

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

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Tourism has received considerable attention in recent years with regards to the impacts of tourism and its ability to contribute toward sustainability. This article focuses on the positive impact community-based tourism can have on the empowerment of women. Four domains of empowerment have been identified in literature, and the objective of this research specifically reviews the social and economic empowerment domains, which community-based tourism has had on the lives of women involved in tourism. Primary data in the form of life histories were collected through semistructured interviews by the researchers, and data analyzed according to an empowerment framework. The results yielded a number of women considered to be empowered on both economic and social levels. However, despite the considered empowerment of women, aspects of disempowerment were noted. The study fundamentally reveals that Sustainable Development Goal 5, pertaining to women empowerment, can be achieved through the economic empowerment of women who in turn socially empower the communities in which they reside.

Key words: Women empowerment; Community-based tourism; Economic empowerment; Social empowerment

Introduction

“[Tourism] has the potential to be a vehicle for the empowerment of women in developing regions” (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2020, p. 20). In comparison to other economic sectors, the tourism industry, especially the community-based tourism sector, provides easily accessible opportunities for women to become

active participants in the work force. Tourism not only provides women the ability to be active participants but also leaders and entrepreneurs of the sector. Although women in tourism are underpaid, undereducated, and underrepresented, tourism offers potential pathways to address these inequalities.

The UNWTO (2020) Global Report on Women in Tourism suggested that tourism can play a vital role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

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Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5. This SDG relates to gender equality and women's empowerment. There is a further growing concern and responsibility for countries and respective tourism operations to highlight ways in which gender equality or women's empowerment are promoted. This depicts the value and importance of tourism in a global sense, for its ability to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, especially towards empowering the lives of women. Friendmann (1992) has long proposed empowerment as a means in addressing global poverty. Friendmann presented a strong case for alternative development that is committed to empowering the poor in their own communities.

The same UNWTO (2020) report suggested that women play a key role both as individuals and as members of civil society in support of the achievement of sustainable development in communities. Women are very active in various civil society groups and organizations and are critical linchpins in the achievement of sustainable development. This similar sentiment is reflected by Hanson (2009), who suggested that communities are enhanced and improved because of the involvement of women in them, such that communities are empowered by the way women do business. This is due to the women who alter the settings in which they find themselves in, and keeping the community in mind in this process.

In Aghazamani and Hunt's (2017) review of the core themes in empowerment tourism literature, it was established that the empowerment of women in tourism represented 26.4% of the articles on the topic. In an industry where 54% of the people involved in tourism are women globally (UNWTO, 2020, p. 9), this indicates a disproportionate focus on women. It can therefore be concluded that there is a dire need to investigate the empowerment of women within tourism situations globally. This lack of attention to women's empowerment in tourism within a South African context was also noted by Butler (2017). By contrast, tourism is considered to have a low/easy level of entry into the marketplace, making it easier for women to enter the tourism industry compared to a variety of other industries (UNWTO, 2020).

Despite a more accessible entry into the marketplace, the manner in which women's empowerment

is measured and their impact on tourism has not yet been fully explored. Although much is noted about the need to include women in tourism endeavors, there is a dearth of literature measuring the impact women have on tourism. The impact of what women are accomplishing is most evident on a social level, the way in which they are contributing to communities, which is what this study aims to deliberate on.

This article therefore responds to these gaps in literature by researching the empowerment of women within a community-based tourism (CBT) endeavor, known as the Mothers of Creation Route (MOC Route) in Knysna, Western Cape, South Africa. The main objective of the study is to investigate the economic and social domains of empowerment of women who partook on the MOC Route, which is the focus of this study. This article used the framework proposed by Scheyvens (2000) and the domains of empowerment (economic, social, psychological, and political) as a means to analyze the positive impact tourism is having through the empowerment of women. However, the investigation only focuses on the economic and social empowerment (or disempowerment) of women's part of the MOC Route. The significance of female entrepreneurship connected to economic empowerment in tourism, and the way in which this is beneficial to the Knysna Township community is also explored in a manner that reflects social empowerment.

Literature Review

The literature review section as a whole, highlights CBT and empowerment in a manner that depicts their advantages and downfalls such that the role women play in them may be made apparent.

CBT Concepts

CBT is considered as an alternate to mainstream tourism (Stone & Rogerson, 2011). It is defined by Giampocolli and Mtapuri (2012) as "tourism activities or enterprises in which local communities participate, occurring on their lands, and scaffolding on their cultural heritage and natural attractions and assets" (p. 30). This definition is elaborated on by the Regional Tourism Organization of Southern

Africa (RETOSA), which displayed the core characteristic of tourism experiences where tourists add value to the community. This formed part of the tourist encounter through giving to preservation efforts of nature and the people (Giampocolli & Mtapuri, 2012). This is considered different to community tourism (CT) where the concept of the tourist gaze is apparent. This shows the characteristic of culture or the tourism experience being a commodity for tourists to experience. The fundamental contrast between CBT and CT is that CBT as in its original form “aspires to foster community empowerment and self-reliance” (Giampocolli & Mtapuri, 2012, p. 37). The empowerment of the community, especially women, thus plays a key role in CBT. This is an important concept as this article has an inherent focus on the empowerment of a group of women who are active participants on the MOC Route, which is an example of CBT. The UNWTO report (2020), further indicates that there are numerous case studies in the global context where CBT has led to the empowerment of women.

