



**GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET
HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN**

**The perceptions of managers of SMEs on
sustainable tourism development in least
developed countries (LDCs), using The Gambia
as a case study**



Foday Drammeh

**LICENTIATUPPSATS I FÖRETAGSEKONOMI
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The picture on the front page of this research illustrates a view from a tourism facility with a lush green wilderness on the tributary of the Gambia River that was a traditional community owned farm land. The area has been gradually developed into a culture Forest advocating eco ethics with sustainable economic development practices enhancing opportunities for employment to the villagers. It is now a private eco-tourist facility open to the public for full or half-day cultural guided eco-tours of the forest. The facility encourages replanting of trees in areas that had previously been felled by farmers whilst clearing to make fields. Fish and vegetables consume in the facility are provided by local community members in the area.

The perceptions of managers of SMEs on sustainable tourism development in least developed countries (LDCs), using The Gambia as a case study

Abstract:

This research investigated the perception of managers of SMEs in sustainable tourism development in least developed countries (LDCs). The conceptual framework was built on Sharpley's (2010) destination capitals model for sustainable tourism development. A case study of The Gambia was undertaken, where data was collected from 73 participants, consisting of small hotels, motels, equipment hirers, service providers, art and craft vendors, tourist taxi drivers, ground tour operators and car rentals that are the usual route for local participation in tourism development in the industry. The recommendations arrived at in this research and in accordance with the research findings suggest that, a more complete strategy for sustainable tourism development in LDCs is that tourism development strategies should be more focused on three destination capitals namely, the environmental, Sociocultural and human capital on the destination. These capitals are available and accessible to local SMEs.

From the analyses, knowledge of the destination, its environment and ways of living of the people within locally owned SMEs seem to be crucial for tourism consumption. The findings of the research thus suggests that indigenous knowledge of the environment and the socio-culture contained within the human capital drawn on the destination is the basis for building a better sustainable tourism development strategy in LDCs. Hence the findings, and aligned with the destination capitals model, it is concluded herein that the model is a suitable methodology to study sustainable tourism development in the least developed countries.

Keywords: Least Developed Countries, Small scale and medium size enterprises, destination capital, indigenous local knowledge, sustainable tourism development.

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.....

Foday Yaya Drammeh

February, 2014

Note: comments made in this research about The Gambia without reference to any specific source are inline with the author's experience about the country, having worked and directly involved in the tourism industry in the destination for the past 20 years.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASSET	Association of Small scale Enterprises in Tourism
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
DOSFEA	Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs
ECINEQ	Society for the Study of Economic Inequality
EC	European Commission
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GATS	General Agreements on Tourism Services
GRA	Gambia Revenue Authority
GHA	Gambia Hotel Association
GTTA	Gambia Travel and Tourism Association
GTA	Gambia Tourism Authority
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SMEs	Small Scale and Medium Size Enterprises
TDA	Tourism Development Area
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UN	United Nations
UNCSD	United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Educational Program
USCED	United States Committee for Economic Development
UNHRC	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNESC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNED	Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia
WTO	World Tourism Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction to research topic

Least Developed Countries (LDCs) have embarked on tourism development as a development strategy, with objective to strengthen their production sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, fisheries and other traditional industries. It helps to create linkages with the local industries absorbing a lot of small scale business initiatives. As such, this industry is thus said to be a critical economic activity for such economies. It is regarded as an avenue for export and diversifications of economic activities, generated through merchandise trade (Cosbey, 2010). The benefits of tourism are therefore encouraging for LDCs, and because of the opportunities within, it is considered a strategy for poverty alleviation, providing livelihood opportunities for many people.

However, it also seems that such an industry requires massive investment in terms of finance, technology, material and human resources. LDCs are said to be poor and thus lacks such important resources that are needed for the operation of tourism all by themselves. They lacked the means of transportation, adequate accommodation, restaurants and amusement facilities that are utilised by tourists. They therefore seek the cooperation of multinational corporations with the finance, material and technical resources to invest in the tourism in their countries. This cooperation seems to be significant in terms of infrastructural development, product development, increased entrepreneurship and tourist arrivals.

Many Small and Medium size Enterprises (SMEs), operating in tourism came out of this cooperation acting as agents for Multinational corporations bringing tourists in LDCs. They are widely recognised in this development as a major stakeholder, acting both as the backbone of local economies and as consumers of natural resources (Ubrice and Lofthouse, 2006). In a country like The Gambia for instance, tourism industry absorbs a lot of SMEs founded by local community members operating as sub contractors for international tour operators such as the multinational corporations is an important element of the tourism industry in the country. The products they provide are crucial for the tourism experience in the country, for the survival and the well being of local investors and their communities alike. It provides employment for many people, especially for women and semi-skilled people, as well as a source of revenue and foreign exchange for the government. The activities involved also seem to be contributing to the urbanisation process of some local communities. However with all this progress, countries and regions where the economy is driven by the tourism industry are becoming increasingly concerned with the environmental, as well as socio-cultural problems associated with what is

term to be unsustainable tourism (Neto, 2002). Similar remarks are made by Koppola, (2010), Borges; Carbone; Bushell and Jaeger, (2011).

There is little evidence to suggest that individual tourism businesses are performing in a more sustainable manner in accordance with local community needs, or, indeed, at the destination level (Sharpley, 2010). It thus seems that less attention have been given to local SMEs in the sustainable tourism development debate. These are enterprises that use available local resources including the human, socioculture and natural environment as a tourism product. Hence the majority of managers of such enterprises in LDCs seem to be members of the local communities, their understanding and knowledge of the socio-economy, the natural environment and the cultures of the people on the destination tends to be important in the practice of sustainable tourism. As key players in tourism development in LDCs, more efforts are therefore needed to understand the perceptions of managers of SMEs in sustainable tourism development in LDCs. Furthermore, for the understanding sustainable tourism development in LDCs, there is perhaps a need to also explore the destination's capital which forms these enterprises.

This research investigated the perception of managers of SMEs in sustainable tourism development in LDCs, using The Gambia as a case study. The conceptual framework was built on the destination capitals model suggested by Sharpley, (2010) as a model to understand sustainable tourism development, namely the environmental, human, socio-cultural, economic, technological and political capital of destination that are relied upon by investors to create tourism business activities. The first chapter of this study will present the research background focusing on the potentials, abilities and participation of SMEs in economic development in LDCs. It explores SMEs contributions to development and specifically to sustainable tourism development. It will look at how theory and existing research has addressed the problems of sustainable tourism development in LDCs and the gap this research intends to make a contribution to. The chapter proceeds to present the aims and objectives of the research, and the questions it wishes to answer. The outline of the preceding chapters is presented thereafter.

1.1 Research background

Poverty, unemployment and lack of manufacturing industries are among the overriding social and economic issues Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are facing. These are countries with a low per capita gross domestic product (GDP) and structural impediments to growth, defined as low-income countries suffering from the most severe structural impediments to sustainable development (UNDPAD, 2011). (Appendix 1 Definition of a least developed country pp:122). The Gambia for instance is an example of such countries. Tourism development and encouragement of SMEs are seen to be a solution to bridging such a development gap in such a country. Services in general and tourism in particular are increasingly viewed as a significant opportunity for a sustainable economic and social development of such countries (Recupero, 2001). Consequently, it has become a major economic activity and a venue for development of entrepreneurship, providing employment, income generating opportunities, infrastructure development, linkage with local traditional industries, enhancing export and generation of foreign exchange for governments in many LDCs.

Tourism is often the first source of foreign exchange, and one of the five leading sources of export revenue for at least 69 developing countries (Jules, 2005). Whether local initiatives or foreign direct investment, the government of The Gambia for instance has given support to private sector ventures encouraging the coming of many SMEs into tourism development. This encouragement of locals in tourism development tends to enhance partnership with foreign investors providing opportunities for the expansion of the industry and its activities. It encourages production and utilisation of local resources thus reducing the consumption of imported products which has been heavily criticized for causing economic leakages in LDCs.

The core of the political and economic transformation of any country in transition is the creation of the private sector and the development of SMEs (United Nations, 2006). They provide opportunities for linkages with other sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and the manufacturing sectors thus increasing the potential for additional demand for goods and services throughout the economy (Jules, 2005), and is probably the only service sector that provides concrete trading opportunities for all nations, regardless of their level of development, makes a greater contribution to foreign exchange earnings than many other economic sectors considered as major export-oriented activities of developing countries also with multiple linkages with other sectors of the economy, without encountering the same magnitude of trade barriers (Benavides, 2004). The participation of locals in tourism development also seems to provide opportunities

for locals to contribute to the reduction of the negative impacts of tourism that threatens the local socio-economy and the environment.

However, with all these encouragements and potentials of tourism in poor countries, it has also been directly affected by unforeseen incidents that have affected patterns of growth and development of the industry (UN, 2005). Tourism industry in LDCs is still accused of causing economic leakages, environmental and socio-cultural degradation in host destinations. It is argued that the resources that tourism survives upon are said to be fragile and vulnerable for overused and degradation. As such, the encouragement and participation of local investors in tourism has been mostly relied upon as a solution for sustainable tourism development in LDCs. Local SMEs are thought to have the potential to minimise the negative impacts of the tourism development in LDCs. Understanding the links between environmental sustainability and equity is critical if we are to expand human freedoms for present and for future generations (UN 2011). This seems to be more associated to those who are most affected in this kind of development and tend to have knowledge of the tourism destination and its products.

1.1.1 Tourism development issues

According to The United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2011), tourism destinations have diversified substantially and several LDCs are witnessing phenomenal growth in tourist arrivals and expenditure and International arrivals have increased by an average of 11 percent a year between 1990 and 2009. This trend is likely to continue, indicating that LDCs will be among the major players in international tourism in the coming years (UNDP, 2011). Africa for instance, with its huge diversity, rich supply of natural resources, and its wealth of wildlife and cultural heritage, is one of the main destinations for international tourism in the world (Okech, 2010). One of its development options is promoting tourism because of the existence of an overseas demand for it (Dieke, 2001a). According to The UNDP, the growing market trend of tourists seeking cultural and natural attractions in rural areas gives LDCs a strong comparative advantage in the tourism market place. Tourism has therefore become an important source of employment, foreign exchange earnings and government revenues, driver of infrastructural development, and encouraging for export of local products in LDCs.

However, whilst such positive impacts are acknowledged, there are also concerns about the barriers that exist, reducing the potentials of tourism as a catalyst for growth and development in such countries. Tourism is said to be an agent for change, and as a result of the increasing tourist arrival figures in LDCs, emerging tourism destinations are facing increasing pressure on their

natural, cultural and socio-economic environment (UN CSD, 2001). It thus seems that, tourism sector in LDCs has not yet lived up to its full potentials (Yiu, Saner and Filadoro, 2011).

It is argued that, the type of tourism developed and consequently the visitors attracted, and with the type of companies that organise and arrange the trips, will impact strongly on the opportunities that tourism can offer (Meyer, 2003). As such, it seems that tourism activities in LDCs are market-led driven, and has failed to achieve the objectives of sustainable tourism development. Therefore the real challenge for the future of tourism is to provide sustainable tourism products for the mass market (Klemn, 1992; Sharpley, 2000). However, despite many new approaches for a sustainable tourism development, the problems of economic leakage, environmental and socio-cultural degradation associate with tourism continues to persist in many LDCs. The assumption in this research is that, tourism SMEs seem to be part of the strategies adopted to combat some of the negative impacts tourism development, and therefore their perception of sustainable in LDCs could be useful in this endeavour.

1.2 Research questions.

The aim of this research is to understand the perceptions of managers of SMEs on sustainable tourism development in the least developed countries, based on the case of The Gambia. To enable the research to fulfill this aim, it will discuss the following research questions:

1. What does sustainable tourism development mean for SMEs managers in The Gambia?
2. What is the role of indigenous knowledge in SMEs to induce sustainable tourism development in The Gambia?

1.2.1 Objectives are:

First, to describe the perceptions SMEs managers of what sustainable tourism development is in The Gambia. Secondly, to analyse and discuss the role of indigenous knowledge in SMEs to induce sustainable tourism development in The Gambia.

1.3 Research outline

Chapter two will look at the literature on SMEs and their contributions in national development and specifically in tourism development in the least developed countries. It will further look at the literature on sustainable tourism development in the context of SMEs, and previous works that has been conducted in the area of the research under investigation. Chapter three will introduce The Gambia as a case study. It will provide a background description of the country, relating to its characteristics as a tourism destination, participation of SMEs and its tourism development impacts, and efforts of sustainability practices.

Chapter four will provide the research methodology intended to be used to conduct the study to achieve its overall aim and the objectives. It will present the sources for both primary and secondary data used in the research, and the criteria for the selection of primary data collection. Chapter five presents and analyses the findings, presented in tables showing statistical results obtained from the questionnaire complemented with the narratives obtained from the in-depth interviews of managers of SMEs. The analyses of the findings are then linked to theory to present the findings to the sub research questions of the research.

Chapter six provides the discussions and conclusions to the research. The chapter will present how the findings have answered the set research questions and how they have met the research objectives, and answered the main research question. The seven presents the model for sustainable tourism in accordance with the findings in this research questions developed from Sharpley's (2010) destination capitals model that could be applied in the context of LDCs. The components are derived from the responses of managers of SMEs in The Gambia to answer the main research question which was investigate the perceptions of managers of SMEs on sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

The chapter first elaborates on the findings of the research, and proceed to present a model of sustainable tourism development that is deemed fit for LDCs. It provides the research implications and contributions to sustainable tourism development and business administration literature, to practitioners as well as for policy. The limitations, recommendations, and finally the suggestions for further research are also presented.

CHAPTER TWO, LITREATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The significance of Small scale and medium size Enterprises (SMEs) in development endeavour and specifically in tourism development in the least developed countries is well documented in academic literature and research journals. They are described as being a strategy for sustainable development, created out of existing and arising opportunities within the market, as well as the demand for goods and services to satisfy wants. They are an important part of the entrepreneurial activities in LDs, discovering, creating, and exploiting "future" goods and services (Venkataraman, 1997). Such innovativeness in entrepreneurship seems to be organised under the functions of SMEs in LDCs as an economic activity associated with growth and development in local communities where they exist.

This seems to be an opportunity for LDCs to address development gaps challenges, especially through tourism development. It is argued that by encouraging entrepreneurial capabilities, improving productive resources, and enhancing sectoral linkages these countries can alleviate poverty, and become less dependent on foreign aid (Todaro and Smith, 2003:37). Over 400 million individuals in developing countries are owners or managers of new firms (Reynolds et al. 2004), mostly in the form of SMEs and “are considered to be one of the principal driving forces of economic development. Such enterprises are often created by local community members with the view to contribute to national through tourism development.

This chapter will look at the literature on SMEs in LDCs, their characteristics and indigenous knowledge of the tourism destination in terms of product development. It will explore the concept of inclusive development and the prevailing opportunities for local participation in development initiatives and the establishment of SMEs in LDCs. The intention is to provide a foundation from the literature that shows the position of SMEs in sustainable tourism development in such countries. It will then explore the concept of sustainable tourism development in context of tourism development impacts and its relation to the concept of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development as a concept foundation for this research. The chapter will then provide its evaluation and conclusions.

2.1 Small scale and medium size enterprises

It seems to be a difficult task to define SMEs, especially when the term is used in the context of the LDCs. Considering the existing economic and socio-cultural realities prevailing in different countries; its definition seems to be as such. It could thus be suggested that a universally agreed definition of what a small or medium size enterprise is may not exist. No common define objective for SMEs (Morrison, 1998; Thomas, 2000), has yet been assigned to the term universally. Thus, attempts to define SMEs have been base on country, regional or continental perspectives with focus on existing socio-economic realities on the ground.

The European Commission in Bastakis, Dimitrio, Buhalis and Butler (2003) defines SMEs in the European context, as enterprises that have less than 250 employees. This definition was widely thought of the European Union with three criteria; staff headcount, annual turnover, and annual balance sheet (European Commission, 2005). The Committee for Economic Development (USCED) suggests that SME has at least two of the following features: -

1. Management is independent, since the manager usually owns the business; - Capital is supplied and ownership is held by an individual or a few individuals;
2. The area of operation is primarily local although the market is not necessarily local;
3. The business is small in comparison with the larger competitors in its industry.

Categorising Small businesses in this context is therefore based on the number of employees including the owner(s). In Asia, SMEs are classified by the number of employees and the amount of capital or turnover within an enterprise. According to Srivihok and Intrapairote (2010), in Thailand the definition is based on the number of salaried workers, and fixed capitals. They suggest that, an enterprise is categorised as an SME since it has employees less than 200 and fixed capital less than 200 million baht, excluding land and properties, with less than 25% owned by one or jointly several enterprise(s), and less than 50% owned by foreigners. In Singapore small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is define in terms of their net fixed assets investment and number of employees (Puay Eng, 2010).

A United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) study, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Turkmenistan base SME definitions on maximum levels of capital, assets or income, and number of employees, while Tajikistan and Uzbekistan base the definition only on the number of employees (Pasadilla, 2010). In Africa, they are ideally defined in accordance to sector specific, as enterprises having less than 50 employees and include the following characteristics by The African Development Bank:

Table 1: Characteristics of SMEs

Types	Characteristic
Informal Operator/Survivalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no employees • no distinction between business and personal finances • does not keep records • does not pay taxes • is not registered with any authority • engages in business activities to pay for daily expenses
Informal Micro or Small Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between 10 and 49 employees • no distinction between business and personal finances • may not keep records • may not pay taxes • may not be registered with any authority • has physical address and contact details
Formal Micro or Small Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between 10 and 49 employees • keeps records • has separate bank account • pays taxes • is registered with all required authorities • has physical address and contact details

Source: Esselaar, S., Stock, C., and Ndiwalana, A (2007) African e-index (2006)

The accepted criteria to be considered SMEs have therefore had a both quantitative and qualitative characteristic which also varies from country to country. Not only have they differed from country to country, but even within a country categorising SMEs can differ. In East Africa for instance, where no scientific, organised inventory of them is undertaken, they are not only inventorised in terms of numbers but also in other ways such as gender, age, sub-sector (trade, manufacturing etc), geographical localities within countries (Ernst and Young, 2009), the majority are in the service sector. In the context of The Gambia, they are mostly family owned enterprises engaged in different kinds of business activities.

Since the aim of this research is to investigate the perceptions of managers of SMEs in The Gambia, the working definition for SMEs will thus be based on the criteria used by The Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA) referring it as the registered small structured sector that falls under the purview of the organised economic activities and has been characterised as small or medium enterprise by The Gambia Tourism Authority because of their small size.

2.2 SMEs in the least developed countries.

Industrial development based on SMEs is capable of countering growing unemployment, persistent inequalities and mass migration to cities (Tesfayohannes, 2000). They are the starting point of development in the economies towards industrialisation (Fida in Kongolo, 2010), and

play a key role in transition and developing countries (OECD, 2004), and typically account for more than 90% of all firms outside the agricultural sector, constitute a major source of employment and generate significant domestic and export earnings (OECD, 2004). Such enterprises account for a significant share of production and employment, and are directly associated with poverty alleviation in LDCs (Salah and Irwin, 2010).

SMEs emerge as a key instrument in poverty reduction efforts and as noted earlier, they have traditionally been operated as informal enterprises providing significant livelihood opportunities and safety nets for many households, and are playing an increasingly important role in the process of export-led industrialisation in the developing world (Wignaraja, 2003). They help to absorb productive resources at all levels of the economy and add to the formation of flexible an economic system in which small and large firms are interlinked, and very crucial for the attraction of foreign investment (Fida in Kongolo, 2010). It is therefore widely considered a potential engine for growth and development in many poor economies.

A large number of such enterprises are established out of the opportunities posed by the immediate local environment where indigenous community members relies upon their knowledge of the built and natural environment; socio-culturally and environmentally to create businesses as activities as a means of income generation and support for their own and extended family members. In The Gambia for instance, some of such enterprises are traditional family managed heritages wit spiritual connotations passed down from generation to generation. The role of such enterprises in development and poverty alleviation modified after Pro-poor Tourism, Roggerson in The Society for the Study of Economic Inequality (ECINEQ) Society, 2007 is presented in the figure below:

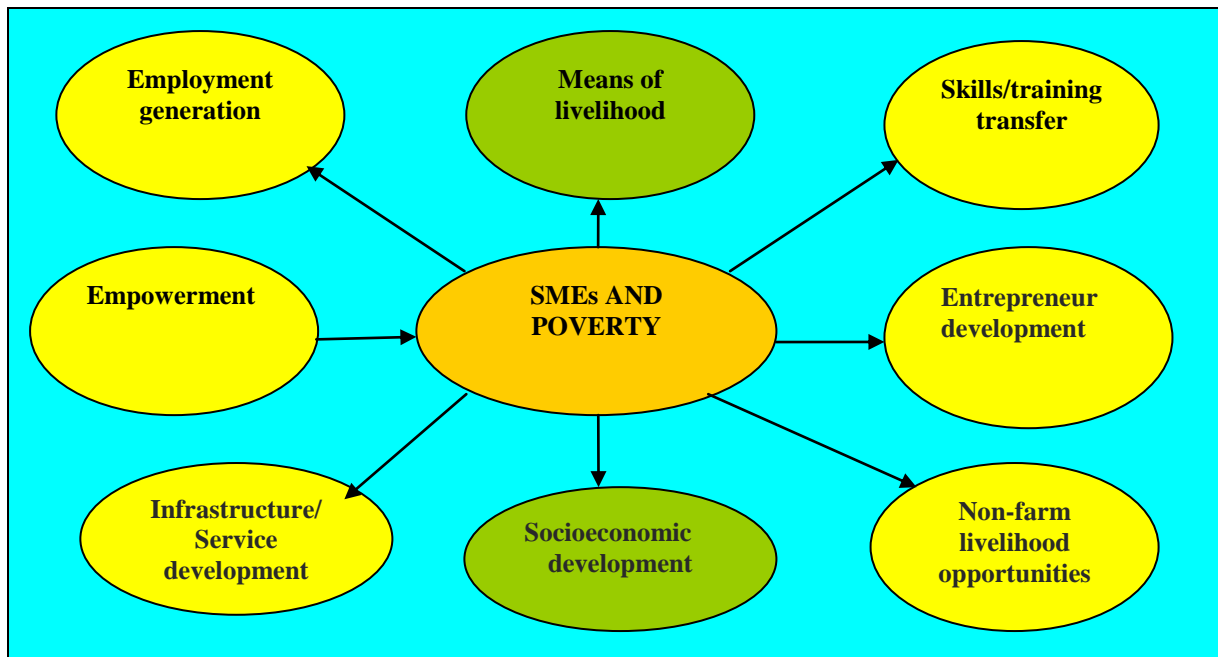


Figure 1: SME development and poverty alleviation. Source: ECINEQ Society, 2007

In many poor countries for instance, this match heralds the discovery of new frontiers for business opportunities, coupled with competitiveness of market dynamics, the drive for self reliance, growth towards food security, self-sufficiency and economic effectiveness of the local communities. In the context of tourism, apart from the traditional sites, fishmongers, bee keepers, poultry farmers and meat vendors, vegetable gardening, blacksmith, pottery, carving, batik, art and craft, bakeries and building are very common family enterprise found in poor countries that have become important partners in tourism development. It further resulted to the people's desire to contribute to the socio-economic, political and infrastructural development in the country, and as a means of survival, to escape the scourge of poverty, unemployment and other social vices (Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA), 2010). It has truly helped in putting many people to work thereby contributing to poverty alleviation.

2.2.1 Characteristics of SMEs in Least developed countries

SMEs is the sector of business that falls within the operating environment of the informal sector as a way of exerting civic responsibilities in the socio-economic pace of the economy (Esselaar et al, 2007). They are a very heterogeneous group, found in a wide array of business activities, ranging from the single artisan producing agricultural implements for the village market, the coffee shop at the corner (OECD, 2004). Most SMEs in the LDCs are family enterprises and relies mostly on relatives, neighbours and friends as a workforce. They are usually managed by family members, and can even comprise of between 1-3 people.

In The Gambia for instance, most SMEs are family businesses that are passed down from generation to generation. A majority of such enterprises are female-owned businesses, which are more often home-based compared to those owned by males; they are operated from home and are mostly not considered in official statistics (Abor and Quartey, 2010). They usually have limited access to financial capital, has a simple management structure resulting from the fusion of ownership and management by one person or very few individuals (Sule, 1986). They are secluded and lack primary collateral as a guarantee for loans (Abubakar Koko, 2013). Thus, their source of business capital is mainly from personal savings, through family contributions, or community savings and credit facilities as they tend to find it challenging in accessing funds from banks and other financial institutions.

In The Gambia, the majority of the poor in the country start micro and small businesses for family survival (Ministry of Women Affairs- The Gambia, 2010-2020). Characteristics of such business include their local character and traditional use, small in size, managed by people of different levels of literacy with specific knowledge that is unique to indigenous communities. In the context of tourism, indigenous community members seem to use such opportunities to create tourists attractions that have developed diverse tourism products, and to a wider extend provide opportunities for members of such communities to venture into business activities that are important for the tourism industry. A common characteristic of SMEs thus seems to be their small size and limited resources, and investment capital with ownership and management usually controlled by the same person who also decides over issues of the operations of the enterprise. They also contained a unique human and organisational capital that is hard to imitate that evolves continuously within such firms (Armstrong, 2001). They are also found to characterised firms across various industries (Chatman and Jehn, 1994), including international firms (Hofstede et al., 1990). These dimensions tend to encourage societies to make good use of their traditional and cultural ways of living with innovative approaches for enterprise development. Such enterprises are now said to be playing a significant role in tourism development in LDCs, and are mostly created and operated by indigenous people. The unique relationship between an indigenous group and their territory, and the immediate knowledge the community has developed about lands and resources, should serve as the bases for any environmentally sustainable culturally appropriate tourism development (Butler and Menzies, 2007).

2.3 Indigenous Knowledge and the tourism destination

Indigenous or aboriginal people are called so because they were living on their lands before settlers came from elsewhere; they are the descendants (The United Nations, 1995). They are also, the people who shares social, economic and cultural patterns of a community. Governing myths, family and community organisation, values, concerning work, play, sexual roles and relations, are among the many matters where different indigenous groups exhibit striking differences (Peredo and Anderson, 2006). This is the local knowledge held by people; land-based, practical knowledge of resources and beliefs regarding human interaction with the ecosystem (Butler and Menzies, 2007). Despite this understanding, tourism is said to be facing barriers and obstacles to skills and knowledge, and are hardly debated by scholars (Moscardo, 1989; Aref, Redzuan and Gill, 2009).

Local skills and knowledge of the destination seems to be an important source of tourism development. This might not necessarily be based on only indigenous knowledge, but also on knowledge of the needs, preferences, and priorities of indigenous people is critical (Butler and Menzies, 2007). Human beings are inhabitants of language-carried patterns of meanings which are conjoined with practical actions...and can be taken to be inhabitants of culture (Preston, 1996). Preston went further to suggest that, the cognitive resources of a culture will made available to the inhabitants of that culture in practical action, explanation and tradition, and concludes that one use to which these resources will be put is business of making sense of the culture or way of life of the people. Tourism industry in LDCs seems to rely heavily on such knowledge found within the local population which is important for both product development and preservation of resources that crucial for tourism. According to Pretty and Guijt in Mikkelsen, (2005:55) development:

“will have to begin with the people who know most about their livelihood systems. It will have to value and develop their knowledge and skills, and put it into their hands the means to achieve self development. This will require a reshaping of all practices and thinking associated with development”.

Indigenous local knowledge thus seems to be important and to be collaborative with foreign businesses in all aspects of tourism activities to achieve sustainable tourism development in the least developed countries. Indigenous/ local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society thus tends to be an important element of sustainable tourism development (Flavier, 1995). However, despite the key role SMEs are playing in tourism development, to date, there is little research that explores stakeholder perceptions in sustainable tourism development and unless there is an understanding of these perceptions, sustainable tourism may not be possible (Hardy

and Beeton, 2001). The participation and inclusion of local SMEs in the sustainable tourism development debate is essential, when it is now known that the greater majority of tour operators do not consider environmental issues to be of importance for their business, mainly because of their indirect contribution in creating the impacts and the intangible nature of their activities on social and cultural structures (Budeau, 2000).

