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Abstract

Collaborative tourism governance among the stakeholders is one of the approaches used to manage tourism destinations. This approach is not devoid of bottlenecks. This study sought to determine the influence of collaborative tourism governance on tourism performance in Kwale County. The study objectives were to; review the impact of tourism partnerships on the performance of tourism in beaches of Kwale County and to examine factors associated with influencing the successful operations of tourism partnerships for better tourism performance in Kwale County. This study adopted a descriptive research design and mixed methods of collecting quantitative and qualitative primary data. The study was conducted at the beaches of Kwale County which have a wide range of tourist attractions and a variety of tourism stakeholders. The study targeted senior officers involved in tourism activities working for the National government and its affiliated tourism agencies. The study also targeted senior tourism and trade officers working for Kwale County Government. In addition, the study targeted private associations involved in tourism activities in Kwale County. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select senior officers and officials and members of stakeholder's associations who participated in the survey. The key informant interview schedule was used to collect data from senior officers while a semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data primary data from associations' respondents. Multiple linear regression fitness model analysis was used to predict the influence of

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the independent variables on the dependent variable. Based on the findings of this study it can be concluded that the impact of tourism partnership and factors associated with influencing the operations of tourism alliances play a critical role in the performance of beaches in Kwale County. The study recommends for a SWOT model be developed to ensure that all the positive and negative attributes of a beach destination concerning collaborative governance are identified.

Keywords: *Impact, Tourism partnerships, Performance of tourism, Beaches Influence, Successful operations and Better tourism performance.*

1.0 Introduction

According to Valderrama & Polanco (2022), Both formal and informal relationships are essential for sustainable tourism development. In addition, they noted that Collaborative governance could explain this relationship to overcome any challenges that may arise. Further, the World Travel and Tourism Council identifies WTTC (2022) identifies tourism as a major contributor to the world economies in terms of GDP with an increase of US\$1 trillion (+21.7% rise) in 2021 recovering from a loss of almost US\$4.9 trillion in 2020 due to travel restrictions during that emanated from pandemics, insecurities among other reasons. Consequently, in Africa, tourism contributed 8.5% (\$194.2bn) of the continent's GDP in 2018 as reported by African Travel and Tourism Association (ATTA, 2021).

In Kenya, evidence indicates the significant performance of the industry. A report by the Government of Kenya GoK (2022) showed an increase in tourism numbers at point arrivals especially airports with around 76,300 arrivals from March 2022 through the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA). A significant figure of other 5,000 travellers arrived through Moi International Airport (MIA). The tourists' arrival from both airports amounted to some 81,400, which is an increase from the previous month's increase compared to the previous month (GoK, 2022). The report also noted that the number of international arrivals increased by 1.2% from 2 Million arrivals in 2018 to 2.1 million arrivals in 2019 (GoK, 2019). Thus the sector contributed about 8.8% of Kenya's GDP and also generated about 1.1 million jobs in the economy. This improved performance was mainly attributed to various factors key of them being collaboration and partnerships that have been witnessed in the previous years (GoK 2019).

According to Sarah (2022) tourism performance is achieved through a diverse range of experiences, products, and services created by numerous stakeholders in the tourism industry. Further, the tourism industry consists of diverse multi-sector consisting of various stakeholders (Weidenfeld, 2018). According to Adu-Ampong (2017), the tourism industry involves the input of various sectors namely attractions, accommodation, amenities, transportation auxiliary services, and other related sectors. These stakeholders according to Gursoy *et al.* (2018) create a wide tourism experience and provide products and services across the tourism industry. The action of each stakeholder according to Manente, Minghetti, and Mingotto (2016) influences the other. According to Amoako, Darko, and Marfo (2021), tourism performance essentially depends on how effectively each stakeholder collaborates to produce a tourism product. The performance of a tourist destination relies on the efforts of all the stakeholders that contribute to creating the total tourism experience. This makes tourism collaboration and partnerships an essential part of tourism development to achieve tourism performance. Further, Colleen (2021) ascertains that collaborative tourism is a fundamental element in tourism performance.

According to Weidenfeld (2018), the development of tourism destinations requires a shared collaborative effort between diverse stakeholders in the industry. Further, Oberg (2021) observed that tourism collaborations often hold widely different viewpoints on tourism development. Collaborative tourism governance comprises stakeholders from numerous sectors including public entities, the private sector, NGOs, the local community, the international community, and business and trade partners (Spenceley, Snyman & Eagles, 2017). In many developing economies the public sector has always been seen as a dominant player when it comes to the development and management of the tourism industry. However, according to Oberg, (2021), governments are seeking private sector collaborative partnerships to co-operatively develop tourism destinations through marketing, product development opportunities, and the provision of policy and tourism strategies. Worku and Tessema (2018) ascertain that new avenues exist in tourism collaboration arrangements between the public and private players. This is so since the public sector is slowly shifting from being a dominant player to being an accommodative entity that emphasizes more in efficiency, performance, and partnerships.

