

Socioeconomic Dynamics of Township Tourism in Soweto: Community Perceptions on Impacts

Abstract

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This study examined the dynamics of township tourism by analysing the local community's perceptions of the associated socioeconomic impacts. By way of self-administered questionnaire surveys to n=387 residents in a South African township, findings revealed that the development of township tourism had mixed perceptions on several issues, such as disrupting family and community life, overcrowding of amenities, and resentment of tourists among the local community. Perceptions show that tourism development in the township has not been sustainably and acceptably managed, necessitating policy interventions aimed at regulating tourist activities and preserving the local community's well-being. The study also highlights the potential benefits of these interventions, guiding the development of effective policies and practices that prioritise the long-term socioeconomic well-being of the local community in township tourism destinations.

Keywords: Soweto, township tourism, socioeconomic impacts, local community perceptions

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Introduction

Township tourism sometimes referred to as 'ghetto tourism' or 'slum tourism,' dates to its popularity in London in the nineteenth century as a way for the wealthy to experience life in impoverished areas (Booyens & Rogerson, 2019; Conforti, 1996). Township tourism offers a more varied range of products, services and experiences (Donaldson et al., 2023). The growth and development of the township tourism sector are evidenced by the sector's socioeconomic contribution to developing nations, which includes increasing foreign exchange earnings, investment opportunities, and social cohesion between stakeholders, tourists, and locals. In the global South, township tourism is a growing phenomenon because of the intensified relationship between tourism and socio-economically marginalised people, sometimes framed as tourist attractions (Booyens & Rogerson, 2019). In South Africa, township tourism has become increasingly popular since the end of apartheid in 1994 (Chili, 2015). It is widely recognised as an effective way to stimulate job creation and local economic development and improve locals' way of life, especially within government circles and policymakers (Hoogendoorn et al., 2020). The country's townships often have high unemployment, poverty, underdevelopment, and inadequate infrastructure (Booyens & Rogerson, 2019). As a result, township tourism instils hope and optimism for the future. Nevertheless, the literature provides evidence of several problematic issues. For example, the local community may feel excluded from the decision-making processes and planning related to township tourism (Donaldson et al., 2023), areas may be affected by tourism-related crimes and other unacceptable social behaviours such as the use of drugs, prostitution and treating locals as inferior to tourists (Mbane & Ezeuduji, 2022). Townships often face stereotyping and stigmatisation, which can negatively impact township tourism development by further marginalising township residents or deterring tourists from visiting them (Donaldson et al., 2023). Consequently, this can worsen socioeconomic inequalities by restricting potential job opportunities, economic growth, and community development within the townships. As a result, developing tourism in impoverished areas requires addressing the socioeconomic disparities.

Numerous studies focused on township tourism, specifically the sustainability of township tourism Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) (Mokoena & Liambo, 2023), mixed experiences and perceptions of residents towards township tourism (Hoogendoorn et al., 2024), challenges on community involvement (Mazhande & Mamimine, 2020), socioeconomic contributions of township tourism (Booyens & Rogerson, 2019; Busisiwe-Mazibuko et al., 2023) and the impact and integration of sustainable tourism (Chen et al., 2024). Although these studies have contributed to understanding the impacts of township tourism, highlighting the importance of sustainability, community perceptions, stakeholder engagement, and empowerment initiatives, there is a constant struggle to understand the nuances of the mixed perceptions, calling for more in-depth research to investigate the sociodynamics of township tourism. The growing body of research on township tourism in the global south has identified the impacts of township tourism development as an important policy issue (Cardoso et al., 2022; Rogerson, 2019). However, a gap exists for recommendations to ensure that township tourism contributes to sustainable socioeconomic development. Moreover, township tours' ethical and moral justification has been under scrutiny (Frenzel, 2018; Rogerson, 2019). Against the above background, the current study aims to investigate the socioeconomic dynamics of township tourism by analysing the local community's perceptions of tourism impacts. In addition, local community perceptions of tourism need to be constantly evaluated to address locals' concerns and ensure that the impact of tourism aligns with the local community's needs and expectations.

Literature review

Township tourism in South Africa

Dating back as early as mid-1660s (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021), when the first guided township tours were conducted in South Africa, township tourism underwent significant evolution, focusing on developing tourism paths and transforming



township destinations. Drawing on evolutionary and path-dependent approaches, Table 1 outlines the stages of township tourism in South Africa. Path dependency in tourism refers to the long-term effects of past developments that shape the direction of tourism growth, with multiple paths emerging in tourist destinations, complementing or competing within tourism contexts and in relation to broader economic paths in the destination (Booyens, 2021; Brouder & Ioannides, 2014).

Politically motivated visits during stage one aimed to normalise townships and make them acceptable in the eyes of mostly the white privileged onlookers. South African mobilities were restricted under apartheid, with Black Africans forced to carry passbooks and had curfews while the Whites were restricted from entering townships (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021). Stage two witnessed the rise of townships as prominent destinations on the post-1994 tourism map, with townships becoming a “must-visit” for high-profile and leisure tourists in South Africa. South Africa was integrated into the global tourism economy after many years of international sanctions, post-apartheid era (Chili & Mabaso, 2016). As township tourism gained momentum, stage three saw the government as an active stakeholder in township tourism development. During stage four, diversification became more pronounced. Townships such as Soweto, Khayelitsha, Langa, and Inanda became popular tourist destinations, offering unique experiences (Booyens & Rogerson, 2019) such as heritage sites, festivals and cultural events, concerts, adventure activities (like bungee jumping), paintball activities, bars and restaurants, food markets, craft breweries, specialist shops, marathons and sporting events.