2.4 Inclusive tourism development

The idea of inclusive tourism development is being coined as one of the solutions for sustainable tourism; an idea that is originally promoted by The World Bank as an economic and regional development that allows full social participation of people with disabilities (Rains, 2005). Adopting the concept to tourism is the systematic and strategic inclusion of locals in the tourism development process in destination countries such as LDCs. Inclusive tourism development encourages the use of local resources, facilitates and encourages the full participation and inclusion of locals in tourism development on the destination. The means of tourism development that fosters links and interaction between the different actors in the tourism industry on a destination, forms partnerships with private actors, stimulates the local economy and the integration of women and the active involvement of local communities, with aim to increase the income of the poor and improve their livelihoods opportunities. Through active participation of locals in tourism, a major portion of tourism-generated benefits remains in the local economy (Leclercq, 2008). In the context of sustainable development, the concept of inclusiveness will tend to contribute to minimising the much talked about economic leakage, as well as the socio-cultural and environmental degradation that tourism is largely accused of causing in LDCs. Indigenous people have long since been using resources that are now used as tourism products in destination countries without posing dangers for their continuous use. It seems that they had ways and means of applying productive measures for the longevity and continuous existence of such resources.

Inclusive development tends to encourages local involvement in tourism development and encourage linkages of the different sectors with the sector. It tends to support efforts for sustainable tourism, which seeks deeper involvement of locals thereby help alleviate poverty, enhance the preservation of cultural and historical heritage, contributes to the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources as well as the retention of some portion of the tourism earnings in the destination country. The skills, knowledge and abilities (human capital) within such firms are intertwined with organisational culture to form unique resources that other

firms cannot acquire or apply (Armstrong, 2001). As such, indigenous participation in tourism development could be an important contributor to sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

2.5 Indigenous participation in tourism development

Local knowledge patterns of the destination are important aspects of indigenous entrepreneurial activity, forming the foundation of business activities created by locals usually centered on local resources that are sensitive to indigenous traditions and cultures. There are six key or common elements that are relevant to the concept of indigenous entrepreneurship:

1. descent from inhabitants of a land prior to later inhabitants,
2. some form of domination by the later inhabitants,
3. maintenance of socio-cultural norms and institutions of the indigenous groups,
4. an attachment to ancestral lands and resources,
5. often, but not always, subsistence economic arrangements, and
6. an association with distinctive languages.

(The World Bank; The Asian Development Bank in Peredo and Anderson, 2006).

Most SMEs in LDCs seem to be created by indigenous people on such foundations. The human capital that forms such enterprises is hard to imitate because it is acquired through an evolutionary process that takes time and is a product of unique organisational culture (De Nisi et al in Acs et al, 2005). They are usually engaged in activities such as petty trading, grocery store operators, local manufacturing such as pottery making, selling charcoal and firewood and operates in both rural and urban areas. They may be operating as formal or informal enterprises with different levels of skills depending on their activities. The root of indigenous participation in tourism development in LDCs also seems to be based on elements that explain the characteristics of most SMEs in such countries. They are widely recognised as one of the largest investor groups in the tourism industry in LDCs, who integrates a wide range of economic activities to form the core concept of their products. They are also dependent on the environment, culture, heritage and people built upon intrinsic tourism assets-- coastal, wildlife, nature, cultural, or city based -- that can compete internationally (Iain and Crompton, 2001). Hence their local character, indigenous participation in tourism could help alleviate poverty, enhance the preservation of cultural and historical heritage, contribute to the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources that are utilised by the tourism industry. It can also facilitate the retention of some portion of the tourism earnings on the destination.

However, despite such prolific representation of SMEs in the tourism activities in LDCs, few, if any tourism product are still said to be truly sustainable, and fewer if any destination can be called sustainable (Mckercher, 2003). Perhaps due to the assumption that, even the most referenced document on sustainable development does not mentioned tourism in its agenda (Wall, 2006), much more SMEs in tourism and their relation to sustainable tourism development. However, ethnic minority entrepreneurship is rising in importance, and especially those related to small businesses, has been the subject of interest with particular interest and focus on their ability to a changing environment and because of their structure allows them to adjust themselves to technical change at a rate fast enough for their survival (Ball, 2005). As an industry where entry barriers can be low, tourism creates opportunities for small entrepreneurs and allows poor people to establish new activities or formalize existing micro ventures (UNDP, 2011).

2.6 SMEs and tourism development in LDCs.

Recognising that poverty is multi-dimensional, a broad range of strategies for using tourism to address issues of poverty from employment and business development to mitigating environmental impacts which adversely impacts on the poor and addressing socio-cultural impacts (Goodwin, 2006). This is said to be an important element of SMEs participation in tourism development, especially in LDCs. Given the fact that tourism is so diverse and multi-dimensional, there seem to be room for the LDCs to provide products and service built on the local character of the destination, facilitating the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host governments, and host communities” (Goeldner, Ritchie and McIntosh, 2000). SMEs provide a very diverse range of tourism products and services; facilitate rapid infusion of tourism spending into local economies, while in leisure tourism they usually shoulder the distinctive function of offering a local character to the increasingly homogenised tourism packages (Bastakis, Buhalis and Butler, 2002). The economic objectives are to increase foreign exchange earnings, investment and job opportunities, as well as minimising adverse social and cultural effects that are not best promoted through inward investment and large tourism enterprise but through enhancing micro and small enterprises (Wanhill, 2000).

This seems to be much easier for the tourism industry in LDCs relying on the nature, the people and their cultures on the destination. Indigenous land tenure ownership systems for instance are also acting as an inhibiting factor that includes locals in tourism enterprise development in LDCs facilitating the possibilities for the achievements of objectives of tourism development in such destinations. It provides opportunities for local investors to set up enterprises that cater for the demands of the tourism industry. Resources may thus be exploited by the destination in ways

which meet community needs and the need for environmental sustainability (as defined by the destination), reflecting on local developmental objectives and which take advantage of opportunities offered by the external market (Sharpley, 2009/2010 no.4). In this context, traditional sites have also gradually developed to become tourist sites and evolved into family businesses absorbing other members of the community in its activities. Many indigenous tourism ventures started with such underlying premise that the youth would follow and take up the running of the business (Schmiechen, 2006), seen both as a means of cultural continuity and at times revival as well as forging a better economic base to generate more sustainable and rewarding lifestyles (Schmiechen, 2006). In the context of The Gambia for instance, they also operate in businesses that are even unrelated to tourism but has with links with the industry.

Indigenous people have developed their traditional economic activities into ventures that facilitate earnings as well as experience for tourists. Ownership creates a greater organisational commitment, a lesser overt control system and therefore improves business effectiveness (Denison, 1990), concerned with changes that require them to maintain the specialisation which stems from their small size but at the same time to enter the market as an entity of larger proportions (Buffa, 2005). Thus, SMEs operating in tourism needs to be understood not in the sense of an industry or even a conglomerate of different business sectors but as a system, integrated not only into the private sector as businesses but as a service industry linked into most other sectors of the economy (Sofield and Mactaggart, 2005). Such enterprises has a broad range of impacts on the poor, among which are financial, livelihood opportunities, and that cultural values, optimism, pride, participation and exposure to risk and exploitation need to be considered (Ashley et al in Goodwin, 2006).

SMEs stimulate private ownership and entrepreneurial skills, and can adapt to changing market demand and supply situations, they generate employment, help diversify economic activity and make a significant contribution to export and trade. It stimulates local production, especially food and gastronomy, as well as artisanship and helps to create a multiplier effect of tourism. Tourist-host encounters may lead to better understanding between cultures, remove prejudices and promote cultural pride eventually leading to the preservation or a renaissance of the local art/craft (Bauer, 1999). Writing in the context of Balinese, Hitchcock, (2000) suggests that it was expected to develop and promote simultaneously taking advantage of culture to attract tourists, while using the economic benefits to foster Balinese culture. Tribal and minority peoples are targeted by the tourism sector as an attraction, just as in the case of many other developing countries. Forsyth (2005) for instance gives example of the Maasai in Kenya who happen to live

near the large safari parks, suggesting that they are a major attraction for the tourism sector in Kenya. There are many safari style trips that are organised by local ground tour operators as well as local tourist taxi drivers visiting villages, towns and local communities where tourists travel to inland areas to experience the cultures and traditions of The Gambian people. The situation is similar to that of the Dominican Republic (Roessingh and Duijnhoven, 2004).

Higher multipliers have been connected to more dispersed, small-scale, locally owned operations that tend to be better linked to the local economy, but there still remain problems of serious economic leakage, socio-cultural and environmental impacts which are significant threats to sustainability (Brohman, 1996:56). Many researchers conclude that SMEs are more likely to have ties of dependence and familiarity to their communities, which will ensure they protect their reputation and relationships among neighbors and customers (Newberry, 2006). Shared meanings, assumptions, norms and values that govern work-related behaviour; the symbolic, textual, and narrative structures in which they are encoded; and in the functionalist tradition, the structural causes and consequences of cultural forms and their relationship to various measures of organisational effectiveness (Kunda in Jafee, 2001). A primary challenge for local governance, both today and in decades ahead, is to steer increasingly external, global forces on local development so that development achieves the shared vision of the local population (UNCSD, 1999). Local SMEs offers new employment and income generating opportunities for rural populations, including tourism as expression and cultural exchange of agricultural practices, artistic heritage and craftsmanship, and culinary traditions (International Trade Centre, 2010), and puts strong emphasis on sustainability, taking environmental, social and economic factors into account (Leclercq, 2010). It therefore seems that SMEs can play an important role in sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

2.7 Sustainable tourism development

The impacts of tourism can be positive or negative (Kreag, 2001), falling under a multi dimensional phenomenon that encompasses economic, social, cultural, ecological, environmental and political forces (Singh et al. 2003). Its positive impacts means solidarity, mutual respect, and participation of all players implicated in the process, especially those indigenous to the location and must be based on efficient cooperation mechanisms at all levels: local, national, regional and international” (Gartner, 1996 in Birch et al., 2002:48), which requires “reconciliation of the ecological imperative to stay within the carrying capacity of the planet, the economic imperative to provide adequate standard of living for all, and the social imperative to develop forms of governance that promote the values people want to live by (Sustainable Development Research

Initiative (SDRI). Thus, the concept of sustainable tourism endeavours a tourism business environment that enhances economic benefits for locals on the destination by encouraging the consumption of local products and services. It stimulates new economic activities that are linked to the local productive sectors thereby not only contributes to the balance of payment, foreign change earnings, and employment on the destination, but also encourages consumption and export of local products. The concept puts emphasis on environmental preservation measures and practices which encourages the prolong use of the environment on which tourism heavily depends upon as a source of its products. For the fact that tourism relies a lot on the natural environment as well as the socio-cultural and historical heritage of the destination, the concept of sustainable tourism development implies the optimum use of such resources with preservation measures to minimise negative impacts of tourism on such resources. The concept envisages creating a balance between economic benefits of tourism and its impact on the socioculture and both built and natural environment of the destination.

However, many of the demand patterns in tourism reflect the unsustainable lifestyles of industrialised consumer societies (UN Commission on Sustainable Development, 1999). As such, The United Nations (2003) points out some proactive measures to be adopted by host countries in their tourism development efforts to include the protection of the environment, and preservation of local culture and historic sites. Current tourism development literature has made increased emphasis on issues relating to sustainability in the economic, environmental and social arenas of tourism host nations, defined as the type of tourism development:

“that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems”.

(World Tourism Organisation in Cernat and Gourdon, 2005).

Table 2. Tourism impacts.

POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS
<p>Economic Aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased household earnings from tourist activities. • Multiplier effects (e.g. the redistribution of tourism spending from tourism related sectors). • Better infrastructure: road, water, sewage, transport modes, recreation Opportunities. • Foreign exchange earnings for government • Labour-intensive service industries • Income from use of amenities and taxes 	<p>Economic Aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonality (e.g. weather, timing factors) creates loss of income for the destination and employees • Economic leakage (e.g. large-scale transfer of tourism revenues out of the host communities/exclusion of local Businesses products and services) • Dependency of foreign goods and services (importation of foreign food and drink, immigration of outsiders as tour managers/leaders, guides, laborers) • Cost of security to offset crime in the local areas • Loss of receipts owing to external economic crises/terrorism
<p>Sociocultural Aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation of local heritage resources and ethnic identity • Widening of social perspectives • Preservation of family ties • Upward mobility • Folklore stimulus; creation of museums 	<p>Sociocultural Aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural clashes, loss of cultural identity • Commodification of local culture • Deterioration of historic sites owing to overuse • Fearfulness from terrorism and crime • Misuse of intellectual property rights
<p>Environmental Impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of conservation needs • Establishment of eco-labels • Awareness of local resource limits • Establishment of land use regulations 	<p>Environmental Impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution and preservation costs • Transformation of national parks and green/open spaces • Loss of native ecological systems/values • Overuse of tourist facilities and services (e.g. accommodation, parking and toilets especially where tourism is seasonal)

Source: Adapted from Smith, (2001:110).

The table illustrates potential positive and negative impacts of tourism on a destination. Whilst tourism was not the subject of Agenda 21, the General Assembly of The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) adopted the notion at its nineteenth special session in 1997, and included sustainable tourism as one of its sectoral themes (CSD, 2001). The complexity of tourism development and its socio-economic impact on host destinations has also been pointed out by the UN (1999) suggesting that there is a need to balance environmental and social impacts in economic terms while achieving economic and community development. With all the encouragements and potentials of tourism in poor countries, it has also been directly affected by unforeseen incidents that have affected patterns of growth and development of the industry (UN, 2005). There are complains about economic leakages, socio-cultural as well as environmental degradation experienced by many destinations.

2.8 Negative impacts of tourism development

The negative effects of the growth of tourism on a destination have had serious environmental deterioration, affecting both the human and natural environment and cultural heritage (Spink, 1994). In the context of The Gambia for instance, leisure tourism have had limited linkage with the productive base of the local economy thus encouraging leakages and exclusion of the vast majority of the population from the acquisition of benefits from tourism (The Gambia Strategy Team, 2004). It involves large-scale transfer of tourism revenues out of the host country and exclusion of local businesses and products (UNEP, 2012). It is widely believed that the tourism industry in the third world is dominated by large corporations that exploit the labour and resources in such countries, thus strengthening the inequality and deepening poverty that are already acute problems in such countries.

Relatively few, large corporations have market prominence” (Cooper et al, 1998:22). Whilst the environment, culture and traditions of host communities forms the bulk of the tourism product making the destination attractive, they are often subjected to intensified modifications, manipulation and irresponsible utilisation of vulnerable resources. United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, 2001) suggests that with the rapid expansion of tourism, traditional and emerging tourism destinations are facing increasing pressure on their natural, cultural and socio-economic environments.

2.8.1 Economic Impact

Tourism industry has been characterized by a high degree of monopoly, which implies a concentration of services and profits into very few big transnational corporations (Song, 2004). The locals on the destination country are often excluded from the tourism development process. The economic sustainability of tourism in poor countries are thus said to be undermined by external factors beyond the control of developing countries, notably the dominant position of integrated suppliers from the originating tourists markets (Diaz, 2001). Much of the expected foreign exchange is also repatriated or spent on imports to provide tourists with the food, drink and standards of accommodation they require” (Duffy, 2002:50).Meyer in Mitchell and Fall (2007) explains tourism expenditure and benefits distribution in the figure below:

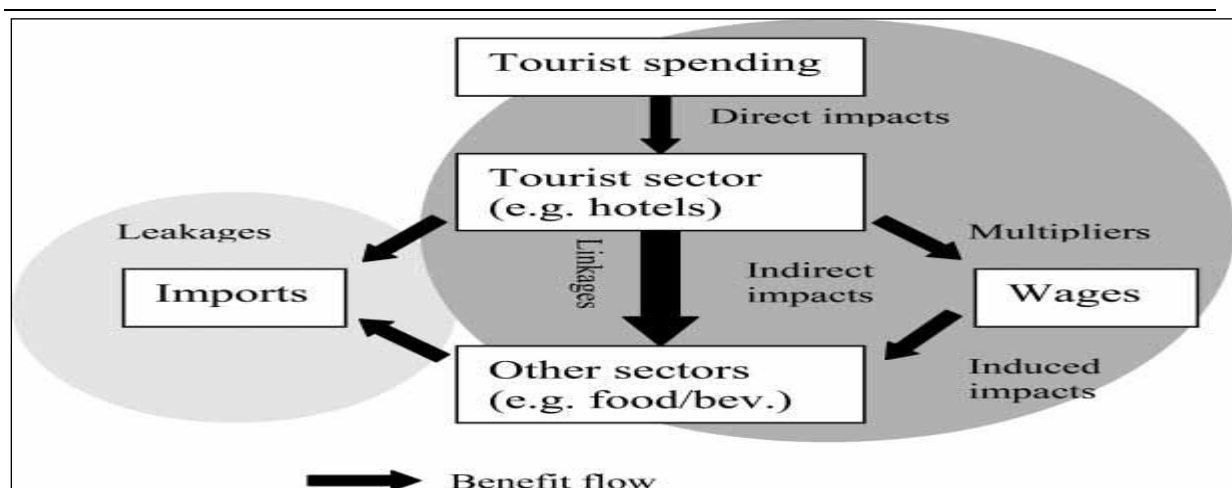


Figure 2 Tourism expenditure and the distribution of benefits. Source: Mitchell and Fall, 2007

In general, it estimates the changes in economic activity within a region resulting from some action with direct effects (the changes in the industries associated directly with visitor spending), indirect (sales, income, or jobs resulting from secondary rounds of purchases the hotel makes to other linked industries in the region) and induced effects (are related to sales, income or jobs resulting from household spending as a result of income earned from visitor spending (either directly or indirectly) (Acher, 1989; Pao,2005:69).

Currently, in a number of LDCs with limited economic diversification, the majority of revenues from tourism do not go to local operators but to foreign firms (UNCTAD, 2011). Consequently there is an increased critical review of its social and environmental impacts over the last decade, and such concerns are expanding in importance. The destination can be exploited of its attractive character that destroys a region’s integrity and force tourists to transfer their interest elsewhere

(Calabrese et al, 2002). It is now known that tourism involves opportunity costs, and when destination areas invest in tourism, they rarely consider what the same resources could provide when invested in another industry (Ardahaey, 2011). These economic impacts can seem to be reflective on the environment, either through depredation or secluding it from local use depriving them from cultural and traditional usage of the destination's natural resources.

2.8.2 Environmental impacts

Not only do tourism activities have impacts on local economies, but also on its environment. Tourism is a major contributor to change responsible for altering landscapes, land-use, and life-style patterns. Water pollution, ecological disruption, land degradation, and congestion typify negative environmental impacts associated with poorly planned tourism (UN, 2001). By indulging in many activities that can have adverse environmental effects, tourism has the potential to gradually destroy the environment resources on which it depends (UNEP, 2006).

Pressures on land use as well as waste generation can become significant problems for some LDCs (UNCTAD, 2011). Therefore the rapid expansion of tourism can be responsible for adverse environmental impacts (Neto in Kushi and Casa, 2012), such as pressure on natural resources, pollution and waste generation, and damage to the ecosystem (Kushi, 2011). Consequently, environmental degradation has become an important research theme in tourism development. Future research should focus on the evaluation of environmental impacts, particularly those gradual cumulative impacts on the tourism environment (Zhong, Deng, Song, Ding, 2011). It is important that a balance must be found between limits and usage so that continuous changing, monitoring and planning ensure that tourism can be managed (Sustainable tourism, 2012). This is particularly important considering the socio-cultural importance of the environment on the host population in LDCs. The development of tourism in LDCs should thus not lead to an environmental trade-off but to an improved environmental and human welfare that can enhance livelihood opportunities for destination.

2.8.3 Socio-cultural impacts

There are six issues that are often overlooked but must be addressed in research: the role of tourism demand, the nature of tourism resources, the imperative of intra-generational equity, the role of tourism in promoting socio-cultural progress, the measurement of sustainability, and forms of sustainable development (Lui 2003). The impacts of tourism on cultural values through the influx of people and interference with the social fabrics of society can create socio-cultural

degradation in local communities where there is a scarcity of data in the tourism literature; have attracted the attention of many researchers. The outcome of the interactions of tourist with local residents and their relationship creates changes in the host individuals and the host's community's quality of life, value systems, labour division, family relationships, attitudes, behavioral patterns, ceremonies and creative expressions (Cohen, 1984). Often, host communities are the weaker party in interactions with tourist and service providers. Such impacts of tourism arise when tourism brings about changes in value systems and behaviour and thereby threatens indigenous identity. It brings changes in community structures, family relationships, collective traditional life styles, ceremonies and morality. In some cases, in an attempt to preserve environments for ecotourism, (and other forms of tourism in the name of environmental protection), traditional resource use and users have been eliminated, thereby depriving local people of their livelihoods (Wall, 1997).

Should one be trying to sustain individuals, communities, regions or nations; experiences for tourists, incomes for businesses, or life-styles for residents; individual enterprises, economic sectors, or whole economies and production systems; economic activities, cultural expressions, or environmental conditions, are some of the questions that should be answered (Wall, 2006). If tourism is to benefit local residents, means must be found to facilitate local participation; otherwise if they do not receive benefits, they are likely to compete with the tourism industry for the use of scarce natural resources (Wall, 1997). It is from these perspectives that local participation in tourism development has been widely encouraged. A useful model to this endeavour is the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development proposed by Sharpley, (2010). The approach argues to ensure that tourism development meets the destinations' needs by giving though consideration to the destination capitals that are said to contain opportunities for sustainable tourism development for LDCs.

2.9 Destination capitals

Sharpley (2009) suggests that the way to sustainable tourism development may lie in the concept of destination capitals- ‘that is to a greater or lesser extent all destinations possess a variety of capitals including environmental capital, human capital, socio-cultural capital, economic capital and political’ provided in the figure below:

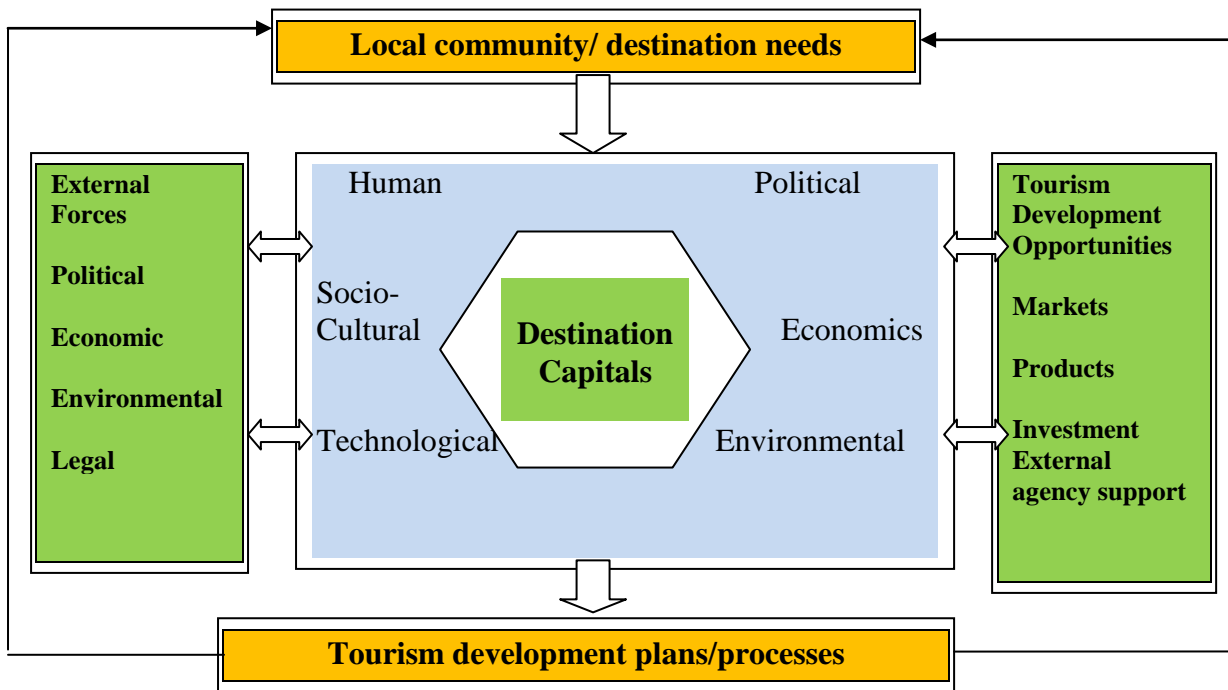


Figure 3: A destination capitals model of tourism development. Source: Sharpley(2009).

In the literature of destination development, destination planning and destination marketing, a destination is viewed as an amalgam of individual products and experience opportunities combine to form a total experience of the area visited (Murphy, Pritchard and Smith in Kompula, 2001). For the purpose of this research, a tourism destination herein refers to a country as tourism destination. These capitals as illustrated in figure 3 may be exploited in ways which meet the need for environmental sustainability reflecting on local development objectives and which take advantage of opportunities offered by the external market (Sharpley, 2009).

2.9.1 Environmental capital

This refers to a wide range of natural resources that are available on the destination and are of important use to society. It can be defined as any naturally occurring stock of assets that yields valuable goods and services (Porritt, 2007: 149). It is an important source of food, water, medicine, shelter, and energy in most LDCs. Tourism destination in such countries is heavily dependent on such assets as the core of their products and experience.

The standard SMEs in the least developed countries tends to evolve from entrepreneurial engagements of people who have knowledge of the environmental capital and search for the opportunities that that encouraged the formation of an enterprise by exploiting the opportunities provided within the environment, including the built environment. The important contribution of local initiatives derived from the human capital can thus be an essential criterion for tourism development. Their business initiatives are important means of creating links between different economic activities on the destination based on their knowledge of the environmental capital.

2.9.2 Human capital

This is the ability of individuals to produce through skill and knowledge. It is “the knowledge, skills and competences and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic activity” (OECD, 1998: 9). Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* had already pointed out the importance of Human capital as an explanatory factor of economic growth (Maquieira, Tugores and Ramos, 2006). It plays a critical role in economic growth and poverty reduction, and from a macroeconomic perspective, its accumulation improves labour productivity, facilitates technological innovations, increases returns on capital, and makes growth more sustainable (Son,2010). It is a key factor of production in development, and seems to be important in tourism development. This creates the experience, good or bad, and determines the quality of the ‘product offer’ to the tourists (Raj, 2008). A particular importance of human capital can thus be said to be language and socio-cultural skills of the area where development is intended for.

2.9.3 Socio-cultural capital

Since the beginning of the 1990s, studies of the processes of local development have increasingly focused on the importance of the contextual situation and the social capital represented by a certain place (Grängsjo and Gummesson, 2005). This is a system’s capacity for self-organisation derived from how the system’s members accept a shared set of values (Dolan, Garcia, and Auerbach, 2003). It is a cross-disciplinary concept generally referring to the benefits of social networks, including problem solving related to mutual interests"(Putnam, 2000). Cultural capital, just like social capital comes from human capital combined explains the accepted shared set of values that is passed down from generation to generation. Local resources such as culture, heritage, are important assets in tourism development in LDCs. It takes stock of social-cultural capital of the destination to create tourism products and experiences, or become part of the experience. Beyond economic factors, cultural habits and dispositions inherited from families are important, and share many of the properties that are characteristics of economic development (Bourdieu, 1997). Socio-cultural capital is important to development just as economic capital.