The involvement of various stakeholders as observed by Ness, Fuglsang, and Eide (2018) has opened a platform for the entry of numerous tourism players in areas that were traditionally dominated by public and government bodies only. Apart from government entities the tourism industry encompasses a diverse range of players like the hospitality sector, the local community, the business community, transport and tour operators, and financial providers (Spenceley, *et al.*, 2017). The implication for achieving tourism performance in destinations calls for tourism stakeholder organizations to engage in collaborative tourism governance to meet the needs of the industry (Azizpour & Fathizadeh, 2016).

According to Moronga, Kariuki, and Bitok (2018), for tourism destinations to achieve great tourism performance such as increased tourist arrivals, increased tourism earnings, and increased volume of repeat visits, there is a need for collaborative tourism governance. UNWTO (2020) identified tourism collaborations as a tool that will steer tourism performance and development in developing countries through public-private partnership initiatives. However, despite the emergence of tourism collaboration and partnership initiatives among tourism industry players, there have been scanty studies done on the impact of tourism partnerships on the performance of tourism in Kenya, and also a lack of data on factors associated with influencing the successful operations of tourism alliances for better tourism performance in Kenya.

1.1 Study Objectives

1. To review the impact of tourism partnerships on beach tourism performance in Kwale County
2. To examine factors associated with influencing the operations of tourism partnerships for better tourism performance in Kwale County.

1.2 Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: Adopted tourism partnerships have no impact on the performance of tourism in Kwale County

H₀₂: There is no relationship between factors associated with influencing the operations of tourism partnerships and tourism performance in Kwale County

1.3 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in the South Coast in Kwale County

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Impact of the Current Partnerships on the Performance of Tourism Safety and Security

Öberg (2021) views safety and security issues in the tourism industry as a clear sign of it being a critical factor in determining the performance of tourism destinations. Safety and security issue has always been indispensable condition in any tourism destination and that is why it is an indispensable factor for travel and tourism. As Franco and Estevao (2010) ascertain safety and security phenomena gained importance in the last two decades in tourism due to the rise of terrorist acts, local wars, natural disasters, epidemics, and pandemics. Öberg (2021) additionally, establishes that tourist destinations must consider the possibility of terrorist attacks or political instability which might result in civil disturbances with the potential of destabilizing the performance of tourism destinations. The travel and tourism industry can't ignore all these negative events and their consequences as they manifest the vulnerability of tourism destinations (Gursoy, Saayman & Sotiriadis, 2015).

A report by World Bank (2010) established that collaboration in the tourism industry is a big contributor to the management of safety and security in tourism destinations. The report by the World Bank pointed out that beach management and especially security management from all stakeholders involved can foster the success and performance of any coastal destination (World Bank, 2010). Similar sentiments were echoed by Graci, Dodds and Holmes (2010) who observed that collaborative efforts need to be pulled in coastal beach destinations to curb the fast decline of the marine environment caused by increased traffic from boats, overuse through overfishing, diving, and glass bottom boats. Further, a travel and tourism publication by the World Economic Forum recognized safety and security and health and hygiene issues as one of the tourism destination performance pillars.

Conducive Business Environment: A conducive environment can stimulate public/private sector participation in improving the performance of enterprises, envisages a conducive business environment as a platform for tourism enterprises to thrive, and gives an avenue for a better environment for foreign players (Lahat & Sher-Hadar (2021). Improved business operations within the tourism industry are highly attributed to a conducive business environment, which according to Besada (2011) benefits foreign investors from efficiency in supplier and buyer venture partnerships which many policymakers in the public/private sector attribute as an indicator of greater tourism performance.

In a study conducted by Mijiyawa (2015) on what drives tourism performance in Africa, it was found that many Countries attract more tourists and investments when the business environment is conducive to political stability. World Bank underscores the important role of African national governments in tourism policy formulation and implementation for improved tourism performance (Christie, Fernandes, Messerli & Twini-Ward, 2014). Policies are meant to spur the development of tourism by removing barriers and providing an enabling environment for the tourism business to thrive. According to Quian (2010), the government as part of its mandate must take the center stage in tourism performance by ensuring that there is a conducive business environment for businesses.

According to the Kenya Association of Travel Agents (KATA), in 2018 tourism industry significantly contributed a total of 294.6 billion shillings (USD 2.9 billion) to Kenya's economy which accounted for approximately 3.7% of the total GDP (KATA, 2018). These gains were attributed to an improved business environment occasioned by aggressive marketing, enhanced security, political stability, infrastructure development, and high-speed internet connectivity

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among others (GOK, 2018). These interventions have led to Kenya's tourism sector emerging as the third largest in the Sub-Saharan region after South Africa and Nigeria registering a 5.6% growth contributing a total of Ksh.790 billion in 2019 (Nyasuguta, 2019).

