

Exploring Creative Tourism potential in Protected Areas:

The Kruger National Park case

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ABSTRACT

Creative tourism strategies are often adopted by destinations as a result of its appeal to policy makers, without a serious assessment of tourists' needs. Although there are significant cultural and heritage resources in and on the periphery of the Kruger National Park (KNP), these resources seem to be inadequately harnessed. The aim of the paper is thus to explore the potential of creative tourism as a medium to harness cultural and heritage resources in the KNP by measuring the importance of local community (cultural tourism) elements to tourists when visiting the KNP. Convenience sampling is used to distribute questionnaires to tourists, and 201 responses are used in the data analysis. The results indicate that respondents have a neutral opinion regarding the importance of local community aspects, and recommendations are made to exploit the untapped potential for creative tourism. This study adds to the current debate on creative tourism by assessing its role in protected areas.

Keywords: Creative tourism, cultural and heritage resources, Kruger National Park, protected areas, tourist needs.

1. INTRODUCTION

In tourism the medium [bond] as described by Chen et al. (2015) is the connection between the object [scenic resource] and the subject [tourist] and helps to improve the accessibility of tourism through service. This tourist-resource bond is indispensable to tourist activities, and creative tourism, which is often considered as an extension of cultural tourism (McIntosh & Zahra, 2009; Prentice & Andersen, 2003) may be an attractive medium for presenting tourists with “the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken” (Richards & Raymond, 2000, p. 18).

The essential difference between cultural and creative tourism is that in creative tourism visitors' active involvement and interaction are required instead of just being spectators (Jelincic & Žuvela, 2012; Tan et al., 2013). Active participation and interaction enables creative tourism to be used as an instrument to produce more meaningful and also stronger links between the environmental, social and economic goals of sustainable development (Prince, 2011). Creating meaningful links by using tools such as creative tourism is essential in developing countries for instance South Africa that selected Responsible Tourism and the pillars of social justice, environmental integrity and economic prosperity (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2002; Responsible Tourism Partnership, 2002; Spenceley, 2008; United Nations Environment Programme, 2005) as a pathway to achieve the goals of sustainable development (South African Bureau of Standards, 2016; South Africa, 1996).

Although embraced internationally the past two decades (see Hung et al., 2016; Jelincic & Žuvela, 2012; Richards & van Ark, 2013; Tan et al., 2013; UNESCO Creative Cities Network, 2006), creative tourism has not attracted much attention in Southern Africa, even though, according to Richards (2011) tourists seem increasingly interested to grow their creative potential. This is surprising, since creativity seems to be particularly appropriate for developing countries that typically do not have extensive developed built heritage (Maitland, 2007), and can offer these countries a competitive advantage without requiring much investment (Rogerson, 2007). According to Marques (2012) the link between creativity and tourism is usually related to particular western urban environments, and for this reason, creative tourism development is lacking in other cultural and historical settings. Even though the increasing role that creative industries play in the economies of developing countries has been recognised (Miettinen, 2008; Rogerson, 2007), there are still substantial gaps in knowledge on creative tourism development in Africa. In South Africa specifically, various authors have noted the limited discourse that exists on creative tourism and creative

industries (Booyens, 2012; Rogerson, 2006; Rogerson, 2013; Rogerson & Visser, 2011; Visser, 2014) and even less so within a protected areas context (managed by South African National Parks (SANParks)). Again, this is surprising, since creativity, which is mostly reliant on human capital, is viewed as a sustainable and renewable resource, which does not need a great amount of funds for preservation and maintenance (Richards & Wilson, 2006).

SANParks also committed to the principles of responsible tourism, to guide it towards a more sustainable form of tourism development (South Africa, 1996), and mentions that their strategy over the past few years has been built on three main pillars which inform and direct their work namely sustainable conservation assets, radical socio-economic transformation, and diverse and responsible tourism (SANParks, n.d.-a).

Although active movement towards exploiting and enhancing heritage and cultural tourism assets has been observed in the SANParks context (Booyens, 2018; SANParks, n.d.-a), it seems that there is no inclination to move towards creative tourism yet as no mention is made of this medium in SANParks' relevant strategic documentation (SANParks, n.d.-a, b).