2.9.4 Economic capital

When tracing back to the root of economic capital, an important development was the growth of trading activities and the introduction of Risk-adjusted Return on Investment by financial institutions in the 1970s (Klaassen and Eeghen, 2009). It may have different meanings according to approach taken. The term is often used to refer to financial capital including financing, production, infrastructure, energy, water, transportation, and information. In the context of tourism development, “it is directly or indirectly convertible into money and maybe institutionalised in the form of for example property rights” (Taug and Roberts in Macbeth, Carson, and Northcote, 2004:505). It refers to available resources and other local assets that have value in the tourism development process on the destination. The importance of the economic capital and benefits that can be drawn from it will to a greater extent, seem to be dependent on the regulatory environment refers to as political capital on the destination.

2.9.5 Political capital

Governmental, international organisations, private sector organisations and conglomerates, international networks and NGOs operating at different levels, through warnings about the need for careful control of the process, have proposed tourism as a strategic sector for development and a key factor to bring forward a more cohesive and just society (Russo, 2011). Government’s development plans are often translated into policy, and in line with institutional arrangements and policy setting at international, national and local levels. Macbeth, Carson, and Northcote (2004:514) identified two ways to approach the issue of political capital; first, how much is a community is in control over the resources that grant them real influence over decision-making; second is in terms of influence communities have over formal political apparatus.

Recognising that tourism is, in essence a form of capitalist endeavour manifested in market-led production and consumption of tourism products, services and experiences, it has been suggested that the ‘destination capitals’ perspective provides the most appropriate framework for optimising the economic benefits of tourism to the destination (Sharpley, 2009: 175-176). The destination capitals thus depicts a logical process of need identification and bases for tourism development that is worthy of examination in the sustainable tourism debate.

2.10 Chapter evaluation and conclusions

This chapter explored the literature on SMEs in LDCs, their characteristics and indigenous knowledge of the tourism destination in terms of product development. It shows the significance of SMEs in economic activities taking place in such countries, and how they are regarded as an engine for growth and development. They are said to contain specific characteristics that are unique to the operating environment, involving many activities with a local character. They seem to be mostly created out of economic needs involving women, semi-skilled and others who tend to fall outside the formal business sectors. Their large representation in the tourism business activities has been highlighted suggesting that they are one of the key investors in tourism development and could be key player in sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

The chapter elaborated on indigenous Knowledge of the tourism destination that is within these small firms, and argued that this has now become an important source of tourism development. It is suggested here, that the indigenous SME owner-managers and employees seems to have a common understanding and knowledge of the economic and socio-cultural realities in their societies. The chapter therefore made reflections on the concept of inclusive development and the prevailing opportunities for local participation in development initiatives and the establishment of SMEs in LDCs. Based on their unique knowledge of locals on the destination, it is suggested that they tend to understand development needs and opportunities that could be exploited to enhance economic activities that can be beneficial for local investors, and not only for economic gains but also for the socio-cultural and environmental sustainability of the destination. Their participation in tourism thus supported the idea of inclusive development witnessing a number of local enterprises engaged in provision of facilities, products and services that are used by tourists. This thought to enhance sustainable tourism development in LDCs. The concept of sustainable tourism development and its relations to tourism development impacts in LDCs was then explored, including the economic, socio-cultural and environmental issues that can be inherited through tourism development. The general assumption is that local SMEs in LDCs are encouraged through development needs and opportunities on the destination that are available for tourism development. Thus with their knowledge of the destination capitals that are utilised for tourism development, it is suggested that the practice of sustainable tourism development could be realised through the involvement of local SMEs. The assumption is that environment, socio-culture and the majority of the tourism product in the LDCs are basically built from the destination capitals, and whilst the majority of these attractions are used for tourist

amusement, such resources could also have other meanings attached to them by the locals on the destination.

Thus, in order to understand the concept of sustainable tourism development in the context of LDCs, it is essential to explore the destination capitals model proposed by Sharpley from which tourism resources are drawn from. The model is said to contain the solutions for sustainable tourism development in LDCs. The chapter elaborated on its different components including environmental capital, human capital, socio-cultural capital, economic and political capital' as important capitals that can enhance sustainable tourism development practices on a destination. In the next chapter, this research will explore the case of The Gambia as a least developed country for that matter to investigate the tourism development situation and the efforts for sustainable tourism development on the destination in regards to the forgone literature review.

CHAPTER THREE, A CASE STUDY OF THE GAMBIA

Introduction

Chapter two illustrated the motivation; strive of locals in LDCs and possibilities that are present and encouraging for the adoption of tourism as a mechanism to support economic development. Its importance as a strategy for poverty alleviation and to increase foreign exchange earnings for governments in LDCs is emphasised by researchers and practitioners. Tourism is now considered a significant economic activity for such countries without which, most of them would be forced to entirely depend on foreign aid to cater for their development endeavours. It is an economic activity that is encouraging for local SMEs because of the abilities to tap into local resources and create products and service that are interesting for the tourism industry. The Gambia, as a typical least developed country has followed this initiative, using the tourism industry as a development strategy.

As a least developed country, with similar aspirations for tourism development, similar to that of the majority of the LDC, The Gambia seem to be a prime candidate to conduct such an important study. The country has a long history of tourism development with SMEs as one of the major investors playing an important role in tourism business environment in the country. The benefits of tourism in this country have been appraised, but its negative impacts are also of great concern to practitioners and researchers. As such, development initiatives propagating the concept of sustainable tourism development have been introduced to combat the negative impacts of tourism development and to maximise its positive impacts.

The objective of this chapter is to make reflections on the situation in The Gambia and the participation of SMEs in sustainable tourism development initiatives in the country. The chapter will provide a background description of the country, relating to its characteristics as a tourism destination, local's participation in tourism development and the impacts of tourism development on the destination. The chapter will also to examine the level of participation of SMEs in sustainable tourism development in the destination.

3.1 The Gambia

The Gambia is a small country in the west coast of Africa. The country stretches along the banks of the Gambia River for approximately 400km, width from 24 to 48 km, almost engulfed by the republic of Senegal. It is 11,300 square km; with land covering 10,000 Sq.km, and water 1,300 Sq.km. The topography of the Gambia is dominated by the River Gambia, which stretches through the entire length of the country. Its climate is tropical with distinct dry and wet season. The dry season is between November and May. Temperatures in the cool dry season vary between 70°F (21°C) and 80°F (27°C) with relative humidity between 30% and 60% (Jaiteh, 2007). This is the period for tourism activities in The Gambia referred to as “the tourist season”. The wet season is in the summer months beginning immediately after the tourist season, from June until October when local farmers begin work on their farm lands.

The vegetation ranges from open savannah, to woodlands and shrub land which are important sources of food and other means of subsistence. The most important source of energy in The Gambia is the fuelwood that is fetched from the woodlands from which a large number of the population depends on for domestic cooking. The country has no mineral resources and only one sixth of the land is arable. The River Gambia and its tributaries are central to the Gambia’s water resources running the entire length of the country and provide vital socioeconomic, cultural, scientific, aesthetic and environmental values. Land and water resources are central to Gambian life. Irrigation agriculture (tidal or mechanized) is the highest user of the river water. Western Gambia in general and the urban centres in particular depend entirely on groundwater resources for domestic and industrial use, including rice cultivation along the river banks. The country’s geographic location combined with the extensive wetland systems result in a wide range of habitat types supporting diverse plants and animal species. It is home to a variety of birds, fishes and mammals. Such resources are important resources of survival for local communities in The Gambia, and are now part of the tourism product in the country. Figure 3 illustrates the map of The Gambia and the distribution of these resources.

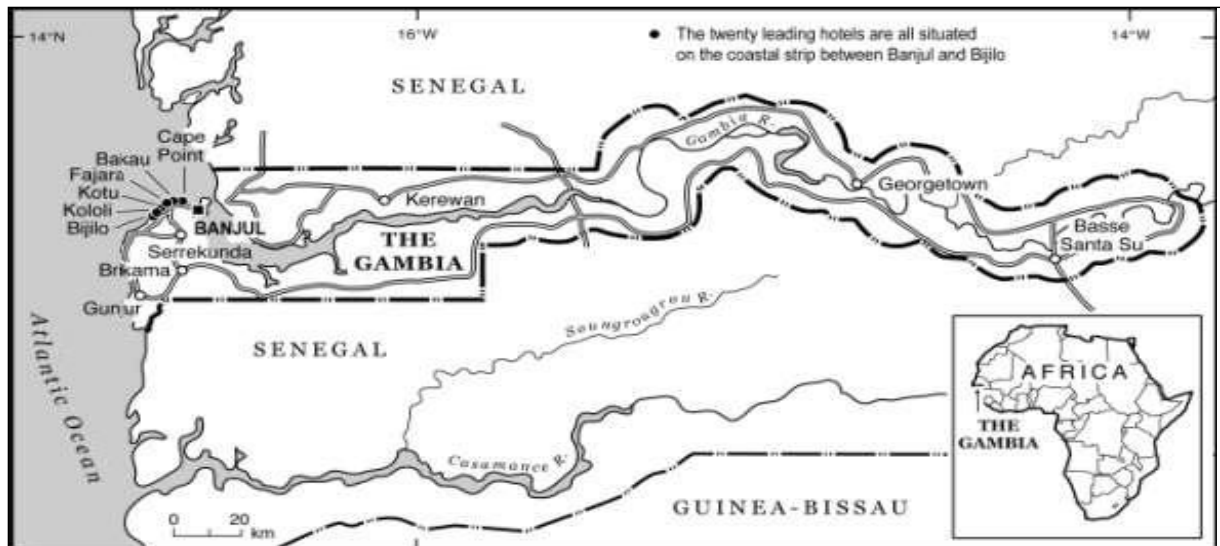


Figure 4: Map of The Gambia. Source: In Mitchell and Fall (2007).

Agriculture (cropping and livestock husbandry) remain the major provider for most Gambians engaging over 70% of the active population and contributing over 25 % of the GDP. The population is estimated at approximately 1,8 million (July 2011 est.) growing at an annual rate of 3% per annum, (CIA World Factbook, 2011). Migration from rural to urban areas has resulted in about 55 per cent of the population currently living in the Greater Banjul Area, the region comprising the city of Banjul and Kanifing Municipal Council (Central Statistics Department, Gambia, 2012). “This area occupies 93 sq. km (0.08% of the total land area), and when Kombo North bordering the Greater Banjul Area is included the proportion increases to 34%”. This area is important in the tourism development process of the country as a major attraction. The population is diverse, with 99% Africans (Mandinka 42%, Fulla 18%, Wolof 16%, Jola 10%, Serahulay 9%, other African groups, 4%) other nationalities 1%. This description of the country has always been part of the tourism attraction- its sandy beaches, tropical climate and people being the attraction for tourist visiting The Gambia.

3.2 Tourism development in The Gambia.

At the time of independence in 1965, the economy of the Gambia was growing at 40 per cent per annum on average (Lee, 2001). Inflation was low, foreign debt small and the government budget was in balance. Subsistence farming is the largest socio-economic activity- with an estimated 70 per cent of the working population engaged in farming. However, despite a large number of the population are engaged in agricultural activities, its failure to meet government’s development ambitions has been a trying moment. From the 1970’s, the country was faced with severe economic problems, and huge bills to pay on foreign debt. The problem was linked to

over dependent on one single cash crop, groundnuts (Bah and Goodwin, 2003). Tourism was then seen as a way out for the country.

Much of The Gambia's appeal as a tourist destination was thus designed around the coastal region, with its white-sand beaches, unspoiled nature and large stretches of coastline. Tourism development started in The Gambia in 1965 with the arrival of 300 Swedish tourists, pioneered by the Swedish company, Club 33 (later known as Vingresor), now under My Travel Group. Apparently, the first badge of tourist that arrived where not scheduled for The Gambia, but by way of "accident" the trip saw itself on the soils of The Gambia. They started by using two hotels in the Banjul with a capacity of 250 beds (Lee, 2001) who were low income earners from Scandinavia searching for a short, cheap holiday destination with sand, sun and sea and an exotic cultural experience (Lagerkvist, 1999). Their numbers have grown slowly over the years since with arrival figures in 1966/67 showing a hundred percentage increases over 1968/69 tourist season (Tourism Statistics, Gambia, 1974). Until the mid 1970s the tourism industry has still not yet attracting foreign investment as expected. Whilst the destination seem have been growing popular, there were still few hotels available and demand was exceeding the capacity for available rooms and other facilities in The Gambia.

3.2.1 Tourism infrastructure development in The Gambia

The Gambia lacks the finance, own flight and technical expertise to bring in tourists to the country. There were thus particular problems attracting a share of the international market because they are generally distant from the generating markets (Cooper et al, 1998:107). The government had therefore embarked on lobbying and attracting foreign investors with the required resources to invest in tourism in the country. Part of that strategy has been in investing in building hotels, either by itself or in partnership with foreign investors (Bah and Goodwin, 2003), largely driven by the need to increase tourist arrival figures for foreign exchange earnings. Although the inception of tourism in the country was not part of government's plans at the time independence, but realising its potentials after its introduction in the country by a foreign company, it was quickly embraced as a strategy for economic development..

At this initial stage of tourism development in the Gambia, government has focused its potentially limited funds into a geographically concentrated area for the development of tourist facilities primarily to cater for winter tourists either by itself or in collaboration with foreign companies. To encourage foreign investment in the tourism industry in The Gambia, the government then offered incentives to would-be investors and marketed The Gambia to Package

Tour Operators with attractive incentives such as a three year tax holiday, duty waivers and exemption from custom duties, sales tax and turn over tax.

Tourism activities, and foreign investment became particularly strong in the development of accommodation facilities, catering outlets, tour operating and travel businesses around the Kombo St Mary area along the Tourism Development Area (TDA) concentrated on a 10 km strip along the Atlantic ocean from Cape Point in Bakau and eventually spread to Fajara, Kotu and Bijilo in the coastal areas About 80 km long of which almost 2.5 km lie around the bay-shaped mouth of the Gambia River estuary and the rest directly faces the Atlantic Ocean. The area became completely out of bound for residential purposes declared for the development of tourists facilities only. Foreign companies started to heavily invest in the tourism sector in the country concentrating their activities around the TDA where they control the majority of the tourism related operations. Hotels, guest houses, lodges, bars and restaurants, tourism service facilities, and souvenir shops were provided, and local people are employed as unskilled workers. The area designated as the tourism development area (TDA) is shown in the figure below comprising of Bijilo, Kololi, Kotu, Fajara and Bakau.



Figure 5: Map of tourism development area (TDA), The Gambia. Source: Modified after Mitchell, 2007 (Ekenberg, 2010)

The figure above illustrates the area where tourism development is highly concentrated around the coastal region... a flat and monotonous area of unconsolidated marine and Aeolian sands; low dunes being typical (UNESCO, 2001): is a strip of sandy beaches, some part of which has been

important source for fishing for the locals, but with the coming of tourism most part of the area become out bound for the locals.

From 1972, tourism grew steadily in the country, reaching a peak of almost 90,000 visitors in 1994 and providing 7,000 jobs (Sharpley, 2007). The Ministry for Information, Broadcasting and Tourism in The Gambia, from 1975 onwards, advertised the destination as follows:

“A climate that has been designed as one of the best in the world, mile upon mile of Sun splashed beaches, tall coconut palms, blue tropical skies, and a river that can take you right into the heart of Africa”

(Ministry of Tourism of The Gambia, 1995).

The Gambia then gradually emerged as a sun, sea and sand winter destination for Scandinavians, particularly attractive for vacation around the Atlantic Ocean and its sandy beaches. Access to The Gambia from the major source markets was and still dependent on chartered aircraft organised by international tour operators. Not only are visitors dependent upon air travel, but the dominance of organised packages is also clear (Mitchell and Fall, 2007). Package tours representing different elements sold as a single product, put together in an inclusive way catering for the visitor’s transportation and accommodation arrangements; half board or full board were sold to tourists visiting the country were provided. The destination quickly came to be recognised as a winter destination, attracting a majority of tourists visiting as holiday-makers with 84% on packages that generally include flights, airport transfer, bed and breakfast accommodation in a hotel (Mitchell and Fall, 2007).

3.3 Tourism development challenges faced by The Gambia

The Gambia is and still dependent on foreign tour operators to connect its tourism industry to the international tourism market. This heavy dependent on foreign tour operators was quickly felt by the tourism industry in The Gambia during the transition period of the military coup d'état in 1994, which gave serious flaws to the destination, following travel warnings from several Western countries. A notable challenge for the tourism industry in The Gambia thus includes its dependence on foreign operators as the source of tourists the destination.

Apart from the 1994 travel warnings from the major tourists’ source areas, attempts by the government of The Gambia to regulate the growth in all-inclusive holidays, have led to the withdrawal of a major German tour operator from the destination. This was followed with a storm of protest from European tour operators issuing threats of reduced business on the destination resulting in the policy being abandoned.

Although there seem to be a demand for all-inclusive tour packages enabling tour operators to assure quality offerings, help customers to manage their travel budget and to feel secured, it is also a challenge The Gambia is tends to be struggling with. The all-inclusive nature of the tourism operation does not only seem to be a challenge for the government in realising its much anticipated aim of foreign exchange earning but also for the indigenous communities that are excluded from taking active part in the tourism business activities. According to Tourism Concern, Gambia, local businesses, such as restaurants, shops, taxi drivers and small guest houses, all lose out to the all-inclusive model, as guests are deterred from leaving the hotel grounds. Tourists experiences in terms of meaningful cultural exchange, and consumption of local products throws up some serious questions about the sustainability and ethics of this tourism model. The tourist purchases a cheap package holiday, 'but by far the greater part of the money stays away from the destination. This is because through such types of tourism activities, money tends to leave the country in the form importation of foreign goods and services, management fees, marketing, distribution systems, and advertisement.

Given such kind of a structure, Shaw and Williams (2002:148) cites Gamble, 1989; for instance suggesting that it is hardly surprising, The Gambia suffers some of the greatest leakages and consequently has some of weakest economic benefits of tourism. There is no economic sense in this sort of tourism for our country.' (Wheat 1997). Critics pointed out the dependency on foreigners investors and the vulnerability of the destination to factors outside the control of the destination, and the reinforcement of socio-economic and spatial inequalities created (Goodwin 1998:2). It creates problems for economic development, economic leakage, domestic social dissatisfaction and resentment (Pearce, 1989:14). When facilities are enclave with an all-inclusive characteristic, they do not tend to benefit the destination and comes with environmental degradation because of the intensified use of the natural resources from tourist activities within a specific period of time. It thus seems that challenges faced by The Gambia in its tourism development efforts ranges from economic, socio-cultural and environmental challenges.

3.3.1 Economic. Tourism has contributed to the economy of The Gambia in many ways. With increasing investment in accommodation, restaurants and other facilities used by tourists, the direct bearings of which are the many opportunities created for employment, which also means increase disposable income for those employees who in turn spends their income on other commodities to thereby further creating a multiplier effect of the tourism economy in the local population. It created opportunities for petty trading, craft work, artisan-ship and increased

agricultural production helping many to earn a living. Tourism has therefore helped in improving living standards for many people, especially for women and less skilled people.

Taking into consideration that the formal sector, comprising government, its agencies and private companies, employs about 16,000 jobs in 2004 and to around 35,000 in 2020 (Gambia Tourism Master Plan Study, 2007) and that the net foreign exchange earnings are projected to increase from an estimated \$40 million in 2004 to \$130 million in 2020 (Bah, 2006). Thirty percent of the workforce depends directly or indirectly on tourism. Based on a projected doubling in tourist arrivals, tourism's contribution to monetary GDP is projected to increase from an estimated 13% in 2004 to around 18% in 2020 (IMF Country Report, 2006). However, in a survey of local people dependent on the tourism industry in Gambia in 1999, found 99% opposed to all-inclusive because local restaurants, bars, guides and taxi-drivers were losing business to the resorts, which are mainly controlled by foreign companies (Bah and Godwin, 2003). A significant percentage of the revenues arising from tourism, common estimates state that approximately 60 to 75% leaks away from developing countries because of foreign ownership of the industry, imported resources, foreign tour operators and airlines and other reasons (Sinclair 1991; Kersten 1997; Wheat 1998). It is argued that the tourism revenue is not evenly distributed from the all-inclusive forms of operation and the seasonal nature of tourism development that were adopted in The Gambia.

Tour operators often earn important revenue from their own sale of excursions, which would be undercut by promoting services sold by local businesses (Pro-Poor Tourism Sheet No.10). Local guides were excluded from information meetings of tour operators in The Gambia (Bah and Goodwin, 2003). Their fears over health and safety liabilities, may mean that they do not recommend fresh juice sold on the beach, despite high standards on the part of the new juices' sellers' organisation in The Gambia (Bah and Goodwin, 2003). Recent research confirms, as expected, that little of the actual package cost directly reaches the poor, and between 20% and 35% (varying by season) of the package costs accrues to hoteliers (a substantial percentage by international comparison) and the rest to ground handlers, tour operators, airlines etc (Ashley, 2006). According to GTA, 87% of hotel guests in The Gambia come on package tours with a 77 percent concentration on the period between November and March. Leisure Tourism in The Gambia have had limited linkage with the productive base of the local economy thus encouraging leakages and exclusion of the vast majority of the population from the acquisition of benefits from the tourism industry (Gambia Strategy Team, 2004). This was made possible through the exclusion of local communities and concentration of tourism activities in a

geographical given area. Consequently, there are problems of foreign exchange leakages and the neglect of 'local producers and enterprises' (Bah and Godwin, 2003).

There is high importation of food and drinks that is consumed in hotels as the local food and drink is not recommended by tour operators to tourists (Bah, and Goodwin, 2003; Gambia Tourism Master plan, 2007). It has brought about socio-cultural impacts, not only for the loss of income but also pressure on local norms and values. The weakness and constraints facing the industry include product development, dependence on seasonality, hotel bed capacity bottleneck (limited high quality hotels) low income for local investors, limited linkages with the local economy and negative social issues – (“bumster” problem) (Gambia Planning Commission, 2011). Among the reasons for this are large-scale transfer of tourism revenues out of the host country and exclusion of local businesses and products (UNEP, 2006). However, in a survey of the tourism sector in The Gambia, respondents rated sun, sand and sea, good value, and friendly people most highly as motivations for their visit (Bah and Goodwin, 2003). Thus, it seems that not only are visitors to The Gambia interested in sun, sand and the beaches, but also in the culture and traditions of the people on the destination.

3.3.2 Socio-cultural. Many tourism activities provide a wide range of employment opportunities, particularly for women, minorities and young people in The Gambia. Tourism is now acknowledged to be a social phenomenon (Page, 2003), and for many destinations, Rassing, (2001); Rassing and Sørensen, (2001), suggests that the far majority of repeat customers are people combining a holiday with a visit to friends and relatives. According to Bah and Goodwin (2005), a significant number of their predecessors it has made a difference to their own and their families' opportunities. This kind of “person to person” aid is significant and increasing, and also plays a major part in the development of relationships between Gambians and visitors (Bah and Godwin, 2005). Despite such social uplifting on the destination, tourism in the country has also been accused of negative socio-cultural impacts that the destination seem to be struggling with.

Local communities around the coastal areas lost a large part of their farm lands to tourism development activities, followed by mass migration of youths from farming communities to seemingly more glamorous jobs in the hotel industry around the Tourism Development Area. Vicinities of the locals are stormed by tourism development competing with locals on the available resources. Other than those employed in the facilities around the TDA, the area was out of bound for locals. Tour operators were organising their own tours that are guided by foreign guides. Not only does this seem to have impacts on the economy, but obvious problems

for local communities to gain employment within the industry which can lead to illicit behaviors around the tourism development area. A new socio-economic group has been realised referred to as “Bumsters” tend to come out of this development. This is a group of boys and girls who normally go around the beaches and hotels offering private guiding trips, and trying to make friends with tourists, as a way of earning money, new ways of behaviour such as criminality, alcohol consumption, drug peddling and prostitution become a challenge for these communities. As far back as 1979 Wagner suggests that the older generation of Gambians have complained about the plight of their sons being exploited by tourists.

Culture is transformed and used to entertain tourists, no matter what the result is on the country's image, on the business future, and on the local people with regard to their psychology and cultural reference marks (Tuson, 2001). The result is that host communities find their cultures and traditions under threat from the purchasing power of the tourism industry. Lack of understanding and knowledge of culture and traditions of the locals on the destination are mostly the overriding issues that are over looked upon by investors in the tourism industry. Large scale tourism activities in one given area are putting heavy pressure on the biodiversity and traditional believes of locals, also competing with wildlife for habitat. The degradation of the natural resources and other facilities will not only affect the tourism industry, but to a wider extent the local people who also have other benefits from the built environment, heritage and nature as a source of subsistence.

3.3.3 Environmental issues. The tourism industry is heavily dependent on the environment for its activities; therefore the environment being part of the tourism product must be attractive. The beaches, nature, wild life, fauna and flora, as well as the scenic beauty of the destination need to be well taken care of to attract tourists. Therefore the quality of the environment both manmade and natural is essential to tourism industry in The Gambia. Compared to other sub sectors in the country, areas where tourism activities take place in The Gambia are considered to be more environmental clean. The coastal area for instance, where major tourism development activities are taking place are more clean and better taken care of.

The Environmental Quality Regulations under the National Environment Management Act of The Gambia setting out environmental quality standards for air and water has been encouraged and helped in regulating development and operational standards in hotels and restaurants in the country. This has been useful in helping policy makers take informed decisions aimed at protecting health and environmental issues affecting people, thus contributing to the

improvement of the quality of life of Gambians (National Environment Management-The Gambia). However, tourism is not, as many people assert, a clean and non-polluting industry (United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, UNCSA, 1999). With all the environmental improvements that tends to be taking place within the tourism industry in The Gambia most activities does not also seem to be concern with values and meanings attached to the environment by people who are most affected.

Religious rituals, traditional ethnic rites and festivals are reduced and sanitised to conform to tourist expectations, resulting in what has been called "reconstructed ethnicity." Sacred sites and other traditional objects for instance are no more serving local people as traditional worship places when they are perceived as goods to trade to tourists. This is a major oversight of sustainable development, and reflects a lack of appreciation of the nature and significance of tourism (Wall, in Wahab and Pigram, 1997). Mass tourism by assembling large numbers of tourists in small areas creates intense environmental pressure- creating urbanisation pressures of air, water, and terrestrial pollution that are associated with any population concentration (Shaw and Williams, 2002). Water pollution, ecological disruption, land degradation, and congestion typify negative environmental externalities associated with poorly planned tourism (UN, 2001). Therefore not only the potentials for economic exploitation, but its environmental consequences can also be enormous.

Tourism depends a lot on the environment which tourists enjoy for amusement. However, for the local people on the destination, the environment seems to be a source of survival. Therefore when sustainable tourism development advocates that environment should be protected, or managed in a manner that lessens indigenous people's freedom to utilise it as they used to without alternatives, meaning that the concept does not equally consider the situation of the people without that environment- opportunity cost. Poor people cannot afford to be conservationists: people with empty stomachs are not much interested in respecting environmental regulations (Farquharson in Wall, 1997). Whilst both the natural and built environment, culture and traditions of host communities forms the bulk of the tourism product making the destination attractive, they are often subjected to intensified modifications, manipulation and irresponsible utilisation of vulnerable resources. This is a case of concern, and it seem that indigenous people who knows best about the destination and has the ability to provide tourism experiences, as well as protect the resources within their immediate environment might be the solution to a sustainable tourism industry in the country.

Ministry of Tourism and Culture (1995b) then envisaged diversifying the industry and launching cultural, inland and eco-tourism products as a policy statement. Indigenous participation in tourism development was thus highly encouraged. This development witnessed the wide participation and spread of SMEs owned by indigenous people in tourism development in The Gambia. However, the majority of such enterprises face constraints including access to credit, information, inefficient marketing, storage and transportation facilities which hinder their effective participation (Ministry of Women Affairs- The Gambia National Gender policy 2010-2020). The presence of local SMEs taking part in tourism development was thought to be a strategy to reduce the overdependence on chartered tour operators. In this regard, some of the challenges the destination is confronted which includes economic, socio-cultural and environmental issues could be addressed through encouraging local investment in tourism to help preserve tourism and for the destination to stay attractive for generations to come.

