

Developing a stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa

MJ Ramoliki



orcid.org/0000-0002-5203-0493

Thesis accepted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree **Doctor of Philosophy** in **Tourism Management** at the North-West University

Promoter: Prof M Scholtz

Co-Promoter: Prof M Kruger

Graduation: October 2022

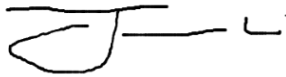
Student number: 26879557

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENT WORK

I, Mpho Ramoliki, identity number 8105245354088 and student number 26879557, hereby declare that this research submitted to the North-West University for the PhD study: ***Developing a stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa***, is my own independent work; and complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the North-West University; and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself or any other person in fulfilment of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

Researcher:

Mr Mpho Ramoliki



Promotor:

Prof Marco Scholtz



Co- promotor:

Prof Martinette Kruger



DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my gorgeous and gifted daughter Reabetswe-Botlhale Wageng. As I sign off this PhD thesis and put down my pen today, I wish you pick it up and continue where I left off. I do not wish you to emulate what I have achieved and done or who I am, but please run your own race at your own pace the same way I did. It might seem impossible for now since you only began with your first grade at school this year (2022). Trust me, it is possible. If I did it, you can also do it. I LOVE YOU, Reabetswe.

PERSONAL JOURNEY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It all started with messy and not so cursive but completely print handwriting taught by one of my many grannies called Motlalekgomo Rancho, who is this year turning 80 years old in December. The print handwriting I learned from my granny paved the way for me at Selogilwe Primary School in Tumahole where I was enrolled for Sub-A, now known as Grade 1. Since then, I never looked back and proceeded to Bopa-Setjhaba Primary School, where I completed Standard five (5), before moving to the then newly formed Boitlamo Secondary School, where I successfully completed my Grade 12 in 1998. During my school days at Boitlamo Secondary School, I was touched by the motherly love of Mrs Motlalepule Roberts, who taught me the importance of mother tongue and general respect for humanity irrespective of age, race, gender, and orientation. Mr Sonny Selebano, as young as he was then, was also there as my Grade 12 class teacher, and he never failed in his duties of general life orientation and the importance of education while we were still young.

Fast forward to 1999, when education was not fashionable, financial resources were scares due to the high unemployment rate and my young mother herself was also not employed then. I had to take a detour to Sasolburg College, where I studied up to N6 in Business Management studies before I left for Vanderbijlpark in 2001 to the then Vaal Triangle Technikon which was in the same year of my enrolment changed to Vaal University of Technology. Upon my arrival at the VUT, I had all intentions to enrol for Labour Relations studies, but my application was unsuccessful due to limited space as I made a late application in January 2001. Favourably a gap was available for me in Tourism studies.

The year 2001 was cumbersome for me as my mother was still unemployed, but my eagerness for education was uncontrollable. As I was about to leave for Vanderbijlpark for the resumption of the 2001 academic year, my other granny Mme Marama Rancho summoned me to her house where my dad and I grew up and handed me an envelope filled with some banknotes, and upon counting the notes, I could not comprehend such generosity, and I immediately shed tears. I left for VUT with some confidence knowing that before NSFAS approves my application, I still would be able to cover any financial eventualities. It was smooth sailing at the beginning of the year academically until I was

locked outside the communal flat I rented with other students due to one irresponsible housemate. However, that did not last longer than a day as my maternal grandmother Mampheng Dorothea Ramoliki came to my rescue and helped me pay what was due and immediately left to stay at the VUT dormitory for the duration of my successful completion of both National Diploma in Tourism Management and B-Tech Degree in 2003 and 2004 respectively.

In 2006 I was still unemployed after completing my B-Tech Degree in Tourism Management in 2004 when the SAPS appointed me as a Police trainee, and I had an interesting period as a crime prevention officer, detective, and intelligence officer in my last years. In 2009 while still in the SAPS, I enrolled for Magister Technologiae (M-Tech) in Tourism and Hospitality Management with the title of my study being “Determining Sasolburg residents’ perceptions of tourist safety and security in South Africa”, which I successfully completed in 2013 with Prof Elmarie Slabbert as my study supervisor.

My PhD journey started well in 2017 after Prof Melville Saayman convinced me to change the title from what I intended to research to something more interesting, which I gladly enjoyed from the beginning until the end. My journey continued smoothly until the untimely death of Prof Melville Saayman, and Prof Marco Scholtz, who was my co-promoter, took over to be my study promoter. Throughout my PhD journey, I faced many challenges associated with academia and some deliberate and unnecessary human challenges, especially during my prolonged qualitative data collection. I almost lost my sanity, but one well-behaved gentleman Mr Tshediso Lerumo came through for me and restored my sanity. While I was trying to recover from the loss of Prof Melville Saymaan, another setback engulfed my PhD journey momentarily when Prof Scholtz left for Thomas-More University in Belgium in pursuance of his illustrious academic career. Before his departure to Belgium, Prof Scholtz arranged a meeting between me and Prof Martinette Kruger, my newly appointed co-promoter, and the meeting could not materialise due to my personal crisis on that day. However, since then, I have never missed any meetings and enjoyed all Zoom meetings we had between myself, Prof Marco Scholtz and Prof Martinette Kruger. My promoter and co-promoter fuelled me with amazing energy and pushed me to the limit towards successfully completing my PhD thesis with the North-West University. This was a very lengthy but necessary journey that I would undertake if the opportunity were to be presented again. The whole PhD journey

taught me plenty of things, including discipline in general, tolerance for ignorant humans, patience for every living being you come in contact with and not having assumptions about anything and everything. After this PhD journey, I pledge to be helpful to my fellow students in my hood and around reachable corners of the country in terms of how to cope and complete post-graduate studies without hassles and tussles. The PhD journey ends here, but the invaluable knowledge acquired throughout the journey will be shared amongst fellow learners, scholars, researchers, and everyone with a keen interest in any tourism topic.

To my spiritual ancestors, the light and guidance of the 'Bakoena ba ha modimosana' of the Molokoane clan and those of 'Basiea ba tubatsi' of the Ramoliki clan, you are highly honoured.

A big thank you to the God of Henry Radiloko Rancho, who was fond of the Methodist Tswana hymn 'Modimo wa boikanyo' and the God of Daniel Letshabo Ramoliki of the majestic Methodist hymn 'Semphethe wena ya ratehang'.

My dear mother, Sylvia 'Mannoko' Ramoliki, thank you for being there for me from the first day until today. In as much as you do not have much to say, I always get to understand what you say, even in your silence. This is your 60th birthday present, and I hope you enjoy it.

To my late Dad, Gaseitsiwe Jacob 'Barnard' Molokoane, those who knew you said a mouthful about you, including your love for education. This is how I wish to reincarnate your dreams and aspirations for good education. Continue to rest well Papa!

To my younger brother, Teboho Dintwe Ramoliki-Molokoane, we might not be talking everyday because of the long distance in between ourselves. I was always flattered and charmed by your good luck messages whenever I inform you about my academic progress. Thank you so much, all your messages gave me more courage to push harder as I know that you always look up to me.

A posthumous thank you to Prof Melville Saayman for accepting my PhD application at TREES and for the conditional approval, which led to one of my scariest and most intense interviews ever attended with a host of knowledgeable panellists of TREES (NWU).

Prof Elmarie Slabbert, thank you for holding the fort at the TREES department since the sorrowful departure of your predecessor Prof Melville Saayman and, most importantly, for your guidance during my Magister Technologiae (M-Tech) at VUT.

Prof Marco Scholtz, it seemed impossible with the sudden departure of Prof Saayman, but you showed character and boldness and stepped up when it was necessary. You were always full of affirmative words and made me see the whole journey as an easy one. Thank you so much for all your troubles since from the beginning until thus far. I wish you well in all your endeavours, you are kind-hearted.

Prof Martinette Kruger, thank you for being my co-promoter. I thought I knew the meaning and importance of a study co-promoter until you became my co-promoter. You personally provided balanced thoughts and suggestions which inextricably complemented those of Prof Scholtz without any contradiction. I always said to you, “South Africa needs people like you”. I really meant every word I said, and if we have more individuals of your calibre, our country will be a better place for all. Keep up the good work, and I wish your mother lingers longer to keep the fire in you burning.

To Prof Suria Ellis, thank you for your assistance with the statistical analysis. You made it easy for us to interpret our data and make meaningful contributions to all the data collected.

Karl Albrecht once said ‘Change your language and you change your thoughts’. Thank you so much Ms Cecile Van Zyl, for the sterling language editing job you performed. You helped to re-align my deformed thoughts.

To Mrs Lizelle Snyman, my subject librarian. Thank you for your assistance and support in all requests I made through your office in the library. I thank you for your timeous responses. Even in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, you always showed up with relevant material from the beginning to the end.

Mr Tshediso Lerumo, at some point, I thought I was losing it, but you assured me your unconditional assistance not in rhetoric but with your indelible and firm actions. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the troubles you placed yourself through and for the intervention stance you provided. “Oe hlanakile senna ngwaneso, le ka moso”

Mr Siphiwe Cingo, my brother. You were a great companion throughout my data collection process in Dihlabeng Municipality. You helped me manoeuvre the rocky streets of Paul Roux, the beauty of Rosendal, the buzzing life of Bethlehem, the scenery of Fauriesburg and the wonderful nature of Clarens. You made it all easy for me and my team of fieldworkers to collect data unhindered. You did not wait for my permission to lend a hand, but out of your good heart, your hands were on deck from day one until the end. Thank you, my brother.

Mr Segobelo Elias Magashule, thank you for all your troubles and assistance during the period when I thought it was time to give up. I will forever cherish your contribution in my education since the year 2000 at Sasolburg College and most importantly during the final years of my PhD journey, you really are a champion of education for a black child.

To Mawela tours, thank you for all your troubles and transportation of all fieldworkers, even in the displeasing road conditions. May your business grow exponentially to establish more companies similar to yours.

All participants from the FSGLTA members, residents, and tourism business providers in Paul Roux, Rosendal, Fouriesburg, Bethlehem and Clarens. Thank you for participating in your respective surveys to make this project a success.

Thank you all sincerely to all my family and friends who showed interest in my PhD endeavour. At least none of you asked me when I am finishing my studies, which gave me humongous energy to push through until the end.

The NWU for financial assistance to keep me in the game for as long as you could, thank you.

“But I’ve got more to learn, too. I do not feel like I’m done, or I know it all”

Gary Sinise

ABSTRACT

Developing a stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa

Tourism routes have increasingly been adopted as an economic development strategy in rural and underdeveloped communities. This is also evident in developing countries such as South Africa. The existence and success of tourism routes are mainly influenced by the active involvement of stakeholders such as tourism planners (the government), residents, and tourism and non-tourism business providers. Unfortunately, there are notable gaps in the understanding of tourism route development evident from the literature: a lack of community consideration during the development of a tourism product, a lack of collaboration between industry, government, and community, a lack of stakeholder engagements, and continuous collaboration. The tourism route planners (government) need to consider the residents' views and opinions before planning and developing potential tourism routes. The residents should form part in planning, developing, marketing, and managing tourism routes within their communities' boundaries. Tourism providers need to be aware of the products and services necessary for developing and successfully launching tourism routes as they are at the centre stage of the route development as some of them are the rightful owners of products and services to be included in the tourism route.

This study contributes to the literature on stakeholder involvement during tourism route planning, development, and management by developing a stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa. The Eagle tourism route in the Free State Province was the case study. The study's goal was achieved through five objectives. The first two objectives were achieved through a critical review of the existing literature. The first analysis reviewed tourism routes, the key factors of their success, and sustainable tourism in addressing economic, environmental, and social responsibility during route development. The second review explored stakeholder involvement in tourism route development. The third objective established route planners' (government) perceptions of the Eagle Tourism Route's planning, development and management and how, according to them, the residents who live in communities along this route form part as stakeholders through interviews (qualitative approach). This

objective links to Phase 1 of the data collection. During this qualitative phase of the study, five Free State Gambling, Tourism and Liquor Authority (FSGLTA) officials were interviewed from October to December 2019. The data was transcribed into text, and thematic content analysis was applied to identify the codes and sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes revealed how FSGLTA officials involved tourism stakeholders in the planning, developing, and managing tourism routes in the Free State (Eagle tourism route). Contrasting views were revealed, especially regarding the involvement of residents and other stakeholders in the development, management and marketing of the tourism route. The results informed and guided the development of the data collection tools in Phase 2.

The fourth objective focused on the second phase of the data collection, where a concurrent triangulation strategy was applied, which involved simultaneous quantitative and qualitative phases of data collection, analysis, and result comparisons. This research strategy was employed to understand the involvement of permanent residents and tourism business providers in Paul Roux, Rosendal, Fouriesburg, Bethlehem and Clarens in Dihlabeng District Municipality in the planning, development, and management of the tourism route. Interviews were conducted among community members (n = 25) living in the towns or settlements that form part of the tourism route, while questionnaires were distributed to tourism business providers (n = 241). The comparison of the results included the critical aspects to be considered when routes are developed and the expected benefits of the tourism routes for both the residents and tourism business providers.

The fifth objective was achieved through drawing conclusions and making recommendations regarding stakeholder involvement in tourism development. Based on the empirical results, the study proposes a practical stakeholder involvement framework towards tourism route development. The framework is conceptualised based on the review of seminal works and the empirical findings of this study. The framework proposes that the tourism route planners (government) adopt three phases and eight steps throughout the phases. Phase 1 Stakeholder analysis consists of two steps: *Step 1 Identification of stakeholders* and *Step 2 Initial communication and invitations*. Phase 2 Planning and cooperation consist of three steps: *Step 3 Stakeholder engagement*, *Step 4 Route consolidation* and *Step 5 Stakeholder collaboration*. Steps 4 and 5 operate

interchangeably and back and forth when necessary. Lastly, Phase 3 Implementation consists of three steps: *Step 6 Tourism route launch/relaunch*, *Step 7 Tourism route marketing* and *Step 8 Tourism route review*. The steps in the framework are circulatory, implying that after a particular period, the tourism routes must be assessed and evaluated, and if necessary, all eight steps need to be followed again based on the tourism routes' performance.

The findings of this study are significant to the literature on the government as tourism route planners (enablers), the involvement of communities residing within the tourism routes and tourism businesses operating within the tourism routes. This study has the following theoretical and practical contributions. Firstly, the study fills the gap in stakeholder analysis by identifying stakeholders and including communication and invitation of stakeholders as critical phases and steps in the framework. Secondly, the study fills the stakeholder engagement gap, which is the tourism route planners' responsibility and the gap in route consolidation through stakeholder collaboration. This study contributes to new information and guidance on launching a new tourism route or re-launching an existing tourism route and a tourism route review. Finally, the study contributes to a thorough understanding of the steps to take should the need for a tourism route review occur. The review occurs when tourism route planners and other stakeholders consider the route redundant or operating counter to how it was planned - such reviews should occur periodically (e.g., every 3rd year). Overall, the study provides an integrated step-by-step guide to tourism route planners (government) on the planning, development, marketing, and managing of tourism routes. The stakeholder involvement framework developed in this study is beneficial (especially from a developing country perspective) to the general tourism industry, academic institutions, local tourism route developers, FSGLTA, other provincial and national tourism authorities, and scholars and researchers.

Keywords: tourism, tourism route, route tourism, sustainability, stakeholders, tourism business providers, community, small community, community participation, stakeholder involvement, framework

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
BTC	Business to consumer
CBT	Community-based tourism
CCB	Community capacity building
CEO	Chief executive officer
CIPC	Companies and the intellectual property commission
CNMHS	Caisse nationale de monuments historiqueset
COE	Council of Europe
COVID-19	Coronavirus
CP	Community participation
CRP	Cultural route programme
CT	Community tourism
CTF	Clarens Tourism Forum
DESTEA	Department of Environmental, Small businesses, Tourism and Economic Affairs
DETEA	Department of Economic, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs
DMO	Destination Marketing Organisation
DO	Destination of origin
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
EMS-REC	Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee
FSGLTA	Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority
FSTA	Free State Tourism Authority
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GI	Geographical Indicators
TGSTC	Global sustainable tourism criteria
ICC	International Convention Centre
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LDC	Least developed countries
LED	Local economic development
LTA	Local Tourism Association
MEC	Member of the executive council
N	Population

NACOBTA	Namibian Community-Based Tourism Association
NCHTS	National strategy for tourism in culture and heritage strategy
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NIYSTD	United Nations International Year of Sustainable for Development
NTSS	National Tourism Sector Strategy
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
PPT	Pro-poor tourism
QCA	Quality content analysis
RDMS	Research Data Management Services
Rho	Rank correlation coefficient
RHRTA	Rideau Heritage Route Tourism Association
S	Sample size
SAPS	South African Police Service
SATSA	South African Tourism Service Association
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SPSS	Statistical package for the social sciences
ST	Stakeholder theory
STD	Sustainable tourism development
TCGSA	Tourism Grading Council of South Africa
TRP	Tourism route planners
TTR	Themed touring routes
UCOTA	Ugandan Community Tourism Association
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
US	United States
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WTO	World Tourism Organisation
α	Cronbach's alpha

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENT WORK.....	I
DEDICATION.....	II
PERSONAL JOURNEY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	III
ABSTRACT	VIII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	XI

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, THE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AND THE RESEARCH SETTING	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the study	2
1.2.1 Tourism sustainability through stakeholder involvement	4
1.2.2 The tourism potential in small communities	6
1.2.3 The establishment of tourism routes.....	7
1.2.4 Involvement of stakeholders in tourism routes	9
1.2.5 Seminal work on tourism routes.....	11
1.3 Problem statement	13
1.4 Goal and objectives	15
1.4.1 Goal.....	15
1.4.2 Objectives.....	15
1.5 Research method	16
1.5.1 Literature review	16
1.5.2 Empirical research.....	17
1.6 Defining the concepts	21

1.6.1	Route tourism	21
1.6.2	Tourism business providers	21
1.6.3	Tourism route	21
1.6.4	Sustainability	22
1.6.5	Stakeholders	22
1.6.6	Community	22
1.6.7	Small community	23
1.6.8	Community participation	23
1.6.9	Framework	24
1.6.10	Stakeholder involvement	24
1.7	Chapter classification.....	25
 CHAPTER 2: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT		
		27
2.1	Introduction.....	27
2.2	Sustainable tourism development.....	29
2.2.1	Fundamental principles of sustainable tourism development	30
2.2.2	The importance of sustainable tourism development	34
2.3	Tourism routes defined and explained	35
2.3.1	The emergence of tourism routes	35
2.3.2	Tourism routes around the world	36
2.4	Types of tourism routes	40
2.4.1	Cultural routes	40
2.4.2	Heritage routes.....	41

2.4.3	Wine routes	41
2.4.4	Liberation routes.....	43
2.5	The importance and benefits of tourism routes	44
2.6	Tourism route development	45
2.6.1	How are tourism routes developed?	46
2.6.2	Stakeholders responsible for the development of tourism routes	47
2.6.3	The marketing and management of tourism routes.....	50
2.7	Seminal work on tourism routes.....	52
2.8	The challenges associated with tourism routes.....	54
2.9	Key success factors of tourism routes and the current state of tourism routes	55
2.9.1	Attractions	55
2.9.2	Service quality	56
2.9.3	Marketing.....	56
2.9.4	Governing strategies.....	57
2.9.5	Funding	57
2.9.6	Economic development	57
2.10	Synthesis of the content, gaps in the current literature and the importance of stakeholders	58
2.11	Conclusion.....	59

CHAPTER 3 : AN ASSESSMENT OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT, AND MARKETING OF TOURISM ROUTES..... 61

3.1	Introduction.....	61

3.2	Stakeholders in tourism and the stakeholder theory.....	63
3.2.1	Understanding stakeholders in tourism	63
3.2.2	The stakeholder theory	64
3.3	The tourism stakeholders in tourism route development	66
3.3.1	Defining stakeholders in tourism route development and planning.....	66
3.3.2	The significance of stakeholders' involvement in tourism route development....	67
3.4	Stakeholders involved in tourism destination planning and development.....	69
3.4.1	A stakeholder map.....	70
3.4.1.1	Government.....	70
3.4.1.2	Community	71
3.4.1.3	Hospitality tourism businesses.....	71
3.4.1.4	Non-tourism businesses	71
3.4.1.5	Tourists	71
3.4.1.6	Tourism associations	72
3.4.1.7	Destination marketing organisations (DMOs).....	72
3.4.2	Responsibilities of stakeholders involved in tourism route planning and development.....	73
3.4.3	Roles of stakeholders during the development of tourism routes	74
3.4.3.1	Government/tourism planners' role in tourism route development	75
3.4.3.2	Community/residents' role in tourism route development.....	78
3.4.3.3	Tourism business owners' role in tourism route development.....	82
3.4.3.4	Non-tourism business owners' role in tourism route development	84
3.4.3.5	Tourism associations and organisations within tourism route development	89

3.5	Challenges associated with stakeholder involvement in tourism route development.....	93
3.6	Overcoming the challenges associated with stakeholder involvement in tourism route development	95
3.7	Seminal work on stakeholder involvement in tourism route development.....	96
3.8	Conclusion.....	100
CHAPTER 4 : APPLIED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....		103
4.1	Introduction.....	103
4.2	The mixed-method approach	103
4.3	Research design.....	105
4.4	Phase 1: Qualitative interviews with tourism route planners.....	108
4.4.1	Population under investigation.....	109
4.4.2	Sampling and sample size	109
4.4.3	Survey method	111
4.4.4	Interview guide development	112
4.5	Phase 2: The residents and tourism business providers as stakeholders (concurrent mixed-method approach)	116
4.5.1	Quantitative approach: Tourism business providers	117
4.5.2	Qualitative approach: Resident perspectives	121
4.6	Conclusion.....	124
CHAPTER 5 : TOURISM ROUTE PLANNERS' PERSPECTIVE ON STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS.....		125
5.1	Introduction.....	125

5.2	The participants and conducted interviews	125
5.3	Thematic content analysis	127
5.4	Issues of trustworthiness	129
5.5	Results from the qualitative research	129
5.5.1	Information regarding participants' demographic information	130
5.5.2	Information regarding participants' job positions	130
5.5.3	Numbers and names of tourism routes in the Free State	132
5.5.4	The conceptualisation and implementation of tourism routes	133
5.6	Reasons for developing tourism routes in the Free State.....	134
	Theme 1: Importance of tourism route development.....	134
5.7	The level of involvement in the tourism routes in the Free State	135
	Theme 2: Tourism planners' involvement in tourism route development.....	135
5.8	The benefits, intended and current beneficiaries of tourism route	137
	Theme 3: The benefits of tourism route development.....	137
5.9	The operation of Free State tourism routes.....	142
5.10	Management and marketing of tourism routes	142
	Theme 4: Current marketing of tourism routes	142
	Theme 5: Improving the marketing of tourism routes.....	142
5.11	Stakeholders involved in the tourism routes.....	146
5.12	The existence and role of associations in the tourism routes	146
5.13	Attractions included in the tourism routes	147
5.14	The review of tourism routes.....	148

5.15	The operation of the tourism routes, positive attributes and problems in operating tourism routes	149
5.16	The operation of the tourism routes, positive attributes and problems in operating tourism routes	150
Theme 6: Barriers to the sufficient operation of tourism routes		150
5.17	Primary stakeholders of the tourism routes.....	151
5.18	Non-tourism stakeholders.....	152
5.19	Residents' involvement in tourism routes.....	153
5.20	Involvement of tourism and non-tourism business owners.....	154
5.21	The role of stakeholders in the management and marketing of the tourism routes	154
Theme 7: Stakeholder roles and responsibilities.....		154
5.22	Role of stakeholders in the development of tourism routes.....	158
5.23	The benefits of tourism routes	158
5.24	A synthesis of the findings and a comparison with the existing literature	160
5.25	Key considerations from the findings that guided Phase 2.....	163
5.26	Conclusion.....	165
 CHAPTER 6 : EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS - TOURISM BUSINESS PROVIDERS AS STAKEHOLDERS IN TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT		
		166
6.1	Introduction.....	166
6.2	Quantitative approach: Tourism business providers' perspectives	166
6.2.1	Data analysis	166
6.2.2	Descriptive statistics	166

6.3	Multi-variate statistical analyses and results	179
6.3.1	Results of the Exploratory factor analysis (EFAs)	179
6.3.2	Results from the EFA on the cooperation and tourism business providers' involvement as stakeholders in the tourism route development	181
6.3.3	Results from the EFA on the key considerations for tourism route development.....	182
6.3.4	Results from the EFA on the barriers to tourism route development	184
6.3.5	Results from the EFA on expected tourism route benefits	187
6.4	Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis.....	190
6.4.1	Spearman's rank-order correlation results	190
6.4.2	Linear regression analysis	195
6.5	Conclusion.....	201
CHAPTER 7 : EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS - RESIDENTS AS STAKEHOLDERS IN TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT		202
7.1	Introduction.....	202
7.2	Qualitative approach: Resident perspectives	202
7.2.1	Results from the qualitative interviews among residents.....	203
7.2.2	Information regarding the date, location and duration of the interviews.....	203
7.2.3	Demographic profile of participants.....	205
7.2.4	Thematic content analysis results	207
7.3	Conclusion.....	271
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		272
8.1	Introduction.....	272

8.2	Conclusions	273
8.2.1	Conclusions concerning the literature review chapters	273
8.2.2	Conclusions concerning the results	277
8.3	Key findings based on the results	294
8.4	Research contributions	299
8.4.1	Theoretical contributions.....	299
8.4.2	Practical contributions.....	301
8.5	A stakeholder involvement framework in sustainable tourism route development.....	302
8.5.1	Critical aspects and considerations for the development of a tourism route	302
8.5.2	A practical framework towards sustainable tourism route development	307
8.6	Similar stakeholder involvement studies in tourism route development.....	320
8.6.1	The public sector as a key enabler in sustainable rural tourism	321
8.6.2	Astro-tourism in the Karoo arid region	321
8.7	Limitations of the research.....	322
8.8	Recommendations for future research.....	323
8.9	Conclusion	326
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	328
	ANNEXURES.....	383
	APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE NUMBER	383
	APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE AIMED AT TOURISM ROUTE PLANNERS	387
	APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE AIMED AT TOURISM BUSINESS PROVIDERS.....	391

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE AIMED AT PERMANENT RESIDENTS	397
APPENDIX E: PHASE 2 INSTRUMENT VARIABLES.....	399
APPENDIX F: PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING.....	402

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2-1:	Analysis of previous studies conducted.....	52
Table 3-1:	Analysis of previous studies conducted on stakeholder involvement.....	97
Table 4-1:	Number of tourism business providers in the selected towns	118
Table 4-2:	Primary towns and population of Dihlabeng Local Municipality	121
Table 5-1:	Participant's date, location and duration of the interviews	126
Table 5-2:	Demographic information of participants	130
Table 5-3:	Numbers and names of tourism routes in the Free State	132
Table 5-4:	The conceptualisation and implementation of tourism routes	133
Table 5-5:	Reasons for developing tourism routes in the Free State	134
Table 5-6:	The level of involvement in the tourism routes in the Free State.....	135
Table 5-7:	The benefits, intended and current beneficiaries of tourism routes.....	138
Table 5-8:	The operation of tourism routes in the Free State	142
Table 5-9:	Management and marketing of tourism routes	145
Table 5-10:	The role of associations in the tourism routes	147
Table 5-11:	Attractions included in the tourism routes.....	148
Table 5-12:	The review of tourism routes	148
Table 5-13:	The operation of tourism routes, positive attributes and problems in the operation of tourism routes.....	150
Table 5-14:	Primary stakeholders of the tourism routes	152
Table 5-15:	Number of non-tourism stakeholders in the routes	152
Table 5-16:	The role of stakeholders in the development, management and marketing of the tourism routes	156

Table 5-17:	The role of residents as stakeholders in the development of tourism routes.....	158
Table 5-18:	The types of benefits from tourism routes	159
Table 6-1:	Job function/position	169
Table 6-2:	Main target market(s)	169
Table 6-3:	Expanding the tourism route	171
Table 6-4:	Suggestions regarding the involvement of tourism business providers.....	173
Table 6-5:	The involvement of stakeholders in the tourism route development	174
Table 6-6:	Key considerations in developing a sustainable tourism route)	175
Table 6-7:	Key barriers in tourism route development	176
Table 6-8:	Expected tourism route benefits	178
Table 6-9:	EFA results of tourism business providers' involvement as stakeholders in tourism route development	182
Table 6-10:	EFA results of key considerations for tourism route development	183
Table 6-11:	EFA results of the barriers to tourism route development.....	185
Table 6-12:	EFA results of expected tourism route benefits	188
Table 6-13:	Spearman's Rank-order Correlation results	193
Table 6-14:	Regression model predictors.....	196
Table 6-15:	Stepwise linear regression results for enhancing <i>Active stakeholder involvement</i>	197
Table 6-16:	Stepwise linear regression results for enhancing Expected benefits of tourism route development.....	199
Table 7.1:	Participant's date, location, and duration of the interviews	204
Table 7.2:	Demographic profile of participants	206

Table 7.3:	Eagle Tourism Route awareness and the influence of the route on the community	213
Table 7.4:	Do you feel that the support of the residents of this community is important for sustainable / further tourism route developments?	223
Table 7.5:	Do you feel the residents formed part of the tourism route planning, development, and management?	230
Table 7.6:	In your opinion, what are the most significant barriers that deter residents from being involved in the tourism route?.....	237
Table 7.7:	What benefits for the community do you expect to see because of the tourism route?	246
Table 7.8:	In your opinion, what are the critical aspects of a successful tourism route?.....	255
Table 7.9:	Do you have any suggestions regarding the involvement of residents as tourism stakeholders in the tourism route?	266
Table 8-1:	Profile of the participants (tourism route planners)	278
Table 8-2:	Profile and general perceptions of the respondents (tourism business providers).....	283
Table 8-3:	A summary of the EFA results.....	286
Table 8-4:	Summary of the stepwise linear regression analyses	288
Table 8-5:	Profile of the participants (residents)	290

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1:	Conceptual framework for sustainable tourism route development through stakeholder involvement.....	6
Figure 1-2:	A summary of the applied sequential mixed-method approach	19
Figure 2-1:	Sustainable tourism development management: Main goals.....	30
Figure 2-2:	A framework of rural tourism route stakeholders	48
Figure 3-1:	Stakeholder map.....	70
Figure 3-2:	Community participation Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation and Tuson's typology of community participation	79
Figure 3-3:	Route tourism association partnership model.....	91
Figure 4-1:	Mixed-methods elements	104
Map 4-1:	Map of the Free State Province.....	107
Figure 4-2:	Concurrent triangulation strategy	116
Figure 6-1:	Profile of tourism business providers.....	167
Figure 6-2:	Business types.....	167
Figure 6-3:	Years in operation.....	168
Figure 6-4:	Role played by stakeholders in the tourism route development.....	170
Figure 6-5:	How important is the support of tourism business providers?	172
Figure 6-6:	Hypothesised regression model for <i>Active stakeholder involvement</i>	196
Figure 6-7:	Hypothesised regression model for Expected benefits of route development	197
Figure 8-1:	Summary of the findings related to the tourism route planners.....	280
Figure 8-2:	Summary of the findings related to the residents.....	291

Figure 8-3:	Critical aspects and considerations for the development of a tourism route	304
Figure 8-4:	A stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development	309

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, THE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AND THE RESEARCH SETTING

1.1 Introduction

Governments set the economic climate and offer a comprehensive regulatory framework for the travel and tourism sector to operate and play a key role in tourism planning, development, and marketing (Liu, Dou, Li & Cai, 2020:178). As a result, the worldwide output of sustainability policy statements, objectives, guidelines, and initiatives issued by national, regional, and municipal governments has risen exponentially (Ruhanen, 2013:83). The collection of tourist levies and taxes from successful businesses, with little or no aid to faltering projects, has historically been sufficient to meet the needs of government agencies. Local government is responsible for economic development in their region, with a direct focus on the underprivileged members of the community (Saayman, Rossouw & Krugell, 2012:465). In a tourism program, community engagement (which might entail a level of influence, control, or authority) emerges closely linked to the spin-offs of livelihood and other benefits from such government initiatives in communities (Simpson, 2008:1). Therefore, as Myburgh and Saayman (2002:89) state, two questions are most often asked: 'How can tourism impact communities?' and 'How can community engagement in tourism be sustained?'

According to Viljoen (2007:37), a potential strategy of encouraging development by involving communities in local tourism planning is recognised through tourism routes and networks. Route tourism is based on the concept of bringing together a range of activities and attractions under the same theme, hence promoting entrepreneurial opportunities via the creation of auxiliary goods and services (Bialostocka, 2014:100). The rationale is to enhance the economic development of less developed, mainly rural areas, through tourism by stimulating communities to partner with other role-players within the community (ECI Africa, 2006:6). Furthermore, tourism routes may be defined as systems for exploiting history for the primary objectives of conservation, preservation of natural resources, tourism, and the secondary objective of economic growth (Viljoen, 2007:2, 37).

According to Stoddart and Rogerson (2008:11), there is increased interest in developing tourism routes as a vehicle for tourism growth in various areas of Africa. Many tourism

routes have recently been developed in South Africa, including nearby countries such as Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland). Viljoen, Viljoen and Struwig (2010:88) emphasise the need for cooperation among stakeholders to achieve a universal objective: within specified routes, to support and grow all tourist goods, services, and participants. As a stakeholder, the community (or residents of the area) plays a pivotal role in establishing a sustainable tourism route. However, several communities see community development projects exploitative and helpful to only a few (Viljoen *et al.*, 2010:75).

Some questions arise from the above: Do rural community members benefit from tourism routes? Do communities fulfil their role as significant participants in developing and managing tourism routes? What can be done to enhance community involvement in such routes? These questions are addressed by developing a framework for cooperation and communication between the communities and the government's two main stakeholders in tourism routes. It is envisaged that such a framework contributes toward the sustainable development and management of tourism routes, which will benefit community members and help redress the inequalities that persist in South Africa by uplifting the lives of residents. Both residents' and tourism business providers' opinions are essential regarding the community. Therefore, the term 'community' refers to these stakeholders in the research context.

To answer the questions mentioned above and argue for the study's significance, the rest of the chapter is outlined as follows: firstly, reasons and arguments for developing a sustainable tourism route framework are presented, providing context for the study. The problem statement is followed by a summary of the research methodologies, defining significant concepts, and the classification of the study chapters.

1.2 Background of the study

Tourism is a global phenomenon involving an increasing number of people and is regarded as one of the world's most significant industries (Tovmasyan, 2016:429). The tourism market is continually evolving as a consequence of new tourism services and activities, and even under these conditions, countries are under pressure to keep up with the worldwide progress of the tourism industry (Tovmasyan, 2016:434). Such tourism

involvement has been crucial for countries with limited economic alternatives due to a lack of a sophisticated manufacturing base, weak connectivity, and low commodity costs (Boluk, 2011:238). In South Africa, tourism development has become a critical focus of the national government's policy attention. Through comprehensive policy development, the government has assumed a lead role in developing a range of programmes and incentives to aid tourism role-players in expanding their activities (Rogerson, 2004:256; Visser & Rogerson, 2004:201; Visser & Kotze, 2006:88). The South African government extensively promotes tourism to create employment opportunities, economic development, and poverty reduction. By investing in marketing and assisting the private sector in producing new products and services, the public sector has made tremendous progress in growing tourist infrastructure (Marschall, 2012:723). Tourism has become a "last choice" for regenerating these marginalised communities, particularly those experiencing economic decline and having limited resource-based industries (Van der Merwe & Rogerson, 2018:189). The South African government acknowledges and values the importance of local governments in promoting tourism, and as a result, it has implemented several assistance programmes to strengthen these local governments (Ramukumba, 2019:639).

Against this backdrop, in several regions around the world, including South Africa, the notion of rural trails or historical routes has been adopted, notably encouraging rural tourism (Telfer, 2001a; Lourens, 2007b). Route development can ensure the long-term sustainability of travel and tourism (Lourens, 2007a:475). Unsurprisingly, themed routes as tourist attractions have increased globally in recent years (Rogerson, 2007:49). Mathfield (2000:60) indicated that the route's direct employment contribution is minimal. Regarding employment opportunities available, most businesses are micro- or tiny businesses that employ a limited number of people and rely on their existing staff when more labour is required. Rural towns are rarely economically sound without a varied economic foundation, becoming highly significant as tourism and recreation become essential. For rural regions to remain sustainable, a wide range of related activities must be linked and coordinated (Butler & Hall, 1998). As a result, small tourism economic expansion blends in with these ideals since it allows local resources and talents to be utilised while also providing substantial and proven economic advantages to local communities, significantly smaller, rural communities (Koen & Thomas, 2015:4). The rural

community resources are obsolete without a sustainable approach. Therefore, the following sub-section focuses on tourism sustainability through stakeholder involvement.

1.2.1 Tourism sustainability through stakeholder involvement

The concept of sustainable tourism has been researched intensively but without polarised opinions. On the one hand, sustainability points to more economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable tourism development models and forms. On the other hand, the notion was often criticised as defective and insufficient (Mihalic, 2016:462). A sustainable balance must be achieved between the three elements of sustainability principles, such as environmental, economic, and social-cultural aspects, to maintain the long-term sustainability of tourism (Mearns & Boshoff, 2017:90). Asmelash and Kumar (2019:68) reiterate that "sustainability" refers to "long-term economic, environmental, and communal wellbeing". Similarly, there is no universally acknowledged concept of sustainable tourism development. While economic growth and the environment are often conflicting concepts, they are critical to ensuring sustainability. Although economic growth and the environment are contrasting concepts in many cases, both are critical to ensuring sustainability. A [tourism] business should not adversely affect the environment while maintaining a feasible economic undertaking (Mearns & Boshoff, 2017:89). In addition, management, policy, regulation, customer demand and implementation costs are all drivers and obstacles for businesses attempting to adopt sustainability (Moyle, Moyle, Ruhanen, Bec & Weiler, 2018.1). A sustainable tourism destination cannot exist with only one or two sustainable dimensions. Successful tourism businesses must give equal consideration and dedication to all the dimensions mentioned above (Mearns & Boshoff, 2017:90). Stakeholders need to be involved in reaching sustainability, especially within tourism route development.

In Figure 1.1, a conceptual framework is illustrated to better understand this concept in this study. The figure indicates how cooperation between government and local residents, as stakeholders, may contribute to developing a more sustainable tourism route. Tourism is a meaningful way to reduce poverty in some local communities, as tourism provides jobs other than traditional livelihoods and opportunities to market local products (Lee & Jan, 2019:368). However, Mutana and Mukwada (2018:63) indicate that in many cases, the absence of community engagement in tourism planning and development has sparked controversy, with local people criticising tourism for adversely influencing their

culture. In addition, Kala and Bargi (2018:326) argue that communities in remote locations are often deprived of the benefits of tourism. The lack of tourism awareness will likely impede community participation in development processes and host communities' capacity to meet tourists' expectations. Scholtz and Saayman (2018:106) reiterate that lack of contact with citizens is alarming, as the tourist industry's profitability and long-term viability are strongly reliant on the cooperation of local populations where tourism activities occur. Mak, Cheung and Hui (2017:1) emphasise that considering tourism has a direct connection with the lives of the local community, and tourism destinations are communities with which citizens engage, community participation (CP) is critical for long-term tourism growth.

Figure 1.1 reveals that it is crucial to emphasise that tourism will only thrive if the host communities are involved. Tourism planning must include tourists and host communities on an equal footing. As a result, a town will profit from adequate tourism planning significantly from economic prosperity and development (Hanrahan, Maguire & Boyd, 2017:512). Figure 1.1 depicts a range of challenges experienced by community members in small and rural communities due to their neighbourhood and location size. If there are fewer tourism developments in the community due to the community being in the peripheries and not considered by the tourism planners, such communities will continue to experience economic hardships and high levels of poverty and inequalities. However, considering the peripheral communities by the tourism planners and government to develop tourism routes will lead to better living standards, employment creation, less poverty and enhanced economic benefits. Lack of community involvement in developing tourism routes will lead to hostility and rejection of such a route by communities in which the route transverses. It is, therefore, necessary for the government to work together with the community as stakeholders for a sustainable and well-developed tourism route.

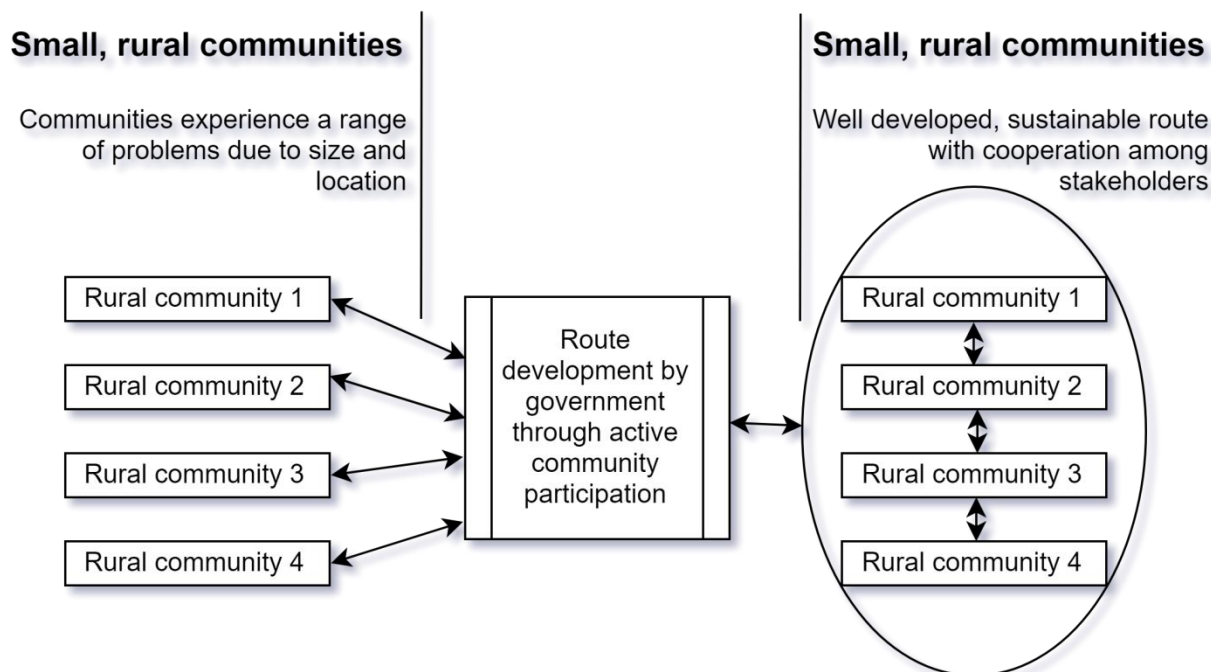


Figure 1-1: Conceptual framework for sustainable tourism route development through stakeholder involvement

Source: Researcher's conceptualisation based on the literature

Challenges to local stakeholders' participation in the tourist planning process have been found in earlier research. The lack of a shared vision, strong leadership, and a long-term strategy are the most significant barriers to collaborative planning approaches (Hatipoglu, Alvarez & Ertuna, 2016:307). The goodwill and cooperation of the local community are essential to the success and sustainability of any tourism development project (Stylidis, Biran, Sit & Szivas, 2014:261). Figure 1.1 shows that understanding the residents' views and seeking such support is vital to local government, policymakers, and businesses. Considering the above, tourism in the small communities of South Africa and abroad is active and significantly contributes to urban population growth and political and economic growth. The following section elaborates on the tourism potential in small communities.

1.2.2 The tourism potential in small communities

Smaller towns, particularly those with populations under 100,000, tend to have more unsolved issues and fewer human, financial, and technological resources. Furthermore, they are underserved in terms of housing, running water, garbage disposal, and other

amenities (Donaldson, 2018:2). However, the continuing role of smaller cities in absorbing urban population growth offers both comfort and concern (Donaldson, Du Plessis, Van Niekerk & Spocter, 2012; Donaldson, 2018). Since the end of Apartheid in 1994, South Africa's urban settlement environment has experienced profound socio-spatial, political, and economic transformations (Harrison & Todes, 2015; Newton & Schuermans, 2013). It has resulted in challenges such as corruption, xenophobia, unemployment, re-segregation, demonstrations, a lack of service delivery, and a general breakdown of government institutions. Overused, deteriorated infrastructure and a lack of new infrastructure development are significant challenges for smaller communities. Additionally, small towns do not attract investors, have poor relationships and communication between the municipality and the community, businesses and residences are of a poor standard, and such areas only receive fragmented public support (Masualle, 2017).

Sasha *et al.* (2004:3) argue that several small towns are fighting for a share of the developing sector, recognising tourism's potential as a vital tool for rural economic development. Tourism is viewed as a strategy for rural community development and economic diversification. The Least developed countries (LDCs) are said to rely on tourism for 40% of their GDP (gross domestic product) (UN, 2010). This contribution opens substantial possibilities for a vast urban region and rural and disadvantaged places (especially small communities). South Africa's small towns have a lot to offer travellers. However, they do not always receive a large number of tourists (Proos, Kock & Hattingh, 2017:135). Simultaneously, tourists may be persuaded to visit these communities if they have a distinctive and highly sought-after attraction. South Africa had over 500 small towns with populations of less than 50,000 people by the end of the 20th century (Toerien & Seaman, 2014:1). It has also been reported that there is a growing interest in small-town development and research projects. In this respect, tourists can visit small towns and rural regions as part of a tourism route, greatly enhancing tourist flows (Proos *et al.*, 2017:135).

1.2.3 The establishment of tourism routes

Tourism routes have long been recognized as having great potential in the advanced world. The Council of Europe created a working committee in 1964 to develop various

cultural routes throughout Europe. The primary purpose was to use travelling to enhance understanding of European culture (Proos *et al.*, 2017:136). Tourism routes are an excellent example of tourism networks, and some nations, notably South Africa, have embraced a route-based tourism development strategy. The South African Department of Trade and Industry commissioned a study on backpacking and community-based tourist routes to better understand (better) the trends, difficulties, scale, and potential of these routes in the country (Viljoen, 2007:36). Tourism route development necessitates implementing development methods involving planning and tourism investment, both of which play a critical part in a region's or place's success as a tourism destination. According to Brás, Costa and Buhalis (2013), initiatives include detailed planning to ensure that the location has the requisite infrastructure to incorporate into national or worldwide tourism routes. Finally, each region strives to maximise economic gains from tourism, enhance social structures, and safeguard tourist resources.

According to Rogerson (2007:50), tourism planning is thus a subset of what Timothy (1998) refers to as "cooperative tourism planning", and Reed (1999) refers to as "collaborative" tourism planning. Rogerson (2007:58) argues that "the clustering of activities and attractions in less developed areas arouses co-operation and partnerships between communities in local and neighbouring regions and serves as an instrument for stimulating economic development through tourism" and the incitement of business prospects. However, the variation of the benefits of such route tourism initiatives should be carefully evaluated (Rogerson, 2007:58).

The development of less urbanised locations with considerable cultural resources that attract special interest visitors who frequently stay longer and spend more to pursue their hobbies appears to be a natural fit for tourism routes (Rogerson, 2007:50). Furthermore, international overnight tourists who visit the route as part of a special interest vacation, domestic visitors who visit the route (or a section of it) on day excursions, and urban domestic day visitors are just a few of the users who admire routes (ECI Africa, 2006:8). Bialostocka (2014:100) highlights that one can find developments such as wine or food circuits, scenic or religious routes, and cultural heritage routes within the category of tourist routes. Proos *et al.* (2017:136) assert that a themed route is one in which everything (accommodation, catering services, and retail) revolves around a single theme (wine, food or arts and crafts).

Considering the afore-mentioned considerations, the following section examines the function and relevance of stakeholders in tourism routes, which is the goal of this research.

1.2.4 Involvement of stakeholders in tourism routes

Route planning for tourism is a component of what is known as cooperative tourism planning. However, Viljoen *et al.* (2010:69) point out the lack of historically disadvantaged communities' inclusion in tourism route development models, revealing that tourism benefits well-resourced institutions but does little to integrate disadvantaged areas effectively. According to Rogerson (2013:12), another topic illustrated in the research on the developing world is the catalytic role of tourism in building collaborations between local stakeholders. A plan to spread the economic benefits of tourist efforts must include community engagement and capacity building. Ideally, this should include local community engagement in decision-making on the type and size of development (particularly cultural routes) and participation in economic advantages (Rogerson, 2007:54).

When juxtaposing stakeholder participation for the maximum benefits of the community, potential challenges may arise where communities are heavily involved in tourism initiatives. However, it is essential to carefully and adequately manage how communities can be involved in tourism initiatives. According to Malek and Costa (2015:283), the notion of community involvement has been adopted in the Western global tourist development process to reject biased decision-making, create an equal distribution of benefits, and better satisfy the local community. Community participation and conservation activities create appropriate development frameworks and strategies through sustainable development and planning, ensuring favourable local attitudes, the protection of local resources, and, most notably, the preservation and betterment of life of communities swayed by tourism development (Malek & Costa, 2015:282). Tourism can adversely affect local residents unless it is managed responsibly. Regional community members and tourism sector stakeholders should collaborate to oversee the regional tourism sector as a "community industry" (Lo, Ramayah & Hui, 2014:84) to

promote sustainable tourist growth. There may be different relationships between tourism businesses and other destinations' stakeholders.

