



Developing a Model for Packaging and Popularizing Township Tourism in Zimbabwe

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Research Article

Abstract

Purpose: There is tremendous potential for vibrant township tourism in Zimbabwe. The country boasts an abundance of township tourism resources such as monuments of colonial history, administrative centers, informal sector activities, co-existence of traditional and modern cuisine, art and craft centers, community markets, iconic personalities and buildings, and others. Despite this rich heritage of tourism resources, township tourism has failed to attract a critical mass of clients to make it viable thereby depriving the country of potential revenue of this form of alternative tourism. Keeping this in mind, the main objective of the study was to develop a model for packaging and popularising township tourism in Zimbabwe.

Method: The study adopted a qualitative methodology. Data were collected from Tour operators, residents, and Zimbabwe Tourism Authority through participant observations and in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed using a thematic approach.

Results: The study revealed key challenges to the growth of township tourism being lack of finance, lack of support from authorities, illegal operators, and limited access to markets, stringent operational laws, and poor understanding of the concept. Furthermore, tour operators and residents were of the view that information should be disseminated through publicity associations, using brochures and travel shows to aid in popularising township tourism. Respondents highlighted the need for educating all stakeholders on township tourism and creating mutual relationships.

Implications: Recommendations included stakeholder involvement and tour operators' in-depth knowledge of iconic tourism resources in the township. It further recommends a strategic partnership with international tour operators offering township tourism.

Keywords: Township, Township Tourism, Packaging, Popularizing, Zimbabwe.

1. Introduction

Township tourism attracts a smaller segment of the bigger tourism market (Rogerson, 2015). In the 19th Century, township tourism initially concentrated on the shantytowns of Manhattan and

London, and is now gradually prominent in emerging nations, like Indonesia, Brazil, and India (Rolfes, 2009). Rolfes (2009) posits that township tourism in developing countries began in the mid-1990s. The important part of this kind of tourism is visiting the most underprivileged areas of the cities called slums or shantytowns. Rogerson (2004) defines township tourism as the movement by international visitors to urban areas that have largely traditional arts and crafts, heritage, and cultural attractions, local cuisine, and historical insights.

A year later Nemasetoni and Rogerson (2005) redefined township tourism as “tourism that brings visitors to the sites of significance to the anti-Apartheid movement as well as improving tourists’ understanding of poverty issues of historically oppressed communities” inclusion of the circumstances of life in the previously “black townships” developed during Apartheid. This definition showed that heritage tourism had been redefined by township tourism, as it was previously associated with white heritage. Ramchander (2004) postulates that urban townships in South Africa are significant as they are connected to social segregation, which differentiates them from deprived and slum areas of the world. The fact that the current definitions of township tourism are seemingly country-specific leaves room for the search of a more encompassing or comprehensive definition that straddles geographical and political boundaries. In South Africa, townships are rapidly becoming one of the most popular tourist attractions in the country (Rogerson, 2012). In the early 1990s, township tours started with visits to South Western Township of Johannesburg popularly known as Soweto (Rolfes & Steinbrink, 2009). Key places of the anti-apartheid struggle, for instance in Soweto, Vilakazi Street resulted in the construction of museums together with the creation of different political heritage sites (Frenzel et al., 2015). A policy to counter the trend of the white-owned mainstream tourism industry by ensuring the benefits of township tourism is felt in the community was developed (Frenzel et al., 2015). Competing with world-leading destinations like the USA, India, and Brazil, a robust and vibrant township tourism product was developed post-apartheid era (Munyanyiwa, Mhizha, & Mandebvu, 2014). The previously known as 'no go' zones are now more accessible to visitors due to political change and the progression of tourism in South Africa (Rogerson, 2008). Soweto, one of the country's top 20 tourism attractions is being promoted as the premier township destination in Johannesburg (City of Johannesburg, 2004). Major successes have been recorded in Cape Town and Durban as a sequel to Soweto which has been the largest drawcard for township tourism mainly due to the apartheid era. Zimbabwe could duplicate South Africa's successful township tourism concept, guided by its National Tourism Policy.

Zimbabwe has been heavily relying on its rich wildlife heritage for its tourism development however there is a threat to this resource. Mkono (2012) observed that there is a need for vigilant and careful management of carrying capacities of wildlife resources to guarantee long-lasting sustainability. Undeniably, there has been a new era of contemporary visitors who yearn to be integrated into the lives of the local communities they visit therefore wildlife tourism is failing to cater to such diversity. According to Chugh, (2018) the new norm is that visitors prefer destinations that provide them with authentic culture and involving experiences. This,

therefore, led to the observation that it will not be viable and sustainable for the nation to continuously consider wildlife tourism as a niche especially in the long run (Manwa, 2007).