Sharing of Resources Among Stakeholders: The potential impacts of collaborative partnerships in the tourism sector are manifold because tourist destinations are fragmented in which a variety of stakeholders vary in size and functions are connected in numerous dynamic ways (Fathimath, 2015). Ngo, Lohmann, and Hales (2018), posit that collaborative tourism governance has been touted as a crucial strategy for achieving tourism performance.

Over the years, tourism partnerships have been on the increase which is attributed to the need of ensuring collective management efforts. A study conducted in Australia revealed that collaborations among stakeholders have a positive impact on the optimization of tourism performance and development (Pham, Driml & Walters, 2018). This observation is incongruent with that of Bagus, *et al.* (2019) in a study on the impact of collaboration on sustainable tourism in Thailand. They noted that the innumerable benefits that tourism brings to a given destination have prompted many players in the industry to partner to improve their performance. Fathimath (2015) conducted a study on the role of stakeholder collaboration in sustainable tourism competitiveness in Auckland, New Zealand. He established that collaboration has a positive impact on facilitating sharing of resources. In return, it creates value addition, high-quality tourism experiences, and products that are capable of generating greater tourism performance.

Tapping of Skills from the public/private Sector: Until recently, the travel and tourism industry has been reluctant in establishing public/private partnerships because of the competitive nature within which the industry operates Fathimath (2015). But recently there has been gradual awareness of the benefits of partnerships amongst various tourism players. Public/private partnerships enable the pooling of knowledge, expertise, capital, and resources from various stakeholders. They ensure consistency within the framework and act as an effective avenue for management and planning, problem-solving, and change, therefore partnerships enhance business rather than reduce the competitive advantage of the tourism product or service (World Bank, 2010).

Collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem engages in an interactive process, using shared norms, rules, and structures to tackle an issue related to the problem (Wood & Gray, 2012). According to Lane (2018), public/private partnerships represent a pooling of resources, shared ideas and knowledge, and expertise from a variety of stakeholders. Further, as Fathimah (2015) stipulates public/private partnerships act as effective platforms for problem-solving, planning, and responsibility sharing thus ensuring the performance of businesses.

A report by UNWTO noted that the development of tourism in developing countries has been shaped by the emergence of partnerships (UNWTO, 2020). The report further noted that partnerships play a key role in bringing together government agencies, the public sector the private sector, and representatives from the whole tourism value chain. The ultimate goal of the partnership is to promote social economic development, sustainability, job creation, and tourism development through tourism (UNWTO, 2019). Collaboration among tourism stakeholders has the potential of promoting the protection and sustainability of natural and cultural resources, particularly in protected areas (Leung, Spenceley, Hvenegaard & Buckley, 2018). This was showcased by Kumar, Tiwari, and Mishra (2015) who revealed that partnerships between

public/private sectors had a positive impact on the development of the tourism Sector of the Indian economy.

In Kenya, the impact of tourism collaborations has frequently been felt by communities living near protected areas or tourist attractions in which community integration and participation are key (Morongâ, *et al.*, 2018). A case study by Gona (2014) on the public-private tourism partnership in the Elesenkei conservancy in Kajiado County in Kenya revealed that private-public collaborations bridged the gap between tourism earnings and poverty in the Elesenkei community. Similarly, a study by Nthiga *et al.*, (2015) on a partnership between Koija Group Ranch in Laikipia, Kenya Oryx limited a private land leasing firm in Loisaba Laikipia and AWF. The study revealed that partnership led to increased performance on substantial employment levels, immediate community benefits, improved security, improved healthcare, and offered educational opportunities. Further, the ranch and the community managed to generate income from wildlife conservation through joint conservation awareness.

2.1.2 Factors Influencing partnerships for Better Tourism Performance Partnership Structure

Partnership structure is considered to be essential in moving the tourism industry towards optimal destination performance (Bichler & Lösch, 2019). According to Lahat and Sher-Hadar (2021), a critical role in ensuring optimal destination performance entails bringing together different organizations to establish common goals and create a framework for joint action. The UNWTO revealed that public/private partnerships are the likely principle for a successful destination performance (UNWTO, 2020).

The success of a partnership organization is dependent on the structure put in place among the stakeholders. A Memorandum of understanding (MOU) provides a structure that is used by the majority of associations to execute their operations. The use of MOU in the operations of collaborations and partnerships was found to influence smooth operations in the management of National Parks in Zimbabwe (Musakwa, *et al.*, 2020). The articles in a good MOU need to stipulate the form of partnership structure among the parties. Failure to have a clear partnership structure may lead to suspicion, mistrust, and lack of commitment among the members.

The success of tourism partnerships is based on the recognition that partnerships constitute a business relationship, where partners share risks and success (Bushell & Bricker, 2017). Fathimath (2015) asserts that commitment to the shared vision and planning process with specific goals and identification of each role played by each partner with effective communication between partners is a key to successful operations of alliances involved in tourism. These views were also echoed by Kim *et al.* (2015) who identified factors associated with performance as a partnership structure, expert experience, common objectives, and effective communication between partners. Additionally, Franco and Estevão (2010) proposed a set of factors that may influence the success of tourism alliances to include a strong shared vision and leadership, shared approach to problems, equality, responsibility-sharing communication links, commitment, and trust, and shared decision-making (Bushell & Bricker, 2017).