3.4 Tourism SMEs in The Gambia

The demand side of tourists experience shows the need to propose a more holistic offering of the tourism product that includes a multiplicity of services, and distinct attractive features of the destination away from the coastal areas. As such, tour operators have sought informal arrangements with other companies as a way of expanding their businesses (Youell, 1999:42). This includes suppliers of goods and services whether or not they are directly contracted by tour operators or by their agents including ground handlers or suppliers of accommodation and other service providers. It opened ways to opportunities that do not occur automatically, but need to be searched for and purposefully exploited (Pietrobelli, 2008). This facilitated expanding opportunities for locals to venture into the business world.

This small business community provides stimulus for development of indigenous production of import-substituting goods and services, contributing to exports, and providing inputs into larger-scale industrial and commercial activity (Duncombe and Heeks, 2001). SMEs in The Gambia can be categorised into two groups; urban and rural enterprises. They are either organised under the structured organised economy or operating under the unorganised informal economy found in both urban and rural areas. Some of them (formal ones) have paid employees with registered offices, and some (informal ones) are usually made up of local artisans with no registered operational address in sometimes with any salaried employees. They tend to concentrate on natural resources, culture and traditions on the destination as their products, which may also feature among other assets belonging to local communities.

Ground tour operating enterprises are set up by locals providing guiding services, linking the coastal region to the rest of the country through their excursions and safaris. They became the link to rural unorganised enterprises which became attractions or suppliers of agricultural products to the tourism industry. This further encouraged the development of new products, most notably small hotels, eating outlets, vegetable gardens, guiding services, facilities for fishing and bird watching, inns, eco-camps, river boating trips, culture and community tourism, recreational activities, souvenir shops, transportation, as well as wildlife and social safaris consequently becoming the route for indigenous participation in tourism development in the country. The activities of the organised tourism SMEs have encouraged the extension of even unrelated sectors including local batik fabrics, textile and leather work, local blacksmith, ceramic, clothing and tailoring, food processing, furniture, beverages, bakeries, agro processing, heritage and culture that used by the tourism industry.

Local fisheries, vegetable gardening, poultry, fruits production, cattle rearing and milk production, craftsmanship (e.g. pottery, and other craft works), and construction also provides opportunities for the development and commercialisation of products that can be acquired and produced locally. There is also a plethora of smaller guest houses, camps, inns, lodges, motels, apartments and rest houses (Mitchell and Fall, 2007), the majority of which are owned by local investors, extending the need for more product development in activity based tourism, supporting the growth and encouraging tourists to travel to the in-land areas to experience the nature, the people and their cultures, historical sites, heritage, bird life, art and craft, and the musical tradition (Ministry of Tourism, 1995). There are now many safari style trips that are organised by tour operators and local ground tour operators as well as local tourist taxi drivers visiting villages, towns and local communities where tourists are given the opportunity to experience the cultures and traditions of The Gambian people.

The expansion of tourism in The Gambia witnessed the incorporation of historic and nature areas, including even the family owned traditional sites into the tourism product. Examples of these are James Island (Now Kunta Kinteh Island), Katchikally Crocodile pool, Folongko Crocodile Pool, Berending Crocodile Pool and other places with indigenous importance operating as enterprises. These resources have become attractions, emerged as a response to the likely opportunities of a developing tourism market in a locality, often building upon the natural attraction (Page, 2003:85). The majority of them have other functions in Gambian society and the ownership of which is always claimed by a certain family. Cultural and traditional assets of

the locals in the form of the built environment (monuments, villages, and traditional worshipping grounds), living heritages expressed in distinctive local customs and songs, dance, religion and traditional beliefs, art and handicrafts, etc., and museums that reflect the local cultural heritage are important assets used by tourists in the country expressed in different forms. A detailed survey of 2 000 tourists at Banjul Airport in 2004, as part of the Master Plan process, confirmed the dominance of recreation as the purpose of visit; a sector highly dominated by locally owned small scale and medium size enterprises.

3.5 Examples of good practices of sustainable tourism development.

There are notable examples of good practices carried out in The Gambia in regards to their sustainable tourism policies and practice. The Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism (ASSETS), has been set up to support small-scale enterprises in tourism to trade fairly and pursue sustainable development goals, which contribute to the conservation of the physical environment and the social and economic welfare of Gambian communities. Through ASSET, further linkages were developed between small-scale enterprises and mainstream tourism to enhance the multiplying effect of the tourism revenue. There have been a number of win-win stories for fruit sellers, juice pressers, licensed guides, and craft markets resulting in increased earnings for these workers (Williams, Dorothy and Riddle, 2004). They further suggests, for instance fruit sellers no longer hawk their fruit baskets on the beach and hassle the tourists because a Code of Conduct was developed covering their relationships with each other, the hotels, and the tourists. Through ASSET's initiatives and support many local ground tour operating enterprises were established in The Gambia.

ASSETS promotes the idea of Fair Trade in Tourism, and a leading player in the Gambian Responsible Tourism Partnership program introduced in 2002 leading to the development of a Responsible Tourism Policy launched in 2006. This program brings together principal stakeholders in the tourism industry (government, local people and tourists, tour operators, ground handlers, hoteliers and small scale businesses) in order to ensure that the adverse impacts of tourism are minimised and that maximum benefits are gained by local people and their communities, and to take responsibility, as well as actions to make tourism more sustainable. According to Goodwin (2003) Responsible Tourism generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the wellbeing of host communities, by improving working conditions and access to the industry.

Through the Responsible Tourism partnership, the Cape Town Declaration, an action plan was created to help suppliers gain better access to tourism income - and improve the choice and quality of products and services on offer to visitors. Their future plan is focused on training and development to improve communications, product quality, marketing and promotion (Bah, 2007). They have successfully trained many beach boys “Bumsters” to become official tourists’ guides. There is Gambia is Good (GiG) program under the umbrella of Concern Universal operating as a pro-poor fresh produce marketing company for local food producers. This is an innovative hybrid project which is already attracting a lot of international recognition and was used as a case study by DFID at the recent launch of their African Enterprise Challenge Fund. The project was set up in collaboration between an NGO and Haygrove UK LTD, a horticultural private business in partnership with The UK Travel Foundation through activities in the area of sustainable tourism. The project works with local gardeners to create a sustainable, pro-poor marketing initiative in The Gambia, where many local vegetable gardeners are able to supply the hotel and tourism industry their products. The picture below shows one of such initiatives in The Gambia, encouraging women vegetable gardening projects supplying their harvests directly to hotels and restaurants.



Figure 6. Community garden in The Gambia. Courtesy of Concern Universal.

Gambia is Good project provides a market outlet and distribution channel for small-scale Gambian farmers, helping to enable their transition from subsistence farming to commercial enterprise. It purchases fresh horticulture produce from smallholder farmers and markets them

to hotels and restaurants, replacing middlemen between growers and buyers, as well as provide marketing support and production training, and facilitates input procurement (UNCTAD, 2013). The gardens supply locally grown produce to hotels and restaurants by communities making the transition from subsistence agriculture to commercial enterprise through tourism. The project seems to be instrumental in facilitating benefits generated by tourism activities to reach local communities. For instance, women in the most rural communities, who previously had virtually no cash income, are now making up to £150 per month, and recent independent evaluation states that over the last three years, GiG growers have increased their income by an average of 500% (Concern Universal, 2012).

As a result, produce is purchased from nearly 1,000 growers, 90 per cent of which are women. The growers supply around 20 tons of produce per tourist season month to more than 40 hotels and restaurants (Concern Universal, 2012). It minimises the consumption of foreign food that are served in hotels and restaurants in The Gambia thereby reduce leakage factors on import goods, as well encourages the retaining of some the tourists spending on the destination. This project translates the needs of hotels, restaurants and supermarkets into detailed production plans for growers, negotiates fair prices, sets up seed stores and a produce a grading system, irrigation systems and diversifying crops to enable year-round production (UNCTAD, 2013).

The study on tourism value chains conducted in The Gambia, suggests that the great achievement of Gambian tourism is the scale of the pro-poor benefits derived from the relatively high levels of out-of-pocket, or discretionary, expenditure by tourists (Mitchell and Fall, 2007). Most of these expenditure items relate to Gambians who sell goods and services directly to tourists, such as craft market stall holders, fruit and juice sellers, taxi drivers and local tourist guides. They suggest that 7% of total tourists spending in The Gambia accrue directly to the poor. These projects are allowing the participation of local communities in the supply of agricultural products to hotels and restaurants which have become ways to earn a living for them. The development of eco-tourism initiative to alleviate poverty through sustainable alternative livelihoods, and generate revenues for conservation of biodiversity and for the benefit of local communities is also encouraged. For instance, the Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Tourist (COAST) Project,” called; Strengthening community-based ecotourism and joint venture partnerships, which aims to promote poverty alleviation through the development of more diverse ecotourism opportunities for rural communities”, is an example of good sustainable tourism development practice. The project promotes linkages between different stakeholder groups while building their capacity in marketing environmentally and socio-economically

sustainable ecotourism activities. This has strengthened the opportunities income for many poor communities through services and products delivered to such establishments.

As such, and as part of the sustainable tourism development strategy, a blue print was also introduced by the government of The Gambia, “National Tourism Policy” that seeks to attract a diversified group of investors from the local population operating in different of forms of tourism was encouraged. It was suggested that both government and private operators in the industry have come to realise that as long as the tourism industry continues to focus on the expansion of mass tourism, there can hardly be any complementary development within the sector (DSFEA, 2006). The National Action Plan (Ministry of Tourism and Culture 1995b) envisaged diversifying the industry and launching cultural, inland and eco-tourism products as a policy statement. Recent developments in The Gambia have shown that the nature of tourism development is now shifting focus from its concentration on entirely the sea, sun and sand to a more diversified product that involves local investors and communities.

This also witnessed the flourishing of local heritage sites with a long history traditional use as places for worship, source of food, firewood and many other socio-cultural activities for locals becoming tourists’ attractions. Thus, cultural and traditional assets of the locals in the form of the built environment, living heritages expressed in distinctive local customs and songs, dance, religion and traditional beliefs, art and handicrafts, etc., and museums that reflect the local cultural heritage are now important assets used by tourists in the country. The picture below is a popular tourist’s site in The Gambia with other meanings and importance attached to the site by locals other than for tourists’ amusement.



Figure 7 Katchikally sacred site. Courtesy of RM Tours LTD, Gambia

Tourism activities have been encouraged around such sites whilst trying to preserve its original functions. Many of such sites have other important functions for locals on the destination passed down from generation to generation. James Island, Forth Bullen, Katchikally, Folongko and Brending crocodile pools, Abuko Nature Reserve, Wassu and Kerr Batch stone circles are of such characteristics and of popular interest to tourists visiting The Gambia (Gambia Tourism Authority, 2007). The reserves are an excellent introduction to the flora, fauna and avifauna of The Gambia whose unique nature allows visitors to gain an insight into the biodiversity of the country. They are now part of the tourism product managed by indigenous Gambians with traditional knowledge of the facilities.

The Collaborative Action for Sustainable Tourism (COAST) project in Kartong is another good practice with the goal to support and enhance the conservation of the coastal and marine ecosystems and associated biodiversity, through the reduction of negative environmental impacts of coastal tourism. The project promotes village tours, introducing camping, demonstrations of Gambian home cooking, bicycle hiring, cross-village excursions, promoting/developing craft, introduction of sports tourism, training and awareness raising on sustainable environment management, production of maps of the demo site and public private partnership planning. Under the project, Kartong's ancient sacred site Folonko crocodile pool will be rehabilitated. "To introduce more environmentally-friendly activities, the project already bought and handed over 20 wheel-waste bins and 10 bicycles to Kartong Association for Responsible Tourism (KART)". The project also trains 20 members of the community on environmental protection

and management issues to enable them to protect the marine and coastal ecosystems. “In addition to a Training of Trainers (TOT) for six KART and VDC members to build capacity within the community for further replications, the project would also develop Tesito Camp into a camping site with modern facilities and enhance the Sandele craft showcase by introducing new craft products, among a long list of benefiting programmes and activities KART and VDC will benefit,” (The Gambia Daily Observer, 2013).

However, despite such initiatives taken on the destination in what seem to be the foundation for sustainable tourism development there are still complains about economic, socio-cultural and environment degradation experienced from tourism development in the country. Current efforts do not seem to make much difference. The large presence and dominant position of tour operators both in terms of ownership structure of tourism facilities, supply and influence of tourism demand through marketing activities abroad also seem to be a challenge for the tourism industry in The Gambia. Likewise, most sustainable tourism development projects in the country are initiated sponsored or managed by such companies showing the importance such companies in the tourism development and management activities in the country. It thus seems that little attention is given to the destination, its local resources and indigenous knowledge that could support a meaningful sustainable tourism development practice.

3.6 Chapter evaluation and conclusions.

The objective of this chapter was to make reflections on The Gambia as a tourist destination and the participation of SMEs in the tourism development initiatives. It provided a background description of the country, its characteristics as a tourist destination, local participation and examples of good tourism development practices taking place in the country. The landscape, fauna and flora, the climate, built and natural environment, the scioculture, and heritage of the country has been appraised as the base of the tourist attraction in The Gambia. It is said to be an important economic activity in the country, providing employment and source of income for many, especially for women and less skilled people.

The chapter suggested that international tour operators have the dominant position both in terms of accommodation development as well as source of tourist supply on the destination. This is because the country lacks both the financial, technical and material resources to operate such an industry all by its own. As such, not only have the dominant position of foreign investment been marked in the accommodation sector alone, but they are said to be visible in all other sectors of the hospitality and tourism industry in The Gambia, and have even encouraged the growth in

locally own SMEs serving the tourism and hospitality industry in the country. Despite being a package holiday destination, largely operating all-inclusive, local SMEs are also said to be significant in the tourism business environment in the country.

The expansion and demand for tourism activities outside the traditional tourism development areas along the beaches seem to have encouraged the establishment of inland activities and facilities serving tourists. Many Gambians have now invested in small hotels, lodges, restaurants and ground tour operating services. Traditional heritage sites that serve other functions for the indigenous people have also eventually been included in the tourists' attractions and embraced by local communities because of their economic potential. The chapter appraised the move as encouraging for locals, and a way to minimise economic leakages, and degradation of local resources. For instance, it was augured that the all-inclusive package tour provided by international tour operators has been criticised because of its economic leakage factors, as well as the exclusion of locals to play an active role in the tourism development process. Such activities of tour operators are said to be making it unnecessary for tourists to spend money outside the resorts. Their business activities do not seem to encourage the consumption of local products either. A bulk of the tourism earnings is also said to be retain abroad and never reach the destination. **It was** suggested that both government and private operators in the industry have come to realise that as long as the tourism industry continues to focus on the expansion of mass tourism, there can hardly be any complementary development within the sector (DOSFEA, 2006). The chapter shows that international tours operators operating in the country do not only organise and operate flight operation and accommodation for tourists, but also operate ground handling and sightseeing tours as part of their package all-inclusive tours in the country.

Thus, despite the significant contributions tourism is making to the economy of The Gambia, and efforts of SMEs, there still remain concerns for its sustainable operation. The challenges faced by the country ranges from economic, socio-cultural and environmental issues as a result of the ways tourism operates on the destination. Public pressure was therefore intensified which persuaded the government to adopt strategies geared towards encouraging more local investors to compete foreign tourism investments in the country.

Many governments, including The Gambia have therefore encouraged local entrepreneurship and implying a pro-active approach by tourism industry partners to develop markets and manage the tourism industry in a responsible manner so as to create a competitive advantage (Hemmati and Koehler, 2000). The Gambia, however, is said to continue to face increasing pressure on its

natural, cultural and socio-economic environment from expansion and activities of tourism. Whilst attempts were made by government to stop the tour operators from the all-inclusive tours they offer, they resorted to withdrawing their operations from the destination. It shows that not much can poor countries do with resources outside their control. In the efforts to minimise the challenges The Gambia is struggling with its tourism development initiatives, a number of good practices were presented in the chapter, including strategies for the retention of some the revenues from tourism through means of increase local participation in the tourism business activities. Women's vegetable gardening, traditional sites with historical cultural importance to local communities, community-based ecotourism, and other practices aimed at alleviating poverty, as well as propagating environmental friendly practices that are examples of good sustainable tourism development practice.

However, the conclusion arrived at in the chapter is that, because of dominant position of international tour operators in the tourism business environment in The Gambia, current efforts do not seem to make much difference. The chapter went further to suggest that most of the sustainable tourism development projects in the country are either initiated, sponsored or managed by such companies. Very little attention seems to be given to the destination, its local resources and indigenous knowledge that would support a meaningful sustainable tourism development practice.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the design and methodology used to investigate the research questions.

It involves the data sample, the research instruments used to collect data and the methods adopted to analyse and interpret the data. It also discusses the reliability and validity of the finding of the research.

4.1 Research design

This research is to understand the perceptions of managers of SMEs operating within the tourism and hospitality industry. A case study is proposed to be an appropriate method to collect data for this type of investigation (Beeton, 2005). There are three types of case studies: exploratory, descriptive, and causal (Yin, 2003). Exploratory approach is adopted for this investigation, and is more focused and seeks to discover existing research which might throw light on specific questions (Veal, 1998:84). In this regard, the destination capitals model proposed by Sharpley (2010) as a model to understand sustainable tourism was the centre of attention to capture the perceptions of managers of SMEs in regards to sustainable tourism development in The Gambia. A similar approach was used in Zapata-Campos, (2008) referring to it as a simplified representation of reality. Models identify basic concepts and describe what reality is like, and the conditions by which we can study it (Clark, 2005). The study uses the destination capital model to analyse and discuss the collected data that was collected from the case study in The Gambia to answer the research questions:

1. What does sustainable tourism development mean for SMEs managers in The Gambia?
2. What is the role of indigenous knowledge in SMEs to induce sustainable tourism development in The Gambia?

4.1.1 Sample

The respondents in this research are managers of operations within tourism industry and characterised as SMEs by The Gambia Tourism Authority. Therefore, even multinationals/foreign companies with similar characteristics in terms of employment capacity as local small scale medium enterprises are included in the survey. These businesses include small hotels and lodges, restaurants, eco-camps, craft market vendors, tourist taxi drivers, service providers, equipment hirers, guest houses and ground tour operators. They are referred to as the structured sectors operating in tourism under the purview of the organised economic activities in the country and registered with The Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA). This is equivalent to around 61% of the registered SMEs with GTA. The categories of operations showing the number of operations that responded to the survey are provided in table 3.

Table 3. Frequency of category of operations that participated in the research

Category	Frequency	Valid Percent
Art and craft vendors	7	9.6
Car rental	2	2.7
Eco-Camp	5	6.8
Equipment hirer	4	5.5
Flight operator	2	2.7
Ground tour operator	7	9.6
Hotel	10	13.7
Hotel and restaurant	8	11.0
Lodge	9	12.3
Other	3	4.1
Public sector	6	8.2
Restaurant only	5	6.8
Service provider	3	4.1
Tourist taxi	2	2.7
Total	73	100.0

The sample in this research covers a wide geographical area in five administrative divisions in The Gambia involving SMEs operating the tourism industry. The locations of the operations are herein referred to as Tourism Development Area or outside Tourism Development Area. At the time of this research there were 120 registered with The Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA) out of which 73 managers (60%) responded to the questionnaire and 5 of them also responded to a qualitative interview questionnaire.

Although the majority of operations in the sample frame, (70) of potential respondents are located along the Tourism Development Area, nevertheless tourism businesses outside the Tourism Development Area (50) are also included in the sample frame of the research.

4.2 Research instruments and data collection

Broad access to scientific information is key for people to understand, participate and respond to the challenges that development poses to civilisation but many scientific journals are not within easy reach to developing countries (de la Carlos, 2000). Without information and knowledge of sustainable tourism development, issues in hand could be at stake. A seminar was proposed by GTA, which became a foundation to facilitate a platform for the discussion of sustainable tourism development with investors in the tourism sector in The Gambia known as the formal sector. Tourism enterprises registered with tourism associations within the country, comprising of hotels represented by the Gambia Hotel Association (GHA) and the Gambia Travel and

Tourism Association (GTTA), composing of the inbound ground tour operators and members of the Association of Small scale Enterprises in Tourism (ASSET) were the participants in the seminar. The research was therefore limited to the formal sector operating in the tourism. There were 55 participants in the seminar, with two resources persons who presented papers on Pro/poor tourism in The Gambia (Bah and Goodwin, 2003), and The Gambia Tourism Master Plan (Nyang, Gambia Tourism Master Plan, 2007).

The seminar facilitated opportunities for discussion of challenges of sustainable tourism development faced by the industry in The Gambia. No part of the research was discussed. Only general issues concerning sustainable tourism development practices as suggested in the tourism development literature and related previous researches conducted in the context of The Gambia were discussed facilitating for participants to reflect upon the concept of sustainable tourism development and the type of tourism development they themselves are engaged in. It provided the opportunity for participants to reflect upon their knowledge of the concept of sustainable tourism development providing them an in-depth understanding of the issues under investigation. With the exploratory nature of this study, coupled with time constraint, quantitative questionnaire supplemented with a qualitative survey was chosen as the appropriate instruments for this survey. The method has the ability to reduce weakness in one of the research methods, and provide in-depth insight to the research.

The two different types of questionnaires were all in English. Questionnaire A (See appendix 1) contained statements that utilise a Likert scale of 1-5 (1 is strongly agree- 5 strongly disagree) (Maddox, 1985). This is the most widely used measurement instrument for measuring opinions of respondents from strongly agree to strongly disagree to a particular statement in the questionnaire. They are a "pre-formulated set of written questions to which respondents record their answers" (Sekaran, 1992:200). The questionnaire was personally distributed by the author throughout The Gambia to 120 Small scale enterprises operating within tourism and registered with GTA in May 2008 throughout the country. The questionnaires were filled in by respondents themselves generating 73 respondents from the sample of 120 potential respondents. The questions are structured to the objective of the study and the focus of each question monitored by ensuring that every question linked to one or more than one objectives. It asked questions on sustainable business practices in terms of awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism issues and what it means for SMEs, and knowledge of sustainable tourism practices. To complement the quantitative data, qualitative data was also collected using a qualitative interview

questionnaire B, providing opportunity for respondents to describe their business operations with their own stories.

Questionnaire Interview guide B (See appendix 2) which contains interview questions were sent by email in 2011 to about 20 of those who answered to the first questionnaire. Thirteen questions were asked reflecting on the research questions. The questions used are simple and easy to understand and similar to those used in previous similar surveys as recommended in the literature. It was also structured to capture the objectives of the research. The focus of each question was monitored by ensuring that every question is linked to one or more of the objectives of the research questions and facilitates for respondents to describe their operations in regards to the objectives of the sub research questions. They are constructed in simple, direct and familiar vocabularies that are easy for respondents to understand. The data generated from the narrations of the manager's description of their operations expanded the quantitative data providing details and examples that complemented the numerical data.

4.3 Data analysis.

The destination capitals model proposed by Sharpley (2010) as a model to understand sustainable tourism was the centre of attention to capture the perceptions of managers of SMEs in regards to sustainable tourism development in The Gambia. A similar approach was used in Zapata-Campos, (2008) referring to it as a simplified representation of reality. Models identify basic concepts and describe what reality is like, and the conditions by which we can study it (Clark, 2005). This study uses the destination capital model to analyse and discuss the collected data that was collected from the case study in The Gambia. This also facilitated the reformulation of Sharpley's destination capitals model based on the findings of the research. With the reformulation of the destination capitals presented in chapter seven, the main research question of this study is answered.

The analysis of data generated from Questionnaire A follows the quantitative tradition of description which involves gathering statistics analysis to describe what is happening, and answering the question how?(Holloway and Robinson, 1995:52). It is descriptive and exploratory, seeking to discover, and describe patterns of behaviour (Veal, 1998:3). The collected raw data was coded and input in SPSS. Frequency tables were created to show the number of times a particular data value concerning perceptions on sustainable tourism development on the destination occurs on respondents' answers on the questionnaire. The tables were useful in the statistical information of the data that was generated from the questionnaire and forms the bases

for the quantitative analysis of the findings. This became the bases for reformulating the destination capitals to answer the research questions.

Questionnaire B was analysed using content analyses to fit responses into a model of communication in accordance with the research aim and objectives. This “method uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (Weber, 1990:9), and examines textual data for patterns and structures, singles out the key features to which researchers want to pay attention to, develop categories, and aggregates them into perceptible constructs in order to seize text meaning (Gray and Densten, 1998). A content analysis of responses from 5 managers of SMEs who responded to the interview was conducted to provide a detailed description of their operations on the research questions. This facilitates a critical examination and comparison of the content of the responses from the interview and that of the quantitative obtained data identifying issues that shed light and expand on the findings in the quantitative data providing a clear idea of the perceptions of respondents on the research questions.

4.4 Reliability and validity

Reliability is a necessary condition for validity, meaning that the data collected through the questionnaires should be accurate and ensure that the researcher will be able to draw the correct conclusions (Nachmias and Nachmias 1981: 297), and truly reflects the phenomena being studied (Veal, 1998:35). Research should seek consistency in the degree to which the variables indeed measure what they are supposed to measure. With the exploratory nature of this research, both quantitative and qualitative methods are used which were all free of any form of interference or influence from the researcher.

The pre-data collection activity in the form of a seminar was useful for participants to reflect upon their understanding and knowledge of the practice of sustainable tourism development and their own business activities. All 55 participants in the seminar have responded to the research. The researcher is aware of the danger of the seminar having an effect on the research, and cautious of the risk of any form of influence that might cause bias with the topic being investigated, no part of the research was therefore discussed at the seminar.

The quantitative survey was a conducted during the period of “tourist off season” in may 2008 when most tourism operations are not in full operation and the qualitative questionnaire in April 2011 which was at the end of the tourist season. Both periods can be crucial in influencing the amount of response rate to the questionnaires. The criteria to define SMEs in this research is based on the nature of the operations, their small size and been characterised as small or medium

by The Gambia Tourism Authority and refers to the structured sector that falls under the purview of the organised economic activities within tourism in the country and are registered with The Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA). Therefore, even multinationals/ foreign companies with similar characteristics in terms of employment capacity as local small scale medium enterprises are included in the survey.

The findings are also limited in the context of LDCs. Although a cause of concern can be the positiveness of the findings, this research can still claim validity by truly claiming to represent the phenomenon being studied. Another concern is that SMEs might be claiming to have the ability, knowledge of or are practicing the concept of sustainable tourism development, whilst in actual fact these perceptions might concern what seems profitable for their businesses and not be in the best interest of local communities. However, with the model that has come out this study, sustainable tourism development in LDCs truly seem to be supported by the destination three capitals; environmental capital, socio-cultural capital and human capital.

Out of the 73 that responded, 38 (52 %) are located within the TDA, 26 (36%) outside the TDA, and 9 (12%) have not indicated their location of operation. This is quite representative for the sample in the research and also seems to be showing the reliability of research instrument used. The mixing of data type known as triangulation is thought to help with this kind of validation; using surveys with qualitative interviews as a more profound form (Olsen, 2004). A self administered questionnaire and interviews were therefore used to facilitate internal validity. A major setback that can be observed when respondents are asked to rate items on some response scale is that, it provides limited choice to alternative options. However, the intention here is to make the questions easy to be understood and to seek consistent and correct answers to the questions. A multiple research method was thus used to strengthen validity where mutual confirmation of results can be demonstrated (Bryman, 1988). The combination of the two research instruments helps to reduce uncertainty of the interpretations of the findings as it is a combination of quantitative data and social realities.

There was no intended number of response rates for the qualitative interviews. Out of 20 interview questionnaires 5 responded with 3 respondents located within the TDA and 2 from outside the TDA. Thus, in regards to the concept of sustainable tourism development this distribution of respondents in this research can claim validity and reliability concerning the locations of the operations that responded in this research. The majority of respondents are not only local investors operating within the TDA but also from outside the TDA across the

country. The results could not have been much different in similar situations. The findings will provide similar findings if the research is to be repeated in a similar setting with the formal sector operating within tourism in The Gambia.

