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Residents' Perspectives on the Environmental Impacts of Urban Tourism in Cape Coast: Implications for Sustainable Tourism Development

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Abstract: As a corollary to urbanization, cities and towns have become increasingly attractive to tourists, because of the concentration of museums, galleries, shopping centres, theatres, restaurants and other cultural attractions. Though the growth in urban tourism offers a number of socio-economic benefits for residents of host cities and towns, it has also affected the local residents in many ways, including pollution and degradation of the environment. There is, however, increasing concern about the environmental impacts of tourism in urban areas. This study sought to analyse the perceived environmental impacts of urban tourism from the perspective of residents of Cape Coast and examine the implications for sustainable urban tourism development. A cross-sectional household survey of 245 local residents was conducted. Results of the study indicate that though residents perceived urban tourism as having some positive environmental impacts, they were concerned about its negative impacts in terms of crowding, traffic congestion, littering, and waste disposal problems. It is recommended that city authorities and the Ghana Tourism Authority should capitalize on the perceived positive environmental impacts of tourism by using tourism as a tool for the reinforcement of environmental conservation.

Key words: Environmental impacts, urban tourism, sustainable, residents, Cape Coast

Introduction

Cape Coast as an urban destination receives a large volume of tourist traffic. Throughout history, cities and towns have been the focus of tourism activities, providing accommodation, restaurants, entertainment and tourist attractions, such as galleries, shopping centres, and theatres (Aksoz & Bac, 2012). Cities and towns have been described as a magnet of attraction by Taleb Rifai, Secretary of UNWTO. Judd and Fainstein (1999) note that urban visitors are attracted by the cultural, historical and architectural attractions, such as heritage sites. According to Ruetsche (2006), the demand for travel to cities has greatly increased over the last few decades with many people travelling for diverse purposes, including business, leisure, culture, special interests and entertainment. The market for urban tourism is growing rapidly (Law, 2002). As a spin-off of the growing urban tourism market, research on the subject has also heightened. However, Ashworth and Page (2011) are of the view that though scholarly interest in urban tourism has increased in recent

years, the scale is limited, given its size and significance.

The UNWTO refers to urban tourism as trips taken by travellers to cities or places of high population density. The duration of these trips is usually short (one to three days), therefore, it can be said that urban tourism is closely linked to the short-breaks market. According to the UN, the world's urban population is expected to grow by 61% by 2030, the volume of people living in cities will rise to 5 billion by 2030 and this will have a considerable impact on urban tourism as a key factor not only in the development of the cities, but also in its economy (United Nations, 2014). Weissmann (2017), in a publication in the Travel Weekly, mentions WTTC report on North America, which indicates that urban destinations account for 20% of total tourism activity and GDP in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Like a double-edged sword, the growth in urban tourism offers a number of socio-economic benefits for residents of host cities and towns, but it also affects the local residents in many ways (Law, 2002).

There have been some studies on urban residents'

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attitudes towards urban tourism (e.g. Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Chen, 2001; Ross, 1992; Snaith & Haley, 1999; Tosun, 2002). The impetus behind the growing amount of literature focused on residents' perceptions of tourism impacts is that an understanding of residents' perceptions of tourism development often helps practitioners and policymakers to adopt appropriate strategies for service delivery and community development (Chen, 2001). This notwithstanding, most of these studies have been conducted in developed countries. However, with growing urbanization in developing countries coupled with the promotion of tourism by governments, it is imperative to conduct similar studies from the developing world perspective.