In Zimbabwe, township tourism was launched in October 2012 at the home of the former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe in Highfield Township in Harare. The focus was to promote township tourism through the history of the country's liberation struggle (Munyanyiwa, Mhizha, & Mandebvu, 2014). Transformation of houses belonging to former icons of the liberation war in Zimbabwe such as Robert Gabriel Mugabe, the late Enos Nkala, the late Leopold Takawira, and the late Herbert Chitepo was done in a bid to tell stories on how these leaders fought to liberate the nation (Munyanyiwa et al., 2014).

However, township tourism has only been active in Harare (Zimbabwe's capital city) and Bulawayo at a very minimum level. In Harare, tour operators mostly start the tours by taking the visitors to the Kopje area and explain to the tourists the history of the city, from there they then take the tourists to the 'pioneer graves' (graves of pioneers of colonial settlements in Zimbabwe) then finally take them to Mbare Musika (people's market) as well as to Matapi Flats (Nyati Travel 2016). The Harare city center tours have been limited as the city is highly congested so tour operators have been finding it difficult to move around with groups of tourists (Nyati Travel, 2016). The Harare tours focus too much on Mbare (call it the Soweto of Zimbabwe) yet there are other residential areas like Glen view, Epworth which can provide tourists with variety. In Bulawayo, township tours have been limited to the city hall tour, art gallery, Makokoba and Mzilikazi townships, and a fusion of the 'shebeen' (informal bar) concept (Silwane Tours, 2015). The operationalization of township tourism has been limited to just a few towns whereas there are other towns like Mucheke which have a history that can equally appeal to tourists (Munyanyiwa et al., 2014).

Generally, the popularisation of township tourism has been very limited as some people do not even know what the phenomenon of tourism is all about. This ignorance was acknowledged by Honourable Prisca Mupfumira, the then Minister of Environment, Tourism, and Hospitality in Zimbabwe at the national tourism strategy workshop held in Harare in 2018. The Minister directed that marketing be adequately addressed to attend to some of these problems as a critical aspect of the strategy document.

In places like Victoria Falls, township tourism is hardly on offer. Most of the tour operators' concentrate on marketing wildlife tourism and the majestic Victoria Falls products only. In essence, township tourism in Zimbabwe has not been given as much attention in terms of presentation and publicity as mainstream tourism offerings like wildlife and others. This study sought to develop a model for packaging and popularising township tourism in Zimbabwe. Robinson (2015) defines a model as a set of procedures that are used as an example to follow or imitate. Clarke (2005) views a model as a description that helps one understand how a system or process works or how it might work. These two authors are echoing the same sentiments that a model gives a guideline of how a process works.

2. Statement of the Problem

Despite the abundance of townships, rich in history and heritage, township tourism has failed to attract a critical mass of visitors into the country (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2017). A

survey conducted in Harare's oldest suburbs Highfields, Epworth, and Mbare revealed that most of the homes of Zimbabwe's nationalists which were the center of attraction for township tourism had not recorded a significant number of tourists in 2013 (Munyanyiwa et al., 2014). This study, therefore, sought to develop a model for packaging and popularising township tourism in Zimbabwe.

3. Study Objectives

The main objective of the study was to develop a model for packaging and popularising township tourism in Zimbabwe.

The specific objectives are:

- To establish the current practices in the operationalization of township tourism in Zimbabwe.
- To identify weaknesses and problems in the current planning and operationalization of township tourism in Zimbabwe.
- To explore how the weaknesses may be addressed to ensure the viability of township tourism
- To establish the stakeholders' views on the best practices in planning and operationalization of township tourism in Zimbabwe.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Evolution of Township Tourism

Slum tourism or township tourism emanated in London in the eighteenth-century. Originally, 'slum' was an informal word presumed to be from Ireland. It only made way in 1840 into Standard English around 1840 and was then used to describe the East End by upper-class Londoners (Frenzel & Koens, 2012). In that period, in London's 'West Side Lingo' the word 'slumming' developed (Steinbrink 2012). Directed by police officers in citizen attire, journalists, and clergymen, it defined the practice of members of London's higher classes visiting the East End. Slumming progressed into a more purpose-free leisure-time activity, from an era where early slummers used to be commonly wrapped in the cloak of concern, welfare, and charity (Koven 2004).