Table 1: Stages of the evolution of township tourism in South Africa

Stage	Characteristics
Stage 1: Under apartheid (1960s to early 1990s)	Leisure tourists and official/political visitors made numerous visits to townships. These visits were aimed at spreading propaganda and raising political awareness and solidarity regarding the challenges faced by the residents of the townships. Additionally, there was a noticeable lack of leisure tourism in the late 1980s as the political situation took precedence, leading to a focus on political solidarity over leisure activities.
Stage 2: Re)emergence (early Post-1994 post-apartheid)	Before and after the 1994 democratic election, there was a strong sense of political solidarity. High-profile figures visited township residents, places symbolising the struggle, and individuals in need. During this time, leisure tourism was also increased, driven mainly by foreign visitors. Charity became a defining characteristic during this period.
Stage 3: Commercialisation 2000s	Rising trend in the popularity of township tours as a recreational activity and growth of volunteer tourism. There has been increased government involvement in tourism development, particularly with a focus on heritage and culture.
Stage 4: Diversification 2010s to present	Expansion and diversification of township tourism offerings and destinations; growth and development of experience-based and creative tourism. The emergence and advancement of educational and research-based tourism and continued visits by high-profile individuals while emphasising political correctness.

Source: Adapted from Booyens (2021)

Impacts of township tourism

Despite being a controversial type of tourism with strong ethical scepticism (Steinbrink & Voshage, 2021), the transformation paths and evolution of township tourism brought benefits for the locals and expanded leisure and services (Donaldson et al., 2023). Cultural craft centres were developed, often run by the city council and with donor support from NGOs (Booyens, 2021), hence creating jobs and providing entrepreneurial avenues for income generation for the locals (Henama, 2021), allowing the previously disadvantaged communities to benefit from the township tourism industry. Creative tourism gave rise to craft-making experiences, street art tours, drumming sessions, and visiting jazz or visual artists (Tapfuma et al., 2024), enhancing the cultural authenticity and experiences for the tourists. Communities establish a sense of pride when their arts and crafts are displayed, encouraging a renewed interest in local art, traditions and crafts, and a sense of pride for the heritage and culture, leading to the preservation of cultural exercises and political attractions.

The interactions between tourists and residents in township tourism foster social and cultural exchanges, leading to mutual learning, understanding, and enrichment for both parties (McLennan & Thomas-Maude, 2023). In townships like Soweto, tourists no longer feel threatened regarding their safety because the residents have welcomed them and even feel the need to protect them (Busisiwe-Mazibuko et al., 2023). Township tourism provides a platform for community involvement, participation and empowerment, which is essential to mitigate resilience in tourism growth (Chen et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2023). The sustainability of Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in township tourism has been a key focus, with tour guides, restaurants, bars and accommodations playing a crucial role in the economic growth of local economies (Mokoena & Liambo, 2023). Residents and stakeholders in places like Langa, Khayelitsha, Gugulethu (all in Cape Town) and Soweto (Johannesburg) hold diverse opinions on township tourism and often use township tours as a tool to educate visitors about the apartheid policy (Donaldson et al., 2023).

On the other hand, local entrepreneurs in township tourism face tough competition from established, predominantly white-owned tour operators, limiting their market share and growth opportunities due to limited skills, access to finance, and a weak product base (Chili & Mabaso, 2016), while the presence of illegal operators poses a challenge to the formal tourism sector in townships, impacting the quality and integrity of tourism offerings (Mazhande & Mamimine, 2020). Locals experience a feeling of intrusion due to tourists’ unacceptable behaviour such as overdrinking, drugs, prostitution and inappropriate

dressings from tourists and tour operators (Harb & Bassil, 2022; Rames et al., 2021). In addition, locals resent tourists taking pictures of them as they feel that the tourists are invading their personal spaces and making money off their pictures (Symons, 2024). In places of cultural and traditional significance, locals may feel that tourists are disrupting their community and its beliefs when the tourists do not respect the significance of the site, leading to a sense of cultural appropriation or commodification (Sharma & Sodani, 2024). Though some tour operators forbid tourists from taking photographs unless permission is given, either some tourists do not listen to the rules, or certain tour guides allow photographs to be taken (Symons, 2024). Poor infrastructure in townships, such as inadequate roads and facilities (Mawela, 2019) and the shortage of amenities puts pressure on local resources (Hoogendoorn et al., 2024) and create challenges for sustainable growth and limit the overall visitor experience in the township tourism industry.