Communication Structure: The UNWTO (2020) identified effective communication as a key success factor influencing the management of successful partnerships in the tourism industry. Kim and Lee (2005) also identified communication as a crucial tool among all stakeholders in a collaborative partnership. Choi and Turk (2011) highlighted that communication creates room for central engagement among all tourism stakeholders, including the local communities ensuring

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seamless discussions related to tourism. De-Araujo and Bramwell (2002) further argue that a communication system enables organizations to work together for the common good of the tourism industry, enabling tourism organizations to gain a competitive advantage against competitors. Additionally, Saxena (2008) was of a similar opinion, suggesting that tourism organizations succeed when all members in the partnership communicate in unison and share ideas, these were also in agreement with Fathimath (2015) who established that the success of partnerships is influenced by a long-term shared vision, continuous communication by all partners that combines shared strategic vision, goals, and plans. According to Mwesiumo & Halpern (2016) open communication among partners helps to reduce disagreements and misunderstandings that some stakeholders may have. Further, Lane (2018), argue that collaborative arrangements require constant interactions between parties to address common issues.

Shared Vision: Shared vision is attributed to the willingness of a given organization to work together through sharing risk for the greater common good of the tourism industry. Franco and Estevo (2010) identified strong and shared vision as a critical factor in the success of managing collaborative partnerships. Further, these sentiments were echoed by De-Araujo and Bramwell (2002) who revealed that shared vision enables organizations to work together for the common good of the tourism industry, enabling tourism organizations to gain a competitive advantage against competitors. Additionally, Saxena (2008) ascertained that tourism organizations flourish when all members in the partnership share ideas, visions, resources and share risks. These are also in agreement with Fathimath (2015) who noted that the success of partnerships is fuelled by a long-term shared vision that combines shared strategic vision, goals, and plans. Similarly, Ahn, Heo, and Kim (2020) established that there is a wide range of factors that influence the success of tourism partnerships amongst them being shared vision and shared problem-solving.

Trust and Commitment: Franco and Estevo (2010) identified trust and commitment as key critical factors in managing public-private partnerships in the tourism industry. Additionally, the UNWTO (2020) included trust and commitment in the list of key success factors influencing tourism partnerships. Kim and Lee (2005) also identified trust and commitment as crucial attributes that all partners in a partnership must possess, arguing that trust and commitment bring about a balanced structure, leadership sharing, and well-shared goals and expectations Kim and Lee (2005). Graci (2013) suggest that trust and commitment as a crucial element in collaborative partnerships as it plays a role in providing a cohesive environment for tourism destinations to focus on equitable resource distribution and information sharing.

Similarly, Ahn, Heo, and Kim (2020) posited that there is a wide range of factors that influence the success of tourism alliances. These factors are equitable power, communication, trust, commitment, shared problem-solving and decision-making, leadership, vision, and mutual responsibility. These crucial factors according to Ahn, *et al.* (2020) enable tourism stakeholders to share information, focus on resources, increase destination branding and awareness, ensure the protection of resources, and enable a destination to develop and perform. Kenya has not been left behind in the field of partnership among stakeholders in the management of tourism. Imbaya, Nthiga, Sitati, and Lenaiyasa (2019) conducted a study on capacity building for inclusive growth in community-based tourism initiatives in Kenya. The study established that a lack of capacity among the partnering stakeholders impedes the success of alliances to manage tourism, especially in community-based organizations.

3.0 Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. According to Elliott and Timulak (2021), descriptive survey research design focuses on variables and characteristics of interest in a phenomenon. This design allows the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data through interviewing respondents to describe their characteristics (Newby, 2014). The advantage of this design method enables the study to describe the situation or phenomenon of the study the way it is at that time or duration (Kothari, 2014). The descriptive research design has the advantage of conducting an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon using questionnaires, key informant interview schedules, and observation guides (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

Variables

The study's main variables comprised independent, dependent, and moderating variables. The influence of collaborative tourism governance (impact of tourism partnerships and alliances, factors associated with influencing the successful operations of tourism alliances, and effective tourism collaborative governance process) will represent independent variables. Tourism performance formed the dependent variable. The dependent variable in this study was tourism performance.

Location of Study

This study was carried out on nine (9) beaches in Kwale County, amongst them, Diani beach which is a leading tourism destination in the country, competing with worldwide recognized tourist attractions making it a perfect location for data collection for the study. These beaches are; Zote, Tiwi, Kongo, Diani, Trade Winds, Bidi Badu, Mwaepe, Galu, and Msambweni. These beaches are some of the tourist hubs in Kwale County. They are rated worldwide as major tourist attractions making them a perfect location for the study.

Target Population

The target population for this study was drawn from forty-six (46) public and private tourism stakeholders' organizations. The public sector is comprised of the National government together with affiliated agencies and Kwale County. The private sector is comprised of different actors represented by various umbrella bodies. Other stakeholders were the local population and NGOs.