Highlights and Challenges of CBT

In the CBT context of this article, it is valuable to take into account the advantages that are often associated with this tourism form. The above being noted for empowering local people when there is an advanced form of CBT (Kibicho, 2008); it is also considered to represent sustainability principles (Timothy, 2002). This is often linked to entrepreneurship (Timothy, 2002), which is a core perspective to consider in the Agenda for Sustainable Development for 2030. Despite these two main advantages, CBT is not without its challenges.

Some of these challenges include leadership structures that may not fully comply with democratic principles and representation of the full community at hand (Timothy, 2002). This is contrary to the principles of participation on which CBT is based. Furthermore, a significant challenge with CBT is that it is not guaranteed that all local community members would be able to be participants, due to personal limitations on time or resources that may be apparent for individuals (Timothy, 2002). Financial aspects related to CBT can be a trial for communities, especially with the factors of conflict that may emerge (Lopez-Guzan et al., 2011). It is

also suggested by Zhou and Lui (2008) that advantages of CBT may not inherently be distributed to all people of a community. This means that aspects of empowerment or disempowerment may be apparent in the study because it speaks to the nature of CBT as well as the concept of empowerment in tourism. It also means that in considering achieving SDG 5, the value of the case-by-case basis needs to be amplified due to the complex nature of CBT and each individual context.

Empowerment: A Brief Historical Digest, Definitions, Women, and Entrepreneurship

Empowerment and its roots in literature emerged in the 1960s, in parts of the globe considered as “Western countries” (Chen et al., 2016). This was spurred on through circumstances in the 1800s that showed contrasting situations among people regarding affluence. These time frames suggest that the notion of empowerment has been a consistent concern for more than 100 years (Gutierrez et al., 2003). However, this is different to the inquiry into the empowerment of women reflected in the literature, which is tied to the work of Boserup (1970) (Moswete & Lacey, 2015). Boserup’s (1970) study indicated women resembled the vast majority of members of societies, yet showed a large disparity in formalized schooling endeavors compared to males. It also stated the perspective of the value of large economic expansion of states would need to be connected to include women (Moswete & Lacey, 2015). As a result women’s empowerment is a critical catalyst for economic expansion and growth. Despite the age of Boserup’s findings, the importance of women empowerment still holds true in the present day in light of sustainability aspirations, promoted by the SDG. Women empowerment is also a core point of conversation among the global leadership at this point in time as gender equality is a concern around the globe (Nara & Irawan, 2020).

Aghazamani and Hunt (2017) created a working definition of empowerment that is particular to the tourism environment, which is described as “a multidimensional, context-dependent, and dynamic process that provides humans, individually or collectively, with greater agency, freedom, and capacity to improve their quality of life as a function of engagement with the phenomenon of tourism”

(p. 343). In different words that resonate with this study—empowerment in the tourism framework has numerous facets, is situation specific, and is a changing/evolving course of action, which enables individuals and/or communities with more choice, free will, and opportunity to elevate the living standards they may face (Aghazamani & Hunt, 2017). This links with the roots of the empowerment concept in tourism, which was elaborated on by Scheyvens (2000) and Timothy (2002) based on the four main domains of empowerment from the writings of Friendmann (1992), namely the economic, social, psychological, and political domains.

The domains of empowerment proposed by Friendmann (1992) are elaborated on and defined as follows for this study. Economic empowerment refers to the “long-term financial benefits spread throughout a destination community” (Timothy, 2002, p. 152), whereas social empowerment refers to “community cohesion.” This is created when the tourism sector is beneficial to the social fabric of the community, to such an extent that other development projects are initiated (Timothy, 2002). Psychological empowerment refers to growth of value for self, which is also recognized by people who are not from the inherent community (Timothy, 2002). Political empowerment refers to structures that are in place to tackle the concerns and viewpoints of local people, allowing them to make inputs as stakeholders in the tourism context (Timothy, 2002). Empowerment is further perceived by several authors as a process rather than as an end point or goal (Aghazamani & Hunt, 2017).

Economic empowerment as a concept has already been described above and a reflection of economic empowerment can be considered through investigating entrepreneurship (Shane & Ventkataraman, 2000). Entrepreneurship in the global context has been found to grow resources where there are shortages (Bruton et al., 2013). The concept of entrepreneurial success is up for its own interpretation because it has a range of differing ways to measure it (Fisher et al., 2014). Mininni (2017) reflected that women creating a monetary income for themselves allows them to make their dreams reality. However, a direct correlation between economic empowerment for women due to an income cannot be assumed. The economic empowerment consideration would also need to be taken into

account whether the woman is in control of that money in the way it is spent (Mininni, 2017). Economic empowerment for women does not automatically mean that she is empowered in a holistic sense. The women’s perspective plays a large role in the empowerment perception (Mininni, 2017). It is for these reasons that this study uses nonfinancial data and the perception of rewards and economic advantages of the business to determine women’s economic empowerment.