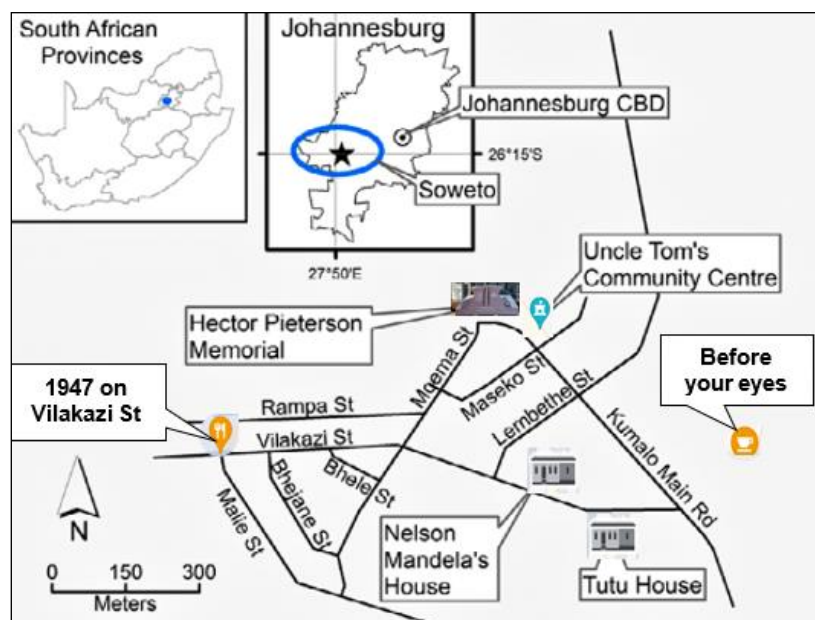


Figure 1: Map of Soweto (Source: Hoogendoorn et al. (2020))

Methodology

The study was conducted in Soweto (Figure 1), a South African township that has gained popularity in tourism due to its unique historical and cultural attractions, such as the Nelson Mandela Residence, Archbishop Desmond Tutu's house and the Hector Petersen Memorial Museum (Busisiwe-Mazibuko et al., 2023). Formally known as the South Western Townships, Soweto is one of South Africa's most prominent and busiest townships, whose tourism industry has experienced immense growth in the last two decades (Letuka & Lebambo, 2021). Grounded in a positivist research paradigm, the study adopts a quantitative research design and uses a self-administered questionnaire to gather data from the local community. Adopting a simple random technique, a fourth-house approach interval was adopted (where the fieldworkers approached every fourth household after approaching the first household). The survey instrument consisted of close-ended questions to solicit data such as the local community demographics and perceptions of socioeconomic impacts. A total of 387 completed questionnaires were deemed usable, surpassing the 384 sample size recommended using a sample size calculator to reach a confidence level of 95% at a 5% margin error.

Table 2: Demographic profile

Variables	Category	n=387 in %
Gender	Female	41
	Male	59
Highest level of education	No schooling	4
	High schooling	52
	Technical/University	44
	Other	0
Monthly income	Below 2500	25
	2500-5000	31
	5001-7500	15
	7501-10000	17
	Above 10000	12

Results

This study aimed to investigate the socioeconomic dynamics of township tourism by analysing the local community's perceptions of its socioeconomic impacts to shed light on its complex dynamics and provide insights into how it affects the local community. To achieve this, the study provided a profile of the respondents. The results are shown in Table 2. Most of the respondents (59%) were male, either had high-level schooling (52%) or technical (or university) (44%) and earned between R2500-R5000 (31%).

Locals' perceptions of social impacts on the host community

Respondents were provided various social impact statements regarding tourism in Soweto to understand their perceptions of township tourism and how it affects their everyday lives.

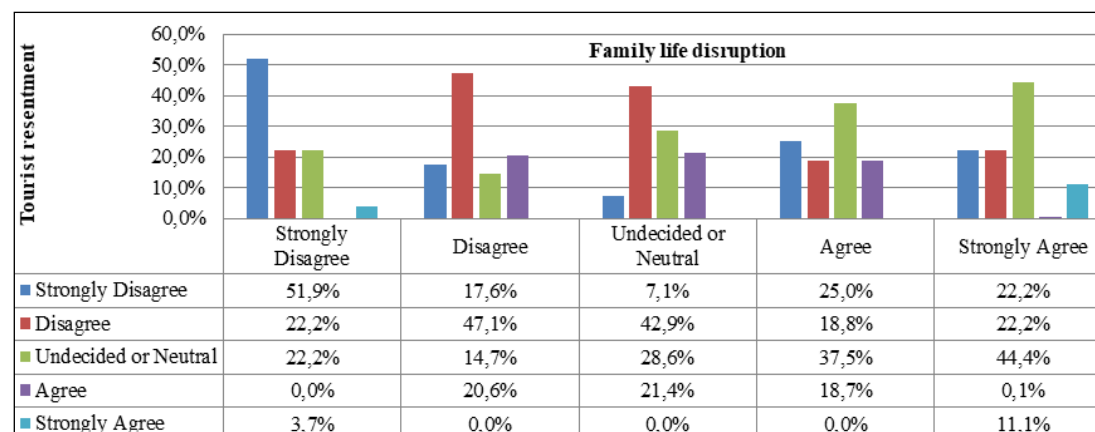


Figure 2. Locals' perceptions of family life disruption vs tourist resentment

Figure 2 reveals the respondents' perceptions of tourism's impact on family life. Almost half of the respondents (51.9%) strongly disagree that tourism has disrupted family life, and they also strongly disagree that increasing tourists to Soweto will lead to resentment among residents and tourists. A significant proportion (44.4%) of the respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed that tourism has disrupted family life strongly agreed that increasing tourists to Soweto would lead to resentment among residents and tourists. In comparison, 11.1% strongly agreed that tourism has disrupted family life and that increasing tourists to Soweto will lead to resentment among residents and tourists.