Purposive sampling was employed to sample 2 senior officers giving a sample size of a total of 18 respondents who were orally interviewed using a Key informant interview schedule.

The local community was represented by 25 associations. Each association was represented by four (4) persons (Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, and a member). This gave a sample size of 100 respondents. The 100 respondents were allocated equally to the 9 beaches identified as the study site.

Data Collection Techniques

The study sought appointments with the respondents to explain the purpose of the study. After getting permission, the researcher and trained research assistants administered questionnaires. The researcher personally interviewed senior officers using a key informant interview schedule.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 20 and presented in charts and tables. Cross-tabulations between independent and dependent variables were done to summarize the general characteristics and relationships between various variables. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics like dispersion, and distribution frequencies while cross-tabulation was used to compare variables under study. The chi-Square test was used to test the research hypothesis. Multiple linear regression models to predict the influence of independent variables on tourism performance in Kwale County.

Logistical and Ethical Considerations

The study sought approval from the Kenyatta University Graduate School and a research permit from the NACOSTI. Utmost confidentiality was observed during and after data collection.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Impact of Tourism Partnership on the Beach Tourism Performance in Kwale County

The first objective sought to review the impact of tourism partnerships on beach tourism performance in Kwale County. This was necessary to discern the role played by tourism organizations in a partnership to influence the performance of tourism in Kwale County. The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Impact of Tourism Partnership on the Beach's Tourism Performance in Kwale County

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|--------|----------------|
| Safety and security have been ensured | 3.99 | 1.049 |
| Effective implementation of national and county tourism policies | 3.30 | 1.115 |
| Resource mobilization and sharing | 3.54 | 4.279 |
| Reduction in duplication of roles and efforts | 3.54 | 1.049 |
| Tapping of skills from the private/public sectors in the execution of tourism activities. | 3.50 | 1.049 |
| Tourism-related project initiation | 3.85 | .957 |
| Stakeholders are now working together in implementing the tourism-related project | 3.53 | 1.185 |
| The quality of service offered by stakeholders has improved | 3.44 | 1.192 |
| Partnership in investments | 3.1100 | 1.09078 |
| Service delivery to tourists like guiding, entertainment, etc. has improved | 3.54 | 1.086 |
| Sharing of tourism data and information | 3.13 | 1.203 |
| There is increased participation of the local community thus reducing disputes | 4.50 | 5.809 |
| There is an increased partnership in the marketing/promotion of tourism | 3.24 | 1.319 |

Source: Research data (2021)

The analysis in Table 1 documents a wide range of impacts of tourism partnerships on the BTP in Kwale County. It was established collaborative tourism partnerships resulted in increased

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participation of the local community thus reducing disputes (M=4.50) followed by the increased provision of safety and security at (M=3.99) and tourism-related projects being initiated (M=3.85) due to tourism partnerships in Kwale County.

Two respondents representing various organizations in Kwale County noted the following regarding the impact of tourism partnerships on the performance of tourism on the beaches of Kwale County;

“...The collaboration of various tourism stakeholders has positively impacted the performance of Diani beach making it the best beach destination on the Kenyan Coast, various beach operators and businesses can actively participate in various projects in the County and also there are a lot of shared benefits among local communities, the locals have been trained on various tourism projects and also had their enterprises funded, education benefits and also medical facilities and check-ups are being provided for the locals, employment opportunities for the locals amongst other CSR activities which are continually being carried out by various establishments in Kwale County. These activities have motivated many local community members in Diani to be open to collaborations and partnerships.....” (O.I. Member local community of Diani Tourism, November 2021).

Team Leader Diani Tour Operators noted the following;

“...Insecurity was one of the biggest problems affecting the performance of various beaches in Diani but with more tourism ventures in the County opening up to partnership, there has been tremendous improvement in the state of security in most beaches in Diani and there is also a peaceful co-existence of both locals, residents, tourism establishments and visitors this can be highly attributed to more tourism stakeholders partnering Kwale County....” (Oral Interview (O.I.) Team Leader Diani Tour Operators, November 2021).

4.2 Hypotheses Testing on the Impact of Tourism Partnership on Tourism Performance in Kwale County

The null hypothesis was tested using Chi-Square analysis. The null hypothesis was stated as follows:

H₀₁: Adopted tourism partnerships have no impact on the performance of tourism in Kwale County.

Table 2: Results of Hypothesis Testing for Objective One

| Pearson Chi-Square Tests | | |
|--|------------|----------------|
| | | Overall Impact |
| Influence | Chi-square | 78.816 |
| | df | 8 |
| | Sig. | .000* |
| Results are based on non-empty rows and columns in each innermost sub-table. | | |
| *. The Chi-square statistic is significant at the .05 level. | | |

Source: Researched data (2021)

Interpretation of Table 2 results in it is clear that the significance *p*-value 0.000 is less than 0.05, and hence the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypnosis is accepted. This implies that tourism partnerships have a positive impact on the performance of tourism in Kwale County.