On the one hand, they may compete for customers, but on the other side, they may work together in marketing to attract more visitors to the destination. Collaboration involves a relationship that incorporates elements of competition and cooperation (Tuohino & Konu, 2014:205). Locals must be willing to engage in the process to preserve the tourist industry's economy and satisfy residents. Inhabitants' desire to serve as welcoming hosts is essential to tourism's success, given the regular interaction between residents and visitors. As a result, locals are urged to engage in the planning process actively, and their attitudes toward tourism and views of its influence on community life must be examined regularly to improve their contentment (Lo *et al.*, 2014:84).

Simpson (2008:3) reiterates that communities may be subjected to external pressures, issues of governance and structure conflicting with stakeholder agendas, and the growth of artificial hierarchies and elites may occur, obliterating or undermining potential benefits to the community. Overall, travelling has become an essential element of tourism route operations, and stakeholders on the route must understand how much each contributes to providing a positive guest experience (King, 2002:107). Stakeholder collaboration is a process that necessitates mutual trust among the participants, and if significant challenges are not resolved, they may obstruct cooperation at a later stage. Likewise, those initially barred from the collaborative process may disrupt the process if all stakeholders are not engaged early on (McLaren & Heath, 2013:20). Therefore, it is equally important to monitor the involvement of stakeholder participation when developing tourism routes to protect the interests of the hosting community and maximise their economic benefits.

In addition, participants with specialised knowledge of specific locations and valuable relationships with appropriate government agencies and other institutions are needed to speed up and strengthen the route design process by using existing local tourist development networks (Viljoen *et al.*, 2010:78). However, McLaren and Heath (2013:27) argue that while development may be helpful for the economy, if not well maintained, it may harm the unspoiled country environment that attracts tourists to rural routes. In this regard, it is the government's responsibility, as an enabling stakeholder, to maintain the

tourists' experience along the route as authentic as possible. The following section examines the seminal work done on tourism routes and their stakeholders.

1.2.5 Seminal work on tourism routes

The following primary conclusions are briefly confirmed by reviewing previous studies on tourism routes. However, an in-depth discussion is provided in the literature review chapters.

- Tourist routes distribute tourism money to marginalised areas, and several ways exist to build a PPT (pro-poor tourism) strategy (Meyer, 2004:29).
- Poverty may be alleviated through well-established cooperative networks and the promotion of locations with a defined purpose. Routes must also be created based on thorough market research (Lourens, 2007a:486).
- Routes present opportunities for development through a partnership with the industry, government and community (Olsen, 2003).
- Paraphernalia and interpretation are the critical components of successful tourism routes (Hardy, 2003).
- According to wineries along the Stellenbosch Wine Route, wine tourism's characteristics benefit their companies. Some features of wine tourism, such as brand recognition and the opportunity to spend time with clients, are beneficial to the winery (Kirkman *et al.*, 2013).
- It was confirmed that “if private sector industry associations do not stop their turf war, the private sector will not succeed in making its role a successful one” (Briedenhann, 2000:47). Mistrust between various factions is endemic since any potential economic activity represents a potential benefit to one community sector, simultaneously marginalising another (Briedenhann & Wickets, 2004:75).
- Not all tourism routes are effective and establishing a 'tourism route' does not ensure tourism growth or local development (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2011:11746).
- According to Proos *et al.* (2017:145), the findings point to a lack of local and provincial government support, mainly regarding marketing aid, sufficient signage, and contact between route members and provincial tourist officials.
- McLaren and Heath's (2013:30) framework could only serve as a beginning point for identifying and engaging stakeholders along the route, and the authors

cautioned that each tour should have its own combination of stakeholders. McLaren's (2011:278) research was primarily concerned with marketing issues. Further studies on other elements of rural tourist routes are recommended to build a body of knowledge to help uplift communities where these routes pass through.

As indicated in the summary of the findings of tourism routes, several factors relating to tourism routes can bear on developing sustainable tourism routes. The studies mentioned above reflect a diverse representation of constructive and adverse outcomes. From some of the studies mentioned above, to be successful, any new development of tourism routes must be developed in partnership with industry, government, and community stakeholders. In addition, they need to be continuously improved, learning from counterparts abroad who, in many cases, may already have been down this path (in many cases already) (Olsen, 2003:399). The study by Proos *et al.* (2017:145) emphasises the necessity of collaborations with tourist stakeholders. These collaborations are often between government and industry leaders, such as local tourism organisations and tourism route representatives. The need for collaboration between the government and the business sector and government support for tourism development activities is recurrent in such policy declarations. Finally, in the study conducted by Briedenhann and Wickens (2004:76), the development of tourism routes is done through a string of meetings by an Open Africa field officer who would convene and address meetings to explain the project in the tourism route development process, attended by as many potential stakeholders as possible. The community makes all decisions about participation or any other issue on its own. Communities opting to participate in the project are asked to identify their area's 'Big Five' features and identify themselves as a community.

McLaren and Heath (2011) developed a framework for public sector stakeholders in tourism route development and marketing, and Van Wyk-Jacobs (2018) developed a framework aimed at developing a specific product (Astro-tourism) in a specific region. Therefore, tourism routes can be seen as a significant dimension of tourism. The tourism route development process benefits all stakeholders and local communities if adequately planned. While previous studies have developed frameworks aimed at route development in South Africa, for example, McLaren and Heath (2011) and Van Wyk-Jacobs (2018), no study has developed a stakeholder framework for sustainable tourism route development.

1.3 Problem statement

Tourism is rapidly being recognised as a significant source of revenue and a critical instrument for encouraging economic growth, poverty reduction, food security, environmental preservation, and intercultural peace and understanding worldwide, particularly in developing and rising economies (Phiri, 2016:31). However, Viljoen *et al.* (2010:42) argue that tourism development in South Africa has been distinctly inconsistent and failed to fulfil the promises of pro-poor development for the upliftment of disadvantaged communities. Viljoen *et al.* (2010:42) further state that tourism routes have been touted as a promising means of supporting pro-poor tourism by clustering activities that assist entrepreneurial opportunities. The development of new tourism routes is receiving significant policy attention in South Africa (Rogerson, 2007:49), which encompasses integrating smaller towns and promoting them as a unified leisure location area (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Donaldson, 2007). Contrary to the former, in South Africa, routes appear to be more loosely defined (McLaren & Heath, 2011:27).

The responsibility for promoting tourism routes varies depending on the situation; in some instances, tourism businesses are involved, while in others, the government is involved under regional tourism programs (Rogerson, 2007:55). Key small towns form part of defined developmental corridors, each with particular needs and potential (McKibbin *et al.*, 2012:391). Social grants (most notably old age pension), which serve as a vital welfare program to empower families to survive, largely depend on residents living in small towns of South Africa (McKibbin *et al.*, 2012:392). Some of the small towns are part of essential tourist paths. However, they are only transited by the tourist flows, while others are isolated, and tourists find it hard to get to them. This norm happens in localities with low tourist potential and urban realities that could become highly interesting if their natural or anthropical patrimony could be accessed (Bănică & Camairă, 2011:128). If one considers the unique properties of South Africa's rich and diverse natural and cultural resources, confidence in the future of the tourism industry is easily substantiated (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004:73).

Understanding the idea of sustainable development and guiding values for promoting sustainable tourism is required for tourist planning. The need to raise community knowledge of the tourist sector and understand its implications and the many methods for

integrating and engaging all stakeholders in public engagement, general agreement and conflict management must be considered (Chilli & Xulu, 2015:30). However, a few aspects can influence sustainability in tourism development, such as municipalities that are unwilling to work together. Private stakeholders are also unwilling to participate because they do not envisage any benefit and have no faith in the government. Finally, there is a lack of funding and slow processes (Van der Merwe, 2019). According to previous research, the government has difficulty incorporating public engagement into tourist development procedures. Public participation is more correctly defined as a sort of tokenism in which the government has already dictated decisions or the direction of decisions (Chili & Xulu, 2015:29). However, Community capacity building (CCB) is a significant potential component of rural tourism planning and development, promoting public participation in governance and deciding how resources are managed (Ghaderi *et al.*, 2018:537).

South Africa has a variety of tourism routes, some of which are doing well while others are not. When considering that tourism is a vital industry for the development of South Africa and that smaller communities can perhaps participate in the activities of the industry using tourism routes, the evidence points to the fact that tourism routes are essential for such communities and that their active participation is key to its sustainability. In light of the above, participation of the community in the conceptualisation, development, start-up, operation, and day-to-day management of tourism enterprises will assist stakeholders (government and the community), partners, and potential benefactors in identifying, understanding, appreciating, and focusing on those areas most likely to bring cumulative benefits to the local community (Simpson, 2008:3).

The afore-mentioned leads to the following questions: How can tourism route development be streamlined? Do community members (directly and indirectly involved) benefit from tourism routes? Why do some tourism routes fail, and others succeed? Do communities fulfil their role as primary participants in establishing, developing, and managing tourism routes? What can be done to enhance community involvement in such routes? By answering these questions, a better understanding of stakeholder involvement (government, residents, and tourism business providers) in developing tourism routes will enable a framework for developing sustainable tourism routes.

1.4 Goal and objectives

This section describes the study's goal and objectives.

1.4.1 Goal

This thesis aims to develop a framework towards sustainable tourism route development through stakeholder involvement in South Africa with the Eagle tourism route in the Free State Province as a case study.

1.4.2 Objectives

The following specific objectives were set to achieve the study's primary goal, secondary to the stated goal.

Objective 1

Through an in-depth literature analysis, which critically reviews the concept of tourism routes, the early ages of the tourism route development and the planning and establishment of tourism routes. This literature analysis also identifies the different types of tourism routes in South Africa and highlights some of the most successful tourism routes globally and the key success factors of such routes. Furthermore, tourism sustainability is reviewed by addressing the economic, environmental, and social responsibility during tourism route development.

Objective 2

To explore stakeholder involvement in tourism route development by reviewing the related literature. Sub-objectives include identifying the stakeholders involved in tourism route development and management by reviewing the related literature; discovering how tourism planners involve stakeholders in developing tourism routes; discussing stakeholder participation in the management and marketing of the tourism routes and how they can benefit from tourism route development, and analysing the literature on the Stakeholder Theory (and the benefits of stakeholder participation in tourism development).

Objective 3

To establish route planners' (government) perceptions of the Eagle Tourism Route's planning, development, and management and how the residents who live in communities along this route form part thereof as stakeholders through interviews (qualitative approach). This objective links to Phase 1 of the data collection, and a sub-objective includes using the results to inform and guide the development of the data collection tools in Phase 2.

Objective 4

To demonstrate the perceptions of communities (residents and tourism business providers) forming part of the Eagle tourism route regarding their function as stakeholders through questionnaires and interviews (mixed-method approach) and to compare their views with those of the route planners.

Objective 5

To formulate conclusions and provide suggestions based on the reviewed literature, the empirical results, and draw comparisons between the previous literature and empirical findings. Finally, to develop a framework to guide tourism route planners to ensure sustainable development of routes through stakeholder involvement.

1.5 Research method

The study comprises both a literature review and an empirical study.

1.5.1 Literature review

According to Ridley (2012:3), a literature review is the part of the thesis where there is an extensive reference to related research and theory in one's particular field; it is where connections are made between the source texts that one can draw on and where one can position oneself and one's research among these sources. It is an excellent source for selecting or focusing on a topic and refining the research question as it reduces the chances of selecting an inappropriate or outdated topic by investigating what has already been done in a particular problem area (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:134). A literature review

further assists with identifying a problem to research and illustrating a gap in previous research that needs to be further investigated (Ridley, 2012:3). In a general sense, a literature review serves to put the researcher's efforts into perspective, situating the topic in a larger pool of knowledge (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:134). The literature review explored articles, annual reports, newspaper articles, theses, dissertations from various universities and education institutions, journals, newspapers, books on tourism and other tourist-related literature, and information on tourism routes. Furthermore, the North-West University Library database and other scientific databases, including Science Direct, ProQuest, EBSCOhost and Google Scholar, were comprehensively used to gather adequate information. The following concepts and keywords were used to conduct the literature review: *community, community participation, route tourism, small communities, route tourism, stakeholders, tourism sustainability and tourism route*.

1.5.2 Empirical research

This section discusses the methods chosen in the empirical section of this study.

(a) Research design and method

The newly established Eagle tourism route spans the Free State's southern border with Lesotho; it runs from Ficksburg through Fouriesburg, Clarens, Phuthaditjhaba and Bethlehem. The route was conceptualised and developed by the then Free State Tourism Authority (FSTA) in 2013. However, there are some discrepancies regarding the exact date the route was conceptualised, as limited document resources on the Eagle route could be found. The Eagle Route boasts attractions such as the Ionia Cherry Farm (famous for Ionia Cherry liqueur), the mystical Motouleng Cave (where tourists can enjoy the sacred spring water), the Golden Gate National Park (known to be the oldest dinosaur nesting site), the LIONSROCK Big Cat Sanctuary (an extraordinary wildlife centre), and Basotho Cultural Village (showcasing the rich culture of the Basotho) (Visser & Kotze, 2004:41). The Dihlabeng Local Municipality which is found in the Thabo Mofutsanyane District serves as the case study area.

This research followed a sequential mixed-method approach. Creswell (2014:14) explains that the mixed method involves combining or integrating qualitative and

quantitative research and data in a research study. The sequential mixed method means that one data collection method is first done to inform the second method (Creswell, 2014:16). Qualitative research was first done through interviews with tourism route planners (government officials). A phenomenological research design was used to culminate in the essence of the experiences of several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon. This design has strong philosophical underpinnings and typically involves conducting interviews (Creswell, 2014:14). The phenomenological studies focus on the meaning that specific lived experiences hold for participants “to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and can provide a comprehensive description of it” (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004:58-59). From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived (Maree, 2007:77). The phenomenological interview is often an unstructured one in which the researcher and participants work together to “arrive at the heart of the matter” (Leedy & Ormord, 2010:141). The results from the qualitative research were then used in developing a questionnaire for the quantitative research aimed at tourism business providers and the interview guide aimed at community members. The second phase followed an exploratory concurrent mixed-method research design. The interviews were conducted among community members living in towns or settlements that form part of the tourism route while distributing questionnaires to tourism business providers.

Qualitative data tends to be open-ended without predetermined responses, while quantitative data usually includes closed-ended responses such as questionnaires or psychological instruments. Figure 1.2 provides a summary of the applied research methodology.

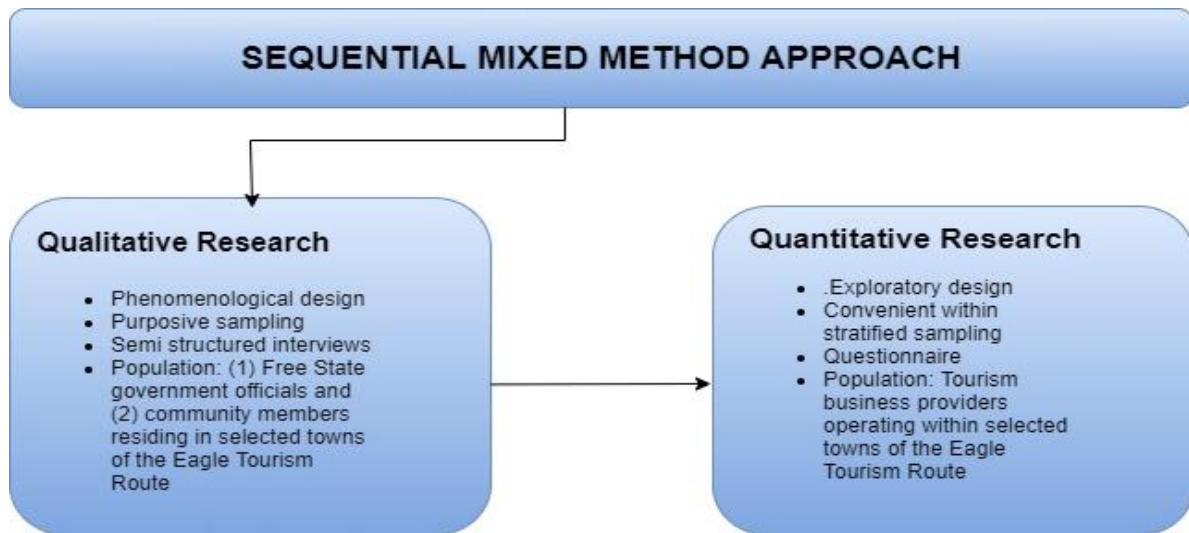


Figure 1-2: A summary of the applied sequential mixed-method approach

The applied research methodology is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

(b) Ethical clearance and considerations

Ethical clearance for the research was obtained from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences' Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) at the North-West University [NWU-01317-19-A4] (see Appendix A).

One of the fundamental values emphasised in Australia's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research in 2007 by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) was respect for participants' anonymity and confidentiality (Lancaster, 2017:98). Participant anonymity means that the researcher does not know the participant's identity, whereas participant confidentiality means that the researcher knows the participant's identity but that the data has been de-identified and is kept confidential (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018:2011). Therefore, participants of this study's anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, and no participant's identities were revealed during and after the completion of the study.

In theory, informed consent is the authorisation of an activity based on understanding what that activity implies and in the absence of control by others (Grady, 2015:855). Therefore, the consent letter must consider and advise participants that they have the right to withdraw from the research study without explaining (Ramrathan, Le Grange &

Shawa, 2017:442). In this study, participants were informed about data management, their anonymity and confidentiality would be assured, and they had the right to withdraw from the research. Please refer to the informed consent letters for details (Appendix B-D).

The Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) prohibits processing sensitive personal information. Special personal information comprises information about the participant's health, political beliefs, racial or ethnic origin, or criminal behaviour (Adams, Adeleke, Anderson, Bawa, Branson, Christoffels, Vries, Etheredge, Flack-Davison, Gaffley & Marks, 2021:2). In this research, the inclusion of personal information was limited to protect the respondents, and no information was processed without their consent. The realisation that consent can be revoked at any time was observed.

Since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic in 2020, essential precautions have been taken to limit viral transmission and reduce death, including mandatory mask use in public, regular hand-sanitising and handwashing, remote work, social distance, avoidance of crowds, and cancellation of public activities (Dadras, Alinaghi, Karimi, MohsseniPour, Barzegary, Vahedi, Pashaei, Mirzapour, Fakhfour, Zargari & Saeidi, 2021:1). The COVID-19 protocols were explained to the participants involved in the study, including the research team and the respondents/participants.

Lastly, data management is another ethical consideration in data acquisition once gathered. The researcher is required to describe how the data will be managed once gathered in the entire disclosure of the research aim and process; for example, the data's accessibility to others, the anonymity of the data source, where the data will be stored, who will have access to the data, the date the data will be disposed of, and how the data will be disposed of (Ramrathan, 2017:441). The information regarding data safekeeping was extensively communicated to all participants to clear possible uncertainties. This information is outlined in the informed consent letters.

1.6 Defining the concepts

The following concepts are used regularly throughout the thesis and require more clarification. This also aided in improving the understanding of the research framework applied to the study.

1.6.1 Route tourism

The essential concept of route tourism is simple: linking together a series of tourist attractions to promote local tourism by encouraging visitors to travel from one location to another (Lourens, 2007b:1). The route tourism concept is a market-driven approach to tourism destination development. The terminology used to describe the concept often varies in different parts of the world, using the notions of 'themed routes', 'trails', 'scenic by-ways' and so forth (Rogerson, 2007:50). According to Lourens (2007b:82), the notion is beneficial on a microeconomic scale *because* of local communities' engagement. In addition to its economic benefits, tourism may aid in environmental and cultural conservation initiatives.

1.6.2 Tourism business providers

The corporate sector, non-governmental organisations, academia, and the public sector are synonymous with tourism business providers (Alexis-Thomas, 2020:296). Tourist service providers are directly involved in tourism supply and play a significant role. Their views and attitudes regarding the growth of accessible tourism determine the realities of the industry (Zajadacz, 2015:196). Tourism business providers include a variety of enterprises that support rural tourist endeavours, such as tour operators, tourism business owners and managers, and tourism resource providers. Residents and community members may be involved in business development in rural tourism destinations (Nair, Munikrishnan, Rajaratnam & King, 2015:330).

1.6.3 Tourism route

According to Stoddart and Rogerson (2008:10), the term 'tourist route' refers to an endeavour that combines various activities and attractions under a common theme, promoting entrepreneurial prospects in the form of supplementary goods and services. A route, usually presented through a map and signage, links attractions of a single theme

that encourages visitors to experience multiple sites in a relatively narrow geographic area. In effect, routes cluster attractions and serve as a navigation aid for visitors. Promoting a route offers a more critical mass of attractions than the popular model and features joint promotion of participating businesses along the route. In some cases, the route may also link cultural attractions with local accommodation and food services (Donaldson, 2018:27-28).

1.6.4 Sustainability

According to Mihalic (2016:461), the debate over the term "sustainability" began in the early 1900s with Edward Inskeep (1991), who defined five main criteria for sustainable tourism, including economic, environmental, and social responsibility, as well as tourism's responsibility to tourists (visitor satisfaction) and global justice and equity. With the manifesto's publication, "our shared future," the word "sustainability" was born. It defined sustainable development as "meeting the requirements of current generations without jeopardising future generations' ability to fulfil their own needs". It has an oxymoronic foundation since the phrase "sustainable" implies some constraint, yet "development" emphasises human usage to suit human needs" (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018:157).

1.6.5 Stakeholders

Stanford Research Institute first coined the term 'stakeholder' in a 1963 internal memorandum to refer to "those groups without whose support the organisation would cease to exist" (Freeman & Reed, 1983:89). Furthermore, the term stakeholder was applied eventually to tourism in the 1980s. Therefore, the stakeholder in tourism was referred to as an agent or instrument affected by or influencing the actions of tourism-related organisations, government agencies, companies, or associations. It relates to those with legitimate interests in an organisation's activities, irrespective of its interest in them (Marzuki & Hay, 2016:896-897).

1.6.6 Community

A community is one type or scale for characterising a location or group of people (Vogt, Jordan, Grewe & Kruger, 2016:166). A settlement, town, or city is an example of a

community in traditional definitions. A collection of individuals with a common interest, such as retirement or professional community, those who share ideas, such as a church congregation or an ethnic group, or virtual communities, such as Facebook or Twitter, are examples of modern communities. The community is typically based on geographic location in tourism, such as a town or city. A set of towns or cities that share identity or geography and act as a region might be described as a host community. Extensively, community-based tourism is both an idea about and an approach to the development and planning of tourism. The notion rests on the assumption that the success and sustainability of tourism require the involvement of those affected by the development (Mair, 2016:169-170). In the context of this research, 'community' refers to the permanent residents living and the tourism business providers operating in and along the route.

1.6.7 Small community

"To equate the urban with any singular, bounded spatial unit (city, agglomeration, metropolitan region, or otherwise") is misleading; nor can its territorial contours be coherently delineated relative to some theorised nonurban "outside" (suburban, rural, natural, wilderness, or otherwise), Brenner and Schmid (2015:166) argue. Policy papers, the White Paper on Local Government (1998), and the Urban Development Framework, among other sources, demonstrate the multiplicity of settlement forms in post-apartheid South Africa (1997). In the mid-1990s, there were an estimated 500 tiny towns in the nation with populations of less than 50 000 people. In 2001, urban places were defined using an administrative function, and the 1996 Census used an administrative definition as a criterion, whereas Census was applied to size and density (Donaldson, 2018:5).

1.6.8 Community participation

Tosun (2006:496) defines community participation as a categorical term that permits people, citizens, or a host community to participate in their affairs at various levels (local, regional, or national) and in a variety of ways (manipulative, coercive, induced, passive, spontaneous, and so on) and under site-specific conditions. In the tourism industry, community engagement refers to local residents' involvement in tourism development and management. Government and tourism developers should interact with locals effectively

before making choices, consider residents' opinions adequately, and establish tourism development collaboratively during the initial phase (Wang *et al.*, 2010:763).

1.6.9 Framework

Frameworks serve a particular purpose. Generalisations are formed based on the specific data observed and related to a conceptual framework, explaining future research topics and implications for further studies (Leshem & Trafford, 2007:98). Ager and Strang (2008:167) define a framework as a “middle-range theory”, attempting to provide a cohesive and conceptual structure for analysing what constitutes the key elements of integration from a normative approach. Frameworks identify and illustrate the concepts that comprise a significant phenomenon. The relationships are frequently represented visually in the form of a flowchart, web diagram, or another sort of semantics (Leshem & Trafford, 2007:98). Therefore, because this study aims to develop a framework towards sustainable tourism route development through stakeholder involvement in South Africa, the developed framework seeks to fill most gaps identified in the study by Viljoen (2010). Moreover, the framework emphasises the failures of tourism development to fulfil the commitment of enhancing the economy of previously disadvantaged communities and uplifting such communities, including small towns that are not well developed and rely on social grants, as highlighted in the study by MacKibbin (2012). The framework further considers and highlights applicable policies on developing a sustainable tourism route, as indicated in the study of Rogerson (2007). In Chilli and Xulu's (2015) study, most governments encouraged a significant involvement of residents and other stakeholders in developing sustainable tourism development that will benefit the communities where the development is taking place. In light of the above, and considering all gaps identified in the previous studies, this study developed a stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa. The research framework for this study is essential within the South African context since some of the previous gaps have not been addressed.

1.6.10 Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement incorporates individuals in planning and managing a significant proportion of their own work activities, with sufficient knowledge and capacity to impact

processes and results to reach desirable goals (Vink, Imada & Zink, 2008:520). Stakeholder involvement can reduce the likelihood of stakeholders exercising full authority, contributing to decision-making content because stakeholders' specialised knowledge is applied, and promoting the democratic quality of decision-making (Klijn, Eshuis & Braun, 2012:505).

1.7 Chapter classification

The classification of the chapters is discussed and outlined in the following section.

Chapter 1: Introduction and problem statement

This chapter provides an overview of how the study's research is organised. This includes the introduction, concept definitions, problem statement, main goal and objectives, and research methodology.

Chapter 2: A critical analysis of sustainable tourism route development

This chapter entails an in-depth literature review regarding tourism routes in general. This chapter reviews comprehensive information regarding tourism routes and how successful tourism routes are. This chapter further assesses the promotion and management of tourism routes and how the routes are developed. In addition, this chapter analyses tourism sustainability to address economic, environmental, and social responsibility during the tourism route development.

Chapter 3: Assessing stakeholder involvement and participation in the development, management, and marketing of tourism routes

This chapter entails an in-depth literature review on understanding stakeholders in tourism. The literature focuses on the significance of tourism stakeholders in tourism and tourism route development, identifying different types of stakeholders and roles of stakeholders. Lastly, this chapter consists of the literature on the stakeholder theory and the benefit of stakeholder participation in tourism development.

Chapter 4: Applied research methodology

This chapter outlines the applied research methodology (sequential mixed-method) and details the methodological considerations in each research phase.

Chapter 5: Empirical results (qualitative: tourism route planners)

This chapter includes the discussion of results and the thematic content analysis regarding the interviews with the Free State tourism planners and how the results guided the development of the data collection tools for Phase 2.

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7: Empirical results (mixed-method: tourism business providers and community members)

These chapters consist of the mixed method results of the study. The results are divided into descriptive, exploratory, and inferential quantitative survey results conducted among tourism business providers (Chapter 6). The thematic content analysis results of the interviews among the community members are discussed in Chapter 7. The views of the two stakeholders were compared with those of the route planners.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and recommendations

The final chapter summarises the main findings of the study. This chapter outlines the literature and practical contributions of the research. The framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa is proposed, interpreted, and explained to validate the findings.

CHAPTER 2: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

Tourism is an essential social, cultural, and economic contributor that involves the movement of millions of people worldwide, with a significant impact on the economies of many countries (Cenamor *et al.*, 2017:2). In the 1950s and 1960s, talks on the compelling need to assist economic growth in the 'Third World' brought this industry into the mainstream policy discourse. Following that came a slew of applied empirical research on tourist development and zealous support of tourism as a development strategy by international development organisations and foreign specialists (Crick, 1989:318; Bianchi, 2018:4).

Tourism can affect host communities economically, socially, and environmentally, according to (Rasoolimanesh, Ringle, Jaafar & Ramaya, 2017:147). Increased household income, higher living standards, the creation of new jobs and employment prospects, and enhanced tax revenue streams are all positive economic consequences of tourism. Tourist management planning is essential for sustainable tourism growth, including tourism promotion, a tourism development strategy that facilitates economic development and income for the host nation (Sirirak & Pitakaso, 2018:1).

Tourism is frequently depicted as an industry that primarily serves the affluent middle and upper classes by allowing them to travel and engage in leisure activities in 'other' areas while generating profits, particularly for large corporations, and creating exclusive enclaves for the wealthy. On the other hand, tourism-related development possibilities are not always available to the most vulnerable and underprivileged people (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018:589-590). Given the focus of this research, the unequal distribution of the benefits of tourism route initiatives requires careful consideration. From the current record, route tourism initiatives should be undertaken as a form of local economic development (LED) from a pro-poor tourism approach to avert uneven development (Rogerson, 2007:58).

However, Idajati and Nugroho (2019:1) explain that tourism routes were one of the most critical parts of the tourism package long before the more formal tourism industry was

established. Routes can be established using a model or theme of tourism identification of the product and services displayed by a comprehensive map of a specific region. In many countries, tourism organisations include tourism routes designed for popular destinations, but less popular destinations are often not included (Sirirak & Pitakaso, 2018:1). Many visitors are looking for new tourist attractions to enhance their experience; therefore, the popularity of tourist attractions is an essential factor in travel planning (Sirirak & Pitakaso, 2018:1).

It is not an easy task to extract valuable information that can fulfil the desire of visitors to profit from mass information. Tourist route management includes the management of roads designed to allow tourists to visit and sightsee destinations with ease, health, and entertainment (Zhou, Gao, Lun, Zhu, Yang & Tong, 2018:169). A tourist route may arise when several visitors have used a route regularly. Such routes can include land, water or other means of transport paired with a typical city road or a route designed for specific purposes (Luangsa-Art, 2016:43). Routes function as anchors to market collectively and compete more effectively with significant established tourist destinations; this extends the distribution of tourism by drawing unique tourist interest to less-visited areas through niche offerings (Jacobs *et al.*, 2019:2). Tourism route development can stimulate economic growth and entrepreneurial opportunities by developing ancillary products and services (Briedenhahn & Wiekens, 2004; Visser & Rogerson, 2004), aligning with sustainable development.

This study (as a whole) focuses specifically on developing a stakeholder involvement framework for sustainable tourism route development. This chapter critically analyses sustainable tourism route development to reach this goal. This chapter analyses sustainable tourism development, and tourism routes are defined. Then, the types of tourism routes are outlined, while the importance and benefits of tourism routes are highlighted. Then, stakeholders responsible for the development of tourism routes are identified. Following that, the management and marketing of the tourism route are examined. Finally, challenges associated with tourism routes and key success factors of tourism routes are outlined.

2.2 Sustainable tourism development

The notion of sustainable development is rapidly being incorporated into numerous aspects of people's lives and development decisions. Sustainable tourism addresses the demands of tourists, the industry, the environment, and host communities while considering present and future economic, social, and environmental implications (Kapera, 2018:581). While the concept of "sustainable tourism" continues to be a source of passionate and often heated discussion, the sector has progressed and evolved significantly since the 1990s (Bramwell *et al.*, 2017:1). Although sustainability theory has been applied to tourism (see Clarke, 1999; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Buckley, 2012), there is no agreed-upon definition of sustainable tourism or precise criteria for sustainable tourist management (Manwa *et al.*, 2017:4). Sustainable tourism development includes elements comparable to that of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), such as economic stability, psychological well-being of local peoples, natural resource protection, healthy culture, and optimal fulfilment of visitor expectations (Hardy & Pearson, 2018:2).

Furthermore, Lu and Nepal (2009:6) argue that sustainable tourism is "envisaged as leading to the management of all resources so that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems". Tourism development has traditionally been influenced by economic, environmental, social, cultural, and institutional factors that promote long-term sustainability (Lee & Hsieh, 2016:788). Sustainable development has been a key priority of tourism officials, including industry and destination marketing organizations and tourist scholars (Hall, 2019:1044). The residents' support for sustainable tourism growth is influenced by perceived economic, social, and cultural benefits, whereas perceived social and cultural costs have a negative impact on residents' support (Lee & Jan, 2019:370). The tourism industry and a wide variety of interest groups, from public sector organisations to community groups, must all work together to ensure long-term tourism sustainability (Timur & Getz, 2008:222). As tourism becomes increasingly important for many communities around the globe, the need for the sustainable development of tourism also becomes a primary concern (Hall & Richards, 2000:1).

2.2.1 Fundamental principles of sustainable tourism development

Given the previous information, the sustainable tourism development and management goals, as highlighted by Kimbu (2010:43) in Figure 2.1, emphasise that all stakeholders should be consulted before significant decisions are taken from the beginning and throughout the planning and development process. Moreover, all should participate actively and efficiently in tourism development, driving communities' socio-economic development and ensuring increased visitor satisfaction. The following section focuses on Kimbu's (2010) conceptual model for sustainable tourism development and management.

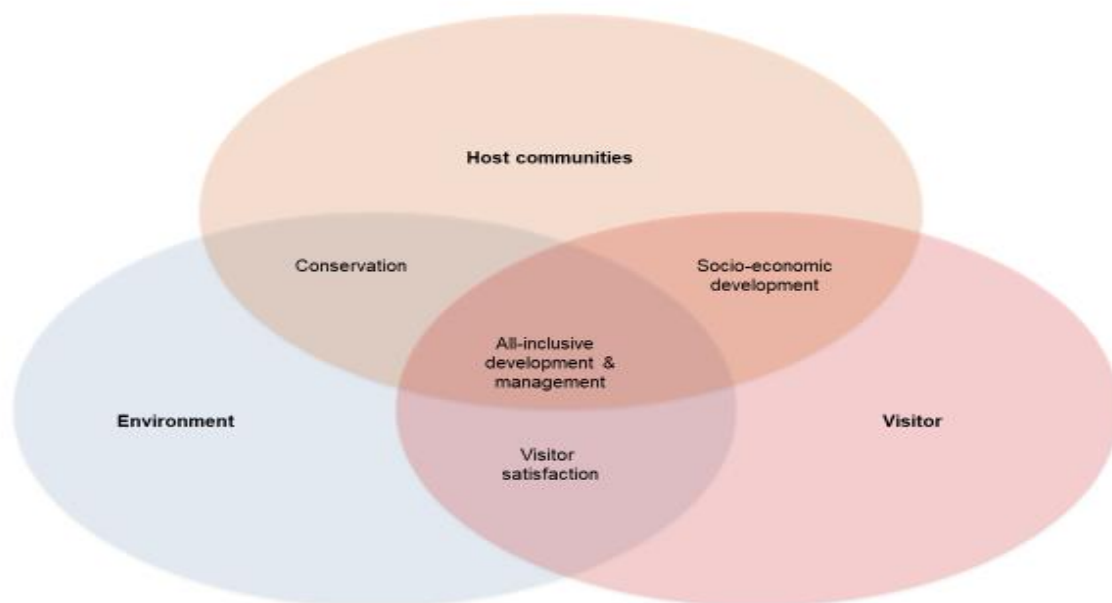


Figure 2-1: Sustainable tourism development management: Main goals

Source: Adapted from Kimbu (2010:43)

In Figure 2.1, Kimbu (2010) proposes that the fundamental principle of sustainable development is its importance on the destination areas' environment, economy, political and cultural organisations. The socio-cultural authenticity and the environmental and economic characteristics of the host community should be respected. As shown in Figure 2.1, the sustainability of this theory is assured if visitors (outside investors and tourists) take time to read, study and familiarise themselves with the host communities' cultures, customs and traditions before embarking on projects and trips (Kimbu, 2010:43). A critical question is whether there are mutual benefits between the tourism industry, the economy,

and the environment in promoting each other. Naidoo *et al.* (2017:5) state that balancing sustainability in tourism means maintaining a low impact on the tourism environment and local culture while helping to generate income and creating employment for the local community through the development and promotion of the tourism industry. Lu *et al.* (2018:23) stress that the industry, the economy, and the environment develop collectively and combine mutual benefits. The relationship between the tourism industry, the economy and the environment will collapse if one of the components is ignored.

The coherence between host communities and tourism development has been an essential subject of research since the inception of tourism-related literature in the formative works in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Del Chiappa *et al.*, 2018:171). According to Cheer and Lew (2017:12), sustainable tourism includes tourism that considers its present and future economic, social, and environmental implications and the demands of tourists, the industry, the environment, and host communities. Therefore, for the host communities to preserve their originality and develop simultaneously, Ernawati *et al.* (2017:367) suggest they need a sound understanding of community-based tourism (CBT) to sustain their tourism. In addition, increased exposure to tourists and tourism in host communities is another predicament, especially when adapting and accessing the tourism economy is strained due to limited local skills and the dominance of foreign investors and interests (Cheer & Lew, 2017:14).

Del Chiappa *et al.* (2018:179) found that guaranteeing the sustainable development of tourism destinations is a complicated task that necessitates collaborative policy-making among local governments, government agencies, businesses, and host communities to plan and regulate tourism growth. Herrera *et al.* (2018:91) state that it is of the utmost importance for destination planners to manage the integration of stakeholder interests and preferences in such a way as to provide meaningful, memorable experiences for both visitors and hosts and to create favourable destination quality, sustainability, competitiveness and profitability. Leung *et al.* (2018:9) reiterate that a primary objective of sustainable protected area tourism is consumer satisfaction and promoting conservation ethics in visitors. Visitors should be aware of how and why conservation is taking place in the protected area; it is hoped that this knowledge will contribute to sustainable support. As depicted in Figure 2.1, Kimbu (2010:43) concludes that if attention is paid to the implementation of the principles mentioned above in the planning,

development and management of tourism destinations, the impacts of most of the problems caused by tourism development that are often accompanying economic growth will be minimised.

The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) was the first to introduce the concept of sustainable tourism, which defined it as "the development of tourism activities aimed at meeting today's needs without jeopardising the ability of natural resources to provide for future generations" (Piartrini, 2018:131). Goals for sustainable tourism are now viewed as adaptable to the circumstances of various settings and changes in the environment throughout time. It is also becoming more widely recognised as relevant for all types of tourism, whether small-scale or large-scale (Bramwell *et al.*, 2017:1). In order to achieve the objectives and respond to the community's needs, the construction of a network should be encouraged to establish a mechanism to drive an energetic and productive activity for sustainable tourism growth, contributing to the long-term development of future working conditions (Chinsomboon, 2019:52).

In recent trends of sustainable tourism issues, Bramwell *et al.* (2017:3) highlighted six changes significant in shifting the direction of sustainable tourism research activities and some potentially valuable platforms for future research:

- Individual actors' attitudes, behaviours, and choices, rather than understanding and changing broader social relations and socio-technical structures, such as the provisioning system, have sparked concern about how sustainable tourism research and policies can often focus on knowledge and completely change such traits.
- According to some academics, to promote sustainable tourism, one must study and adjust one's everyday behaviours, relatively common social practices and the accompanying societal interactions and social-economic systems.
- There has been much discussion recently about how to understand better potential routes for the societal shifts needed for more sustainable tourism.
- Many experts believe evaluating how governance structures and regimes may guide society, including tourist activities, toward long-term sustainability is critical.

- There is a growing interest in whole systems perspectives on (un)sustainable tourism that stress the importance of complex interconnections around social systems and between human and natural systems.
- Finally, numerous new articles assume a 'critical turn' in 'framing' (un)sustainable tourism, which aims to analyse society, including repressive, exploitative, and alienating aspects, and effect transformational and progressive change. However, it does not intend to inveigh against the literature; instead, it is a personal observation of the debate about tourism and sustainability (Liu, 2014:499).

Sustainable tourism indicators are recognised broadly as valuable tools for planning rural or cultural tourism, managing crises, managing community tourism, assessing tourism destinations, measuring responsible behaviour and tourism practices, and selecting criteria for policy implementation and scientific recognition (Lee & Hsieh, 2016:779). Sustainability indicators are well-established methods for evaluating and monitoring initiatives for long-term development. As a result, sustainability indicators may help policymakers make better decisions and conduct more effective measures by simplifying, clarifying, and collecting data and expressing various stakeholder groups' ideas, views, and values (Kristjánsdóttir *et al.*, 2018:584). Identifying the key aspects of sustainable tourism and identifying relevant indicator topics within each component may be aided by a thematic analysis of research published between 2000 and 2015 that created and validated sustainable tourism indicators (Agyeiwaah, McKercher & Suntikul, 2017:26). The policy relevance of sustainable tourism is that the United Nations designated 2017 as the official United Nations International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

Despite such apparent interest and focus, the evidence suggests that tourism is less sustainable than ever worldwide (Hall, 2011; Hall, 2019:1044). As a result, it is critical to promote sustainable tourism, maximise its advantages, and reduce negative consequences. Sustainable tourism indicators can help by allowing a more accurate evaluation of the tourist industry's long-term viability (Lee & Hsieh, 2016:780). Now that the concepts of sustainable tourism, approaches and policy significance of sustainability have been discussed, the following section examines the importance of sustainable tourism development.

2.2.2 The importance of sustainable tourism development

Mylan (2018:2) poses new questions in the anthropology of tourism that showcase the benefits associated with sustainable tourism's social, economic, and environmental profits. Sustainability tourism principles ensure that the benefits of tourism are maximised while the negative impacts are minimised. Sustainable tourism actions contribute to high-quality experiences, differentiated offerings and higher yields (Day, 2016:3). However, the discussion regarding the supposed benefits of tourism to reduce poverty is limited in policy terms. In 2017, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stated that the tourism public policy focus of sustainable development goals (SDG) is "Tourism provides income through job creation at local and community levels. It can be linked with national poverty reduction strategies and entrepreneurship. Low skills and local recruitment can empower less favoured groups, particularly youth and women" (Hall, 2019:1050). However, careful, inclusive planning and implementation will be required to ensure tourism opportunities result in sustainable social/cultural, environmental, and economic benefits for municipalities and local communities (Day, 2016:2). Above all, tourism is a sector of optimism. With its numerous socioeconomic advantages and extensive effect across various industries, tourism is an essential component of global solutions to these global concerns (Hall, 2019:1053).

Although the economic benefits of tourism are well-known, little attention is paid to the distribution of income and capital among the recipients (Hall, 2019:1050). According to Manwa *et al.* (2017:3), sustainable tourism development is based on community engagement and producing socioeconomic advantages for local populations. In prior research (see Choi & Murray, 2010; Murphy, 1985; Saufi, O'Brien & Wilkins, 2014; Tosun, 2006), local community engagement as participants, stakeholders, and beneficiaries in tourist planning and development was highlighted. As a result, tourism routes with an open and inclusive decision-making network may foster collaboration and links among local communities and the tourism sector and enhance economic growth (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Meyer, 2004). In the following section, the early years and history of tourism routes and their inception are discussed in-depth, and tourism routes are explained comprehensively by examining the definitions, the different routes, and their unique attributes.

2.3 Tourism routes defined and explained

Tourism destinations have traditionally been considered sites where people go and stay, whereas tourism routes are primarily associated with regions people transit through (Jacobsen, 2006; Lue *et al.*, 1993). Tourism routes have been described using a variety of themes, including scenic byways, themed routes, cultural routes, and many more. Tourism routes form a significant component of tourism products. It is a travel system reflection on a linear trajectory, an entity that organically combines different tourism products (Da, 2019:756). The emergence of tourism routes is outlined in the following sub-section.

2.3.1 The emergence of tourism routes

In the late 20th century, destination marketing organisations (DMO) formalised itineraries to structure tourism assets, calling them 'routes' or 'circuits'. In addition, Rogerson (2007) further explains that other tourism routes in various parts of the world are termed 'themed routes' or 'trails'. The Burgenstraße, or German Castle route, is a good example (Ward-Perkins *et al.*, 2020:3). The German Castle Road was first launched in March 1954; the route was conceived in collaboration with Mannheim, Heidelberg, Rothenberg ob der Tauber, Ansbach and Nuremberg as an initiative of the city Heilbronn. Starting in Mannheim and ending in Prague, the Burgenstraße is more than 1 200km (745 miles) long with 70 castles and palaces and crosses Germany from west to east via some of the most popular heritage towns in the world. The drive typically takes three or four days, although travellers may take a longer time (Ward-Perkins *et al.*, 2020:5).

Tourism routes amalgamate marketing and development energies that promote corridor-style experiences for the drive market (Olsen, 2003:334). However, according to Lourens (2007b:7), tourism routes, particularly those with specific themes such as birding, wine, and arts and crafts, can be viewed as a market-driven approach in which a local community tourism product within a specific destination is defined and packaged to be appealing to tourism markets. Themed touring routes (TTRs) are defined by Xu *et al.* (2016:168) as roads or road segments that connect neighbouring tourism destinations under an overall theme of goods. TTRs have grown in popularity recently, focusing on various topics such as culinary arts, wildlife observation, and history. Wine trails have become one of the most prevalent forms of TTRs throughout Europe's historic wine

regions and the expanding regions of the 'New World'. The advent of 'New World wines' such as those from Australia, the United States, and Chile, has transformed the business landscape and increased the industry worldwide (Dalmoro, 2013:96).

Routes and networks, according to Stoddart (2008:35), are not necessarily novel notions. The initial Silk Route existed thousands of years before its tourism and promotional counterpart in modern times, and it was also linked with other textile routes by the Council of Europe (COE) (Moulin & Boniface, 2001:241). The Silk Route, as well as numerous other well-known routes like The Monastic Influence Route, Celtic Routes, Mozart Routes, Viking Routes, Park and Garden Routes, Writing Frontiers, European Discoveries Routes, Humanism Routes, Northern Lights Routes, Gypsy and Popular Festivals Routes, and Rites in Europe Routes, have all existed for a long time (Stoddart, 2008:35). Antonson and Jacobsen (2014:342) reveal that there are other examples of early tourism routes in Europe that including the Roman Road in Germany (1950) and the Alsace Wine Route in France (1953).

In the touristic areas, routes hold an original space; within the context of their names, their shapes are commonly linear, narrow or long drawn. These linear resources are unique and intricate systems that fuse nature and culture into traceable corridors such as trails, getaways and tourism routes (Olsen & Trono, 2018:27). Routes are known to be corridors that channel the flow of tourists between destinations. They can be terrestrial, aerial, maritime or fluvial (Hmidani & Sguenfle, 2018:140). Tourism routes are, moreover, partnerships of the "...historical, economic and cultural elements between cities, smaller towns and tourist historical cities and regions" (Meyer 2004:7) to improve the attractiveness of the areas where they are located (Marques & Santos 2014; Jacobs *et al.*, 2019:1). As a result, tourism routes should contain attractions and services contributing to the entire visitor experience. According to the tourism literature, tourism industry strategy and growth must also be founded on visitor views and assessments of route attractions, surroundings, and roadside services (Antonson & Jacobsen, 2014:343).

2.3.2 Tourism routes around the world

The different types of tourism routes globally, such as in the US, Europe and Australia, and South Africa, will be discussed in the following sections.

(a) US routes

In the US, the first transcontinental highway, Route 66, resulted from the trend of increasing car ownership in America provoked by Henry Ford's assembly line production of automobiles. According to Caton and Santos (2007:373), Route 66 of America covered 2 448 miles from Chicago to Los Angeles, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California when officially established in 1926. It was the first all-weather road from the Midwest to the West Coast. It opened the Southwest to migrants, troops, and tourists travelling by car for the first time (Caton & Santos, 2007:373). Furthermore, in the 1930s, Route 66 was re-routed to minimise long travels and lessen trips for tourists, and it was broadened continually between the 1950s and 1960s to allow traffic flow before it became a victim of its popularity (Caton & Santos, 2007:373).

The Cascade Loop is a self-drive tourism trail enclosing the heart of Washington State in the US, starting 28 miles north of Seattle. It was established in 1978 by its operators, led by Gordon Ohmes, with intentions to link Leavenworth, Wenatchee, and Chelan in the southern Cascades. This initiative culminates from the opening of Highway 20 in the north, and the rationale behind it was growing concerns and uncertainty that the southern communities would lose visitors. The Council of Europe (COE) pioneered the notion of cultural routes in 1987. This effort aimed to promote the main cultural ideals of the COE: human rights, cultural democracy, cultural variety and identity, debate, and mutual enrichment exchange (Hardy, 2003:320).