Steinbrink and Pott (2010) pointed basically township tourism seems to concern the other side of the world and is no longer merely about the other side of the city in the Global South. This results in the construction of a global or world-societal "Other". The globalization of township tourism therefore began. This saw the growth of township tourism in countries like Brazil, South Africa, India, Mexico, Philippines, and Kenya (Steinbrink and Pott 2010). In line with this view that township tourism concerns the other side of the world, this study seeks to establish the current practices in the packaging and popularisation of township tourism. It justifies why this study is necessary because it will bring out the weaknesses of the current township tourism planning as well as the views of the stakeholders which concerns the other side of the world.

Rolfes 2010) argued that in South Africa, a more contemporary form of slum tourism started. Political groups for international solidarity activists and critical non-governmental

organizations conducted tours in non-white group areas in the apartheid period (Dondolo 2002). Township tourism extended across all major places in South Africa, with the main township destinations situated in Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban, at the end of apartheid legislation and international sanctions.

Parallel with the growth of township tourism in South Africa post-apartheid, in Brazil favela tourism was also happening. Political activists and journalists who had attended the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro conducted the first favela or township tour. To date, a commercial tourism branch has grown after touring Rocinha, an area identified as the largest favela in the city (Frenzel & Koens, 2012). Steinbrink (2012) posits that slum tourism or township tourism has received far less interest from the academic community, apart from being set in a historical perspective. He then goes on to refer to township tourism as ghetto tourism or inner-city reality tourism.

Ramothato (2000) posits that travelers visiting townships also want to taste the African foods prepared locally and enjoy the vibes not only sight-seeing the townships. According to Reutsche (2006) visitors to cities are attracted by various elements like primary, secondary, and additional elements. The main reason that attracts tourists is the primary elements for example cultural facilities, historical monuments, additional elements are things like accessibility of the destination and the secondary elements are catering services and accommodation.

Dondolo (2002) originally uses the term 'Struggle junkies' to refer to township tourism visitors. It shows a significant value conclusion. This is a sign that shows somewhat the questionable role of foreign political activists who go to other countries to join the local struggle. The view of 'struggle junkies' indicates that tourists exude selfish pursuit, voyeurism driven by an interest in the vision of locals struggling rather than in the root of the struggle.

Booyens (2010) found that vacationers were fascinated in seeing cultural attractions, performing arts, and activities in Soweto, art galleries, counting music and dancing, arts and crafts, museums). Findings from a survey in 2013 by the City of Cape Town revealed that tourists had high satisfaction levels from cultural attractions in the form of arts and crafts, museums, historical buildings as compared to natural. This finding implied that demand for cultural attractions was high and there was a need to enhance cultural township tourism thus positioning the destination at a better level (Law 2002). According to George (2014), historical sites like statues, cultural villages, festivals, ceremonies, restaurants, rituals are all part of cultural tourism which can be used for township tourism. Opportunities are therefore presented through township tourism

4.2 Packaging of Township Tourism

According to Lincoln and Guba (2006) packaging refers to the art and technology of preparing a service or a commodity for convenient transport, storage, and sale. The authors go on to say that it can be referred to as everything related to designing, evaluating, and producing the container for a product.

Rolfes (2009) postulates that few domestic tourists are fascinated by poor areas of their own country. Township tourism is therefore commonly packaged based on the interest of

international tourists. Rolfes (2009) claims that the need by tourists to experience the real living conditions of poor people of a host country and the authentic culture of a country motivates them more than to just go and see poverty. One can argue that the search for authenticity may as well have been used as a front to cover up their real motives which may have been to record and make documentaries of how people in the townships are suffering and are in abject poverty.

Ramchander (2004) suggests that well-selected areas should be part of the township tour making it organized and orderly. The tour could take travelers to short walks through designated streets under the watchful eye of a guide, a 'safe' shebeen, a cultural performance, and a few carefully selected people in their homes, ranging from a small shack to a room in a hostel, and a day-care center (Ramchander, 2004). Visiting these areas discloses the consequences of the legacy of apartheid therefore making townships backstage regions, whilst front stage experiences involve purely favorable images (Ramchander, 2007). His view is debatable as some would argue and say that townships can actually be the front stage for some tourists who may be specialists in creating documentaries. Their sole purpose of traveling to a country may be to write and produce a film about a certain township. The motive for them to partake in township tourism may be educational so that puts township tourism at the front stage to them. This, therefore, justifies why a model for packaging township tourism should be given attention as per the focus of this study.