4.5 Generalisability and transferability

The findings reflect the answers generated from respondents who are managers of SMEs operating in tourism. It was intended to have the perceptions of managers of 120 SMEs. However, response rate for the quantitative data (73 respondents) was fairly good, complemented with 5 qualitative narrations of managers pertaining to their own operations and in line with the research questions.

Table 4 Generalisability

Small and medium size enterprises			Sample	
Within TDA	70	58 %	38	52 %
Outside TDA	50	42 %	26	36 %
No answer	-	-	9	12 %
Total	120	100 %	73	100%

Despite this representation of the sample in the research involving formal operations within the TDA as well as formal operations outside the TDA, most of the non-respondents are outside the TDA. This might be due to reasons such as distance of the operation, reluctant for self-disclosure, suspicion or lack of understanding of the usefulness of the research. There is still possibility for generalisation of the findings to the formal sector operating within the circuit of tourism development in The Gambia.

The conclusion is that, the results seem to be applicable within SMEs, referred to as internal generalisability (Maxwell, 2005; Flick, 2008), and can be applied in similar settings that were not directly observed by the study referred to as external generalisability. Thirty eight percent of the respondents indicated that they are operating outside the tourism development area which is part of the tourism diversification strategy to spread the benefits of tourism development in the Gambia. This is similar to strategies adopted in other LDCs in efforts spread the benefits and inclusion of locals in tourism development. It is thus possible to generalise the findings to situations in other LDCs and can be representative in similar situations. This is referred to as transferability of the findings to other contexts (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The procedure used in this research thus ensures the generalisability of the findings, meaning that the findings are applicable to formal sector operating in tourism development in other LDCs.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The aim of this research is to investigate the perceptions of managers of SMEs on sustainable tourism development in LDCs, using The Gambia as a case study. The sub research questions were as follows:

- 1 What does sustainable tourism development mean for SMEs managers in The Gambia?
- 2 What is the role of indigenous knowledge in SMEs to induce sustainable tourism development in The Gambia?

The chapter presents and analyses the findings, presented in tables showing statistical results obtained from the questionnaire and complemented with the narratives obtained from the in-depth interviews conducted to a sample of SMEs in The Gambia. The analyses of the findings are then linked to theory.

5.1 What does sustainable tourism development mean for SMEs managers in The Gambia?

The type of ownership of operations that participated in the research is presented herein, thereafter, the awareness of concept of sustainable tourism development, perceived dimensions of a sustainable tourism development.

Firstly, SMEs manager's awareness of the concept of sustainable tourism development is analysed. Second, the different dimensions of what sustainable tourism means to SMEs managers in The Gambia is also explored in this section. Finally, the manager's perceptions of how sustainable tourism development is been implemented in The Gambia is studied.

Table 5 shows the type of ownership of operations that participated in the research.

Table 5. Type of ownership of operation

	Frequency	Percent
Multinational	7	9,6
Locally owned	33	45,2
Multinational partnership with local resident	12	16,4
Private foreign owner	20	27,4
Other	1	1,4
Total	73	100,0

The categories of operations that responded in the research are all SMEs comprising of between 2- 115 employees with 42% owned by locals respectively 16.4% in partnership with a foreign operator. This means that local investors are directly or indirectly involved in more than 68% of tourism operations that responded to this research. 9.6 % of the operations are owned strictly by multinationals. Ninety percent of them affirmed to be aware of the concept of sustainable tourism development, and almost all of them (99%) agreed that the practice of sustainable tourism is very important for the industry.

5.1.1 Awareness of the concept of sustainable tourism development.

In order to understand the meaning of sustainable tourism development for SMEs in The Gambia, Managers' level of awareness of the concept was assessed in the first place. The results are presented in table 6.

Table 6. Are you aware of the term Sustainable tourism development?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	5	6.8
yes	66	90.4
no	2	2.7
Total	73	100.0

90% of the respondents affirmed to be aware of the term sustainable tourism development. Similar remarks were made by all interviewees, indicating their awareness of sustainable tourism is and the positive and negative impacts of tourism development. During the in-depth interview, one respondent said:

“Tourism threatens and often destroys locals' traditional means of livelihood, local Self-reliance, or ruin local industries, but it also bring lot of positive impact to the country so, what we should do is, to introduce responsible and sustainable tourism which promote the welfare of the local population in a responsible and sustainable way”.

(Interviewee respondent, Company B).

The research further investigated SMEs managers' perceptions on the importance of the practice of sustainable tourism development in The Gambia. Table 7 presents the findings.

Table 7. The practice of sustainable tourism is very important for the industry

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	3	4,1
Disagree	1	1,4
Neither Agree or Disagree	1	1,4
Agree	35	47,9
Strongly Agree	32	43,8
Total	72	98,6
Missing	1	1,4
Total	73	100,0

Almost 99% of respondents affirmed that, the practice of sustainable tourism is very important for the industry. The survival and longevity of tourism depends on its attractiveness as an industry; economically, socio-culturally and environmentally which the concept of sustainable tourism development advocates.

5.1.2 Perceived dimensions of a sustainable tourism development

Respondents were asked to rate statements pertaining to the first objective of the research on a Likert-scale. Each participant was asked to rate items on some response scale on a 1-to-5 level where 1 is Strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree or disagree, 4 agree and 5 strongly agree.

Table 8 to 13 shows how important respondents' perceived that each dimension of a sustainable tourism development is based on the questionnaire and complemented with narrations from the in-depth interview. Respondents were first asked to state perception on the statement that "sustainability will provide better economic benefits". The findings are provided in table 8.

Table 8. Sustainability will provide better economic benefits

		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly disagree	3	4,1
	Disagree	2	2,7
	Neither agree or disagree	10	13,7
	Agree	29	39,7
	Strongly agree	27	37,0
	Total	71	97,3
	Missing	2	2,7
Total		73	100,0

As it is shown in table 8, the majority of respondents (39.7% agreed and 37% strongly agreed) agreed that "sustainability will provide better economic benefits". The economic dimension of what sustainability means for SMEs in The Gambia underscored in the survey seem to correspond with the qualitative analysis stemming from the interviews:

We work hand-in-hand with the local people making them active participants in the whole process, this helps the local people share their culture, learn about other cultures and earn some money.

(Interview respondent, Company A).

Respondents perceived that SMEs working hand in hand with locals who opened their doors for tourists to experience their ways of living, can bring them income and provide better economic benefits. Respondents were then asked to state their level of agreement with the environmental impacts of a sustainable tourism. Their responses are presented in table 9.

Table . 9 Sustainability will improve the environment

		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly disagree	4	5,5
	Disagree	1	1,4
	Neither agree or disagree	5	6,8
	Agree	38	52,1
	Strongly agree	23	31,5
	Total	71	97,3
	Missing	2	2,7
Total		73	100,0

A majority of the respondents (more than 83%) in table 9 perceived that the development of sustainable tourism would improve the environment. Respondents seem to show their awareness of potential environmental footprint of tourism development and almost unanimously agreed that environmental dimension of sustainable tourism is important.

Tourism threatens and often destroys locals' traditional means of livelihood, local self-reliance, or ruin local industries, we need to sensitise the general public on these issues.

(Interview respondent, Company C).

In most LDCs the functions of nature and ecology is to provide food, shelter, medicine, energy and other functions that have other meanings to locals other than for tourists' amusement. Environmental protection and preservation measures involved in sustainable tourism development thus tend to be useful in fostering the prolonged use of nature by locals bringing them livelihood opportunities.

The research then seeks the perceptions of respondents on a sustainable tourism development that would improve living standards in The Gambia. Table 10 presents the results.

Table 10. Sustainability will improve living standards

		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly disagree	4	5,5
	Disagree	2	2,7
	Neither agree or disagree	9	12,3
	Agree	42	57,5
	Strongly agree	14	19,2
	Total	71	97,3
	Missing	2	2,7
Total		73	100,0

The respondents in table 10 (around 77%) agreed that sustainable tourism also implies the improvement of living standards. The industry has created jobs in The Gambia thereby uplift standard of living for many people. An interview respondent said:

“Our business can contribute to bringing benefits of tourism in the country by providing cultural experiences, having people to enjoy staying in a family setup and the income derived..”.

(Interview respondent, Company C).

Most of the incomes gained come from fees paid by visitors to the park and others who might want to have personal spiritual cure which we do according to our customs and traditions. All the money we received, the largest part goes to conservation which is highly needed throughout the year”.

(Interview respondent, Company E).

Environmental protection and preservation could bring benefits to both the industry and locals, providing them livelihood opportunities and improved living standards. In table 11 SMEs' perceptions of the socio-cultural impacts of a sustainable tourism development are presented.

Table 11. Sustainability will bring better socio-cultural awareness

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	2,7
Disagree	4	5,5
Neither agree or disagree	7	9,6
Agree	44	60,3
Strongly agree	14	19,2
Total	71	97,3
Missing	2	2,7
Total	73	100,0

The perception of the majority of respondents in table 11 is that socio-cultural awareness can be acquired through the practice of sustainable tourism development. This seem true because through the activities of local SMEs, tribal and minority peoples their cultures, traditional places and heritage are targeted by the tourism sector as an attraction. There is potential for such activities to facilitate interaction between tourists and local community members thereby providing a better socio-cultural awareness between the host communities and tourists. An interview respondent said:

Cultural product would contribute towards learning from others which I think would contribute towards cross-cultural misunderstanding of my country and abroad.

(Interview respondent, Company B).

...cultural products are what makes a country unique and symbolizes the whole experience.

(Interview respondent, Company A).

Against this background, better socio-cultural awareness can also be associated with what sustainable tourism development mean for small scale and medium size enterprises in The Gambia. An interview respondent said:

Tourism threatens and often destroys locals' traditional means of livelihood, local self-reliance, or ruin local industries, we need to sensitise the general public on these issues.

(Interview respondent, Company C)

An interview respondent warns that:

If we do not practice conservation then the place will soon lose its original meaning thereby causing the depletion of the cultural values that sustain the place.

(Interview respondent, Company E)

Through local SMEs, tribal and minority peoples their cultures, traditional places and heritage are targeted by the tourism sector as an attraction. Knowledge concerning availability of such products is therefore important in sustainable tourism development.

Table 12 transcribes responses on the statement that SMEs knowledge of the local environment is important for sustainability.

Table 12. SMEs knowledge of the local environment is important for sustainability

		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly agree	2	2,7
	Agree	14	19,2
	Neither agree or disagree	11	15,1
	Disagree	8	11,0
	Strongly disagree	1	1,4
	Total	36	49,3
	Missing	37	50,7
Total		73	100,0

There was a 49% response rate to the statement in table 12, that “SMEs knowledge of the local environment is important for sustainability”, with about 21% who can be said to have agreed. Around 27% do not agree or disagree. The majority participants, 51% (50, 7%) have not responded to the statement.

Hence the important of indigenous knowledge in sustainable practices, the research thus went further and investigated respondents’ perceptions on cooperation between stakeholders. Table 13 presents the level of agreement /disagreement to the statement that, “Cooperation is required from all stakeholders in sustainable tourism”.

Table 13. Cooperation is required from all stakeholders in sustainable tourism

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	8,2
Disagree	1	1,4
Neither agree or Disagree	1	1,4
Agree	22	30,1
Strongly Agree	42	57,5
Total	72	98,6
Missing	1	1,4
Total	73	100,0

The majority of respondents in table 13 (87.6%) agreed that sustainability requires “cooperation from all stakeholders. What they seem to be saying is that it is important that local SMEs are part of the cooperation for sustainable tourism development.

We have good partners who sponsor some of the activities taking place here and one of them is the National Council for Arts and Culture and another partner called The West African Museum Organization. Saint Mary's University in the USA is a good partner..

(Interview respondent, Company E).

Cooperation between stakeholders thus seem to support an effective integration of the social, economic, ecologic and institutional parts sustainability at all levels in the long term and to understand the strength and direction of these complex interrelationships in tourism (Kemp and Porto, 2005). Knowledge transfer, sharing of information leading to more innovative strategies seems to be an expected benefit. This cooperation might mean enhancing SME's participation in sustainable tourism practices, capacity building, education and training. Briefly, together with the previous tables there is an overwhelming agreement that:

- It is perceived by managers that local SMEs are central to sustainable tourism development. This is supported in tables 11, 12 and 13
- Sustainable tourism development is perceived by managers of SMEs as the way forward for the development of the tourism industry in The Gambia. Tables 8, 9, 10 and 11 support this finding.
- Local entrepreneurship is perceived by managers as fundamental for tourism development in LDCs, therefore requires the cooperation of multinational corporations for the successful realisation of the principles of sustainable development. This is also supported by tables 11, 12 and 13

- Perceived dimensions of sustainable tourism development treated in tables were centered on better economic benefits, improve the environment, improving living standards, and bring better socio-cultural awareness to the destination, participation and indigenous knowledge of the destination. However, the different dimension of sustainable tourism development are perceived to have different importance.

5.1.2 A comparison between the different dimensions of what sustainable tourism means to SMEs in The Gambia.

Perceived dimensions of a sustainable tourism development treated in the tables were centered on better economic benefits, improve the environment, improve living standards, and bring better socio-cultural awareness to the destination, participation and local knowledge. Better economic benefits seem to be linked with environmental preservation. Environment in LDCs is also used for other purposes other than for tourists' amusement, therefore its preservation that allows its prolonged usage and beneficial for locals will bring them income and provide better economic benefits to them, and thereby help improve living standards in local communities. This activity will also enhance the interaction of locals and tourists in the dual use resources such as the environment, and socio-cultural fabrics of local communities directly reflective to better economic benefits and better socio-cultural awareness. There is therefore a general agreement with the perceptions of SMEs managers that:

- Sustainability will provide better economic benefits
- Sustainability will improve the environment
- Sustainability will improve living standards
- Sustainability will bring better socio-cultural awareness

However, whilst there is a unanimous agreement that sustainable tourism development is important for the industry, there is also a split in perceptions concerning the importance of SMEs knowledge of the local environment. The response rate in table 12 which depicts the importance of SMEs knowledge of the local as important for sustainability is low. The majority of respondents do not agree that SMEs knowledge of the local environment is important for sustainable tourism development. However, the findings in table 12 do not seem to be reflecting on respondent's own knowledge of the environment, but other SMEs in Gambia. This has been shown in table 4, where 90% of the respondents affirmed to be aware of the term sustainable tourism development, which has as well been affirmed in the in-depth interview showing respondents view that:

“Tourism threatens and often destroys locals' traditional means of livelihood, local Self- reliance, or ruin local industries, but it also bring lot of positive impact to the country..”

Since sustainable tourism development is a local agenda, therefore knowledge of the local environment seems to be quite obvious in the practice of the concept. This seems to be connected to product development as well as on environmental preservation practices. Hence the important of local knowledge in sustainable practices, the reseearch thus went further and investigated respondents' perceptions on cooperation between stakeholders, which the majority of respondents affirms to. Despite the abstinences of the majority of respondents in stating their perceptions concerning the importance of SMEs knowledge of the local environment for sustainable tourism development, there is a general agreement that cooperation is required from all stakeholders in the practice. This is supported in Table 13

5.1.3 Perceptions of how sustainable tourism development is been implemented in The Gambia in practice.

Respondents' perceptions in regards to the operation of sustainable tourism development in The Gambia are provided in this section. Table 14-16 presents the findings.

Table 14. Tourism in The Gambia is operated in a sustainable manner

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	6	8,2
Disagree	21	28,8
Neither agree or disagree	15	20,5
Agree	25	34,2
Strongly agree	4	5,5
Total	71	97,3
Missing	2	2,7
Total	73	100,0

A division in perceptions of whether tourism in The Gambia is operated in a sustainable manner could be observed in table 14. Whilst around 37 % disagreed to the statement in the table (29% disagreed respectively 8.2 % strongly disagreed), more than 40% agreed that tourism in The Gambia is operated in a sustainable manner (34.2% agreed respectively 6% strongly agreed). An interview respondent said:

“We should introduce a code on ethic which tourists should follow when in the country. The measures I take to protect local resources am using as a product from being degraded, or misused, is through responsible tourism where the local should learn how to minimise negative impact of tourism and maximises positive ones. In doing this we need to learn how preserve and sustain our tourism product.

(Interview respondent, Company B).

Respondent's perceptions of values attached local resources would seem to be important for sustainable tourism development. An interview respondent said:

"..the biodiversity of the place is very significant to us and exploits the highest priority in activities we do...has also widen our perspective to encourage voluntary students from abroad, who are interested in environmental conservation and respect to the biodiversity existing in the place to come and work with us for a period and thereby exchange knowledge with the local workers".

(Interview respondent, Company E).

"We have traditional knowledge and practice of spiritual healing...we have the knowledge to grow medical plants to cure different kinds of diseases therefore the biodiversity of the place is very significant to us and exploits the highest priority in the activities we do. ..interested in environmental conservation and respect to the biodiversity ..."

(Interview respondent, Company E).

In this context, sustainable tourism development would seem to mean biodiversity and environmental conservation where locals are involved. It seems that SME managers have a fragmented perception of how tourism is practiced in The Gambia. Different perceptions of how tourism is been implemented can reflect different interests. Ethical issues of SME's, their perceptions of which are presented in Table 15, complemented with narrations from the interviewed respondents.

Table 15. Business strategies of SMEs are ethical

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	6	8,2
Agree	15	20,5
Neither agree or disagree	9	12,3
Disagree	4	5,5
Strongly disagree	1	1,4
Total	35	47,9
Missing	38	52,1
Total	73	100,0

Around 48% (47, 9%) that have responded, about 29% agreed (8.2% strongly agreed respectively 20.5% agreed) that business strategies of SMEs are ethical. With the principles of sustainable tourism development, it is essential that ethical equations become a prerequisite for business activities in accordance with pillars of sustainable development. This would seem to direct practices that are built upon what is right to do as an obligation and benefits society. An interview respondent said:

Tourism threatens and often destroys locals' traditional means of livelihood, local self- reliance, or ruin local industries, we need to sensitise the general public on these issues. Measures we take to protect local resources we are using as a product from being degraded, or misused is through conservation and information.

(Interview respondent, Company C).

The figures in the table are in agreement with findings in table 12 showing a split in perceptions concerning whether tourism in The Gambia is operated in a sustainable manner. Although, more than half of the respondents have agreed to the statement. It is not clear what the majority in the sample thought of ethical issues concerning business strategies of SMEs. Table 16 then presents the level of agreement /disagreement to the statement that, “most of the establishments are aware of sustainable practices”.

Table 16. Most of the establishments are aware of sustainable tourism development

		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly disagree	7	9,6
	Disagree	18	24,7
	Neither agree or Disagree	18	24,7
	Agree	25	34,2
	Strongly Agree	1	1,4
	Total	69	94,5
	Missing	4	5,5
Total		73	100,0

The figures in table 16 show a division in perceptions of respondents concerning SMEs awareness of sustainable tourism development. The majority of the respondents do not agree that most of the establishments are aware of sustainable tourism development. This seems to show a general conclusion that the practice of sustainable tourism development in The Gambia may be minimal or lacks precision. Hence local traditional or scientific approach, this might be due to divers ways of interpreting what sustainable tourism development means. Whilst respondents mostly agreed about what sustainable tourism development means, the opinions were fragmented when it comes to how sustainable tourism is being developed in The Gambia. Briefly, subsection 5.1.3 found that:

- Despite being aware of the impacts of tourism, ethical business strategies of SMEs in The Gambia is not clear, and can mean they might be doing business as it favours them with little ethical considerations.
- The majority of the respondents do not agree that most of the establishments are aware of sustainable tourism development.

5.2 The role of indigenous knowledge in SMEs to induce development and specifically in sustainable tourism development.

The research proceeds to seek the perception of respondents about SMEs' knowledge of the local business environment in relation to sustainable tourism development. The interviewees were asked to rate statements on a Likert-scale, where 1 is strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree or disagree, 4 agree and 5 strongly agree answers of which are transcribed from tables 17-19, complemented with narrations from the interviewed respondents.

In previous tables, 6 and 12, discussed respondents own awareness of the concept of sustainable tourism development respective, respectively their perceptions of the importance of SMEs knowledge of the local environment as important for sustainability. 90% of the respondents affirmed to be aware of the term sustainable tourism development, which has as well been affirmed in the in-depth interview. However, majority of them in table 12 do not agree that SMEs knowledge of the local environment is important for sustainable tourism development.

To facilitate insight knowledge of the level of availability of local facilities, this chapter begins with a presentation of the perception of SMEs concerning efforts in the provision of local products (e.g. facilities, food and drink or even safari and excursions provided by local SMEs) in the tourism market in The Gambia. Table 17-19 presents the findings.

Table 17. SMEs put emphasis on local products

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	9	12,3
Agree	16	21,9
Neither agree or disagree	6	8,2
Disagree	3	4,1
Strongly disagree	2	2,7
Total	36	49,3
Missing	37	50,7
Total	73	100,0

With those who responded, the perception of the majority is that SMEs puts emphasis on local products. Sophisticated knowledge of the natural and socio-cultural environment would help SMEs to scout around to create products and services as a base of their products. An interview respondent points out that:

Economies like the Gambia's is highly driven by local small scale businesses and cultural products are the dominant goods. We are very well connected with the local people.

(Interview respondent, Company A).

Locally owned small scale enterprises in the tourism industry often have limited knowledge and awareness of the needs of the tourism industry, and are commonly known for their lack of investment capital and low awareness of sustainable tourism development (Huybers and Bennett, 2003; Vernon et al., 2003). An interviewed respondent also explained that:

We provide accommodation for tourists in a family setting, providing locally products and services, among others, drumming and cooking lessons.

(Interview respondent, Company C).

“We sell carvings, batik, paintings, drums and many other hand made things from Gambia. They are all locally produced products”.

(Interview respondent, Company D).

Tourism is about experience, and therefore essential that local products are presented to tourists visiting the destination. Therefore indigenous knowledge of the tourism business environment and provide the required experience is vital in sustainable tourism development. This will enabled the diversification of tourism product offering opportunities for small scale and medium size enterprises to invest in products and services that are unique to the destination. An interview respondent said:

I provide local product and service which I think would have more benefit to country's economic. Cultural product would contribute towards learning from others... of my country and abroad.

(Interview respondent, Company B).

Although the majority of respondents in the sample have abstained from stating their perception concerning SMEs' emphasis on local products, most of the interviewed respondents have outlined this emphasis in their day to day operations. They seem to use their knowledge of the local environment to create products and services to service the industry. In this context, development will be inclusive encouraging locals to contribute to creating opportunities enhancing poverty reduction. The research went further to investigate the importance of the role played by local investors' in the practice of sustainable tourism development. The findings are presented in table 18.

Table 18 Local investors play an essential role in sustainable tourism

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	4,1
Disagree	2	2,7
Neither agree or Disagree	8	11,0
Agree	40	54,8
Strongly Agree	18	24,7
Total	71	97,3
Missing	2	2,7
Total	73	100,0

The majority of respondents in table 18 agreed that “local investors play an essential role in sustainable tourism practices. The important role played by SMEs in sustainable tourism development is affirmed in table 18 that SMEs makes emphasis on local products. This is especially important in destinations where traditional industries are in decline, and tourism has become an important source of employment and income generating activity for many. The activities of SMEs enhance locals’ involvement and participation not only in tourism development but also in other forms of development activities. An interview respondent said:

We are a tour group that adds an educational component and volunteering opportunities in its package. We offer our customers the opportunity to do volunteer work in the Gambia.

We take tourists out on adventures to visit various places of interest, take part in various activities to give them an in-depth insight into Gambian culture and daily life.

(Interview respondent, Company A).

Such activities of SMEs are part of the components of sustainability and will enhance the prospects for inclusion of locals in tourism development endeavour. Against this background, using local facilities tends to be fundamental for sustainable tourism development. This is because local knowledge, local investment and provision of local products can show the importance local facilities for sustainable tourism consumption.

It is thus essential to understand the perceptions of respondents on the statement that “Multinationals use local facilities” (such as hotels, lodges and other amenities that are provided by local investors for tourists) the findings of which are presented in table 19.

Table 19. Multinationals use local facilities

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	1	1,4
Agree	18	24,7
Neither agree or disagree	9	12,3
Disagree	7	9,6
Strongly disagree	1	1,4
Total	36	49,3
Missing	37	50,7
Total	73	100,0

The majority of the respondents in the sample (51%) have not responded in table 19. With a low response rate with diverse perceptions, around 26% generally agreed that multinationals uses local facilities. More than 10% do not agree to the statement, and 12% have not pointed out their perception. A similar trend can be observed in the responses in table 18 concerning SMEs emphasis on local products. Generally, to summarise the findings regarding the role of local knowledge in SMEs to induce sustainable tourism development in LDCs:

- The majority of managers of SMEs do not consider that SMEs knowledge of the local environment is important for sustainable tourism development.
- The perception of managers is that SMEs provides products and services from the local environment as part of the tourism experience. This finding is supported in the data provided in table 17.
- The perception of managers is that local investors are important for the success of the practice of sustainable tourism development shown in table 18.
- Table 17 supports that the products of SMEs are drawn from the local environment, respectively table 18 showing the importance of local investors (normally SMEs) in the practice of sustainable tourism development, whilst table 19 shows a division in perception, and some managers not showing their perception if multinationals use local facilities. There is therefore scope for more cooperation between SMEs and multinational in use of local products available on the destination.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the findings, in the context of the theoretical framework adopted by this research and the related literature. The main research question was to investigate the perceptions of managers of SMEs on sustainable tourism development in LDCs, using The Gambia as a case study. The sub research questions were as follows:

- 1 What does sustainable tourism development mean for managers of SMEs in The Gambia?
- 2 What is the role of indigenous knowledge in SMEs to induce sustainable tourism development in The Gambia?

The chapter elaborates on how these research questions have been answered to meet the objectives of the study.

6.1 Meaning of sustainable tourism development for managers of SMEs in Gambia.

Although the influence of SMEs in The Gambia on the tourism experience and consumption seems to be limited because of their lack of resources and ability to connect the destination and the international market, literature on sustainable tourism development made emphasis on the participation of local investors in tourism development as a strategy to minimise economic leakages that tourism development in LDCs have been criticised for. The formulation of a national SMEs policy for the development of the subsector in The Gambia in 2004 has encouraged the development of SMEs which helped to increase employment and poverty reduction (International Monetary Fund, 2006). Forty five percent of the respondents in this research are locally owned enterprises respectively 16.4% multinationals in partnership with local residents. The large presence of locally owned SMEs in tourism in the country facilitates inclusive development which can be a supporting factor for sustainable tourism development.

Tourism is about experience, therefore the spread of tourism facilities will not only minimise pressure on the concentrated beach resources but will also facilitate linkage with local communities and other productive sectors thereby facilitating opportunities for the spread of the tourism earnings. Such enterprises are derived from the human capital on the destination, which is as an important component of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development. They are not only for creating linkage and spreading economic benefits but also as important in environmental preservation practices. It is thus essential to understand what sustainable tourism development means for managers of SMEs in The Gambia.

The findings of this study suggest that sustainable tourism development practices in The Gambia are strongly connected with environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals of the destination. It puts emphasis on the environmental dimension of sustainability, and shows the significance of the different dimensions of a sustainable tourism in varying degrees. The emphasis on the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism development seems to be more relevant for SMEs, and tends to reflect upon the environmental capital of the destination on which they heavily depends upon for product development. It tends to show the significance of SMEs' knowledge of the local environment, (built and natural) and its importance in tourism.

Despite the diverse views, both the quantitative as well as the qualitative data in this research confirms that respondents' perception is that SMEs in The Gambia are aware of the term of sustainable tourism development. Human societies around the world have developed rich sets of experiences and explanations relating to the environments they live in (Nakashima, Prott and

Bridgewater, 2000). People have differing ways of interpreting their environment in accordance with own ways of living, traditions and cultures of societies they belonged to. The meaning of sustainable tourism development is therefore strongly contained in local participation in tourism development which is demonstrated in their prolific presence in the tourism business environment. With this understanding, the research went further and presents the perceived dimensions of a sustainable tourism development of the respondents.