(b) Routes in Europe

In the 1970s, France was a pioneer in using routes, with the phrase "route historique" being a trademark registered with the National Institute of Intellectual Property by the Caisse Nationale de Monuments Historiques et des Sites (CNMHS). However, route planners must form themselves into associations (Moulin & Boniface, 2001:241). The Way of St. James is a medieval pilgrimage route and was declared the First European Cultural Route in 1987 (Lopez, Nicosia & González, 2018:1). In addition, the Council of Europe (COE) designated the Camino de Santiago as a pilot project of the Cultural Route Programme (CRP) in Spain in 1998. COE instigated the establishment of CRP to

demonstrate the shared cultural heritage of diverse European countries (Lourens, 2007a:477).

(c) Routes in Australia

The Queensland Heritage Trails are a collection of five trails in the Australian state of Queensland. The trails were created between 1999 and 2004 to give a variety of attractions, the most popular of which is cultural heritage. These routes span along the coast and interior, connecting big cities and small towns to heritage attractions and themes that span thousands of kilometres (Lourens, 2007b:40). In recent times, the new historical and cultural artefacts are mainly included in Australian tourist routes, shaped by natural objects. The most popular among them are the Winery, Manjie and Hunter Winery in South Wales, the Royal Canyon in the Red Centre with its unique scenery, as well as the Australian city-building traditions of Sydney and Melbourne (the Queen Victoria Building, the Sydney Opera, the Sydney TV Tower and many others) (Duk *et al.*, 2020:55). Because of the importance of the tourism route business, several levels of government have been involved in constructing critical infrastructures, such as motorways, signage, restrooms, and rest spaces (Rolf & Flint, 2018:168).

(d) Routes in southern Africa

In southern Africa, the emergence of tourism routes is encouraged as a developmental strategy for rural areas. The routes' organisations are a way to bring together rural tourist businesses that are generally dispersed and unorganised, allowing them to compete more effectively with more established tourism destinations as a group (McLaren & Heath, 2012:18). The Cape Wine Route was the first in South Africa, and it is a world-renowned example of a successful route concept that connects people to a specific place and provides wine and gourmet experiences. Other popular business routes include the Highlands Meander, the Midlands Meander, and the Cape Garden Route (Viljoen *et al.*, 2010:68). These routes are discussed in the next section.

(i) The Cape wine routes

During a visit to the Route de Vins in Morey St Denis, Burgundy, France, in 1969, one of the founding members came up with the concept of wine routes. As the initial members of the Stellenbosch Wine Route, the founder incorporated 11 wine producers. However,

the historic occasion has not been without its difficulties. The Liquor Act had to be altered to allow tourists to experience wine farms and members of the wine route to display signboards (Nowers *et al.*, 2002:197). A restricted location in the form of a typically formally designated wine region or geographical indication (G.I.) that has an identity in the form of a branded descriptive term such as Champagne (France) or Stellenbosch (South Africa) characterises the majority, if not all, wine routes (Bruwer, 2003:423).

(ii) The Midlands Meander

As indicated earlier, the Midlands Meander is one of the most well-known and first established tourism routes in South Africa. It is situated in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and was founded by a group of crafters and artists. Since then, the route has developed into a popular tourist route (Lourens, 2007a). The Midlands Meander boasts various amenities within the route, such as accommodation, conference and wedding facilities, restaurants, outdoor activities and historical landmarks, wildlife conservation, and artists and crafters are also members of the Meander (Wisdom, 2015:2). Art studios, rural hotels, flower farms, cheese manufacturers, tea gardens, craft, pottery, weaving schools, trout farms, and golf courses are part of the Meander in a cluster of about 120 white-owned enterprises (Mathfield, 2000; Stoddart, 2008).

(iii) The Garden Route

The Garden Route (the coastal region along the southern Cape coast between Still Bay and the Storms River mouth) was named one of the country's top holiday destinations (Leggat & Klein, 2001:51). The Garden Route is described as sandwiched between the Outeniqua and Tsitsikamma Mountains and the Indian Ocean, stretching from Mossel Bay in the west to the Storms River in the east. Mossel Bay, George, Plettenberg Bay and Knysna are the four major towns along the route (Pauw, 2009:1). The Garden Route is a coastal corridor on South Africa's western coast that combines historic woods, rivers, marshes, dunes, beach lengths, lakes, mountain vistas, and indigenous fynbos to provide a therapeutic landscape. It has been described as a stretch of land unlike any other in the world in terms of natural beauty, natural attractions, and unique flora and fauna (Ramukumba *et al.*, 2011b:59).

The concept of themed routes as tourist attractions has grown in popularity in recent years. Despite having no global origins, route tourism is exploited by numerous nations

to ensure economic growth and development (Kovács & Martyn, 2013; Proos *et al.*, 2017:136). The researcher examined some of the most iconic routes in various countries; however, such routes usually have a theme connected to them. In the next section, the types of tourism routes will be explored.

2.4 Types of tourism routes

There has been much study into trails and routes, from cultural and historical trails to nature trails and those that blend natural and cultural heritage aspects (Boyd, 2017:418). For example, Timothy and Boyd (2015) distinguished between routes spontaneously growing into tourist resources through time and those actively constructed as tourism resources. Timothy and Boyd (2015) developed several conceptual models to represent a start and end-stage for each of these evolutionary sorts of paths in order to make this difference (Boyd, 2017:419). Route-based tourism product development is well-known worldwide, and it may be especially beneficial for less developed communities that are less well-known in the tourism sector. Specific forms of tourist routes, when paired with spatial development, support from local communities, and integration of local goods, may be tools for social innovations by combining the phenomena of tourism, the economy, innovation, and social challenges (Piskóti & Nagy, 2016:75). The length of the route, the scale of the offerings, and the theme(s) presented all influence how well it attracts travellers. Many themed routes are geared toward the domestic markets rather than the international ones. As a result, routes serve several purposes and appeal to a diverse range of clients (Meyer, 2004; Proos *et al.*, 2017:137).

There are various types of routes, ranging from trails, thematic routes, heritage routes, wine routes, drive routes and cultural routes, and all routes are inherently cultural because humans and their anthropic activities created them: farming, fishing, hunting, pilgrimage, trade and village-to-village communication (Olsen & Trono, 2018:27). This section briefly discusses a few prominent types of routes in characteristics and nature.

2.4.1 Cultural routes

According to Piskóti and Nagy (2016:75), cultural routes are a new method of heritage protection and utilisation. They refer to geographical travel via various regions and locales and cognitive travel, with values, emotions, sentiments, and experiences shaping the result. Jones *et al.* (2018:309) further explain that cultural routes are of transitional

importance because of their relationship with the comprehension and mutual respect of common European values. Therefore, many researchers displayed a common interest in tourism routes. They possess enormous social values and represent locations with affluent cultural heritage and collective meaning for the people who travel on the route and the inhabitants of the areas where the route transverses. Butler and Ivanovic (2016:59) stress that in South Africa, the development of cultural heritage tourism has been seen to have the potential to yield various benefits, including those that venture beyond economic growth. Furthermore, cultural heritage may be a leeway to positively influence how global society perceives a particular nation. Nonetheless, considering the benefits and attractiveness of cultural routes, inadequate statistical record-keeping, benchmarking of the new National Strategy for Tourism in Culture and Heritage Strategy (NCHTS) has led to its overall contribution to South African tourism to fade (Butler & Ivanovic, 2016:58).

2.4.2 Heritage routes

Another form of tourism showing rapid growth is heritage tourism, often synonymously with cultural tourism. Heritage tourism is the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their usual places of residence to accumulate new information and experiences to please their cultural needs (Kempiak *et al.*, 2017:379). Lemky (2017:526) added that driving tourism on scenic byways and heritage routes is developed to enhance the local economy in various areas worldwide, such as Australia and the US. Within a South African context, the Tourism White Paper, published in 1996, identified heritage tourism as scenic parks, sites of scientific and historical importance, national monuments, and historical buildings (Proos & Hattingh, 2020:2). The economic analyses of heritage tourism were conducted by Van der Merwe (2014) by examining the battle route within KwaZulu-Natal Province, one of the notable routes in the province. It was concluded that the situation is currently unpleasant amid possible economic drivers and opportunities within the route. It was then recommended that routes be incorporated into tourism packages to sustain the battlefield routes (Proos & Hattingh, 2020:3).

2.4.3 Wine routes

The emergence of wine tourism has been highly regarded as important in most countries and globally. Wine tourism is described as visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals,

and wine exhibitions with the purpose of sampling grapes and wines and learning about the characteristics of a grape cultivar and wine area (Bregoli *et al.*, 2016:205). Wine tourism has been established mainly in Europe and many other nations worldwide as 'wine routes' (Bregoli *et al.*, 2016:205). A wine route is a tourism route that connects several wine vineyards and wineries in one area. The route is distinguished by natural attractions (mountains and views), physical attractions (facilities such as wineries on wine estates), vines, and roads and markers (signposts) bringing passengers to each wine route farm business (Bruwer, 2003:424). According to tourist literature, the term wine route inspired an examination of wine routes through the theoretical approaches of networks, which have been used in two ways. The first approach is that within the wine routes exist the inter-organisational businesses and networks, and secondly, there are public-private networks that can influence the planning and governance of tourism (Del Chiappa *et al.*, 2019:591). In South Africa, the first wine route was developed in 1971 by Frans Malan of the Simonsig Estate wine route post his tour of the Route de Vins at Morey and St Denis Burgundy. This initiative led to many other wine routes as wine producers around the Stellenbosch area realised the benefits of wine tourism routes (Hunter, 2017:55). Del Chiappa *et al.* (2019:591) highlighted the following three general benefits of wine route tourism development.

- Firstly, wine routes can enhance the economic development of wine regions by reducing tourism irregularity and changing the regional economy's diversity by creating employment opportunities.
- Secondly, due to the network nature of wine routes, many organisations can benefit if the problem-solving capability is improved, and daily operations are adjusted. Furthermore, a well-balanced business network with other wine routes can grow strong and reach a broad customer base.
- Lastly, these benefits are influenced mainly by socio-cultural benefits such as knowledge and interchange of information among stakeholders and interlink to the place's identity and local cultural and physical resources.

Del Chiappa *et al.* (2019:591) concluded that it is apparent that these three different categories of benefits are intertwined inextricably with each other. For instance, the socio-cultural benefits can be influenced by the collaboration of business cultures, which could prompt businesses to realign their operations to develop new skills (organisational

benefit) that will eventually present economic benefits for the single business and the place (economic benefits).

2.4.4 Liberation routes

A liberation heritage route's theme is well defined. It corresponds to broader national and international ambitions, such as the 2005 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) resolution to pioneer 'Roads to Independence' historic routes (Snowball & Courtney, 2010:574). Routes of Liberation is the first exhibition on World War II to use a multi-discipline approach, one of its distinguishing aspects. It is organised on an extensive European scale, including contributions from five countries. National narratives from the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Poland are gathered in one display and pitted against another (Brentjens & Lenders 2018:360). Generally, the Routes of Liberation exhibition comparatively connects all histories of the latter countries. The aim is not to ascertain the number of fatalities during World War II. Instead, the aim is to contextualise the understanding of histories. Brentjens and Lenders (2018:370) concluded that much is still to be learned from each country, and with the plans of the Liberation Route Europe Foundation, the aim will be achieved.

In South Africa, the development of the Liberation Heritage Routes was one of the most significant project initiatives with a focus “to preserve the legacy of South Africa’s long walk to freedom” (Bialostocka, 2014:1). The premise that economic growth and cultural preservation and documentation are inextricably linked is represented holistically in the reason for the establishment of South Africa's Liberation Heritage Route. This suggests that such ideals as the “preservation of national memory for continuity and national identity and efforts to improve the quality of life for those who regard themselves neglected within the footprints of freedom, democracy and justice” (Snowball & Courtney, 2010:565). One such example of the liberation heritage route in South Africa is the 13 sites dispersed across South Africa but connected by the shared history of the liberation struggle, constituting the route. The Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication (Kliptown, Soweto), the Hector Peterson (Soweto), numerous Nelson Mandela sites (Qunu and Soweto), Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe House, Steve Bantu Biko House, Zanempilo Clinic, Constitutional Hill, Robben Island, the University of Fort Hare, Chief Albert Luthuli Museum, Sharpeville shooting site, Sol Plaatjie House, Avalon Cemetery and Liliesleaf Farm, all recollect people and incidents that embody the past and the present of South

Africa (Bialostocka, 2014:95). Taking into account that routes connect many places of interest and can bring benefits to such areas, it is vital to be aware of the significance of the route's contributions.

2.5 The importance and benefits of tourism routes

Routes are often explored in tourist literature, particularly in developing rural tourism. Routes appear to be a reliable way to develop less mature places with rich cultural resources that appeal to special interest visitors, who frequently stay longer and spend more to follow their interests (Lourens, 2007b:1). Rogerson (2007:49) highlights that route development has been viewed as the world's best hope to ascertain sustainability in travel and tourism. The development of tourism routes is mainly due to the acknowledgement that more people desire a free and independent travel experience, and local communities recognise that tourism may provide an economic alternative to the associated decline in agriculture (Hardy, 2003:314). Historically, numerous tourism routes begin with one or more of the following goals (Meyer, 2004:3). First, to disperse visitors and income in the tourism industry; second, to incorporate unpopular attractions and features into the tourism business/product; third, to maximise the overall appeal of a destination; fourth, to increase the length of stay and spending by tourists; fifth, to entice new and repeat tourists; and finally, to increase the sustainability of tourism products (Meyer, 2004:3). Mnguni and Giampiccoli (2017:14) concluded that tourism routes and hiking trail developments are being proposed in many parts of the world as a tool for tourism, economic and community development. According to Antonson and Jacobsen (2014:342), route initiatives for tourist spatial dispersal have been deemed adequate and connected to increasing autonomous motoring in numerous locations. Routes may also be constructed to increase community awareness, pride, and a feeling of belonging.

A successful route benefits product owners by exposing tourists to lesser-known places and rural regions, which would gain from route tourism's long-term economic growth, according to Proos *et al.* (2017:144). A tourism route with numerous attractions generates a synergy effect and promotes comprehensive benefits due to the higher number of possible ties between small businesses and the distribution of money across a more extensive territory (Meyer, 2004). As a result, a well-designed and creative tourism route may provide several benefits. Because more tourists would be travelling through an area,

these benefits include job generation and business potential (Telfer, 2001a; Meyer-Cech, 2004, 2005; Lourens, 2007b).

Another significant benefit noted by Goodwin (2006) is that routes can function as a catalyst for the growth of small businesses in the local economy. Meyer (2004:14) outlines three additional benefits of route development:

- Expanding tourism by creating tourist facilities, activities, and services along the routes to facilitate visitor spending at stopover spots generates economic advantages.
- Local facilities and services necessary to conduct tour programs give additional jobs and money directly and indirectly.
- Wedded tourism routes can help expand visitor markets and increase the average duration of stay.

Now that the importance and benefits of tourism routes have been established, it is also essential to determine how such routes develop.

2.6 Tourism route development

The establishment of tourism routes demonstrated an increased interest in Northern Europe and many other countries in the recent past. Tourism route development is based continuously on practical applications of attractions theory; some routes are designed to provide access to a single and primary tourism attraction, while most routes suggest presenting and linking secondary attractions as clusters (Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011:780). The development of tourism routes requires that the route developers consider the tourists' needs and reasons for travelling along the route. It will also depend on whether tourists see the route as a destination or just a path to reach their desired destination (Schmudde & Sörensson, 2020:59-60). The other important consideration when tourism routes are developed is to proportionally distribute the economic benefits more widely by developing more tourist amenities, activities, and services along tourism routes in a form that will allow tourist spending at these stopover points and all that will provide additional employment and income both directly and indirectly (Lourens, 2007b:21). Further details regarding the development of routes will be discussed.

2.6.1 How are tourism routes developed?

Lourens (2007a:486) identified a step-by-step approach to successfully developing tourism routes. Firstly, the route must be conceptualised based on concrete market research that identifies important target audiences and their needs. Market research must be undertaken constantly to consider current tourist trends. Secondly, the tourism items in the targeted location must be adequately researched. To guarantee that current products match the changing dynamics of the tourist business, the research must include existing items. Furthermore, the association must establish a minimum level for member qualification and have a method in place for periodical re-assessment. Thirdly, a tourism asset analysis must identify the area's and its goods' distinctive selling points. Additionally, a micro-level strategic plan must be prepared to outline how tourism development should occur at this level (Schmudde & Sörensson, 2020:60). Fourthly, the possible membership base's size must be determined. From the inception, tourism product owners with the potential to complement the distinctive attributes must be sought to join the organisation. Mentorship within the committee and subcommittees is also critical for the long-term sustainability of skills. Fifthly, following the finalisation of the membership, a clear brand identity for marketing must be determined. The overstate of attractions in the route might be detrimental to the association's attractions to under-deliver. Sixthly, the operational plan must be prepared to enable proper communication between the members and the association to assign committee members and personnel roles and responsibilities. Lastly, a financial plan is paramount to the survival of the organisation. The organisation must allocate resources in accordance with its strategic significance.

Schmudde and Sörensson (2020:60) stated that resources are needed in the early phases to create the 'route' (see steps above). It should be borne in mind that the development of a route is a long-term endeavour that often takes time to mature. Traditionally, routes begin on a small scale, and it can take up to 30 years to yield the anticipated economic benefits. Therefore, it is important to set long-term goals for better yields than to operate on a setup of short-term goals. In addition, Iles and Prideaux (2011:137) briefly describe two strategies to apply when a tourism route is formalised. The first strategy is called a 'bottom-up' strategy, mainly local stakeholders who are in complete control of the route, while a 'top-down' strategy is commonly supported by the public sector, where local control can be lost. Iles and Prideaux (2011:138) state that the

“top-down approach dictates that the public sector drives the routes planning, implementation and marketing.” The importance of this model is that it can yield visible and tangible results for any program in a relatively short period.

After reviewing the literature regarding route development, it has become clear that there is a gap regarding the aspects that need to be considered when developing tourism routes in South Africa – this study will address this gap. To better understand the development of tourism routes, it is vital to know the stakeholders that need to participate in its development.

2.6.2 Stakeholders responsible for the development of tourism routes

The following section is based on the research by McLaren and Heath (2013), *A framework of rural tourism route stakeholders*. The framework for rural tourism route development in southern Africa constitutes three primary stakeholder groups, as shown in Figure 2.2. The first variance in the stakeholder groups is drawn between demand-side and supply-side stakeholders. McLaren and Heath (2013:20) further state that the supply-side stakeholders are the visitors of the tourism routes, while the supply-side stakeholders are subdivided into two groups of core and enabling stakeholders. The core stakeholders represent suppliers of tourism offerings within the route and enable stakeholders to represent influencers who can directly or indirectly impact the route’s success (McLaren & Heath, 2013:20). Some critical elements in the framework are briefly explained in the next section, and others will be dealt with in-depth in Chapter 3.

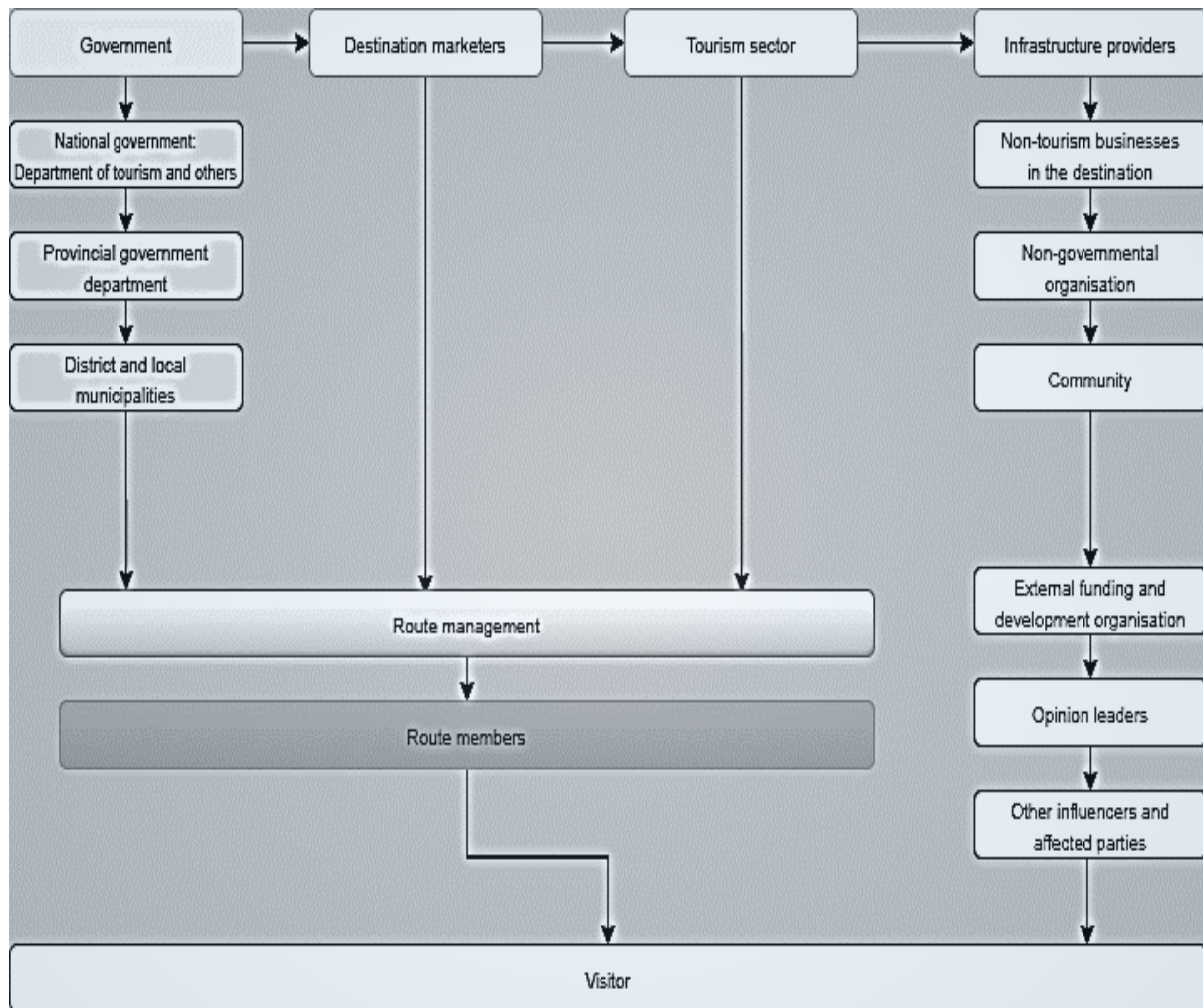


Figure 2-2: A framework of rural tourism route stakeholders

Source: Adapted from McLaren and Heath (2013:21)

The demand-side of stakeholders in the framework is represented by visitors with different market segments identifiable within visitors who may be consumers of the route product or individual tourism offerings. The tourism service suppliers provide the services visitors purchase on the route as a tourism experience (McLaren & Heath, 2013:21).

As shown in Figure 2.2, core stakeholders are individuals and organisations that provide tourist services, such as hospitality, amenities, transportation, and attractions. The interest of these stakeholders in the route is to collaborate resources for visitors' convenience, develop an identity for an area, and promote community bonds (McLaren, 2011:34).

McLaren and Heath (2013:22) further reflect enabling stakeholders in Figure 2.2 as influencers whose primary focus may not be the route's success. Their interest may partly be in other benefits created by increased tourism activities on the routes, such as employment creation, poverty alleviation, economic development, conservation of natural and cultural attractions and political advantage. McLaren (2011:34) summarises the role of the local, provincial and national government as authority expected to provide an enabling environment for the operation of the route and play an essential part in influencing tourism planning, providing funding, aiding with physical infrastructure, marketing and dispersal of services for the areas in which the route transverses.

The other essential group of enabling stakeholders in Figure 2.2 is the community where tourism routes occur. This group is recognised as a separate stakeholder group from their privileged counterparts. Apart from that, their stakeholder interest might undoubtedly be set aside in the operation of the route (McLaren, 2011:35-36).

Ruhanen (2013:80) argues that governments adopt a more reconciliatory tourism approach compared to other service sectors. This stems from a passionate interest in tourism's economic benefits, which was justified by the opportunity to profit from the taxes paid by businesses and visitors and the employment created. The effective operation of a tourism route necessitates permission for development, the availability of funds for the local community, and the facilitation of discussions between the private sector and the community (Ashley, 2006). Governments can influence the private sector's behaviour by requiring pro-poor and pro-community initiatives as part of the approval process for new plans, licenses, or concessions (Ashley, 2006; Ashley & Hayson, 2008) through written agreements and monitoring.

The touring routes system approach is reported to have been well documented as valuable in the study of tourism because of the complex relationships between businesses, marketing organisations, governments, and communities in providing tourist experiences (Iles & Iles & Prideaux, 2011:323). Since 1995, the non-governmental organisation, Open Africa Organisation, has actively created community tourism routes with a pro-poor component. It has aided communities in developing tourism routes that link impoverished setup to more established businesses. As a result, the benefits of route development are shared between all participants irrespective of rich or poor background (Viljoen *et al.*, 2010:69-70). According to McLaren (2011:27), the Open Africa

Organisation, involved in developing tourism in rural Africa, continues to stimulate routes in various locations. With the necessary infrastructures, attractions, and management and marketing activities, the spatial relationships between origins and destinations are fundamental components of the tourism routes (Meng & Hudson, 2016:1). The next section discusses the management and marketing of tourism routes.

2.6.3 The marketing and management of tourism routes

According to Luangsa-Art (2016:43), tourism route management includes developing routes that allow tourists to visit and sightsee attractions with ease, safety, and amusement. Furthermore, a tourism route can develop after numerous groups of visitors have used the route regularly, and it can be on the land, sea, or other modes of transportation, with a combination of the typical city route and the route that is specifically designed for the purpose (Luangsa-Art, 2016:43). According to Sirirak and Pitakaso (2018:2), tourism route management comprises crucial planning decisions that help the local economy. Furthermore, increasing the number of tourists generates tourism route planning, trade, and services. The importance of the participation of local government and private sector stakeholders throughout the implementation and ongoing management of tourism routes cannot be overstated (Antonsons & Jacobsen, 2014:344).

Meyer (2004:14-15) summarises the evidence to find pro-poor benefits with tourism routes and offers five "key considerations for successful route development." (i) collaboration networking, regional thinking, and leadership; (ii) product development, infrastructure, and access; (iii) community participation, microenterprise growth, and innovation; (iv) information and promotion; and (v) a clear pro-poor attitude. These findings suggest that tourism routes should be efficient tourism goods that generate regional synergies. Without long-term stability and attractiveness of the tourist product, a route's leverage for achieving local or regional benefits is weakened, as it is for other tourism products (Stoffelen, 2018:92). This culminates from much of the literature on governing strategies that concern stakeholder involvement, such as organisations, local businesses, and the community in general (Brown, 2003; Cartan & Carson, 2009) and this kind of strategy is always referred to as a bottom-up approach. However, Iles and Prideaux (2011:318) state that the bottom-up strategy is somehow problematic because there are continued disputes among stakeholders, especially when the route transverses various landscapes and passes through two or more political boundaries. Furthermore,

disputes may arise over the design and composition of the product market, management and membership, and membership benefits. According to Antonson and Jacobsen (2014:344), the opposite of a bottom-up strategy has not been addressed in academic literature and is only described broadly, such as when a tourism route is imposed on a community.

The tourism marketing premise is that instead of each product along the route promoting itself separately, the whole route is sold as a single product and brand (Hardy, 2003:326). Route marketing is often synonymous with destination marketing rather than promoting a single service offering (ECI Africa, 2006:19). Furthermore, the marketing of tourism routes is a crucial component in making the routes known and visible to tourists. Most routes are marketed through collaborations between non-profit organisations and public entities at local, regional, and national levels (Fyall *et al.*, 2016). The high prevalence of competition between tourism destination areas, place or route promotion and marketing seems essential (Antonsons & Jacobsen, 2014:343). The private and public sectors are essential in marketing and promoting tourism routes through local government initiatives (ECI Africa, 2006). Both sectors may give much-needed leadership and collaboration in mass mobilisation, dispute settlement, oversupply, or sales, widening supply chains, infrastructure difficulties and planning, adopting behaviour codes, and mentoring emerging businesses.

Furthermore, with the ready backing of local, regional, and state authorities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector is best positioned to manage and advertise tourism routes where needed (ECI Africa, 2006; Lourens, 2007b; Koko, 2017). The road signage alongside the roads is an essential aspect of the worldwide marketing of routes (Stoddard & Rogerson, 2009:15). Open Africa Organisation, a non-government organisation (NGO), usually aids with the application to relevant authorities for erecting signage. According to Viljoen *et al.* (2010:71), printed brochures are another popular marketing item to maximise exposure to potential clients. However, while some routes have successfully developed and disseminated brochures, others struggle to raise funds or lack the knowledge and expertise to develop their marketing material.

After a literature review on the development of tourism routes, identifying stakeholders responsible for tourism routes development, and how tourism routes are managed and

marketed, the following section analyses the studies conducted on tourism routes to identify possible gaps in the literature.

2.7 Seminal work on tourism routes

The table below analyses and summarises previous and recent similar tourism route studies conducted by other researchers.

Table 2-1: Analysis of previous studies conducted

YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	FINDINGS
2007a	Lourens	A roadmap for a successful destination and local economic development.	In the process of tourism route development, there is a need for local community consideration for a successful product. The local government and private sector need to play a pivotal role in developing and managing tourism routes, particularly within the South African context.
2003	Olsen	Tourism themed routes: A Queensland perspective	For a successful tourism route, the industry, government, and community must collaborate during such routes' development.
2004	Briedenhann & Wickens	Tourism routes as a tool for the economic development of rural areas – vibrant hope or impossible dream?	There is a need for authentic collaboration and partnership between the public, and private sectors and, most importantly, the local community for a sustainable tourism product.
2013	McLaren & Heath	Towards a framework for identifying and engaging rural tourism stakeholders in southern Africa	For a successful tourism route, stakeholders must collaborate continuously to earmark and engage all other stakeholders who could positively impact the development of a successful tourism route.
2017	Kokt	The perceptions of stakeholders on local economic development and route tourism on the four deserts tourism route in southern Namibia	It is recommended that local tourist guides be equipped with the necessary training and continuously updated. Furthermore, collaborations with public and private businesses must be well established to nurture cooperation between stakeholders. Lastly, there is a need for government involvement and support for the route.
2019	Jacobs, Du Preez & Fairer-Wessels	Rough road to the stars: A route development framework for Astro Tourism in the Karoo arid region	This study suggests that the major stakeholders need to be all represented in the Astro Tourism Route Forum, and route planners should comply with regulations with a solid case for the formation of partnerships and for securing support from both public and private sectors.

In the evidence and conclusions of most studies, as reflected in Table 2.1, it is vital to involve the local community in developing tourism routes. In essence, evidence from most studies on community-based tourism (CBT) is relevant because local-related matters directly influence the tourist experience. In addition, the tourism community must be built in harmony with the social context, where the community will benefit from tourism and not become a victim (Sugandini *et al.*, 2018:734). Secondly, the portrayal of tourism is derived from the assets of the local community, the natural environment, infrastructures, services, and special activities. Community participation is a guiding factor, thereby promoting increased revenues from tourism. Lastly, a CBT development plan must be linked to the community's socio-economic development (Sugandini *et al.*, 2018:734). The public and local community partnerships are also meaningful when routes are developed. The study of Koko (2017) in Table 2.1 emphasises that continuous stakeholder engagement and government support toward route development must be considered. Lastly, the government is encouraged to train local tour guides, support the route, and assist tourism route forums to adhere to the regulations as set by the government.

Evidence from Table 2.1 identified a few gaps, which this study attempts to fill. Firstly, there is a general lack of local community consideration and training. Secondly, there is a lack of collaboration between the industry, government, and community. Thirdly, there is a lack of stakeholder engagement and continuous collaborations. McLaren and Heath (2013:30) concluded that a collaborative effort should be in place to continually identify and engage stakeholders who are impacted or could impact the sustainable success of a route. Fourthly, education and training of locals by the government are needed. Training that incorporates sustainable tourism into work practices and the recruitment of local personnel at all levels improves the quality of the tourism product (Yfantidou & Matarazzo, 2017:463). Lastly, compliance with regulations by the tourism route planners and route forums and representation of all major stakeholders. Compliance with regulations prepares the route developers with a well-founded demonstration for forming partnerships and gaining support from the public and private sectors (Jacobs *et al.*, 2019:6). From the literature and the review of studies, it becomes clear that there can be challenges associated with this form of tourism, and such challenges will be discussed next.

2.8 The challenges associated with tourism routes

The tourism industry is the world's largest industry that can perform as a revenue generator and as an impetus for the socio-economic enhancement of a nation (Koiri & Mukherjee, 2018:1). In recent years, the tourism sector has demonstrated a steady expansion in revenues and tourist numbers. It has left broad economic, social-cultural, and environmental imprints in practically every area of the world (Cholik, 2017:49). While the growth of tourism in many nations is generally encouraged by policymakers as it brings economic and social benefits to an area, several negative consequences should not be overlooked. For example, existing traffic congestion in a particular location may intensify due to an influx of tourists, other places may become overcrowded, and conflicts between the requirements of visitors and residents may occur (Maxim, 2019:1007). In the South African Tourism White Paper of 1996, a few important factors derailing the success of the tourism industry to attain substantial tourism growth and benefit the local communities were revealed and are listed below:

- A lack of relevant institutional structures;
- A lack of market access and insufficient market knowledge;
- Narrow integration of communities and previously disadvantaged groups; and
- Less interest of existing operators in collaborating with communities and non-traditional suppliers (Kokt, 2017:56).

Van Wyk-Jacobs (2018:56) highlighted that Open Africa discovered that implementing tourism routes requires buy-in from local communities. The following challenges need to be given attention by the route planners for successful route development. Firstly, the degree of variety in the neighbourhood regarding socioeconomic statuses and uneven power relations among the many major players, as enterprises range from well-established to emerging businesses along the roadside. Secondly, challenges are related to the lack of skills found in the poor communities and the high illiteracy rate of community members. Thirdly, the community members with a poor economic background do not often comprehend the value that tourism and tourists can present concerning their interests. Finally, the language barrier and physical distance in rural regions are major problems since routes often require a lot of time and effort, especially in recent years, when people's lives have become increasingly demanding and hectic (Van Wyk-Jacobs,

2018:56). Furthermore, specific routes may fail to link the product to a potential market, resulting in discontinued route development (Rogerson, 2007:55).

Although there are various challenges regarding route tourism, certain factors also help improve the management of such routes. Other tourism route-related challenges could result in poor route performance due to a lack of marketing skills, product undercharging with a resulting lack of revenue growth, incorrect representation of offerings leading to visitor disappointment, inadequate marketing, and misunderstanding of tourist needs (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004:199; Gilbert, 1989:39; Meyer, 2004:26). Meng and Hudson (2012:5) concluded that lack of access could also hinder the area's development from being transformed into a tourism region.

2.9 Key success factors of tourism routes and the current state of tourism routes

Some attempts have identified crucial aspects for tourism route developments (Carson & Cartan, 2010; Hardy, 2003). Collaboration partnerships, geographical vision and management, invention, infrastructure and accessibility, community engagement, small businesses, growth and innovation, and information and marketing are essential for route success (Meyer, 2004; Antonson & Jacobsen, 2014:343). However, several factors are challenging to achieve, particularly in rural and peripheral areas (Carson & Cartan, 2010). These elements are consequently briefly outlined. The following were identified as key success factors for tourism route development: attractions, service quality, marketing, governing strategies, funding, and economic development (Antonson & Jacobsen, 2014:343).

2.9.1 Attractions

Route developments are firmly based on functional attraction theory; some routes provide access to a single and primary tourism attraction, while most routes reflect and connect secondary attractions as clusters (Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011:780). A tourist attraction is a location of interest visited by tourists, generally for its inherent or expressed cultural worth, historical importance, natural or architectural beauty, or recreational opportunities (TWA, 2009). Accordingly, tourism routes should include attractions and facilities, which collectively aid in creating an overall visitor experience (Antonson & Jacobsen, 2014:343). Tourist routes are designed according to the consumer's interests, geographical

structure, accessibility, attractions, or any other consideration, without any scientific basis (Piskóti & Nagy, 2016:76). Generally, if attractions are added to a route or if a route crosses a town or village, the area affected by the heritage corridor will be widened to include clusters or nodes of attractions along such a route and might develop into a destination area. Developing better infrastructure and unique attractions and promoting local culture along a route encourage tourists to stay longer in an area, resulting in an economic impact. Several communities consider routes essential, even iconic, marketing tools to create images of destinations and increase arrivals and expenditures (Lemky, 2017:528).

2.9.2 Service quality

Many publications on service quality research have been published since Gronoos (1984) and Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry *et al.* (1985) released their service quality models. Some studies created scales to assess the quality of service in the hotel and tourist industries. On the other hand, others created study models to look at the impact of service quality in these sectors because different hospitality and tourist industries have varied business environments (Lai *et al.*, 2018:115). The dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, commitment, credibility, understanding and knowing the customer and tangibles are considerably intertwined when dealing with service quality, as proposed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985). In addition, a multiple-item scale (SERVQUAL) to measure service quality and the ten dimensions of service quality to five dimensions, which are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Hsieh *et al.*, 2008:430), was used. Similarly, it has been maintained that if tourism routes can be developed without minimum standards, comprehensive planning, and coordination, they might not be as appealing to tourists as they should be. Therefore, visitor route satisfaction is the most critical factor (Antonson & Jacobsen, 2014:344).

2.9.3 Marketing

Marketing has been described as the act, collection of institutions, and procedures for developing, conveying, delivering, and exchanging value-added solutions for consumers, clients, partners, and society (Font & McCabe, 2017:870). According to Jones *et al.* (2008), some observers say that marketing fosters excessive spending by pushing a culture of consumerism and a never-ending desire for unachievable lifestyles to and by

people who cannot afford them and who, in the end, would not be happier if they attained them. However, Antonson and Jacobsen (2014:344) indicate that marketing and promotion of routes are essential with perpetual competition among tourism destinations. Therefore, routes should be part of the tourist information systems, with maps, brochures, road signage, attractions, and interpretation to highlight the importance of routes to prospective tourists.

2.9.4 Governing strategies

In most literature on the governing strategies of tourism routes, local businesses, local stakeholder involvement, and the community were paramount, and this strategy is referred to as a bottom-up approach. The role of local government and private stakeholders during the implementation and ongoing route management cannot be exaggerated. Therefore, such stakeholders must govern the routes (Lourens, 2007a:488). This strategy was also applied in one of the most successful routes in the world located in Spain and France, the Camino de Santiago, which is endowed by a well-built cooperative partnership of private sector, local and regional administrators (Antonson & Jacobsen, 2014:344).

2.9.5 Funding

Many local attractions struggle with competition, funding, and, perhaps most importantly, organisations that can assist their activities in adapting to a changing future. One of their flaws is that they are fragmented into a slew of non-cooperative, short-term firms against well-organised long-term competitors (Pearce, 2018:149). In addition, Antonson and Jacobsen (2014:344) stress that funding strategies for tourism routes vary; some are partially dependent on the political influences on the usage of state subsidies. On the other hand, it can be the administrative level responsible for route development.

2.9.6 Economic development

In some global writings, a narrow focus is placed on tourism routes to enhance the local economies and current development in distressed regions (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Lourens, 2007b). Developing tourism routes in rural regions aims to reorganize the struggling agricultural sector and solve concerns like highly educated youth emigration, worsening rural urbanisation, and declining economic activity (Rolfe & Flint, 2018:169).

Briedenhann and Wickens (2004) suggested that many Western countries have turned to tourism as an alternative development strategy for rural areas' economic enhancement and social activities.

The next section considers the various aspects discussed in the previous sections to synthesise the literature review.

2.10 Synthesis of the content, gaps in the current literature and the importance of stakeholders

The public sector's generous investment as a stakeholder in developing destination and tourism routes is essential for a successful destination. These were proven in the development of the Camino de Santiago, where the public sector investment aided destinations within the route and discharged substantial private sector investment opportunities, which led to notable tourism demand. Equally, the lack of capital investment from the government could derail the implementation of a successful tourism route (Lourens, 2007a:488). According to McLaren and Heath (2013:21), in southern Africa, there are three major groups of stakeholders acknowledged in rural tourism routes, namely the demand-side (tourists), supply-side (core stakeholders) and enabling stakeholders (planners).

The tourist's interest in the route is mainly tourism experience, but direct contact with the core stakeholders and their interactions could influence their route experience. The core stakeholders depend on their route membership for the assistance, chain, and closeness their affiliation brings. The contribution of enabling stakeholders to the route can directly or indirectly impact the tourist experience and prosperity of the route, the business of core stakeholders within the route, and the community residing in the route area (McLaren & Heath, 2013:20). The sole objective of enabling stakeholders is to satisfy tourists, while core stakeholders only focus on the livelihood and improvement of quality of life; therefore, the coexistence of tourists and core stakeholders is paramount in tourism planning and management (Poudel *et al.*, 2016:477). Bregoli *et al.* (2016:220) suggested a poor level of collaboration among various stakeholders because they have different perceptions of a wine route. McLaren (2011:277) highlighted the need for more academic research on various features of route tourism, such as strategic tourism route development and other aspects of rural tourism routes that aim to develop a body of

knowledge that would contribute to the improvement of the communities through the successful launch of rural tourism routes.

Therefore, the next chapter will discuss the importance of stakeholder involvement in developing, marketing, and managing tourism routes.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to analyse the development of sustainable tourism routes. Tourism routes around the globe have unique characteristics as per the surroundings in which they are found. They are primarily themed in their locality and can be wine, culture, pilgrimage, arts and culture or heritage inclined. Tourism routes are primarily used in economically distressed areas to create employment opportunities, poverty alleviation, and to improve the quality of life of the community members residing in areas in which tourism routes transverse. In the development and planning of tourism routes, there is a need for route developers to have the interest of tourists in mind with consideration of the proportional economic benefits that will lure tourists into spending money at all stopover points. In most of the tourism route literature, researchers identified steps to be followed in route development as a guide for a sustainable tourism route.

The government's role in managing and marketing tourism routes features prominently in the literature. In most tourism routes, government involvement is crucial as it levels the playing field for essential stakeholders, such as the local communities and core stakeholders, to be involved for mutual beneficiation. The marketing of tourism routes is imperative not only for the benefit of tourists in terms of tourism experience but also for supply-side stakeholders and local communities.

Amid economic benefits derived from tourism route development, tourism routes experience challenges during their inceptions and entire existence, just like many other tourism phenomena. On the contrary, the success of sustainable tourism route development relies on appealing attractions, good standard service quality, well-orchestrated marketing and governing strategies, sound financial plans, and economic development endeavours for the local community. The absence of community buy-in has proven to be a severe challenge to which tourism route planners must give serious attention.

The analysed literature shows that tourism development in many communities can succeed with relevant stakeholders and a sound legislative framework for tourism development. However, as revealed in the literature, tourism development can also fail due to various factors. The literature analysis of this chapter highlighted the following gaps that will be examined in the empirical chapters: lack of community consideration during the development of a tourism product, lack of collaboration between the industry, government and community, lack of partnership between the public sector, private sector and local communities, absence of education and training of local communities by government and lack of stakeholder engagements and continuous collaboration by all relevant stakeholders.

Developing a successful tourism route in a community depends on the support and contribution of relevant and interested stakeholders impacted by or can impact the tourism product. The involvement and participation of stakeholders in the tourism routes begin with developing the actual route, management, and marketing of the tourism route as it progresses. Therefore, Chapter 3 assesses stakeholder involvement in developing, managing, and marketing tourism routes.

CHAPTER 3 : AN ASSESSMENT OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT, AND MARKETING OF TOURISM ROUTES

3.1 Introduction

Tourism needs to be managed effectively, and destinations are central to many tourism activities (Hazra, Fletcher & Wilkes, 2017:278). Tourism destinations are heterogeneous entities that can grow naturally but are internally linked to multiple organisations, groups, and individuals that can influence or be influenced by tourism activities, referred to as stakeholders (Hazra *et al.*, 2017). The concept of 'stakeholders' is becoming more common in tourism due to the early efforts of tourism planners. A destination's organisational structure is viewed as a network of interdependent and multiple stakeholders, depending on the destination's experience and hospitality (Waligo, Clarke & Hawkins, 2013:343). In recent decades, fundamental measures for socio-economic and environmental sustainability and the development of local communities have included the empowerment and engagement of local stakeholders and suppliers in numerous dimensions. This entails paying more attention to residents' and suppliers' indigenous knowledge and promoting awareness to stimulate collaboration and accomplish socio-economic growth (Naser & Saeideh, 2017:493).

In studies like those of Lanquar (1985), and Vargas, Plaza and Porras (2007), tourism stakeholders are defined as the residents of coastal or inland destinations, government agencies, tour promoters and agents and the tourists themselves (Sánchez Cañizares, Castillo Canalejo & Núñez Tabales, 2016:966). As one critical non-governmental entity intervening between tourists and tourism destinations, local stakeholders' participation can positively impact the sustainability and development of tourism by promoting the patterns and numbers of tourists (Naser & Saeideh, 2017:494). Successful and effective stakeholder involvement is influenced by a multitude of factors such as quality of leadership, information quality and accessibility, stakeholder mindsets and capacity to engage, stakeholders' relationships, contextual circumstances, and implementation priorities for sustainable tourism (Zeng, 2018:160).

Multiple stakeholders' participation is essential for the successful development and implementation of strategy, as local communities often benefit and suffer from tourism (Weber *et al.*, 2017:8). The involvement of people and establishing networks for effective communication can enhance tourism awareness and maximise tolerance (Weber *et al.*, 2017:8). Responsible authorities or destination marketing organisations (DMOs) must consider the perspectives of various stakeholders, including the tourism industry, residents, special-interest groups representing the environment, community, and even tourists, when developing tourism development strategies and policies (Getz & Timur, 2012:230). Tourism as a social phenomenon is concerned with relationships emanating from the interactions of tourists, businesses, governments, and host communities, simultaneously attempting to attract and host tourists and other visitors (Amerta, Sara & Bagiadi, 2018:248). In addition, tourism is full of contexts within which relations are essential to a complete understanding of its activities, such as tourism flows, inter-business partnerships such as associations, stakeholder relationships at destinations, management of relations with tourists and movements between destinations and tourism routes (Casanueva, Gallego & Gracia-Sánchez, 2016:1190). In contrast, tourism is becoming increasingly essential to enhance the economy of small towns and rural areas by transforming them into tourism routes (Mingaleva, Sheresheva, Oborin & Gvarliani, 2017). Therefore, within the context of the present study, many governments, associations, businesses, and regions may be considered stakeholders and consequently seek to influence the legislation or management of tourism routes (Moe, 2020:210).

The present study focuses on the stakeholder involvement framework toward sustainable tourism route development in South Africa. This chapter focuses on the tourism stakeholders and the types of stakeholders involved in the tourism route development and management to reach this goal. Furthermore, this chapter analyses how tourism planners involve stakeholders in developing tourism routes. The final section of this chapter considers stakeholder participation in the tourism routes' management and marketing and how they benefit from the tourism routes as indicated under Objective 2 in Chapter 1. This chapter contributes to understanding the stakeholders involved in the tourism routes, their roles and responsibilities, and how they relate to one another during and after the development process.

3.2 Stakeholders in tourism and the stakeholder theory

As indicated in Chapter 1, the primary goal of this study is to develop a framework for sustainable tourism route development through stakeholder involvement in South Africa, with the Eagle tourism route in the Free State Province as a case study. As a result, the stakeholder theory is essential to the study's purpose, as it suggests that diverse groups might directly impact management decision-making. This is especially true when the topic of focus is a tourism location, where visitor happiness and the region's overall economic performance are strongly linked to numerous businesses and organisations (Pechlaner, Raich, Beritelli, Presenza & Cipollina, 2010:19).

The success of the stakeholder theory, both in the management literature and in business practice, is primarily due to the simplicity inherent to the model (Mainardes, Alves & Raposo, 2011:227). Stakeholder theory is multifaceted and strategically assists those involved, not to mention scholars, in understanding the relationships between businesses and their stakeholders, including the performance outcomes of those relationships. Therefore, the structure of the stakeholder theory and how it has performed in the past are essential in reaching the goal of this study. After a brief introduction of the study relating to stakeholder involvement and participation in tourism routes' development, management, and marketing, the next section will discuss tourism stakeholders and the stakeholder theory.

3.2.1 Understanding stakeholders in tourism

A growing realisation of the governance role has led to an interest in social relations between government, business, communities, and governments' changing structures (Pechlaner *et al.*, 2010:17). Therefore, the stakeholders' approach indicates that effective management is focused on recognising the dynamic relationships between stakeholders. These groups and individuals are influenced and impacted by organisations that depend on their main stakeholders (Todd, Leask & Ensor, 2017:495). The process of stakeholders' involvement is not left to chance but is actively guided by management intervention in the ad-hoc relationship between stakeholders and stakeholders' involvement (Waligo *et al.*, 2015:91).