The impacts of tourism on host communities is generally classified under economic, social and environmental impacts. However, environmental impacts are the more tangible manifestations of tourism impacts. Also, it is inevitable that tourism activity is associated with environmental impacts (Cooper & Wanhill, 2014). This study, therefore, focuses on the environmental impacts of urban tourism in Cape Coast. Cape Coast as an urban destination receives a large volume of tourist traffic, especially during the *Fetu Afahye* festival every year. As the large numbers of tourists descend on the historic city during the festival, they compete with the local residents for the limited infrastructure. Also, during such occasions, environmental problems, including excessive waste generation, loss of biodiversity (Mohammed, 2017; Musora, Mbaiwa, & Bag, 2017) as well as pollution of all forms and magnitudes (Amuquandorh, 2009) are likely to manifest. These negative impacts of urban tourism on an urban area, such as Cape Coast, may have an influence on the perception of residents within whose immediate environment the tourism activities are planned, organized and staged. In this case, residents may embrace tourism as a development strategy or may reject it and develop hostility towards tourists who visit their communities. It is, therefore important to forestall such a situation in order to protect urban tourism from "self-destruction", thereby avoiding the situation of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. The literature on hosts' attitudes towards tourism indicates that residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism are important for the sustainable development of tourism in an area (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010). It is, therefore, imperative to analyse the perceived environmental impacts of urban tourism in Cape Coast and

examine the implications for sustainable urban tourism development.

Literature Review

Urban tourism and urban tourism activities

The concept of urban tourism has attracted the attention of academic researchers since the 1980s (Horita, 2017). There has since been a proliferation of various sub-themes under the concept, including destination image, brand and marketing of cities, visitor satisfaction, resident attitudes, as well as planning and development (Henderson, 2017). However, there has been limited research on its environmental impacts and sustainability. Urban areas are recognised as the origins of many tourists and the pivot around which tourist activities revolve (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Ashworth, 2003). Tourism activities, such as festivals, arts and historic events, gastronomic fairs and events, shopping, night-life and sporting activities, usually occur in urban centres (Silk, 2007).

Urban tourism is a type of tourism that focuses on tourism activities and engagements in a multifunctional urban environment. The urban context in which this type of tourism occurs shows that there is a diversity of relationship between the tourist and the city (Ashworth & Page, 2011). It is, therefore, difficult to have a simple, but all-encompassing, definition of the concept of urban tourism other than putting the simple meaning of the words urban and tourism together, as acknowledged by Lapko (2014).

According to Page and Connel (2010), urban leisure and, to a large extent, urban tourism remains a poorly understood phenomenon in the tourism and development nexus. Henderson (2017) is of the opinion that tourists make use of almost all urban features, which means that they do not make exclusive use of only one of the urban features of a city. Visitors from different backgrounds are likely to be attracted to cities due to urban features, such as fast means of communication, formal social life, transport and other social amenities.

Notable urban tourism activities include sightseeing (Silk, 2007), visiting museums and art galleries (Popescu & Corbos, 2010; Shehata & Mostafa, 2017) and other serendipitous activities, such as taking a city tour, shopping, and visiting friends, among other recreational activities. 'Cities have lots of tourist attractions and, therefore tend to attract lots of tourists' (Farahani, Taleshi, & Laleh, 2014, p. 239). According to Lapko (2014), and Hall and Page

(2006), the main reasons for visiting the city are numerous, and they include participating in cultural and sporting events, participating in religious ceremonies, education and participation in business meetings, trade shows and conferences, sightseeing, entertainment and shopping among others.

Environmental impacts of urban tourism

Environmental impact of tourism has gained considerable attention since the 1980s from relevant organisations, like the UNWTO and OECD (Jim, 2000) and many other individual researchers, such as Dokulil (2014), Alipour, Olya, and Forouzan (2017), and Mohammed (2017). However, available literature indicates that tourism has economic impact (Aref, Redzuan, & Gill, 2009; Pratt, 2015), social and cultural impacts (Brandã, Barbieri, & Junior, 2014) in addition to environmental impacts (Alipour, Olya, & Forouzan, 2017; Aref, Redzuan, & Gill, 2009; Dokulil, 2014; Zhong, Deng, Song, & Ding, 2011). Despite the fact that tourism is one of the most important activities in urban destinations that help to conserve the environment, urban areas also face pressure from tourism that result in major negative environmental impacts. The growth of tourism in urban destinations presents various challenges with regard to the protection of the environment, conservation of heritage, preservation of social fabric and cultural values, and maintenance of a desired quality of life for residents (Timur & Getz, 2009). Studies show that the development of urban tourism results in major environmental problems, including loss of biodiversity (Amuquandorh, 2009; Davenport & Davenport, 2006; Mensah & Mensah, 2013; Mohammed, 2017) noise (Musora, Mbaiwa, & Bag, 2017), reduction in the quality of air (Musora, Mbaiwa, & Bag, 2017; Amuquandorh, 2009), traffic congestion (Law, 2002). However, Ashworth and Page (2011) contend that even in world-class premier tourism destinations, only a small portion of the city's physical space, facilities and services and residents are actually significantly affected by tourism.