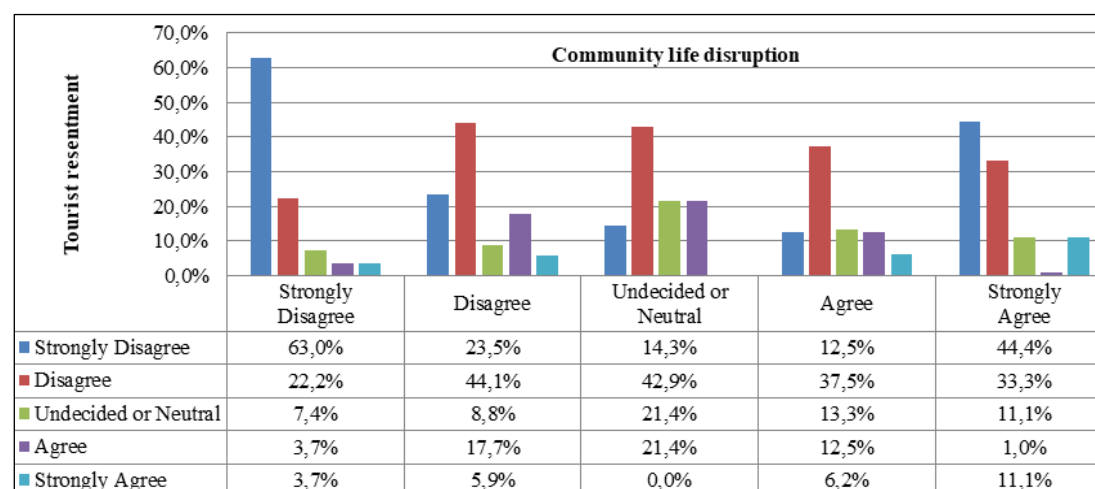


Figure 3. Locals' perceptions of community life disruption vs tourist resentment

Regarding locals' perceptions of community life disruption, Figure 3 shows that 63% of the respondents who strongly disagree that community life has become disrupted as a result of the development of tourism in Soweto also strongly disagree that increasing tourists to Soweto will lead to resentment among residents and tourists. In comparison, 44.1% of the respondents who disagree that community life has become disrupted due to the development of tourism in Soweto also disagree that increasing tourists to Soweto will lead to resentment among residents and tourists. Interestingly, 44.4% of the respondents strongly disagree that community life has become disrupted due to tourism development in Soweto also strongly agree that increasing tourists to Soweto will lead to resentment among residents and tourists, indicating mixed sentiments.

Figure 4 shows that most respondents (59.3%) who view foreign tourists as intruding into their community also strongly disagree that increasing tourists to Soweto will lead to resentment among residents and tourists. 44.4% of the respondents who

remained neutral in their view of foreign tourists as intruding into their community strongly agree that increasing tourists to Soweto will lead to resentment among residents and tourists. A statistical examination of the social impacts on the host community in Soweto was performed using chi-square and phi-value analysis to determine the correlations between family life disruption, community life disruption, foreign tourist intrusion and tourist resentment. The findings are shown in Table 3.

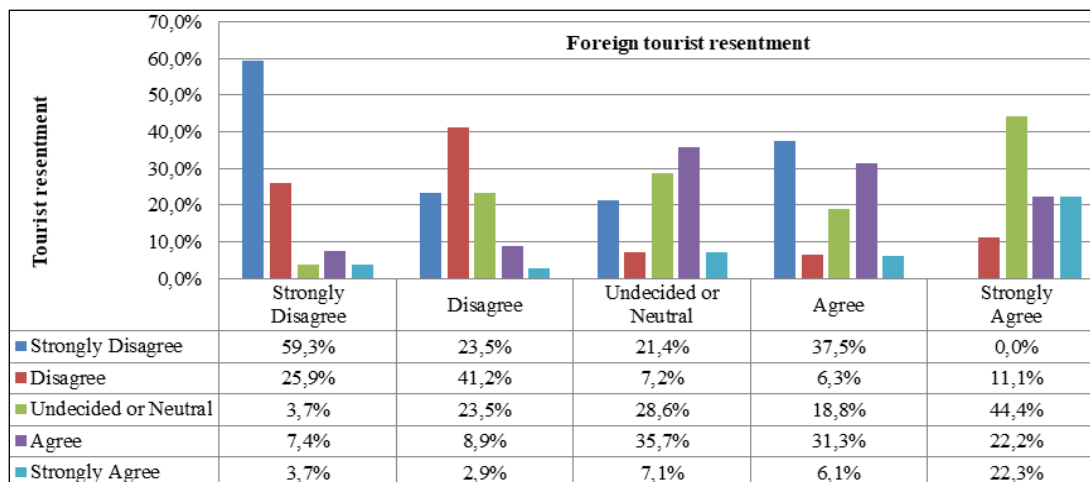


Figure 4. Locals' perceptions of foreign tourist intrusion vs tourist resentment

Chi-square results (Table 3) show family life disruption ($\chi^2=30.845$; $df=16$) with a p-value of 0.01 and Phi-value ($\phi=0.555$; $p=0.01$), community life disruption ($\chi^2=26.041$; $df=16$) with a p-value of $p=0.05$ and Phi-value ($\phi=0.510$; $p=0.05$) and foreign tourist intrusion ($\chi^2=38.302$; $df=16$) with a p-value less than 0.001, all revealing a statistically significant correlation and statistically significant large effect size.