Creative tourism also do not feature in the Park Management Plan of the Kruger National Park (KNP) (SANParks, n.d.-c), which might be seen as a lost opportunity since the KNP is considered as SANParks' flagship tourism and conservation product offering.

Enhancing awareness of and accessing cultural and heritage resources through innovative creative tourism services that promote active participation in and on the periphery of this flagship offering, may open significant opportunities for KNP as an attractive and responsible conservation and tourism destination. The first step in opening these opportunities is to understand tourists' desire for creative tourism and the needs of creative tourists (Lindroth et al., 2007). Even so, it has been noted that the development of creative tourism experiences has typically been addressed from a supply-side view, with limited studies examining what tourists want from these experiences (Maisel, 2009; Tan et al., 2013). What is more, differences

exist between individuals in how they perceive creativity, where some individuals may see a particular experience as creative, whereas others may be of the opinion that it displays no creativity whatsoever (Tan et al., 2014).

For this reason, our paper will address creative tourism from a demand side perspective. The aim of the paper is to explore the potential of creative tourism as a medium to harness heritage and cultural resources in and on the periphery of the KNP by determining the profile of current visitors to KNP and then measuring the importance of Local Community (cultural tourism) elements to tourists when visiting KNP.

In the next section of the paper we briefly explore the theoretical perspectives on creative tourism and focus on the relevance thereof in protected areas before describing the research design and methodology. The latter is followed by results, recommendations and concluding statements.

2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CREATIVE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS

In this section some theoretical perspectives on the link between sustainable, responsible and creative tourism in protected areas are provided. Some discourse on tourism in the South African protected areas context is offered and the KNP case context discussed, with particular reference to the cultural heritage resource base in and on the periphery of the park.

2.1 The link between sustainable, responsible and creative tourism

Sustainable development is the goal of both sustainable and responsible tourism. Sustainable and responsible tourism is thus built on the same pillars namely maximising the economic

benefits to the local community, environmental integrity and social justice (United Nations Environment Programme, 2005). The difference between sustainable and responsible tourism is that in responsible tourism businesses, individuals as well as organisations are expected to take accountability for their activities and the impact of their actions. The obligation of meeting environmental integrity, local economic benefits and social justice are therefore firmly placed in the hands of all role-players involved in tourism including suppliers and operators, government, industry associations, transport operators, local communities, non-governmental and community based organisations, community services and tourists (Department of Tourism, 2015; Responsible Tourism Partnership, 2002; United Nations Environment Programme, 2005).

Following the argument of Richards and Marques (2012) creative tourism seems to be a vital option for tourism development since it re-invents the industry and supports destinations in offering something unique and different. Richards and Marques (2012) further opine that creative tourism could be used as a: “means of involving tourists in the creative life of the destination; a creative means of using existing resources; a means of strengthening identity and distinctiveness; a form of self-expression/discovery; a form of edutainment; a source of „atmosphere“ for places and a source for recreating and reviving places” (p. 4). Furthermore and as noted before, creative tourism may be an innovative medium to involve the community. Fernandes (2011) indicates that creative tourism has even been used as a way to “stabilise communities and solve community problems” (p. 631) since it involves visitors in doing something experimentally so that they can become part of the authentic cultural life of destinations in a memorable way (Hung et al., 2016; UNESCO Creative Cities Network, 2006).

When this happens, tourists co-produce the experiences they consume (Richards 2010, 2011; Tan et al., 2013), and these experiences become more meaningful and fulfilling (Richards &

Marques, 2012). The creative tourist can learn through participation about languages or sport, arts and crafts, health and design, thus expanding the creative tourism experience beyond the popular creative tourism examples of wine holidays and gastronomy (Meethan & Beer, 2007). Creative tourism can be developed based upon the local skills, expertise, traditions and uniqueness of places (Richards & Wilson, 2006). Rogerson (2013) is of the opinion that creative and cultural resources are important for urban tourism because of the accumulation of facilities, skills, infrastructure, capital, institutions, markets and embedded knowledge. Others show that creativity and creative tourism can also be developed at sites other than major cities, such as certain smaller cities, and even in rural areas (Brouder. 2012; Collis et al., 2013; Flew, 2013; Ingle, 2010; Lewis & Donald, 2010). In Japan the law even stipulates that ecotourism plays a vital part in the conservation of the natural environment, and the development of creative tourism in communities (Yamada, 2011). The following section explores the link between conservation of the natural environment and creative tourism in the South African protected areas context.