4.3 Popularisation of Township Tourism

Kotler & Armstrong (2010) define popularisation as the process of presenting something in a widely understandable and acceptable manner. In other words, it is to make it attractive to the general public. Groonros (2008) views popularisation as making known vigorously the positives of a product. Both authors are concurring with the view that popularization involves making a product or service known. Aaker (1991), posit that brands that are well known, and consumers have either tried and tested are usually the ones they purchase as they are more comfortable with them. The assumption is that a popular brand is of high quality, dependable, easy to get, and is readily available. This, therefore, justifies why this study aims to develop a model for packaging and popularising township tourism.

4.4 Problems in the packaging and popularising of township tourism

Ethical concerns have been an issue with township tourism (Frenzel and Koens 2012). Going to places of abject urban poverty out of inquisitiveness for entertainment purposes is viewed as voyeuristic and ethically problematic (Steinbrink 2013). According to Linke (2012), a pattern of product consumerism can be identified in relation to slum tourism in that ethno-racial and geospatial logics are regained for profit under neo-liberal capitalism and globalization cloak. Additionally, there is restricted freedom to interact with visitors. Slum tourists are usually escorted by a tour guide, somewhat protected from direct communication with local residents (Meschkank, 2011). A predominant theme showing these disadvantages is the lack of involvement of the community, not only in the production of township tourism but even as part of the experience

A barrier for the packaging of township tourism as propounded by (Freire-Medeiros, (2009) in her study is the issue of language as a small number of residents spoke English. The mediating role of tour leaders may inhibit communication between residents and tourists due to time constraints or fear of visitors tipping the local residents at their own cost (Freire-Medeiros, 2012). The findings included that, local residents are seldom consulted by tour operators on the upcoming development of township tourism. The majority of the community residents show little interest in tourism therefore it is not necessarily due to a lack of willingness from tour operators (Freire-Medeiros, 2009).

In a study by Munyanyiwa *et al* (2014) to establish the stakeholder views on township tourism, the findings were that the respondents noted several challenges with urban township tourism development in Harare Zimbabwe. Firstly, it was noted with concern that urban township tourism has not been integrated into the national planning agenda hence the idea may simply remain a wish (Munyanyiwa *et al.*, 2014). There are no appropriate community structures that can facilitate community involvement in tourism development initiatives and this concurs with Butler (2010) that community participation is central to tourism ventures.

4.5 Strategies to ensure the viability of township tourism

Mutana and Zinyemba (2013) conducted a study on rebranding the Zimbabwe tourism product. The study aimed to suggest novel and innovative ways of packaging and promoting tourism in Zimbabwe. They suggested that Zimbabwe should adopt innovative tourism products like township tourism, live-in village tourism, innovative cultural tourism packages, ethno music tourism, live-in stone sculpture (Mutana & Zinyemba, 2013). In their conclusion, they highlighted that Zimbabwean tourism has depended heavily on the environment and wildlife. Many researchers have alluded to the need for a paradigm shift as evidenced by the ills of nature-based tourism (Mutana & Zinyemba, 2013) Through innovative ways of packaging the tourism product, alternative tourism especially cultural tourism can be a viable route for a destination like Zimbabwe. Despite adopting innovative packages there is a need for commitment from the government to include it in the national tourism master plan (Mutana & Zinyemba, 2013)

5. Methodology

This study is exploratory in nature and it focuses on the unearthing of ideas and insights regarding packaging and popularisation of township tourism in Zimbabwe. The study population included tour operators, residents of Makokoba, Mzilikazi, Luveve, and the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority. The study adopted participant observations and in-depth interviews as research instruments. Purposive sampling was used to select for in-depth interviews five tour operators active in township tourism, twenty-one residents, Bulawayo City Council Director for Housing and Community, and the Bulawayo Regional Manager for Zimbabwe Tourism Authority. In all, eleven women and seventeen men were interviewed which translates to 39% and 61% respectively. Data collected through interviews and observations were analyzed using a thematic approach.

5.1 Study Site

The study was conducted in Bulawayo. The areas of focus were Makokoba, Mzilikazi, and Luveve townships. These townships are estimated to have 83048 inhabitants as per the last census done in 2016 (Zimstat, 2017). Below is the map of the townships:



Fig. 1: The Map of the Makokoba, Mzilikazi, and Luveve Townships

Source: Google maps

5.2 Sample Description

There were more males than females who took part in the interview. Eleven women and seventeen men were interviewed, which translates to 39% and 61% respectively. This distribution was reflective of male domination in the tour operations business. In terms of age, 50% of the respondents were between the ages of 31 and 40 years. Twenty percent (20%) of the respondents were 51 years and above and these were mostly employed as caretakers of the township markets, who had also lived in the townships for many years. Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents lacked professional qualification in tourism

5.3 Conduct of Township Tours

The tour of townships in Bulawayo begins with a visit to Amakhosi Theatre which is located in Makokoba Township. Amakhosi was established in 1981 by Cont Mhlanga and has since become a prominent cultural institution in Zimbabwe. After a tour of Amakhosi the visitors are taken to Makokoba Market and on their way, they also see the surrounding residential areas.