Table 3: Analytical analysis of social impacts on the host community

Tourist resentment	Social impact variables	Chi-square	Phi-value
An increase in tourists to Soweto will lead to resentment among residents and tourists	Family life disruption	$\chi^2=30.845$; $df=16$; $p=0.01^{**}$	$\phi=0.555^c$; $p=0.01$
	Community life disruption	$\chi^2=26.041$; $df=16$; $p=0.05^*$	$\phi=0.510^c$; $p=0.05$
	Foreign tourist intrusion	$\chi^2=38.302$; $df=16$; $p<0.001^{***}$	$\phi=0.619^c$; $p<0.001$

Notes: Level of significance: $p=0.05^*$; $p=0.01^{**}$ and $p<0.001^{***}$. Phi-value: small effect = 0.1^a; medium effect = 0.3^b and large effect = 0.5^c

Locals' perceptions of economic impacts on the host community

Respondents were provided various economic impact statements regarding tourism in Soweto to understand their perceptions of township tourism and how it affects their everyday lives.

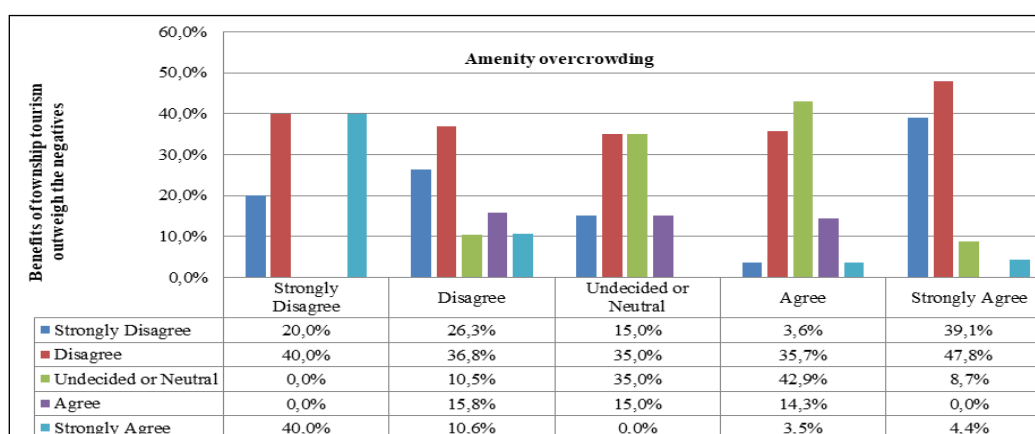


Figure 5. Amenity overcrowding vs benefits of township tourism outweigh the negatives

Figure 5 shows that most respondents (47.8%) who disagree that further growth in Soweto tourism will result in overcrowding of local amenities by tourists strongly agreed that the benefits of township tourism outweigh the negatives. There is a high agreement among neutral respondents (42.9%) that further tourism growth will result in overcrowding of local amenities by tourists and that the benefits of township tourism outweigh the negatives. Figure 6 shows that half of the respondents (50%) who disagreed that local resentment is generated because of the inflated prices for the tourist market also strongly disagreed that the benefits of township tourism outweigh the negatives. Figure 7 shows a significant neutrality (43.5%) among respondents

who believe that township tourism has increased demand for female labour and strongly agree that the benefits outweigh the negatives.

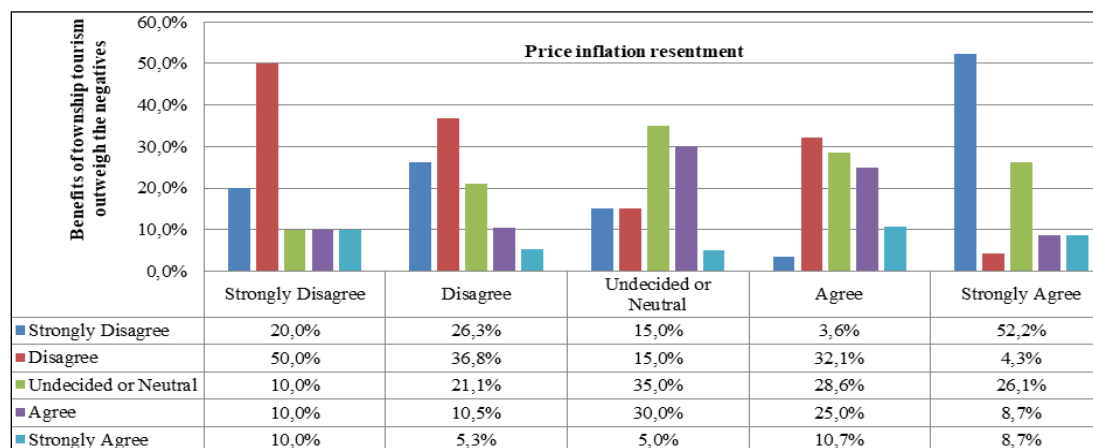


Figure 6. Price inflation resentment vs benefits of township tourism outweigh the negatives