6.1.1 Perceived dimensions of a sustainable tourism development of the respondents

The tourism business environment provides different products and services to satisfy tourist's needs, and together makes the host destination attractive. Much part of the attraction is said to be products provided by SMEs. A destination's development of tourism must be sustainable, not just economically and ecologically, but also socially, culturally, and politically as well as to focus on long-term economic prosperity as the yardstick, industry level attributes as well as mainstream tourism destination's attractiveness attributes destination's competitiveness and sustainability (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). The findings of this study suggest that respondents put great emphasis on the environmental dimension, followed by socio-cultural awareness then the economic dimension for sustainable tourism development.

The tourism enterprises in The Gambia has created diverse operational activities that provide products and services to satisfy tourist's needs on the destination, and together makes the host destination attractive to visitors. The strong emphasis on the environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism practices will tend to encourage local production factors and thus provide economic activities that could be beneficial for destination. Much of the attractions for tourism consumption is said to be based on the nature (built and natural environment) and culture on the destination. This linkage can encourage the expansion of sectors on the destination. The environmental dimension of sustainability reflects a general perspective on the destination capitals, and puts weight on Sharpley (2009) asserting that, environmental capital from the more traditional perspective is an asset which particular benefits could be derived. For instance, evidence of the significance of environmental sustainability has also been found to be important for agriculture (Agriculture and Natural Resources Team, UK, 2004). Thus the quality of the natural as well as the built environment which is significant for SMEs' participation in tourism development can be related to the attractiveness of the tourism industry in the country. Taking care of the environmental foot prints of tourism, preservation of wildlife, fauna and flora, protection of local heritage can strengthen the attractiveness of the industry, enhance economic

benefits for the industry as well as raised the quality of living of the local people and tends to encourage inclusive development.

Many local enterprises operating within the circuit of tourism have been established from this opportunity and come to serve as representatives of multinational cooperations who are the main suppliers of tourists to the destination. A destination's development of tourism must be sustainable, not just economically and ecologically, but also socially, culturally, and politically as well as to focus on long-term economic prosperity as the yardstick, industry level attributes as well as mainstream tourism destination's attractiveness attributes destination's competitiveness and sustainability (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). Whilst some tourists' suppliers do not encourage the consumption of local products by relying much on foreign goods that are consumed in their outlets, locally own SMEs relies on local products as bases of their operation. Emphasis on the environmental dimension tends to be an indication of support the importance of the provision of local products in the practice of sustainable tourism development. Thus, inclusion of locals in tourism development is a challenge for sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

In a previous survey, Bah and Godwin (2003) for instance, there is high importation of food and drink that is consumed in hotels in The Gambia as the local food and drink is not recommended by tours operators to tourists. Although the majority of the respondents in the sample have not responded to statement that multinationals uses local facilities. However, the strong emphasis on the environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism tends to manifest the importance of the use of local facilities, products and services provided by SMEs. It is from this resource that locals depends upon as a source of living as well as provides opportunities for development of the tourism product. There are wider macro-economic benefits of a vibrant small business community, providing stimulus for development of indigenous production of import-substituting goods and services, contributing to exports, and providing inputs into larger-scale industrial and commercial activity (Duncombe and Heeks, 2001).

Tourism is about experience and providing this experience is what is unique about local SMEs with indigenous knowledge of the destination. Local arts and culture, history and heritage as tourism products add to this efforts and very encouraging for locals to set up SMEs. As part of the sustainability debate, SMEs are therefore largely encouraged to concentrate on the provision of the local experience found within the environmental, socio-cultural and human capitals on the tourism destination.

The perception of the majority of respondents in this study is therefore that SMEs put emphasis on local products. This means taking stock of the destination capitals to encourage exploration of the local environment to enhance local production to minimise consumption of foreign goods. Thus the emphasis on the environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism will suggest the use of destination capitals including human capital, socio-cultural and environmental capital which eventually supports the practice of sustainable tourism development in LDCs, and in The Gambia to be specific.

6.1.2 The practice of sustainable tourism is very important for the industry.

Tourism is regarded as a way to broaden economic and social opportunities, and involves the exploration, development and offering of the destination resources as a product. Such resources (destination capitals) must be protected whilst also allowing its use for the amusement of tourists. In LDCs the natural environment as an important element of the tourism production is an equal important source of food, shelter, energy, medicine and other ways of living such as worship and strongly connected to the local people. Thus, for the success of the concept of sustainable tourism development on such destinations, preservation practices for resources that are important locals as well as for tourism seems to be an important component

The primary objective of sustainable tourism development in LDCs is poverty alleviation, providing livelihood opportunities for locals in a manner that would minimise environmental and socio-cultural degradation. Respondents affirm the importance of sustainability to economic benefits, improve environment, improve living standards, and bring socio-cultural awareness and reduction of the negative impacts of tourism development. Emphasis on the environment supports the practice of inclusive development, and the awareness of environmental preservation by SMEs will reflect the very importance of sustainable tourism practices for the destination not only economically but also, socio-culturally and environmentally for LDCs. The findings will thus suggest local production as an important aspect of sustainable tourism development.

It seems that an important aspect of the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism development is that, it is always linked to environmental quality and poverty alleviation and creation of livelihood opportunities that is sustainable. This tend to show that the environmental capital can stimulate local knowledge within the destination in the production of locally grown food products that will not only serve the tourism industry but also provide opportunities for the inclusion locals in the tourism business activities providing opportunities for them to earn a living and to contribute to poverty alleviation.

Emphasis on the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism development encourages the use of locally produced products by using the environmental capital and help minimised financial leakages from the dependence on foreign goods that is supplied to hotels and restaurants on the destination. Preservation and use of the environmental capital on the destination can thus enhance possibilities for the supply local products to the tourism industry, including food which accounts for large portion financial leakages in the LDCs. With links to local heritage through the built environment, recognising and giving value to local production systems and traditional practices could be useful in supporting other dimensions in sustainable tourism development agenda; for instance the retention of economic gains, preservation of the cultural heritage and traditions as well as the environment on the destination.

The findings re-enforces The United Nations, (2005) statement, suggesting the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development which recognises the close interdependency between social, economic and environmental elements of a system. The quality of the environment which includes natural and man-made is important for tourism which heavily depends on such resources, and if not taken care of its impacts can gradually destroy the resources on which depends. As such, environmental protection and conservation can serve the efforts for raising environmental awareness, its value and increase its economic importance. Respondents' recognition of the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism also reflects on the built environment. Thus, environmental preservation should allow existing recourses such as buildings to be updated and retrofitted for continued use encouraging the longevity of such assets while protecting its cultural significance (Lori, 2010).

Culture and heritage as important assets of the tourism experience within built environment also has other values for local culture and natural heritage on the destination. In The Gambia for instance, natural environments that serves as life museums with long history of traditional value to locals have become part of the tourism experience in the country. Preservation measures of such environments for tourism activities encourage cultural and traditional activities that enhance local inclusion in the tourism business activities and protection of such resources. Emphasis on the environment can thus be important because of values attached to it by the respondents in accordance with local experience, and not only for economic benefits but also for the uplifting of the social fabrics and cultural heritage of the destination. Efforts to protect such assets from degradation will reduce the risk of loss of the ecosystem and its traditional cultural benefits, with potential to provide important economic benefits for local communities on the destination.

Despite the fragmented perceptions of respondents of what sustainable tourism development means, the majority of them affirmed that, the practice is very important for the industry, and agreed that cooperation is required from all stakeholders in sustainable tourism. The research further looked sustainable tourism development in The Gambia.

6.1.3 Tourism in The Gambia is operated in a sustainable manner.

In order to understand how the concept of sustainable tourism is practiced in The Gambia, the research investigated the perceptions of respondents concerning how tourism is operated in the country. The findings show that SMEs have diverse understanding of the way sustainable tourism is practiced in the country. Since sustainable tourism development seems to be a local agenda, therefore knowledge of ethical issues as well as awareness of sustainable tourism development is very important for the success of the practice of the concept in LDCs. Every destination has a unique ecosystem, a unique culture and traditions of the people which are important to understand for the purpose of local conservation practices.

The findings shows the strong emphasis SMEs put on local products, but have a division on how tourism is practiced in sustainable manner in The Gambia. There is a clear fragmentation of what sustainable tourism development means for managers of SMEs in The Gambia. Whilst a half of the respondents agreed that “tourism in The Gambia is operated in a sustainable manner” almost a half of the respondents disagreed to the statement. The different interpretation of what sustainable tourism is and how it is implemented in The Gambia tends show the presence and appreciation of indigenous knowledge as well as the scientific or western interpretation of sustainable practices. The research shows a unique blend of established traditions of understanding the environment where tourism is being operated with both a strong local tradition and the scientific concept of sustainable tourism development. As such, there is no uniform understanding of what sustainable tourism is within the destination.

SMEs however place great importance to biodiversity, traditional and spiritual knowledge of the destination. The majority of respondents agreed that business strategies of SMEs are ethical. This seem agree with The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992 concerning the rights of indigenous people and their relationship to the environment. It recognised the critical role indigenous people and their communities play in utilising and managing the local environment, which became part of agreements in that conference. This is an important element of the human capital within the destination, and could include knowledge of local preservation measures in accordance with local

people's ways of living. The concept of sustainable tourism encourages the use of such facilities as it makes a significant source of income and employment for the locals, and way to preserve natural and cultural heritage in tourism host communities.

An important impact factor of tourism development is its ability of excluding locals from active participation in the business activities of tourism. Therefore the inclusion of facilities by multinational corporations in their business activities is a fundamental good tourism development practice. As noted, local investors are a major business group offering the unique local character of the destination, including supply of lodging facilities, food, entertainment and other activities which contributes to the diversification of the tourism activities and enhance the spread of its benefits. Local arts and culture, history and heritage as tourism products add to this efforts and very encouraging for locals to set up SMEs. The perception of the majority of respondents in this study is that SMEs puts emphasis on local products. This means, they are taking stock of the destination capitals. However, some of resources they depend on can also be misused and subjected to degradation.

6.2 The role of indigenous knowledge in SMEs to induce development and specifically in sustainable tourism development.

The natural environment as an important resource for tourism is said to be interpreted and used in manners attached to the socio-economy and cultural understanding of the environment by locals. This is usually in accordance with local's ways of living which is an important element of the sustainability concept. Their knowledge of products they developed from destination's resources is thus an important component of sustainable tourism development.

The large presence of local SMEs in tourism shows the importance of local knowledge that is drawn from the human capital needed for tourism development. As such, a common theme of sustainable tourism is having stakeholder support (Wilson, Fesenmaier, and Van Es (2001), and the involvement of different stakeholders in the early stage of the tourism planning process is essential (Gunn 1988; Inkeep, 1991). However, the perception of the majority of respondents is that, local knowledge does not lead to a sustainable tourism development. This might be based on an outsider perspective that indigenous local knowledge maybe inconsistent, base on superstition, or just plain wrong, but a member of a local culture see it as logical, useful, a consonant with other beliefs (Mundy, 1993). The problem is that, broad access to scientific information is key for people to understand, participate and respond to the challenges that development poses to civilisation, the better they are understood, the better we can respond with

appropriate actions, whether these are activism in public causes or changes at the personal level (de la Carlos, 2000). Thus the perception of respondents that local SMEs are not aware of the concept of sustainable tourism development can be based on western criteria of the concept. Sustainable tourism development is a normative process which involves stakeholder values (Walsh, Jamrozky and Burr 2001). Through the participation of local SMEs, we can understand what is to be sustained, for whom it is to be sustained, and the level at which it is to be sustained (Johnston and Tyrrell, 2005).

Indigenous knowledge for sustainable practices passed down from generation to generation can also be as important as acquired scientific knowledge concerning sustainable practices. This is embedded in both the human and socio-cultural capital of the destination capitals that support sustainable practices. SMEs in most cases are said to be better adapted to the local social resources, like local knowledge, skills, arts, traditions and production base, local products marketed and consumed, local skills valued and used, while local traditions are followed and/or revived, and in such a harmonic co-operation a better development potential can be more secure not only for the present but for the future (Vagionis, 2007). This is because, cultural heritage and other traditional fabrics of destinations have increasingly become popular tourists' attraction and important part of the tourism consumption.

Scientific knowledge, and association of the concept of sustainability to western beliefs and values might suggest that local SMEs have limited knowledge about conservation practices, and argue that they can endanger habitats and the ecosystem or create a possible risk to make wildlife and cultural assets to be endangered from their traditional practices for business ventures. Thus, knowledge of the local environment may be the bases for building more sustainable strategies because they begin from where the people are, rather than from where development experts would like them to be (Marsden, 1991). Local SMEs are thus a function of society's capacity to organise human energies and productive resources to respond to opportunities and challenges (Jacobs, Macfarlane and Asokan, 1997). Information and further development of sustainable practices should encourage a fusion of local and scientific knowledge taking stock of the human as well as the socio-cultural capital of the destination. Thus the division in respondents' perception concerning SMEs knowledge of the local environment as important for sustainability reflects the differences between local traditional practices and scientific practices of sustainable tourism development. Since respondents in the research are managers of SMEs who are themselves local community members, their perceptions of sustainable practices could be associated with the way indigenous people perceived sustainability, in contrast to the scientific

development of the concept. Tourism products they create are built upon this understanding. Human capital on the destination is thus essential for the practice of sustainable tourism development. It is through this component that local traditional practices of sustainable development are incorporated into the concept of sustainable tourism development. It is crucial to make communities to be aware of the role they can take as hosts in contributing to the success of tourism (Young, 1991).

If tourism is to benefit local residents, means must be found to facilitate local participation in the industry; otherwise if they do not receive benefits, they are likely to compete with the tourism industry for the use of scarce natural resources (Wall, 1997). As such and because of economic benefits their businesses provides for them, they might have a commitment to sustainable practices. They are familiar with cultural assets, the built environment, living heritage expressed in distinctive local customs, song and dance, art that reflect the local cultural heritage. Not only could they contribute to conservation measures based on traditional knowledge, but also the development of such knowledge as a supplement of concept for sustainable tourism development. When truly included in development endeavour, they have potentials to contribute to sustainable tourism development.

Thus, indigenous knowledge and sustainability are often intertwined, and often it is the indigenous practice that is sustainable, whilst many modern technologies are harmful to the environment or force local people into economic dependency (Mundy, 1993). Tourism is an experience industry, and it is through the participation of local SMEs (hence local knowledge), that tourists visiting the country can enjoy the artistry, craftsmanship, folklore, nature, and heritage that are part of the main tourism attraction in The Gambia. These businesses taken together makes up what is called the environment of the destination: natural, economic, cultural, and social (Mazilu, 2010). This division in perception concerning sustainable tourism development practices might result from respondents' understanding of the concept influenced by values attached local resources that are utilised by the industry. In essence, they are re-enforcing the importance of the destination capitals which are within their control and utilised in accordance with local needs and local preservation measures.

6.2.1 Most of the establishments are aware of sustainable tourism development.

Whether through local knowledge or scientific knowledge, being aware of the concept of sustainable tourism development is an important foundation for the success of the practice. However, the perception of the majority of respondents in the research is that local SMEs are not aware of sustainable tourism practices. However, this might not necessarily be the case.

The concept of sustainability has been mostly used in relation to ecosystems and natural environment driven by Western aspirations, norms and values. As such most sustainability researches, and in particular in the context of tourism that were conducted have a strong focus on Western societies and their economies which makes the concept difficult to be applied in the context of the Least Developed Countries without aspiring to the ambitions of the west.

Out of 49 sustainable tourism good practices analysed by the World Tourism Organization (2004), they found that, irrespective of whether they were in developed or developing countries, the success of these projects is linked to local community involvement in the planning, development and management of the projects in over 40% of examples. As local actors, the survival and the existence of their businesses rely heavily on local resources that are used as tourism products. It is through local knowledge in SMEs built through various channels and networks within the society that provides the tourism experience. It is thus essential to understand how SMEs use such knowledge of the destination that is so unique to them, as well response of their contractors and suppliers of tourists on the destination.

Whilst there is participation of a large number of SMEs operated by local community members, multinational operations still has complete dominance of the tourism business operations in The Gambia. To contribute to sustainable tourism development, a necessary prerequisite is to be aware of the relationship of the concept to the destination capitals. The wide spread of SMEs in The Gambia confirms the level of awareness of the concept of sustainable tourism development in their capacity and potential to encourage spread of the economic benefits of the industry in the country. Many small firms are integral components of the community run by communities in developing countries (Vernon et al., 2003). Through their participation we can understand what is to be sustained, for whom it is to be sustained, and the level at which it is to be sustained (Johnston and Tyrrell, 2005). Thus, it could be argued that sustainable practices has been taking places in such destinations in their own ways, however, most practitioners might not regard their ways of practice scientific and therefore regards them as unaware of the concept. This is because the concept is usually associated with western believes and values.

6.2.2 Local investors play an essential role in sustainable tourism

Behind the rationale that local investors play an essential role in sustainable tourism development includes their ability to respond to demand, and potential to ensure the competitiveness of the tourism industry, maximise the fair distribution of the economic and social benefits of tourism on the host destination, and empower local communities in taking part in conservation of natural resources, and to ensure respect for culture and traditions on the destination. With the findings in this research, showing a large participation of local SMEs in tourism development on the destination, a majority of whom are said to be aware of the concept of sustainable tourism development, claiming to put emphasis on the local products, it seems that they play an essential role in sustainable tourism development.

The majority of respondents agreed that “local investors play an essential role in sustainable tourism practices. Without the involvement and participation of local stakeholders (SMEs) who are more aware of the local environment, efforts for sustainable tourism development could be difficult to carry out in LDCs. Through their participation we can understand what is to be sustained, for whom it is to be sustained, and the level at which it is to be sustained (Johnston and Tyrrell, 2005). SMEs are formed out of the human and socio-cultural capital on the destination that organises the available resource as an attraction for both tourists as well as for foreign investors who contract their services and facilities. Therefore despite the split in perceptions concerning SMEs knowledge of the local environment, and whether tourism is operated in a sustainable manner in The Gambia, it is generally agreed that the practice is important for the industry in the country. They therefore place strong emphasis on local products, putting more weight on the perceptions on the importance of the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism as an important component of the destination capital.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Model for sustainable tourism development in LDCs

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the conclusions arrived at by suggesting a model for sustainable tourism in accordance with the findings from the research questions developed from Sharpley's (2010) destination capitals model. The components of the proposed model are derived from the perceptions of managers of SMEs on sustainable tourism development in The Gambia. The following sub research questions provided the answers leading to the development of the model:

- 1 What does sustainable tourism development mean for managers of SMEs in The Gambia?
- 2 What is the role of indigenous in SMEs to induce sustainable tourism development in The Gambia?

The chapter first elaborates on the findings of the research, and proceeds to present a model of sustainable tourism development that could be applicable for LDCs. It provides the research implications and contributions to sustainable tourism development and business administration literature, to practitioners as well as for policy. The limitations, recommendations, and finally the suggestions for further research are also presented.

7.1 Meaning of sustainable tourism development to SMEs in The Gambia.

With examples from The Gambia, awareness of the concept of sustainable tourism development, and potentials for local SMEs with emphasis on the destination capitals, this research explains the meaning of the concept to SMEs in LDCs. In order to enable support for sustainable development practices, it seems that the environmental, and sociocultural dimensions of sustainable tourism development is to be central for the success of the concept in LDCs. In accordance with the perception of managers of SMES, they generally agreed that:

- Sustainable tourism development will provide better economic benefits.
- Sustainable tourism development will improve the environment.
- Sustainable tourism development will improve living standards.
- Sustainable tourism development will bring socio-cultural awareness.
- Sustainable practices will reduce negative impacts of tourism development.

Although all the components of the destination capitals; environmental, human, socio-cultural, technological, economic and political capital' are all needed in the efforts for sustainable tourism development, it is specifically found in this research that the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism development seem to be more relevant followed by socio-cultural dimensions. Whilst technological, economic and political capital' are also needed, and in fact playing a crucial role in the practice of the concept of sustainable tourism development, they might not be easily accessible to the poor and marginalised locals. The results thus show that:

- Managers of SMEs are fragmented in their perceptions of what sustainable tourism is.
- Hence, the emphasis on the environmental dimensions, the three destination capitals are fundamental for sustainable tourism development in LDCs.
- Indigenous knowledge within SMEs is central to sustainable tourism development.
- Reliance on the three destination capitals is the way forward for the development of for sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

Thus, the findings when interpreted in destination capitals model, sustainable tourism development practices seem to be strongly connected to the environmental capital of the destination serving as a filter for local participation in tourism development. Such a component is available and easily accessible to the local people. It also means the high presence and representation of locally owned SMEs in the tourism business environment utilising the nature, built environment and socioculture on the destination as the bases of the tourism industry in

LDCs. These findings seem to be important elements for poverty alleviation in LDCs as they tend to encourage entrepreneurial skills geared towards exploring the resources from the destination capitals to satisfy community needs as well as for tourists' amusement.

In essence, the environmental, socio-cultural and human capital is the strength in the destination capitals for a sustainable tourism industry in LDCs. This seems to encourage the existence of local SMEs who are empowered to develop products and services from the local environment which is more easily accessible to them, some of which might not have been meant for tourism development but gradually become part of the tourism experience because of demand.

Thus, the destination three capitals seem to motivate local investors to integrate economic, cultural and social policies on the destination to invest in tourism. This encourages the use of both the local and scientific knowledge for the production, protection and preservation of the local environment. Local technology drawn from the local environment, using the socio-cultural and human capital in the provision of facilities, local engineering and building of wells for water supply recycling, preservation and resource protection methods seem to be important elements for a sustainable tourism development in LDCs. The use and matching of local and modern technology thus seems to be important for sustainable tourism development, and requires Knowledge of the local environment, socio-culture and human capitals to support the use of technological capital on the destination.

7.2 The role of indigenous knowledge in SMEs to induce development and specifically in tourism development in The Gambia.

The World Bank (1997) suggests that a country's ability to build and mobilise knowledge capital, is equally essential for sustainable development as the availability of physical and financial capital. The knowledge capital of a country is said to be derived from the indigenous knowledge of the ways of living of its people and its environment, which includes knowledge passed down from generation to generation, experiences and association of meanings of the local people that defines their daily activities and existence. Thus, the skills, roles and people are what are referred to as the human capital on the destination. Local investment in tourism development in The Gambia seems to be largely dependent on such knowledge, and tend to manifest the importance of indigenous knowledge in SMEs in tourism development. Such enterprises contain a unique knowledge of the destination based on a long history of practices, norms and beliefs passed down from generation to generation as opposed to western/modern knowledge and belief systems. They operate in contexts where social interaction occurs through networks of

relationships in local proximity (Grängsjo and Gummesson, 2006). The people and their distinct traditions, cultures, beliefs, ways of living, language and spiritual links with nature became the gateway for local participation in tourism development. This seems to be supported in the findings of the research showing the importance of the environmental, sociocultural and human capital. The skills, knowledge and abilities (human capital) within such firms are intertwined with organisational culture to form unique resources that other firms cannot acquire or apply (Armstrong, 2001). Thus, indigenous knowledge in SMEs seems to be important for tourism development and seems to contribute to economic activities that have potentials to create direct employment in the tourism industry and thus contributing to industrial development.

It is suggested that entrepreneurial activity will involve a perception of needs in one economic sphere and of opportunities in another economic sphere (Andersson, 1987:132). SMEs seem to understand local community needs and factors, and can thus explore opportunities within their disposal to participate in tourism development. Their activities are undertaken for the benefit of indigenous people (Lindsay, 2005). This seems to be recognised in the tourism industry in LCDs. It is an easy route for many locals without capital or formal training to engage in providing products and services to the industry, often based on knowledge of the destination, its history, cultures and traditions, people and the environment. The emphasis on local products is a reflection of such needs, providing opportunities for product development and minimising the much talked about economic leakage of tourism development in LDCs. As such, tourism also aids in regional development (Sindiga, 1999). It thus seems that indigenous knowledge in SMEs can facilitate the expansion of the tourism business activities, and especially to the rural areas. Such knowledge thus tends to contribute to poverty alleviation, distribution of employment and absorbing women in the sector, as well as creating domestic markets for local production.

Emerging Market Group in Ezeuduji and Rid (2011), for instance, suggests in the context of The Gambia that cultural heritage and natural areas of different communities are being considered as key selling value propositions to the tourists beside sun-beach tourism for which the nation has built up a reputation in the tourism sector so far. The unique competence and indigenous knowledge in SMEs are widely recognised as an important part of the economy in poor countries, acting both as the backbone of local economies and as consumers of natural resources (Ubribe and Lofthouse, 2006). The perception of the majority of respondents in this research seems to buttress such importance by suggesting the presence of a large number of SMEs in the tourism business environment providing local products and services as the core of their business activities. This participation base on human capital and knowledge of the destination capitals also

seems to support the provision of tourism facilities and infrastructure in rural areas by thereby enhancing the expansion of the economic benefits of tourism development in LDCs.

Having stakeholder support (Wilson, Fesenmaier, and Van Es (2001), and the involvement of different stakeholders in the early stage of the tourism planning process is essential (Gunn 1988; Inkeep, 1991). In The Gambia for instance, many people depends on the natural environment as a source of income and other forms of subsistence, for instance farming, collecting firewood, building material, medicine and food which can also bring both income and other benefits to locals. Thus, support for the use of traditional knowledge, practices and innovation systems relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources and promote actions on different levels to eradicate poverty, protect human rights and conserve the environment while working in tourism (CSD, 1999). This assumption is supported in the findings of this research suggesting that indigenous knowledge is very important in sustainable tourism development.

7.3 Critical views on sustainable tourism development in the context of LDCs

Sustainable development is said to be based on Western philosophy and concept of development, ways of living and value systems which seems to assume that the world is just one place to live in with identical resources (both human, economical and environmental) as a concept for protecting global resources. Sustainable development as a whole may thus be regarded as a philosophy, and its lack of precision has helped disguise the fundamental orientation that is required if sustainability is to be sought and gained (Wall, 2006). “It primarily tends to be a symbolic rhetoric, with competing interests each redefining on it to suit their own political agendas, rather than serving as an influential basis for policy development” (Andrews, 1997:19). To enable this research to make a critical of view of sustainable tourism development, it is essential to relay it its findings with a reflection on the pillars of the concept, such as the economic, environmental and socio-cultural to understand the possibilities that are available for LCDs and the ability of local SMEs to have influence on dimensions of the destination capitals that support sustainable tourism development on the destination. Hall, (1998) suggests that values that people assign to a given resource, and their perceptions of that resource, will influence the pathways deemed appropriate to achieve outcomes that are considered sustainable.

A reflection on the literature on tourism development in LDCs and its related impacts, the participation of local SMEs, the concept of sustainable tourism development, inclusive development relating them to the findings of the research, it is truly conclusive that a sustainable tourism development practice lies within the destination capitals that are available and accessible

to locals for tourism development. Hence the assumption that the practice of sustainable tourism development should be responsive to the economic, socio-cultural and environmental preservation for the longevity of the destination, more emphasis is required on the local resources that make the destination attractive and accessible on the destination.

The concept of sustainable tourism development advocates the enhancement and prolonged use of the nature, ecosystem and the sociocultural fabrics of a destination in a sustainable manner that is economically, socioculturally and environmental viable for generations to come. Within the industry, there is now an increasing trend towards nature based tourism, contributing to the growth of the ecotourism industry (Eagels and Hoggins, 1998; Fernell, 1999). This has led to the development models attracting tourists to nature areas for economic growth (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1989). Ecotourism has been particularly successful in attracting private investments for the establishment of privately owned natural parks and nature reserves in an increasing number of developing countries, such as Costa Rica, Ecuador, Malaysia and South Africa (UN, 2003). In The Gambia for instance, ecotourism camps and other forms of locally oriented tourism facilities are becoming significant in rural areas attracting tourists to the country side.