These hypothesis results are in agreement with the sentiments of two managers from various tourism establishments in Kwale County who indicated the following;

“.....partnerships have led to increased community participation in tourism development initiatives through bringing together government agencies, public/private sector, ensured improved income generation infrastructure improvement and job opportunities and eventually leading to great destination performance.” [O.I. Reservation Manager “Diani Backpackers”- November 2021)

Another respondent also noted

“ in previous years Kwale County has been affected by tribal clashes 1997 (Kaya bombo), political instability, as well as insecurity caused by al-Shabaab terror groups making parts of Kwale County less competitive but with more stakeholders in the County partnering there, is a huge improvement in the state of security in Kwale County thus improving the performance of Diani beach to be ranked among the top beach destinations in the World.....” [O.I. Manager “Diani Tour Operators”- November 2021)

4.3 Findings Discussion

Objective two sought to review the impact of tourism partnerships on BTP in Kwale County. The results in Table 1 indicated that tourism partnerships and alliances have positively and highly impacted the performance of beaches along Kwale County through several factors like increased participation of the local community, ensured safety and security, tourism-related projects initiations, tapping of skills from public/private sectors and resource mobilization and sharing amongst tourism stakeholders in Kwale County, which majority of the respondents agreed at a (Mean of 3.5) strongly indicating that this impacts as indicators of measuring the performance of beaches in Kwale County. These findings imply that increased participation of the local community has led to reducing disputes, provision of safety and security on the beaches, and an increase in tourism-related projects thus fostering BTP in Kwale County.

The findings are also consistent with the observation by Fathimath (2015) who established that stakeholder collaboration has a positive impact in facilitating sharing of resources thus bringing innumerable benefits to a given destination. Additionally, Gona (2014) in their study indicated that private-public collaborations increased the participation of local communities bridging the gap between tourism earnings and poverty among communities. Further, the findings are incongruent with the study findings by Nthiga *et al.*, (2015) that indicated that partnerships led to increased performance on substantial employment levels, immediate community benefits, improved security, improved healthcare, and offered educational opportunities. Finally, a report (UNWTO, 2019) affirmed these findings by indicating that partnerships play the ultimate goal of ensuring social economic development, resource mobilization, community participation, and tourism development initiatives by bringing together government agencies, and the public sector eventually leading to great destination performance.

The research findings from both the interviews and questionnaires show that there is a high level of understanding among all stakeholders regarding what tourism can contribute to Kwale County in terms of employment and socio-economic development. There is cohesion among stakeholders in the County about their vision of tourism development for the beach destination of Kwale County.

These findings imply that collaborative governance brings more benefits to organizations leading to positive performance and development of their businesses. The steady positive impacts in Kwale County show the value tourism destinations benefit from collaborative governance. This shows that collaborative governance in tourism has great potential to bridge the gap through the distribution of tourism benefits and a positive impact on the lives of host communities and the performance of a destination. Therefore, this calls for various players in the tourism industry to partner and tap into these innumerable benefits that are associated with collaborative governance to improve their performance. Further, it calls for more consulted efforts and partnerships among tourism stakeholders to improve their performance and in return create value additional, tourism experiences capable of generating greater tourism performance. This presents an opportunity for the government and private sector to intervene and provide an enabling environment to ensure that these partnerships contribute to the vision and reduces the gap between poverty in coastal destinations and performance in beach destinations.

4.4 Factors Associated with Influencing the Operations of Tourism partnerships in Beaches of Kwale County

The second objective sought to examine factors associated with influencing the successful operations of tourism partnerships on the beaches of Kwale County. The percentage of case analysis was used as the focal point of discussing the results. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Factors associated with influencing the operations of tourism partnerships in beaches of Kwale County

| Factors associated with influencing the operations of partnerships in beaches. | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-------------|-----------------------|
| Focusing on the strategic vision, goals, and objectives. | 3.72 | 1.311 |
| Effective implementation of programs and projects. | 3.71 | .935 |
| Transparency in resource usage. | 3.55 | 1.132 |
| Effective communication among the members and staff. | 3.87 | 1.031 |
| Commitment and trust. | 3.76 | .933 |
| Collaborative tourism project initiation and implementation. | 3.68 | 1.136 |
| The quality of service offered by stakeholders has improved. | 3.51 | 1.059 |
| Capacity building of the management and members. | 3.48 | 1.314 |

Source: Research data (2021)

The analysis in Table 3 documents a wide range of factors associated with influencing the successful operations of tourism partnerships on the beaches of Kwale County. It was established that effective communication among the members and staff (M=3.87) followed by Commitment and trust at (M=3.76) as factors highly associated with influencing the successful operations of partnerships in beaches respectively. Whereas capacity building of the management and members was found to have a low influence on the successful operations of tourism alliances scoring a mean of (M=3.48). These sentiments were also echoed by a senior manager at the Kenya Coast tourism association, who noted that;

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“...One of the major benefits, tourism governance has brought to Kwale County, is that collaboration and partnerships reduced adversarial conflicts between different interest groups and ensured seamless communication among tourism stakeholders, Other benefits include the democratization of tourism decision-making, with the involvement of a range of players, the sharing of views and the possibility of synergy and creativity in solving tourism problems....” (O.I. Mgr. 1, November 2021).