Therefore, a dynamic and responsive process can be enhanced by stakeholder cooperation, which offers a basis for collective decision-making by means of multi-stakeholder engagement within a temporary or longer-term context framework (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017:190). Within the context of a tourism destination, the number and variety of stakeholders mean that the effectiveness of cooperation and coordination between these groups is crucial in assessing the planning process' performance and, eventually, the destination's success (Ruhanen, 2009:285). Therefore, through a stakeholder participation management process, stakeholders are intentionally lodged in the sustainable tourism strategy that seeks to understand who they are (identification of stakeholders), what they want (interests of stakeholders) and how they get what they want (strategies of stakeholder influence) (Waligo *et al.*, 2015:91). Therefore, some of the researchers who looked at this end developed some theories such as the stakeholder theory for a better understanding of stakeholders, and Harrison *et al.* (2015:863) noted that one of the essential aspects of the stakeholder theory is that stakeholders are not common nor are they homogeneous within groups.

3.2.2 The stakeholder theory

Stakeholder theory is a general concept for various theories aiming to assist scholars and managers in understanding the relationships between firms and their stakeholders, together with some of the performance results of the same relationships. The stakeholder theory concept originated in 1984 when Freeman penned *Strategic Management, A Stakeholder Approach*, and this strategy was prominent in the business management and public administration literature (Byrd, 2007:7). In addition, the stakeholder theory is mostly postured as being divided into three interrelated categories, namely descriptive, normative and instrumental (Jones *et al.*, 2018:371). The descriptive approach to stakeholder theory seeks to outline corporations' operations, particularly managers, to interact with stakeholders and assess how the theory responds to reality. In addition, an attempt is made to scientifically identify stakeholders in different groupings (Donaldson & Preston, 1995:74), while the instrumental approach argues that ethics are beneficial for business by outlining the consequences of a particular treatment of stakeholders (Richter & Dow, 2017:429). Furthermore, based on the ethical view, the normative approach proposes that the company commit to stakeholders apart from the actions' outcomes to increase shareholders' wealth (Şener *et al.*, 2016:86).

Stakeholder theory is a solitary theory and a combination of diverse narratives emanating from heterogeneous interpretations and applications of business ethics and corporate social responsibility, strategic management, finance, and corporate governance (Miles, 2017:437). Peric *et al.* (2014:275) reiterate that the stakeholder theory possesses multifaceted attributes since it discusses sociological, economic, and psychological aspects. Furthermore, stakeholder theory redefines the mutual corporation as the composition of stakeholder groups, envisaged as relationships within groups with different rights, objectives, expectations, and responsibilities (Richter & Dow, 2017:429).

The stakeholder theory was not used primarily in the literature on tourism planning, policies, and strategy because it was developed with business management. Nevertheless, it could be argued that the stakeholder theory has been an implicit central component in creating a sustainable tourism ideology (Getz & Timur, 2012:230). Stakeholder theory emphasises the significance of stakeholder interests and perceptions in holding up sustainable tourism destination development (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2017:34). Furthermore, from the stakeholder theory perspective, an essential outlook on tourism is a practical approach in which tourism is recognised as an aggressive force that, if developed accordingly, aims to enhance positive returns to a community's general growth while curtailing the costs to the host environment and culture (Peric *et al.*, 2014:275). According to the stakeholder theory, residents' perceptions as stakeholders are vital in attaining sustainable tourism development (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2017:34).

In terms of tourism management and planning, the stakeholder theory should prioritise the role and significance of various studies that applied it as a management tool for business ethics, long-term assessment of stakeholders' attitudes, ethics in tourism marketing, perceptions regarding sustainable tourism and identification of stakeholders (Nogueira & Pinho, 2015:327). In addition, the feedback from these perceptions and the interests of various stakeholders can be differentiated in terms of their support for tourism development (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2017:35). Notwithstanding the significance of the stakeholder theory, less focus has been dedicated to questions regarding what it means to create value for stakeholders and how it can be measured (Harrison & Wicks, 2013:97). The stakeholder theory is associated with the generation of value as an essential driver of the enterprise; however, it acknowledges that this value is to be shared by a group of

stakeholders, not only shareholders and managers but all participants in the community with vested interests in how the enterprise operates (Theoddolulidis *et al.*, 2017:174). The stakeholder theory is now brought closer to the resource theory, the value chain concept, and the concept of co-founding, in which solitary benefits of individual entities through the interchange and co-creation of values with other entities are achieved (Pilchta, 2019:689). The understanding of tourism stakeholders and the stakeholder theory has been analysed, and the following section examines the stakeholders in tourism route development.

3.3 The tourism stakeholders in tourism route development

Tourism organisations are generally fragmented, dispersed, and diversified. Many stakeholders, including local government, tourism offices, chambers of commerce, public and private suppliers, associations and organisations, and tourist educational institutions, are involved in DMOs (Tuohino & Konu, 2014:203). The impact of tourism planning, development, funding, physical infrastructures, and marketing that enables route operations and tourists to enjoy the route depends on the local, district, provincial and national entities (McLaren & Heath, 2012:95). Stakeholder relationships are crucial for the development of tourism and, while networks typically benefit from empowering their stakeholders, can also be closed structures, excluding those stakeholders that can impede the pursuit of sustainable tourism development (Brouder & Fullerton, 2015:157). While tourist product owners are the key players in a tourist route, many other possible stakeholders may influence the achievement of the route's goals or are impacted by it (McLaren & Heath, 2012:95). Therefore, unrelated entities can also be stakeholders on the route, such as communities, others with preferences for route activities, future generations, and non-human entities such as the natural environment (McLaren, 2011:31).

3.3.1 Defining stakeholders in tourism route development and planning

In general terms, sustainable development is determined by what the stakeholders perceive it to be. Various role players have the right to make decisions, change the tourism system, and influence the process and possible development outcomes. Freeman (1984:46) defined a stakeholder as any individual or noticeable group that can

impact or is impacted by actions, decisions, strategies, practices, or organisation goals. Communities, customers, employees, suppliers, and financiers are primary stakeholders in tourism route development and planning, while secondary stakeholders include government, competitors, consumer advocacy groups, social interest groups, and the media, and primary stakeholders are required for an organisation's survival. On the other hand, secondary stakeholders are not necessary yet have an impact on the organisation (Spasojevica, Lohmannb & Scott, 2019:2). Furthermore, tourism route stakeholders can be defined as any group or individual who impacts or is influenced by the continuous planning and management of tourism routes (Hardy, 2003:325).

Many people believe that wine route tourism has enormous potential; however, who are the stakeholders and who will gain the most if and when this potential is realised (Bruwer, 2003:423)? Stakeholders such as product owners, communities, and the government all have a role in developing tourism routes. Therefore, if these stakeholders fail to find common ground and good working relationships, it will be impossible for the community to reap the benefits of the route (Kokt, 2017:97). Therefore, in the case of food and wine route tourism, stakeholders such as food and wine routes, hospitality, wine industry, wine associations, or a designation of origin (DO) have a vested interest in showcasing the region's best product and in creating a memorable experience. Furthermore, such provisions heavily depend on synergies among stakeholders or participating businesses (Duarte Alonso, 2016:177).

The development of tourist quality standards necessitates a detailed understanding of local tourism assets, area carrying capacity, infrastructure, physical design, market analysis, and the construction of local institutions. As a result, stakeholders should collaborate and compete with other regions, allowing product owners to target accessible markets (Kokt, 2017:103).

3.3.2 The significance of stakeholders' involvement in tourism route development

In research and practice, incorporating stakeholders in sustainable tourism is increasingly recognised and encouraged. The nature of tourism destinations as networks of interdependent stakeholders and new stakeholder theory approaches that rely on stakeholder partnerships account for this recognition (Waligo *et al.*, 2015:90). However,

it is equally reported that the Stakeholder theory policy is an evident failure aligned with the absence of stakeholder involvement and lack of conviction in some stakeholders' capability to meaningfully contribute to tourism processes (Waligo *et al.*, 2015:90). Two key questions must be answered for stakeholders to be successful in tourist development: 1) Who should be included in the tourist development process as stakeholders? And 2) How should tourist planners and developers engage the designated stakeholders in tourism development? (Byrd, 2007:7). In response to the questions above, the truth is that stakeholders are not always considered, and their viewpoints are constantly not considered by tourism planners. It is conceivable that there is a greater necessity to understand the challenges and opportunities for stakeholder involvement, and this compels consultation of a broader spectrum of stakeholders in a holistic manner, which might be costly and time-consuming (Hardy & Pearson, 2018:248).

As mentioned earlier, stakeholders are either primary, where organisation survival depends on these stakeholders, or secondary, where the stakeholders are not necessarily essential for the organisation's survival. However, these stakeholders can influence or are influenced by the organisation (Stephenson *et al.*, 2018:47). Therefore, mutual respect from all stakeholders is crucial (Aronsson, 1994:137). Stakeholder participation must start with identifying and enlightening different groups of individuals in the community about the issues and themes, and they should be allowed to offer recommendations that they consider appropriate for their community (Cheng, Hu, Fox & Zhang, 2012:30).

According to Peric *et al.* (2014:277), proper stakeholder participation in tourist development may differ depending on the approach employed and the stakeholders involved. The outcomes of stakeholder involvement can include:

- Stakeholders who are informed and educated about the topics and issues;
- Public values and opinions are incorporated into the decision-making process;
- Improved quality and legitimacy of the decisions;
- Generation of new ideas;
- Trust increases between all stakeholder groups;
- Conflict and lawsuits are reduced;
- More cost-effective process; and

- The promotion of shared resources and responsibility.

While tourism product owners are the key stakeholders on a tourism route, other stakeholders allow the route objectives to be influenced or influenced by it (Kokt, 2017:22). Now that the literature on the definition of tourism route stakeholder and the significance of stakeholders' involvement in tourism routes has been discussed, the following section identifies the types of stakeholders involved in developing the tourism route.

3.4 Stakeholders involved in tourism destination planning and development

The present tourism conceptions concerning stakeholders and their responsibilities in tourist development are based on literature from business management and public administration (Chen *et al.*, 2012:29). The tourism literature defines tourists, industry, local communities, government, special interest groups, and educational institutions as six significant stakeholders. These organisations can considerably influence tourism growth in many areas, notably tourism supply and demand, legislation, socio-economic impact management, personnel management, and research (Pivevi *et al.*, 2019:569).

In a tourism destination setting, stakeholders will typically include the government (international, national, regional, and local); tourism-related government departments; international, national, regional, and local tourism associations; tourism developers and entrepreneurs; tourism industry operators; business and community non-tourism practitioners and local community organisations; indigenous groups of people, and local residents (Ruhanen, 2009:285). Saito and Ruhanen (2017:190) agree and indicate that stakeholders at a tourism destination could include tourism-related government departments; international, national, regional, and local tourism organisations; tourism developers and entrepreneurs; tourism sector operators; non-tourism business professionals; and the community, including local community groups. Tourism associations are also seen as key stakeholders in the South African context. They provide shared marketing services at reasonable rates and channels for governments and tourism industry stakeholders to share valuable information with other tourism businesses (Glen & Mearns, 2018:109).

3.4.1 A stakeholder map

Figure 3.1 represents a stakeholder map with various significant stakeholders involved in developing any tourism destination, including tourism routes. Therefore, these stakeholders are briefly discussed, and their roles are elaborated in detail in Section 3.4.3.

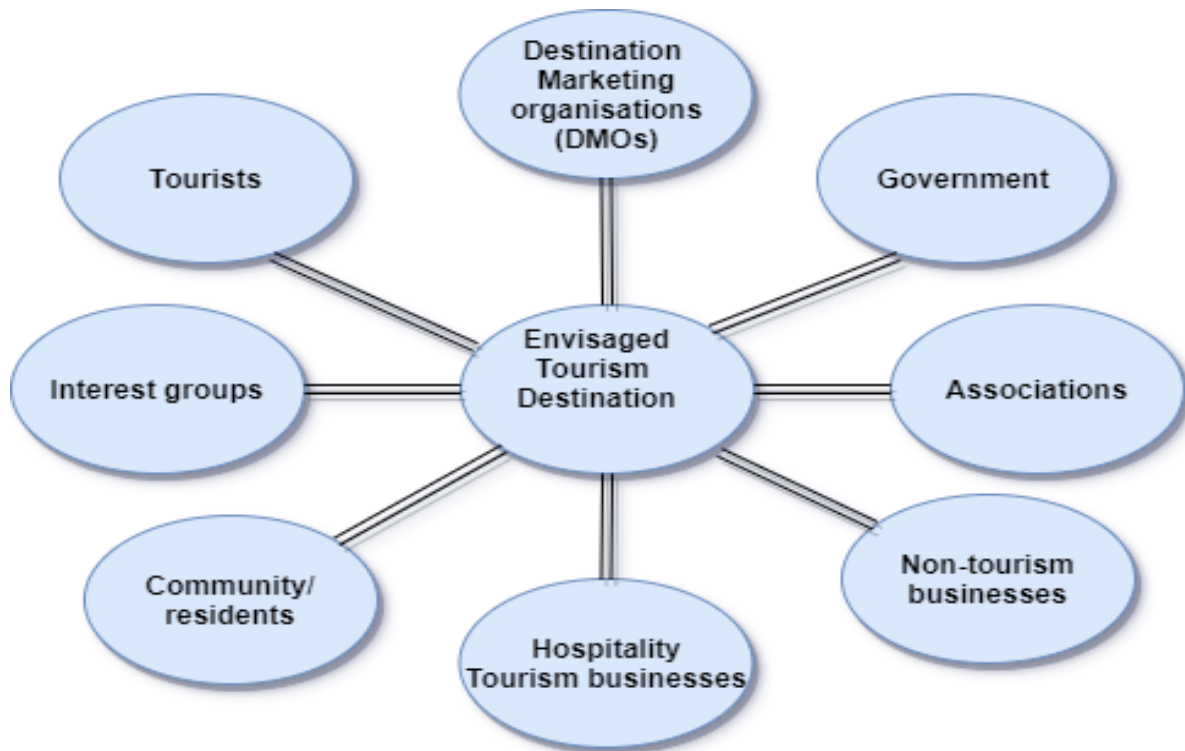


Figure 3-1: Stakeholder map

Source: Adapted from Dodds and Ko (2012:57)

3.4.1.1 Government

The term government is described as the name traditionally given to public entities that interact directly with politicians and parliament's decisions and administer them. It is commonly used interchangeably with the public sector (George, 2007:149). Moreover, the government is a system for governing a state or community and a social control system in which a particular group of people has the power to establish and enforce laws (Engelbrecht, 2019).

3.4.1.2 Community

Tourists both adversely and positively may influence the local inhabitants of a tourist destination, culture, environment and values. For this reason, planners and developers are increasingly aware of the need to involve host communities in the planning and development process (community tourism) (Engelbrecht, 2019). The term community was defined as a tourism destination with an adequate infrastructure to support tourism development (Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier & Van Es, 2001:137).

3.4.1.3 Hospitality tourism businesses

In tourism businesses, the product or service offering combines many service providers' outputs (multiple supplier activities), which demand coordination of cooperation among stakeholders (Lemmetyinen, 2010:17). Accommodation providers, such as hotels, resorts, and game lodges; travel services, such as airlines, agents, and operators; ground transportation services, such as car rentals and coaches; and, finally, food and beverage suppliers that provide services primarily to tourists are among the stakeholders in tourism businesses (Keyser, 2009:176).

3.4.1.4 Non-tourism businesses

Contrary to tourism businesses such as accommodation and food services, non-tourism refers to other businesses such as retail trade, construction, professionals, and scientific services (Moyle *et al.*, 2018:15). Non-tourism businesses depend exclusively on local communities, not necessarily tourists, as their customer bases, such as stationery stores, repair shops, wholesalers, banks, and hairdressers (Suntikul, 2011:1071).

3.4.1.5 Tourists

A tourist is described as a temporary visitor staying at least 24 hours (but not more than a year) in the country either for pleasure (a holiday or to visit relatives) or for business (Medlik, 2012:167; McCabe, 2005:87). People who visit a country to get medical assistance also fall under a 'tourist' (Medlik, 2012:167). There are two types of tourists, namely foreign and domestic tourists. Foreign tourists reside outside their country of origin and travel to another country outside their usual environment. Domestic tourists

reside within a particular country and travel to a place within their country of origin. Both must stay at least one night, include students studying for less than one year, and exclude contract workers (Engelbrecht, 2019:288; George, 2007:5).

3.4.1.6 Tourism associations

Tourism associations are membership organisations that engage in the region's tourism industry, and the organisation's principal purpose is to attract visitors to the region. Its members promote tourism in the region and other related tourism activities (Yamamoto, 2017:164). The tourism system is divided into two categories: 'the outer-regional tourism system', consisting of two additional categories: departure destination stakeholders, such as tourist officers, tourists and related businesses, and the 'regional tourism network' comprising the regional tourist destination stakeholders, such as government, communities and tourism officials (Yamamoto, 2017:167). Nogueira and Pinho (2015:327) mentioned the following four stakeholders established by Murphy and Murphy (2004): consumers/tourists, businesses operating in tourism, local community, and government. According to the stakeholder theory, each category displays contrasting and related characteristics depending on the aspects and criteria suitable to the situation. These characteristics comprise each stakeholder's proportionate power and interests, the networks and affiliations to which they belong, and the importance and influence they enjoy (Dabphet, 2012:6).

3.4.1.7 Destination marketing organisations (DMOs)

Destination marketing organisations (DMOs) are more concerned with the sale of destinations, as their name implies. Lately, this study area has received significant interest (Pike, 2007:1). Four primary propositions linked with global tourism highlight the relevance of destination marketing research as a significant growing sector of tourism that has matured into a separate model: Firstly, most aspects of tourism take place at specific locations; secondly, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) recommended that destinations be considered "the basic unit of tourism research" (WTO, 2002); thirdly, destinations have become the most well-known travel brands; and finally, many countries, nations, and cities are now investing in a destination marketing

organisation (DMO) as the primary tool for promoting and attracting tourists to their particular location or visitor space (Pike & Page, 2014:202).

3.4.2 Responsibilities of stakeholders involved in tourism route planning and development

Tourists (both domestic and foreign), tourism businesses (investors, developers, operators, shareholders, management, and staff, both public and private), the host community, and the government are all stakeholders in tourism routes (Liu, 2010:466). However, within the context of wine routes, cooperative associations formed by establishing wine routes between government, private companies and associations, the tourism industry, wineries, and local governments are best described as networks, which are nearly identical to the stakeholders listed above (Bruwer, 2003:428).

With Figure 3.1 in mind, stakeholders in tourism routes are frequently classified into demand-side stakeholders and supply-side stakeholders (McLaren, 2011:33). The demand-side stakeholders are defined as the visitors or consumers of tourism routes, and this group of stakeholders might include a variety of market sectors for both the route and individual route members (McLaren, 2011; Hultman *et al.*, 2016:5154). Supply-side stakeholders are divided into the core stakeholders and enabling stakeholders.

The core stakeholders are the providers of tourism products and offerings on the route. They are more closely related to the route (McLaren & Heath, 2013:20). Local, district, provincial, and national government bodies are examples of stakeholders who may impact tourism planning, development, finance, physical infrastructure, marketing, and distribution, all contributing to the route's operation and tourist experiences (Kokt, 2017:22). Destination marketing organisations (DMOs), as depicted in Figure 3.1 at the national, regional, or local level, may also involve large companies of the private sector that have leverage in government circles because of their existence and other influential organisations such as boards of economic development (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017:191).

The other stakeholders are the enablers, the most diverse and challenging to identify. These stakeholders can influence decisions, and their activities may directly or indirectly impact the route's success (McLaren & Heath, 2013:20). Tourism is controlled by the

Department of Economic Development and Tourism in KwaZulu-Natal. Various provincial ministries, such as the Department of Transport, primarily responsible for roads and road marking, and the Department of Sport and Recreation, responsible for facilities and large-scale events, can impact rural routes. Finally, the Department of Agriculture and Environment, which oversees agricultural land use, may impact the growth of rural tourism along the route (McLaren & Heath, 2013:23).

Destinations also contain a variety of diverse stakeholders, such as local government, tourism offices, chambers of commerce, public and private suppliers, organizations, and educational institutions that specialize in tourism, in addition to the stakeholders stated above (Tuohino & Konu, 2014:203). Universities and other educational institutions are, to some extent, other stakeholders (Ladkin & Bertramini, 2002:79). Educational institutions (academics and students) also play an essential role in developing sustainable tourism. Academics are viewed as educational experience producers in that they are directly in control of the planning, development and dissemination of tourism knowledge, and students are the primary sources of tourism education (Dabphet, 2012:5).

After a brief literature review on identifying stakeholder involvement in the development and planning of tourism routes, the following section comprehensively discusses the stakeholders' roles during the development of tourism routes.

3.4.3 Roles of stakeholders during the development of tourism routes

Stakeholders often coexist but do not interact well, and this lack of interaction may adversely impact tourism development. However, introducing a relationship mechanism encouraging participation will stimulate development and lead to positive outcomes (Nyanjom, Boxall & Slaven, 2018:680). The efficient management of stakeholders comprises clarifying roles and responsibilities, as stakeholders vary in capabilities to perform various roles. The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders do not have to be equal in decision-making; however, all key stakeholders' interests must be recognised and understood (Byrd, 2007). Furthermore, all stakeholders must cooperate in conceptualising and creating their future (Irvine *et al.*, 2016:389).

International experience demonstrates that private tourism associations often oversee the management and marketing of routes with local, regional, or national authorities (Rogerson, 2007:55). Regardless of the more minimal direct relationship with tourists, organising and coordinating the route components such as route publications, route signage, full route marketing, and collaboration management must undoubtedly be undertaken by someone (Puczko & Ratz, 2007:139). The other essential basis for successful route tourism is undoubtedly adequate information and marketing promotion of any tourism route initiative (Rogerson, 2007:55). Strategic marketing planning and management dictate that it is essential to identify the essence of a tourism destination in depth and breadth and establish the proper necessity for effective marketing at the destination level (Saraniemi & Kylänen, 2011:133).

The stakeholder approach involves a procedure that begins by recognising different stakeholders, including local communities, agriculture, local tourism businesses and tour operators, all tourism agencies, and local businesses, such as retailers and wholesalers, local government and administration, academics, the media and tourists (Van Wyk-Jacobs, 2018:38). It is argued that government action in the form of public support is needed concerning the common objective of tourism marketing since promotion is a public good, the benefits of which are enjoyed by all (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005:716).

3.4.3.1 Government/tourism planners' role in tourism route development

While governments throughout the globe have different philosophies and institutional structures, they tend to agree on the value of tourism as a vehicle for development. They have adopted a more active and interventionist approach in the tourist industry than in other sectors (Liu *et al.*, 2020:173). The government has played a significant role in the tourism industry's growth and development in many less developed countries (Akama, 2002:1). The go-it-alone policies of the past are said to be giving way, as government and public authorities advocate closer participation and collaboration in tourism planning (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017:190). The government plays the most effective controlling role in regional development. Therefore, integrating regional tourism without the coordination of the government is inconceivable (Xiong, 2017:56).

This category of stakeholders is arguably the most relevant of all stakeholders, given that government authorities influence other stakeholders through the policies and regulations they formulate and enforce (Koh & Fakfare, 2019:287). Most of the tourism management and development responsibility rests with local government (Ruhanen, 2013). Local governments in most countries include democratically elected institutions, such as councils and municipalities, with laws, regulations and structures that enable them to function. Furthermore, the significant involvement of local governments in tourism is premised on the idea that they are closest to certain tourism development elements (Aronsson, 1994; Nunkoo, 2015:625). For instance, they are better positioned to balance national and local interests and integrate urban and rural initiatives with national development than other institutions operating at higher government levels (Nunkoo, 2015:625).

Due to its statutory mandate to conduct land-use planning and control development applications, local governments are widely recognised as critical stakeholders in destination management. Accordingly, the government's key role is to protect against external threats and provide the communities with services that the industry cannot provide and maintain law and order. In addition, if a government oversteps these boundaries, it undermines the independence it enjoys, leading to a potential industry failure (Kubickova, 2016:76). In general, local government's involvement in tourism is correlated with industry failure or industry imperfection. For these reasons, local government is generally considered the most appropriate institution within a destination for sectoral planning, regulation, and coordination (Schone *et al.*, 2016:1676).

Furthermore, tourism encompasses many conceptual disciplines, making creating and implementing related policies more complex. Additionally, government tourism policy can take the form of indirect operation, in which official actions impact tourism due to interest in a linked location, or direct intervention, in which governments actively strive to influence tourism (Wattanacharoensil & Schuckert, 2016:1052). A conceptual tourism strategy's effectiveness depends on implementing national policies and governmental bodies (Wattanacharoensil & Schuckert, 2016:1053). Radhika and Johnson (2017:68) argue that the tourism industry's sustainability requires the government to be more proactive in planning and developing the tourism industry. The stakeholder theory provides a perspective on government regulation and control, arguing that stakeholders'

management is dependent on resources, time, and leadership (Byrd, 2007). These elements' availability, although limited, facilitates successful cooperation between stakeholders, accelerating greater control, involvement, and ownership of the decision-making process (Nyaniom *et al.*, 2018:680).

Accordingly, the government and the public sector are essential stakeholders in tourism development, particularly when the project is initiated and funded by the public sector (Mei, Lerfald & Bråtå, 2017:62). Governments at all levels are usually responsible for developing tourism as stakeholders endowed with authority for society's condition for economic empowerment (Retnosary *et al.*, 2020:18). The government's role in tourism development is critical to establishing the framework for strategic planning. In line with place-based approaches to development, the government may not rescind its obligation to nurture these efforts in the interest of job creation, community development and local economic development (Mnguni *et al.*, 2020:45).

Baum (2018:878) highlights the vital role that government and associated public entities play in creating and supporting collective strategic policy formation, recognising the overall industry's competencies that might negatively affect tourism, such as spatial planning, infrastructure development, fiscal policies, transport policies and labour policies. Luo and Bao (2019:346) assert that, unlike the conventional view that governments are merely there to provide public services, governments must consider and understand local development sustainability in modern times.

In South Africa, one of the democratic government's primary objectives, as it came to power, was to address historical imbalances and to improve the quality of life of the poor (Viljoen & Tlabela, 2007:6). In post-apartheid South Africa, the development of route tourism has gained momentum. The key reason is its ability to connect and market a spectrum of tourism services in smaller towns and create alternative work forms in a single tourism destination area (Sheik, 2013:45). However, the White Paper on South African Tourism (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996) highlights the value of spreading tourism advantages more broadly to improve lesser-known regions, while current government marketing focuses only on a few top destinations (Snowball & Courtney, 2010:568). The mandate of the local governments of South Africa was to promote social and economic developments (Irvine *et al.*, 2016:389). The development

of tourism and tourism routes can contribute to local areas' economic development (Proos & Hattingh, 2020:689). Giampiccoli and Saayman (2018:761) assert that, from a South African perspective, it has been noted that the government has been promoting policies to encourage and support inclusive tourism since 1994, especially concerning the previously neglected sector of society. Therefore, the success of sustainable tourism development will be dictated by the involvement of the government, the community, and related parties (stakeholders) (Gunawan, 2020:2). It was concluded that local government and destination marketing or management organisations have the most significant authority and influence over others in destination development. However, there is a lack of 'bridges' between the government and the community (Chen *et al.*, 2012:30).

3.4.3.2 Community/residents' role in tourism route development

Communities' engagement in the tourism planning process is naive, excessive, laborious, time-consuming, and an impossible goal, with complaints of the financial expenses, timeline, and dilution of power and influence over formerly internal business affairs (Ruhanen, 2009:285). Furthermore, in tourism planning, community involvement can be described as a process involving all (local officials, local citizens, architects, developers, businesspeople, and planners) to share in the decision-making process (Ramsoolmanesh *et al.*, 2018:339). Community participation should ensure that information and resources for self-development are exchanged by including all stakeholders in the decision-making process, such as local government leaders, local communities, architects, developers, businesspeople, and planners (Pathumporn & Nakapaksin, 2015:90). The knowledge of the impacts of tourism by host residents is a crucial aspect of their support for and participation in tourism development and the achievability of sustainable development and tourism management (Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2017:149). Okazaki (2008:513) observed the Arnstein ladder of citizen/community participation, which explains the necessary steps, categorised into three levels of gradual evolution: non-participation, degrees of tokenism, and citizen degree power. Figure 3.2 below also reflects on the typology of community participation by Tuson (1999), which indicated whether the typology is spontaneous, induced or coercive participation, and each level enables varying degrees of external participation, local control and represents the relationships of power between them (Tuson, 2006:494).

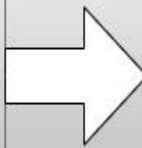
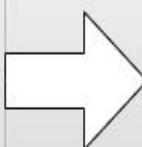
8	Citizen/community control	Degrees of citizen/community power		<u>Spontaneous Participation</u> Bottom up, active participation, direct participation, participation in decision making, authentic participation and self planning.
7	Delegated power			
6	Partnership			
5	Placation	Degrees of citizen/community tokenism		<u>Induced Participation</u> Top-down, passive, formal, mostly indirect, degree of tokenism, manipulation, pseudo-participation, participation in implementation and sharing benefits, choice between proposed alternatives and feedback.
4	Consultation			
3	Informing			
2	Therapy	Non-participation		<u>Coercive Participation</u> Top-down, passive, mostly indirect, formal, participation in implementation but not necessarily sharing benefits, choice between proposed limited alternatives or no choice, paternalism, non-participation, high degree of tokenism and manipulation.
1	Manipulation			
Arnstein's (1971) typology of community participation.				Tuson's (1999) typology of community participation.

Figure 3-2: Community participation Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation and Tuson's typology of community participation

Source: Adapted from Tuson (2006:494)

The formation of the ladder is analysed next.

Formation 1: Manipulation

In this formation, power holders use participation as a manipulated means of public relations (Okazaki, 2008:513), representing the lowest ladder formation in Arnstein's typology through top-down and passive participation, also known as coercive participation (Tosun, 2006:495). The primary objective is not to enable the community to participate in the planning or implementation of any initiative but to enable powerholders to educate them (Arnstein, 1969:217).

Formation 2: Therapy

This formation is at the same level as coercive participation and non-participation level, where the community's values and attitudes are adjusted to those of the larger society with power (Okazaki, 2008:513). It is also a top-down and coercive participation level, wherein the community participates in the implementation but does not necessarily share benefits (Tuson, 2006:494).

Formations 3, 4 & 5: Informing, consulting and placation

The following formations, namely informing, consulting and placation, are where local communities are informed of their rights, roles, and opportunities (the first and most essential step towards legitimate community participation). Consultation is formation 4 of the ladder, and the communities are encouraged to express their views to legitimise the community's full participation. The public gradually increases in the placation step, but community tokenism is still evident (Okazaki, 2008:513). In Figure 3.2, all three formations fall under the induced participation of top-down, passive, and primarily indirect community participation in tourism development and equal degrees of citizen tokenism in Arnstein's typology (Tuson, 2006:495).

Formations 6, 7 & 8: Partnership, delegated powers, and citizen/community control

The sixth form of the ladder is a partnership. Here, negotiations are held between the communities and power holders, reallocating the authority and responsibility for planning and decision-making. Delegated power is next, thereby controlling power over community decision-making. Lastly is citizen/community control; in this formation, the community is granted complete control and authority over policy and governance (Okazaki, 2008:513). These three formations tally to spontaneous participation, bottom-up, active, and direct participation and correspond to the degree of citizen power in Arnstein's typology, as shown in Figure 3.2 (Tuson, 2006:494).

As seen in Figure 3.2, the participation of different groups in tourism varies with the power, objectives, and expectations of different groups to participate in the community, which shapes their attitudes towards community participation (Tuson, 2006:501). The global sustainable tourism criteria (TGSC) emphasise the need to "maximise social and economic benefits for the local community and reduce negative impacts" to facilitate social growth in the community, job opportunities, fair trade, sustainable goods, policies

against sexual harassment and abuse, and equal work opportunities and understand that tourism should not have a negative effect on residents' quality of life (Hererra *et al.*, 2018:93). This would recognise the importance of addressing location-specific issues such as education, skill development, involvement, and governance – mainly control over and access to natural resources – all of which are critical to community participation in tourism and improving the quality of life in host communities (Uysal *et al.*, 2012:219). Community involvement in the decision-making process benefits the local community and enhances their appreciation for their traditional way of life and values (Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2017:150). It must become a continuing responsibility of the community to accomplish its social, political, economic, and cultural roles (Piskóti & Nagy, 2016:75).

Community participation has been extensively discussed in the literature on sustainable tourism, with successful tourism planning depending on local residents' support and participation (Hall & Richards, 2000; Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2017:149). However, it is critical to look at how the community is contributing to the development of the region as a tourist destination for the following reasons: tourism is defined by an examination of the local community's attitude (including the environment, infrastructure, and events); the model of community involvement informs the tourist experience; and the impact of tourism planning on the environment (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2011:72). Each of these concentrates on the empowerment of the grassroots, where the aim is to promote tourism development so that it does not compromise the needs and aspirations of the local community (Turner, 2018:23). While the idea of community engagement is now widely accepted, the participatory method is neither understood nor trusted by many residents (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004:75). Communities as destination locations are aware of the effects of tourism and growth activities in today's tourism world, and therefore they are better prepared to track and handle tourism for a quality experience and advantages (Uysal *et al.*, 2012:4).

In the United States (US), tourism routes have been developed to support those who visit and reside in local communities. Other route objectives include preserving scenic beauty, celebrating US communities' diversity, developing tourism along scenic routes, and providing local communities with economic development opportunities (Besculides *et al.*, 2002:306). On the other hand, routes connect sites and producers and form business clusters to promote interaction and community participation. The Council of Europe has

recently explored this potential in its report on the effect of European cultural routes on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (MacLeod, 2016:137). Route-based developments have an important role in job creation, community, and economic development (Piskóti & Nagy, 2016:77). In Europe, it has been argued that the wide variety of tastes and desires that exist across the continent has been one of the most challenging problems for route development so that what might perform well in France would not necessarily appeal to tourists in the United Kingdom (UK).

Similarly, in South Africa, the domestic South African market does not generally cater to what would be highly enticing to foreign tourists to the region, such as heritage or township tours (Rogerson, 2007:53). One essential factor is appropriateness; the decision to use natural and cultural resources to draw plans and policies should come from the local communities (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2011:70). The poor are recommended to develop tourism products for route tourism initiatives (Rogerson, 2007:54). While tourism clusters can operate on different geographical scales, routes outside the metropolitan areas can be of particular importance and provide local economic development (LED) opportunities in small towns and rural areas (Rogerson, 2010:488). A commitment to local small business growth should be fundamental in any tourism route planning connected to LED goals. Many small businesses have a poor understanding of tourism in developed countries because they have not had access to markets, are not experienced in business or have not travelled (Snowball & Courtney, 2010:571). At the same time, sustainable tourism development (STD) involves addressing various stakeholders' needs, including environmental conservation, the host community, tourists, and tourism businesses (Duarte Alonso & Nyanjom, 2017:481).

3.4.3.3 Tourism business owners' role in tourism route development

Tourism businesses play a crucial role in the global economy in reducing unemployment, penetrating new markets and generally growing economies. It follows that small businesses are an essential vehicle in South Africa to tackle the challenges of job creation, economic development, and social development (Elliot & Boshoff, 2008:32). Mottiar, Boluk and Kline (2018:78) highlight that entrepreneurs and small businesses are of "fundamental importance to tourism growth as an industry" in their destination competitiveness model. While the tourism industry is mainly composed of small

businesses, there is, to date, no literature to explore their impact (Mottiar *et al.*, 2018:78). In many instances of tourism development, the whole country, local businesses, local communities or organisations and institutions representing local culture, nature art, among others, always strive to attract tourists (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009:313).

Waligo *et al.* (2013) encourage an inclusive plan to develop a network and collaboration that involves all tourism stakeholders in sustainable tourism development. Vernon *et al.* (2005:326) suggest a collaborative approach to policies to conceptualise a strategy for promoting and embracing sustainable practices by tourism businesses. Chen (2015:226) highlights that local residents and businesses may be significant components in sustainable tourism development, as politicians' attitudes are strongly affected by the public and businesses' desires. In essence, tourists, local residents and government, and businesses constitute an integrated sustainable development decision-making network. To understand this contribution, Tinsley and Lynch (2001:374) point out that a complete picture should also be taken collectively of the tourism business networks regarding destination development.

Komppula (2014:363) argues that the DMOs are mainly responsible for driving the destination's innovative development, not the individual businesses. DMOs are perceived as coordinating with destination businesses and assisting them in developing new destination marketing services. Olsen (2003:336) submits that effective tourism-themed routes are designed with one clear goal: to forge collaboration between key stakeholders to create an integrated information network to reassure the tourist. Mottair, Boluk and Kline (2018:78) indicate that despite the importance of tourism businesses in tourism development, the different roles require investigation to shed light on how social goals are accomplished. A prominent role is that their efforts can attract tourists to destinations through product development.

Lordkipanidze *et al.* (2005:791) reiterate that the role of tourism businesses can be significant in developing tourism in rural areas, and therefore seeking new livelihoods and alternatives for tourism business is essential. Small businesses and entrepreneurs are the basis of the tourism product in rural areas by providing the tourism reality and making the region attractive, consequently influencing development beyond their contribution (Komppula, 2014:365). However, the contributions of many businesses are less evident.

They can have a cumulative impact that is often greater than their companies' impact and is exhibited by establishing networks that lead to destinations' development (Mottair, 2018:78). In addition, small-scale tourism businesses have a catalytic ability to help turn local resources into tourism products and services by providing a vital force in communities (Lordkipanidze *et al.*, 2005:791).

South Africa provides the most innovative use of routes for tourism marketing, business development, and marketing destinations in Africa (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2011:11738). More recently, however, more attention has been paid to routes' contribution to creating positive economies for tourism businesses and regional competitiveness (Ènalán & Soteriades, 2012:112). The tourism route needs to draw tourists in significant numbers to provide markets that will enable tourism businesses to thrive along the route (McLaren, 2011:72). Therefore, efficient marketing to attract tourists to the tourist route is crucial to the route's sustainability (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004:76; Lourens, 2007a:486-487). It is argued that businesses tend to market selected activities rather than concentrating on broader place marketing. Often, tourism-support organisations take on marketing the region and support public pro-tourism policies (Dudensing *et al.*, 2011:1455).

Rural tourism development must be considered a local activity involving local government and small businesses and not inherently dependent on outside businesses and organisations (Komppula, 2014:364).

3.4.3.4 Non-tourism business owners' role in tourism route development

Research into the South African tourism industry using the routes approach indicates that the country has a sufficient range of interrelated key and business support to create the tourism industry's potential success and growth (Viljoen, 2007:35). The growing cases of links between tourism and other activities unrelated to tourism in their portfolios are witnessed in the tourism industry. This results in how, over time, non-tourism businesses become significant players in the activity of tourist destinations (Jovicic, 2019:279). Accordingly, the non-tourism stakeholders influence or affect tourism or are influenced or affected by it but are not involved in tourism transactions and are unnecessary to its survival (Paresashhvili & Maisuradze, 2016:48). Stakeholders of the route include non-tourism businesses such as banks, personal care services, medical facilities,

supermarkets and stores, garages, and many other amenities to meet visitors' needs. These businesses profit from the route by interacting with tourists, impacting the tourist experience (McLaren & Heath, 2013:26). The disparity between tourism and non-tourism can be formalised by considering tourists' goods as belonging to two distinctive levels (Smith, 2014). This is demonstrated by Xiang *et al.* (2008:138) by identifying two tiers for consideration in non-tourism businesses. Tier 1 consists of businesses that would cease to exist without travel (for example, airlines and other transportation sectors). Hotels are known as tier 1 because their facilities will be limited to dining while they could still operate even if there were no travel. Tier 2 consists of 'mixed' items supplied by businesses serving all tourists and the host community (for example, restaurants). If there were no travel, tier 2 businesses would continue to exist (Xiang *et al.*, 2008:138).

Several authors recognise the importance of the involvement of several kinds of stakeholders in rural tourism development. In their research, Saxena and Ilbery (2008) focused on business networks and resource controllers, meaning stakeholders who operate primarily in the non-profit sector play an important role in, for example, social, cultural, political, and environmental issues and are indirect stakeholders who exert some power or control over tourism resources (Komppula, 2014:364). Retail trade, other services, health services and lodging and food services have appeared to be tourism businesses; however, building, technical and scientific services, and retail trade proved to be non-tourism businesses (Moyle *et al.*, 2018:4). Therefore, several 'non-tourism' businesses have become the key stakeholders in tourism destinations (Jovicic, 2019:279). The involvement of various stakeholders in the tourism and non-tourism businesses enables different stakeholders' interests to be addressed in the planning and developing of a destination (Weber *et al.*, 2017:8). Tourism destinations have developed into more complex structures that have become more complicated and demanding in their management. Increasing the number of destination stakeholders contributes significantly to the greater complexity of destination systems, and many non-tourism businesses, including tourism programmes in their portfolio, are among them (Jovicic, 2016:453).

The following businesses, namely retail, agriculture, media/social media, and arts and crafts, because of their nature, are some of the few identified non-tourism businesses that are likely to be involved in the development of tourism routes. These non-tourism

businesses are essential because they also contribute to the development of tourism routes and are, in most scenarios, form part of the route.

i. Retail

The retail store's importance as part of the tourism destination is highlighted in many other studies (Suhartanto, 2017:161) and they are therefore essential along tourism routes. If retail stores can meet tourist shoppers' standards and surpass them, they would be satisfied and more likely to continue visiting the host destination (Wong & Lam, 2016:840). It is becoming important for retailers in shopping tourism towns to improve their services to satisfy tourists' needs. In promoting shopping tourism for tourists, these retailers also share a significant supply (Azmi *et al.*, 2020:645). A retail store with outstanding store images and loyalty programmes will, in essence, become essential tourism products and attract an influx of tourists to destinations (Wong & Lam, 2016:849). Shopping perception leads tourists to embrace pleasant and realistic shopping experiences. Inherent satisfaction, perceived freedom and participation define those interactions (Azmi *et al.*, 2020:644). Furthermore, Lam and Wong (2020:92) argue that retail stores play a central role in attracting loyal tourist shoppers.

ii. Agriculture/farmers

In recent years, tourist routes have been poorly developed due to the prevalence of a minimal number of tourist activities and low marketing and management development (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2016:59). Burbano and Meredith (2021:1281) highlight that tourism was not seen as the most attractive option for farmers willing to transition; they expressed interest in other industries, such as local retail (for example, selling farm supplies or grocery stores) store), transportation and development. In the geographical region, primarily concentrated in Mediterranean Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, olive oil is a fundamental food commodity that expresses human culture and heritage (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2016:57). Many stakeholders may benefit from the development of olive tourism (Duarte Alonso & Northcote, 2010). Therefore, various routes have been established based on the growth of olive tourism predominantly coexisting in the agricultural sector, the main one being the Routes of the Olive Tree (www.olivetreeroute.gr), which was developed in the Mediterranean countries in 2005 (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2016:60). There are several other agricultural routes, such as the Western Cape wine routes, which provide sound principles and inputs for the

development of both the local tourism and local agricultural sectors to improve the quality of life for all through a strong, healthy, and sustainable agritourism sector (Nowers, de Villiers & Myburg, 2002:208).

iii. Media/social media

Media and social media in particular can play a vital role in the marketing of tourism routes. Social media has transformed how businesses interact with consumers and society, opening up a new world of opportunities and challenges for all aspects of business, from marketing to operations to finance and human resource management (Aral, Dellarocas & Godes, 2013:3). Social media in the form of Twitter and Facebook are widely used in business to engage customers (He, Wang, Chen & Zha, 2017:150; He, Wang & Zha, 2014:226). In addition, despite its popularity, social media research is limited and focuses primarily on the consumer in a business-to-consumer (BTC) domain (Jussila, Kärkkäinen & Aramo-immonen, 2014:606). However, there is a close historical relationship between tourism and media, particularly regarding tourism promotion, because the media is perceived as a mediator in terms of tourism policy, so it is responsible for bringing society and tourism to a common ground (Nistor & Nedelea, 2018:3). Social media is a relatively new phenomenon. Its accelerated successful implementation and public interest can be traced back to initially non-commercial public social media applications such as Facebook and blogs (Aral *et al.*, 2013:5). This theoretical prism is possible to follow to transport tourism offers unique ways to engage with the (travel) world and co-create virtual landscapes. It is possible to vary the symbols and subjects of the tourist gaze and experience and reflect preconceptions of cultures and sites developed by the tourist industry and the media (Rhoden & Kaaristo, 2020:310).

Nistor and Nedelea (2018:3) reiterate that the media's role is to liaise the tourist product's transmission to the consumer. Gretzel (2019:62) indicates that social media and tourism do not enjoy a convenient and straightforward relationship in terms of social media. The term 'social media' refers to a family of internet networks and smartphone apps that use Web 2.0 technology to make it easier for users to develop, curate and distribute content without needing technological expertise (Gretzel, 2019:62). As a new medium of communication, the advent of social media has transformed many aspects of the tourism industry by enabling individuals, the business community, and policymakers to understand the market (Chen *et al.*, 2017:416). Within the business context, social media

has proven to display the possibility to transform the exchange of knowledge and expertise and advance innovation and the development of new products (Aral *et al.*, 2013:3).

Any information posted on a digital network, including photographs, tags (text descriptions and geolocation) or running or biking tracks, for example, can be used in social media content (Calcagni *et al.*, 2019:1310). There are several consequences and behaviours correlated with social media worldwide. Social media is currently commonly used by diverse groups, particularly youth, international businesses, and various classifications of consumers (Ali *et al.*, 2019:226). Tourists also use social media to locate attractions and sites they desire to visit in the tourism industry. McLaren's previous literature (2011:54) indicated that social media was not an essential prerequisite in marketing tourism routes. This notion was later relegated, and since 2011, the utilisation of social media has increased aggressively. Electronic media utilisation was conceived to be an essential tool for marketing (McLaren, 2011; Piskóti & Nagy, 2016; Proos & Hattingh, 2020:688). Social media literature also acknowledges the value of social media marketing to encourage DMOs through optimised and effective communication networks to improve their clients' relationships (Chen *et al.*, 2017:416). Additionally, social media may discover new business prospects and product concepts, strengthen consumer connections, and promote cooperation inside and across businesses (Jusilla *et al.*, 2013:606).

iv. Arts and crafts

Heritage, craftwork, and tourism are fast becoming inseparable partners in developing tourism businesses. It is emphasised that local crafts are essential elements of culture and people visit other cultures, customs and ways of living to see and experience them (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2011:11736). The tourism and the arts and crafts sectors are sectors for rural people involved as a reasonable source of income to complement other activities (Nyawo & Mubangisi, 2015:9). On the other hand, arts and heritage could provide non-market products, such as enjoyment, national pride and cultural identity building and expression, which cannot be easily measured in monetary terms (Snowball & Courtney, 2010:564).

The afore-mentioned is supported by the European Union's tourism policy, which sets out a number of objectives and resources to stimulate the growth of creative tourism. It is, by far, one of the most effective ways to demonstrate the uniqueness of European countries, increase tourism supply, and create significant synergies with the arts and craft trades, which can help to support and preserve cultural heritage while also developing local economies (Jarábkova & Hamada, 2012:12). 'Africa Can Compete,' according to Jamison (2000:55), was the ambitious title of a UN publication that emphasised the potential of African countries to provide current products to international markets as part of their quest for economic growth. Consequently, in 1985, the Midlands Meander was founded in South Africa by five arts and crafters to promote rural tourism development and increase market access for small arts and craft businesses (Rogerson, 2007:37). In the Meander, the themes of the routes vary extensively and encompass arts and crafts, heritage, townships, fossils, shipwrecks, and old mission stations (Rogerson, 2007:34). The Midlands Meander, which is reported to attract a steady stream of tourists, is regarded as one of the most popular route innovations and the oldest African example of using a route as the base for tourism-led local economic development (LED) (Marschall, 2012:734).

With strategic preparation, well-defined goals, local level collaborations, and finance, community events and festivals may substantially contribute to rural development. The promotion of routes has increasingly assumed an economic or developmental objective such that the development of thematic routes has been observed as tourism attractions have gained popularity in recent years (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2011:11737). Rural towns, on the other hand, frequently arrange tourism events to boost their local economy (Irshad, 2011:1). Music and theatre performances are increasingly being utilised to lure locals and tourists to modern performing arts facilities, and programming is more tailored to tourists' preferences (for example, musical development in major cultural tourism destinations such as London) (Richards, 2010:32). Craft, part of the larger 'creative industries' group, is one economic sector attracting rising policy attention in South Africa (Rogerson, 2010:116).

3.4.3.5 Tourism associations and organisations within tourism route development

Previous research has shown how the imperatives driving efforts to stimulate tourism demand, the critical concern of private tour operators and tourism associations, are far

from the planning and advisory processes needed to implement tourism development policies (March & Wilkinson, 2009:457). The national and local government and regional tourism associations can plan, in response to the realisation of tourism routes, the destinations at which new tourist facilities should be located, what type of facilities should be located there, and what type of themed touring routes could be promoted (Shih, 2006:1030). It is suggested that “promoting a vibrant associational life allows the less affluent to develop their distinctive preferences and goals, based on their common economic roles and circumstances, and develop shared strategies for achieving those preferences” (Knight, 2018:635).