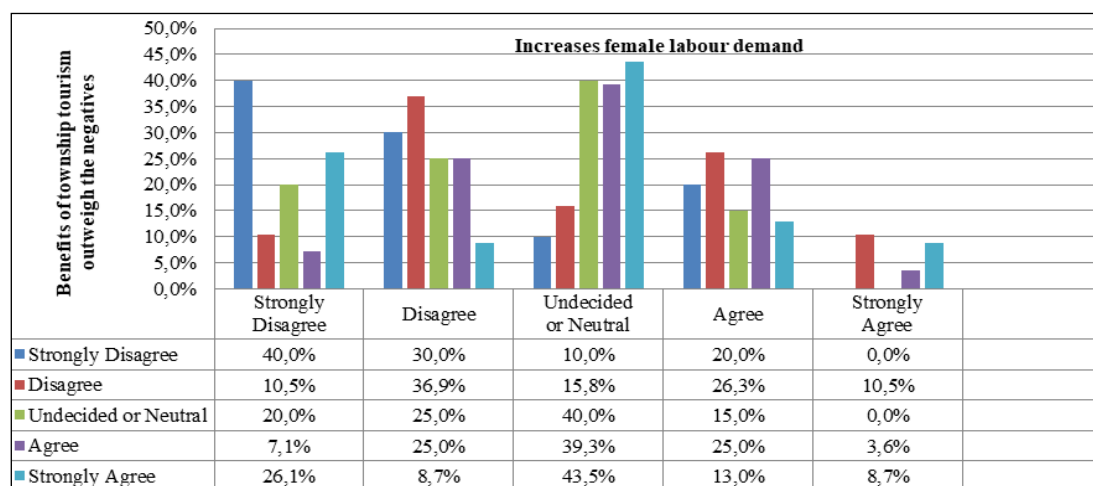


Figure 7. Increases in female labour vs benefits of township tourism outweigh the negatives

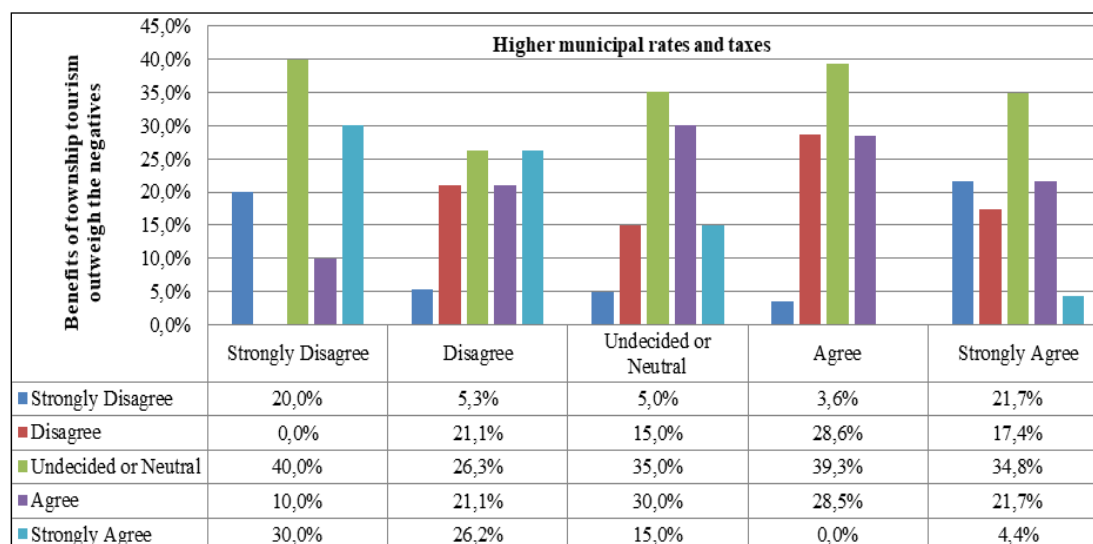


Figure 8. Higher municipal rates and taxes vs benefits of township tourism outweigh the negatives

Figure 8 revealed that a significant proportion of the respondents (40%) who are neutral that township tourism will gradually increase municipal rates and taxes also strongly disagree that township tourism will gradually increase municipal rates and taxes. There is a significant agreement (50%) that tourism development increases the development of recreational facilities and amenities for residents and that the benefits of township tourism outweigh the negatives, as shown in Figure 9.