The growth of women’s attention in small businesses is linked to a greater acknowledgment of their influence as women, the “enhanced family and community well-being and broader societal gains” (Haugh & Talwar, 2016, p. 643). The social entrepreneurship form is connected to benefits that show as “social change processes” (p. 643). Social entrepreneurs often have their sights set on social change (Sastre-Castillo et al., 2015). Economic empowerment of women is not a guarantee for their personal view of their holistic empowerment (Haugh & Talwar, 2016). Furthermore, Sastre-Castillo et al. (2005) found that women tend more to social projects than men.

A description of women’s empowerment according to Kabeer (2001) can also be expressed as the growth of options encountered by women in a manner where the results show the decision-making and priorities of the respective women (Makmud et al., 2012). In the context of women empowerment, growth in a domain may manifest in other domains, such as social, economic, political, and/or psychological domains of empowerment (Makmud et al., 2012). Women empowerment and the way it alters places is dependent on the situation-specific case (Makmud et al., 2012).

Makombe (2007) suggested that “women empowerment as a process takes place in three main areas: household, community and broader areas” (p. 59). As a result of women’s financial flow of income, they gain independence, which assists them in building rapport with other members of the respective community (Makombe, 2007). This is an example of where economic empowerment can lead to the emergence of social empowerment (as described by Scheyvens, 2000) in a community. Another example of a case study where this occurred was in Ethiopia, where Mezgebo et al. (2017) investigated economic empowerment of

women in the Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) context. The growth of their economic position allowed them financial freedom that improved their position in decision-making, in turn assisting the cohesion within the community on household level (Mezgebo et al., 2017).

Nara and Irawan (2020) investigated the impact of tourism through the lens of empowering women in a similar framework as this study, except the location was set in a CBT venture in Cambodia. The core finding was that there were advantages of tourism apparent on a socioeconomic level and women added value to sustainable tourism in their locality. These are case study examples of where empowerment has been present, and where there was a correlation between the economic and social empowerment of women and their respective communities.

Ferguson and Kepe (2011) illustrated the main findings in their study in Uganda as “positive impacts need not always be measured monetarily” (p. 428). In essence, the social empowerment that may manifest could be greater than a monetary value and could show in a larger level of growth, encouraging more endeavors (Ferguson & Kepe, 2011). Although the context of this empowerment analysis is in the farming arena, the principals of empowerment can also be applied to tourism.

To further extend the concept of social empowerment in tourism is where tourism is used as a vehicle to elevate the relationships between community members in the larger community context, such that a state of equilibrium, and occasions where people work together, grows (Boley & McGehee, 2014), thus creating a sense of unity in places of employment (Boley & McGehee, 2014). Although this unity can be present, disempowerment can also be prevalent in the empowerment continuum, and it can also occur in different dimensions (e.g., economic, social, psychological, and political disempowerment dimensions).

Disempowerment

Contrasting to empowerment notions are the concepts of economic and social disempowerment. Economic disempowerment can be explained as circumstances where the indigenous society does not attain access to respective destination assets (Meela, 2019). Social disempowerment links to tensions that

are apparent in a destination community which are connected to problematic circumstances of greed, jealousy, extensive competition, and the disparity in advantages that tourism can bring (Boley et al., 2017; Friendmann, 1992; Robinson, 1999). It was also described by Maruyama et al. (2016) as degradation of relations between community members in a destination community because of tourism. Scheyvens (2000) further indicated that social disempowerment can also be shown through “cultural decay or prostitution” (p. 241).

Methodology

Approach

This study connects with the Feminist Perspectives Paradigm (FFP) where core methods of gathering information are participant observation and semistructured interviews (Jennings, 2007). Therefore, a qualitative approach was used. The data were collected through the tool of life histories. Life histories were used as they have reflective benefits for the participants, and not only the researcher. This is where it is considered to uplift the participant through looking back at one’s life, which may allow for the growth in value of self (Goodson & Gill, 2011). The use of life histories also limits the extent to which assumptions are made, because core deductions are collaboratively determined (Goodson & Gill, 2011). The purpose of using this tool was to attain information from before the participants were involved in tourism, and their current circumstance at the time of the research. The benefit of using life histories is that they make it possible to identify the women’s lives prior to the MOC Route and their current position, thereby creating a baseline against which the empowerment (or disempowerment) impact of tourism can be established.

Women involved in the MOC Route were asked various questions relating to their economic and social empowerment (or disempowerment) through tourism. Through the reflection of interview participants on their life histories, the lived experiences and perceptions were captured as to reflect on her respective empowerment (or disempowerment). Data were collected in January and October 2017 where each interview lasted between 2 and

5 hr depending on the participant's responses and reactions. During the interviews, discussions were captured through the use of mind maps and written notes. The discussions and responses during the interviews were transcribed shortly following the respective interview. Interviews took place in the locality of Knysna by the researcher. Analysis was done by means of the framework developed by Scheyvens (2000) and other indicators that appear later in this article.