However, whilst efforts are being made to encourage the participation of local SMEs in tourism development, it also seems that little have been done to promote education and training in hospitality and tourism geared towards sustainable practices. The findings of this research show fragmented perceptions of what sustainable tourism is. This seems to show that indigenous practices and values for sustainable tourism development might be different western concept of what sustainable tourism development is. In some cases, in an attempt to preserve environments for ecotourism, traditional resource uses and users have been eliminated, thereby depriving local people of their livelihoods (Wall, 1997).

Lack of control by governments over the volume and nature of tourism development has led to a country's dependence on foreign products, foreign investment, and foreign skills (Brohman, Clancy, and Harrison in Scheyvens, (2002:165). Some forms of tourism development have been criticised for the degree of external control and for failing to deliver on promised economic benefits while causing severe social disruptions (Britton; Rodenburg; O'Grady in Pears, 1989). For instance, mainstream "ecotourism", as promoted after the Rio Earth Summit, hasn't always enjoyed a good reputation, and even tour operators have used the concept of sustainable tourism merely as a "greenwash" marketing tool (UN, 2002).

According to Peric (2005), in a purely economic sense, globalisation means increasing the interdependence of markets and production in different countries through trade in goods and services, cross-border flows of capital, international strategic alliances, cooperation, mergers and exchanges of technology. WTO observes that, The General Agreements on Trade regulated by The World Trade organisation with the provision of a broad range of services such as accounting, legal services, road and rail transport, maritime services, education and tourism needs to be subjected to a sustained process of regulatory slackening (WTO, 2001).

Sustainable tourism development is thus said to contain a mechanism of politics in an international scale (Castafieda and Burtner, 2010). In a paper presented to the UN, Simon (2003) suggests that the orientation of wealthy countries' policies regarding aid, trade, and other global issues can profoundly influence on the drivers of development, and are of paramount importance to the challenge of enabling developing countries to develop successfully. Simon further illustrates that developed countries' positions with respect to aid, trade, and other global issues have an impact on development of such countries. The availability of finance and technology are important mechanism that triggers the need for the internationalisation and globalisation of the tourism industry which seem to be acute problems in LDCs are usually financed through foreign aid. Thus, not only the control mechanisms that accompanies such foreign aid, Front and Bendell, (2002) suggests that sustainable tourism standards do not cover the complexity of the tourism products and services, as most standards are specific to environmental issues for accommodation and few standards for tourist destinations and attractions exists. As such, many local SMEs in the tourism industry in LDCs tend to follow the homogenization process described by DiMaggio and Powell, (1983) as isomorphism; a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environment (Hawley in DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

The above assumption seems to be recognised in the hospitality and tourism sector with different certification programs associating the operations with international best practice standards and legitimacy. They seek to legitimate themselves by incorporating institutional features valued in the external environment (Clarke and Newman, 1997), providing legitimacy rather than improve performance, (Meyer, and Rowan 1977).

The institutionalisation of sustainable development is primarily symbolic rhetoric, with competing interests each redefining it to suit their own political agendas, rather than serving as an influential basis for policy development' (Andrews, 1997:19).Consequently, the many adverse

effects of tourism are over-looked due to economic growth (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). The concept of sustainable development seems to put much focus on the environment to suit western values that also seem to be economical for tour operators. In the context of this research the environment and people on the destination are very important elements in the practice of sustainable tourism development. Thus, if the concept is to prove meaningful in LDCs, it seems that increased attention must be given to the destination capitals with attention on the economic and social wellbeing of people that are most affected by the tourism industry.

7.4 Reflections on the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development.

It seems to be difficult to think about sustainable tourism development without thinking about the resources that make up the destination. Sharpley's (2010) destination capitals model for understanding sustainable tourism development includes a variety of capitals; environmental, human, socio-cultural, technological, economic and political capital', all of which seems to entail features of life that SMEs in the LDCs are part of. The pillars of sustainable tourism development; the economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability are also built upon similar components just like that of the destination capitals model. Thus, when sustainable tourism development advocates that the economic, socioculture and environment should be protected, or managed in a manner that promotes its usage in a sustainable manner, it is essential to put emphasis on the destination's resources. From an analysis of the literature on tourism development combined with the findings of the research, a thorough reflection on the destination capitals seem to show the importance of all the components of the model in the efforts for sustainable tourism development. However, despite this, the findings show that the model is more supportive of the environment, socio-cultural and the human capital on the destination for a sustainable tourism development. For instance, an important component of sustainable tourism development is its *economic sustainability* which involves both finance, technology and to more extend, political is very essential in the efforts for sustainable tourism development. However, despite the usefulness of the destination capitals model for sustainable tourism development proposed by Sharpley (2010), the model has not thoroughly considered the limitations of some of its components with realities for LDCs.

LDCs seem to have limited access to the economic, technological and political capitals at the international level. As such, the tourism industry in LDCs tends to be controlled by foreign investment, both in terms of technological and financial investment capital. This seems to have had impacts on how the industry in LDCs is being operated and managed. Tourism industry in such countries is characterised by a high degree of monopoly, which implies a concentration of

services and profits into very few big transnational corporations (Song, 2004). Such destinations display external political and economic structures that maintains their dependency on the metropolitan centre; they are unable to develop unless 'permitted' to do so by the West (Sharpley, 2003:248). They do not only lacked the finance to operate a sustainable tourism industry, but also the transportation, infrastructure, power generating capabilities and the telecommunications network necessary for efficiently conducting commerce, international trade and social and economic development (Soobrain, 1993).

Countries taking part in GATS are required to open up their markets and allow foreign investors to take part in tourism businesses in their countries. This also means that tourism related sectors such as accommodation and tour operating are liberalised to the disadvantage of poor local investors competing with multinational corporations with access to finance, technology and ability to conduct business within the framework of international regulations. The internet for instance as a medium of communication does not seem to be easily accessible to the vast majority of SMEs in LDCs, is now playing a crucial role in the global market. It is an important element of the technological development that is making great impact on tourism development and playing a major role in the changes taking place in the tourism market. Tourism suppliers for example, have traditionally used intermediaries such as travel agents and tour operators to market, promote and sell their products, but with the advancement of technology and growth of the Internet as an e-commerce medium has led to the emergence of online travel intermediaries (or Agencies), online marketing and promotion ventures, and even availability of online booking, payment facilities and e-tickets. Travel suppliers (e.g. airlines, hotels and tour operators) are encouraging consumers to book flight tickets, hotels, car rentals and excursions directly through their own web sites in order to reduce distribution as well as other expensive operating costs. Such facilities and opportunities do not seem to be easily accessible in LDCs and especially in remote rural areas where most local tourism investment seems to take place.

It seems that the *economic, finance, technology and to more extend political capital* are all needed to support the success of the practice of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. However, LDCs seem to have limited access to these principal capitals to support a sustainable tourism development on the destination. At the international level, they have little possibilities to make any meaningful impacts affecting the economic, technological and political capitals for tourism development. They rely on multinational corporations who seem to have easy access to important resources such as airplanes, access to international trade fares for the marketing in the international arena. However, it could also be argued that such challenges faced by LDCs are

only limited at the international level where they seem to play an essential role in supporting sustainable tourism development in LDCs. Despite LDCs' limited access to the economic, technological and political capital, it seems that there are possibilities within the *environmental, socio-cultural and human capitals* on the destination that seem to support and contain the local *economic, finance, technology and political capital* required for sustainable tourism development.

7.4.1 A model for sustainable tourism development in LDCs

Sustainable tourism development research seems to be typically generalised from other contexts that might not be application to LDCs portraying different development needs, capabilities, and resources that are unique to them. To understand possibilities within the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development in LDCs, a thorough reflection of the destination capitals that are available and accessible to local investors is essential.

Despite international issues that seem to limit LDCs access to the economic, technological and political capitals, there seem to be opportunities on the destination that serves similar purposes at the local level to support sustainable tourism development in LDC. This research thus suggests a conceptual framework based on the findings of the study that allows the identification of the components of sustainable tourism within the destination capitals that are likely capable of contributing to a sustainable tourism. The framework facilitates an understanding of the possibilities within destination capitals as a model for sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

To make sense of the economic sustainability of the destination, both the natural and built environment which is the base of production for tourism must also be functional. This seems to agree with the perceptions of the majority of respondents in this research suggesting that sustainable tourism development will improve the environment. Thus, since the natural environment is part of the tourism resources on the destination, as well as a traditional source of food, medicine, energy, shelter, and tourism development, the economic, political and technological capital will seem to support the environmental sustainability of tourism on the destination. At the destination level, political capital for instance might be needed on decisions concerning traditional land ownership sorting the consent of the village elders, family elders or village chief on decisions concerning ownership or use of an area for tourism development.

The major characteristic of customary tenure is that the land is regarded as belonging not to the individual but to the whole social group (Fisher, 1993). Thus, urban areas require systems of tenure and rights which create security for investment not only by individuals, but also by companies, to create employment (Payne, 1996). This *political capital* seems to be linked to socio-

cultural capital, referring to the social network and cultural capital on the destination. Issues of land ownership are handled locally at such levels. Therefore, land ownership and property rights over an area that can be of interest for tourism development can be an important *political capital on the destination* that seem to be accessible to local investors and traditional land owners. It thus seems that the *socio-cultural capital* on the destination is an important component of the *destination capitals* that is linked to the *political capital* taking decisions on land ownership and permission to use land for tourism development.

Although there is a split in perceptions of the respondents concerning the importance of SMEs knowledge of the local environment, specific knowledge within the *human capital* seem to be a reflection on the perceptions of respondents that “local investors play an essential role in sustainable tourism practices”. The sophisticated knowledge of the natural and socio-cultural environment is part of the economic capital that enables local SMEs to create products and services as a base of their products. Thus, the natural and built environment from which tourism in LDCs is highly dependent upon seem to be one of the most important components of the concept of tourism development in such countries as it contains the tourism product that has to be protected from exploitation to maintain its economic usefulness for the destination.

The perception of the majority of respondents in this research is that, “sustainability will provide better economic benefits”. This assumption seems to reflect upon the high presence of local SMEs in the tourism business environment as a manifestation of the importance of indigenous knowledge of the destination acting as a strategy to strengthen the economic sustainability of tourism on the destination. They seem to provide products and services based on opportunities, tourism demand and needs that benefits local communities. For instance, it was found that local investors in The Gambia are directly or indirectly involved in more than 68% of tourism operations. It is said that, financial and investment capital challenges faced by local SMEs in The Gambia are minimised through family savings and contributions, small loans from friends, local networks and credit facilities such as “Susu”; a microfinance scheme normally organised by women thought to have originated from Nigeria and spread to Gambia in the early twentieth century. Such networks are important in support of the economic component of the destination capitals that can support sustainability, which seems to be facilitating possibilities for many local investors to start tourism businesses.

Economic activities involved in tourism are products sold to tourists, drawn from the local environment; natural or built environment developed as attractions. However, the perception of

managers of SMEs in this research is that multinational corporations are not utilising local facilities adequately. This might be a reflection on the assumption that hospitality and tourism operations are institutionalised to suit the desires and ambitions of multinationals. As such, the perception of the majority of respondents in this study is that sustainable tourism development requires the cooperation of all stakeholders. The matching of indigenous Knowledge of the destination capitals and meanings associated to such resources by locals and outsiders or scientific knowledge seem to be essential for the success of the concept sustainable tourism development in LDCs. Most of the local resources that required for tourism development are readily available and accessible to local SMEs. The perception of the majority of respondents is that SMEs puts emphasis on local products. They suggest that *“economies like the Gambia’s is highly driven by local small scale businesses and cultural products are the dominant goods. We are very well connected with the local people”* (personal interview). Such opportunities seem to be important elements of sustainable tourism development in LDCs emerging from the *human capital* on the destination which seem to empower locals to manage the destination’s resources thereby contributing to poverty alleviation on the destination. It also seem to be instrumental in innovativeness with local technology that takes in the social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors that can strengthen a sustainable tourism development.

Thus, despite the fact that modern technology is not easily or freely accessible to local SMEs in LDCs, local technological capital seems to be playing a vital role in the concept of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. SMEs seems to contribute to the innovativeness in providing local technologies such as donkey carts, digging wells to provide water supply and other forms of local technical products that support tourism development on the destination. Some local technologies even seem to part of the tourism experience.

Hence the importance of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development, this research therefore identified the components included in the model that are unique to LDCs, namely; the environmental, socio-cultural and human capital which readily available to local SMEs. The study therefore proposed a model of sustainable tourism development built upon Shapley’s (2010) that would be more enabling for LDCs, hereafter to be referred to as the “destination three capitals model for sustainable tourism development”. The proposed model is based on the findings of this research, making emphasis on the destination capitals that LDCs are available and easily accessible to locals on the destination; the environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals. These three components of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development are important in tourism consumption, local community needs and

industrial development with direct participation and involvement of local SMEs who are largely members of the local community themselves. An alternative model for sustainable tourism development for LDCs based on the destination capitals model revised after the findings of this research is proposed in figure 8.

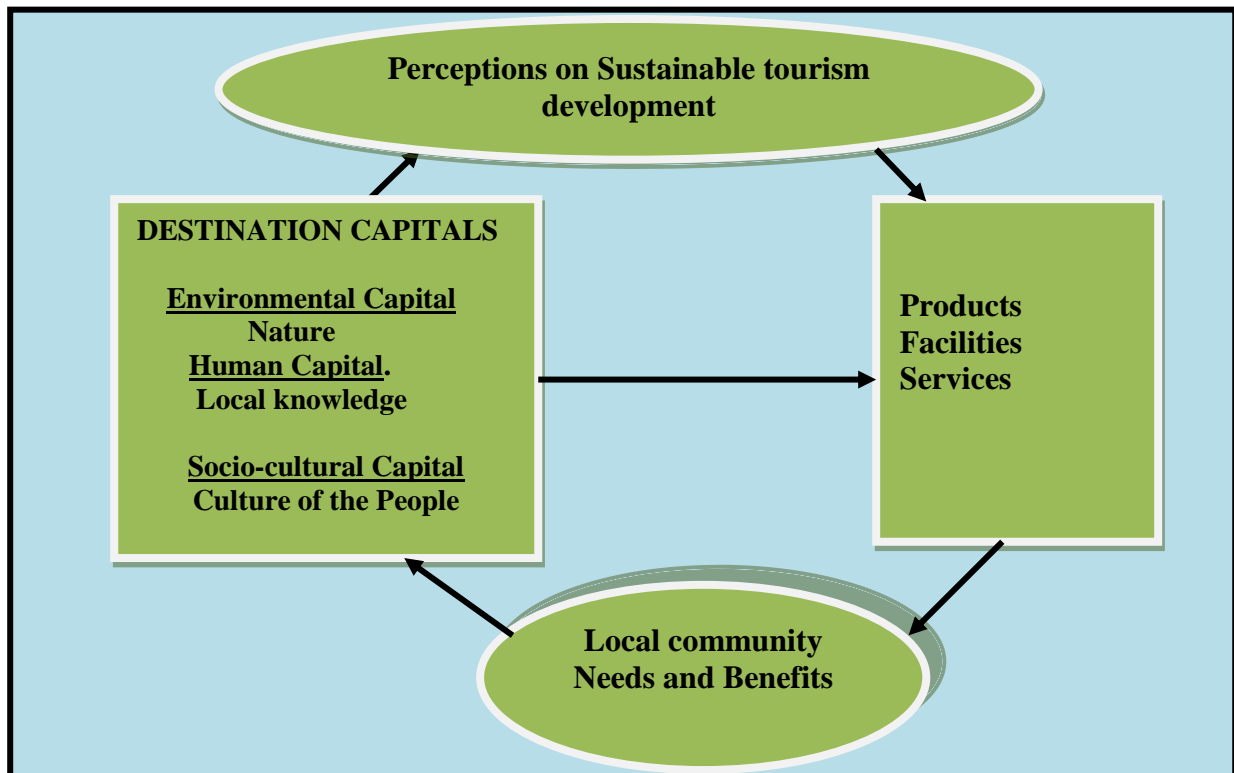


Figure 8. The destination three capitals model for sustainable tourism development in LDCs

Figure 8 presents the components of the destination capitals that seem to be important for the practice of the concept of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. The proposed model suggests that, in the absence of technological, financial and political capital, through local knowledge of the destination, local SMEs could utilise the three destination capitals; *environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals* that they seem to be available and easily accessible to locals enabling them to create tourism products and services in accordance with local community needs thereby encouraging sustainable tourism development in LDC.

LDCs seem to rely on *the environmental, socio-cultural and human capitals* on the destination to create tourism products and services that are utilised by tourists. Knowledge of these components of the destination capitals seem to have some influence on the *economic, political and technological capitals* at the local level and are all important in tourism development in such destinations. This seems to reflect on the perception of the majority of respondents in the research, that SMEs puts

emphasis on local products. It will enhance the inclusion of locals in tourism development, thereby helped to minimise the risk of economic, socio-cultural and environmental degradation caused by tourism on the destination. This seems to be important for sustainable practices, because as part of the tourism product, Morrison, (2002) suggests that cultural symbols include language, religious rituals and art whose shared meanings are from the unique fingerprint of a particular society.

The modified model of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development for LDCs in figure 8 suggests a strong connection between the environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals on the destination on which tourism is heavily dependent upon. Perceptions on sustainable tourism development in the context of this research seems to be influenced by *community needs* and expected benefits, triggering the need to explore the destination capitals for opportunities to create products and services that are utilised by the tourism industry. This seems to be facilitated through *Human capital containing* indigenous knowledge of both the natural and built environment (*environmental capital*) on the destination providing opportunities for *product development, provision of facilities and services* to tourists that could help fulfill local *community needs*. This is anticipated to enhance expected socio-economic benefit by encouraging local production and support for the success of the economic dimension of the practice of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. To a wider extend, the environmental, socio-cultural and human capital seem to encourage innovative ideas developed into local technology. Furthermore, the specific and unique knowledge in local tourism enterprises concerning tourism resources embedded in *the environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals* on the destination also seems to determine the economic, political and technological capitals that are needed for sustainable tourism development.

7.4.2 Environmental capital

The parental paradigm of sustainable tourism development connotes the interconnection between environmental protection, social and economic development. Leisure tourism for instance is heavily dependent on the local environment mostly drawn from the natural environment on the destination and includes land use and modification, attractions in the local vicinities for instance the eco-system, animal life, forest areas, ponds and other natural resources. Most products provided by local SMEs in the tourism industry are either based on such resource or culture and traditions of the people on the destination. The model for sustainable tourism development in figure 8 suggests that the environmental capital on the destination is an important component of sustainable practices as it contains both the built as well as the natural

environment which are all important for the survival of tourism in LDCs, as well as the human existence and survival on the destination.

The local environment is part of the community's means of survival which they also share with tourist who use it for amusement. For instance, traditional places for worship, heritage sites and homes that were not originally meant for tourism are now opened and accessible for tourists to experience. The environmental capital is not only important as tourists' attractions but also for its traditional use as source of food, medicine, energy, shelter and place of worship. Local knowledge of the environment facilitates opportunities for locals to invest in tourism. This could also enhance preservation practices in accordance with indigenous practices thereby prolonging such opportunities. Thus the environment serving both as a source of income from tourism activities with traditional importance as life sustenance for locals would likely encourage SMEs to make responsible decisions that will minimise the negative impacts of their business activities on the natural environment. Preservation of such a resource thus requires local knowledge of the natural environment which is contained within the human capital as suggested in figure 8.

7.4.3 Human capital

Indigenous knowledge is part of the human capital that contains knowledge about the destination. It is an important component of the destination capitals with ability to discover, create and preserve production factors. With the growth of tourism coupled with tourist's demand for additional products and services, it become encouraging for locals to use their knowledge of the local resources and create tourism products that are utilised by tourists. They scout around the destination capitals to provide tourism development needs and create business ventures as part of the tourism experience on the destination. Knowledge of products and services provided to tourists is unique to indigenous/local people as investors on the destination. Broadly speaking, this knowledge is used by local people to make a living in a particular environment (Warren, 1991). With tourist demand, it can now be used to be part of the tourism industry. Thus, not only does new knowledge contribute to technological opportunities, but it also provides opportunities for third party firms, often new ventures (Azoulay and Shane, 2001; Archibald, Betts and Johnston, 2002). The use of radio, TV, mobile phones and the internet is an example of such a development facilitating opportunities for businesses and their partners to communicate within and with the outside world easily.

On the destination level, this can be said to be part of the technological capital that seem to help in increases in productive efficiency arising from the use of mobile telephones in LDCs (Jensen,

2007). A number of people has access to telephony, radio and TV; as many as 80% of the population in the developing world listens to radio at least once a week (Eltzroth and Kenny, 2003). The human capital on the destination recognises these needs and organise the resources in such a manner that even such imported items becomes an important element of sustainable tourism development as it facilitates economic benefits, and with the technological mentioned facilitate easy communication for locals on the destination. It is also thought to have the ability to play an important role in improving the local environment, improve living standards for locals, and provide better socio-cultural awareness of local communities on the destination. In Gambia for instance, with the help of the human capital on the destination, locals were able to organise resources that has a history of traditional importance pass down from generation to generation, utilising traditional knowledge and application of local standards that are significant in efforts for tourism development. An important aspect of this development seems to involve local resource preservation techniques involving the adaptation to traditional methods that are unique to local communities. Notably, sustainability practices can differ from culture to culture; often based on traditional believes of the importance of nature for life sustenance, and meaning of culture and traditions for existence. It thus seems that local knowledge of nature, culture and traditions of local people can be responsive to opportunities for sustainable tourism development. Therefore, engaging the human capital on the destination can be important for the success of local tourism businesses, and for the purpose of sustainable tourism development practices in LDCs.

7.4.4 Socio-cultural capital

Most entrepreneurial development in LDCs starts from informal business activities organised by locals from the family level, exploring opportunities and needs at the community level to set up business ventures. Unlike, multinational corporations, whose business activities are likely based on opportunities for business ventures in LDCs, most local SMEs are created out of community needs usually developed from the socio-cultural capital on the destination. Local networks, associations and connections seem to be an important aspect of tourism development in LDCs utilised by local investors. Through local SMEs such a capital could provide opportunities for tourists to have access to certain attractions with a history of traditional importance with ownership attached to a certain family. The socio-cultural capital on the destination that creates such an important tourism resource that has not only benefited the industry but also an opportunity for local communities to benefit from tourism.

In the context of rural tourism, López and García, (2006), for instance, suggest that tranquility, nature and familiarisation with local customs all play a prominent role in the success of a destination. The assumption herein is that human capital that draws stock from the socio-cultural and environmental capitals on the destination will seem to minimise the dependency on foreign goods and services that are said to be part of the economic leakage factor of tourism in LDCs. As such, SMEs in LDCs thus seem to have the ability to minimise the external threats of market dominance, minimise economic leakage, minimise negative socio-cultural impacts and threats to the biodiversity that are part of the tourism consumption which also has other meanings to local communities on the destination.

The model herein suggests that local need is what influences *local knowledge* to explore the *environmental capital* of the destination including both the *natural and built environment* in the provision of tourism products and services. Creating tourism experiences base on the culture and traditions of the local people on the destination is thus influenced by the *socio-cultural capital* found within the *human capital* on the destination that is passed down from generation to generation. This capital *contains indigenous knowledge* of the destination that explores the environmental capital containing opportunities for tourism product development with economic opportunities and other social benefits for local communities. The suggested model for sustainable tourism development in figure 8 therefore envisages that the pathway to sustainable tourism development could be encouraged through cooperative approaches that are inclusive, ensuring that local SMEs are included in the management and the decision making processes concerning sustainable tourism development and practices.

7.5 Research implications and contributions

In accordance with the findings of this research, the destination capitals model could contribute to the debate as an appropriate method for studying sustainable tourism development in LDCs. The findings of the study suggest emphasis on environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism development in LDCs, which consequently encourages human and socio-cultural capitals of the destination combined to explore, provide and preserve products that are utilised by the tourism industry on the destination.

The study thus contributes to the understanding that, it is the capitals that are more accessible to local SMEs, and the management of which they can influence that is likely to support the practice of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. It also shows the significant dimensions

of the concept of sustainable tourism development in varying degrees; most important is the environmental, then human and socio-cultural capitals of the destination.

The most important capital for sustainable tourism development seems to be *the human capital* which contains not only knowledge of the natural environment, but also the built environment encompassing of the historical heritage and socioculture on the destination. This research thus contributes to tourism research as well as the business administration literature on the contributions of SMEs in Sustainable Tourism Development in LDCs, and to add too to existing knowledge concerning awareness and understanding of the concept in the context of such countries. Based on the destination three capitals as the resources on which tourism depends upon, the study will contribute to current theory by showing that, hence the environmental capital it is the local SMEs that could be the most suitable route for the attainment of the concept of sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

The most important expected contribution of this work would be its ability to add to current understanding of the value of indigenous knowledge of the destination within SMEs and its importance in sustainable tourism development. It clearly shows the fragmented views about sustainable tourism development in LDCs. It will further strengthen our understanding on the limitations of the destination capitals as a solution for sustainable tourism development. Furthermore, this research has also lifted the potentials of SMEs by showing that they are part of the local communities with distinct cultures and traditions that are useful for both the production and preservation of the tourism product in LDCs. The study has assisted to this understanding uplifting their unique importance in the utilisation of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development. It study can also be a useful tool for policy recommendation to enhance sustainable practices in LDCs.

7.5.1 Implications for practitioners

The tourism industry operates in a manner that is very challenging for LDCs, and displays varying tensions that need to be understood and addressed. Practitioners have argued the need to generate more benefits, and minimise the negative impacts that tourism development in poor destinations comes with. This has been a constant evolving debate at governmental, civil-society and academic level, all propagating a fair distribution of earnings of tourism to enhance better living standard for host communities, thus minimise economic leakages, improve environmental and socio-cultural protection to make the industry sustainable. This research shows that:

- The sustainable tourism development is dependent on the human capital dimensions of the concept of sustainable tourism development, putting Local SMEs in the frontline for the success of the practice.
- Human capital which contains indigenous knowledge of the destination is important for product development and consequently for sustainable tourism development,
- There are fragmented views of what sustainable tourism means in LDCs
- Cooperation is required from all stakeholders in the practice for sustainable tourism development in LDCs.

7.5.2 Theoretical Implications

An implication that is identical with many research findings through the environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals of the destination is that:

- Sustainable tourism development will provide better economic benefits.
- Sustainable tourism development will improve the environment.
- Sustainable tourism development will improve living standards.
- Sustainable tourism development will bring socio-cultural awareness.
- Sustainable practices will reduce negative impacts of tourism development.

However, unique theoretical implications of this research are:

- Review of the destination capitals model reducing it to environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals as a model for sustainable tourism development in LDCs.
- Importance of indigenous knowledge in sustainable tourism development in LDCs.
- Sustainable development in LDCs is different from sustainable development in industrialised nations.

7.5.2.1 Review of the destination capitals

Although not all the components of the destination capitals are found to be accessible to LDCs or has any form of influence over, this study re-enforces the importance and relevance of Sharpley's destination capitals as a model for sustainable tourism development. It shows the components of the destination capitals that seem to be more relevant to support a sustainable tourism development in LDCs; the environmental, human and socio-cultural capitals. These capitals are supposed to be the strength of LDCs in the efforts for sustainable tourism development in such destinations.

7.5.2.2 Indigenous knowledge

One of the most important components of the destination capitals found to be relevant for sustainable practices in LDCs is the human capital on the destination. This is because it contains knowledge of the destination from an indigenous perspective including the understanding of the environment, socio-culture, norms and values, ways of living and history of the people on the destination. People are historically and culturally bound and thus have a peculiar knowledge system, which enables them not only to survive, but also to become a civilised community (Ntuli, 1999; Vilakavi, 1999 in Maila and Loubser, 2003).