Newly emerging non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and tourism associations, such as Betuyab (tourism investors' association) in Antalya's Belek in Turkey cluster, have become important for marketing in the region, similar to what DMOs do, and have stimulated networks and communication in a cluster (Erkuş-Öztürk & Eraydin, 2011:1305). Various community-based tourism (CBT) businesses may cooperate and establish business partnerships to increase the efficiency and the networks of CBT companies, such as the Nicaraguan CBT Network, Red Tours, the Namibian Community-Based Tourism Association (NACOBTA) and the Ugandan Community Tourism Association (UCOTA) (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2013:11). On the other hand, an Open Africa team develops the route and provides training. It then transfers the project to the community, overseen by a route forum of local business owners (Booyens & Rogerson, 2016:329). Open Africa works with local municipalities and tourism groups to support social innovation, with funding from corporations, provincial and national government agencies, the South African National Lottery, and the World Bank (Booyens & Rogerson, 2016:329). The Open Africa Foundation (now called the Africa Foundation) was founded in 1995 by a collection of scientists, entrepreneurs, tourism specialists, sociologists, and environmentalists with the goal of "improving tourism in Africa", employment generation and sustainable development in Africa and its vision are equally distinctive “to link the splendours of Africa to a continuous network of Africa tourism routes, from Cape to Cairo” (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004:73).

Although communities also form a single association for tourism, working collectively to host visitors, cook meals, and sell traditional crafts, among others, various expressions of power may contribute to disputes and disparities at the local level, resulting in

substantial declines in membership of the association over time or in the creation of multiple tourism associations in a single community (Knight & Cottrell, 2016:33). To build attractive, safe, and secure destinations, as demonstrated in Figure 3.3, it is also important for associations to participate in different governmental frameworks to address tourism business needs (Glen & Mearns, 2018:118). There is a need for a cooperative association to assume scale-sensitive roles in an industry like tourism with many small and medium-sized businesses (Dudengsing *et al.*, 2011:1455).

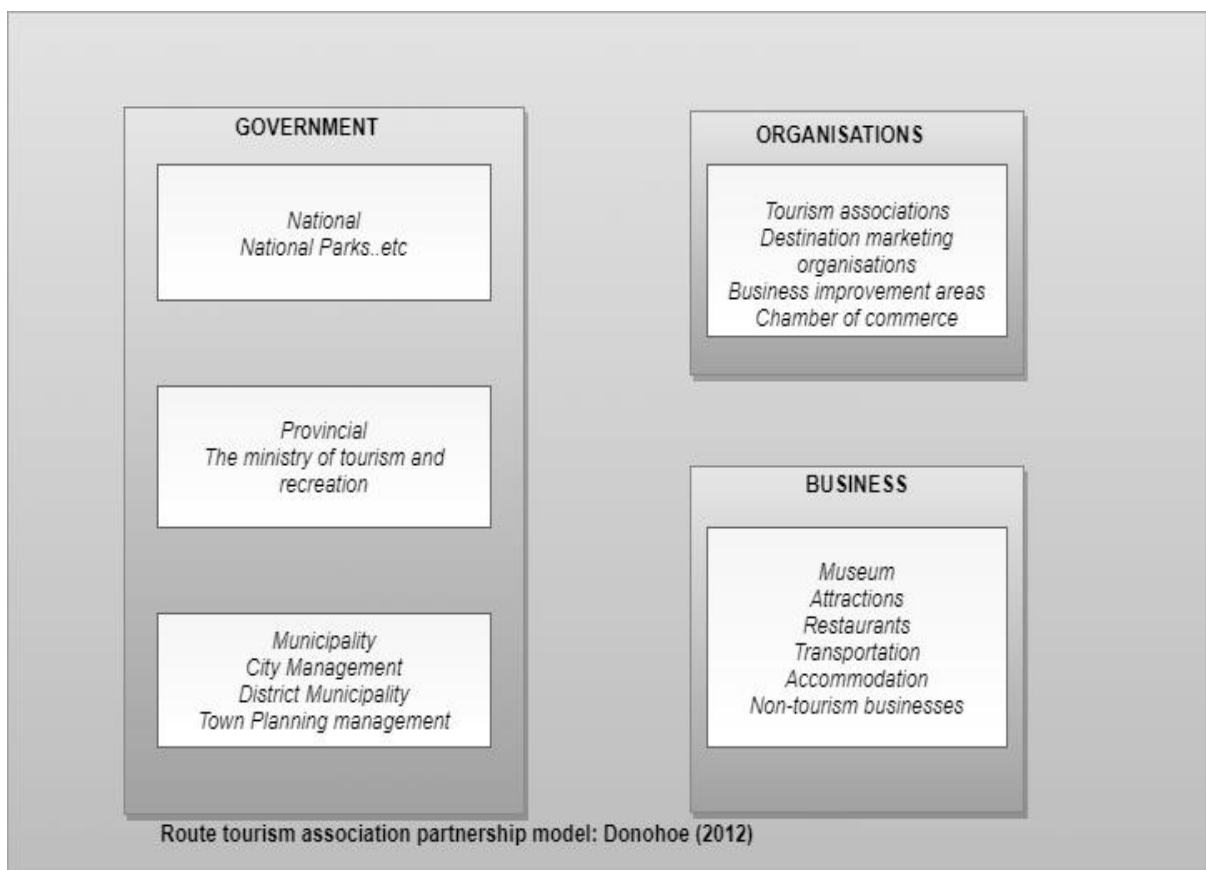


Figure 3-3: Route tourism association partnership model

Source: Adapted from Donohoe (2012)

Tourism organisations, which serve as a link between government and the private sector, are crucial stakeholders in the tourism supply chain and the task of tourism associations is to enable tourism businesses to become self-sufficient and autonomous, thereby helping them to achieve local economic development (LED) (Glen & Mearns, 2018:115). Illustrated in Figure 3.3, Donohoe's (2012) route tourism association partnership model reflects that individual partner representatives shall be chosen by consensus of the association partners at the annual general assembly. Partners are interested in the

company and its administration and benefit from the joint communications campaigns, funding for product creation, exchange of information, and networking (Donohoe, 2012:132). In addition, Donohoe (2012:132) stresses that partnerships with government entities and funding should be prioritised, opportunities for ensuring the continuity of finance, and RHRTA (The Rideau Heritage Route Tourism Association) operations viability should also be established. In South Africa, the Garden Route Tourism Association, the Midlands Meander, and the N12 Treasure Route Association provide market access to their members while also gradually playing an important role in tourism development across the tourist area by connecting numerous products and services in one standard message (Glen & Mearns, 2018:109).

In a previous study by Palmer (1996), the following three marketing activities that could be adopted by the local tourism association (LTA) to enhance the efficiency of tourist experience at the destination were identified: firstly, occasional council tourism-related training for staff not working in the tourism sector (for instance, parking staff and street cleaners); secondly, the tourism planning services regularly consulting on issues of planning and preservation; and lastly, the tourist and technical services departments regularly consult on car parking, street cleaning, and provision of public convenience (March & Wilkinson, 2009:456). Tourism associations strive to establish projects to resolve the existing cluster's challenges through which they plan to expand projects and partnerships with local and global private and public organisations (Erkuş-Öztürk & Eraydin, 2011:1306).

The development of routes is one of the most significant ways to coordinate government entities, local associations, and private industry, allowing locals to easily identify the project (Correia & Brito, 2016:33). Finally, effective collective marketing by destination marketing entities at various government levels from the literature and the review of stakeholder involvement in the development, management, and marketing of tourism routes, it becomes clear that there can be specific challenges associated with this form of tourism. Such challenges are discussed in the next section.

3.5 Challenges associated with stakeholder involvement in tourism route development

The fundamental cause of the growing interest in tourism collaborations suggests that tourist destinations and organisations, putting together the experience, skills, resources, and other tools of different stakeholders, will achieve a competitive advantage (Manhas *et al.*, 2014:147). Waligo *et al.* (2013:346) concluded that stakeholder involvement in tourism is dynamic and influenced by numerous factors, including leadership qualities, quality of information and accessibility, stakeholder mindset, stakeholder involvement capacity, and stakeholder relationships. Van der Merwe (2014:135) added that several stakeholders involved in tourism, including accommodation operators and others, lack confidence and trust in the management and conservation of tourism among local and provincial authorities and expressed deep concerns.

The economic, social, and political institutions and products of tourism usually experience geographical challenges that have a direct impact on the route processes mentioned in the literature on route tourism (Stoffelen, 2018:93). In Germany, on the Iron Curtain Trail, a longer route along the relic Iron Curtain in Europe, stakeholders questioned if the tourism product is good enough to draw visitors daily, considering its evident symbolic and educational importance (Stoffelen, 2018:93). In addition, the fact that tourists linger for a short time in the part of the route they are going through was also considered an extraction element in the reliance on another stakeholder along the route, along with the minimal returns they might earn (Stoffelen, 2018:93). Meanwhile, in South Africa, there are also other obstacles to the tourism industry in each of the nine provinces. Suppose, in part, social stability is to be accomplished by employing interventions in tourism. In that case, no exploitative features should be identified, but instead, a move to concentrate on advancing abilities and knowledge on how and why tourism is developed and funded, whether experts, enablers or any other interested group (Nicolades, 2015:19). Brigoli *et al.* (2016:220) reiterate that some of the difficulties faced by stakeholders in their engagement in the tourism route entail lack of confidence, lack of leadership, lack of funding, project discredit and marketing naivety in the involvement of a large number of participants with diverse motivations, resulting in a lack of capacity to participate and successfully mobilise a sufficient number of participants (Brigoi *et al.*, 2016:220).

Tourism development results in several economic and social benefits for destinations; however, it is also accompanied by high costs that affect the host community's lives (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011a:964; 2011b). Unsustainable tourism development will lead to negative impacts, such as overdevelopment, assimilation, tension, artificial reconstruction, and xenophobia. It can also dilute or even destroy it, while presenting a culture to tourists can help preserve it and dilute or diminish it (Besculides *et al.*, 2002:307). Consequently, although some host community stakeholders may be concerned about tourism, others may condemn it (Duarte Alonso & Nyanjom, 2015:480). The stakes (risks and rewards) resulting from tourism developments could be higher for the host community group whose exposure is more 'real' and continuous.

The absence of direct communication channels may also raise local tensions, and the lack of platforms for sharing information on the other side will result in an ineffective tourism framework and inadequate media knowledge (Pan *et al.*, 2018:457). Another significant restriction to the growth and management of tourism routes is the lack of genuine community involvement from the mistrust and confusion of residents regarding tourism development (Xu *et al.*, 2016:277). Stakeholders see local and indigenous culture as a significant advantage for tourism growth that the increased tourist traffic can quickly improve. Meanwhile, state authorities, countries and tourist companies may have already done fair environmental conservation work. Consequently, tourism stakeholders may not believe that environmental concerns are urgent (Chen, 2015:229).

Numerous impediments exist to the efficient development of wine tourism in the specific context of wine route tourism. These include poor horizontal and cross-sectoral networking among stakeholders, a poor perception of the benefits that tourism can bring to the wine industry by wineries, dominant product-based marketing, poor skills, capacity, and tourism marketing and tourism experience, to name a few (Brigoli *et al.*, 2016:208). In addition, lack of strategic direction, duplication and wasting of resources; inadequate budgeting; poor or non-existent marketing strategies; and lack of capability are the shortcomings of different stakeholders (Van der Merwe, 2014:135).

From the literature reviewed on challenges associated with stakeholder involvement in tourism development, it is essential to reflect on possible corrective measures in this form of tourism, and such measures are discussed next.

3.6 Overcoming the challenges associated with stakeholder involvement in tourism route development

It should be assumed that stakeholders in tourism will forecast the tourist influx problems and would be able to restrict potential tourism growth before tourist arrivals influence the fragile natural environment (Chen, 2015:229). Sustainable tourism implementation strategies include intersectoral relations. The systemic and institutional problems facing tourism industries must be addressed. Tourism's efficient functioning is highly based on institutional structures and structural frameworks (Pan *et al.*, 2018:460). Furthermore, in a study of the Silk Route Circuit, Manhas *et al.* (2014:148) proposed the following tourist development techniques and strategies.

- The co-branding approach might be advantageous and cost-effective at a more advanced phase.
- Identifying the undiscovered induced destinations inside the Silk Route circuit countries proved to be a significant step forward in the development process.
- Increase cooperation policies and practices among associate nations to make cross-border travel more convenient.
- Separate visa facilitation should be framed for Silk Route nations. The Schengen visa idea, which is used by European countries, may be the most acceptable example.
- A multi-faceted approach to planning and development will be an added issue, considering the destinations' fragility, the environment and investment, and community engagement.

In addition, the pooling of cross-border resources and an understanding to improve road infrastructure and ensure its long-life maintenance need a reliable financial mechanism, which builds on continuous exchanges of information, processes that remain challenging for tourism routes and in border areas (Stoffelen, 2018:93). However, within the South African context, the study of Ramukumba *et al.* (2011a, 2011b) suggested the local municipality and district municipality play a few roles to ensure a smooth involvement of stakeholders in the process of tourism development, which is summarised as follows:

- Municipalities should play a significant role in raising awareness of tourism among the members of the community to be informed of the advantages and the development value of tourism in their regions,

- Municipalities should have a proper skills development strategy for all the stakeholders involved in the tourism industry of the area, and
- Municipalities should create an environment conducive to the emergence of small businesses in the tourism industry.

In a specific wine tourism setting, collaborations and networking between vertical, cross-sector (vertical and side) players (both public and private) are argued as a precondition for successful regional wine tourism (Brigoli *et al.*, 2016:207). In addition, wine routes are key wine tourism options and the main framework and diffusion of wine routes. This encourages collaboration between wine producers' groups on shared goals, enables them to deliver a cohesive product and adds value to the original wine production activity (Correia & Brito, 2016:32).

Tourism development and management will pose significant sustainability challenges for policymakers and planners (Pan *et al.*, 2018:456). The emphasis of policymakers and destination marketers should be on the need to carry out internal marketing operations, and the key objective is to encourage stakeholders to share the same boundary product (Brigoli *et al.*, 2016:220). Management of stakeholders requires an organised approach to strategic decision-making in which multiple stakeholders in any organisational undertaking must be fulfilled and considered to the maximum degree possible. In addition, to properly direct all decision-making and provide greater credibility to decision-making, stakeholder involvement is critical (Nicolaidis, 2015:21). After a brief reflection of challenges prevalent and associated with the development of tourism route development, it is equally important to compare other similar studies on stakeholder involvement; therefore, the next section reflects on previous studies on stakeholder involvement in tourism route development.

3.7 Seminal work on stakeholder involvement in tourism route development

Table 3.1 summarises previous studies on stakeholders' involvement in developing tourism routes.

Table 3-1: Analysis of previous studies conducted on stakeholder involvement

YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	CONCLUSIONS
2014	Van der Merwe	Battlefields tourism: The status of heritage tourism in Dundee, South Africa	Expanded municipal and provincial government support and strategic grants will go a long way toward funding to support the work of the Association of KwaZulu-Natal Battlefields routes.
2015	Waligo <i>et al.</i>	Embedding stakeholders in sustainable tourism strategies	This study noted that while the literature contains well-recorded reasons for stakeholder involvement in tourism policies, ad hoc participation on good or poor participation is not understood. The centrality of stakeholders is not remembered often. A deliberate decision to consider and include stakeholders in sustainable tourism programmes from the beginning generates a virtuous circle of stakeholder involvement in sustainable tourism, stakeholder engagement, and more successful sustainable tourism implementation.
2016	Cloutier <i>et al.</i>	Rejuvenating the Cider Route in Quebec: An action design research approach to stakeholder collaboration and innovation	This study observed that the process of identifying the vision, purpose and strategy of the Cider Route would not involve anything more than i) mapping the positions and obligations of all stakeholders ii) identifying the tasks of concern by each stakeholder; iii) carrying out analysis on the needs, anticipations, principles, and effects of all stakeholders; and iv) involving all stakeholders in the process towards a meaningful output.
2017	McComb <i>et al.</i>	Stakeholder collaboration: A means to the success of rural tourism destinations? A critical evaluation of the existence of stakeholder collaboration within the Mourne, Northern Ireland	According to the study's findings, it is more likely that stakeholders' roles in the processes will differ in their effectiveness. Future studies should also concentrate on the positioning of stakeholder involvement such that it is as successful as possible, either at the

YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	CONCLUSIONS
			stage at which a concept is formulated, when it is being implemented or between the concept and execution.
2020	Shafieisabet & Haratifard	The empowerment of local tourism stakeholders and their perceived environmental effects for participation in the sustainable development of tourism	This mutual partnership shows how important and necessary local tourism stakeholders are and how they are more involved and cooperate in the sustainable tourism growth process. In other words, the good and convergent role of the local stakeholders in the planning for tourism development should be considered in the planning of sustainable tourism and regional development.
2020	Festa <i>et al.</i>	Opportunities and challenges in the contribution of wine routes to wine tourism in Italy: A stakeholders' perspective of development	This study highlighted that the strengths and shortcomings of wine routes need to be identified in a big wine country such as Italy to (re)use them as amplifiers to grow the viticultural industry further. In that sense, territorial stakeholders' involvement significantly contributes because of the natural association between wine routes and related territory.

In the evidence and conclusions of the above-analysed studies, as reflected in Table 3.1, the local and national governments are obliged to provide strategic financial support to tourism associations located and operating within the area where tourism routes transverse (Van der Merwe, 2014). The study of Waligo *et al.* (2015) concluded that stakeholders' involvement and acknowledgement could positively affect all stakeholders in implementing a prosperous stakeholder theory. In contrast, the study of Cloutier *et al.* (2016) of the Cider Route in Quebec in Canada observed that for a launch of a successful tourism route, a few factors such as needs analysis of stakeholders, positions and responsibilities of stakeholders and involvement of all stakeholders in the process towards significant output, to mention a few, must in future be considered. Table 3.1 further reflects that, for a successful tourism product, stakeholders' positioning and involvement should commence during product conceptualisation and, lastly, during

implementation and execution (McComb *et al.*, 2017; Shafieisabet & Haratifard, 2020). Finally, Festa *et al.*'s (2020) study indicates that stakeholders' involvement is critical and can lead to harmonious relationships between tourism wine routes and other interconnected areas.

From Table 3.1, some new information regarding stakeholders' role in creating tourism routes is brought to the fore, notwithstanding the potential gaps that this study would eventually fill. As tourism associations are overlooked as one of the key stakeholders in the maturity stage of the tourism product and therefore fail to support tourism planners in the marketing and managing such products, the importance of financial and other related support from appropriate government levels to tourism associations are highlighted. The studies by Waligo *et al.* (2015) and McComb *et al.* (2017) provided significant evidence that cannot be easily ignored, and this relates to the fact that stakeholders must be at the heart of all the development of tourism be active in all stages of development. According to the Stakeholder Theory, in the previous studies, stakeholders' involvement in all tourism development projects and their participation in all phases has proven to be a gap that this study can address.

Previous studies have also highlighted the complete neglect of stakeholders during the review and re-launching of tourism routes, following their poor performance, with tourism planners not considering the views, principles and impact stakeholders can have on the significant output of the tourism development process. This is one of the gaps identified in the Stakeholder Theory literature that this study can also fill. Another gap this study can fill is the failure of tourism route planners to develop the routes adequately and carry out an in-depth and strategic analysis of the intensity and importance of existing tourism routes. This study contributes to the literature by critically assessing stakeholders' involvement in developing, marketing, and managing tourism routes. This is essential in highlighting the importance of involving stakeholders in developing tourism routes and the impact of involving and not involving stakeholders in managing and marketing such routes.

This study contributes to the literature on the development of tourism routes, respecting the significance of stakeholders in developing tourism routes. The study will further contribute to the knowledge of different types of stakeholders and the role of those

involved in developing tourism routes, such as the management and marketing of routes and how all these stakeholders correlate. It will also enhance the terminology associated with the Stakeholder Theory concept and the equally detailed terminologies of the tourism route's actual stakeholders. In addition, this research contributes to the literature on stakeholder theory's perception and furthers knowledge of tourism-related stakeholders. Finally, this study contributes to a clear understanding of the tourism routes in the South African communities and makes recommendations on the development, management and marketing of tourism routes in the Free State Province.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter assessed stakeholder involvement and participation in tourism routes' development, management, and marketing. This was realised through a thorough and detailed understanding of stakeholders in the tourism industry. Furthermore, the Stakeholder Theory (ST) concept was also exploited to understand its history, formation, and relevance in the tourism industry. The Stakeholder Theory concept is aligned with the creation of values as an essential business driver. Therefore, the theory acknowledges the benefits shared by not a solitary shareholder but by a group of stakeholders.

The tourism stakeholders involved in tourism development, such as the local government, tourism offices, chamber of commerce, public and private suppliers, and tourism associations, were identified individually and were further defined, and their roles outlined. The literature identified the stakeholders involved in developing tourism routes: tourists, the tourism industry, the local community, government, associations, and educational institutions. These groups are vested with a great deal of influence in tourism development. Furthermore, the literature also analysed the significance of stakeholders' involvement in tourism development and highlighted some positive outcomes of inclusive stakeholder involvement.

The stakeholder involvement theory is only complete when the relevant stakeholders and their roles are outlined. This chapter briefly conducted a thorough analysis of the types of stakeholders involved in tourism routes within the international and South African context. From the analysed literature, it is evident that every stakeholder involved in tourism route

development, such as government, community, tourism business owners and non-tourism business such as retail, farmers, media and arts and crafts, have an essential role to play during the development, management, and marketing of tourism routes. Moreover, the literature revealed that the tourism route might fail or not even take off from the ground without one or two stakeholders mentioned above.

This chapter also analysed the contribution of tourism associations that operate within the tourism routes. It is evident from this chapter that the government, tourism planners and associations operate interdependently in the management and marketing of tourism routes. The literature further analysed the study of Palmer (1996) on marketing activities that tourism associations can adopt to improve the efficiency of tourist experiences, such as the training of staff not working in the tourism industry, continuous planning and preservation and regular consultations with other association members. The analysed literature shows that tourism stakeholders participate at different levels during tourism routes. The government's involvement in developing tourism routes is at the highest level as they are the custodians of planning, strategies, and tourism routes. The community is one of the key stakeholders in developing tourism routes. Their involvement is mainly in the planning, decision-making, and ensuring that the tourism routes are effective and well managed. Furthermore, it is evident that tourism associations, as one of the key stakeholders in the tourism routes development, are also featured in the management and, most notably, in the marketing of tourism routes.

Furthermore, all relevant stakeholders' development of tourism routes is not the beginning and the end. It is evident from the literature that after planning and developing tourism routes, all stakeholders must resume management and marketing. The analysed literature revealed that all stakeholders such as government, community, tourism businesses, non-tourism businesses, and tourism associations have a role in managing and marketing tourism routes for the benefit of all. The international and South African context of tourism route development demonstrated in this chapter that national and local government stakeholders are responsible for planning tourism routes. Consequently, their financial support in managing and marketing tourism routes is of great importance. In addition, some governments will always be essential stakeholders in tourism routes to support their primary objective of job creation, poverty alleviation and the general concept of environmental conservation. The local community stakeholder is in the heart of

marketing and managing the tourism routes to benefit from government objectives such as job creation, economic enhancement, and, most importantly, environmental protection. The analysed literature further revealed that stakeholders such as tourism and non-tourism businesses and tourism associations have a meaningful role in managing and marketing tourism routes to keep their businesses open and profitable. It is evident that most tourism associations consist of members involved in tourism or non-tourism businesses located within the tourism route; therefore, marketing and management of tourism routes are also their responsibility. Furthermore, according to the literature reviewed, some stakeholders also use online marketing and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others to promote tourism routes.

Tourism routes' development, management and marketing face several impediments or challenges. From the analysed literature, it is evident that tourism route development without necessary and relevant stakeholders or adequate planning is bound to experience difficulties such as lack of leadership, inadequate communication channels, poor quality of information and accessibility on the side of government and lack of training and capacity, lack of knowledge and unprofessional relationships among the local community and other stakeholders. However, there are always solutions to most challenges stakeholders face in developing a tourism route. The literature reveals that stakeholders such as national and local governments should contribute substantially to tourism route development by ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are actively involved in the planning, managing, and marketing tourism routes. There is a need for stakeholder collaboration and appropriate coordination in tourism route development.

The next chapter outlines the methodology applied in the different phases of the research to collect the data.

CHAPTER 4 : APPLIED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study followed a sequential mixed-method approach. Morse and Cheek (2015:733) explain that mixed-method and multi-method designs open the possibility of new and exciting opportunities. Palinkas *et al.* (2015:534) argue that, for the most part, qualitative methods are designed to achieve a depth of understanding, while quantitative methods are intended to achieve a breadth of understanding. The conclusion was that qualitative approaches focused on saturation (obtaining a comprehensive understanding by continuing to sample until no new substantive information is acquired). The emphasis in quantitative approaches is on generalisation (for example, ensuring that the knowledge gained represents the population from which the sample was taken) (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015:534). According to Corby *et al.* (2015:452), qualitative research allows for the in-depth exploration of individual experiences, with researchers seeking to understand participants' perspectives and the impact of the setting in which the experience unfolds. Therefore, this chapter details each research phase's methodology and methodological considerations.

4.2 The mixed-method approach

Multiple findings are acquired and combined in most mixed-methods studies to reach conclusions. As a result, differentiating between the various research strands in a mixed-methodologies study is essential (Schoonenboom, 2018:999). A mixed-method approach to exploring the social environment ideally involves more than one methodological tradition and, consequently, more than one way of knowing (Almeida, 2018:138). Mixed-methods research, according to Creswell and Clark (2011), is a research design (or technique) in which the researcher gathers, analyses, and combines (integrates or links) quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a multiphase program of inquiry. Migiro and Magangi (2011:3757) assert that quantitative and qualitative methodologies complement each other and provide a fuller analysis of the research problem when used together in one study. Figure 4.1 provides a summary of multiple elements of mixed methods. Figure 4.1 further provides the components of different research and design types of methods. This figure demonstrates that the convergent design is used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data that recognises the inclusion of different views, while

the descriptive sequential uses qualitative data to describe a preliminary quantitative analysis for elaboration, and exploratory sequential is used to describe quantitative results to explain qualitative results for theoretical confirmation. In Figure 4.1, it is demonstrated that research follows almost similar steps to collect and interpret data. However, every method accomplishes its own unique desired results.

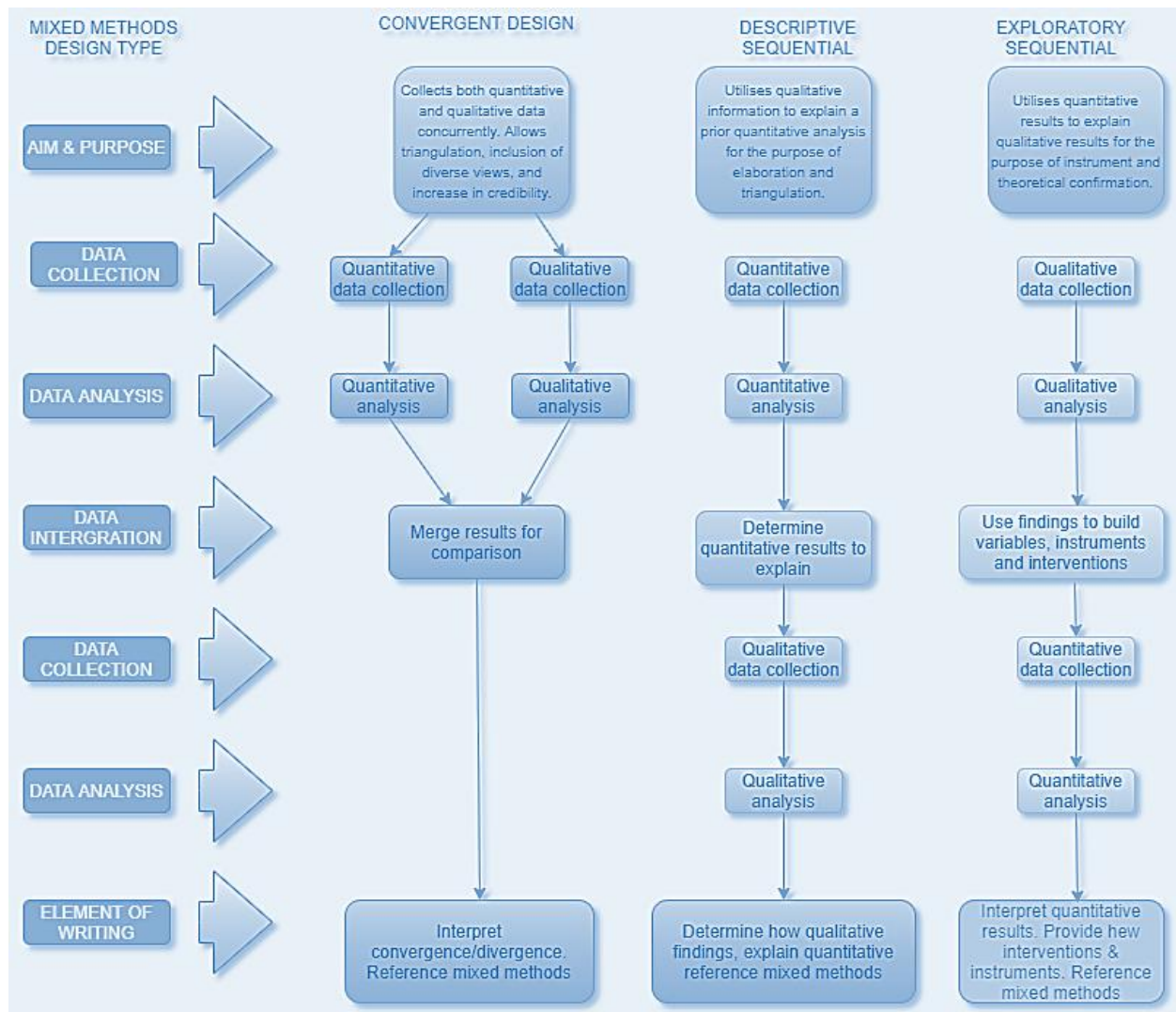


Figure 4-1: Mixed-methods elements

Source: Adapted from Harrison *et al.* (2020)

Mixed-method research is defined as conducting scientific studies that employ qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, either sequentially or concurrently (Imran & Yusoff, 2015:390). This mixed-methods design capitalises on the strengths of its different components. Qualitative support was crucial in directing the hypothesis generation, controls applied, and interpretation of the quantitative data (Harrison, Reilly & Creswell,

2020:487). This type of research incorporates qualitative and quantitative assessment methodologies at various steps of the research design. Collected data includes continuously and sequentially quantitative and qualitative information (Imran & Yusoff, 2015:389).

Before designing and implementing a mixed-methods study, it is essential to consider whether a mixed-methods design, rather than a mono-method design, will best address the research topic and question (Molina-Azorín & Font, 2016:551). This mixed-method research arose in a distinct direction in the last 20 years and is less widely recognised than the quantitative and qualitative traditions. Mixed methodologists offer an alternative to the quantitative and qualitative traditions by proposing whatever methodological tools are needed to solve the research questions under consideration (Subedu, 2016:570). The use of mixed-method designs in tourism research is not new. Indeed, numerous tourism literature studies use quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the same project (Khoo-Lattimore, Murab & Yung, 2019:1531). The mixed-method approach pushes the researcher to think beyond the agreed-upon standards of quantitative research for a specific issue, raising broader concerns about the validity of such an approach and acquiring valuable insights. Tourism epistemology may benefit from mixed-methods research (Molina-Azorín & Font, 2016:556).

4.3 Research design

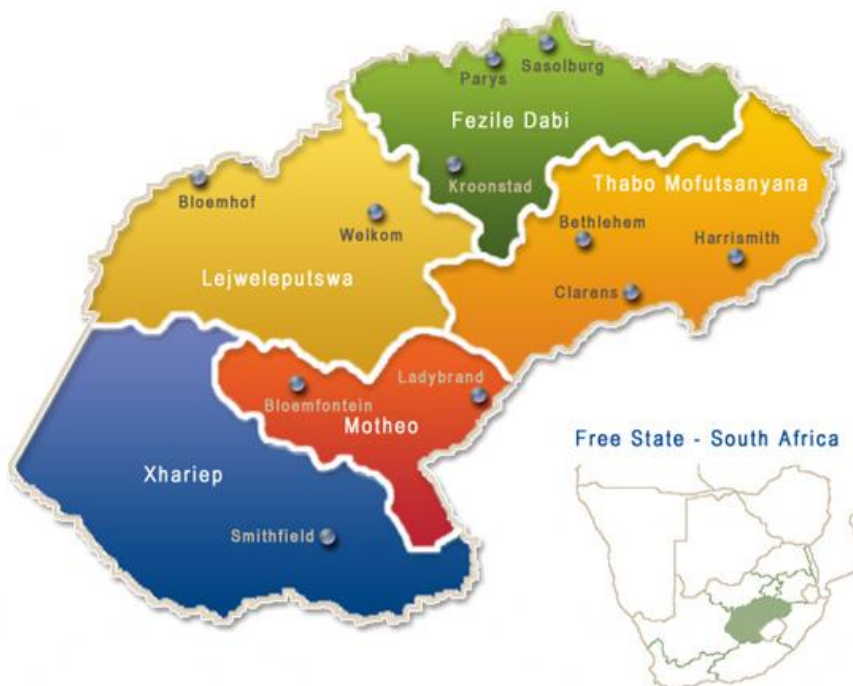
The phenomenological research design was applied for this research. According to Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie (2015:92), phenomenology as a philosophical discipline originated in the early twentieth century, building on the work of earlier philosophers who used the human experience as a beginning point for philosophical inquiry. Willis et al. (2016:1188) explain that the phenomena pertain to how things (objects) appear in the human mind. The philosophical idea of blending subject and object emerges from this distinction as a characteristic of phenomenological research. Furthermore, phenomenology is founded on the work of the philosopher Edmund Husserl, who lived from 1859 to 1938 and was later refined by his pupil Martin Heidegger and is rooted in the academic fields of philosophy and psychology. However, Husserl's descriptive and Heidegger's interpretative methods have affected the methodology of numerous phenomenological research schools (Corby *et al.*, 2015:452).

Phenomenology is a broad word that refers to a philosophical movement and various research methodologies (Kafle, 2011:181). Phenomenological research is best suited for examining intuitive, emotional, and typically intense human experiences (Worthington, 2013:1). As a qualitative methodology, phenomenology focuses on the meanings of human experiences in situations that spontaneously occur during daily life. A phenomenon can be an emotion, relationship, or entity such as a program, a culture or an organisation (Lin, 2013:470). Phenomenology is regarded as the most appropriate approach for investigating phenomena of instructional relevance and is further elaborated as a reaction to how one orients to lived experience and examines how one experiences the world (Kafle, 2011:183). It is worth highlighting that qualitative researchers prefer to think of meaning as local and contingent on a particular time and place. In contrast, quantitative researchers are more interested in broader generalisations that apply across contexts (Fisher Jr & Stenner, 2011:94). Qualitative research aims to document and analyse the conceptual coordinate system of linguistic and social intersections to determine the meaningfulness and truth value of distinct statements across representational alternatives such as words, grammatical formations, and social context (Fisher Jr & Stenner, 2011:94). Quantitative research, on the other hand, comprises examining the process of assessing amounts and relationships among quantities in the circumstances and developing new quantities. People's concepts include the number of objects, events, and circumstances (for example, we may need to think about how far we can travel to get to work or how old we will be in 15 years) (Lobato & Bowers, 2000:4).

Following the phenomenological approach, the case study approach was applied for this research. Case study examples may be traced back to Charles Darwin's life in the early nineteenth century, according to Harrison, Birks, Franklin and Mill (2017:2). Case study research is most associated with its origins in anthropology and the social sciences in the early twentieth century when it was utilised to conduct extensive, detailed ethnographic analyses of individuals and communities. A case study approach develops an in-depth, multi-faceted knowledge of a complex topic in its real-life setting (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery & Sheikh, 2011:1). Other qualitative methodologies, such as grounded theory or phenomenology, may not be as adaptable as case study research. Case studies are custom-made for each case and research topic, and published case studies demonstrate a variety of study designs (Hyett, Kenny & Dickson-Swift, 2014:1).

On the other hand, case study research was frequently criticised for its inability to support generalisability and was therefore regarded as having little validity and usefulness as a research strategy (Harrison *et al.*, 2017:3). Furthermore, discussion regarding case study shortcomings has prompted some researchers to question whether a case study is a methodology (Hyett *et al.*, 2014:1). However, there are some added advantages to using a case study approach. Firstly, a case study helps establish alternative perspectives on reality, such as the realisation that human behaviour cannot be described just as an act motivated by a rule or a theory; and secondly, case studies can aid a researcher's professional growth by providing a tangible, context-dependent experience that improves their research abilities (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Starman, 2013:36). The Eagle tourism route in the Free State (located in Dihlabeng Local Municipality, an administrative area in the Thabo Mofutsanyane District of the Free State) was the case study in the research.

Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality is in the north-eastern part of the Free State Province, bordering landlocked Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal (see Map 4.1). It is situated in the Maluti Mountain Range, between the Orange and Vaal Rivers (Strydom, Mangope & Henama, 2018:6).



Map 4-1: Map of the Free State Province

Source: <https://www.businessinsa.com/free-state/>

Therefore, the study focus area is the Dihlabeng Local Municipality, which boasts the newly formed Eagle tourism route between the southern border of the Free State Province and Lesotho. Phuthaditjhaba, Ficksburg, Fouriesburg, Bethlehem, and Clarens are some towns forming part of the Dihlabeng Local Municipality, including Golden Gate National Park, that serves as a case study area with a population of 128 704 (Statistics SA, 2011).

The research was conducted in two phases (sequential mixed-method approach). The first phase involved interviewing tourism route planners (government officials) working for the Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority (FSGLTA). The results from phase 1 informed the development of the data collection tools in Phase 2. The second phase comprised a questionnaire survey among tourism business providers (quantitative approach) operating along the route and interviews with residents (qualitative approach) with residents living in the towns forming part of the route. The methodological considerations in each phase are consequently discussed.

4.4 Phase 1: Qualitative interviews with tourism route planners

The phrase "qualitative research" refers to a variety of study methodologies that are, in some ways, quite distinct from one another. There are two aspects that all qualitative methods have in common (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:135). To begin with, they concentrate on phenomena that occur in natural settings or the "real world". Second, they include investigating such occurrences in all their complexities. Qualitative researchers seldom attempt to simplify their findings. Instead, they recognise that the topic they are examining has many levels and aspects, so they aim to represent it in all its complexity. Phenomenological research is employed in this study. The researcher recounts the lived experiences of persons concerning a phenomenon as recounted by participants in phenomenological research, which is a design of inquiry from philosophy and psychology (Creswell, 2014:14). This description consists of what they experienced and how they experienced it (Maree, 2007:78). The tourism route planners are the supply-side stakeholders that include all who may influence the route's success in terms of what is on offer to the visitors, such as the government, destination marketers, service providers, non-tourism businesses, local communities, and funding and development agencies (McLaren & Heath, 2013:22). Therefore, the interviews were conducted among the tourism route planners of the Free State government, such as the FSGLTA board

members, executive managers responsible for marketing and tourism, and the Eagle tourism route ambassador.

4.4.1 Population under investigation

The government provides the enabling environment where a rural route operates on a national and local level by planning and subsidising tourism, constructing physical infrastructure, marketing, and distributing the routes it traverses (McLaren & Heath, 2013:22). The Free State Department of Environmental, Small Businesses, Tourism and Economic Affairs (DESTEA) is one of the route planners responsible for controlling the Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority. Destination marketing organisations (DMOs) exist in Southern African countries to promote their country as tourist attractions. Some of these organisations maintain offices in various regions of their nations where tourists may get information (McLaren & Heath, 2013:23-24).

The FSGLTA is responsible for the tourism routes in the province, including the Eagle tourism route in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality. According to Chilli and Xulu (2015:28), the government's responsibility should promote sustainable tourism development within their destination. It should establish a destination's tourist strategy orientation. Local government is frequently a fundamental effect on governance, especially policy-making for sustainable development, and it functions within the framework of the national state. Therefore, Dihlabeng Local Municipality encompasses towns such as Bethlehem, Clarens, Fouriesburg and the Golden Gate Highlands National Park, with a population size of 128 704 (Statistics SA, 2011)¹. Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality and the FSGLTA were the focus as enabling stakeholders.

4.4.2 Sampling and sample size

According to Maree (2007:79), sampling selects a population group for research purposes. According to De Vos *et al.* (2011:84), theoretical sampling relates to the sample size and answers the following questions: How many people, occurrences, or acts must be investigated before significant information becomes available? Maree (2007:79)

Population under investigation:¹

The population size as per Statistic SA (2011) are based on the latest census numbers.

identified 16 sampling strategies. However, beginner researchers have the three most used strategies: stratified purposive sampling, snowball sampling, and criterion sampling.

Non-probability sampling was applied in this qualitative research. According to Etikan and Bala (2017:215), non-probability sampling is a sampling procedure that does not provide a basis for any opinion on the probability that elements in the universe will have a chance to be included in the study sample. After carefully considering the three commonly used sampling strategies, the researcher used purposive sampling because of its structure. The intended selection of a participant based on the subject's features is known as purposive, also known as judgement sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling methodology that is particularly effective when studying a specific cultural subject with experts within that subject (Tongco, 2007:147). It is a non-random process that does not need any underlying notions or a specific range of participants (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016:2). Purposive samples can appear in various shapes and sizes. Accordingly, there are sixteen different forms of purposive samples, but they all have one thing in common, participants are chosen based on specified criteria relevant to a specific study goal (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006:61). Participants of this research were selected from the board and the FSGLTA management committee. The participants comprised the two board members, the CEO, the tourism and marketing acting general manager, and the route ambassador. For this study, the researcher targeted Free State tourism route planners as they were the best and most relevant persons to provide the needed information for this research. These participants were selected since they have the experience and expertise required for the case study's route development.

Five interviews were conducted with board members, executive managers and the Eagle route ambassador. The organisational structure of the FSGLTA is not widely represented, and therefore there were only five possible respondents to interview to obtain the information. The interviews led to data saturation as the same answers from different respondents started to emerge, and no new information was produced. In research that involves semi-structured interviews and content analysis, the sample size is frequently justified by interviewing participants until data saturation is realised (Kumar, 2014:228). However, there is no agreed-upon mechanism to determine whether data saturation occurred. Therefore, it is unclear what this implies (Francis, Johnston, Robertson, Glidewell, Entwistle, Eccles & Grimshaw, 2010:3). However, Creswell (1998) suggested

that five to twenty-five interviews are valid for phenomenological research and twenty to thirty for a grounded theory study. Therefore, the inclusion of 5 participants in the qualitative phase of the research can be justified.

4.4.3 Survey method

Maree (2007:82) highlights four qualitative survey methods in the research literature: documents, observations, focus groups, and interviews. After carefully analysing all survey methods, the researcher used interviews to collect the data. An interview is a two-way conversation where the interviewer asks the respondents to learn about their ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and actions (Maree, 2007:87). Interviews can yield a great deal of helpful information. However, it is worth noting that when interviewees are asked about prior events, behaviours, or opinions, they must rely on their memories, which are hardly as exact as a tape recorder or video recorder (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:148). Interviews in a qualitative study are rarely structured as the questionnaires in a quantitative study. Nevertheless, their primary disadvantage is that the researcher obtains different information from different people and may not make comparisons among the interviewees (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:148). On the other hand, interviews can be done individually or in small groups, depending on flexibility. The advantage thereof is that working with a single person relates to the term 'in-depth interview', in which the researcher may go deeper and focus on personal aspects (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017:89).

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed for this study after carefully reviewing the available literature on the specific subject of tourism route development (c.f. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). Semi-structured interviews, according to Brown and Danaher (2019:77), are those in which the interviewer prepares a list of questions to ask and follows that list during the interview, but also ensures that the questions elicit open responses from the participants, allowing lines of conversation to develop 'on-site' in ways that could not have been anticipated when the interview schedule was planned. The semi-structured interview is endowed with disadvantages as well as benefits. One of the disadvantages of semi-structured interviews is that they are time-consuming, labour-intensive, and demand high interviewer expertise. Interviews must be articulate, sympathetic, poised, flexible, and informed about the subject (Adams, 2015:493). Furthermore, in using semi-structured interviews, interviewers risk becoming so preoccupied with the interview protocol that they fail to convey the sincerity and

reasonable regard required to build a relationship (Segal, Coolidge, O'Riley & Heinz, 2006:127).

However, there are various benefits or advantages to using semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview promotes mutuality between the interviewer and the interviewee, allowing the interviewer to improvise follow-up questions depending on the participant's responses (Kallio, Pietillä, Johnson & Kangasniemi, 2016:2955). The possibility of previously unknown information emerging is a significant advantage of semi-structured interviews. Since participants can be considered experts based on their prior experiences, new and unexpected knowledge can emerge when they speak openly (O'Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Brozovic & Sinha, 2016:1913). In addition, the most significant advantage of structured interviews is their increased reliability. Structured interviews improve reliability by systemising and standardising the interviewers' questions and presenting those questions (Segal *et al.*, 2006:124). A semi-structured interview guide was the most appropriate data collection tool for this research based on the advantages above.

The survey was conducted through interviews with the FSGLTA board members, executive managers responsible for marketing and tourism, and the Eagle route ambassador during a one-on-one, scheduled interviews in Bloemfontein, Sasolburg and Parys, based on the respondent's availability. The FSGLTA Board of Directors and the Communications and Marketing Manager in marketing and tourism received formal authority to conduct and arrange all interviews.

4.4.4 Interview guide development

It is worth noting that, when creating an interview guide, the researcher should consider several factors, one of which is the amount of information to be obtained. Although the goal of a qualitative researcher is to get a deep knowledge of the phenomena under investigation (Polit & Beck 2010), it is unethical to gather data that does not suit the research's focus (Kallio *et al.*, 2016:2955). The central issue of the study is covered in the interview guide. It provides a concentrated structure for the interview conversation but should not be followed closely. Instead, the goal is to learn more about the study topic by gathering comparable information from each participant and giving them direction on what to talk about (Kallio *et al.*, 2016:2955). There are differences in qualitative research

between open-ended (unstructured), semi-structured, and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews, like survey research, require comprehensive questions to be created in advance, according to Maree (2007:87). It is typically employed in several case studies or bigger sample groups to maintain consistency. Overly structured ones, on the other hand, prevent probing.

Qualitative research aims to make sense of and understand the similarities between words to create a coherent image without losing its complexity and dimensionality. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research attempts to answer questions about how, where, when and why to build a hypothesis or refute an existing theory. Leung (2015:324) further emphasises that contrary to quantitative research, which deals primarily with numerical data and their mathematical interpretations in the framework of a reductionist, rational and purely empirical model, qualitative research deals with non-numeric knowledge and its phenomenological interpretation, which is inextricably linked to human senses and subjectivity. The semi-structured interview guide (Appendix B) consisted of five sections. The relevant literature consulted to guide the inclusion of the various questions is also indicated.

Section A of the interview schedule measured the participants' socio-demographic information, including gender and birth year. Furthermore, the socio-demographic information included the participants' highest qualifications and years of service. The socio-demographic information relating to the participant's gender, year of birth and highest qualification is also traceable in the literature of López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares and Pavón (2011); Donaire and Galí (2008); Xu *et al.* (2016a, b); Lane *et al.* (2009); Clemente-Ricolfe *et al.* (2012); Mukhamadaliyeva and Tilyabaeva (2020); Sharma and Gursoy (2015) and Albalade and Bel (2010).

Section B of the interview schedule mainly dealt with questions related to the participants' job positions, such as their current job responsibility, the level of government that participants report to, what precisely they report about, how they report to their seniors, and the frequency of reporting to their seniors. The job positions and level and frequency of reporting of participants in tourism were included in an array of previous studies such as Bruwer (2003); Keogh (1990); Tyndall *et al.* (2002); Goodwin and Santilli (2009); Yang *et al.* (2012)) and William and Ponford (2009).

Section C included the participants' involvement in the tourism routes, and the following questions were explored. The participants were asked about the names and numbers of tourism routes in the Free State and the year the routes were conceptualised and implemented. They were also asked about the purpose of developing the tourism routes in the province and, more so, in all five districts of the province and their involvement in tourism route development in the Free State. Some of the questions related to the benefits of tourism routes in the community and the intended beneficiaries from the development of the tourism routes, who are currently benefiting from these routes, and how the communities' benefit from the routes. Information regarding the names and number of tourism routes was found in the following studies: Uwaisy *et al.* (2019); Frochot (2009); Stoddart and Rogerson (2008); McQueen (2012) and Clifford (1997). The benefits of tourism routes and different types of benefits were also found in the literature by Besculides *et al.* (2002); Rogerson (2007); Meyer (2004); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Snowball and Courtney (2010); Brás *et al.* (2013); Correia *et al.* (2004) and Hardy (2003).