2.2 Creative tourism in the context of South African protected areas

The South African government's commitment to sustainable and responsible tourism is reflected in Outcome 12 of the Department of Tourism's Strategic Plan of 2015/2016-2019/2020: "The Department is responsible to formulate a legal and regulatory framework for the sustainable development and management of tourism. Decisions in this regard are meant to govern the tourism sector to ensure that South Africa's approach to tourism development is in line with the principles of sustainability and responsible tourism" (Department of Tourism, 2015, p. 17).

Similarly, as the custodian of 19 national parks, SANParks has taken the lead in nature conservation in South Africa by successfully managing their parks according to their vision “A sustainable National Park System connecting society” and mission statement: “To develop, expand, manage and promote a system of sustainable national parks that represents biodiversity and heritage assets, through innovation and best practice for the just and equitable benefit of current and future generations” (SANParks, n.d.-b, p. 10). SANParks recognises that its cultural heritage must be managed in such a manner that it includes all the possible ways in which visitors might interact with their culture and landscape and indicates that a draft Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been developed (SANParks, n.d.-b). In this statement lies the potential for the 19 South African National Parks to develop creative tourism as a mechanism for job creation and poverty alleviation but as stated before, the literature available on creative industries and tourism in the South African context remains limited (Booyens, 2012; Rogerson, 2006; Rogerson, 2013; Rogerson & Visser, 2011; Visser, 2014) and even more so in the protected areas context.

However, as mentioned earlier some inclination has recently been made towards exploiting and further developing cultural heritage tourism in South African protected areas. When asked whether she sees culture and history playing a bigger role in attracting visitors to SANParks, the Managing Executive for Tourism and Marketing responded by saying that SANParks has the secondary mandate of conservation of cultural heritage. She added that the parks have incredible history attached to the areas under conservation which most people are unaware of, for example Thulamela and Masorini in the Kruger [National Park], and Mapungubwe cultural landscape, a Unesco World Heritage Site in the Mapungubwe National Park. She also confirmed SANParks’ plans to start amplifying their cultural and heritage resources more (Booyens, 2018, p. 59-61). Although some statements in the interview allude to creativity in tourism such as: “creating events for people to come to the parks”, “academics

giving their perspectives on Mapubgubwe’s history”; and “our weekend of African Spirituality”, creative tourism is not explicitly mentioned as a strategy to attract more visitors. It also seems that the focus might rather be on enhancing cultural tourism.

Apart from the above, there seems to be no inclination to move to creative tourism yet as no mention is made of this medium (or mechanism) in either the SANParks’ Annual Report 2016/17, National Parks Strategic Plan 2016/17–2019/20 or the Kruger National Park Management Plan 2018 – 2028 (SANParks, n.d.-a, b, c). This is surprising since creative tourism is especially relevant in a protected areas context. Creativity resources are viewed as more sustainable than physical cultural products because it makes use of tourist resources that, in principal, are processes (Tan et al., 2014). Creative tourism does not require built heritage or costly conservation and there is also no need to maintain tangible building assets (Richards & Wilson, 2006). In the following section we briefly describe the Kruger National Park case context by specifically referring to its rich cultural heritage resource base.

2.3 Case context: The Kruger National Park and the potential for creative tourism

According to Marques (2012) creative resources are associated with heritage and can take on several forms, for instance skills, buildings, landscapes, or knowledge. Every location has its specific resources and they are usually quite varied and unique and may include for example (Marques, 2012, p.117): “a forest with a lake or a savannah with waterfalls; stories, masks or ritual ceremonies; knowledge about medicinal plants; dance and instrument performances; craftworks or a certain use of artefacts”.