Makokoba is where some of Zimbabwe's iconic names emerged despite an unfriendly environment, among them the late musician Beatar Mangethe and soccer stars Peter Ndlovu, Madinda Ndlovu, and the late Adam Ndlovu. A visit to the famous Big Bhawa (Big Bar) is also a key highlight of the township tour. From visiting the Big Bhawa tourists are then taken to the single largest market for all things traditional in Bulawayo. Makokoba market is home to *emkambo* where space is set aside for the sale of traditional medicines, aphrodisiacs, apparel for traditional ceremonies as well as a hardware section that offers all sorts of building materials. The visitors are then taken to Mzilikazi Township and they get to see Mzilikazi Arts and Crafts center where one renowned world-class artist Dominic Benhura emerged from. The last part of the tour targets Luveve Township in which tour guides tell visitors to the history of Luveve. Tourists are then taken to Luveve stadium which is an iconic heritage in that it has been the venue for major national and regional sports tournaments.

6. Findings

6.1 Stakeholder perception of problems faced in the operationalization of township tourism

The key challenges identified by stakeholders to the growth of township tourism were lack of finance, lack of support from authorities, illegal operators, and limited access to markets, stringent operational laws, and poor understanding of the concept.

6.1.1 Lack of finance

Most of the arts and craft centers pointed out that lack of finance was a major hindrance to township tourism. Artists needed financial support for transport, food, and other needs in order for them to avail themselves whenever needed at Craft Centres. One of the arts and craft center officer summed up the concerns with regard to finance saying:

Finance is our major challenge. We need money to ensure that local artists at this Centre are catered for. The performing artists and the sculptors require transport allowances as well as food. They also need the money to acquire raw materials that they use to produce arts and crafts.

Besides a lack of financial support to artists, many craft center managers also complained about not having access to money in form of loans to capitalize on their enterprises. As revealed at one of the arts and craft center:

There is no money for us to grow our township tourism businesses. We are what we were some years ago. For instance, most of us do not have decent transport of our own. We have to rely on hiring.

6.1.2 Lack of support from the authorities

Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents cited a lack of support from the authorities as a constraint. For instance, one respondent highlighted that local authorities had shut down some of the facilities that were key in township tourism. This flies in the face of Spenceley (2008) who observed that governments should help communities maintain control over tourism development. The act of shutting down facilities of importance to operating township tourism is testimony that tour operators did not have full control over township tourism resources.

Below is an extract of what one of the respondents said:

Another problem that we have is our own City Council, I hope you will not sell me out but I have to be honest, they are letting us down as tour operators. Do you know they at some point were fighting with Amakhosi theatre wanting to shut down the place because of the non-payment of water bills? Imagine the negative position that it puts us in with tourists. In Mzilikazi where there is the art and crafts Centre, there is great potential and we have the public library there which they are not maintaining. There is great potential for us to showcase to visitors.

Existence of illegal operators

Fifty percent (50%) of the tour operators perceived competition as a constraint in the operationalization of township tourism. They highlighted that most of the players were operating individually instead of collectively selling the townships as they would be telling the same stories to the visitors. Operating as shareholders in one or two companies would improve the quality of service and unfair competition especially where the cake is small. Instead of improving, new players are ever emerging. As noted by one tour operator:

One of the problems that I know that affect us especially as tour operators offering township tourism is the issue of unregistered tour operators who are just sprouting every day. These are bringing in competition as they conduct tours to townships and Zimbabwe Tourism Authority is not even aware of it.

6.1.3 Lack of access to markets

Forty percent (40%) of the trading residents indicated that access to markets was a constraint to them. They highlighted that it was difficult for them to access international markets because of a lack of technical know-how. This concern is similar to Rogerson's (2009) findings observations that township tourism appeals to the international market hence there is a need for aggressive marketing. On the same issue of lack of technical skills in marketing township tourism, some indicated that they did not have website managers who would be responsible for online marketing of the product. Below is a snippet of what one trader had to say:

Our problem is to whom we sell the crafts. The market for these crafts is not readily available so the very few tourists that we get we try as much as possible to get them to buy the products. Half the time when the tourists come, it will be more like a scramble for customers. Everyone will be trying to sell their product to them.