Case Study Area

The MOC Route was created for the purpose of empowering women in its design. The MOC Route was initiated by the organization, Open Africa. Open Africa is a "social enterprise" that creates tourism routes throughout the African continent (<http://www.openafrica.org>). The MOC Route is a tourism route that involves 11 communities in the Western Cape. It features restaurants, tour guiding companies, community projects, information centers, and accommodation and was formed in 2005. The MOC Route is in the localities of Beaufort West, Oudtshoorn, George, and Knysna. The Knysna component of the MOC Route was chosen as the case study region, because it showcased the largest number of tourism-related businesses in one destination. This would enable an indication of the larger context of empowerment of the Knysna Township, where the majority of the tourism-related businesses were positioned. The participants of the study were chosen because they were women that were part of the MOC Route and were willing to participate in the study. Their contact details were sourced through an online database created by Open Africa for the purpose of tourism. There were

11 women who formed part of this study, which came from seven businesses that were part of the route and were still women owned at the time of data collection.

Limitation

The limitation of the study is that there appeared to be 21 businesses in this locality; however, due to some closed down enterprises and others owned by men they did not form part of the scope of this study. This is the core reason why more women were not interviewed as part of the scope of the study, despite attempts made to incorporate closed down businesses to also form part of the study. These potential interviewees all declined participation.

Results

Using life histories as a methodology yields the stories of 11 women part of seven businesses on the MOC Route. A summary of the participating women's profiles is provided in Table 1. Following the table are their presented stories. The stories are structured in a manner that groups the women in similar parts of the tourism industry together. Therefore, women in tour operations, women in the accommodation sector, women in the catering sector, and women in the nongovernmental organization (NGO) sector as the components of the tourism industry represented on the MOC Route. Many of these women involved in tourism are entrepreneurs and, in some instances, social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs are business owners whose intention it is to benefit the community where they operate, especially in the social realm of a particular place (Abu-Saifan, 2012; Keen, 2004).

Table 1
Participant Information

Participant	Business Type	Business Proprietorship	Social Entrepreneur?
A and B	Tour operating	Partners	Yes
C	Bed & breakfast	Sole owner (started with her husband)	Yes
D and E	Catering/restaurant	Partners	No
F	Home accommodation	Sole owner	No
G	Catering	Sole owner, also employed by F	No
H and I	Social enterprise	Nongovernmental organization	No
J and K	Tour operating	Partners	Yes

As reflected in Table 1, four of the women (Participants A, B, J, and K) are engaged in tour operations. One woman runs a Bed-and-Breakfast (Participant C), three women work in catering (Participants D, E, and G), one woman has a home accommodation business (Participant F, who also uses the services of G), and the remaining two women (Participants H and I) are involved in an NGO, which is a stop off point for tourists.

Women in Tour Operations

The first two women, Participant A and Participant B, are business partners, and they run a tour operating business, offering day tours of the Knysna Township for tourists. From the onset of the business they endeavored to make a difference in the Knysna Township community, particularly in the lives of children and animals. This intention immediately classifies them as social entrepreneurs as per Abu Saifan's (2012) and Keen's (2004) descriptions of social entrepreneurs.

They fund two safe houses for children who come from abusive backgrounds, such that they can have a new start in life away from environments that were not safe for them. They also feed homeless dogs in the Knysna Township and give presentations at the nursery and primary schools in the townships where they teach children how to look after animals. This indicates that their income is not solely used for themselves, but to benefit the wider community in which the women live.

When Participants A and B started their business, their biggest challenges were a lack of funding and the fact that they had no vehicle to facilitate the day tours. They therefore started by renting a taxi when they had tours. By 2017 they had purchased a vehicle and had sufficient funds to operate. The women draw a salary from the business that is considered sufficient for them; moreover, as these participants explained, a portion of the profits are directed toward the operation of safe houses for 23 children. These safe houses rely on the money from the tours business, as well as donations that tourists leave for the safe houses. This is an indication of a positive effect tourism and social entrepreneurs can have on a local society, enabling positive change.

This concept is further illustrated through the involvement by and funding from Participants A

and B's tour operating business that also supports the Mother and Daughter Project, which is directed toward women involved in alcohol and drug abuse. The choice of whether to be a part of this rehabilitation project lies with each woman who is invited to volunteer for the program; no woman is forced to join the program. The project is a response to the situation of women falling into debt because they are trapped in a cycle of drug and alcohol abuse when women misuse grant money received from the government in order to fund addiction. The Mother and Daughter Project is focused on teaching women to repay debts, providing them with food and teaching them to use grant money for appropriate purposes. Participants A and B's tour operating business and donations from tourists also help to fund the Soup Kitchen Project, which feeds up to 30 children once a day during the week and twice a day on weekends. This is an indication of money generated through tourism being used to solve social ills in a destination community.

Participants A and B further founded the Skills Centre in the Knysna Township. The purpose of the Skills Centre is to equip women with sewing and computer skills, and through this process increase the confidence of the women who attend the classes. The center was taken over by the Christian Organization of Youth for Christ, which has more volunteers to assist with its functioning than the sole efforts of Participant A. The project has retained its connection to tourism, because it is an attraction stop for tourists on day tours. This is an example of a collaboration of different organizations that is fostered through tourism, and is benefiting women.