The KNP is located in South Africa’s north-eastern corner and borders Zimbabwe in the north and Mozambique in the east. The park is rich in cultural heritage including several paleontological and archaeological sites of Early, Middle and Late Stone Ages, and also the

Iron Ages as well as widespread San Rock Art (SANParks, n.d.-c). These sites contain evidence of early iron smelting technology, stone tool technology, and the spiritual rituals of the early human inhabitants of the park. Evidence also suggests that some parts of the park were included in ancient trade routes that linked populations for instance those of the Mapungubwe Kingdom to Indian Ocean traders (SANParks, n.d.-c). Furthermore, many diverse cultural groupings make their homes on the periphery of the KNP including: the Tsonga- comprising of the Shangaan, Thonga and Tonga known for music, dance and storytelling; Ndebele acknowledged for arts and crafts; Swazi recognised for cultural events and art such as pottery and jewellery and the Northern Sotho (also called Pedi and Bapedi) known for traditional food, war tactics, rituals, singing and dance (Meskell, 2009). According to SANParks (n.d.-c), members of the community access the park for cultural and spiritual reasons, to use the resources of the park and for educational purposes. Community members use the park to perform rituals at ancestral sites, since they believe that these sites hold significant spiritual powers where they could pray and pay respect. Members are also allowed to harvest and collect some natural resources from the park, while they improve their general knowledge of specific plant and animal species.

The above considered, it is evident that the KNP hosts a rich cultural heritage resource base, which visitors are mostly unaware of. SANParks (n.d.-c) has however recognised the need to improve the interpretation of their cultural heritage sites in the park. It is also essential to note that an integrated cultural heritage plan is being developed as part of the KNP's "Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA), Contractual and Co-operative conservation arrangements programme" (SANParks, n.d.-c, p. 111; GLTFCA, 2016, p. 1). Creative tourism may be an attractive medium to support this programme. In the next section of the paper we provide the research methodology and results related to 1) the current profile of visitors to the KNP; and 2) the importance of local community aspects to tourists when

visiting the KNP. This is followed by the section in which we explore creative tourism potential in the KNP case.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This paper forms part of a larger research project aimed at understanding sustainable tourism development and responsible tourism practices in SANParks, but will only report on the local community aspect covered in the larger project. Community participation and the cultural resource base form part of sustainable and responsible tourism practices, hence its inclusion in the research and subsequent measurement instrument. Convenience sampling was used to distribute a paper-based questionnaire to day and overnight visitors. Domestic and international tourists were included in the sample, and data collection took place at two rest camps in the KNP. Field workers approached tourists in the public as well as accommodation areas of the two camps. A total of 201 responses were collected and used in the data analysis. Part one of the questionnaire focused on the demographic characteristics of the sample and included questions on the respondent's nationality, age, gender, who they travel with, their level of education as well as how often they visit the park. Part two of the questionnaire consisted of a scale with 38 items measuring responsible tourism aspects including 1) visual and aesthetics 2) energy, air and water 3) biodiversity and geology 4) compliance and enforcement 5) access and traffic and 6) local community. This paper will focus on the results of the "local community" category. Various data analysis techniques were used to achieve the objectives of the study. An importance/performance analysis was done to ascertain firstly how important a certain item was to visitors, and secondly, how they measured the KNP's performance on the specific item. Importance was measured on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being of no importance, and 5 of extreme importance. Performance was also measured on a 5 point likert scale with 1 = extremely poor and 5 = excellent. Next, since the study is exploratory in

nature, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the responsible tourism scale. Anova's and t-tests were then used to measure how visitors vary in terms of the importance that they attach to items related to the local community factor. The next paragraph provides the demographic profile of the respondents and also gives an indication of the current profile of visitors to the KNP (as per objective 1).

The sample was composed of 48% men and 52% women. Sixty four percent of respondents were Wildcard members (a loyalty programme membership), whereas 36% were not. Group ages were as follows: 36% = 31-50 years; 30% = 18-30 years; 17% = 51-60 years; 17% = older than 60 years. The respondents' level of education were as follows: Post Graduate (45%); Post Matric Certificate/Diploma (23%); Graduate (21%); secondary school or equivalent (11%). Respondents were also asked who they visited the park with and travelling party was indicated as: family = 65%; friends and family = 18%; friends = 12%; alone=3% and a special interest group = 2%. Sixty percent of respondents indicated that they have been to the park more than three times before. Lastly, South Africans made up 55% of our sample, while the remaining 45% were Internationals. From the demographic profile it is evident that visitors to the KNP are generally extremely loyal, highly educated, and middle aged to older individuals. This gives an indication of the current profile of visitors to the KNP (as per objective 1). In order to ascertain whether our sample, albeit a convenience sample, is representative of SANParks visitors, we compared it to official SANParks data and as well as with a sample from a previous study conducted in the KNP. Our sample is more or less the same as the sample of Kruger, Viljoen and Saayman (2017). In their study, the largest age group responding to their questionnaire, was 45-59 year olds (35%). They also indicated that most visitors to the KNP are graduates, which is similar to our sample. Official data received from SANParks shows that 61% of their visitors have frequented the KNP 1-3 times in the last 3 years, and 23% between 4-9 times. This corresponds with our sample.