4.5 Hypothesis Testing to Determine the Relationship between Factors Associated with Influencing the Operations of Tourism partnerships and Tourism Performance in Kwale County.

The null hypothesis was tested using Chi-Square analysis. The null hypothesis was stated as follows:

H₀₂: There is no relationship between factors associated with influencing the operations of tourism partnerships and tourism performance in Kwale County.

Table 4: Results of Hypothesis Testing for Objective Two

| Pearson Chi-Square Tests | | |
|---|------------|--------------|
| | | Relationship |
| Influence | Chi-square | 89.817 |
| | df | 10 |
| | Sig. | .000* |
| Results are based on nonempty rows and columns in each innermost sub-table. | | |
| *. The Chi-square statistic is significant at the .05 level. | | |

Source: Researched data (2021)

Interpretation of Table 4 results in it is clear that the significance p-value 0.000 is less than 0.05, and hence the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypnosis is accepted. This implies that there is a relationship between factors associated with influencing the successful operations of tourism partnerships and tourism performance in Kwale County.

These hypothesis results on factors associated with influencing the operations of tourism partnerships agree with the views of the Kwale County coordinator, Kenya Red Cross Kwale who indicated the following;

“...for the success of tourism destinations leading to optimal performance there must be communication amongst all partners as well as transparency and trust, shared vision and goals shared vision and if these attributes are adhered to by all partners then Diani will be a top beach destination.....” [O.I. County Coordinator “Red Cross Ukunda”- November 2021)

Another key respondent observed

“ Collaboration occurs when independent stakeholders of a shared problem domain come together through mutual rules, regulations, and structures, and react on a problem domain.....” [O.I. Marketing Manager “Scuba Diving Clubs Kwale”- November 2021)

4.6 Findings Discussion

Objective two sought to examine factors associated with influencing the successful operations of tourism alliances for better tourism performance in Kwale County, Kenya. The findings in Table 3 indicate overall factors examined like, effective communication among the members and staff, commitment and trust effective implementation of programs and projects focusing on the strategic vision, goals, and objectives, and Collaborative tourism project initiation and implementation as factors highly associated with influencing the successful operations of associations in beaches. This is confirmed by the high mean ($M= 3.60$) and above approval by a majority of the respondents.

The findings imply that tourism governance is concentrated on mutual understanding and commitment among various partners in the tourism sector to ensure seamless operations leading to a great performance of a destination. These findings are in agreement with the sentiments of (Musakwa, *et al.*, 2020) who identified factors like commitment and trust, and effective communication among stakeholders as factors contributing to the successful operation of tourism alliances. These results also concur with the findings by Kim *et al.* (2015) who identified factors associated with performance as a partnership structure, quality of service offered by stakeholders' strategic vision and objectives, and effective communication between partners. Additionally, to support these findings Bushell & Bricker, (2017) indicates the success of tourism partnerships constitutes a strong shared vision and leadership, shared approach to problems, equality, responsibility-sharing communication links, commitment and trust, and shared decision-making. Further, to support these findings, Ahn, *et al.* (2020) identified similar factors like equitable power, communication, trust, and commitment, shared problem-solving and decision-making, leadership, vision, and mutual responsibility as factors fostering the success of tourism alliances. The findings were also confirmed by various respondents who were interviewed the majority of them indicating that effective communication among the members and staff and trust among members, transparency, cooperation, and willingness of members as key factors influencing successful operations of tourism partnerships. There is a common agreement in the findings that one of the most crucial elements needed for an effective collaborative effort in tourism planning and development is the need for a shared vision for tourism development. The existence of a shared vision for tourism development makes it easier for stakeholders to work in a coordinated manner because of the feeling of a shared common problem.

This implies that for successful operations of tourism alliances, cooperation among all stakeholders is key in ensuring the performance of a destination. Therefore, this calls for the effectiveness and efficacy of a private/public partnership in tourism involving commitment, communication, and trust with a shared vision. It is argued, therefore a key factor in the performance and development of beaches is the need to create structures based on democratic accountability, full involvement of each stakeholder, and effective communication. Finally, deliberate efforts need to be made toward open communication to properly coordinate the development and implementation of tourism policies. If destination performance is to be achieved and ensure it brings meaningful contributions to socio-economic development, there is also a need to make tourism communication a collaborative process. Ultimately, a successful tourism communication, transparency planning, and development process in beaches in Kwale County will serve as a good example for the remaining Kenyan coastal beach destinations and have positive implications for other countries.

Inferential Analysis

The study used multiple regression analysis inferential techniques to predict the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. The findings are discussed in the sections below.