In Section D, the questions focused on the state of tourism routes in the Free State, and this information was sourced from the participants by responding to the following questions: How do all the Free State tourism routes operate and who is responsible for the management and marketing of the tourism routes in the Free State? The participants were further requested to respond to how these routes are marketed, whether there are challenges in marketing the routes, and how the marketing of these routes can be improved. Tourism routes involve various stakeholders during the developmental stage and their livelihood; therefore, participants also responded to their active involvement and role(s) regarding the tourism routes. Participants were asked whether they have associations involved in the tourism routes and their role in the routes. The question relating to the types of attractions included in the tourism routes was also asked. Participants also responded to whether the routes were ever reviewed since they were developed. Furthermore, participants responded to whether the routes are still operating according to how they were developed and the positive aspects of these routes. Finally, participants were asked to respond to general problems experienced in the operation of the tourism routes. The management and marketing of tourism routes were also traced in previous studies such as Rogerson (2007); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Meyer (2004); Destadli and Jacobsen (2011); Hardy (2003); Ward-Perkins *et al.* (2020);

Antonson and Jacobsen (2014); Lourens (2007a, b); McLaren (2011); Olsen (2003); Nagy (2012); Timothy and Boyd (2015) and Stoddart and Rogerson (2008). The literature on the tourism associations involved in the tourism routes was also consulted in Rogerson (2007); Brower Stahl (2010); Mei *et al.* (2017); Hardy (2003); Cambourne *et al.* (2009); and Murray and Graham (1997). Furthermore, the literature on the challenges prevalent in the tourism routes was also consulted, which included Olsen (2003); Festa *et al.* (2020); Bregoli *et al.* (2016); Mei *et al.* (2017); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Rogerson (2007); Cenamor *et al.* (2017); Tosun (2006); Antonson and Jacobsen (2014) and Ashley and Roe (1998).

In the last section of the interview guide, participants were asked to give more information on stakeholders' role in tourism route development. Participants described the routes' primary stakeholders and the number of non-tourism stakeholders in the tourism routes. All participants responded to questions relating to the residents' level of involvement as stakeholders in the development of tourism routes and how the tourism business owners and non-tourism business owners are involved in the tourism routes. Furthermore, participants highlighted the stakeholders' role in the management and marketing of tourism routes, their level of involvement during tourism development, and how they were involved in developing the tourism routes. In conclusion, participants outlined the benefits of the stakeholders' involvement in the tourism routes and the benefits available for stakeholders. Previous studies related to the stakeholders involved in the tourism routes development and planning were consulted, including Tuohino and Konu (2014); McLaren and Heath (2012); Brouder and Fullerton (2015); McLaren (2011); Bruwer (2003); Kokt (2017); Duarte Alonso (2016); Waligo *et al.* (2015); Byrd (2007); Hardy and Pearson (2018); Chen *et al.* (2012); Pivčević *et al.* (2019); Ruhanen (2009); Saito and Ruhanen (2017); Glen and Mearns (2018) and Dodds and Ko (2012). The non-tourism stakeholder literature in previous studies was also consulted, including Moyle *et al.* (2018); Suntikul (2011); Viljoen (2007); Jovicic (2019); McLaren and Heath (2013); Xiang *et al.* (2008); Saxena and Ilbery (2008); Komppula (2014) and Weber *et al.* (2017). The literature on the benefits of stakeholders involved in the tourism routes and types of benefits included studies by Theodoulidis *et al.* (2017); Pilchta (2019); Kokt (2017); Sheehan and Ritchie (2005); Tuson (2006); Herrera *et al.* (2018); Uysal *et al.* (2012); Rasoolimanesh *et al.* (2017) and Piskóti and Nagy (2016).

The themes derived from the qualitative research in Phase 1 were used to inform the questions in Phase 2.

4.5 Phase 2: The residents and tourism business providers as stakeholders (concurrent mixed-method approach)

This empirical phase used a concurrent triangulation strategy to elaborate on the initial findings, with both quantitative and qualitative phases of data collecting, analysis, and results comparisons done simultaneously. Figure 4.2 illustrates how the two research methods, i.e., quantitative and qualitative, are conducted concurrently, from data collection and analysis to comparison results.

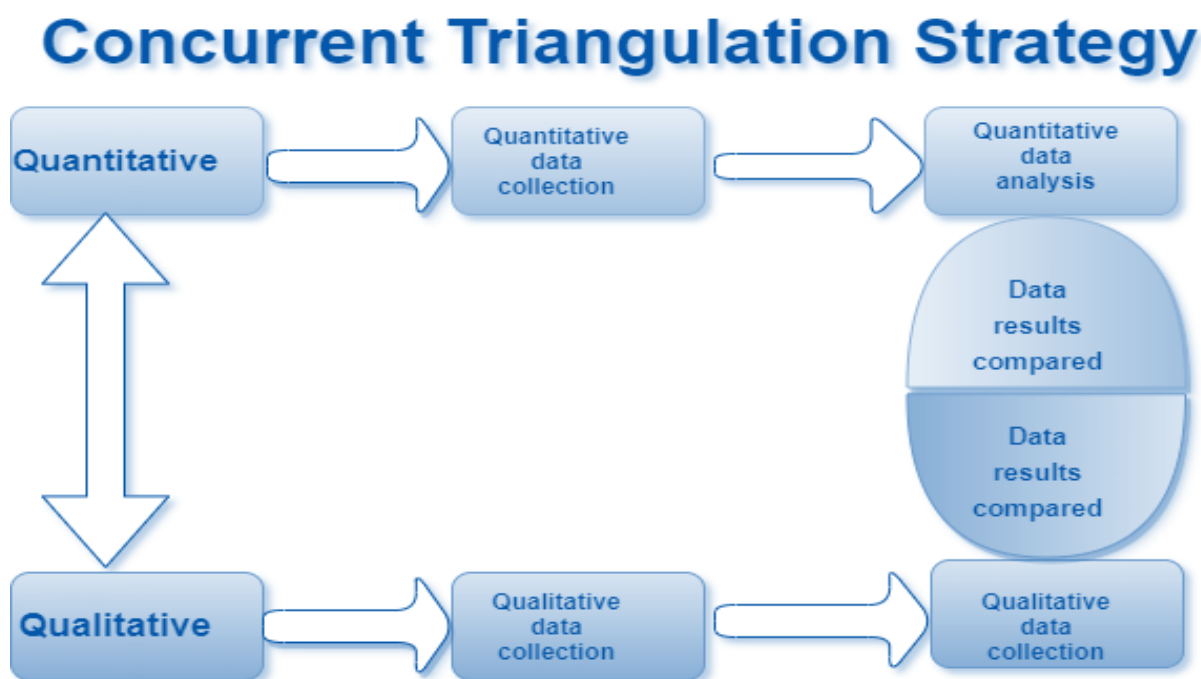


Figure 4-2: Concurrent triangulation strategy

Source: Adapted from Terrell (2012)

The research approach in Figure 4.2 implies that two data collection processes are happening simultaneously. Priority should be equal, although either approach can be chosen. Data are merged during the interpretation phase (Sarma, Uddin, Islam, Rahman, Aaron, Harbour, Banwell & Ahmed, 2021:39). The interpretation highlights either a lack of convergence or convergence that reinforces knowledge assertions. Data integration can also occur during analysis. Within a single study, the primary goal is to confirm,

corroborate, or cross-validate. Many researchers are familiar with its strengths. When opposed to sequential approaches, it takes less time to acquire data. The faults inherent in one design are mitigated (Terrel, 2012:267). The concurrent triangulation strategy is often driven by the notion that 'what people say' is frequently different from 'what people do', so collecting data from various sources effectively increases the study's validity (Oliveira, Texiera & Ebert, 2020:208). Therefore, the concurrent triangulation strategy was used in this empirical phase of the study.

4.5.1 Quantitative approach: Tourism business providers

Tourism route planning tied to Local Economic Development (LED) aims should include a commitment to local small business development (Snowball & Courtney, 2010:571). Simultaneously, creating new tourist routes that appeal to all stakeholders (tourists, enterprises, tourism businesses, and the state) is a subject of much interest (Severino, Martseniuk, Curto & Larysa Neduzha, 2021:3). Because these individual tourism businesses are so intertwined and interconnected, cooperation is a must for their continued growth (Moric, 2013:93). A complementary tourist product which comprises various component goods (e.g., housing, transportation, food, trade, and attractions) combined into a final experience provided to tourists, is the cornerstone of a rural tourism destination.

(a) Sample population and sampling method

A convenience sampling method was regarded as the suitable approach. The convenience sampling method identified all tourism business providers in the Dihlabeng Local Municipality extracted from Molefe (2021). The tourism business providers included transportation services, travel agencies, tour operators, guided tours, accommodation establishments, hospitality businesses, tourist attractions, and outdoor recreation and activities. The total number of tourism business providers is 602, as per Table 4.1 (Molefe, 2021).

Table 4-1: Number of tourism business providers in the selected towns

TOURISM BUSINESS PROVIDERS	CLARENCE	BETHLEHEM	ROSENDAL	FOURIESBURG	PAUL ROUX
Transportation services	5	3	0	0	0
Travel agencies	2	1	0	0	0
Tour operators	0	1	0	0	0
Guided tours and tour guides	5	1	1	5	0
Accommodation establishments	350	40	4	38	5
Hospitality (food and beverage)	30	28	1	5	3
Tourist attractions	30	18	7	9	3
Outdoor recreation and activities	4	0	0	3	0
Total number of providers	426	92	13	60	11

Source: Adapted from Molefe (2021)

Kumar (2014:228) explains that a predetermined sample size guides one based on several other considerations and available resources in quantitative research. This study's sample size was based on guidelines set by Krejcie and Morgan (1970:680) for general research activities, which indicated that the recommended sample size (S) for a population (N) of 1 000 000 is 384. A convenience sampling method was the best approach. Based on the figures provided in Table 4.1, approximately 346 questionnaires (N) were envisaged to be distributed to tourism business providers in five selected towns of the Dihlabeng Local Municipality, wherein 201 were earmarked for Clarens, 73 in Bethlehem, 52 in Fouriesburg, and 10 in Paul Roux and Rosendal, respectively. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, such as the prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic, some people were reluctant to form part of the research even when fieldworkers and the researcher followed strict health and safety protocols. Other respondents were honest enough to mention that they have COVID-19 symptoms, and as a result, such respondents could not participate in the survey. The Dihlabeng Local Municipality is

primarily rural, and some of the tourism businesses are located on farms; due to the high prevalence of crime in farm areas, farm owners heightened their security features to protect themselves. Therefore, some businesses were not easily accessible. As a result, only 241(n) questionnaires were completed with a representation of 129(n) in Clarens, 71(n) in Bethlehem, 21(n) in Fouriesburg, and 10(n) in Paul Roux and Rosendal, respectively.

(b) Survey method

On the eve of the survey, five fieldworkers were grouped and conversed with the questionnaire and its contents as part of orientation and training for almost half a day. All fieldworkers displayed a sense of understanding of the questionnaire content and how the questionnaire should be distributed and completed. The researcher further oriented the fieldworkers on observing the COVID-19 prevention protocols since COVID-19 was still prevalent in most parts of the country during the data collection. Fieldworkers were encouraged to wear mandatory masks and maintain a safe social distance of about two meters from other persons. Each was provided with a pocket-sized hand sanitiser bottle during the data collection, and each was provided with liquid soap to wash hands with running water when necessary. Immediately after the data collection orientation and COVID-19 awareness on observing protocols, all fieldworkers were assigned to the selected towns to collect the data. All fieldworkers accompanied by the researcher started fieldwork in Paul Roux on the first day and proceeded to Rosendal the next day and Fouriesburg on the third day. This was done because the sample size for the towns mentioned above was reasonably small, and data were easy and quick to collect. From the 11th to the 14th of September 2021, data collection continued in Bethlehem and Clarens as these two towns had a significant sample size and required more attention and time to distribute questionnaires among tourism business providers. The data collection process commenced in all identified towns, and most questionnaires were collected immediately after completion for capture and analysis. However, due to the unavailability of other tourism business owners and responsible persons in other towns, some tourism businesses were visited twice after the business owner had appointed their relevant person to assist with completing the questionnaire. The data collection continued uninterrupted for seven (7) days until 14 September 2021. The researcher continually monitored the data collection process by ensuring that all fieldworkers adhered to the

strict COVID-19 safety protocols and that no COVID-19 incident nor injuries were reported during and after data collection by either the researcher or fieldworkers.

(c) Development of the measuring instrument

The questionnaire, directed at the tourism business providers, was developed from previous studies and the results from the qualitative research. The questionnaire consisted of four main sections (Appendix C). In Section A, the questionnaire measured the type of business the respondent owns or works for, the number of years of business existence, job position, and the business's main target market(s). Section B measured aspects relating to tourism business providers as stakeholders in the tourism route, particularly how they formed part of planning, development, and management. Furthermore, this section measured the prospect of tourism development further along the Eagle Route, whether it is essential to support tourism business providers for sustainable tourism developments and whether participating tourism business providers are involved as stakeholders in the tourism route development. Ten statements were measured on a five-point Likert scale of agreement (1 = completely disagree and 5 = completely agree).

Section C measured key considerations and barriers in tourism route development. Fourteen statements were measured on a five-point Likert scale of importance (1 = not important at all and 5 = extremely important) as key considerations for developing sustainable tourism routes. In the section related to the barriers to tourism route development, 30 statements were measured on a five-point Likert scale of agreement (1 = completely disagree and 5 = completely agree). Lastly, Section D measured tourism business providers' perceived or expected tourism route benefits, and participants were requested to provide possible suggestions regarding the involvement of tourism business providers as stakeholders in the tourism route. Twenty-three statements were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = completely disagree and 5 = completely agree). The studies previously conducted by Hardy (2003), McLaren and Heath (2013), Meyer (2004), Olsen (2003), Lourens (2003), Kirkman *et al.* (2013), Alexis-Thomas (2020), Zaiadacz (2015), Anderek (2009), Morrison *et al* (2001), Cole (2014) and Gursoy (2015), among others, served as a baseline for the development of the questionnaire. For other relevant literature consulted for developing the measuring instrument, please refer to Appendix E.

4.5.2 Qualitative approach: Resident perspectives

This section accounts for the qualitative approach wherein twenty-five (25) interviews were conducted amongst the residents of Paul Roux, Rosendal, Bethlehem, Fouriesburg, and Clarens.

(a) Sample population, sampling method and sample size

For this phase, the permanent residents of the Dihlabeng Local Municipality from Clarens, Bethlehem, Fouriesburg, Paul Roux, and Rosendal were interviewed. The total population of the five towns in Dihlabeng Municipality are outlined in the table below (Statistics SA, 2011).

Table 4-2: Primary towns and population of Dihlabeng Local Municipality

TOWN/TOWNSHIP	POPULATION PER TOWN
Bethlehem	16 236
Clarens	751
Paul Roux	437
Rosendal	131
Fouriesburg	664

Source: Adapted from Statistics SA (2011)

Within each intra-strata, any permanent community members (identified through a screening question) could form part of the study. Since the earliest quota sampling applications in the early 20th century, many references have been made to its inadequacy for specific purposes, such as obtaining population-representative samples (De Rada & Martín, 2014:391). On the other hand, quota sampling is particularly beneficial when a probability sample is unavailable, but a sample representative of the research population is still desired (Sharma, 2017:751). Quota sampling is a non-probability version of stratified random sampling, in which a sample is divided into sub-groups based on standard criteria such as age and other parameters. This technique ensures that all significant subgroups in the sample are adequately represented (Gorny & Napierała, 2016:647; Taherdoost, 2016:22). As a result, quota sampling is a method of attaining sample size purposes for some sub-populations, as there are no recommendations for achieving these quotas (Iliyasu & Etikan, 2021:25). Therefore, quota sampling was suitable for this study after thoroughly analysing all sampling methods and techniques.

The municipality comprises about 87.4% of the black African population, 1.5% coloured, 0.5% Indian/Asian, 10% white, and others at 0.2%. The gender parity of the municipality is represented by 52.5% females and only 47.5% males. In the statistics mentioned above, about 44% have some primary education, 32% represent some secondary education, while 11.1% completed secondary school, with only 1.4% of people with higher education qualifications (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The study sought to source the perceptions of all cultures in the area, and the only suitable way is to examine the race distribution and divide the interviews specifically to the same ratio. According to the 2011 census figures, 75.5% of the population speak Sesotho, 2.4% speak English, 11.6% speak Afrikaans, and 4.7% speak IsiZulu. Therefore, the researcher attempted to interview five community members in each selected town, resulting in 25 interviews. When conducting qualitative research, a sample size of 15-20 is more effective when participants are homogeneous (Creswell & Creswell, 2017:167).

The representation of the residents of Dihlabeng Municipality, as per Table 4.2, was selected based on whether they are permanent residents of their respective towns, whether they are adults and whether they understand the language used in the semi-structured interview guide. Based on the population's demographic profile, at least three interviews in each town were aimed at the black African population. A screening question was first asked to ensure that only residents of the town form part of the interview. The researcher also anticipated that many members might be unaware of the route, and the interview guide provided this. The interviews began on September 7, 2021 and ended on November 22, 2021. Out of the twenty-five interviews from five different towns of Dihlabeng Local Municipality, eight were conducted in Fouriesburg, and six were conducted in Bethlehem, five in Rosendal, four in Clarens, and two in Paul Roux. Initially, it was envisaged that an equal distribution of five residents per town would be interviewed. However, some participants were reluctant to face-to-face interviews due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Four participants also expressed discomfort with doing oral interviews due to COVID-19 and opted for a written interview which they emailed to the researcher.

(b) Data collection method

Various elements should be considered when deciding on the appropriate interview strategy for each study. The research objectives, the reliability of the findings, the

potential benefits and drawbacks of the data collection method, such as the time required to conduct interviews, expenses and accessibility, researcher familiarity with the technology, and the subject population's level of comfort all need to be considered (Hawkins, 2018:493).

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed for this research phase after an in-depth review of the available literature on the direct subject of tourism route development. Adhabi and Anozie (2017:89) highlight that, unlike structured interviews, semi-structured interviews do not have a set of rules that must be followed. The interviewee's response to the researcher's question or topics will determine how they are implemented. Semi-structured interviews facilitate the exchange of information by allowing respondents to express themselves freely and unrestrictedly regarding the previously identified subjects, with the researcher posing open-ended questions (Gupta, Antony, Lacher & Douglas, 2020:182). The semi-structured interview is typically based on a script, with the topic matter and portions of the questions set before the interview begins. However, it also allows for changes or additions as the interview and research project progresses (Ramos-Morcillo, Costa, Moral-García & Ruzafa-Martínez, 2020:3). Other scholars support this stance, suggesting that semi-structured in-depth interviews are qualitative researchers' primary source of data (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017:89).

(c) The development of the interview schedule

A semi-structured interview guide was developed (Appendix D). Qualitative semi-structured interviews can study how discourses, assumptions, and ideas in broader society impact participants' experiences, meanings, and reality (Evans & Lewis. 2018:2). To generate sophisticated, detailed ideas and descriptions of the topic of interest, a successful schedule includes significant prompts. Prompts must be relevant to the participants, make sense, and be relevant (Bearman, 2019:4). The researcher used semi-structured interviews for this phase, wherein the interview guide consisted of three sections. Section A of the semi-structured interview guide was mainly about the participant's profile. In comparison, Section B contained questions regarding the Eagle route awareness derived from the literature of Zeng, Shen, Jiang and Telea (2019). Section C was inclusive of questions relating to residents as stakeholders of the tourism route, and the following literature was consulted, Woo, Uysal and Sirgy (2018); Duarte Alonso and Nyanjom (2016); Chen (2015); Poudel and Nyaupane PhD (2016); Sánchez

Cañizares, Castillo Canalejo and Núñez Tabales (2016); Morupisi and Mokgalo (2017); Kantsperger, Thees and Eckert (2019); Liu and Ma (2017); Chen and Chen (2016); Sharma and Gursoy (2015) and Yoon, Kim and Kim (2015).

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodology followed in both phases of the research and explored the applicable methodological considerations. The next chapter provides the perceptions of the government as tourism route planners regarding the development of tourism routes (Phase 1). The first section focuses on the methods used for data analysis, while the second section presents the qualitative research results.

CHAPTER 5 : TOURISM ROUTE PLANNERS' PERSPECTIVE ON STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This research aims to develop a framework towards sustainable tourism route development through stakeholder involvement in South Africa, with the Eagle tourism route in the Free State Province as a case study. In addition, the sub-objectives of this research included the identification of the main travel routes in South Africa, the routes' classification types, the management and involvement of route stakeholders (government and communities), stakeholder participation, and the economic benefits of tourism routes through a systematic literature review. The study consists of three results chapters. This chapter examines route planners' opinions through qualitative data. Chapter 6 examines tourism business providers' opinions (quantitative approach) and Chapter 7 residents' opinions of towns as stakeholders in which the tourism routes transverse (qualitative approach). This was done to ultimately develop a framework that will guide developers of tourism routes during route development to ensure that residents are involved as key stakeholders. This chapter conducts an empirical analysis through interviews where tourism route planners (government) were interviewed regarding their functions as stakeholders through a semi-structured interview guideline under Objective 3. This analysis is essential as the results informed the development of the measuring instruments aimed at the tourism business providers and community to establish their perceptions regarding their role as stakeholders during the planning and development of tourism routes. Therefore, the analysis of the planners, businesses and community perceptions will aid in reaching the study's goal by developing a stakeholders' involvement framework for tourism route development.

5.2 The participants and conducted interviews

The researcher initiated this study immediately after the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) approved the proposal and assigned an ethical clearance number (NWU-01317-19-A4). The researcher sent a request letter to conduct research with the FSGLTA on the Free State tourism routes. The request was approved almost six months after it was sent to the FSGLTA human resource department in Bloemfontein, and there were no reasons for the delay. In the approval letter, the acting

general manager of tourism and marketing was assigned as the gatekeeper and assisted the researcher in securing all interviews for this study. The envisaged participants, i.e. tourism planners, were interviewed and participated freely and valuably.

The research participants were all employees of the FSGLTA, with four based in Bloemfontein at the head office and one based in the Thabo Mofutsanyane District at the regional office. The researcher ensured that participants' interests were protected and upheld the key principles of ethics of care for the participants' benefit. The researcher had to assure participants that their identity would be withheld and that all information would be treated confidentially. The participants were afforded five minutes to go through the first page of the interview schedule to understand the purpose of the research and the implications of participating in the research. After carefully reading the interview rules, all participants signed them acknowledging that they understood the study's aim and accepted the interview's terms and conditions. Furthermore, all participants gave consent to the researcher for the interviews to be recorded.

The researcher conducted five interviews with all the earmarked participants who are employees of the FSGLTA. The first two interviews were conducted on 3 October 2019 in Bloemfontein, the third interview was conducted on 21 October 2019 in Sasolburg, the fourth interview was conducted on 20 November 2019 in Parys, and the last interview was conducted on 1 December 2019, also in Parys as indicated in Table 5.1. Interviews were conducted in an ethical manner, wherein participants were asked the preferred languages for the interview, and all agreed to have an interview in English.

Table 5-1: Participant's date, location and duration of the interviews

Participants	Date	Location	Duration
1	03 October 2019	Bloemfontein	00:35:57
2	03 October 2019	Bloemfontein	00:25:42
3	21 October 2019	Sasolburg	00:26:17
4	20 November 2019	Parys	00:27:39
5	01 December 2019	Parys	00:42:34

Furthermore, during the interviews, participants were allowed to ask for clarity if any questions were unclear, and the researcher was always ready to assist in such instances. At the end of each interview, participants were asked whether they wished to add something they did not mention. Some added, and some were content in how they

answered. The researcher thanked all participants graciously at the end of the interviews and expressed mutual sentiments on meeting again in the future for a similar purpose.

5.3 Thematic content analysis

There are numerous parallels between qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis, such as cross-data analysis, philosophical foundation, attention to description and interpretation in data analysis, consideration of data context, and theme search (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016:101). The term 'theme' refers to the fundamental output of data analysis that produces practical outcomes in research (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016:101). In qualitative data analysis, the dualism proposed by qualitative content analysis (QCA) advocates the use of 'inductive' or 'deductive' approaches or argument styles (Armat, Assarroudi, Rad, Sharifi & Heydari, 2018:219).

The inductive approach refers to "approaches that largely use extensive raw data readings to infer concepts and themes." It requires methodically combing over data line by line and giving codes to paragraphs or portions of the text as concepts emerge (Azungah, 2018:391). Conversely, the deductive approach leverages a pre-existing theory, framework, or other researcher-driven focus to discover themes of interest. Furthermore, the deductive approach effectively focuses on a specific feature of the data or a single finding that may be best illuminated or understood within a previously established theory or frame (Kiger & Varpio, 2020:3). For the thematic analysis of the data collected during the interviews, the inductive approach was used to analyse the data as interviewees' responses determined the themes.

The thematic analysis was conducted to analyse the responses. The analysis focused on participants' tourism planning experiences in developing tourism routes in the Free State. It was important to read all transcripts to obtain a comprehensive sense of the captured data. After finalising the interviews, data were transcribed from an audio recorder (researcher's cell phone) with the assistance of a professional transcriber for analysis. Notwithstanding its centrality in qualitative data analysis, transcription activities remain superficially studied. Oliver *et al.* (2005:1273) highlight that transcriptions are not uncommonly viewed as a behind-the-scenes component of data management rather than a research topic. Transcription is a valuable way of translating digitally recorded interview data into transcripts. However, methodologically speaking, transcription represents the

original spoken text (recorded speech data) in written discourse and the study and interpretation of data instances (Widodo, 2014:101).

The information was obtained through an interview schedule wherein one-on-one interviews were conducted with all participants. These interviews mainly comprised closed and open-ended questions where participants could respond to questions based on their expertise, experiences, and opinions. All participants' responses were used and interpreted to better understand stakeholder involvement in developing tourism routes in the Free State. The participants' opinions and that of the tourism business providers and residents as stakeholders (next chapter) were used towards a framework for sustainable tourism route development in South Africa.

The thematic analysis process consists of sequential steps in conducting the analysis (Kiger & Varpio, 2020:3; Scharp & Sanders, 2019:118; Maree *et al.*, 2019:134; Nowel *et al.*, 2017:4; Pearse, 2019:264). These steps are listed and discussed below in detail.

- Step 1: Familiarisation with the data. The initial step in theme analysis is to become acquainted with the complete dataset, which requires regular and active reading of the material. Depending on the study, the dataset may comprise interviews, focus groups, recorded observations, field notes, and journal entries. After completing all five interviews with the data at hand, the recorded interviews were duly transcribed by the researcher and filed.
- Step 2: The data are being coded. The initial analytic phase of the process, coding, assists in organising data at a granular, accurate level. Researchers can begin collecting notes on potential data items of interest, queries, data item connections, and other early ideas after completing the familiarisation process in step 1. This is the start of phase 2's coding process.
- Step 3: Categorising codes and comparisons. In this step, themes are then determined from interview questions as per the deductive analysis. Furthermore, subthemes are created from codes, codes are classified based on description similarities, and commonalities between subthemes and literature are identified.
- Step 4: Report analysis process and findings. Finally, the most popular approach is a narrative passage to convey the analysis's findings. This step is a detailed discussion of main themes with individual perspectives and discussions, interconnecting themes and quotations.

5.4 Issues of trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers are concerned with trustworthiness, which raises the question: “Can the results be trusted?” There are several concepts and standards for trustworthiness, but the best-known criteria are integrity, transferability, reliability and confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). These criteria were previously outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and later by Guca and Lincoln (1994) (Connelly, 2016:435). Each of these criteria, as well as the commonly employed methods, will be described. However, not every procedure is used in every study. The most significant factor is the study’s credibility or belief in the study’s validity and, therefore, the conclusions. This concept is equivalent to internal validity (Connelly, 2016:435). The purposive sampling design improved the data’s credibility and rigour. In terms of credibility, this sample strategy increases the chance of ‘member checking’, which promotes the trustworthiness of the findings (Campbell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young, Bywaters & Walker, 2020:657). Following credibility is transferability. By sufficiently characterising a scenario, one can assess how the findings are drawn transferrable to other times, settings, situations, and people. Confirmability refers to an audit trail with a detailed record of the research steps, from starting a research project to formulating and reporting findings (Connelly, 2016:435). These are records that are preserved on what transpired throughout an investigation. Lastly, a phenomenological research method allows the researcher to study vast amounts of data without bias, identify additional syntactic features, improve reliability, and permit replication (Lemon & Hayes, 2020:606).

The research method relies heavily on trustworthiness. Attending to the language of trustworthiness and the main actions of reliability contribute to the thoroughness and quality of the research product (Amankwaa, 2016:123).

5.5 Results from the qualitative research

The descriptive results aim to discuss the findings concerning respondents' demographic profiles, the reasons for developing tourism routes in the Free State, and the number and names of the existing tourism routes in the province. The results further include aspects relating to the primary stakeholders of the tourism routes, stakeholders' roles, and the management and marketing of tourism routes. These results also include the level of

stakeholder involvement in the development of tourism routes and the benefits and current beneficiaries of tourism routes in the Free State.

5.5.1 Information regarding participants' demographic information

From Table 5.2, most of the participants in this research were males, and only two were females. The participants were generally well-educated individuals. The most experienced participant had 12 years of service within the FSGLTA, and the least experienced participant had three years of service.

Table 5-2: Demographic information of participants

Participants	Gender	Year of birth	Highest qualification	Years of service
1	Male	1969	Master's	12 years
2	Female	1987	BA degree	3 years
3	Female	1970	MBA	10 years
4	Male	1973	Degree	5 years
5	Male	1967	Matric	11 years

5.5.2 Information regarding participants' job positions

This section considers information relating to the participant's job positions, roles and duties, and the number of years in their positions and further analyses every participant's reporting line and frequency of reporting thereof.

Participant 1

Participant 1 is responsible for keeping the Entity's image in good shape. Furthermore, the participant disseminates information to stakeholders on the Entity's services. Participant 1 has 12 years of service with the FSGLTA, reporting to the National Department of Tourism quarterly through the National Tourism Communicators Forum on all imperatives of communications as per the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) and to the CEO through the Executive Management Team, through monthly written reports and one-on-one meetings on the alignment of the tourism unit and budgetary processes.

Participant 2

Participant 2 is responsible for the database of all tourism establishments such as accommodation, restaurants and hospitality in general. This participant reports to the acting general manager of tourism and marketing about events taking place within the route and assists and advises all eligible accommodation establishments on the grading processes with the Tourism Cristal Grading of South Africa (TCGSA). Participant 2 reports monthly to senior management through written reports and does presentations for other stakeholders about the route. From Table 5.2, Participant 2 has three years of service with the FSGLTA and reports to the provincial level.

Participant 3

Participant 3 has ten years of service with the FSGLTA, responsible for the Entity's strategic vision and direction. The participant also acts as an advisor to the provincial government by ensuring that the Entity is well-governed and follows all its operating statutes. Participant 3 reports to the executive council member (MEC) for the Department of Economics, Small Businesses, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA) on governance issues, control efficiencies, budgeting processes, the general performance of the Entity and cost containment measures to be applied when necessary. Participant 3 reports to the MEC from time to time if the need arises or when the MEC convenes a meeting on audit matters and other important matters relating to the Entity. However, there are scheduled quarterly meetings with the MEC, which Participant 3 attends for reporting purposes.

Participant 4

According to Table 5.2, Participant 4 has five years of service with the FSGLTA, responsible for the Entity's overall management. Participant 4 reports monthly to the province per the set standard procedures about the Entity's overall performance regarding financial and non-financial matters and reports to the portfolio committee externally and internally to the board every month.

Participant 5

Finally, Participant 5 has 11 years of service with the Entity and reports to the MEC of DESTEA at the provincial level. Participant 5 submits written non-financial reports to the MEC and quarterly reports to the standing committee on tourism quarterly regarding the programmes embarked on, and all achieved targets over the entire fiscal or financial year. The participant was asked whether he reports to the national department, and he indicated that he is the chairperson of the [identifiable information removed] forum responsible for all issues pertaining to gambling in all provinces. Participant 5 added that there are several constant engagements between himself, the CEO, and the general manager. Participant 5 said, “I have many years of experience; hence we have a young CEO who leans on me for support and tries to give it to him (experience) all the time”.

5.5.3 Numbers and names of tourism routes in the Free State

Table 5.3 shows the participants' views and knowledge regarding the number and names of existing tourism routes in the Free State. All participants are conversant with the names of the five tourism routes in the Free State and their locations in the various regions. Furthermore, participants are aware of the five regions of the Free State Province and all routes' themes in different localities. Participants 4 and 5 further explained that the Cheetah route is in the centre of the province, with the Springbok route in the south of the province, and that the Flamingo route is in the west of the province, while the Lion route is in the north. Finally, the Eagle route, known as the province's jewel, is in the eastern part of the province.

Table 5-3: Numbers and names of tourism routes in the Free State

Participants	Number of tourism routes	Names of tourism routes
1	5 routes	“There are five routes, namely Cheetah route, Eagle route, Lion route, Flamingo route and Springbok.”
2	5 routes	“The Cheetah route in the centre of the Free State, Springbok route in the south, in the west in Lejweleputswa region there is Flamingo route, in the north of the Free State there is Lion route, and in the eastern part of the Free State there is Eagle route, which is known to be the jewel of the province.”

Participants	Number of tourism routes	Names of tourism routes
3	5 routes	"The Eagle route in Thabo Mofutsanyane region, the Lion route in Fezile Dabi region, Springbok route in Xhariep, Cheetah route in Mangaung Metro Municipality and Flamingo route in Lejweleputswa region."
4	5 routes	"Cheetah route, the Eagle route, Flamingo route, Lion route and Springbok route."
5	5 routes	"The Lion route, Flamingo route, Springbok route, Cheetah route and Eagle route."

According to Table 5.3, there are five tourism routes in the Free State, representing every district municipality with its unique name and theme. The five routes are the Lion route in the Fezile Dabi District Municipality, the Flamingo route in the Lejweleputswa District Municipality, and the Eagle route, which is found in the Thabo Mofutsanyane District, the Cheetah route in the Mangaung Metro Municipality, and Springbok route in the Xhariep District Municipality.

5.5.4 The conceptualisation and implementation of tourism routes

From Table 5.4, there is evidence of conflicting statements by some participants. Participants 1, 4 and 5 indicated that the Free State tourism routes were conceptualised in 2012, while Participants 2 and 4 stated that they are unaware of when the routes were conceptualised and implemented. However, Participant 3 went against the rest and stated that the Free State tourism routes were conceptualised in 2014 and implemented in the same year.

Table 5-4: The conceptualisation and implementation of tourism routes

Participants	Year conceptualised	Year implemented
1	"The routes were conceptualised in February 2012 when the new CEO took over."	"The routes were launched in 2014 during the tourism Indaba. All these took place after some desktop research and strings of meeting and stakeholder's engagements."
2	"That I do not know"	-
3	"The routes were launched in 2014"	"They were implemented in the same year after they were conceptualised".
4	"The routes were conceptualised in 2012 by the former Free State Tourism Authority (FSTA) before the incorporation with the Free State Gambling and Liquor Authority"	-

Participants	Year conceptualised	Year implemented
5	"The routes were conceptualised in 2012"	"They were implemented in the same year (2012)."

From Table 5.4, Participant 1 added that routes were implemented in 2014, but Participant 5 concluded that the routes were implemented in 2012. However, according to Free Daily Email Newsletter (2014), the 'Big 5' concept was launched in 2013 by the FSTA to move to a coherent marketing approach to promote the province. In this instance, most participants are unsure about the actual date the tourism routes were conceptualised and implemented. It is evident enough further to probe these questions with residents during the quantitative research to source the correct date of initiation and implementation conclusively.

5.6 Reasons for developing tourism routes in the Free State

In route conceptualisation and implementation, FSGLTA and the board must have had a particular purpose for developing tourism routes.

Theme 1: Importance of tourism route development

From the responses in Table 5.5, one code was identified: tourism routes were developed in the Free State mainly for *tourism packaging and marketing*.

Table 5-5: Reasons for developing tourism routes in the Free State

Participants	Reasons for developing tourism routes in the Free State	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
1	"The purpose for which the routes were developed was to have a business proposition and to have a selling point so that tourism products can be packaged and not to sell the province loosely."	Business proposition Packaged tourism products	Tourism packaging and marketing
2	"The idea was for everybody to get involved to be part of the route so that everybody can be marketed."	Everyone involved in route marketing	Tourism packaging and marketing
3	"When you take a product like a province to the market, it needs to be packaged and every product finds audience within a platform"	Packaged province marketing	Tourism packaging and marketing

Participants	Reasons for developing tourism routes in the Free State	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
4	"The fact that it was important to integrate tourism products and package them to have something to sell to tourists"	Integrate and package tourism products	Tourism packaging and marketing
5	"We found that the Free State Province was marketed at the heart of South Africa. We did not necessarily attract tourists and only promoted the previously advantaged tourism establishments and totally neglected the previously disadvantaged tourism attractions. The tourism routes concept encompasses every tourism product and hence I decided with this particular concept of the Big Five."	Marketing and inclusion of previously disadvantaged tourism attractions	Tourism packaging and marketing

From the information above, it is evident that the development of tourism routes in the Free State was mainly to integrate and package all tourism products and market them together as one product, as indicated by most participants in Table 5.5. This information will further be probed during the quantitative survey to corroborate the actual tourism products in the Free State and further analyse tourism sustainability to address the economic, environmental, and social responsibility during route development as indicated in this study's objective.

5.7 The level of involvement in the tourism routes in the Free State

Since the participants are individuals with different positions, departments, and responsibilities within the FSGLTA, in this section, participants shed light on their respective levels of involvement in the Free State routes.

Theme 2: Tourism planners' involvement in tourism route development

Based on the identified codes from the responses (Table 5.6), their main level of involvement in the routes revolved around *route management*, while Participant 1 highlighted *route governance* and Participant 2, *route promotion*.

Table 5-6: The level of involvement in the tourism routes in the Free State

Participants	The level of involvement in the tourism routes of the Free State	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
1	"We are working on relationships with the Local Economic Development (LED)	Working, consolidating and collaborating with	Route governance

Participants	The level of involvement in the tourism routes of the Free State	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
	within local and district municipalities under tourism managers where we consolidate and share programs quarterly. We also have a provincial standing committee and collaborate with municipalities”.	local and district municipalities	
2	“I am responsible for information gathering, which will later be taken to the tourism Indaba to market the route. Furthermore, I am also responsible for summer campaigns wherein pamphlets with information on routes will be distributed at the filling stations during peak season.”	Information gathering Summer campaigns	Route promotion
3	“The FSGLTA needs to ensure that the route concept is implemented effectively and that tourists are taken to these routes by the route ambassadors. Furthermore, the Province's mandate is to grow the tourism economy through tourism routes”	Effective implementation of the route Growing the economy through tourism	Route management
4	“As the [identifiable information removed] and looking after the Entity, and as the destination marketing agency, the Entity is responsible for the management and marketing of the province, and his role is to give strategic direction.”	Management and marketing of the route Strategic direction	Route management
5	“As initially conceptualising it, gives me direct involvement from the control point of view, now as the [identifiable information removed], we are the custodians of the Big 5 (tourism routes of the Free State) and as the [identifiable information removed] I have to give direction as to where the Big 5 goes, that’s my involvement now”	Custodianship Future direction	Route management

As seen in Table 5.6, most participants are more involved at the strategic level, wherein their level of involvement in the tourism routes of the Free State is mainly to control and give strategic direction on how routes must be marketed and managed. Furthermore, some participants are mainly involved and working with the local and district municipalities

to gather tourism-related information and eventually develop and distribute pamphlets during peak season and at the tourism Indaba, as indicated in Table 5.6. It is evident that none of the participants is involved or collaborating with the communities in the tourism routes in the Free State. Therefore, community members will also be asked to give their views regarding their level of involvement in the tourism route of the Free State Province, as indicated in Objective 2 of this study.

5.8 The benefits, intended and current beneficiaries of tourism route

In Table 5.7, participants provided more information on the benefits of tourism routes in the Free State, intended and current beneficiaries, how they benefit, and the types of benefits envisaged from the tourism routes. Every participant had a distinct perspective on the benefits and, more importantly, who benefits. As a result, the codes proposed are linked to the specific beneficiaries identified by the participants. Furthermore, only one participant mentioned the community, prompting further assessment of the community perspective in the second phase of the research.

Theme 3: The benefits of tourism route development

Regarding the **general benefits** of tourism routes and the identified codes, *inclusive tourism* was mentioned twice, with *packaged offerings*, *unified management*, *economic benefits*, and *destination branding* only mentioned once. Concerning how **current beneficiaries benefit** from the tourism routes, *increased visitor numbers* were mentioned twice. The remaining codes (*effective target marketing*, *infrastructure development and improved signage*, *community entrepreneurship*, *increased tourist spending*, *effective tourism product marketing*, and *economic benefits*) were mentioned once.

Table 5-7: The benefits, intended and current beneficiaries of tourism routes

Participants	Benefits of tourism routes	Keyword(s)	Code(s)	Intended beneficiaries of the tourism routes	Who is currently benefiting?	How do they benefit?	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
1	Package our products, as they were mainly loose If there are no towns there are no products, we just promote the destinations that are there	Package products Destination promotion	Packaged offerings	Tourism product owners Tour guides learn about these packages that have been developed Guesthouses, night life and clubs begin to be part of the packages	The tourism product owners.	"We firstly did not have huge numbers of arrivals. Our international arrivals have gone up. Our source market has moved away from being Germany and Netherlands. We now have UK as source market"	Low arrival numbers Increased international arrivals. Change in source markets.	Effective target marketing
2	To get everybody under one umbrella To show stakeholders that everything works together like a chain	One umbrella Working together	Unified management	Not sure	Accommodation establishments Tourist attractions	"Draws feet to accommodation establishments Improved infrastructure and signage"	Increased visitor numbers Infrastructure and signage	Increased visitor numbers Infrastructure development and improved signage
3	The routes draw many feet to an area Increases occupancy rates Economic enhancement	Increase visitors, occupancy rates, economic enhancement	Increased tourism Economic benefits	The communities, both domestic and international tourists	The communities' benefit	They sell their wares (potteries and commodities). High occupancy rates Retail shops as tourists spend their money in that area	Selling of wares Occupancy rates Tourist spending	Community entrepreneurship Increased visitor numbers Increased tourist spending
4	It has given us an identity as a tourism destination Small products found audience for	Tourism destination identity	Destination branding	Product owners in the whole Province and the routes were converted for marketing	The market itself	Tourism products are marketed at Tourism Indaba	Marketing of tourism products	Effective tourism product marketing

Participants	Benefits of tourism routes	Keyword(s)	Code(s)	Intended beneficiaries of the tourism routes	Who is currently benefiting?	How do they benefit?	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
	marketing within the route	Small product promotion	Inclusive tourism	purposes into five routes				
5	Inclusion of tourism attractions One can be part of the Big 5, by contacting our department, complete forms and we will include you on our website	Tourism attraction inclusion	Inclusive tourism	Tourism as an industry So, the benefits, the spin-off is humongous from tourism, the more the feet we can the area, the better it is for tourism	Product owners and the staff who work for the product owners and the entire product, for example, guesthouses and all those involved in the guesthouse will benefit and obviously this adds to the economy of the Province	Economic enhancement The tourism industry, in my opinion, is one winner in South Africa	Economic benefits	Economic benefits

Participant 1 indicated that one of the benefits of tourism routes in the Free State was to package tourism products, as they were initially scattered. Participant 1 consistently reported that both the intended and current beneficiaries are the tourism product owners, and the province is now experiencing high numbers of tourist arrivals. The participant reported that the Free State's source market had shifted substantially from Germany and the Netherlands to the United Kingdom (UK).

Participant 2 is no different from Participant 1 and stated that one benefit is getting everybody under one umbrella to make information readily available. Though Participant 2 was unsure about the intended beneficiaries, the participant indicated that the current beneficiaries are the accommodation establishments and attractions with poor or no signage (leading to tourist attractions). Participant 2 further stated that the tourism routes draw feet to accommodation establishments, and beds get filled for their own benefit. Participant 2 added that one significant challenge of the routes is poor infrastructure.

According to Participant 3, tourism routes attract many visitors to an area and increase occupancy rates. Other related activities within the routes will stimulate the area's economic growth. The intended and current beneficiaries are the communities and domestic and international tourists. Participant 3 emphasises that community members benefit by selling their wares (for example, pottery, commodities and vendible), and the tourism product owners catch up in high occupancy rates from time to time. Non-tourism enterprises such as retail shops also benefit when tourists spend their money by buying from their shops.

Participant 4 stated that tourism routes gave them an identity as a tourism destination, allowing small products to find an audience for marketing purposes from within. Participant 4 briefly indicated that the routes' intended beneficiaries were the market and the product owners in the province; conversely, the market is also the current beneficiary. On the issue of the type of benefits and how the market benefits, participant 4 was quoted as saying: "The fact that we take products from the same routes to a platform like Tourism Indaba, this is just one but one example of how these products are benefiting from the Big five route concept".

According to Participant 5, the benefits of tourism routes related to the inclusivity of tourism attractions and added that anyone could be part of the Big Five by completing

forms included on the website. Participant 5 reiterates that the intended beneficiaries were tourism as an industry, stakeholders, product owners, staff members of the tourism establishments, and communities, and concluded by saying, “the spinoffs are humongous from tourism, the more the feet we have in the area, the better it is for tourism.” In terms of the current beneficiaries, Participant 5 stated unswervingly that the current beneficiaries are the product owners and staff who work for the product owners and the entire product. The participant added that an example is that all those involved in the guesthouse business will benefit, which adds to the province's economy. Concerning how all will benefit from the tourism routes, Participant 5 gave an example of accommodation establishments that, at some point, must buy more soap, more liquor, and more food, and all these are purchased from secondary and tertiary businesses that add value to the establishment and concluded by saying, “the tourism industry, in my opinion, is one winner in South Africa.”

It is evident from the results above that most of the participants from all different levels of responsibilities in the entity gave striking views on the issues raised above. To summarise, as indicated in Table 5.7, most participants indicated that some of the benefits of tourism routes were to package and include all tourism products under one umbrella as these products were detached from each other. In terms of the intended beneficiaries of the tourism routes, three of the participants out of five mentioned that product owners are the intended beneficiaries, confirming the actual objective of the FSGLTA regarding the development of tourism routes. Table 5.7 reveals that most participants indicated that tourism product owners currently benefit from the tourism routes. Concerning how tourism product owners benefit, Table 5.7 indicates that developing tourism routes has led to more local and international tourists in the Province and high occupancy rates at accommodation establishments. The responses in Table 5.6 answered some of the essential questions of this study. These questions were posed to the community in the next chapter to confirm the information presented by the FSGLTA representatives. Furthermore, as indicated in the objective of this study, the literature on the benefits of stakeholders' participation in tourism routes development was also analysed.

5.9 The operation of Free State tourism routes

The successful implementation and purpose of developing tourism routes were thoroughly explained in the previous sections, and the participants were afforded another opportunity to describe the operation of tourism routes in the Free State. Participants 1 and 2 believe that the Free State tourism routes are mainly self-drive with privately-owned cars, tour operators, and guides. Interestingly, Participants 3, 4 and 5 relegated the operation of tourism routes to the route ambassadors and tour guides; furthermore, participant 5 added that the route operates through the website and an app.

Table 5-8: The operation of tourism routes in the Free State

Participants	How do all the Free State tourism routes operate
1	Self-drive and through tour operators and tour guides
2	Self-drive and through tour operators and tour guides
3	Route ambassadors and tour guides
4	Route ambassadors
5	Route ambassadors, website and app

According to Table 5.8, the Free State's tourism routes are primarily operated by FSGLTA route ambassadors and are secondarily self-drive through tour operators and guides or an App or Website. The information relating to an App and Website used for the route operation was confirmed during the quantitative research in the next chapter to affirm the information as per the FSGLTA representatives.

5.10 Management and marketing of tourism routes

Table 5.9 depicts the participants' views regarding the management and marketing of the Free State tourism routes.

Theme 4: Current marketing of tourism routes

In terms of how the routes are currently marketed, *printed* and *digital marketing* were the most mentioned codes, followed by *trade show marketing*. *Integrated* and *direct marketing* was only mentioned once, respectively.

Theme 5: Improving the marketing of tourism routes

Regarding how the marketing of the routes can be improved, when looking at the emerging codes, each participant had a different view, including *improved digital marketing*, *improved social media marketing*, *improved multi-level marketing*, *improved*

direct marketing, improved global marketing, improved financial resource management and improved mobile App marketing.

The responses related to these two themes are consequently discussed.