Sustainable urban tourism development

Sustainability has become one of the most important concepts in tourism planning and development in recent years (Byrd, 2007). The costs and benefits of tourism are now being viewed from the perspective of sustainability. Cities, according to Miller, Merrilees, and Coghlan (2014), are trapped in huge environmental footprints as a result of receiving a great number of tourists, especially within the Central Business Districts (CBDs) on a regular basis of

which Cape Coast is no exception. Even though the management of tourism activities in urban settings encourage pro-environmental behaviours (Dolnicar & Matus, 2008), and result in the application of ecotourism principles to urban planning (Higham & Luck, 2002; Weaver, 2005; Wu, Wang, & Ho, 2010), there has been little research on a broader approach, which deals with tourism sustainability concerns (Miller, Merrilees, & Coghlan, 2014). This has helped to draw attention to the need for a balance between economic and environmental interests in tourism (Mihalic, 2016, p. 462).

The rapidly growing concept of urban tourism needs to stand the test of time and, therefore, actions should be taken to develop and sustain urban tourism. To do so, problems that are known to be associated with urban tourism, such as pollution of the air, excessive noise and vibrations, destruction of flora and fauna species, as well as the negative visual impact of tourism in the urban areas, should be controlled. In view of this, studies have proposed sustainable approaches, including urban green tourism (Dodds & Joppe, 2001; Gibson, Dodds, Joppe, & Jamieson, 2003). The rationale behind this is to ensure that both tourists and local residents are responsible for the environment in order to conserve environmental resources for future generations (Leslie, 2012; Mihalic, 2016).

The drive towards sustainable tourism has therefore become very important as results of certain studies by (Byrd, Bosley, & Dronberger, 2009; Látková & Vogt, 2012), revealed that residents who perceive positive tourism impact are more likely to support future tourism development.

Methodology

The study followed a cross-sectional survey design, since the study sought to sample the views of residents in Cape Coast. This involved the collection of data and making inferences about the entire population of Cape Coast at one point in time. Cross-sectional surveys are also referred to as snapshots of the populations about which data is gathered. The descriptive nature of the study also meant that the study did not seek to establish causes and effects, but to describe residents' perceptions of the environmental impacts of urban tourism.

Cape Coast, also referred to as Carbo Corso, was the Capital city of the Gold Coast until 1877. It was one of the first points of contact between Ghanaians and the European colonial masters. It played an instrumental role in the

Transatlantic Slave Trade as most of the slaves were held in the Cape Coast Castle before their journey on the Middle Passage. The study was undertaken in the Cape Coast in view of its importance as a prime tourist destination in Ghana. Apart from the Cape Coast Castle, which has been designated as a World Heritage Site, the city can also boast of beaches, Centre for National Culture,

and PANAFEST Festival. In addition, Cape Coast is just 30km south of the famous Kakum National Park. Its rich history is also inherent in the fact that, of all the cities and towns of Ghana, Cape Coast, the capital of the Gold Coast colony until 1877, has the most extensive surviving historic core of pre-1900 buildings (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).



Figure 1 Map of Study Area

Sources of data

The population of the study comprised of all residents of Cape Coast who were 18 years and above. The population of Cape Coast stands at 169,894 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). The Metropolis was divided into 10 zones for the purpose of the research, namely Abura-Pedu, Kotokuraba-Tantri, Ntsin-Kingsway, Bakaano-Castle, Adisadel-Aquarium, Aboom-Mfantsipim, Amamoma-Apewosika, Ridge, Ashanti road and Ola.