6.1.4 Stringent operational laws

Tour operators also observed that operating laws were a constraint in the offering of township tourism. They indicated that the 2% tourism levy was too high considering the fact that businesses were generally struggling to survive. Dyson, (2012) concurs with the findings as he also found out that membership with regulatory boards in South Africa had been difficult resulting in many unregistered tour operators offering township tours. One tour operator had the following to say:

For one to start up a tour operating business the process of getting certified and registering with Zimbabwe Tourism Authority is cumbersome so this has resulted in some people conducting

township tours unofficially. To add on the 2% tourism levy that they demand us to pay is too much for our businesses.

6.1.5 Ignorance of the dynamics of township tourism

Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents indicated that poor understanding of the concept of township tourism was a challenge in the operationalization of this product, as most of the tour operators were not well versed with it. They went on to say that this was one of the reasons why only a few tour operators in Bulawayo offered township tours.

From the various responses received on problems faced in operationalizing township tourism, the following themes were then isolated and presented in accordance with the frequency of citation:

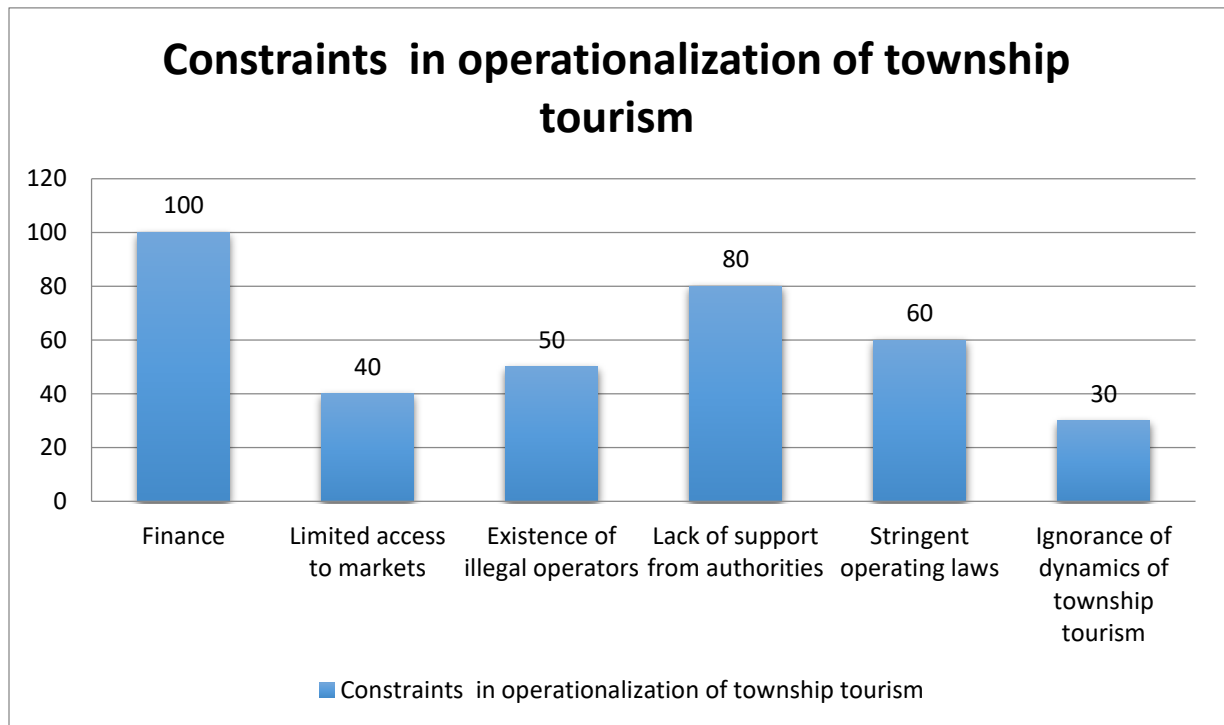


Fig. 2: Constraints in the operationalization of township tourism

6.2 Views on how the problems could be addressed to ensure the viability of township tourism

Generally, the tour operators and residents were of the view that information should be disseminated through publicity associations. They highlighted that using brochures and travel shows may aid in popularising township tourism.

All the respondents said that for all the challenges that they were facing, money was the solution. They believed that if they are provided with finances they would be able to offer township tourism properly. This finding concurs with Meschkank, (2010) who in his study on Mumbai slums also found that provision of finances was a major driver for successful township tourism. Nevertheless, there is a need for caution here. Effective use of the funds is a pre-condition for the success of township tourism.