Similarly, Participant J runs a tour operating business with Participant K as her business partner. They also offer day tours, which they find satisfying, but stated that they do not benefit much financially from the business yet. Participant J had no financing for her business at the outset, and perceives the township day tour environment to be competitive. As a community project, Participant J and Participant K started a school uniform and shoe project, where they supply school shoes and uniforms to children who cannot afford them in the Knysna Township. It is still in its early stages, yet shows them to be social entrepreneurs in their intention as explained by Keen (2004).

These two sets of business partners show similar trends of empowerment—the circumstance of economic empowerment through tourism has enabled the women to start initiatives that benefit the larger community. It shows that these women have a consciousness toward the local society in which they live and operate. It fundamentally contributes to the sustainability of the destination and combatting of social ills that are manifesting in the local community.

Women in the Accommodation Sector

Participant C manages a bed and breakfast (B&B) that she started with her late husband. She did not need start-up funding, because she and her husband already had the necessary facilities: the house that they were living in. They started the business in cash, which they generated when 15 people wanted to stay in a B&B and fulfilled the requirement of paying half the invoice up front. Participant C's husband financed and made the furniture they needed to accommodate the guests. During this time, Participant C's husband facilitated a woodwork project for disabled members of the community, where he and Participant C would finance and supply the wood for the project for the people. Their intentions and actions decipher them as social entrepreneurs, contributing to making a difference in the local community (as per Keen, 2004). Furthermore, the business has grown—the B&B is booked an estimated year in advance. The B&B business has enabled Participant C to send three children to university. The economic empowerment that Participant C and her husband attained in part was directed toward the benefit of providing supplies (wood) for the members of the project to make woodwork items.

Participant F inherited a homestay business from her late mother. Participant F reported that the business has thus far not offered much economic reward. She attributed her difficulties to the standard of the facilities that she inherited (she feels they should be better) and the fact that there were not enough tourists. She also felt she required more education to become better as an entrepreneur. There was no economic empowerment due to tourism in this case, nor social empowerment. This is an example of CBT where the financial advantages are reflected in a way that is not equally distributed

between all members of the MOC Route. This principle is indicated in the work of Timothy (2002). It is also an indication of where there is no prevalence of empowerment taking place.

Women in Catering

Participant D and Participant E are business partners in a catering business. Their business provides catering to tourists on day tours to the Knysna Township. The women indicated that their main obstacle in starting the business was obtaining a venue to serve meals. Finding a suitable venue remains an ongoing challenge for their enterprise. Nevertheless, Participant D indicated that the catering business enabled her to send three of her children to university and her youngest child to school. In this case, although economic empowerment was present on some level for the women, it did not lead to social empowerment because the women were not contributing to the social cohesion in the community on a formal level. What is apparent, however, is the use of the economic empowerment to benefit the children of the household in terms of education growth. Although not social entrepreneurs, these women are still making a success out of a tourism-related endeavor and contributing to the tourism offering in the Knysna Township.

Participant G manages her own catering enterprise, from which she earns enough to pay her rent and send her child to school. However, Participant G felt that her catering business suffers from competition between catering businesses for tourist customers. For her business to survive she has needed to focus to a large extent on the local market instead of tourism. Hence, her business is linked to that of Participant F, as she does the catering for the home accommodation facility owned by Participant F. Although a level of economic empowerment has been attained, it has not directly been because of tourism. She has also not directed her efforts to any form of social empowerment for the community.

Women in NGO Sector

Participant H and Participant I are not entrepreneurs themselves, but work for an entrepreneur in the NGO environment. He would be considered as a social entrepreneur because he aimed to assist in

addressing the stigma of HIV/AIDS in the Knysna Township community. His influence has meant Participants H and Participant I are involved in CBT through the locality of Mad About Art (MAA) being on the MOC Route. The participants facilitate a program for children and teenagers to enable them to address the stigma of HIV/AIDS in their community through the use of art. This is a way that social ills that may have originated from the larger context and not necessarily from tourism are being addressed in the Knysna Township community. One of the projects MAA does is called “Women with a backbone,” where the teenagers make beaded bracelets to sell to tourists. It is an initiative created in response to the rising numbers of women engaging in prostitution in the township. This is a negative impact of tourism that may immerse in destinations as a result of tourism (as shown in Scheyvens, 2010). To counter this a project was created to teach women in the program the value of hard work and money, so that they become more aware of the benefit of remaining in the schooling system in order to get an education. These are initiatives that are enabling social cohesion in the Knysna Township community and therefore its social empowerment. It is also contributing to the well-being of the community, which speaks to the possibility of empowering the young women of this destination.