Due to lack of a sampling frame, convenience sampling method was employed. A sample size of 300 was deemed suitable for the study, but 245 questionnaires were deemed suitable for the analysis after the data collection. The questionnaire was employed for data collection. It comprised two modules namely socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and

perceptions of environmental impacts of urban tourism. A five-point Likert scale was used to gauge residents' perceptions of the environmental impacts of urban tourism. Scale items were based on previous studies on the environmental impacts of tourism (previous studies on environmental impacts).

A pre-test was undertaken on 30 residents of Iture in Elmina to help determine the potential problems with the full-scale administration of the instrument and the reliability of the scale employed. This helped to firm up the instrument for the actual data collection. The actual survey was done in two weeks by third-year students of Environmental Management class of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management. Students were trained and given introductory letters. Groups of seven students were assigned to each of the 10 zones. The

questionnaires were usually self-administered except in situations where the respondents were not literate.

Data were processed with SPSS (version 17). Due to the descriptive nature of the study, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. The results were presented, using tables and charts.

Results and Discussion

Profile of residents of Cape Coast

Table 1 shows that more than half (58.8%) of the respondents were males, while (41.2%) were females. It is evident from the table that over half (55.1%) of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 29 years, followed by those between 30 and 49 years (24.5%), while 12.7percent were 50 years and above. With regard to

marital status, the majority (68.6%) of the respondents had married while 31.4 percent were not.

Also, nearly one-third of the respondents (31%) had attained polytechnic or university degree, while only 6 percent had no formal education. The majority (91%) of respondents professed to Christian faith, followed by Islam (7.8%). Results from Table 1, additionally, suggests that a little over half (51.4%) of respondents were without children, while 48.6 percent had children. A quarter (33%) had between 1- 3 children, while 13 percent had between 4- 6 children. Table 1 further shows that majority (67%) of the respondents earned less than GH¢ 500 (equivalent to US\$ 110.4). On the other hand, only a small proportion of respondents (11%) earned GH¢ 1000 and above (equivalent to US\$ 220.8 and above).

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency(N= 245)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	144	58.8
Female	101	41.2
Age		
Less than 20 years	19	7.8
20-29	135	55.1
30-49	60	24.5
50 and above	31	12.7
Marital status		
Married	168	68.6
Unmarried	77	31.4
Level of education		
No formal education	15	6.1
Basic school	59	24.1
Secondary/ High School	69	28.2
Training college	20	8.2
Polytechnic/University Degree	76	31.0
Other (certificates, diploma)	6	2.4
Occupation		
Sedentary oriented jobs	69	28.2
Mechanical oriented jobs	176	71.8
Religious affiliation		
Christianity	224	91.4
Islam	19	7.8
Other	2	0.8
Child dependent		
With child	119	48.6
Without child	126	51.4
Number of children		
1-3	81	33.1
4-6	31	12.6
7 and above	7	2.9

Monthly income (GH¢)		
50-150	46	18.8
151-300	70	28.6
301-500	48	19.6
501-700	22	9.0
701-900	32	13.1
1000 and above	27	11.0

Impact of urban tourism

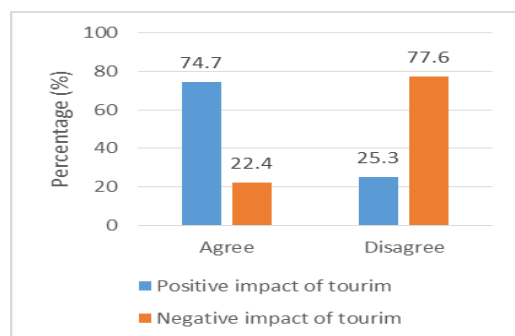


Figure 1: Overall agreement to impact of urban tourism

On the overall percent impacts of urban tourism on the environment, Figure 1 shows that 74.7 percent agreed that urban tourism had a positive impact on the environment, while 22.4 percent agreed that urban tourism had negative impacts on the environment. On the other hand, just about one-quarter of the respondents (25.3%) were of the view that urban tourism did not have a positive impact on the environment, while more than three-quarters

(77.6%) of the respondents also did not agree that urban tourism activities had a negative impact on the environment.