4. RESULTS

The first question asked respondents to show the level of importance that they attach to certain items related to the local community, and then to rate the performance of the KNP on the specific item. The responses to each question are described at the hand of descriptive statistics and given in table 1 below. It is evident that respondents felt strongly about KNP employing the local community, while they had a more neutral opinion regarding the importance of having opportunities to interact with the locals. For two of the items, KNP's performance scored lower than the importance that visitors attach to it (employing the local community and access to local products) while for the other two items, performance was higher than the importance attached to it (consider local culture in architecture and opportunities to interact with locals). Paired sample t-tests were then conducted to determine whether the differences between the importance and performance scores were significant, and for two items they proved to be (consider local culture in architecture and employing the local community).

Table 1. Importance performance analysis for local community

Local community aspect	Importance mean	Performance mean	p-value
Employ local community	4.23	4.01	p<0.001**
Access to local products	3.51	3.34	p<0.062
Consider local culture in architecture	3.40	3.63	p<0.009**
Opportunities for tourists to interact with locals	3.27	3.34	p<0.472

(**) Indicates significance at P < .01

Table 2. ANOVAs and t-tests

		Local community	
Variable	N	Mean (rank)	p-value
Nationality			
South African	110	3.46	p < 0.031*
International	91	3.71	
Wildcard membership			
Yes	128	3.56	p < 0.982
No	71	3.56	
Level of education			
Matric/High School	21	86.60	p < 0.323
Diploma/Certificate	46	91.40	
Graduate	42	99.17	
Post -graduate	89	106.89	
Travelling party			
Family	125	89.74	p < 0.674
Friends	22	94.52	
Friends, family and others	36	98.29	

Gender			
Male	96	3.34	p<0.000**
Female	104	3.77	

(*) Indicates significance at $P < .05$

(**) Indicates significance at $P < .01$

An exploratory factor analysis using maximum likelihood extraction and direct oblimin rotation was deemed appropriate to establish the dimensionality of the constructs and to ensure internal consistency. The 38 items in the responsible tourism scale loaded onto nine factors, and we labelled them: basic requirements, efficiency, **local community**, traffic, biodiversity, aesthetic design, enforcement for safety, ecologically responsible design, and education. The four items that loaded on the local community factor were: architecture considers local culture; employing the local community; opportunities are provided for tourists to interact with local people and access to products and services produced by the local community. Cronbach's Alpha was used to evaluate internal consistency, with local community showing a measurement greater than 0.815, demonstrating strong levels of internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). We calculated the mean scores of all the factors, with local community having the lowest mean score of all the factors, and biodiversity the highest. This is not surprising, since one would expect that the motivation for visiting a national park would be to engage with nature and not necessarily with the local community.

Next, differences in the importance levels between groups were measured in terms of Wildcard membership, nationality, gender, level of education and travelling party. From table 2 it is clear that international visitors deem interaction with the local community more

important than do local visitors. This difference was also shown to be significant. This result confirms Shore (in Stipanovic & Rudan, 2014) who suggested that the demand for local cultural experiences is gaining prominence amongst international travellers who want a more authentic experience when they travel overseas. International visitors not only want to see the main cultural heritage sites, but they also want to immerse themselves in the culture. Whether a visitor is a Wildcard member does not seem to make a difference in the level of importance that they attach to local community engagement. Furthermore, the higher an individual is qualified, the higher the level of importance they attach to engagement with the local community. This seems to correspond with the profile of creative tourists. Numerous studies (Ali et al., 2016; Hung et al., 2016; Luo et al., 2016) have shown that tourists who enjoy creative tourism experiences are usually higher qualified individuals. Interesting, when visiting with family, importance attached to the local community seems to be the lowest. This is not surprising, since in their research, Ali et al. (2016) found individuals engaging in creative tourism to be travelling with friends. Lastly, females seem to attach a higher level of importance to local community engagement than males. This difference was also shown to be significant, and confirms Richards and van Ark (2013) who found women to have a more dynamic cultural consumption pattern than men.

