudes of local people toward tourism and conservation can be significantly enhanced by the inclusion of livestock as a major resource in the management plan and the fair distribution of the benefits accrued from tourism ventures. Again, involving the locals in the policy and decision-making process can significantly affect their opinions of tourism development and, hence, encourage sustainable tourism development in the area.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

The scope of this study is limited to the MMNR due to time and budgetary constraints, meaning the results may not be regionally generalizable. The sample size used typically relies on the concept of saturation or the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data. The idea of saturation is useful only at the conceptual level and, therefore, provides few practical guidelines for estimating sample sizes prior to the data collection.

Further, research should be conducted to investigate the local interest in developing a homestay program for tourists. More research should be conducted to determine the carrying capacity of the reserve, findings which will help to sustain the ecosystem.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Nampushi and Nankaya conceptualized the study, drafted the manuscript, collected, and analysed data. Nampushi drafted the manuscript and Nankaya edited and revised the drafts.

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