This is in line with the findings of by Aref, Redzuan and Gill (2009) that communities perceive tourism to have more positive impacts than having negative impacts on the environment.

Perceived positive environmental impact of tourism

Community perceptions of the environmental impacts of urban tourism were measured, using 24-items on a five-point Likert scale. The results show that residents of Cape Coast rated statements relating to the positive impacts of urban tourism higher than the negative statements, indicating that urban tourism was considered by residents to have a more favourable impact on the environment.

Perceived positive environmental impact of tourism table (Table 2) presents residents level of agreement on the positive environmental impacts of urban tourism. In all, eight (8) elements were used in measuring the perceptions of local residents.

Table 2: Perceived positive environmental impacts of tourism (N=245)

Statement	% in agreement	mean	Standard Deviation
Tourism has led to an increase in environmental awareness among residents	75.5	3.77	1.012
Tourism has led to beautification of the communities	86.1	4.12	0.869
Tourism has led to the protection of environmental resources of the city	69.4	3.71	1.064
Tourism has led to the preservation and restoration of sites of historical and cultural significance	85.7	4.23	0.868
Tourism has led to the conservation of the environment	66.1	3.71	1.037
Tourism has led to an improvement in sanitation and waste disposal	60.8	3.48	1.172
Tourism has led to an improvement in public facilities	65.7	3.69	1.021
Tourism has led to environmental improvement	67.3	3.72	1.010
<i>Overall</i>	<i>74.7</i>	<i>3.88</i>	<i>0.676</i>

*Mean (1.0–1.49 = strongly disagree; 1.5–2.49 = disagree; 2.5–3.49 = ambivalent; 3.5–4.49 = agree; 4.5–5 = strongly agree)

In general, residents agreed with the notion that urban tourism has positive impacts on the environment (74.7%, mean = 3.88). Specifically, respondents agreed with the

statements that tourism has led to an increase in environmental awareness among residents (75.5%, mean = 3.77); tourism has led to beautification of the communities

(86.1%, mean = 4.12). Also, 69.4 percent of respondents agreed that tourism has led to the protection of environmental resources of the city, with a mean value of 3.71, while 85.7 percent agreed that tourism has led to the preservation and restoration of sites of historical and cultural significance, including the Cape Coast Castle (mean= 4.23).

Local residents further agreed that tourism has led to the conservation of the environment (66.1%, mean = 3.71), improvement in sanitation and waste disposal (60.8%, mean = 3.48), improvement in public facilities (65.7%, mean = 3.69) and environmental improvement (67.3%, mean = 3.72).

Perceived negative environmental impact of tourism

The perceived negative environmental impacts of urban tourism table (Table 3) also presents local residents' level of agreement to statements relating to the negative

environmental impacts of urban tourism. For negative environmental impacts, sixteen (16) variables were used to measure local residents' perceived negative environmental impacts of urban tourism.

Overall, less than one-quarter of the respondents were in agreement that urban tourism had a negative impact on the environment (22.4%, mean= 2.92). Respondents were, generally, uncertain about the statements that tourism has led to crowding in public places (53.4%, mean = 3.22), although a little over half of the respondents were in agreement. Respondents were, generally, uncertain that tourism has led to traffic congestion in the city (39.6%, mean = 2.92), increase in noise levels in the city (44.5%, mean = 3.02), tourism increases the rate of pollution (40.4%, mean = 2.98), and generation of excessive litter in the city (46.5%, mean = 3.06).