5. DISCUSSION: EXPLORING CREATIVE TOURISM POTENTIAL IN THE KNP

From the literature review, the analysis of the case study and the results, we argue that there is an underlying desire for more creative tourism activities that are experience-based in the KNP, which will not only enhance the responsible tourism product offering but also provide opportunities for economic development. It is vital to note that even though the KNP is rich in cultural and heritage resources, we propose a development strategy based on creativity as opposed to cultural assets. Richards and Wilson (2006) maintain that cultural and creative

tourism are alike since culture forms the basis of both, and a range of activities are created around it. The main difference between creative and cultural tourism is that cultural tourism makes use of guides who interpret the culture, whereas creative tourism allows tourists to actively learn about their surroundings while offering more engaging experiences to allow for personal development. What is more, as stated by Richards and Wilson (2006), creative tourism holds a number of benefits over 'traditional' cultural tourism. First, since it is scarce, creativity can possibly increase value more easily. While cultural products are universal, fewer people seem to possess creativity. Second, creativity permits destinations to develop new products faster, thus allowing them the opportunity to obtain a competitive advantage over other destinations. Third, since creativity is a process, its resources are usually more sustainable than physical cultural products. Whereas tangible cultural assets, for example monuments and museums may deteriorate and become dilapidated over time, creative resources are seen to be infinitely renewable. This advantage is particularly important in the context of protected areas, which is the focus of this paper. Fourth, creativity is usually more moveable than physical cultural products. Where cultural consumption is reliant on a cluster of cultural resources, creativity is more transportable – again important in the context of a fragile environment, such as the KNP. Lastly, creativity encompasses not only value creation (economic wealth) but also the creation of values, thus supporting responsible tourism's drive to transfer responsibility of meeting environmental integrity, local economic benefits and social justice to all role-players.

Developing creative tourism as part of the tourism product of a destination is however dependent on various aspects for example: the stakeholders of the destination's own creativity is vital for creative tourism; the cultural and natural values and assets of the destination should not be destroyed by the development of tourism, in other words, the development should be built on the principles of sustainability; and lastly even destinations

that do not possess ample cultural assets can develop creative tourism; which could improve the destination's current tourism product (Stipanovic & Rudan, 2014).

According to Jelincic (in Stipanovic & Rudan, 2014) the major reason for visiting some destinations is often not the creative offer, but rather the desire to discover the destination, with creative programmes as part of the added offer. Since our results showed that visitors deem biodiversity and aesthetics more important than the local community, we propose that creative tourism should be developed as an added offer when visiting the KNP. Even though creative tourism can and will never become the main motive for visiting the KNP, it could be developed as an additional tourism product, adding a new dimension to the tourism experience, especially during off peak seasons, which could have a significant impact on the number of visitors to the park. Any destination (even a nature-based destination) can be creative, as long as they develop products that will appeal to tourists who want to have new experiences (apart from the nature-based experiences already offered by KNP) while staying at the destination. When devising creative tourism product offers, Martini and Buffa (2016) suggest that a destination must identify those activities closely related to its area (in terms of its traditions, culture as well as history) and then base the tourist experience they give on those elements, therefore distinguishing themselves through the resource-specific actions and activities they offer. An example of such an activity that could be developed in KNP is an art safari. Art safaris are made up of a number of different elements, including a private tutor to help with the art and one of the local community members offering cultural feedback. It enables real immersion in a culture and offers participants the opportunity to take a piece of Africa home in the form of their art (Venter, 2018). Elsewhere in South Africa, George and Booyens (2014) found existing creative, experience-based tourism in Cape Town. Experiences offered include tours that give opportunities to have direct contact with locals and focus on storytelling about music, local food, arts and crafts; local history and the realities of everyday life for the locals.