Analysis of Results and Discussion

The fundamental aim of the study was to reveal the economic and social empowerment (or disempowerment) of women part of the MOC Route. A base for this measurement is on indicators that represent data of an economic and social empowerment type. Indicators can lessen data to core themes that represent the data collected to a large extent (Mearns, 2012). They are “sets of information chosen because they are meaningful to decisions and can be supported in a way that provides us with information when needed” (Mearns, 2012, p. 136). Therefore, there are relevant chosen indicators that have been representative of the empowerment (or disempowerment) of women on the MOC Route, which relate to economic and social domains of empowerment framework as suggested by Scheyvens (2000). The economic empowerment indicators that were selected are connected to

entrepreneurialism and the uniqueness associated with female entrepreneurship. This was different to the social empowerment indicators that were linked to the upliftment and empowerment of the community in the Knysna Township.

Economic Empowerment Indicators for Women on MOC Route

A study by Katongole et al. (2013) suggested that women operating in small business enterprises think of accomplishment in non-economic terms. This suggests that there are gender differences, because men, unlike women, in small business enterprises tend to focus on economic accomplishment (Katongole et al., 2013). This finding agrees with Bakas (2017), who found that there were contrasting viewpoints of entrepreneurship, based on whether a person was male or female. Women had a greater focus on allowing for support systems to benefit others, whereas men focused on components such as innovation, productivity, networking, and recognition (Bakas, 2017). Fundamentally, it suggests women have a greater concern for social empowerment within the entrepreneurial context than only on financial gain.

The success of each of the businesses run by women in the current study was therefore analyzed according to nonfinancial data. This decision was partly driven by the enterprises’ small scale, a factor which means that they may not be in a position to offer audited financial reports of the business to a researcher (Chandler & Hanks, 1993). Fisher et al. (2014) suggested there is value in attaining non-economic means of measurement to view the accomplishment of a business, especially when it comes to small business enterprises. Therefore, in this study, the ways in which the accomplishment of the businesses were measured was according to self-reported measures of firm performance, as described by Eyana (2017) and Krausse et al. (2005). This means that their own perception of whether the business was a success or not was reflected.

Thus, the indicators chosen to represent the economic empowerment (or disempowerment) of the women on the MOC Route were: the economic advantages of businesses on the MOC Route, and the women’s perceptions of the success of the business.

*Economic Empowerment Indicator 1:
Economic Advantages of the Businesses*

For context purposes it is valuable to indicate that Participants H and I are not included in this section as they were not female entrepreneurs themselves. The remaining participants (nine women) are highlighted in this section on entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.

Participants A and B, who are business partners in a day tour business, considered the business to have economically empowered both of them. A further three women assessed their economic empowerment in terms of the fact that their businesses enabled them to pay for their children's education (Participants C, D, and G).

Participant E expressed that although there were economic advantages to having the catering business, the money gained was often put back into the business for business growth purposes.

This reflects five of the nine entrepreneurial women as economically empowered according to the definition of Scheyvens (2000). It shows the priority of empowerment to be beyond their own gain. It also speaks to the economic provision that they have gained through operating in the tourism industry, which can be considered a positive effect of tourism.

By contrast, some women did not report economic advantages from their businesses. Participant F inherited the home accommodation business from her late mother, but did not benefit economically from the business. Participants J and K, partners in another day tour business, also did not report economic rewards. This can be linked to economic disempowerment on some level according to Meela (2019), as the provision of economic benefits was not accessed by these participants.

These results fundamentally reveal that, in line with the definition of economic empowerment by Timothy (2002), there is an indication of long-term benefits in the CBT community but also that it is not automatic that everyone will necessarily benefit from CBT (Zhou & Lui, 2008).

*Economic Empowerment Indicator 2:
Women's Perceived Success of the Businesses*

Participants A and B have overcome the initial challenges of the business by building up operating

funds and purchasing a vehicle to transport tourists. This has allowed them to feel "wonderfully free" and they state that the process has been "rewarding," which indicates their view of the business as a success.

As Participant C and her husband started their business in cash, with a house to use as a B&B and the furniture they needed, the business has done well from the outset, suggesting that she is economically empowered by the business.

Despite struggling to find suitable venues for their catering business for day visitors to Knysna Township, Participants D and E are proud of the food they serve and are "happy when the tourists leave with a smile on their faces as they were happy with the nice food." These partners considered their business to be a success based on the positive feedback received from tourists.

Participant F did not perceive her home accommodation business as a success, because she was unable to overcome some of the initial obstacles (inadequate facilities, too few guests, and too little education as an entrepreneur). She referred to her business as something she was sad about. Participant G, who catered for Participant F's home accommodation business, was also not happy with her catering business, citing competition for tourist custom as a challenge, and she saw having to default to focusing on the local market as failing to overcome her core challenge.

Participant J also mentioned a lack of start-up financing for her business and, like Participant G, noted the competition, in her case, in the day tour environment. Like Participant F, she felt she needed more education in order to have a prosperous business. Although she was not benefiting economically from the business, she regarded it as a success, because both Participants J and K as business partners stated that they found the business "rewarding."

Katongole et al. (2013) argued that women tend to identify the prosperity of their businesses by non-economic means. This argument was true for five of the nine entrepreneurial participants—Participants D, E, G, J, and K. However, it did not apply to four of them—Participants A, B, C and F—who did see part of their success in economic terms.