Table 3: Perceived negative environmental impacts of urban tourism (N=245)

Impact	% in agreement	mean	Standard Deviation
Tourism has led to crowding in public places	53.4	3.22	1.324
Tourism has led to traffic congestion in the city	39.6	2.92	1.292
Tourism has led to increase in noise levels in the city	44.5	3.02	1.361
Tourism has led to increase the rate of pollution	40.4	2.98	1.243
Tourism has led to generation of excessive litter in the city	46.5	3.06	1.320
Tourism has led to increase in forest loss in the city	28.9	2.50	1.270
Tourism has led to decline in fishing and farming activities	17.5	2.33	1.114
Tourism has led to loss of productive lands	27.8	2.67	1.222
Tourism has led to increase in beach pollution and degradation	44.1	3.03	1.294
Tourism has led to increase in waste disposal problems	47.0	3.02	1.231
Tourism has led to a decline in water supply	26.6	2.56	1.222
Tourism has led to increased pressure on infrastructure and amenities	55.1	3.31	1.298
Tourism has led to an increase in air pollution	33.4	2.81	1.277
Tourism has increased the rate of depletion of natural resources	35.5	2.84	1.253
The construction of large hotels, huge recreational and commercial areas has resulted in negative visual impact	38.0	2.96	1.264
The construction of hotels and other tourist facilities has led to the destruction of the natural environment in the city	36.8	2.92	1.281
<i>Overall</i>	<i>22.4</i>	<i>2.92</i>	<i>0.793</i>

*Mean (1.0–1.49 = strongly disagree 1.5–2.49 = disagree; 2.5–3.49 = ambivalent; 3.5–4.49 = agree; 4.5–5 = strongly agree)

In addition, just a little over a quarter of the respondents (28.9%) were in agreement that tourism has led to increasing forest loss in the city (mean=2.50). Again, though more than half of the respondents (approximately 55%) were of the view that tourism has led to increased pressure on infrastructure and amenities, the responses, generally, show that the residents are ambivalent as the mean is 3.31.

Furthermore, respondents were uncertain that tourism

has led to an increase in beach pollution and degradation (44.1%, mean = 3.03), increase in waste disposal problems (47%, mean = 3.02), tourism has led to a decline in water supply (26.6%, mean = 2.56) and that the construction of large hotels, huge recreational and commercial areas has resulted in negative visual impact (38%, mean = 2.96). Also, they were uncertain about the construction of hotels and other tourist facilities, leading to the destruction of the natural environment in the city (36.8%, mean= 2.92) On

the other hand, respondents disagreed that tourism has led to declining fishing and farming activities in the Cape Coast area (17.5%, mean= 2.33).

The results of this study contradict the findings of studies done in different locations by different researchers. First, it is inconsistent with the results of studies by Mohammed (2017), Mensah and Mensah (2013), and Davenport and Davenport (2006) that tourism activities in urban areas lead to the loss of biodiversity. In the same way, the study does not confirm the assertion by Musora, Mbaiwa and Bag (2017) that tourism leads to increase in noise. Again, this study did not support the claim by Musora, Mbaiwa and Bag (2017) and Amuquandorh (2009) that tourism causes a reduction in the quality of air and water. This is because the respondents in the Cape Coast Metropolis were ambivalent to these statements.

Conclusions and Implications

The perceived environmental impacts of urban tourism were, generally, favourable among residents of Cape Coast. Residents perceived urban tourism as having a positive impact on the environment. However, they were also concerned about the negative impacts in the following areas: crowding in public places, increasing pressure on infrastructure and amenities, littering and waste disposal problems as well as increasing levels of noise. Cape Coast is not a fully-fledged tourist destination and the current volumes of tourist arrivals have not reached the mass tourism threshold as such it is not surprising that the negative environmental impacts of tourism are not pronounced, as perceived by local residents.

City authorities and the Ghana Tourism Authority should capitalize on the perceived positive environmental impacts of tourism by using tourism as a tool for the reinforcement of environmental conservation. Also, decision-makers should consider planning for tourism in cities alongside other urban strategies, to promote towns and cities for tourism purposes. This will help to minimize potential conflicts between tourism and other urban land uses.

Residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism are essential for the sustainable development of tourism in an area. A positive perception usually elicits community support for tourism development, but a negative perception often results in residents' resentments towards tourists and tourism activities. Therefore, urban tourism should be developed in a way that ensures environmental

conservation and economic development. This can be achieved through sustainable tourism development where there is active community participation. Adoption of sustainable tourism would help to reduce the tension and friction created by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, visitors, the environment and host communities

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