In addition to the art safari's mentioned, these experiences could also be offered at KNP. George and Booyens (2014) do caution however that thoughtful responsible tourism planning as well as policy action are required to guarantee enhanced economic prospects for locals. Brouder (2019) further notes that creative tourism requires a focus on community relationships, instead of tourism relationships, to open new opportunities in locations that are not yet creative tourism centres, but have continuous creative processes linked to tourism innovation. Furthermore, deliberate efforts should also be made to include the local community when decisions are made regarding tourism development (Harrill, 2004), to achieve a sense of ownership. Additionally, the local community should be encouraged to participate more, so that the authenticity of the creative tourism experience could be enhanced. Adeleke (2015) elaborates by stating that the attitudes of the local community towards tourism is one of the vital indicators for tourism development in protected areas. To minimise the problems and maximise the benefits associated with creative tourism development, planners and developers should take note of the attitudes of the local community and identify the real concerns and issues to develop applicable policies and actions (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003).

6. CONCLUSION

The aim of the paper was to explore the potential of creative tourism as a medium to harness cultural and heritage resources in and on the periphery of the KNP by firstly determining the profile of current visitors to KNP; then measuring the importance of local community (cultural tourism) elements to current tourists when visiting the KNP; and lastly exploring the creative tourism potential in KNP.

In terms of the first objective, the results show that the current profile of visitors to the KNP comprises of individuals who travel to the park with other family members, are slightly older,

extremely loyal, with a high level of education. From the results, it seems that international visitors place a greater importance on local community engagements than local visitors do, which confirms the results of Shore (in Stipanovic & Rudan, 2014) who suggested that the demand for local cultural experiences is gaining prominence amongst international travellers who want a more authentic experience when they travel overseas. Furthermore, the higher an individual is qualified, the higher the level of importance they attach to engagement with the local community. This seems to correspond with the profile of creative tourists as discussed in previous studies (Ali et al., 2016; Hung et al., 2016; Luo et al., 2016). Lastly, females seem to attach a higher level of importance to local community engagement than males, confirming the results of Richards and van Ark (2013) who found women to have a more dynamic cultural consumption pattern than men. In the current profile, almost a third of visitors are younger than 30, and these individuals represent an untapped market for creative tourism products in KNP which is also in line with SANParks' strategy of attracting younger generations to the parks (Booyens, 2018). In their research, Chaminuka et al. (2012) found interest in crafts markets and village tours for international as well as domestic tourists visiting the KNP. These activities had creative tourism elements since it gave tourists a chance to observe and take part in the process of making souvenirs and allowed for interaction with locals in their daily lives. Our research showed conflicting results, with respondents having a neutral opinion regarding the importance of having opportunities to interact with locals and access local products. At the same time respondents rated the KNP's performance on the item "access to local products" lower than the importance that they attach to it. Respondents placed a high importance on employing the local community, and were positive about KNP's efforts in doing so. Overall, when compared to other responsible tourism factors, the local community factor had the lowest mean score and biodiversity the highest. This is not surprising, since one would expect that the motivation for visiting a

national park would be to engage with nature and not necessarily with the local community. Finally, in terms of objective three, we found latent potential for creative tourism in the KNP. While the main reason for travelling to the KNP will never be for creative tourism, it could be used to add a new dimension to the tourism experience, thus enhancing the overall tourism offer by generating new development models that will emphasise the best the KNP has to offer to tourists as well as to the local community as Jelincic and Žuvela, (2012) suggested. Recommendations in terms of creative tourism products that could be introduced to the park are made.

Like any other paper, this one is not without limitations. We used a convenience sample, which is not representative of all visitors to the KNP. Also, the questionnaire was deemed too long by many, reducing the response rate.

As a first step in exploring the potential for creative tourism in a protected area, the paper considered the views of tourists only, but as previous authors noted (Binkhorst & den Dekker, 2009; Brouder, 2019), creative tourism involves a number of actors and the success of any development is dependent on the co-operation and commitment of all the actors. Future research could consider how these actors visualise the development of creative tourism in the KNP and how creative tourism attractions could be inserted in itineraries. It is also important to consider the views of the local community and establish whether they see potential for developing creative tourism in the KNP, assess the impact that creative tourism might have on their culture, determine the types of jobs that could potentially be generated, and lastly identify the necessary training to develop such initiatives.

In conclusion, the main contribution of this paper lies in the fact that only a few studies (Korez-Vide, 2013; Prince, 2011; UNESCO Creative Cities Network, 2006) have investigated the link between sustainability and creative tourism development. Also, studies exploring the concept of creative tourism in protected areas are even scarcer. For this reason,

this study adds to the current debate on creative tourism by assessing its role in protected areas, and its contribution to sustainability.

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