Environmental, socio-cultural degradation and economic are among the issues tourism is often accused in destination countries. Mostly, it is the local communities who are affected by these negative impacts. The diverse perceptions of respondents on how sustainable tourism is practiced in The Gambia seem to show the relevance of local's understanding and knowledge of the practice of the concept. The majority of the respondents agreed that there is need for cooperation of all stakeholders, reflecting upon, and exploring both indigenous and western knowledge and their integration into the practice of sustainable tourism development in LDCs. Knowledge is a national heritage and a national resource, and it is essential to develop and utilise this form of knowledge too to deal with the challenges at hand (Maila, 2001).

7.5.2.3 Sustainability in LDCs

An important theoretical implication of this study is that, the practice of sustainable tourism development does not seem to be universal. In The Gambia for instance, the concept seem to have a historical socio-cultural and traditional bearing where locals have had their ways and means of survivals in regards to conservation practices imbedded in the concept. For instance, in many western countries, where parks are maintained with trees and flowers for relaxation, family outing and recreational activities, might be otherwise in LCDs with different functions. In The Gambia for instance, such parks might have a total different meaning with important social, mystical and medical functions. Thus, local communities may also benefit in economic terms as well as create a commitment to conservation and sustainable development (UN 2001). Where tourism industry is heavily dependent on the environment, preservation for the purpose of sustainable practices might therefore not only be considered as opportunities for economic gains, but also for the prolonged use of the environment in regards to its traditional functions and well being of local communities.

7.6 Transferability of the research findings

The criteria to define SMEs in this research is based on the nature of the operations, their small size and been characterised as small or medium by referring to the structured sector that falls under the purview of the organised economic activities within tourism in the country and are registered with The Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA). Therefore, even multinationals/ foreign companies with similar characteristics in terms of employment capacity as local SMEs are included in the survey. The findings of this research are in the context of LDCs.

The Gambia as a typical LDC, shares common characteristics with other LDCs. It therefore seems that the findings of this study can be generalised to similar situations in other LDCs. Although a cause of concern can be the positiveness of the findings, this research can still claim validity by truly claiming to represent the phenomenon being studied and can be applied in similar situations to other LDCs. A concern is that SMEs might be claiming to have the ability, knowledge of or are practicing the concept of sustainable tourism development, whilst in actual fact these perceptions might concern what seems profitable for their businesses and not be in the best interest of local communities. However, with the model that has come out of this study, sustainable tourism development in LDCs seem to be supported by the destination three capitals; environmental capital, socio-cultural capital and human capital.

7.7 Recommendations for further research

The findings of this study seems to suggest that a more complete strategy of sustainable tourism development in LDCs should be more focused on three destination capitals that are unique to the destination, the environmental, sociocultural and human capital. Future work on this study should thus apply the suggested conceptual framework that was adopted in this research to expand the current study for an in-depth study of the destination capitals for sustainable tourism development in the context of events development in LDCs.

Indigenous knowledge of sustainable tourism development practices, the efficiency and effectiveness of SMEs in regards to resource use are important areas that also need thorough investigation. An extensive use of the three destination capitals model for sustainable tourism development in LDCs could therefore serve as the foundation for the PhD of this research.

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APPENDIX 1 Definition of least developed countries.

The least developed countries (LDCs) are a group of countries that have been identified by the UN as "least developed" in terms of their low gross national income (GNI), their weak human assets and their high degree of economic vulnerability.

The term "Least Developed Countries (LDCs)" describes the world's poorest countries with following 3 criteria:

- **Low-income criterion**
based on a three-year average estimate of the gross national income (GNI) per capita (under \$750 for inclusion, above \$900 for graduation)
- **Human resource weakness criterion**
involving a composite Human Assets Index (HAI) based on indicators of:
(a) nutrition; (b) health; (c) education; and (d) adult literacy.
- **Economic vulnerability criterion**
based on indicators of the instability of agricultural production; the instability of exports of goods and services; the economic importance of non-traditional activities (share of manufacturing and modern services in GDP); merchandise export concentration; and the handicap of economic smallness.

Source: Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, (2011)

http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/least_developed_countries.htm

Appendix 2 Declaration on the Right to Development

Bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations relating to the achievement of international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian nature, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recognizing that development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting there from,

Considering that under the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in that Declaration can be fully realized,

Recalling the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

Recalling further the relevant agreements, conventions, resolutions, recommendations and other instruments of the United Nations and its specialized agencies concerning the integral development of the human being, economic and social progress and development of all peoples, including those instruments concerning decolonization, the prevention of discrimination, respect

for and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the maintenance of international peace and security and the further promotion of friendly relations and co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter,

Recalling the right of peoples to self-determination, by virtue of which they have the right freely to determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development,

Recalling also the right of peoples to exercise, subject to the relevant provisions of both International Covenants on Human Rights, full and complete sovereignty over all their natural wealth and resources,

Mindful of the obligation of States under the Charter to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Considering that the elimination of the massive and flagrant violations of the human rights of the peoples and individuals affected by situations such as those resulting from colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, all forms of racism and racial discrimination, foreign domination and occupation, aggression and threats against national sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity and threats of war would contribute to the establishment of circumstances propitious to the development of a great part of mankind,

Concerned at the existence of serious obstacles to development, as well as to the complete fulfilment of human beings and of peoples, constituted, inter alia, by the denial of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and considering that all human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interdependent and that, in order to promote development, equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the implementation, promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and that, accordingly, the promotion of, respect for and enjoyment of certain human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot justify the denial of other human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Considering that international peace and security are essential elements for the realization of the right to development,

Reaffirming that there is a close relationship between disarmament and development and that progress in the field of disarmament would considerably promote progress in the field of development and that resources released through disarmament measures should be devoted to the economic and social development and well-being of all peoples and, in particular, those of the developing countries,

Recognizing that the human person is the central subject of the development process and that development policy should therefore make the human being the main participant and beneficiary of development,

Recognizing that the creation of conditions favourable to the development of peoples and individuals is the primary responsibility of their States,

Aware that efforts at the international level to promote and protect human rights should be accompanied by efforts to establish a new international economic order,

Confirming that the right to development is an inalienable human right and that equality of opportunity for development is a prerogative both of nations and of individuals who make up nations, *Proclaims* the following Declaration on the Right to Development:

Article 1

1. The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.
2. The human right to development also implies the full realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, which includes, subject to the relevant provisions of both International Covenants on Human Rights, the exercise of their inalienable right to full sovereignty over all their natural wealth and resources.

Article 2

1. The human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development.
2. All human beings have a responsibility for development, individually and collectively, taking into account the need for full respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as their duties to the community, which alone can ensure the free and complete fulfilment of the human being, and they should therefore promote and protect an appropriate political, social and economic order for development.

3. States have the right and the duty to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting there from.

Article 3

1. States have the primary responsibility for the creation of national and international conditions favourable to the realization of the right to development.
2. The realization of the right to development requires full respect for the principles of international law concerning friendly relations and co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.
3. States have the duty to co-operate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development. States should realize their rights and fulfil their duties in such a manner as to promote a new international economic order based on sovereign equality, interdependence, mutual interest and co-operation among all States, as well as to encourage the observance and realization of human rights.

Article 4

1. States have the duty to take steps, individually and collectively, to formulate international development policies with a view to facilitating the full realization of the right to development.

2. Sustained action is required to promote more rapid development of developing countries. As a complement to the efforts of developing countries, effective international co-operation is

essential in providing these countries with appropriate means and facilities to foster their comprehensive development.

Article 5

States shall take resolute steps to eliminate the massive and flagrant violations of the human rights of peoples and human beings affected by situations such as those resulting from apartheid, all forms of racism and racial discrimination, colonialism, foreign domination and occupation, aggression, foreign interference and threats against national sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity, threats of war and refusal to recognize the fundamental right of peoples to self-determination.

Article 6

1. All States should co-operate with a view to promoting, encouraging and strengthening universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without any distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

2. All human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interdependent; equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the implementation, promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

3. States should take steps to eliminate obstacles to development resulting from failure to observe civil and political rights, as well as economic social and cultural rights.

Article 7

All States should promote the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security and, to that end, should do their utmost to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control, as well as to ensure that the resources released by effective disarmament measures are used for comprehensive development, in particular that of the developing countries.

Article 8

1. States should undertake, at the national level, all necessary measures for the realization of the right to development and shall ensure, inter alia, equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income. Effective measures should be undertaken to ensure that women have an active role in the development process. Appropriate economic and social reforms should be carried out with a view to eradicating all social injustices.

2. States should encourage popular participation in all spheres as an important factor in development and in the full realization of all human rights.

Article 9

1. All the aspects of the right to development set forth in the present Declaration are indivisible and interdependent and each of them should be considered in the context of the whole.

2. Nothing in the present Declaration shall be construed as being contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, or as implying that any State, group or person has a right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the violation of the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenants on Human Rights.

Article 10

Steps should be taken to ensure the full exercise and progressive enhancement of the right to development, including the formulation, adoption and implementation of policy, legislative and other measures at the national and international levels.

Source: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Geneva, Switzerland: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/74.htm>

APPENDIX 3 RESEARCH QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

This section concerns general information about your corporation / institution. Kindly answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

SECTION ONE

1. Which category of operation does your establishment belongs? Please tick

Hotel and Restaurant	
Hotel only	
Restaurant	
Lodge	
Equipment Hirer	
Eco-camp	
Service provider	
Art & Craft vendor	
Flight tour operator	
Ground tour operator	
Car rental	
Tourist taxi	
Public sector (government, NGO, parastatal)	
Other	

2. Please indicate if your operation is within or outside the tourism Development Area (TDA)

TDA Outside TDA

3. What is the ownership of your operation?

1

2

3

4

Multinational

Locally own

Multination-Partnership
with local resident

Private foreign owner

- 4 What is the size of the operation; e.g. how many seats if it is a Restaurant?
and how many rooms if it is a hotel/lodge/camp.....
- 5 Please indicate the number fulltime (or equivalent) employees in your establishment.....
- 6 How many of your fulltime employees are Men?.....
- 7 How many of your fulltime employees are Women?.....
- 8 Indicate in the statement (s) that best fits where the senior managers in your establishment come from. Please tick

All Senior managers are foreign nationals	
All Senior managers are local residents	
There are no local resident managers	
There are no foreign national managers	
Managers are a mixture of local residents and foreign nationals	

SECTION TWO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

This section seeks your opinions on sustainable tourism

9. Are you aware of the term sustainable tourism ? Yes No

10. If you are aware, how did you heard about sustainable tourism?

11. Please indicate your level of agreement /disagreement with the following statements. Please tick the number that best corresponds to your opinion.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Tourism in The Gambia is operated in a sustainable manner. (Please circle the number that best corresponds to your opinion	1	2	3	4	5
The practice of sustainable tourism is very important for the industry.	1	2	3	4	5
Most of the establishments are aware of sustainable practices	1	2	3	4	5
Local investors will play an essential role in sustainability	1	2	3	4	5
Multinational corporations plays an essential role in sustainability	1	2	3	4	5
Sustainability requires cooperation from all stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5

12 . I am very interested in knowing about sustainable tourism? (Please circle the number that best corresponds to your interest).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	2	3	4	5

13. Who do you think should take the leading role in implementing sustainable tourism? (Please tick).

The Public Sector	The Community	The Private Sector	All Stakeholders	Others (please indicate)

The following statements ask you to consider sustainable tourism in general terms.

14. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements. Please circle the number that best corresponds to your opinion.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Sustainable tourism development will provide better direct economic benefits to society	1	2	3	4	5
Sustainable tourism will improve the environment	1	2	3	4	5
Sustainable tourism will help to improve the living standards of host communities	1	2	3	4	5
Sustainable tourism will bring better socio-cultural awareness	1	2	3	4	5
Sustainable tourism will benefit tourists, and the industry	1	2	3	4	5
Sustainable tourism will reduce the negative impacts of tourism	1	2	3	4	5

15. The following statements are very important to the commercial and sustainable success of tourism businesses in The Gambia. For each of the statements, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement using the following scale.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The degree of government regulations	1	2	3	4	5
Conduciveness of investment environment	1	2	3	4	5
The availability of skilled Manpower	1	2	3	4	5
The degree of political stability	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Support for local investors	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of products & services required by customers	1	2	3	4	5
The degree of competition	1	2	3	4	5
Finance and capital acquisition for local investors	1	2	3	4	5
Marketing and promotion of local products	1	2	3	4	5
Technology	1	2	3	4	5
Quality services & products	1	2	3	4	5
Access to international markets.	1	2	3	4	5

Other (please explain).....

SECTION THREE

1. How many years have you been operating in The Gambia? _____
2. Do you operate in any of the following regions? If yes please mark the appropriate region with an X.

West Africa	
East Africa	
Southern African	
North Africa	
Central Africa	
South America	
South East Asia	
The Caribbean	

3. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Stakeholders are environmentally, socially and economically friendly in their operations	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals are environmentally, socially and economically friendly in their operations	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals are very influential in the industry	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals provide training for skilled jobs to local employees	1	2	3	4	5
Local employees are involved in the decision making of multinationals	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals use local facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals utilise local products	1	2	3	4	5
Our business policy restricts cooperation with local SMEs	1	2	3	4	5
Local products and services are included in our marketing activities abroad	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals have limited cooperation with local SMEs in terms of business operations	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals put emphases on local food, traditions and cultures	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals are more interested in profit maximization at minimum cost	1	2	3	4	5
Business strategies of multinationals are ethical	1	2	3	4	5

It is the duty of Multinationals to contribute to the preservation of resources which the company uses	1	2	3	4	5
Some profits of the company goes back to the local community to help preserve and protect the area where customers visit	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals take responsibility for damage to the environment by your potential use (e.g. use of water in a dry area, use of energy efficient measures, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
Conservation/reduction measures are undertaken for water, waste and energy	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs knowledge of the local environment is important for sustainability	1	2	3	4	5

4. Please answer to the following statements to the best of your knowledge with yes or no how your establishment deals with such issues.

	YES	NO
Provide staff with information, tips and training on how to be more environmentally responsible		
There is an environmental policy to adhere to		
Travelling in groups of small numbers has less impact on the flora and fauna in an area		
We make suggestions to clients to purchase local products to support the local communities		
We inform tourists not to purchase products made from endangered species		
We support local projects by donating a percentage of profits to wildlife protection or social causes		
We inform our clients of cultural or religious issues where they should be considerate		
We make investments in training and education		

SECTION FOUR

1. How many years have you been operating in the industry?.....
2. Do you have any cooperation with multinational corporations? Yes No
3. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SMES are environmentally, socially and economically friendly in their operations	1	2	3	4	5
SMES provide training for skilled jobs to local employees	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs knowledge of the local environment is important for sustainability	1	2	3	4	5
Employees are involved in the decision making of the business	1	2	3	4	5
Multinational uses local facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals utilise local products	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals have limited cooperation with local SMEs in terms of business operations	1	2	3	4	5
Local SMEs depends on multinationals	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs put emphasis on local food, traditions and cultures	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals are more interested in profit maximization	1	2	3	4	5
Business strategies of SMEs are ethical	1	2	3	4	5
It is the duty of Multinationals to contribute to the preservation of resources which the company uses	1	2	3	4	5
Some profits of the company goes back to the local community to help preserve and protect the area where customers visit	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs take responsibility for damage to the environment by your potential use (e.g. use of water in a dry area, use of energy efficient measures, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
conservation/reduction measures are undertaken for water, waste and energy	1	2	3	4	5
provide staff with information, tips and training on how to be more environmentally	1	2	3	4	5

responsible				
SMEs have no influence in the industry	1	2	3	4
	5			

SECTION FIVE

1. Please indicate which institution you are working with.....
2. Kindly circle the appropriate number which best corresponds to your perception tourism business environment in The Gambia.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There is an environmental policy to adhere to	1	2	3	4	5
Local investors (SMEs) are important in sustainable practices.	1	2	3	4	5
Local investors (SMEs) knowledge of the environment is important part of sustainability	1	2	3	4	5
There are prescribed environmental regulations to be followed by all stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5
Local stakeholders are considered in our sustainable strategic plans	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals are environmentally, socially and economically friendly in their operations	1	2	3	4	5
SMES are environmentally, socially and economically friendly in their operations	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs utilise local products	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals utilise local products	1	2	3	4	5
Multinational uses local facilities	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs utilise local products	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals have limited cooperation with local SMEs in terms of business operations	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs put emphases on local food, traditions and cultures	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals put emphases on local food, traditions and cultures	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs are very interested in profit maximization at minimum cost	1	2	3	4	5

Multinationals are very interested in profit maximization at minimum cost	1	2	3	4	5
Business strategies of SMEs are ethical	1	2	3	4	5
Business strategies of multinationals are ethical	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs are very concern about socio-cultural impacts of tourism	1	2	3	4	5
It is the duty of SMEs to contribute to the preservation of resources which the company uses	1	2	3	4	5
It is the duty of Multinationals to contribute to the preservation of resources which the company uses	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs take responsibility for damage to the environment by the potential use (e.g. use of water in a dry area, use of energy efficient measures, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
Multinationals take responsibility for damage to the environment the potential use (e.g. use of water in a dry area, use of energy efficient measures, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
Conservation/reduction measures are undertaking for water, waste and energy	1	2	3	4	5
Provide staff with information, tips and training on how to be more environmentally responsible	1	2	3	4	5
The products provided by SMEs are not endangered	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs lacks the technology and know how to operate sustainable practices	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION SIX
DEMOGRAPHIC SECTION

1. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with how tourism affects you (in terms of socio-economy and environment)

	Very negatively affected	Some what negatively affected	Not affected	Some what positively affected	Very much positively affected
Economic	1	2	3	4	5
Social	1	2	3	4	5
Environment	1	2	3	4	5
General	1	2	3	4	5

2 Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The industry's food supply is highly foreign dependent	1	2	3	4	5
Supply of tourism goods and services are designed around perceived customer demand	1	2	3	4	5
Customers show little interest in local food and drink	1	2	3	4	5
Local agriculture is an important part of tourism	1	2	3	4	5
Tourism industry helps to expand local products wholesale facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Local entrepreneurs responds to the changing demands of the market	1	2	3	4	5
Local SMEs are highly dependent on multinational corporations	1	2	3	4	5
SMEs should concentrate on local products for sustainable reasons	1	2	3	4	5

3. Please indicate your age group with an X in the appropriate groups provided below.

20-24	
25-29	
30-39	
40-49	
50-59	
60+	

4 Gender: Male Female

5 Please indicate your Level of education /training in hospitality and tourism in the table below:

High School Certificate	
Secondary School Leaving Certificate	
2 years vocational training	
College diploma	
University Degree	
Post Graduate Degree	
No formal education	

6. Is your education and training related to hospitality and tourism? Yes No

7. What is your position in the establishment / institution?

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Appendix 4 Qualitative survey questionnaire

This survey concerns your perceptions on Sustainable Tourism Development. It is purely for academic purpose only. Thank you for your time and cooperation

1. Why, how and when did you start your business? (elaborate on the motivation behind the initiative- opportunities to start the business).
2. How did you get your finance when you start your business?
3. What role did your family- extended family and friends contribute to the start of your business?
4. What kind of products/ services do you provide?
5. Are your products/services locally produced?
6. The inclusion of cultural products is useful for the tourism industry, why?
7. How connected are you with the local community in relation to the product/ services you provide to the market?
8. How do you sell your products/ services?
9. How do you do the distribution, promotion and marketing of your product/ services?
10. Who are benefiting most from this business?
11. How do you think your business can contribute to bringing benefits of tourism in the country?
12. Tourism threatens and often destroys locals' traditional means of livelihood, local self-reliance, or ruin local industries- what is your perception of this?
13. What measures do you take to protect local resources you are using as a product from being degraded, or misused?

Appendix 5 Responses from five participants- description of their business operations

COMPANY A

The company is new founded by a native Gambia and a US citizen in 2009, to establish a link between The Gambia and North America. This is a market that has been left untouched, and with The Gambia being a great tourist destination. With tourism as the dominant industry in The Gambia due to its beautiful sunshine, sandy beaches, great hotels, food and hospitality and vibrant culture. However, most tourists that visit The Gambia are from Europe. The Gambia played a vital role during the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade and the advent of Alex Haley's "Roots" with Kunta Kinteh, tracing his 'roots' back to the village of Jufureh in the Gambia (West Africa). Being a citizen of the Gambia and Alumni of the University of the Gambia, I believe it is my noble duty to contribute to the Socio-economic development of the Gambia. We are a tour group that adds an educational component and volunteering opportunities in its package. We offer our customers the opportunity to do volunteer work in the Gambia. Finally, we also offer educational ventures through study abroad programs between the University of the Gambia and other Universities in the United States. We take tourists out on adventures to visit various places of interest, take part in various activities to give them an in-depth insight into Gambian culture and daily life. We clearly explain and expose them to The Gambian culture and way of life. We give them the opportunity to meet and mingle with the local people and get a first hand understanding and experience Gambian culture and way of life (daily living). This gives guests an opportunity to ask any questions they may have and also share their experiences. This will provide an in-depth understanding of Gambian culture and a unique and everlasting experience.

We financed our business from our personal funds and savings. Our families and friends provided us with lots of moral support and advice. They also helped with our operations helping us give our customers an experience of a life time during their visit to the Gambia. Another support we received from them was helping us spread the word out about our business and what we do. We work hand-in-hand with the local people making them active participants in the whole process. This helps the local people share their culture, learn about other cultures and earn some money. Making the locals active participants in the whole process will motivate them to make sure their guests have an everlasting experience. Because cultural products are what makes a country unique and symbolizes the whole experience. Economies like the Gambia's is highly driven by local small scale businesses and cultural products are the dominant goods. We are very well connected with the local people. We sell our products/ services through the internet, company website, Personal selling and word-of-mouth, Travel Fairs, School Presentations, Direct Mail, Newspaper publications and ads. Our distribution channels are through the internet, books, academic journals, television shows, newspaper ads, travel and other publications, academic organizations, personal selling and word-of mouth.

The ones that benefits most from our company are the customers, and then the local people and small scale enterprises that get an opportunity to share their culture, make friends, sell their products and above all make some money. Our volunteer product has been able to provide professional training to Gambians. Our volunteers held two trainings; one for journalists and media personnel and another for people working with disable people. Third, the University of the Gambia and its students benefitted from lectures and seminars by University professors from the U.S through the company. Donation of books to the UTG library and establishment of partnerships with Universities in the U.S.A. We are striving to exploit this market that will bring American tourists to the Gambia all year round that will also help with the problem of seasonal tourism plaguing the Gambia tourism industry. It is a fact that "Tourism threatens and often destroys locals' traditional means of livelihood, local self-reliance, or ruin local industries"- but if the locals are educated on the benefits and disadvantages of tourism and made active

participants/stakeholders then this threat can be easily eliminated. We recruit the locals to serve as tour guides giving them the opportunity to share their culture and earn a living. Staff training is thorough, and focuses on the need for staff to provide concise information to 'adventurers' and answer their concerns.

COMPANY B

After completion of my grade 12 in 2001, I was unemployed until 2004 when I was voluntary working as an assistant to one of my friends who used to sell fresh fruit juice on the beach. One of my customers agrees to pay my studies at business training centre where I obtain my single diplomas in structure & management of travel and tourism and information technology. In 2005 a friend of mine borrowed me 2000 dalasis where start my own fresh fruit juice bar. My family-extended family and friends give me courage as they are very poor and they cannot support me financially. I provide local product and service which I think would have more benefit to country's economic. Cultural product would contribute towards learning from others which I think would contribute towards cross-cultural misunderstanding of my country and abroad. I concentrate on linking local community to tourism industry were I providing local transport, guides..., and entertainment. I sell my products/ services through recommendation by satisfied customers. Distribution, promotion and marketing of the product/ services are done through my website where I publish my past and future activities. Those benefiting most from this business is the local community. I provide product/ services that link tourism and local community down to the rural level. Tourism threatens and often destroys locals' traditional means of livelihood, local self-reliance, or ruin local industries, but it also bring lot of positive impact to the country so, what we should do is, to introduce responsible and sustainable tourism which promote the welfare of the local population in a responsible and sustainable way. We should introduce a code on ethic which tourists should follow while in the country. The measures I take to protect local resources am using as a product from being degraded, or misused, is Through responsible tourism where the local should learn how to minimise negative impact of tourism and maximises positive ones. In doing this we need to learn how preserve and sustain our tourism product.

COMPANY C

Started in 1997 with the intension of providing accommodation in a family environment. This was done through self financing from own savings. My family, extended family and friends helps in running the business. We provide accommodation for tourists in a family setting, providing locally products and services, among others, drumming and cooking lessons. We are well connected with the sector and the market. We sell our products/ services through word of mouth, newspaper advert and website, and distribution by providing brochures and pamphlets. Everybody is benefitting from the business. Our business can contribute to bringing benefits of tourism in the country by providing cultural experience having people to enjoy staying in a family setup and the income derived will be shared among family members. Tourism threatens and often destroys locals' traditional means of livelihood, local self-reliance, or ruin local industries, we need to sensitise the general public on these issues. Measures we take to protect local resources we are using as a product from being degraded, or misused is through conservation and information.

COMPANY D

The business was started by my elder brother in the late 80s with the help of our aunt who give some money to him to buy and sell carvings and paintings to tourists. My family and friends contributes a lot. My sister comes to the market to help. We sell carvings, batik, paintings, drums and many other hand made things from Gambia. They are all locally produced products. I think the tourist like drums, batik and carvings from Gambia to take home. They can give presents to their friends and family. We have connections with the carvers, the ones doing the batik. Even

the painting too. They can bring their things here for us to sell and we pay after. We sell at tourists market and sometimes at the beach. Many people are benefiting. My family, the carvers, batik maker and artists who do painting are all benefiting. The presents we sell are good for the industry. If the tourists take it to their countries, it is good to advertise Gambia, and more people will come. Tourists want to buy something to take along when going home. I think tourism is good. We cannot sell some things that they say is banned. I always asked carvers, or artist who sell craft work with skin or bone.

COMPANY E

This place was discovered by our family for over hundred years ago and since then the place is administered by the same family. The financial compensation of the place comes from the community and people who live in other parts of the country. This is why we do not want to commercialize the place. It is contrary to our norms, culture and traditional values. This place has not started through financial investments of any kind.

Originally the place was regarded as a sacred place and people therefore come here to purify their souls through giving out sacrifices in the form of money and materials but no one is allowed to attempt any form of commercial activities at a large scale. This place is a sacred, cultural heritage site to be sustained for future generations. People washed at the pool are expected to make a small cash donation, a piece of cloth and a cola nut – half of which is shared among the elderly and the other half of which is thrown into the pool to appease the crocodiles. We do also allow the organizations in the community to organize social activities in the park and from these activities some form of financial compensation is realized. We have traditional knowledge and practice of spiritual healing gained from our ancestors times immemorial and this is why we have the knowledge to grow medical plants to cure different kinds of diseases some people have and they have no other cure rather than the traditional cure with local herbs. Therefore the biodiversity of the place is very significant to us and exploits the highest priority in the activities we do. Even this aspect of the activities we are doing here has also widen our perspective to encourage voluntary students from abroad, who are interested in environmental conservation and respect to the biodiversity existing in the place to come and work with us for a period and there by exchange knowledge with the local workers. Some of the employees are tourist guides during the tourist season.

Most of the incomes gained come from fees paid by visitors to the park and others who might want to have personal spiritual cure which we do according to our customs and traditions. All the money we received, the largest part goes to conservation which is highly needed through out the year. Profits are spent on the projects and payments due to the activities we have in the place. We gain little incomes this year from the gate fees we collect from visitors compared to last year. This place is runned by family members.

The money collected from the activity is partly used to pay those working in the place, part of it recycled in the system and the rest deposited in an account for future use. We have good partners who sponsor some of the activities taking place here and one of them is the National Council for Arts and Culture and another partner called The West African Museum Organization. Saint Mary's University in the United States of America is a good partner and most of the students' research in The Gambia through our supervision and support, until they finish the assignment they have in the country. If we do not practice conservation then the place will soon loose its original meaning there by causing the depletion of the cultural values that sustain the place. The cultural values of the place must therefore be safeguarded by those working here and the rest of the community and the international community must be sensitized to understand this philosophy.