This study therefore reflected a rather nuanced view where the results show partial but not full agreement with Katongole et al. (2013). The findings

are therefore in full agreement with Mininni (2017), who indicated just because a woman is economically empowered does not guarantee holistic empowerment. Also, that the woman's view plays a pivotal role in the perception of whether empowerment has been attained or not (Mininni, 2017).

Despite the apparent perception of success, social empowerment featured as a major contribution of the women, which is highlighted and explained in the following section.

Social Empowerment Indicators for Women on the MOC Route

When calculating and comprehending social empowerment, it is important to remember that there are no universal core factors (Albuquerque et al., 2016; Santillan et al., 2007). In a case study in Detroit by Kaiser and Rusch (2015), human capital development was used as a way to comprehend empowerment. This indicator was also adopted for this study in Knysna, because two organizations specifically contributed to human capital development in the area. This indicator was used in conjunction with core components of the definition of social empowerment indicated by Scheyvens (2000), which are projects initiated to solve social problems and the formation of organizations or associations. Social disempowerment is also included along with the factor of a lack of social cohesion posited by

Scheyvens (2000). Therefore, the indicators used to measure social empowerment are

- projects initiated to assist in solving social problems,
- the formation of organizations or associations,
- human capital development, and
- the presence/absence of social cohesion (empowerment/disempowerment).

Figure 1 depicts these indicators.

Social Empowerment Indicator 1: Projects Initiated to Assist in Solving Social Problems

Participants A, B, C, J, and K's businesses have had spinoff projects and endeavors in the local community that are intended to solve social problems as some of the women are social entrepreneurs. Participants H and I also both work in a NGO of MAA that is present on the MOC Route. These endeavors suggest social empowerment according to the definition of Scheyvens (2000) suggested as beneficial to the community at large. It also links to Ferguson and Kepe's (2011) work that highlighted the value added by women in the social empowerment avenue may be a larger level of growth that something of economic value.

All of the mentioned projects are in agreement with Scheyvens' (2000) definition of social

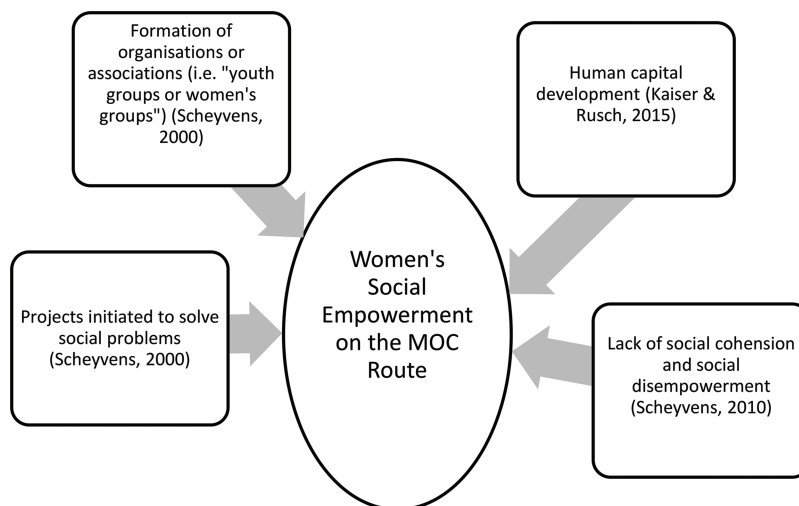


Figure 1. Social empowerment indicators.

empowerment as a “situation in which a community’s sense of cohesion and integrity has been confirmed or strengthened” (p. 41) due to tourism endeavors.

Another indicator of empowerment in this section as described in Scheyvens’ (2000) occurring is the hand-over of projects to the hands of members of the local community. This occurred with the Youth for Christ case, as well as in the process for the MAA endeavor, where the founder of the initiative wants to hand it over to the local community of Knysna Township to operate.

*Social Empowerment Indicator 2:
Formation of Organizations or Associations*

Social entrepreneurs allow for the growth of community cohesion through their support in solving social challenges in the community. The social entrepreneurs identified as per definitions stipulated already are Participants A, B, C, J, and K. The main organization that was formed was the Skills Centre to equip women.

*Social Empowerment Indicator 3:
Human Capital Development*

As already discussed above under the economic empowerment section, training and capacity building are also valuable in social empowerment in CBT. In the social domain of human capital development, the life histories revealed that three women now engaged in catering were trained by Knysna Tourism in cooking by means of a cooking course (Participants D, E, and G), while two (Participants D and E) attended a course in entrepreneurship also hosted by Knysna Tourism. This training put the women in a better economic position to be able to provide for themselves. This speaks to the endeavors of Knysna Tourism to stimulate economic growth in the Knysna Township community. It manifests as social empowerment to initiate further projects and entrepreneurship.

*Social Empowerment Indicator 4: Lack of
Social Cohesion (Social Disempowerment)*

Boley et al. (2017) described jealousy and competition as disempowering and this is evident in the

case of the MOC Route among few of the women. This is illustrated in the situation of Participant F, who inherited her business from her mother and did not think much of it, in its current state, as a success. She considered herself to be “the laughing stock of the community.” Such a decrease in the value of relationships because of tourism is described by Maruyama et al. (2016) as disempowerment. The situations of Participants D and E also indicated a sense of disempowerment, as people in the community laughed at their dream of a successful catering business and did not believe they would achieve it. This collectively shows four women who experienced envy on the MOC Route and therefore social disempowerment.