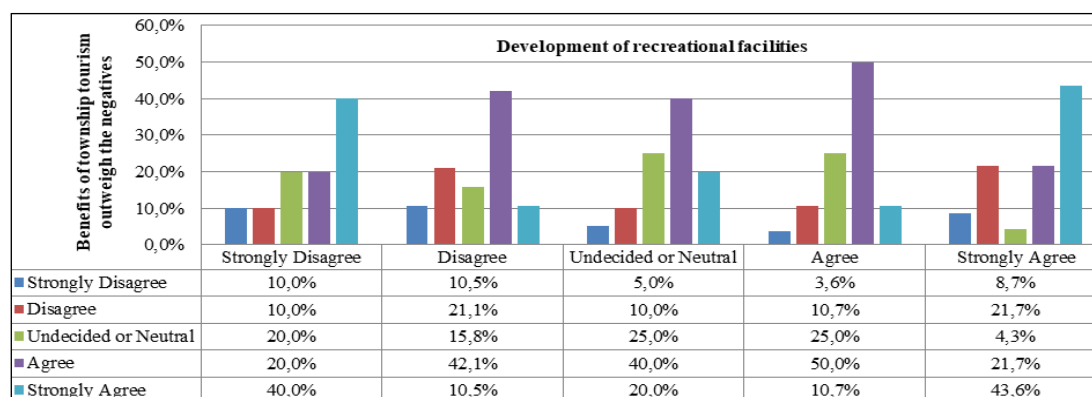


Figure 9. Development of recreational facilities vs benefits of township tourism outweigh the negatives

Table 4 shows statistically significant correlations and statistically significant large effect sizes for amenity overcrowding ($\chi^2=41.517$; $df=16$) with a p-value less than 0.001 and Phi-value ($\phi=0.644$; $p<0.001$) and price inflation resentments ($\chi^2=29.650$; $df=16$) with a p-value of 0.02 and Phi-value ($\phi=0.545$; $p=0.02$). No significant relationship could be established for increase in female labour demand ($\chi^2=19.357$; $df=16$) with a p-value of 0.25 and Phi-value ($\phi=0.440$; $p=0.25$), higher municipal rates and taxes ($\chi^2=22.429$; $df=16$), with a p-value of 0.13 and Phi-value ($\phi=0.474$; $p=0.13$) and development of recreational facilities ($\chi^2=19.252$; $df=16$) with a p-value of 0.26 and Phi-value ($\phi=0.439$; $p=0.26$).

Table 4: Analytical analysis of economic impacts on the host community

Benefits vs negatives	Economic impact variables	Value	Phi-value
The benefits of township tourism outweigh the negatives	Amenity overcrowding	$\chi^2=41.517$; $df=16$; $p<0.001***$	$\phi=0.644^c$; $p<0.001$
	Price inflation resentments	$\chi^2=29.650$; $df=16$; $p=0.02^*$	$\phi=0.545^c$; $p=0.02$
	Increases female labour demand	$\chi^2=19.357$; $df=16$; $p=0.25$	$\phi=0.440^b$; $p=0.25$
	Higher municipal rates and taxes.	$\chi^2=22.429$; $df=16$; $p=0.13$	$\phi=0.474^b$; $p=0.13$
	Development of recreational facilities	$\chi^2=19.252$; $df=16$; $p=0.26$	$\phi=0.439^b$; $p=0.26$

Notes: Level of significance: $p<0.05^*$; $p<0.01^{**}$ and $p<0.001^{***}$. Phi-value: small effect = 0.1^a; medium effect = 0.3^b and large effect = 0.5^c.

Discussion

Tourism in Africa has become an important industry, diversifying African economies from traditional industries such as mining and agriculture, with countries jumping into the tourism bandwagon because of its benefits. The increased institutionalisation of township tourism has played a pivotal role in reshaping the economic landscape of African communities. Yet, despite the major benefits rapid tourism growth brings to destinations, it can also be damaging to the host communities (Sharma & Sodani, 2024). This study aimed to investigate the socioeconomic dynamics of township tourism by analysing the local community's perceptions of tourism's socioeconomic impacts and providing insights into how it affects the local community. This study's findings reveal mixed sentiments about the socioeconomic impacts, similar to Hoogendoorn et al. (2024), who reported mixed resident's experiences with township tourism.

This study showed that most of the respondents who disagreed that family and community life of the local community has been disrupted by the presence of tourists and tourism development also disagreed that increasing tourists to Soweto will lead to resentment among residents and tourists. These findings indicate that those who perceive minimal family and community life disruption do not feel resentment towards tourists and vice-versa. Aligning the study findings, further statistical analysis (Table 3) shows a statistically significant correlation with large effect sizes between family life disruption, community life disruption and tourist resentment. These findings reveal that as family and community life disruptions increase, so does the locals' resentment of an increase in tourists in the area.

This is because tourism activities directly impact township residents' daily lives and well-being (Busisiwe-Mazibuko et al., 2023). Consequently, residents' attitude towards tourists in township communities is influenced by the extent of disruptions to their daily lives. Affirming these findings, Chamboko-Mpotaringa & Tichaawa (2023) posit that residents' perceptions of tourism impacts affect their attitude towards tourists. Similarly, in their study, Hoogendoorn et al. (2024) point out that some residents complain about tourists making noise, parking and urinating at residents' gates, and even throwing bottles in the yards. In agreement, current study findings suggest that the perceived negative impacts of tourism might be driving resentment among some residents, as evidenced by the correlation between respondents agreeing that tourism causes disruption and those agreeing that increasing tourists to Soweto will lead to resentment, especially in the case of community life disruption and foreign tourist intrusion.