Participant 1 suggests that the management and marketing of tourism routes are the responsibility of district marketing coordinators, also known as the route ambassadors; meanwhile, Participant 2 was unsure who is responsible for managing and marketing the tourism routes. Participants 3 and 5 indicated that the general manager of marketing is responsible for the management and marketing, while Participant 4 suggests that it is the general manager and route ambassador. Participant 5 added that DESTEA also plays a role in managing and marketing the tourism routes.

Regarding the marketing strategy of tourism routes in the Free State, Participants 1 and 3 asserted that the tourism routes are marketed through brochures, branding, website, flyers, media conferences and platforms such as tourism indabas. However, Participant 1 added that their deficiency is the website, which is currently not fully functional. Participant 2 briefly mentioned that tourism routes are marketed through trade shows. At the same time, Participant 5 stated that they use newspapers and websites, contradicting Participant 1, who said that the website was not fully functional. Lastly, Participant 4 retracted the earlier statement that the general marketing manager is responsible for managing and marketing the tourism routes by stating that “we do not necessarily market the route but feeding information into the marketing that we use”. Furthermore, printed and digital marketing featured prominently as both were mentioned three times, with trade shows mentioned twice and direct and integrated marketing only mentioned once, respectively.

In terms of improving the marketing strategy of the Free State’s tourism routes, the participants suggested different approaches ranging from policy shift and interprovincial offices to marketing the routes and app development. Participant 1 corroborated his earlier statement on the website’s functionality by stating that the FSGLTA needs to get the website running and that there is a need to improve and diversify their social media, such as Instagram, because “tourism goes with it pictures”. The other interesting view was that of Participant 2, stating a need for a policy shift to compel product owners to register with FSGLTA for marketing. Participant 3 stated that the FSGLTA intends to

launch Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) offices and use *Explorer* magazine, distributed at airports, to market the routes abroad. Participant 5 said, “we need to involve every single person and that ‘I love Free State’ should be used to market the province”. Finally, Participant 4 gave a striking view saying, “everything depends on how you know the available resources, and we have limited financial resources”.

The Free State tourism routes are widely marketed by the acting general marketing and tourism manager and the route ambassador, as indicated in Table 5.8. It is evident that the Free State tourism routes are marketed through brochures, newspaper adverts, the website and trade shows, such as the tourism indaba, wherein tourism products owners can market their products. According to Table 5.9, FSGLTA intends to open the Big Five tourism routes Gauteng and KZN offices for marketing and exposure. The FSGLTA website should start operating, and an app should be developed to improve the marketing of the tourism routes. Lastly, Table 5.8 indicates that the marketing of tourism routes can be done through a policy shift wherein the tourism product owners will be obliged to register with FSGLTA for marketing.

Table 5-9: Management and marketing of tourism routes

Participants	Who is responsible for the management and marketing of the route	How are the routes marketed	Keyword(s)	Code(s)	How can the marketing of these tourism routes be improved	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
1	District marketing coordinators (route ambassadors)	We have brochures and our tour package; however, our deficiency is our website. In terms of above line, the budget hinders	Brochures Website	Printed marketing Digital marketing	We get the website running. Improve and diversify our social media such as Instagram because tourism goes with pictures.	Improve website Improve social media	Improved digital marketing Improved social media marketing
2	Not sure	We go to trade shows	Trade shows	Trade show marketing	There is a need for a policy shift for product owners to oblige and register with us for the purpose of marketing.	Need for policy shift	Improved multi-level marketing
3	The Entity through GM marketing	We do it through website, branding, flyers and brochures and platforms such as the tourism Indaba/media conference	Website Flyers and brochures Trade shows	Digital marketing Printed marketing Trade show marketing	We intend to have offices within Gauteng & Durban and looking to use <i>Explorer</i> magazine, which is distributed in flights going abroad to market our routes internationally	Offices Magazine for international marketing	Improved direct marketing Improved global marketing
4	General manager marketing and tourism and route ambassadors	We do not necessarily market the route but feeding information into the marketing platforms that we use	Marketing on existing platforms	Integrated marketing	Everything depends on how you know the resources that are available, and we have limited financial resources	Limited financial resources	Improved financial resource management
5	General manager marketing and tourism, the Entity and DESTEA	Through our adverts in newspapers and the website. FSGLTA intends to open Big Five offices in Gauteng & KZN	Newspapers Website Opening of offices	Printed marketing Digital marketing Direct marketing	Develop an app, and coordination of events has been lacking in the Free State. We need to involve every single person. "I love Free State" concept should be used to market the Province	App development	Improved mobile App marketing

5.11 Stakeholders involved in the tourism routes

According to the participants of this survey, this section represents information relating to all possible stakeholders actively involved in the Free State tourism routes. In this section, the participants mentioned multidimensional stakeholders involved in the operation of the tourism routes. According to Participants 1, 2, 4 and 5, tourism LED offices within the district municipalities, and DESTEA plays a significant role in the Free State's tourism routes. Participant 2 added that the Department of Arts and Culture and entities such as the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) are actively involved. At the same time, Participant 5 elaborated that within DESTEA office building, all walls are painted according to themes of each tourism route found within the five districts of the Free State Province. Participant 4 added that tourism forums and the tourism industry are also involved, while Participant 3 insists that communities were made aware of the routes and the other indirect stakeholders, such as the police, were trained to ensure that everybody understands the routes. Participant 3 said, “we had to have campaigns, meetings and we had to make sure that we get information from them regarding the products they are offering so that we can package them together and ensure that they are part of this product.”

5.12 The existence and role of associations in the tourism routes

Table 5.10 illustrates the existence and role of associations operating with the Free State's tourism routes. Participants 1, 2, 4 and 5 agree that associations are involved within the tourism routes; however, Participant 3 was uncertain of any associations operating within the tourism routes. Nevertheless, Participant 4 presumed that if there are associations in the tourism routes, their role would be to assist in marketing the routes in the province. According to Participant 1, the association have forums wherein the FSGLTA will be invited to attend, and Participant 2 stated that associations deal with the safety of the roads and signage. Participant 4 believes associations collaborate with the route ambassador and management of FSGLTA. Finally, Participant 5 stated that the N12 route association plans to partner with FSGLTA and further explained that the N12 route² would seamlessly link into the Free State routes

² The N12 route is (connects Johannesburg to Kimberly, down to Beaufort West) and is also known as the Treasure Route due to all the mineral mines.

as if they were initially planned to operate collectively. In conclusion, Participant 5 further explained that Lesotho wishes to collaborate with the Eagle route, as shown in Table 5.10.

Table 5-10: The role of associations in the tourism routes

Participants	Yes or No	Role of associations in the routes
1	Yes	They have a forum which we attend as per invitation(s)
2	Yes	They deal with issues relating to safety and security in the route and assist greatly with signage
3	Not sure	Assist in marketing the routes in the Province
4	Yes	They collaborate with the route ambassador and management
5	Yes	"N12 route wants to be part of us. They link into us seamlessly as if the routes were initially planned to operate collectively. We are also in communication with Lesotho to collaborate with the Eagle route."

It is evident from Table 5.10 that tourism associations exist within the Free State's tourism routes. The role of tourism associations in the route is to collaborate with route ambassadors and management. Other associations are responsible for safety and security on the route and assist significantly with signage, as shown in Table 5.10.

5.13 Attractions included in the tourism routes

In Table 5.11, there is a summary of various types of tourism attractions included in the Free State's tourism routes, as described by all participants. According to Participant 2, some tourist attractions included in the tourism routes are adventure tourism, hiking at Sentinel Peak, and historic battlefields. Participant 5 added accommodation attractions, events, historic attractions, museums, adventure, sports tourism (Bloemfontein Celtics) and battlefields, corroborating information by Participant 2. The Xhariep Dam, water sport in Denneysville, business tourism in the Cheetah route, motorsport in the Flamingo route, magnificent views, adventure tourism, and Basotho cultural village are some tourist attractions routes, as stated by participant 1. Participant 3, similar to Participant 1, reiterates that the Vaal Dam, Xhariep Dam, Sterkfontein Dam, friendly climate, Cherrie Festival in Ficksburg, Golden Gate, and Basotho cultural village are some of the tourist attractions included in the tourism routes. Finally, Participant 4 exemplified game farms, river rafting activities, hot air ballooning, and horseback riding in the Lion route. Furthermore, Participant 4 concluded by saying, "Vredefort Dome with all the challenges that are there but it is an attraction and or a product that's there for us to market, but you are

from this area you know the challenges in that space, but it is there, it is a world heritage site that for some reasons we have not mined it to its full potential”.

Table 5-11: Attractions included in the tourism routes

Participants	Types of attractions included in the tourism routes
1	Springbok route there is Xhariep Dam, Denneysville there is an avalanche of water sport. Cheetah route is the business hub of the Free State and we are soon to develop South African Liberation route in Bloemfontein. Flamingo route has motorsport and the Eagle route boasts with magnificent scenic views, adventure tourism and Basotho Cultural Village
2	Adventure, hiking at Sentinel Peak, river rafting, historical attractions and battlefields
3	Vaal Dam, Xhariep Dam, Sterkfontein Dam, Golden gate and Basotho cultural Village, friendly climate and Cherries/ Festival in Ficksburg
4	River rafting in the Vaal river, hot air ballooning, horseback riding and Vredefort dome
5	Accommodation attractions, events, historic attraction like battlefield, museums, sport tourism like the Bloemfontein Celtics

The evidence from Table 5.11 indicates a variety of tourist attractions on the tourism routes of the Free State in each district municipality. The Eagle route boasts attractions such as the Basotho cultural village, scenic views and the Battlefields. On the Lion route, river rafting is one of the route's main activities because of the Vaal Dam, and horseback riding and adventure tourism are abundant. The Flamingo route has flamingo birds and motorsport facilities for high-speed racing cars. There is a barrage of accommodation establishments and sports tourism on the Cheetah route. Lastly, the Springbok route is home to the Xhariep Dam, one of Africa's largest dams.

5.14 The review of tourism routes

Table 5.12 reflects whether the Free State tourism routes have been reviewed since implementation. According to Participants 1, 2, 3 and 4, the routes have never been reviewed since they were created. In contrast, Participant 5 said he reviews the tourism routes yearly.

Table 5-12: The review of tourism routes

Participants	Where the routes ever reviewed
1	No
2	No
3	No
4	No
5	Yes, I review them personally every year. The participant is quoted as saying “you know I normally do in December, I focus on the routes, during my break because it’s a very up time to do that because you meet tourists, I remember I told you about tourism industry. So, I keep it in the back of my mind during December listening to guests, listen to tourists and listen to their opinions”

In Table 5.12, most participants indicated that the Free State tourism routes were never reviewed. However, one participant indicated that all these routes were reviewed by the participant himself every December. Table 5.12 reveals that the tourism routes were never reviewed; however, the other evidence contradicts the latter. As presented by Participant 5, the contradicting information will be further probed in the next chapter of quantitative research, wherein residents will be asked to corroborate the information to eliminate further discrepancies.

5.15 The operation of the tourism routes, positive attributes and problems in operating tourism routes

This section highlights whether the tourism routes are still operating according to how they were developed; furthermore, it aims to highlight positive attributes of the routes and identify general problems in operating the tourism routes. According to Participants 1, 3 and 4, tourism routes are still operating according to how they were developed. However, Participant 1 added that the Cheetah route in Mangaung was extended to the south and that some segments of the Eagle route were integrated into the Cheetah route; and Participant 4, without certainty, suggests that the tourism routes operate as initiated. On the contrary, Participant 5 indicated that the routes were not operating according to how they were developed; they are not moving with speed, and further remarked that the government does not focus on tourism.

Participants displayed diverse views on the tourism routes' positive aspects. According to Participant 1, the packaging of tourism products and their market are good aspects of the tourism routes. Government is now closer to product owners, and no need to travel to Bloemfontein to trace the Free State Tourism Authority, as argued by Participant 2. Participant 3 argues that tourism routes enhance the tourism economy, simultaneously increasing the occupancy rate, while Participant 4 briefly states that tourism routes gave the province an identity. Finally, Participant 5 highlights an aspect of inclusivity and further remarks that black communities were left out, but recently the township Shisanyamas has been incorporated.

There are problems and complications in any newly developed tourism product, as with the Free State tourism routes' operation. Once more, participants outlined heterogeneous challenges in the general operation of the tourism routes. Participant

1 briefly highlighted the lack of connecting products as some of the problems in the route's operation, and Participant 2 argues that access roads are poor and that no registered tour guides are operating on the routes, and that signage is of poor quality. Furthermore, Participant 3 highlighted insufficient staff and a lack of tour guides and tour operators on the tourism routes. Participant 4 notes that accommodation establishments are not graded since some tourists are specific in their preferred accommodation. In response to general problems in the tourism routes' operation, Participant 5 said, “ambassadors are not on board. They seem to enjoy ‘free ride with a free key of vehicle’; they do not understand the operation of the route.”

5.16 The operation of the tourism routes, positive attributes and problems in operating tourism routes

This section highlights whether the tourism routes are still operating according to how they were developed; furthermore, it aims to highlight positive attributes of the routes and identify general problems in operating the tourism routes.

Theme 6: Barriers to the sufficient operation of tourism routes

Regarding the barriers (Table 5.13), *insufficient integrated supply system* was the most prevalent emerging code (three mentions), while participants also mentioned *poor infrastructure*, *poor signage*, *insufficient human resources* and *ungraded accommodation establishments* (one mention respectively).

Table 5-13: The operation of tourism routes, positive attributes and problems in the operation of tourism routes

Participants	Are the routes operating as initiated	One good aspect of the routes	General problems in the operation of the routes	Keyword(s)	Codes
1	Yes, but the Cheetah route in Mangaung was extended to south. Some parts of the Eagle route are being integrated into the Cheetah route	Packaging of the tourism products and now we have a market point	No connecting products	No connected products	Insufficient integrated supply system
2	Think so	Government is now closer to product owners and there is no need for them to	Access road is poor and there are no registered tour guides, finally our signage is poor	Poor roads Lack of registered tour guides Poor signage	Poor infrastructure

Participants	Are the routes operating as initiated	One good aspect of the routes	General problems in the operation of the routes	Keyword(s)	Codes
		travel to Bloemfontein to look for Free State Tourism			Insufficient integrated supply system Poor signage
3	Yes, as initiated	Tourism routes increase the tourism economy in the area and at the same time the occupancy rate also increases	Insufficient staff, lack of tour guides and tour operators	Insufficient staff, lack of tour guides and tour operators	Insufficient human resources Insufficient integrated supply system
4	Yes	Tourism routes gave the Province an identity	Accommodation establishments are not graded	Ungraded accommodation establishments	Ungraded accommodation establishments
5	No, not moving fast and government does not focus on tourism	Inclusivity: black communities were left out. Now the Township Shisanyamas is in the mix	Ambassadors are not on board. They seem to enjoy "Free ride with a free key of vehicle". They do not understand the operation of the route	Uninvolved ambassadors	Insufficient integrated supply system

It is evident from Table 5.13 that the Free State tourism routes operate as initiated by the FSGLTA; however, some evidence contradicts the latter statement that routes are not moving fast, and that government is not focused on tourism. This information requires further probing with the community in the next research phase. In Table 5.13, it is evident that the packaging of tourism products and the inclusivity of tourism products are some of the positive attributes of the routes. However, the community will have to confirm the inclusivity of their tourism products in the tourism routes. In conclusion, tourism routes' general challenges are lack of tour guides and tour operators, ungraded accommodation establishments, poor signage, and lack of understanding of tourism routes by route ambassadors. Furthermore, in the next chapter, existing tour guides and tour operators will be requested to corroborate the information as per Table 5.13 to assist with the conclusive results of the study in question.

5.17 Primary stakeholders of the tourism routes

The table below reflects the diverse views of participants on the route's primary stakeholders. According to Participant 1, tourists are the primary stakeholders of the

tourism routes, while Participant 2 identified the accommodation sector, transport and eateries, and Participant 3 views the communities as the primary stakeholders. Participant 4 identified general trade, product owners, attractions, DESTEA, and local and district municipalities as the route's primary stakeholders. Participant 5 reiterates that district municipalities are the primary stakeholders, added provincial government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and associations, and concluded with the Province's people.

Table 5-14: Primary stakeholders of the tourism routes

Participants	Who are the route's primary stakeholders
1	Tourists are our primary stakeholders
2	Accommodation sector, transport and eateries
3	Communities
4	General trade, product owners/attraction/ DESTEA, local and district municipality
5	Government, provincial and district municipalities, NGOs, associations and the people of the Province

Various routes' primary stakeholders exist within the tourism routes, such as the tourists, accommodation sector, tourism product owners, DESTEA, NGOs, and the government, as indicated in Table 5.14.

5.18 Non-tourism stakeholders

Similar to the primary stakeholders, the tourism industry operates interdependently with many unrelated sectors, also known as the non-tourism stakeholders. Interestingly, Participants 1, 2 and 4 were unsure about the numbers of non-tourism stakeholders in the tourism routes (Table 5.15). Participant 3 stated that the community must be involved, including the police and other government departments, associations and the South African Police Service (SAPS) policing forum. Participant 5 says, "everybody is a tourism stakeholder, such as your service stations, food outlet and health facilities". However, Participant 4 further indicated that the numbers are not readily available; he gave an example of the casino industry, a gambling facility, and a tourist attraction.

Table 5-15: Number of non-tourism stakeholders in the routes

Participants	How many non-tourism stakeholders are in the routes
1	The route ambassador will help you with the numbers for such information
2	Not sure with the numbers, like your retail shops and spas
3	The community must be involved, the police and other government departments, associations and policing forum (SAPS)

Participants	How many non-tourism stakeholders are in the routes
4	Not sure with the numbers, but the casino industry is a gambling facility, but also a tourist attraction
5	Everybody is a tourism stakeholder, your service station, food outlet and hospitals

There was no clear consensus on the total number of non-tourism stakeholders within the routes; however, according to Table 5.15, everybody is a tourism stakeholder – from the service stations, food outlets and hospitals. Furthermore, Table 5.15 indicates that the community must be involved, the police and other government departments, associations and policing forums, but there is no evidence depicting the actual number of the non-tourism stakeholders in the routes. As per Table 5.15, the evidence identified some gaps regarding the actual numbers of non-tourism stakeholders within the tourism routes, and these inconsistencies will be probed in the next phase of the research for accuracy.

5.19 Residents' involvement in tourism routes

Participants identified residents as primary stakeholders involved in the Free State's tourism routes in the previous sections. This section will further highlight the level of involvement of residents in the tourism routes. In response to the residents' involvement in tourism routes, Participant 5 deviated from the question and said, "We have never had an opportunity to engage residents, especially disadvantaged communities, before 1994. Tourism must be taught as a subject at schools to educate our kids on the importance of tourism". During the inception of the Free State tourism routes, Participant 2 was not yet employed by the FSGLTA. Therefore, she does not know the residents' level of involvement in developing tourism routes. According to Participant 1, residents were not involved in developing the tourism routes, and the invitation was only to the industry. Interestingly, Participant 4 provided a contradicting response and said, "I cannot confirm that there was an extended involvement in terms of community participation". In the same statement, Participant 4 said, "the communities, whether in business or as individuals, would have made the community and business sufficient inputs hence that strategy was approved". In contrast, Participant 3 indicated that several roadshows were conducted during the development of tourism routes, and residents were made aware of the routes.

5.20 Involvement of tourism and non-tourism business owners

The tourism industry is multi-dimensional and always operates interdependently with other unrelated sectors. In this section, participants detail how tourism and non-tourism business owners are involved in the tourism routes. According to Participants 1, 3 and 4, the tourism business owners within the tourism routes were highly involved and engaged in developing tourism routes. These tourism business owners were invited to be part of the hearing and contributed to the product on offer. Participant 2 identified the transport sector as one sector involved in the tourism routes, while Participant 5 said, “as stakeholders, they are not involved, but they are in tourism their whole life.” In response to non-tourism business owners' involvement in the development of tourism routes, Participant 2 indicated that the role of the SAPS would be the safety and security of tourists and emergency services for any medical emergencies. According to Participant 3 and Participant 4, non-tourism business owners were informed regarding the development of tourism routes through media platforms, social media, websites and radio to attend a broad participation process that included everyone, whether directly or indirectly involved in tourism. On the contrary, Participants 1 and 5 contradict the latter statement and say that non-tourism business owners were never consulted. Only municipalities were involved. Participant 5 further said that the non-tourism business owners were not involved; however, they benefit from tourism, but they do not understand tourism, and the government must educate them about it.

5.21 The role of stakeholders in the management and marketing of the tourism routes

In Table 5.16, there is a representation of the participants' views on the stakeholders' role in the management and marketing of the Free State tourism routes.

Theme 7: Stakeholder roles and responsibilities

Based on the responses, the following codes were identified related to the role and responsibilities of stakeholders in the management and marketing of tourism routes: *route identification* (2 mentions), *marketing information provision* (2 mentions), *route packaging*, *route concept development*, *forum participation*, *direct marketing*

opportunities, social media and digital marketing initiatives, printed marketing campaigns, and enhanced route promotion (one mention respectively).

According to Participants 1 and 4, the stakeholders assisted immensely in tourism route development by identifying suitable products and relevant names for each route. Furthermore, there were meetings held between FSGLTA, residents and tourism business owners to source information to package tourism products accordingly (Participant 3), while Participant 2 could not respond on this matter as FSGLTA did not employ her at that time. Interestingly, Participant 5 says, “truthfully nothing at the beginning. It was conceptualised and then I presented it to my Entity. I could not get them involved before I present it to the government, I cannot go to the public before getting blessings of my political masters. We had to present it to Exco first and after Exco approved it, we launched the Big 5 concept. We went on roadshows explaining the route concept by inviting all stakeholders through adverts and newspapers.”

The stakeholders assisted with identifying tourism products to be included in the tourism routes and provided the necessary information for the right products to be appropriately packaged, as shown in Table 5.16. Regarding stakeholders' role in the management and marketing of tourism routes, Table 5.16 indicates that stakeholders are the interface between route ambassadors and management and assist the FSGLTA in marketing tourism routes through Facebook pages, websites, brochures, and brochures campaigns. As indicated in Table 5.16, “stakeholders play [a] very big role, every time they promote their businesses and say that they are in a particular route, they market the route”. In Table 5.16, regarding the role of stakeholders in the development, management and marketing of tourism routes, route identification was mentioned twice by two different participants, while route concept development and route packaging were mentioned once, with one participant not responding.

Table 5-16: The role of stakeholders in the development, management and marketing of the tourism routes

Partici- pants	The role of stakeholders during the development of tourism routes	Keyword(s)	Code(s)	Role of stakeholders in management and marketing of tourism routes	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
1	Assisted in identifying and naming routes with names familiar to the region	Identifying and naming routes	Route identification	They participated through forums	Forums	Forum participation
2	I cannot answer and was not there when the routes were developed	-	-	They provide us with information for us to start marketing and some deal with basic services as I previously mentioned	Marketing information	Marketing information provision
3	It was through meetings that residents and tourism product owners had to give us information and make sure that we package products correctly. We also had interviews with tourism product owners	Information gathering	Route packaging	We do have meetings from time to time with stakeholders to make sure that we still understand what we have in the tourism routes". They also help us through Facebook pages and websites, and they participate in all campaigns and through brochures placed at the guesthouses	In-person meetings Facebook pages and websites Brochures	Direct marketing opportunities Social media and digital marketing initiatives Printed marketing campaigns
4	They contributed in terms of shape and form of the routes from just naming the relevant route. They also contributed with the identification and named the routes as per the best features of the region	Identifying and naming routes	Route identification	They are the interface between the route ambassador and us at the leadership level to feed us information on what is happening on the ground	Marketing information	Marketing information provision
5	Truthfully, nothing at the beginning. It was conceptualised and I presented it to my Entity. I could not get them involved before I present it to government. I cannot go to the public before getting	Conceptualisation	Route concept development	Very big role, every time they promote their businesses and say they are from a route they automatically market the route. So, indirectly a hotel can advertise and mention that it is in a	Business and route promotion	Enhanced route promotion

Partici- pants	The role of stakeholders during the development of tourism routes	Keyword(s)	Code(s)	Role of stakeholders in management and marketing of tourism routes	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
	blessings of my political masters. We had to resend it to the Executive Committee first and then after Exco approved. We then launched the Big 5 concept through roadshows by inviting all stakeholders through adverts and newspapers			route; that on its own is marketing		

5.22 Role of stakeholders in the development of tourism routes

Table 5.17 summarises stakeholders' involvement in developing tourism routes and how they were involved. Participants 3, 4 and 5 affirm that stakeholders were involved during the development of tourism routes, while Participant 1 contradicts the latter statement by saying that “stakeholders were not involved and that they were only consulted”, and Participant 2 briefly said that she does not know whether they were involved or not.

Table 5-17: The role of residents as stakeholders in the development of tourism routes

Participants	Where stakeholder involved	How were they involved
1	They were only consulted and not directly involved	• No stakeholder involvement
2	I do not know	• I do not know
3	Yes	• We had to start with them to source information in order to package products relevant to the route • There was no way that we could have done it without product owners on the route
4	Yes	• Through public hearings, so that is the level of their participation
5	Yes	• As I conceptualised the Big 5 and presented it to the Entity, and Exco said “yes”. • During road shows we asked stakeholders to give inputs and those inputs were used to develop the Big 5 route

Table 5.17 reveals that most participants confirmed that stakeholders were involved in developing tourism routes, with only variation from one participant indicating that stakeholders were only consulted, not directly involved. In contrast, the other participant was not sure about the involvement of stakeholders. As shown in Table 5.17, stakeholders were approached to provide information to enable the FSGLTA to package products, and this was done through public hearings and further sourced inputs to finalise the Big 5 routes.

The evidence in Table 5.17 reveals some contradictions in response to residents' involvement as stakeholders in the development of tourism routes. The evidence in Table 5.17 depicts that residents were involved in developing tourism routes through public hearings and roadshows to give input to develop the Big Five routes. On the other hand, the evidence shows that the residents were only consulted and not necessarily involved.

5.23 The benefits of tourism routes

The purpose of developing tourism routes was discussed earlier in the previous sections. The participants diversely outlined the identification of all stakeholders involved in tourism

development. The tourism business owners and non-tourism business owners were identified, and their involvement in the development of tourism routes was discussed in detail. This section attempts to establish whether there are benefits for stakeholders from the tourism routes and, if so, what types of benefits. Table 5.18 below indicates the existence of benefits in tourism routes and the types of benefits available.

Table 5-18: The types of benefits from tourism routes

Participants	Are there any benefits associated with tourism routes	Types of benefits	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
1	Yes	• Adverts and social platforms to advertise themselves and their products. • We take product owners to the Tourism Indaba and in future we want to take them to World Tourism Meet Africa, which is held in Cape Town and • We want to give them more platforms and feature them in our brochure for exposure. (Just like Leratong guesthouse in Qwaqwa went to four countries to promote their own products)	Adverts and social media Trade shows Greater platforms	Increased marketing opportunities
2	Yes	• Marketing is one of the benefits because we market the route and your accommodation establishment, transport and restaurants	Marketing	Increased marketing opportunities
3	Yes	• Increased tourism economy due to the activities in the route and increased occupancy rate, more sales in the retail stores • More employment opportunities for the local communities	Tourism activity and economic benefits Employment	Increased economic opportunities
4	Yes	• We take them to Africa's biggest tourism platform, the Tourism Indaba • We source information about attractions and tourism products and add it to our brochure and marketing material for national and international exposure	Trade shows Marketing information	Increased marketing opportunities
5	Yes	• Marketing transforms turnover in their business. • More job opportunities for the communities. Stakeholders have platform to market their businesses • They get to market to over 300 000 people on "I love Free State" campaign.	Marketing Employment	Increased marketing opportunities Increased economic opportunities

All participants confirmed benefits from the tourism routes; however, they identified different types of benefits of tourism routes. According to Participants 1, 2, 4 and 5,

advertising and marketing of stakeholders' tourism products are some benefits of tourism routes. Participants 1 and 4 exemplified the benefits of tourism routes to stakeholders by marketing stakeholders' products on international platforms such as the Tourism Indaba and adding more information about attractions to the brochures for national and international marketing. Participant 5 added that one of the benefits is job opportunities for the communities and platforms for marketing to benefit other stakeholders. Interestingly, all participants mentioned that some of the benefits of tourism routes relate to increased marketing opportunities, with only one mention of increased economic opportunities. However, Participant 3 argues that some of the benefits of tourism routes ranged from increased tourism economy due to activities in the routes, increased occupancy rate, more sales in the retail sector and employment opportunities for the local communities, as pointed out by Participant 5. Furthermore, tourism business owners can market their products to over 300 000 members of the "I love Free State" campaign.

5.24 A synthesis of the findings and a comparison with the existing literature

Participants expressed different and interesting views regarding the year tourism routes were conceptualised in the results section and the eventual implementation thereof. The evidence presented is that most participants indicated that the routes were conceptualised in 2012, while the other participants contradicted others by saying that the routes were conceptualised in 2014 and implemented in the same year. This information will be valuable during the quantitative research by asking residents to confirm the date or year in which Free State tourism routes were conceptualised and implemented. Further probing is essential to establish from the residents if they know the tourism routes.

The findings are characterised by critical feedback about the reasons for developing tourism routes in the Free State. These findings revealed that the development of tourism routes in the Free State was primarily focused on integrating and packaging all tourism products and marketing them as a single product. However, in the previous studies by Matyin (2013) and Proos *et al.* (2017:136), tourism routes were mainly developed for enhanced economic development and growth in many countries. Meyer (2003:3) emphasises that tourism routes were traditionally developed to 1) diffuse visitors and disperse income in the tourism industry, 2) bring unpopular attractions into the tourism industry, 3) maximise the overall appeal of the destination, 4) increase the length of stay

and spending by tourists, 5) lure tourists and encourage repeat tourists and 6) increase the sustainability of tourism products; and all these objectives are inconsistent with the reasons as indicated by the FSGLTA representatives. Mnguni and Gioampiccoli (2017) further contradict the results by the FSGLTA planners by indicating that tourism routes were used as a tool for tourism, economic and community development, but none of the participants mentioned all these factors.

The results revealed that the Free State government was highly involved in conceptualising and implementing the “Big 5” tourism routes of the Free State. This was revealed through individual responses on their involvement in developing the tourism routes. Some participants indicated that they were responsible for summer campaigns wherein pamphlets with information on routes were distributed during peak season, while others are directly involved from the control point of view and strategic and future direction of where the tourism routes should progress, obviously as board members. However, in the literature of Koh and Fakfare (2019:287), the government as a tourism stakeholder is arguably the most relevant stakeholder, given that, through the policies and regulations they formulate and enforce, government authorities influence other stakeholders. Kubickova (2016:76) reiterates that the government’s critical role is to protect against external threats, provide the communities with services the industry cannot provide, and maintain law and order. Furthermore, if the government transcends all these boundaries, it compromises its independence, leading to possible industry failure. None of the participants articulated issues relating to the policies and regulations and thus contradict how the FSGLTA, as tourism planners (government), is involved in the tourism route development. Therefore, Sheik (2013:45) stated that if the latter is not featured in the results, it will defeat the purpose of South Africa’s government that the development of tourism routes has the ability and potential to connect and market a multitude of tourism services in smaller towns and create alternative work forms in a single tourism destination area.

The results further revealed that stakeholder involvement in tourism route development is crucial, as demonstrated by the FSGLTA. The LED offices based within the district municipality, DESTEA, SEDA, Department of Arts and Culture, police, and the communities are some of the stakeholders that participated in the development of the Free State tourism routes and, according to FSGLTA, these stakeholders continue to play

a role in the life and operation of the routes. There are interesting and contradicting views regarding the involvement of residents in tourism route development. Most participants believe that residents as stakeholders in the process of route development were highly involved in developing tourism routes in the Free State. In contrast, the other participants indicated that residents were only consulted but were not directly involved in the process. In the study by Ramsoolmanesh *et al.* (2018:339), it is evident that in tourism planning, community involvement is described as a process inclusive of local officials, local citizens, planners, business community and planners to participate in the decision-making process. This implies that if the community was not involved in developing tourism routes in the Free State, as indicated by one participant, the community involvement in the tourism routes must be probed further as the evidence presents negative views.

Furthermore, the results highlight that the management and marketing of the tourism routes solely rely on the Entity (FSGLTA), through its general manager, responsible for tourism and marketing with the assistance of route ambassadors situated in each of the five regions of the Free State. From the results, each tourism route has a unique name as per the theme of that region, for example, the Lion route in the Fezile Dabi region, the Flamingo route in the Lejweleputswa region, the Springbok route in the Xhariep Region, the Cheetah route in Mangaung metro, and the Eagle route in the Thabo Mofutsanyane region. Contrary to the results relating to the management and marketing of tourism routes, Sirirak and Pitakaso (2018:2) stated that tourism route management involves crucial tourism planning decisions intended to benefit the local economy. Within the context of the research done by Antonsons and Jacobsen (2014:344), the responsibility of implementing and maintaining tourism routes is entirely dependent on local government and private sector stakeholders. This is averse to the perspective of the FSGLTA, wherein the management of tourism routes is solely the responsibility of the general manager responsible for tourism and marketing without any involvement of the private sector or other relevant stakeholders.

Fyall *et al.* (2016) emphasised the collaboration of non-profit organisations and public entities at a local, regional, and national level for marketing tourism routes. Viljoen *et al.* (2010:71) agree with the results of this study regarding the prominence of printed brochures as a marketing tool to maximise exposure to potential tourists.

Tourism routes in the Free State are experienced through self-drive, wherein tourists utilise their own motor vehicles and tour operators and guides. The sentiments of some participants are corroborated by Hashim and Ismail (2017:52), that self-drive implies that tourists travel in their own vehicles or use their own recreational vehicles such as recreational vehicles and caravans. According to the latter assertions, self-drive tourism is tourism performed by driving one's own vehicle or hiring a vehicle to sites and attractions. Interestingly, Sabur (2019:40) noted that numerous successful methods and instances in and outside Europe are realised due to the successful operation of thematic routes. The route design appears to be a simple task, but the attractions must be selected and developed in accordance with the main theme while also employing management strategies. In the instance of FSGLTA tourism routes, strategic management and operation of tourism routes are the responsibility of route ambassadors.

However, on the bright side, the results revealed some interesting benefits of tourism routes in all the transverse towns. Some of the benefits highlighted by some participants are the social platforms for the tourism product owners to promote their products, events such as the Tourism Indaba, increased tourism economy and high occupancy rates in the establishments within the route, and more job opportunities for the communities. Telfer (2001b), Meyer-Chech (2003; 2005), and Lourens (2007a, b) confirm the latter in terms of benefits perceived from tourism routes. The literature indicated that tourism routes would aid in creating employment creation and allow for business opportunities as more tourists travel through the area. Furthermore, Meyer (2004:14) emphasises that route development can enhance economic benefits, create employment from direct and indirect tourist facilities and services, expand tourist markets, and increase the length of stay due to various tourist attractions and activities within the routes.

The following section examines the critical matters from the qualitative results to guide the next research phase.

5.25 Key considerations from the findings that guided Phase 2

A few aspects in the results section of the qualitative research had to be validated to reach the goal of this study. These aspects include information regarding the reasons for the development of tourism routes, which most participants indicated was to package all tourism products and market them together. This information was confirmed during the

quantitative research with the tourism product owners, whether it is accurate. The residents as stakeholders in which this tourism route transverses were further requested to validate information regarding their level of involvement in the tourism routes of the province. The request was based on the results of the qualitative research wherein the participants indicated that some relevant stakeholders are involved in the tourism routes of the Free State.

Another aspect of the results that needed to be probed further is the possible benefits, intended and current beneficiaries of tourism routes. The conclusions from this section of the results presented a colourful view. Consequently, it was essential to confirm with the residents and tourism business providers whether they are benefiting from the tourism routes and, if so, what kind of benefits they are enjoying, as presented by the FSGLTA. Furthermore, participants revealed different views concerning the operation of tourism routes in the Free State. Therefore, for this study and to reach the study's goal, residents and business providers were requested to confirm information relating to an app and website used by the FSGLTA to operate the tourism routes.

The management and marketing of the tourism routes in the Free State were further examined, and the residents and business providers had to confirm if they were aware of the printed and digital marketing of the routes and to what extent they witnessed the marketing of the routes via the platforms mentioned above. Furthermore, they had to confirm the existence and role of tourism associations in the routes and their collaboration with route ambassadors and FSGLTA as outlined in the next chapter. The residents and business providers further had to validate the stakeholders directly involved in the tourism routes, including their roles within the tourism routes.

The other two essential aspects of the study that required further examination were the role of stakeholders in the development, management, and marketing of tourism routes. This was necessary due to multiple contrasting views by participants wherein some participants mentioned that residents were not involved, and others stated that residents were involved. Due to contradicting statements by the five participants regarding whether or not the tourism routes were reviewed, it was deemed important to confirm this information with the residents and business providers to validate these contrasting views. Furthermore, stakeholders' role in the management and marketing of tourism routes was probed as participants mentioned that residents were involved during the development of

tourism routes and that residents are part of the management and marketing of tourism routes.

5.26 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter's purpose was to discuss tourism planners' perspectives on tourism route development (Phase 1). The results were presented and provided meaningful insights into the role and responsibility of tourism planners, the level of involvement in the tourism routes and how tourism routes are operated, and problems in the operation of tourism routes in the Free State. The chapter yielded significant results to be considered by the tourism route planners (government) on the development of tourism routes through stakeholders' involvement. Furthermore, the results serve as a guideline on how best the routes can be marketed and managed within the context of route development in South Africa. The next chapter measures similar information from the communities' perspectives (Phase 2). This was done to determine whether their perspectives are aligned and whether differences exist between the information provided by the tourism planners. Since tourism business providers are an essential roleplayer and form part of the community, their views were also assessed and compared to determine their level of involvement in the planning and managing of the tourism route.

CHAPTER 6 : EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS - TOURISM BUSINESS PROVIDERS AS STAKEHOLDERS IN TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Introduction

The second phase of the data collection applied a concurrent mixed-method approach. The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the empirical research, where perceptions of tourism business providers forming part of the Eagle Route regarding their function as stakeholders were measured through a quantitative survey. The findings are particularly significant because they demonstrate the key aspects to be considered when developing the final framework presented in Chapter 8.

6.2 Quantitative approach: Tourism business providers' perspectives

The quantitative survey results among tourism business providers are discussed in detail.

6.2.1 Data analysis

Microsoft Excel was used for data capturing of the questionnaires. The Statistical Consultation Services at the North-West University assisted with the data processing. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 (2019) was used to analyse the data. The data analysis involved, among others, descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), Spearman's Rank-order Correlation analysis and Linear Regression analysis.

6.2.2 Descriptive statistics

This section used descriptive statistics to understand the respondents' profiles better and explore the data results. The profile of the respondents is consequently discussed.

(a) Profile of tourism business providers

Figure 6.1 illustrates the distribution of tourism business providers, where Clarens is represented by 54% of the respondents, while 30% were from Bethlehem, with 8% from Fouriesburg and 4% from Paul Roux and Rosendal, respectively.

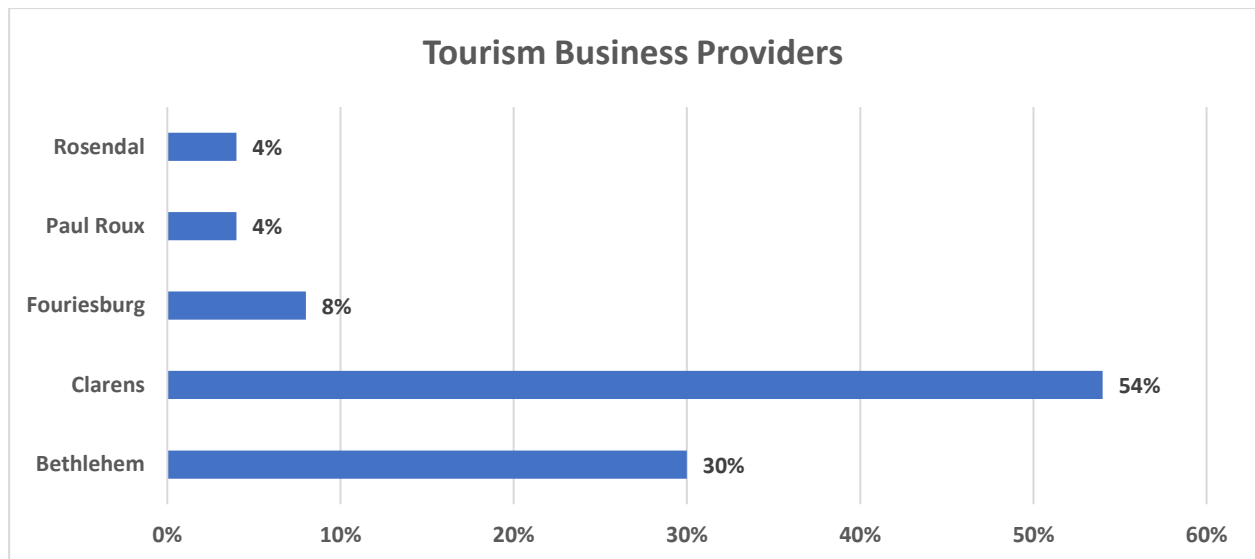


Figure 6-1: Profile of tourism business providers

(b) Business profile

Figure 6.2 summarises the tourism business providers who participated as respondents in this study. Figure 6.2 demonstrates that 48% of tourism business providers were accommodation businesses, with hospitality (food and beverages) businesses represented by 26% of the respondents. Guided tours and tour guides, travel agencies, and tourist attraction businesses represent 5% of the respondents, respectively, with transportation services comprising 3% of respondents and tour operators and outdoor recreation and activities businesses representing 2%, respectively.

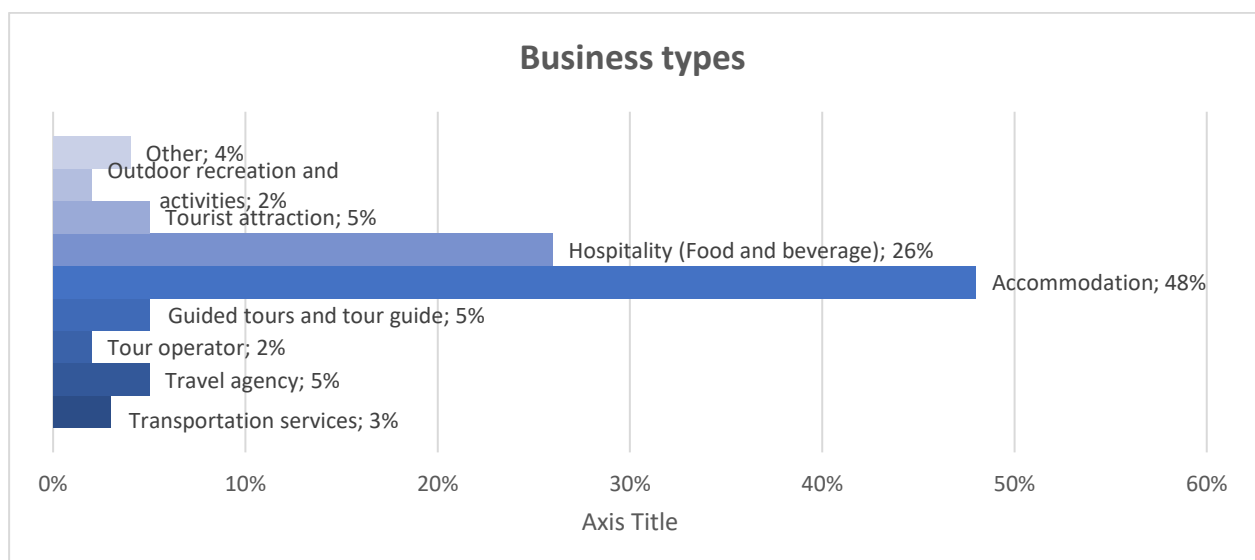


Figure 6-2: Business types

(c) Number of years in operation

Figure 6.3 illustrates that 38% of tourism business providers have already been operating between six and ten years, followed by 24% of tourism business providers having operated for between 11 and 20 years, 21% between three and five years, 13% for one to two years and 4% who were in operation for more than 20 years. Respondents had been in operation for an average of 8.5 years.

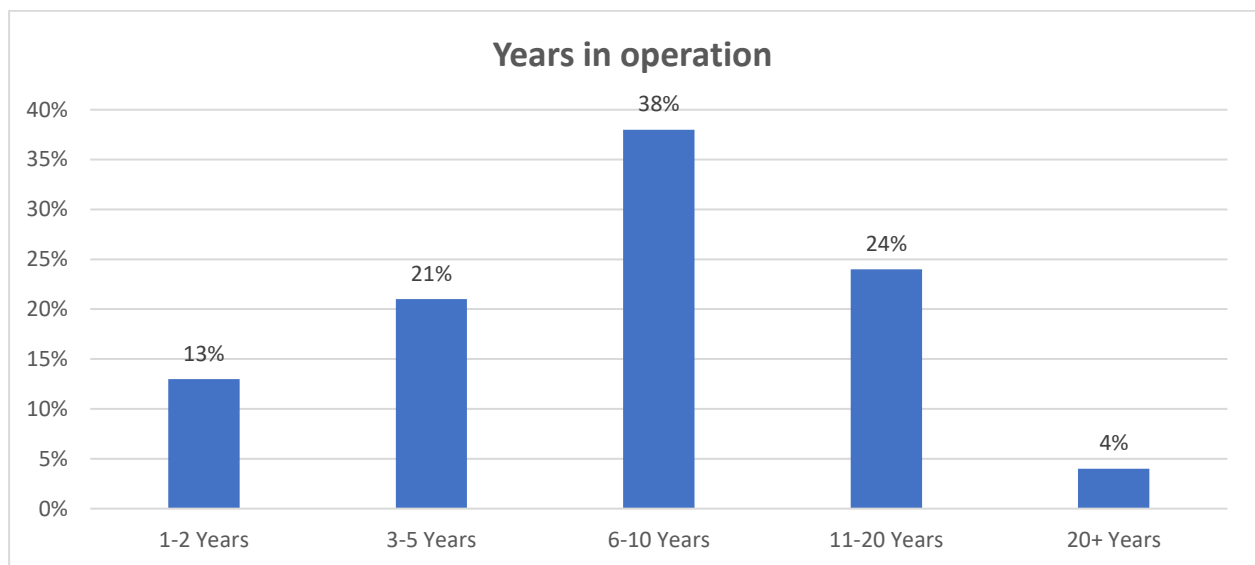


Figure 6-3: Years in operation

(d) Job function/position

Due to the low number of responses, some percentages are not rounded off in Table 6.1. According to Table 6.1, 42% were owners of tourism business providers, 41% were employed as managers, and 6% of respondents were employed as administrators. In contrast, 2% were employed in the transport sector, and 3% were employed in the catering industry. In comparison, agents and tour guides represented 1%, and sales managers, retail workers, tourism coordinators, and marketing executives represented half a percent (1 respondent in each category).

Table 6-1: Job function/position

Job function or position	Number of responses	Percentage
Administrative position	15	6%
Agent	2	1%
Co-ordinator	1	0.5%
Food/drink/catering	6	3%
General worker	3	1%
Housekeeper	1	0.5%
Instructor	1	0.5%
Manager	99	41%
Marketing executive	1	0.5
Owner	100	42%
Retail	3	1%
Sales manager	1	0.5%
Supervisor	1	0.5%
Tour guide/operator	3	1%
Transport	4	2%
Total		100%

(e) Main target market(s)

The results in Table 6.2 reflect that tourism business providers in the area target various types of tourists. Table 6.2 reveals that the main target market(s) were all tourists, represented by 43%, with 18% of respondents indicating that their main target market(s) is/are local tourists, and other respondents indicated that their main target market(s) are Gauteng tourists and other tourists at 7%, respectively. International and leisure tourists are also some of the main target market(s) of tourism business providers at 5%. Lastly, Cape Town tourists were indicated as a target market, represented by 1% of the responses.

Table 6-2: Main target market(s)

Main market(s)	Percentage
All tourists	43%
Business tourists	4%
Cape Town tourists	1%
Couples	3%
Gauteng & KZN tourists	3%
Gauteng tourists	7%
Groups	1%
International tourists	5%
Leisure tourists	5%
Local families	3%

Main market(s)	Percentage
Local tourist	18%
Other tourists	7%
Total	100%

*Please note that this was an open-ended question, and the researcher created the classification based on the responses.

(f) **Tourism business providers as stakeholders in the tourism route**

In Figure 6.4, it is demonstrated that 42% of stakeholders were not involved in the development of the tourism route, while 30% indicated that they were unaware of the tourism route, and 21% were members of the tourism route association. In comparison, 19% reported having made inputs during the development of the tourism route, 17% of the respondents indicated that they are primary stakeholders in the tourism route, 15% of the respondents highlighted that they were only informed about the route and not necessarily involved, with only 13% of respondents reported having taken part in the planning process of the tourism route and the smallest percentage (9%) indicated that they were part of the planning committee.