The first three social indicators point to social cohesion as described by Timothy (2002) as a form of social empowerment that is apparent in the case study area. It is evidently not without aspects of disempowerment as shown through the fourth indicator.

Conclusion

This study focused on the economic and social domains of empowerment as outlined by Scheyvens (2000) and Timothy (2002). Economic and social empowerment factors were considered by measuring them largely from a nonfinancial perspective. The respective indicators used from an economic perspective were connected to the economic advantages of the women’s businesses and their perceived success. This was different but connected to the social indicators, which were linked to projects initiated to solve social problems, the formation of organizations or associations, human capital development, and the presence or absence of social cohesion (a lack of social cohesion can be viewed as a form of disempowerment).

The nonfinancial approach allowed for a greater understanding of the women in the community environment that is broader than from only a financial point of view, and fundamentally reflects the empowerment of women and their influence in their local community. These indicators used from an economic and social perspective can be valuable as a manner of analysis when case studies from all over the globe are considered in the context of sustainable women empowerment. It can be

considered sustainable due to the social environment and the impact the women have on the respective communities that are included in this approach. It is not merely directed toward the women themselves but attends to the larger context in which the women live. This speaks to local settings and the transformation and upliftment of communities as a whole because of the influence of women and their endeavors in tourism and, moreover, how the empowerment is transferred. This therefore contributes to the literature on the measurement factors of women empowerment that can be used as a framework of indicators to understand women empowerment against a backdrop of sustainability.

From a literature perspective, this article is in agreement with Aghazamnai and Hunt's (2017) definition of empowerment and particularly that empowerment is situation specific. It also agrees with Makombe (2007), who indicated women empowerment manifests within a home as well as a local society. Nara and Irawan (2020) explained that tourism can allow for the economic and social empowerment of women, which is fundamentally reflected in this article. Ferguson and Kepe (2011) reflected that advantages of tourism are not limited to economic aspects and larger empowerment may be apparent in a local society. Haugh and Talwar (2016) also reflected that women's actions in entrepreneurship benefit the local society and can initiate culture change in essence. These characteristics were also apparent in this article, which positions it to be in agreement with them.

In the specific case of the MOC Route, the findings reveal 5 of the 11 female entrepreneurs identified could be considered economically empowered in terms of Scheyvens's (2000) and Timothy's (2002) definitions, regarding the monetary advantages of the businesses which were apparent. There were also seven women who could be considered as socially empowered, but four experienced a level of disempowerment.

The women on the MOC Route who were considered economically empowered and were social entrepreneurs contributed considerably to social cohesion in the community. This was largely because they were sufficiently economically empowered to allow them to offer financial support for community endeavors that they wanted to assist, which led these women to be socially empowered. This social

empowerment also extended to the community, since the women initiated or supported projects that were directed toward benefiting the Knysna township community. These projects appear to be successful and have contributed to the growth of social cohesion in the community.

This study therefore suggests that on the MOC Route it was the economic empowerment of the female entrepreneurs that allowed the women to add value to the social environment, fostering social cohesion in the community. Similar case studies where this was found was Makombe (2007), Mezgebo et al. (2017), and Nara and Irawan (2020), and this study is therefore in agreement with them.

The article shows that women empowerment through community-based tourism can be beneficial to the greater community, and not only the members who participate in tourism ventures directly. This refers particularly to the way women in tourism can alter destination communities for reasons greater than their own businesses, and by not only focusing on building their own wealth as in agreement with Hanson (2009).

The advancement of the women, namely the social entrepreneurs on the MOC Route through their involvement of CBT, has meant the emergence of a number of projects that are solving social problems within the Knysna Township community. These projects are linked to combatting abusive home relationships through the formation of the safe houses and mother and daughter project, addressing hunger through feeding children through the soup kitchen, addressing clothing needs through the providing of shoes and uniforms for them, as well as lack of skills in the community facilitated through the Skills Centre. Social perceptions of HIV/AIDS are being changed through the MAA initiative run by women. Animal welfare is also considered where homeless animals are fed.

The major limitation of the study is the small sample of women that were available to participate. The closed down businesses on the Knysna section of the MOC Route at that point were a main reason as to why more women were not interviewed, despite attempts to make contact with former business owners.

This is a case study example where women contribute to the wider community through the success that they enjoy as a result of tourism. It fundamentally

reveals that women empowerment does not only manifest in the upliftment of women, but that women influence the respective local community as well. Therefore, SDG 5 can be attained through the empowerment of women through the vehicle of tourism. This is where the economic empowerment generated can be channeled to the respective community's social benefit, through the hands of women.

Future research can be directed toward a case study example in different parts of the globe using the approach used in this study complimented with the use of both the proposed economic and social indicators. This could in turn add value to the concept of women socially transforming environments in a sustainable manner, fundamentally offering an understanding of local CBT women empowerment endeavors and SDG 5, in the global context.

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