The strong correlation between locals' feelings of foreign tourist intrusion and resentment of an increase in tourists means that the feelings of foreign tourist intrusion are strongly associated with increased tourist resentment. Previous research has highlighted that the presence of foreign tourists in host communities may lead to challenges such as cultural disruptions



and social tensions (Rames et al., 2021). In agreement, they (Harb & Bassil, 2022) maintain that foreign tourists' behaviour and preferences, such as their spending patterns, motivations, and cultural interactions, can influence the level of acceptance and integration within the local community. The statistically significant correlation large effect sizes between amenity overcrowding and price inflation resentments revealed that overcrowding on amenities and price inflation is a significant concern for the residents. These findings align with the views of Hoogendoorn et al., (2024) who argue that the influx of affluent people to townships negatively affects residents because it results in shortages of parking spaces. Moreover, businesses usually overprice their products and services for affluent people who are usually willing to pay higher prices than the locals cannot afford. On the other hand, the significant disagreement with price inflation resentment among those who see more benefits suggests that the economic advantages might overshadow the concern about price increases. Tourism can drive economic growth, increase revenue and profit (Mokoena & Liambo, 2023) while the development of township tourism can lead to economic diversification (Donaldson et al., 2023).

Although the study could not establish statistical significance between increased female labour, higher municipal rates and taxes and the development of recreational facilities, the cross-tabulation findings suggest that these impacts are cause for concern. The neutrality on higher municipal rates suggests that while some recognise the benefits of tourism, residents are cautious about potential increases in living costs (Hoogendoorn et al., 2024). The mixed views on the increased demand for female labour, with significant neutrality, show that township tourism has varied impacts on different demographic groups. This corroborates with Raihan et al. (2022), who found that increased tourism led to a higher level of female participation in the employment sector; thus, tourism growth creates opportunities for women. Findings highlight a positive perception of infrastructure development among locals who see tourism benefits aligning with (Mazhande & Mamimine, 2020).

Implications

The study has threefold implications: theory, practice and policy. Firstly, the findings call for a holistic and community-centred approach to understanding and conceptualising the socioeconomic dynamics of township tourism. Secondly, they point to the importance of social and economic factors in the theoretical analysis of tourism impacts, suggesting that theoretical frameworks should encompass aspects such as family and community disruption, amenity overcrowding, tourist and price inflation resentment and higher municipal rates to provide insight into the complexities of tourism development in local communities. As a result, the study findings suggest the need for theories that consider the diverse impacts of township tourism on socioeconomic dynamics and incorporate local community perceptions into theories of tourism development, as perceptions directly influence the sustainability and acceptability of tourism initiatives by communities.

Regarding practice and policy, the potential of township tourism to foster cultural exchange, promote mutual understanding, stimulate economic growth and create job opportunities is widely acknowledged; however, there is a need to address the concerns raised to sustain positive local perceptions of township tourism. There is a need for governments and policymakers to address the specific concerns of the locals who perceive the negative impacts of tourism, such as disruptions to family and community life due to tourism, which are significantly linked to resentment, to mitigate resentment in the growth of tourism. Strategies such as managing tourist behaviours, encouraging respectful interactions, cultural sensitivity training, enhancing community engagement and participation, ensuring tourism development aligns with local interests, and equitably sharing tourism benefits can help reduce the perceived disruptions.

Policies which include creating designated tourist areas can limit intrusion into residential areas. Achieving sustainable tourism requires balancing tourism growth and maintaining community well-being. Policymakers must manage tourist flow into townships and enhance amenities to prevent overcrowding. Similarly, prices should be monitored and regulated to avoid inflated prices for the tourist market, while local business support is encouraged. This will help to balance the interests of the locals and tourists, ensuring locals continue to see the benefits of tourism. To address the mixed perception of increased demand for female labour, targeted policies promoting equitable job opportunities can be implemented. While tourism brings benefits, such as continued investment in recreational facilities, which enhances the quality of life for residents and maintains positive attitudes toward tourism, transparent communication about how tourism revenue is reinvested in the community can mitigate concerns about rising municipal rates. Governments should try to balance tax policies to ensure that the financial burden does not outweigh the perceived benefits of township tourism.

Conclusion

Township tourism has been a subject of mixed views regarding its multifaceted impacts on host communities. The study revealed mixed township tourism perceptions about the disruption of family and community life, opinions about foreign tourists, the benefits of township tourism outweighing the negatives, amenity overcrowding, price inflation resentments, increases in female labour demand, higher municipal rates and taxes and development of recreational facilities portraying complex relationships and resentments. Sustainable and responsible management practices and a deep understanding of residents' perceptions and needs are crucial for maximising the benefits of township tourism while mitigating its potential drawbacks. The study recommends developing policies that manage tourist numbers to mitigate overcrowding—ensuring that local businesses are supported and can grow without significantly inflating prices. Female labour participation in township tourism can be encouraged to promote inclusive economic opportunities while continuously investing in recreational and community facilities to enhance the quality of life for residents and attract more tourists. The limitations of this study provide avenues for future studies, which can be conducted as a longitudinal study, focusing on monitoring changes in local community perceptions and the actual impacts over time. This will provide insights into the sustained effects of tourism on the host



communities. Moreover, with technological advancements, the role of digital technologies in tourism development and management can be explored to give insights into how technology enhances tourist experiences, improves resource management and minimises the negative impacts on host communities.

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