Operators were also of the view that they needed government support in township tourism development in order to succeed. This observation is in consonance with Mowforth (2008) who states that tourism is becoming significant in many cities hence authorities should provide a well-organized city, safe, spotless, and healthy to make the quality of life in the town appealing to the tourists and to enhance the operators' capability to earn income from tourism.

Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents were of the view that there is a need to market Bulawayo townships as a whole. They argued that instead of each tour operator doing their own marketing they could team up and create a website that has all the information about the townships. Thirty percent (30 %) of the respondents felt that there was a need for the authorities to put in place strict measures of ensuring that unregistered businesses refrain from conducting township tours. From the above responses, the following table is a summary of the tour operators' view:

Table 1: Ways to address problems in the operationalization of township tourism

The problem in the operationalization of township tourism	Suggested solution	% of respondents suggesting the solution
Finance	The government should set aside funds for township tourism development.	100%
Limited access to markets	Group marketing of Bulawayo townships	50%
Existence of illegal operators	Strict enforcement of tourism business registration	30%
Lack of support from authorities	Strong support from local and central government and other organizations	80%
Stringent operating laws	Reconsidering relaxation of certain rules and regulations	40%
Ignorance of the dynamics of township tourism	Regular training of operators	70%

6.2.1 Best practices for making township tourism viable

Respondents were asked what they thought would be best practices in making township tourism viable. Respondents highlighted the need for educating all stakeholders on township tourism and creating mutual relationships. This is in line with the notion by Rogerson (2012) where he posits that stakeholder education is a fundamental need in the tourism industry. In sum for any form of tourism to be viable, the tour operators, local government authorities, and township residents need to have in-depth information about township tourism. With reference

to township tourism, it means having knowledge of iconic tourism resources in the township. Below is an extract of what a ZTA official had to say.

For township tourism to be viable there is a need to involve residents. They are the ones who will host the visitors, so it is important to include them when doing these tours. I think there is a great need to educate all the people involved in township tours. This means that everyone from the local people and the tour operators should be educated and given information on how both parties can have a good relationship

Benchmarking with other nations doing well in township tourism was also one of the suggestions given by the respondents. This would go a long way in ensuring that township tourism is viable. Nemasetoni and Rogerson (2005) posit that for any organization or business entity to be successful it is important to compare with the best in class and adopt best practices. One prominent tour operator had to say the following:

I feel as a nation if we really want township tourism to be viable we should always benchmark ourselves with those who are doing well. For example our neighboring country South Africa is doing very well in township tourism. If you go to Soweto a lot of foreign visitors go there just to experience the daily life of a Soweto ordinary person. Through ZTA and the Tour Operators Association, we can even arrange to send tour operators on a learning trip from those tour operators in South Africa offering township tourism

Aggressive marketing is one of the best practices that the respondents mentioned. This finding is in line with Gerosa, (2003) who suggests that marketing and popularising of tourism must become an integral part of national policies and planning. Marketing tourism involves having a clear understanding of the target market, research capacity, correct positioning, understanding competition, and the proper rightful use of effective promotional tools.

One passionate tour operator even went on to take the researchers down to memory lane and had the following to say:

Aggressive marketing of our township tours may also help in making it viably. This means being visible everywhere on any platform. Take for example at one point Showman Tours a tour operator in Harare was making a lot of noise all over the media on TV, Radio. Imagine if we are to use that same energy taking about township tours in Zimbabwe. We will end up even appealing to our own domestic market because we would have made so adequate noise.

Respondents indicated that as long as they can benefit from township tourism then they will be willing to participate in it. They highlighted that tour operators need to ensure that they give back to the townships and develop their areas thus making it a viable venture. This finding concurs with (Cooper et al (2005) who observes that township tourism has the potential to fast-track growth and expansion of local places. Distribution of wealth and income is improved and social welfare is enhanced. David (2005), points out that any type of tourism generates meaningful benefits for the host communities in townships, and revealing opportunities for them, is a welcome phenomenon.

Frey & George (2008) suggest that in order to create goodwill, security, and safety it is critical to share benefits and increase local people's participation in tourism as it is vital for township tourism. The poor local communities should be involved in initiatives that provide them with

opportunities to gain economically and participate in decision making. Through locally produced items like handicrafts, the township residents benefit as they sell these items to tourists. Awareness is created through township tours about the various challenges that township dwellers may be facing.

7. Recommendations for packaging and popularising township tourism.

Insights from this study indicate that in order to ensure viable township tourism in Zimbabwe, there is a need for a critical interplay of a number of elements. The following is a summation of the elements in tabular form.