Regression Analysis

A regression analysis was generated to determine the extent to which changes in the dependent variable (performance of beaches) can be explained by the change in the independent variables (the impact of tourism partnership and associated tourism factors). The regression model (adjusted R squared) and regression coefficient results were used to explain the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. Table 5 indicates the fitness of regression model results.

Table 5: Model fitness

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. The error in the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|---------------|
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change | |
| 1 | .750 ^a | .232 | .367 | 2.80825 | .734 | 107.966 | 3 | 121 | .000 | 2.320 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), the impact of tourism partnership and associated tourism factors | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: performance of beaches | | | | | | | | | | |

Source: Researched data (2021)

The results in table 5 present the fitness of the regression model used to explain the influence of predictors (independent variables) on the dependent variable. The model explains extent of variation of the dependent variable (beach performance) can be explained by the change in the independent variables (impact of tourism partnership and associated tourism factors). This model explains that 36.7% of the beach tourism performance is a result of independent variables explored. These findings imply that the impact of tourism partnerships and associated tourism factors play a critical role in beach tourism performance (dependent variable). However other factors that were not examined in this study accounted for a 63.3% chance of variation in beach tourism performance.

Analysis of Variance

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics were generated to determine the significance of the regression model. Table 6 presents the ANOVA results.

Table 6: Analysis of variance

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 2218.967 | 4 | 775.656 | 106.967 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 894.161 | 122 | 7.329 | | |
| | Total | 3323.135 | 125 | | | |
| a. Dependent Variable: performance of beaches | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), the impact of tourism partnership and, associated tourism factors effective tourism governance process | | | | | | |

Source: Researched data (2021)

The ANOVA results in Table 6 indicate $p=.000$ (p set statistically at 0.05) indicating the results were significant. This implies that independent variables are good predictors of beach tourism performance.

Regression Coefficients

The regression coefficients analysis was used to determine the extent of the contribution of each independent variable explored on beach tourism performance. The results were presented in table 7.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig | 95.0% Confidence Interval B | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| (Constant) | -2.832 | 1.360 | | -2.887 | .005 | -6.627 | -1.238 |
| Performance of beach tourism | .233 | .043 | .109 | 11.942 | .000 | .828 | .338 |
| Impact of tourism partnership and alliances, | .230 | .066 | .187 | 3.524 | .001 | .101 | .360 |
| Associated tourism factors | .534 | .044 | .208 | 11.941 | .000 | .828 | .438 |
| a. Dependent Variable: performance of beaches | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictions (Constant). Impact of tourism partnership and, associated tourism factors effective tourism governance process | | | | | | | |

Source: Researched data (2021)

The regression coefficient results presented in table 7 indicate that (Beta=0.208) contributed the most to beach tourism performance. It was followed by the impact of tourism partnership. Regression equation; $Y = -3.83 + 0.483$ (E-tourism sites) $+ 0.233$ (performance of beach tourism) $+ 0.233$ (Impact of tourism partnerships) $+ 0.230$ and (associated tourism factors) $+ 0.534$ The regression model shows that the independent variables explored have a positive coefficient, which means that they were directly proportional to beach tourism's better performance.

The above results imply that a unit increase of independent variables will increase beach tourism performance correspondently. In conclusion, the inferential statistics showed that beach tourism performance is explained by the independent variables explored.

5.0 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study and the testing of the four research hypotheses that formed the framework of this study and the results of the regression model used, it can be concluded that tourism associations and alliances, the impact of tourism partnership, factors associated with influencing the operations of tourism alliances and effective tourism governance process play a critical role in the performance of beaches in Kwale County (dependent variable).

6.0 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made;

1. The study established that tourism partnerships have positively and highly impacted the performance of beaches, though many positive impacts were highlighted, a bigger picture needs to be painted on the strengths, weaknesses opportunities, and threats associated with tourism governance to ensure optimal performance of tourism destinations. The study,

- therefore, recommends for a SWOT model be developed to ensure that all the positive and negative attributes of a beach destination regarding collaborative governance are identified.
2. The study revealed that overall factors examined like, effective communication among the members and staff, commitment and trust, effective implementation of programs and projects, focusing on the strategic vision, goals, and objectives, collaborative tourism project initiation and implementation as factors highly associated with influencing the successful operations of alliances in beaches. The study recommends transparency and seamless communication amongst all tourism stakeholders.
 3. The study revealed various aspects that make the effective tourism collaboration governance process better, key among them being the provision of clear guidelines for steering the collaborative governance process and also laid down strategies of collaborative governance through networking. The key constraining factor hampering collaboration from the study appeared to be the lack of a clearly defined policy framework on tourism development in Kwale County. The resulting situation has been one where there is inadequate monitoring and evaluation of planned activities even when ad hoc collaborative arrangements are made. Furthermore, there is a constraining factor relating to overlaps in mandates and activities. The study recommends the government, and other private tourism stakeholders develop clear policies regarding collaborative governance, especially in beach tourism destinations.

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