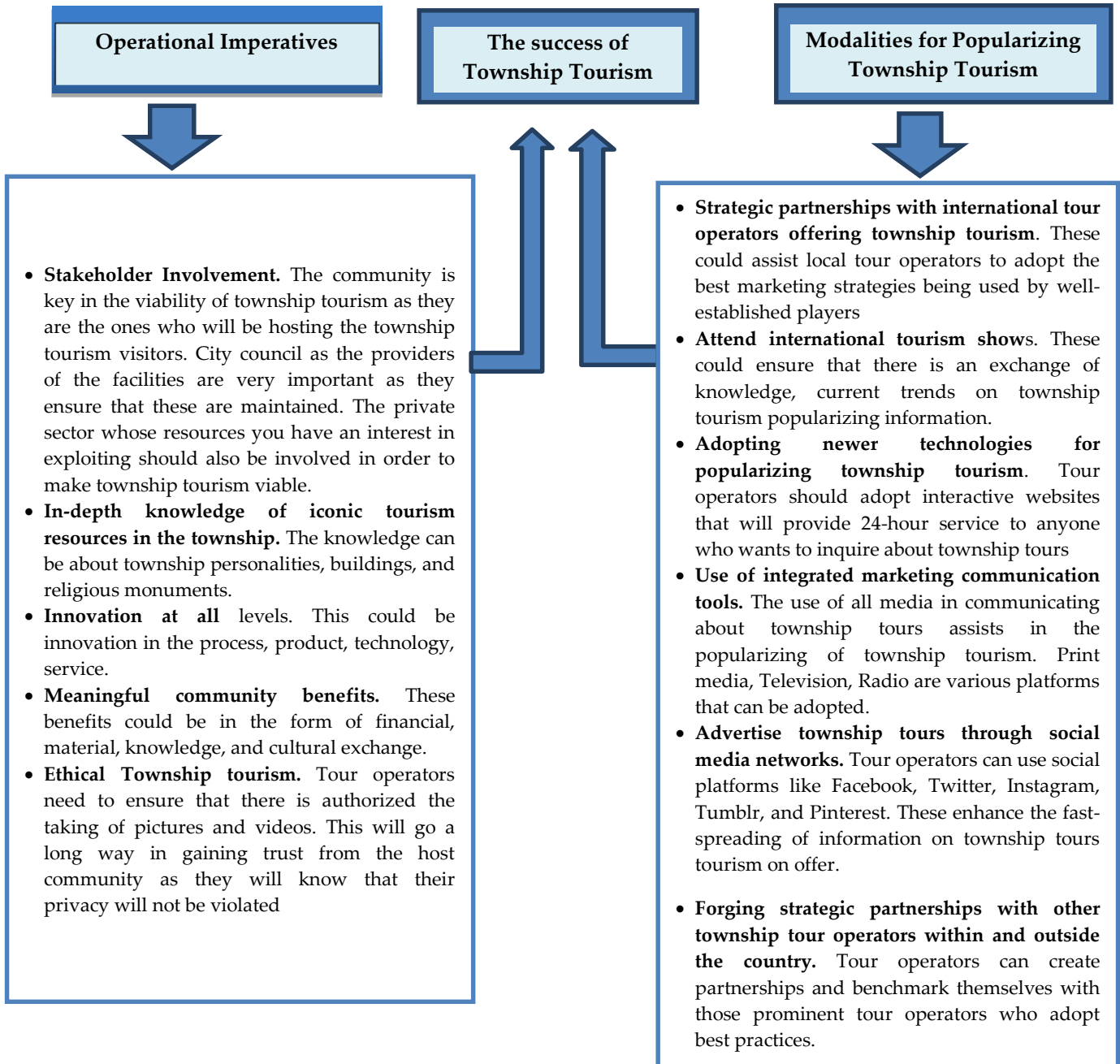


Fig. 3: Recommendations for Packaging and Popularizing Township Tourism

8. Conclusion

The proposed recommendations for packaging and popularising township tourism is constituted of principally two elements, that is, operational imperatives and modalities for popularising township tourism. On operational imperatives for township tourism to succeed, it is critical to ensure broad stakeholder involvement, in-depth knowledge of iconic tourism resources in the township, innovation at all levels, bequeathing meaningful community benefits, and practicing ethical township tourism. On the other hand, some modalities are key to popularising township tourism, namely forging strategic partnerships with international tour operators, attending international tourism shows, adopting newer technologies for popularizing township tourism, use of integrated marketing communication tools, advertising township tours through social media networks and forging strategic partnerships with other township tour operators within and outside the country.

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