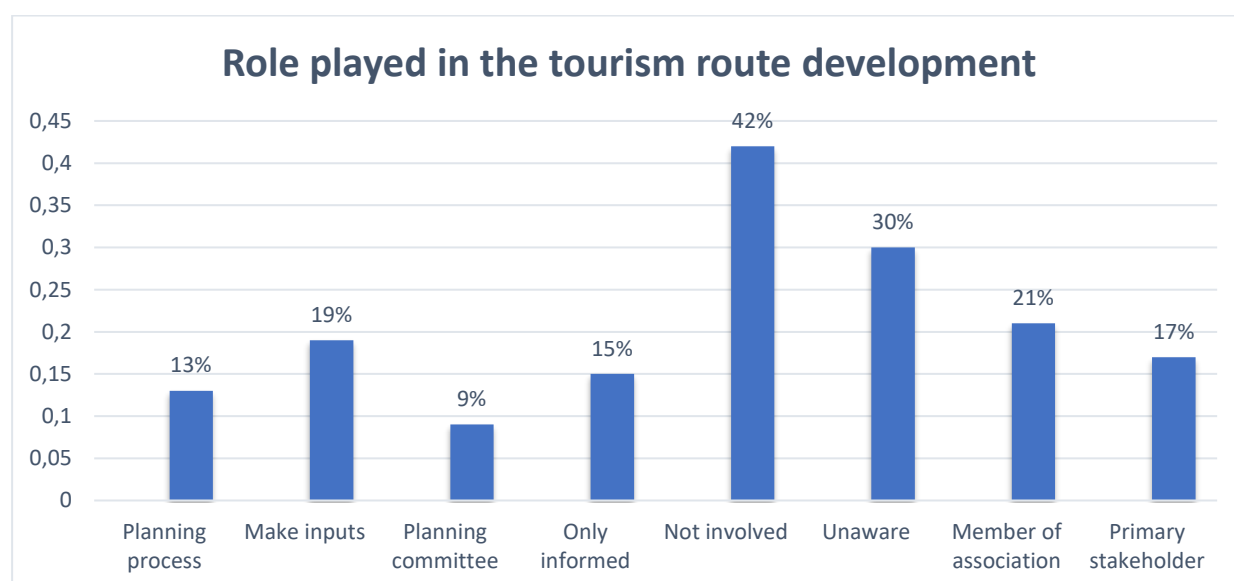


Figure 6-4: Role played by stakeholders in the tourism route development

*Please note that respondents could select all that apply; therefore, the percentages do not calculate up to 100%.

(g) **Expanding the tourism route**

Table 6.3 illustrates that 20% of respondents suggested that the tourism route can be expanded by developing active tourist attractions, with 19% proposing that the route

requires the national government's intervention. In comparison, 16% suggested that the government should improve marketing and awareness about the route, with 11% proposing the involvement of the private sector in tourism planning, 10% suggested the involvement of all stakeholders to create jobs, while the involvement of local communities to create jobs and improvement of road infrastructure of the route were suggested by 5% of respondents, respectively. This was followed by tourism investment, good governance, and route extension with visible signage, as 4% of the respondents suggested. Three percent (3%) of respondents suggested that the tourism route can be further expanded by the involvement of all stakeholders, with 2% suggesting the development of new tourist attractions and 1% suggesting the involvement of tourism forums to assist in reviewing the tourism route.

Table 6-3: Expanding the tourism route

Suggestions	Percentage
Tourism investment and good governance	4%
Involvement of the private sector in tourism planning	11%
Involvement of local communities to create jobs	5%
Involvement of all stakeholders to create jobs	10%
The intervention of the national government	19%
Improved road infrastructure of the route	5%
Forums to assist in reviewing the routes	1%
Extension of the route with visible signage	4%
Development of tourist attractions (horse riding etc.)	20%
Development of new tourist attractions	2%
By the involvement of all stakeholders	3%
By improving marketing and awareness about the route	16%

*Please note that this was an open-ended question, and the researcher created the classification based on the responses.

(h) The importance of tourism providers' support

According to Figure 6.5, 45% of respondents suggested that the support of tourism business providers is important as it will grow the economy and create jobs, 23% indicated that tourism business provider support is essential for the sustainability of small businesses, with 16% indicating that it will encourage stakeholders to join the business forum. Furthermore, 5% stated that the support of tourism business providers would promote the route via social media, and 4% of respondents mentioned that it improves efficient communication through the website and will lead to improved livelihood. Only 1%

indicated that there are more tourist attractions within the tourism routes, so support is essential.

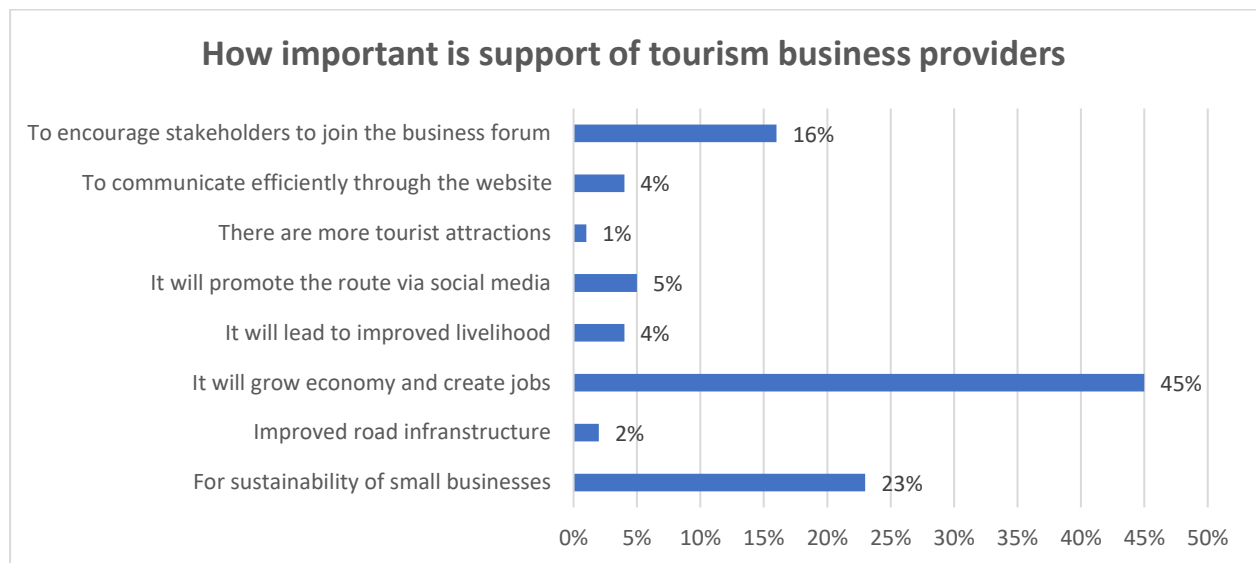


Figure 6-5: How important is the support of tourism business providers?

*Please note that this was an open-ended question, and the researcher created the classification based on the responses.

(i) **Suggestions regarding the involvement of tourism business providers**

In Table 6.4, the question was formulated as an open-ended question. Therefore, thematic content analysis was applied. In response to the suggestions regarding the involvement of tourism business providers, 22% of respondents suggested inclusive tourism stakeholder involvement. In comparison, 21% suggested improving marketing and awareness about the route, while 16% suggested that the government should invest in road infrastructure. Furthermore, 10% suggested that the government should hold regular meetings with stakeholders, 7% mentioned improving tourism marketing for job creation, and 6% of respondents suggested improved government communication to unite stakeholders. Five percent (5%) suggested increased awareness of new tourism products through an updated website. Table 5.4 illustrates that 3% referred to developing unique tourism products and services. Two percent (2%) suggested promoting skills transfer among stakeholders, improved road infrastructure, and improved marketing through social media. The remaining respondents, at 1%, suggested website access for tourism business providers, transparent and corruption-free processes, awareness of tourist products, and developing new non-tourism products along the route.

Table 6-4: Suggestions regarding the involvement of tourism business providers

Suggestions	Percentage
Awareness of new tourism products through an updated website	5%
Awareness of tourists products	1%
Development of new non-tourism businesses along the route	1%
Development of unique tourism products and services	3%
Government to have regular meetings with stakeholders	10%
Government to invest in road infrastructure	16%
Improved government communication to unite stakeholders	6%
Improved marketing through social media	2%
Improved road infrastructure	2%
Improved tourism marketing for job creation	7%
Improvement of marketing and awareness about the route	21%
Inclusive tourism stakeholder involvement	22%
Promotion of skills transfer among stakeholders	2%
Transparent and corruption-free processes	1%
Website access for tourism business providers	1%

(j) **The involvement of stakeholders in the tourism route development**

The involvement of stakeholders in the tourism route development requires the cooperation of tourism business providers. The respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agree with the listed statements regarding cooperation and tourism business providers' involvement as stakeholders in the tourism route development on a five-point Likert scale agreement (1 – completely disagree to 5 – completely agree). The average out of 5 (mean value = $\bar{x}$) was therefore calculated. The results, as shown in Table 6.5, reveal that 'the tourism route brings in more money to the district' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.53, SD = 1.39), 'product owners who were previously disadvantaged now form part of the tourism route' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.15, SD = 1.31), and 'tourism and non-tourism businesses form part of the tourism route' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.19, SD = 1.3.7) obtained the highest mean values, followed by 'tourism business providers are involved in the management and marketing of the route' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.08, SD = 1.44), and 'tourism business providers are made well aware of the existence of the tourism route' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.04, SD = 1.44). It is evident that respondents somewhat agreed with the statements mentioned above, but mostly they were neutral when interpreting the averages. 'The government actively involved tourism business providers in the tourism route development' ($\bar{x}$ = 2.98, SD = 1.42), and 'tourism planners involved non-tourism businesses (e.g. retail, hardware etc.)' ($\bar{x}$ = 2.98, SD = 1.26) were equally rated, while 'meetings were regularly held with tourism business providers to get

their opinion of the route' ($\bar{x}$ = 2.90, SD = 1.43) was rated the lowest and respondents disagreed with this statement.

Table 6-5: The involvement of stakeholders in the tourism route development

Statement(s)	Mean value (MV)	Standard deviation (SD)
The government actively involved in tourism business providers in the tourism route development	2.98	1.42
Tourism planners involved in non-tourism businesses (e.g., retail, hardware etc.)	2.98	1.26
Meetings were regularly held with tourism business providers to get their say/opinions on the route	2.90	1.43
Tourism business providers are made aware of the existence of the tourism route	3.04	1.44
Product owners who were previously disadvantaged now form part of the tourism route	3.15	1.31
The tourism route brings in more money to the district	3.53	1.39
Regular information updates about the route are received from the tourism route planners	2.97	1.42
There is a good level of communication between the planners and the tourism business providers	2.91	1.42
Tourism and non-tourism businesses form part of the tourism route	3.19	1.37
Tourism business providers are involved in the management and marketing of the route	3.08	1.44

(k) Key considerations in developing a sustainable tourism route

Establishing a new tourist route improves infrastructure development in specified locations along the route and increases demand for modern facilities by tourists, commercial firms, and business ties (Jacobs *et al.*, 2019:1). Therefore, respondents were asked to state the key considerations in developing a sustainable tourism route on a five-point Likert scale of importance (1 – not important at all, 2 – unimportant, 3 – neutral, 4 – important, and 5 – extremely important). The results, as illustrated in Table 6.6, reveal that the respondents cited 'road quality and maintenance' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.61, SD = 0.79), 'tourism infrastructure development' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.55, SD = 0.73) and 'information boards and signage' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.52, SD = 0.71) as extremely important considerations. Furthermore, 'website development' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.49, SD = 0.68), followed by 'branding of the route' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.48, SD = 0.73), 'attending trade shows' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.39, SD = 0.68) as well as 'government funding and support' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.39, SD = 0.81) were rated as important, while 'location to target market' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.33, SD = 0.76) was rated the lowest, but respondents still considered the statement

as important. The evidence from Table 6.6 reveals that respondents consider most statements important considerations in sustainable route development.

Table 6-6: Key considerations in developing a sustainable tourism route)

Statement(s)	Mean value (MV)	Standard deviation (SD)
Road quality and maintenance	4.61	0.79
Tourism infrastructure development	4.55	0.73
Branding of the route	4.48	0.73
Linkages with other sectors, e.g., the private sector	4.43	0.73
Tourism activities and products along the route	4.47	0.76
Website development	4.49	0.68
Information platforms, e.g., website, social media engagement and a route app	4.51	0.67
Information boards and signage	4.52	0.71
Attending trade shows to market the route	4.39	0.80
Getting tourism product owners to join as members of the route	4.43	0.74
Location to target market(s), i.e. market is easily accessible	4.33	0.76
Government funding and support	4.39	0.81
Board of directors/committee that can manage the route with the necessary skills	4.38	0.80
The route must be en-route to major tourist destinations	4.40	0.81

(I) Key barriers to tourism route development

In many African countries, state-led tourism development and a lack of attention to community-based and appropriate approaches to empower local stakeholders to overcome economic difficulties caused by unemployment have created various challenges in sustainable local development and tourism (Shafieisabet & Haratifard, 2020:489). The respondents were asked to detail the extent to which they agree with the listed statements as barriers to tourism route development to reaching its full potential, and this was done through a five-point Likert scale of agreement (1 – completely disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 – agree and 5 – completely agree). The results, as illustrated in Table 6.7, reveal that respondents agreed with the following statements: ‘the government is doing a bad job at managing the tourism route’ ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20, SD = 0.91), ‘the roads are in poor condition, and there is lack of signage’ ($\bar{x}$ = 4.15, SD = 1.05), ‘the government is making decisions about the tourism route without talking to the tourism business providers’ ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11, SD = 0.94), ‘the marketing of tourism route is poor’ ($\bar{x}$ = 4.10, SD = 1.03), ‘tourism businesses are not supported well enough by the government’ ($\bar{x}$ = 4.07, SD = 1.02) and ‘tourism business providers and the government do not

understand one another' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.06, SD = 1.03). Furthermore, 'the government is not training entrepreneurs who work within the route' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.99, SD = 1.03), and 'there is no App available that acts as a tourism route guide' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.99, SD = 1.02) were rated similarly. Respondents also agreed with the following statements: 'there is no cooperation between government, private sector, local communities and tourism business providers' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.95, SD = 1.10), followed by 'many accommodation establishments are still not graded even though the route exists' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.89, SD = 1.05), 'there is a limited understanding of the tourism industry by the local community' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.87 = 1.17) and 'tourism route associations are not actively involved in the operation of the route'. Lastly, 'there are too many of the same tourism products (i.e., Cherry farm in Ficksburg and Cherry wine farm in Clocolan)' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.29, SD = 1.00) was rated the lowest and respondents somewhat disagree with this statement.

Table 6-7: Key barriers in tourism route development

Statement(s)	Mean value (MV)	Standard deviation (SD)
1. Tourism business providers and the government do not understand one another.	4.06	1.03
2. The government is doing a bad job at managing the tourism route.	4.20	0.91
3. The government makes decisions about the tourism route without talking to the tourism business providers.	4.11	0.94
4. The government is not planning tourism products very well.	3.98	1.00
5. There are too many of the same tourism products (i.e., Cherry farm in Ficksburg and Cherry wine farm in Clocolan).	3.29	1.26
6. The government is not providing funding to operate the tourism route.	4.03	1.00
7. The government is not embarking on tourism route awareness campaigns.	4.07	0.96
8. There is poor policy development around the tourism route development.	4.00	1.04
9. The roads are in poor condition, and there is a lack of signage.	4.15	1.05
10. There are not many tourist attractions in the district.	3.42	1.30
11. Tourism products and services are inaccessible either to entrepreneurs or tourists.	3.71	1.14
12. The tourism products and attractions are not well maintained.	3.59	1.21
13. Lack of funding is slowing the speed at which the tourism routes can develop.	4.04	0.93
14. There is no cooperation between government, private sector, local communities and tourism business providers.	3.95	1.10
15. Government officials do not have enough knowledge about the tourism industry.	4.12	1.07

Statement(s)	Mean value (MV)	Standard deviation (SD)
16. The local community has limited understanding of the tourism industry.	3.87	1.17
17. The government is not training entrepreneurs who work within the route.	3.99	1.03
18. Tourism businesses are not supported well enough by the government.	4.07	1.02
19. Tourism route associations are not actively involved in the operation of the route.	3.85	1.06
20. Tourism businesses are not benefiting from the route.	3.59	1.23
21. Local communities are not benefiting from the route.	3.70	1.23
22. There are few economic benefits for the local communities.	3.77	1.24
23. The route creates no adequate job opportunities	3.72	1.21
24. The marketing of tourism route is bad/poor	4.10	1.03
25. Tour guides and operators are not involved in the operation of the route.	3.88	1.05
26. The stakeholders do not trust one another.	3.84	1.05
27. Getting the community to participate in tourism activities on this route is challenging.	3.80	1.08
28. The theme/name of the route does not work/fit with the district.	3.70	1.16
29. No App is available that acts as a tourism route guide.	3.99	1.10
30. Many accommodation establishments are still not graded even though the route is there.	3.89	1.05

(m) **Expected tourism route benefits**

The respondents were asked to give opinions on the extent to which they expect benefits from the tourism route on a five-point Likert scale of agreement (1 – completely agree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 – agree, 5 - completely agree). The route's development appears to be a simple operation. However, it requires careful selection and development of appropriate attractions for the main theme and the application of management techniques (Sabir, 2019:40). Additional favourable economic effects include encouragement for locals, investment support, building, infrastructure, and human resource development. The effect of income grows due to the increased tourism flow and job generation (Sabri, 2019:40).

As shown in Table 6.8, the results reveal that 'the area needs to attract more tourists' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.57, SD = 0.68) and 'local tourism businesses need to experience high occupancy rates' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.57, SD = 0.70) were rated the highest. In contrast, 'tour guides and tour operators need to benefit from packaged tourism products' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.55, SD = 0.80), 'job opportunities must be created for the local community residents' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.53, SD = 0.76),

and ‘the road infrastructure of the area must improve’ ($\bar{x}$ = 4.51, SD = 0.82) were also rated high and considered as benefits. Furthermore, the results reveal that respondents agreed that ‘local tourism products must be more recognised’ ($\bar{x}$ = 4.47, SD = 0.73), ‘tourism business providers in the area must be included in the provincial government brochure’ ($\bar{x}$ = 4.47, SD = 0.72), ‘the government tourism offices must be accessible and known to tourism business providers’ ($\bar{x}$ = 4.46, SD = 0.73), and ‘Shisanyamas need to identify themselves as part of the tourism business providers’ ($\bar{x}$ = 4.17, SD = 0.93). Reviewing the ratings of all the statements in Table 6.8 and interpreted on the Likert scale, respondents agreed with all the statements.

Table 6-8: Expected tourism route benefits

Statement(s)	Mean value (MV)	Standard deviation (SD)
1. Tour guides and tour operators must benefit from packaged tourism products.	4.55	0.80
2. All tourism stakeholders must work together in the route operation.	4.53	0.70
3. There is a need to attract more tourists.	4.57	0.68
4. Together with the tourism business providers, the community members need to be more involved in the tourism route.	4.37	0.77
5. Local tourism products must be more recognised.	4.49	0.71
6. More job opportunities need to be created.	4.45	0.75
7. The district must experience economic growth.	4.47	0.73
8. Tourism business providers in the area must be included in the provincial government brochures.	4.47	0.72
9. Tourism business providers in the area must market themselves as part of the route.	4.35	0.76
10. The government website must be accessible and regularly updated with new route information.	4.44	0.74
11. The government tourism offices must be accessible and known to tourism business providers.	4.46	0.73
12. The route ambassadors and tourism business providers must meet regularly.	4.27	0.78
13. Tourists must be aware of and use the provincial government tourism route App.	4.35	0.77
14. Tourism route associations must work together with all stakeholders.	4.33	0.82
15. Tourism-related businesses must feel supported by the government.	4.42	0.77
16. The tourism route must be operational on a full-time basis (seven days a week).	4.40	0.84
17. The “I love Free State” Facebook page must be known to tourism business providers.	4.44	0.82
18. Shisanyamas need to identify themselves as part of the tourism route.	4.17	0.93
19. Previously disadvantaged residents must be included in the tourism route.	4.24	0.88

Statement(s)	Mean value (MV)	Standard deviation (SD)
20. Township products must form part of the tourism route.	4.37	0.85
21. The road infrastructure of the area must improve.	4.51	0.82
22. Job opportunities must be created for the local community residents.	4.53	0.76
23. Local tourism businesses need to experience high occupancy rates.	4.57	0.70

6.3 Multi-variate statistical analyses and results

The next section outlines the statistical analyses performed, why these methods were selected and how they were applied.

6.3.1 Results of the Exploratory factor analysis (EFAs)

In this section, the selected method is described, and its importance is outlined by following various aspects such as principal component analysis (PCA), the rotation method of Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO), Bartlett's test of sphericity and Cronbach's alpha and inter-item correlations.

(i) Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a method to validate the scales of items in a questionnaire. This analysis was done in SPSS (George & Mallery, 2019:1). The objective of an EFA is to take various variables and group them into fewer variables, which makes it easier to interpret and allows for further analyses (Samuels, 2017:1). It is critical to emphasise that factor analysis is not a single statistical method but rather a series of statistical analyses with similar methodology and functionality (Beavers, Lounsbury, Richards, Huck, Skolits & Esquivel, 2013:1). Considering that EFA is fundamentally exploratory, the number of underlying components is unknown, and determining the number of factors to retain is one of the most important aspects of successfully applying this methodology (Finch, 2020:218). To better understand EFA, one needs to consider the aspects discussed under the following sub-headings.

(a) Extraction method: Principal component analysis

A dimension reduction technique for data is principal component analysis (PCA). The purpose of the PCA is to eliminate data redundancy while sacrificing as little information as possible to reach the dimension reduction goal (Zhao, Zheng, Xu & Deng, 2019:99264). It is commonly described as a data reduction strategy for synthesising a large number of variables (Beavers *et al.*, 2013:5). The PCA extraction method was applied to reach the necessary data reduction.

(b) Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation

After determining the number of components to be included, all other factors are eliminated. The components are factored again, this time into a predetermined number of factors. The solution is then rotated. This is referred to as factor rotation (Beavers *et al.*, 2013:5). Factors with eigenvalues greater than one were generated after principal component factor extraction and Oblimin rotation with Kaiser normalisation (Albatineh, Al-Taiar, Al-Sabah & Zogheib, 2021:6; Morton & Altschul, 2019:91). All items with a factor loading greater than 0.3 were considered contributing to a factor (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2019).

(c) KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy)

The Kaiser criterion should only be applied in PCA when the complete variance is accounted for in the extraction (Beavers *et al.*, 2013:7). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy of more than 0.90 was used to determine whether the covariance matrix was a suitable factors analysis and Bartlett's test of sphericity had to be significant ($p < 0.05$).

(d) Cronbach's alpha [α] and inter-item correlations

Cronbach's alpha measures several items or measurements' internal consistency or dependability. It calculates how reliable the questionnaire's responses (or domain of a questionnaire), instrumentation or rating reviewed by participants are, indicating the tool's stability (Bujang, Omar & Baharum, 2018:85). Cronbach's alpha was used to measure internal consistency commonly employed within the context of multi-item measuring instruments (de Vet, Mokkink, Mosmuller & Terwee, 2017:47). Cronbach's alpha values vary from 0 to 1, with higher values signifying that the items are measuring the same dimension. On the other hand, if the Cronbach's alpha value is low (around 0), it

indicates that some or all of the items are not measuring the same dimension (Bujang *et al.*, 2018:85). The acceptable alpha values have been reported to range from 0.70 to 0.95. A low alpha value could result from a small number of questions, inadequate item interrelatedness, or diverse constructs (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011:54). Therefore, to test the reliability of the identified factors, reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha above 0.7) and inter-item correlations (between 0.15 and 0.55) were calculated (Clark & Watson, 2016). To understand the results on the original five-point Likert scales, factor scores ($\bar{x}$ = mean values) were calculated as the average of all items contributing to a factor. The next section will interpret the results of all factors analysed.

6.3.2 Results from the EFA on the cooperation and tourism business providers' involvement as stakeholders in the tourism route development

The first EFA was performed on the statements related to the cooperation and tourism business providers' involvement in tourism route development (Table 6.9). The EFA was adequate and suitable for factor analysis [KMO = 0.96, Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\chi^2(45) = 2513.99$, $p < 0.05$]. One factor was extracted, *active stakeholder involvement*, and consists of the following statements: Tourism business providers are involved in the management and marketing of the route, there is a good level of communication between the planners and the tourism business providers, tourism business providers are made well aware of the existence of the tourism route, regular information updates about the route are received from the tourism planners, and meetings were regularly held with tourism business providers to get their say/opinions of the route accounting for 76% of the total variance. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.96 and based on the mean value ($\bar{x} = 3.07$), respondents were neutral towards the factor, i.e., neither agreed nor disagreed.

According to Chamidah, Guntoro and Sulastri (2020:180), the tourism minister of Indonesia promulgated a guideline for sustainable tourism destinations in 2016 by developing a multidimensional concept of tourism stakeholders consisting of academics, media, community, government, and business, so that tourism problems and development are resolved together with all stakeholders in a reliable, expeditious, and systematic manner. While stakeholder involvement is highlighted in the literature as critical in sustainable tourism route development, the low rating of the factor in this study is worrisome and is an aspect that the final proposed framework needs to address. Therefore Rasoolimanesh, Ramakrishnaa, Hall, Esfandiar and Seyfi (2020:2) reiterate

that management is crucial for ensuring that tourist strategy implementation is long-term and responsive to the demands of stakeholders and destination communities, as well as for monitoring and evaluating progress and integrating tourism with existing governance structures.

Table 6-9: EFA results of tourism business providers' involvement as stakeholders in tourism route development

Statements	F1: Active stakeholder involvement
Tourism business providers are involved in the management and marketing of the route.	0.91
There is good communication between the planners and the tourism business providers.	0.91
Tourism business providers are well aware of the existence of the tourism route.	0.91
Regular information updates about the route are received from the tourism planner.	0.90
Meetings were regularly held with tourism business providers to get their say/opinions of the route.	0.90
Tourism planners involved non-tourism businesses (e.g. retail, hardware etc.) in developing the tourism route.	0.88
Tourism and non-tourism businesses form part of the tourism route.	0.86
The government actively involved tourism business providers in tourism route development.	0.85
Product owners who were previously disadvantaged now form part of the tourism route.	0.83
The tourism route brings in more money to the district.	0.75
EV	7.58
Var. (%)	75.78
Cum. var. (%)	75.78
α	0.96
Avg. inter-item correlation	0.73
Mean value ($\bar{x}$)	3.07

6.3.3 Results from the EFA on the key considerations for tourism route development

The EFA was adequate and suitable for factor analysis [KMO = 0.90, Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\chi^2(91) = 1951.30, p < 0.05$]. Two factors were extracted, accounting for 60% of the total variance (Table 6.10). The first factor, *route packaging and development*, consists of the following constructs: Tourism infrastructure development, road quality and maintenance, branding of the route, tourism activities and products along the route, linkages with other sectors, e.g., the private sector, website development. The

Cronbach's alpha value is 0.91 and based on the mean value ($\bar{x} = 4.51$), the factor was rated as extremely important.

The second factor, *route promotion and cooperation*, is made up of constructs such as attending trade shows to market the route, getting tourism product owners to join as members of the route, board of directors/committee that can manage the route with the necessary skills and location to target market(s), i.e., market is easily accessible. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.83, and with a mean value of $\bar{x} = 4.40$, this factor was rated similarly important as Factor 1. The face of the package, including the brand and label, should be thoughtfully set out to communicate the integration of the product and the tourism destination to tourists in tourism promotion packaging (Simsiri, Smitinand & Eiambua, 2018:3). In the study of Jaikaew and Chum-un (2019:146) on tourism development and marketing, it was revealed that, in one of the districts of Chiang Mai in Thailand, the community had a distinct lifestyle with natural, cultural, and architectural assets that were suitable for cultural or agricultural tourism and could easily link their tourist products with other nearby tourist attractions. This literature findings demonstrate that a well-branded, marketed, and coordinated tourism route can be realised if the factors identified in Table 6.10 are considered.

Table 6-10: EFA results of key considerations for tourism route development

Statements	F1: Route packaging and development	F2: Route promotion and cooperation
Tourism infrastructure development.	0.96	
Road quality and maintenance.	0.92	
Branding of the route.	0.85	
Tourism activities and products along the route.	0.80	
Linkages with other sectors, e.g., the private sector.	0.62	
Website development.	0.61	
Information boards and signage.	0.49	
Attending trade shows to market the route.		0.83
Getting tourism product owners to join as members of the route.		0.74
Board of directors / committee can manage the route with the necessary skills.		0.72
Location to target market(s), i.e., market is easily accessible.		0.66
Government funding and support.		0.64
The route must be en-route to major tourist destinations.		0.58
Information platforms, e.g., websites, social media engagement and a route App.		0.42
EV	7.01	1.41

Statements	F1: Route packaging and development	F2: Route promotion and cooperation
Var. (%)	50.08	10.07
Cum. var. (%)	50.08	60.14
α	0.91	0.83
Avg. inter-item correlation	0.58	0.45
Mean value ($\bar{x}$)	4.51	4.40

6.3.4 Results from the EFA on the barriers to tourism route development

The EFA was adequate and suitable for factor analysis [KMO = 0.94, Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\chi^2(435) = 5603.74$, $p < 0.05$]. Five factors, *insufficient economic benefits*, *insufficient route governance*, *insufficient tourism management*, *insufficient integrated supply system* and *insufficient branding and involvement*, accounted for 69% of the total variance (Table 6.11).

Insufficient route governance ($\bar{x} = 4.07$) was regarded as the main barrier to tourism route development followed by *insufficient integrated supply system* ($\bar{x} = 4.01$). *Insufficient branding and involvement* ($\bar{x} = 3.85$), *insufficient economic benefits* ($\bar{x} = 3.69$) and *insufficient tourism management* ($\bar{x} = 3.57$) were identified as additional barriers.

In the literature of Rogerson and Rogerson (2019:302), it is highlighted that, by increasing the competitiveness of tourism businesses, the South African government developed a platform for economic inclusion, resulting in increased sustainable jobs, economic growth, and development. Simultaneously, the literature of Akbar, Yang, Mazbayev, Seken and Udahogora (2020:49) concluded that lack of essential funding, labour force, and tourism planning knowledge are barriers to tourism development. Notwithstanding, the introduction of tourism into a community usually necessitates allocating resources to develop tourist infrastructure and facilities. These amenities are frequently modelled on Western norms, even in the poorest host countries. These factors are barriers to tourism route development and require well-managed interventions to overturn them into positive benefits.

Table 6-11: EFA results of the barriers to tourism route development

Statements	Insufficient economic benefits	Insufficient route governance	Insufficient tourism management	Insufficient integrated supply system	Insufficient branding and involvement
Local communities are not benefiting from the route.	0.80				
Tourism businesses are not benefiting from the route.	0.80				
The route creates no adequate job opportunities.	0.76				
There are few economic benefits for the local communities.	0.74				
The government is not planning tourism products very well.		0.82			
The government is doing a bad job at managing the tourism route.		0.80			
The government is not embarking on tourism route awareness campaigns.		0.80			
The government decides the tourism route without talking to the tourism business providers.		0.79			
Tourism business providers and the government do not understand one another.		0.74			
There is poor policy development around the development of the tourism route.		0.68			
The government is not providing funding to operate the tourism route.		0.65			
The roads are in poor condition, and there is a lack of signage.		0.62			
There are not many tourist attractions in the district.			0.71		
There are too many of the same tourism products (i.e., Cherry farm in Ficksburg and Cherry wine farm in Clocolan).			0.70		
The tourism products and attractions are not well maintained.			0.68		
Tourism products and services are inaccessible either to entrepreneurs or tourists.			0.66		
There is a limited understanding of the tourism industry by the local community.			0.38		
Government officials do not have enough knowledge about the tourism industry.				0.82	
There is no cooperation between government, private sector, local communities and tourism business providers.				0.67	
Tourism businesses are not supported well enough by the government.				0.66	

Statements	Insufficient economic benefits	Insufficient route governance	Insufficient tourism management	Insufficient integrated supply system	Insufficient branding and involvement
The government is not training entrepreneurs who work within the route.				0.61	
Lack of funding is slowing the speed at which the tourism routes can develop.				0.55	
Tourism route associations are not actively involved in the operation of the route.				0.35	
The marketing of tourism route is bad/poor.				0.33	
There is no App available that acts as a tourism route guide.					0.78
The theme/name of the route does not work/fit with the district.					0.73
Getting the community to participate in tourism activities on this route is challenging.					0.72
Many accommodation establishments are still not graded even though the route is there.					0.63
The stakeholders do not trust one another.					0.55
Tour guides and operators are not involved in the operation of the route.					0.39
EV	14.15	2.33	1.74	1.31	1.26
Var. (%)	47.17	7.78	5.81	4.35	4.21
Cum. var. (%)	47.17	54.95	60.76	65.11	69.32
α	0.94	0.92	0.82	0.9	0.89
Avg. inter-item correlation	0.79	0.59	0.49	0.57	0.58
Mean value ($\bar{x}$)	3.69	4.07	3.57	4.01	3.85

6.3.5 Results from the EFA on expected tourism route benefits

The EFA was adequate and suitable for factor analysis [KMO = 0.91, Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\chi^2(253) = 3668.42$, $p < 0.05$]. Four factors, *integrated cooperation and involvement*, *integrated tourism advancement*, *integrated economic and marketing benefits* and *integrated regional tourism development*, were extracted, accounting for 64% of the total variance (Table 6.12). Based on the mean values, *integrated tourism advancement* ($\bar{x} = 4.50$) followed closely by *integrated economic and marketing benefits* ($\bar{x} = 4.46$) and *integrated regional tourism development* ($\bar{x} = 4.45$) were the highest rated expected benefits. *Integrated cooperation and involvement* ($\bar{x} = 4.30$) was also an important expected tourism route benefit.

Tourism's contribution to the country's economy necessitates exporting domestically produced services and utilising foreign financial resources or foreign infrastructure and technology to develop the service sector and create jobs (Nurov, Khamroyeva & Kadirova, 2021:272). Tourism has the potential to benefit the poor, according to Toerien (2020:1), because it highlights natural resources and culture, provides opportunities to diversify local economies with few other export and diversification options, allows for the sale of additional goods and services, provides labour-intensive and small-scale opportunities, and provides a high proportion of low-skill, domestic-type jobs, as well as increasing entrepreneurship. Therefore, the literature confirms or corroborates most factors in Table 6.12. regarding the expected benefits of tourism route development.

Table 6-12: EFA results of expected tourism route benefits

Statements	Integrated cooperation and involvement	Integrated tourism advancement	Integrated economic and marketing benefits	Integrated regional tourism development
Previously disadvantaged residents must be included in the tourism route.	0.86			
Shisanyamas need to identify themselves as part of the tourism route.	0.86			
The tourism route must be operational full-time (seven days a week).	0.77			
Tourism route associations must work together with all stakeholders.	0.65			
The route ambassadors and tourism business providers must meet regularly.	0.52			
Tourism-related businesses must feel supported by the government.	0.44			
Tour guides and tour operators need to benefit from packaged tourism products.		0.84		
All tourism stakeholders must work together in the operation of the route.		0.75		
The area needs to attract more tourists.		0.67		
Tourists need to be aware and use the provincial government tourism route App.		0.54		
The government website must be accessible and regularly updated with new route information.			0.76	
The district must experience economic growth.			0.60	
The government tourism offices must be accessible and known to tourism business providers.			0.59	
Local tourism businesses need to experience high occupancy rates.			0.59	
Tourism business providers in the area must be included in the provincial government brochures.			0.54	
More job opportunities need to be created.			0.53	
Tourism business providers in the area market must be able to market themselves as part of the route.			0.37	
The road infrastructure of the area must improve.				0.88
Job opportunities must be created for the local community residents.				0.69
Local tourism products must be more recognised.				0.54

Statements	Integrated cooperation and involvement	Integrated tourism advancement	Integrated economic and marketing benefits	Integrated regional tourism development
The 'I love Free State' Facebook page must be known to tourism business providers.				0.53
Together with the tourism business providers, the community members need to be more involved in the tourism route.				0.42
Township products must form part of the tourism route.				0.39
EV	10.60	1.67	1.27	1.11
Var. (%)	46.08	7.27	5.51	4.85
Cum. var. (%)	46.08	53.34	58.86	63.71
α	0.89	0.77	0.88	0.86
Avg. inter-item correlation	0.56	0.46	0.52	0.51
Mean value ($\bar{x}$)	4.30	4.50	4.46	4.45

6.4 Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis

This research applied Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (ρ) to explore the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The independent variables were the key considerations and barriers to tourism route development. Since the research aims to develop a stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa, the dependent variables were *active stakeholder involvement* (c.f. Table 6.9) and the four expected benefit factors (c.f. Table 6.12).

6.4.1 Spearman's rank-order correlation results

Spearman's ρ is one of the first examples of non-parametric statistics that most social scientists have become familiar with. It is easily accessible in most statistical software systems, has an intuitive conceptualisation as the Pearson correlation between two ranked variables, and provides an instant alternative when the distributional normality assumption is questioned (Astivia & Zumbo, 2017:347). The Spearman rank-order correlation is the proper test to employ when the interval/ratio variables are not regularly distributed. When dealing with ordinal (rank-ordered) variables, the Spearman rank-order correlation is the best test to apply (Swank & Mullen, 2017:271). The correlation coefficient ' r ' is a dimensionless number -1 to 1. It is used in correlation analysis (Kumari & Yadav, 2018:33). This approach yields a value between -1 and +1 that describes how closely the two variables are related; 1 denotes a perfect 1:1 (positive or negative) relationship, and 0 indicates no systematic relationship between the two variables. A correlation of 0.5 usually implies a meaningful association, although the number of samples used determines this. A scatterplot is the greatest tool for visualising relationships between two variables (Reimann, Filzmoser, Hron, Kynčlová & Garrett, 2017:966). As per Pallant (2016), a value of 0 indicates no relationship, a value of 1.0 indicates a perfect positive correlation, and a value of -1.0 indicates a perfect negative correlation. Cohen (1988) suggests the following guidelines to interpret the values between 0 and 1: small effect, $r_s = 0.1$; medium effect, $r_s = 0.3$; and a large effect, $r_s = 0.5$.

Table 6.13 shows Spearman's rank-order correlation results. The following variables had a statistically significant relationship ($p \leq 0.05$) with *active stakeholder involvement*:

- Regarding the expected benefits of route development, all four factors had a negative relationship with *active stakeholder involvement* [*integrated cooperation and involvement* ($r_s = -0.215$; $p = 0.001$), *integrated tourism advancement* ($r_s = -0.136$; $p = 0.036$), *integrated economic and marketing benefits* ($r_s = -0.281$; $p = 0.001$) and *integrated regional tourism development* ($r_s = -0.174$; $p = 0.007$)]. The negative relationships could be explained by the low rating of the factor, implying that respondents did not regard themselves as involved in the development of the route and expected benefits will not necessarily change the situation or their level of involvement. Therefore, the first and most important aspect of addressing is getting tourism business providers more actively involved as stakeholders.
- The barriers, *insufficient route governance* ($r_s = -0.159$; $p = 0.014$) and *insufficient integrated supply system* ($r_s = -0.237$; $p = 0.001$) also had negative relationships with *active stakeholder involvement*. These results imply that these barriers are detrimental to getting stakeholders involved and must be addressed. Therefore, the proposed framework needs to consider providing solutions to these barriers.

The following variables had a statistically significant relationship ($p \leq 0.05$) with the expected benefit factors:

- Regarding *active stakeholder involvement*, the factor has a negative relationship with all four expected benefit factors ($r_s = -0.215$; $p = 0.001$; $r_s = -0.136$; $p = 0.001$; $r_s = -0.281$; $p = 0.001$; $r_s = -0.174$; $p = 0.001$) respectively. The results confirm the conclusion above, that without stakeholder involvement, these benefits cannot be realised.
- It is evident from Table 5.13 that all four expected benefits ($r_s = 0.592$; $p = 0.001$; $r_s = 0.655$; $p = 0.001$; $r_s = 0.776$; $p = 0.001$) have a positive relationship with each other and this implies that the benefits work together and do not function in isolation. The goal is to ensure that all four benefits are realised to develop a sustainable tourism route.
- When reviewing the results for the key considerations, both factors have positive relationships with all four perceived benefits (see Table 6.13 for the values). These results show that the key considerations are essential for the perceived benefits to be realised.

- Finally, besides *insufficient route governance* ($r_s = -.114$; $p = 0.001$) with *integrated tourism advancement*, the barriers had significant positive relationships with the expected benefits. The positive relationships are unclear since the barriers are expected to affect the expected benefits negatively.

Table 6-13: Spearman's Rank-order Correlation results

Variables			Active stakeholder involvement	Integrated cooperation and involvement	Integrated tourism advancement	Integrated economic and marketing benefits	Integrated regional tourism development
Spearman's Rho	Active stakeholder involvement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.215**	-.136*	-.281**	-.174**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.036	.000	.007
		N	240	240	240	240	240
	Integrated cooperation and involvement	Correlation Coefficient	-.215**	1.000	.592**	.727**	.769**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	240	241	241	241	241
	Integrated tourism advancement	Correlation Coefficient	-.136*	.592**	1.000	.655**	.554**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	240	241	241	241	241
	Integrated economic and marketing benefits	Correlation Coefficient	-.281**	.727**	.655**	1.000	.776**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	240	241	241	241	241
	Integrated regional tourism development	Correlation Coefficient	-.174**	.769**	.554**	.776**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	240	241	241	241	241
	Route packaging and development	Correlation Coefficient	.091	.363**	.318**	.421**	.449**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.161	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	240	241	241	241	241
	Route promotion and cooperation	Correlation Coefficient	.077	.375**	.329**	.382**	.480**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.237	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	240	241	241	241	241
	Insufficient economic benefits	Correlation Coefficient	-.023	.356**	.254**	.335**	.363**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.722	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	240	241	241	241	241
	Insufficient route governance	Correlation Coefficient	-.159*	.348**	.114	.338**	.319**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.000	.077	.000	.000
		N	240	241	241	241	241

Variables			Active stakeholder involvement	Integrated cooperation and involvement	Integrated tourism advancement	Integrated economic and marketing benefits	Integrated regional tourism development
	Insufficient tourism management	Correlation Coefficient	.043	.274**	.213**	.243**	.247**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.511	.000	.001	.000	.000
		N	240	241	241	241	241
	Insufficient integrated supply system	Correlation Coefficient	-.237**	.381**	.329**	.408**	.412**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	240	241	241	241	241
	Insufficient branding and involvement	Correlation Coefficient	-.003	.441**	.237**	.350**	.385**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.963	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	240	241	241	241	241

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

6.4.2 Linear regression analysis

Linear regression is a statistical test used to establish and quantify the relationship between the variables in a dataset (Kumari & Yadav, 2018:33). The statistical approach of regression analysis is used to investigate and simulate the relationship between variables. There are numerous regression applications in practically every subject, including engineering, physical and chemical sciences, economics, management, life and biological research, and social sciences (Montgomery, Peck & Vining, 2021:1). The equation, $y = mx + c$, which describes the line of greatest fit for the connection between y (dependent variable) and x (independent variable), is used in the linear regression analysis (independent variable). The degree of variability of y owing to x is shown by the regression coefficient, r^2 (Kumari & Yadav, 2018:33). The output variables are predicted as linear combinations of the input variables in linear regression, one of the most used regression analysis methods. The least squared error or least absolute error procedures are typically used to estimate the regression coefficients of the input variables (Yanga, Liua, Tsoka & Papageorgiou, 2016:157).

The multi-variate analyses involved exploratory factor analyses (EFA) in identifying the dependent and independent variables and Spearman's rank-order correlations to review the relationships between the variables included in the regression analyses. The variables identified in the EFAs were included in the regression analysis to determine which factors had the most significant influence on 1) enhancing *active stakeholder involvement* and 2) enhancing the four expected benefits from route development. A set of linear regression analyses was performed to show a significant relationship between the factors that may provide additional guidelines for enhancing stakeholder involvement and the expected benefits. The stepwise regression models had the best results. Table 6.14 shows that the R-value represents the simple correlation, indicating an adequate prediction level for all five models. The R-square (R^2) value for Model 1 was below the recommended value of 0.25 (Ellis & Steyn, 2003), while it was above 0.25 in the other models. According to Cohen (1988), R^2 -value of 0.12 or below indicates low, between 0.13 to 0.25 values indicate medium, 0.26 or above, and above values indicate high effect size. Model 1 is a low and medium effect size in this respect. An R^2 as low as 10% is generally accepted for studies in the field of arts, humanities, and Social Sciences because human behaviour cannot be accurately predicted. Therefore, the independent

variables statistically predicted the dependent variable significantly in all five models.

Table 6-14: Regression model predictors

Prediction criteria	Model 1: Active stakeholder involvement	Model 2: Integrated cooperation and involvement	Model 3: Integrated tourism advancement	Model 4: Integrated economic and marketing benefits	Model 5: Integrated regional tourism development
R-value	0.433	0.828	0.673	0.818	0.810
R² value	0.188	0.686	0.453	0.668	0.657
Adjusted R² value	0.174	0.678	0.441	0.661	0.652
R² value	17%	68%	41%	66%	65%
F-ratio	$F(4, 239) = 13.595, p = 0.001^*$	$F(6, 233) = 84.826, p = 0.001^*$	$F(5, 234) = 38.716, p = 0.001^*$	$F(5, 234) = 94.343, p = 0.001^*$	$F(3, 236) = 150.511, p = 0.001^*$

The discussion of the stepwise linear regression analyses is presented next.

(a) Enhancing *Active stakeholder involvement*

The hypothesised regression model is illustrated in Figure 6.6.

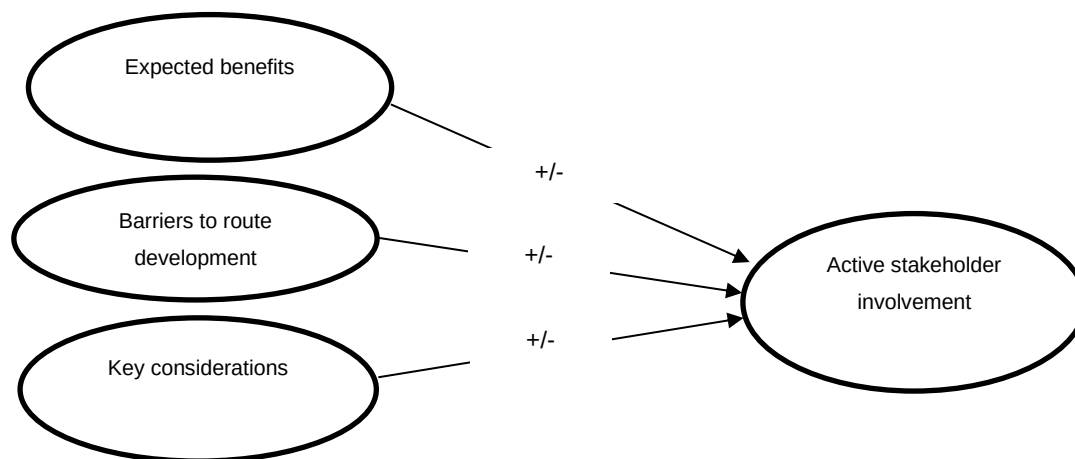


Figure 6-6: Hypothesised regression model for *Active stakeholder involvement*

Table 6.15 indicates the statistically significant variables. The key consideration, *route packaging and development* ($\beta = 0.556, p = 0.000$), had a positive relationship, implying that it can enhance *active stakeholder involvement* when managed correctly. Interestingly, the expected benefit, *integrated economic and marketing benefits* ($\beta = -0.625, p = 0.000$), had a negative relationship. Similar to Spearman's rank-order correlation results, the negative relationship could be explained by the low rating of the factor, implying that respondents did not regard themselves as involved in the

development of the route and expected benefits will not necessarily change the situation or their level of involvement. The same explanation could apply to the positive relationship of *insufficient tourism management* ($\beta = 0.261$, $p = 0.000$). While it is considered a barrier, it has an unexpected positive relationship.

Table 6-15: Stepwise linear regression results for enhancing *Active stakeholder involvement*

Model:	Active stakeholder involvement	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
4	(Constant)	4.352	.673		6.463	.000
	<i>Integrated economic and marketing benefits</i>	-.625	.139	-.296	-4.502	.000*
	<i>Route packaging and development</i>	.556	.132	.273	4.201	.000*
	<i>Insufficient integrated supply system</i>	-.480	.108	-.332	-4.429	.000*
	<i>Insufficient tourism management</i>	.261	.092	.204	2.830	.005*

*Statistically significant, $p < 0.05$

(b) Enhancing Expected benefits from route development

The hypothesised regression model is illustrated in Figure 6.7.

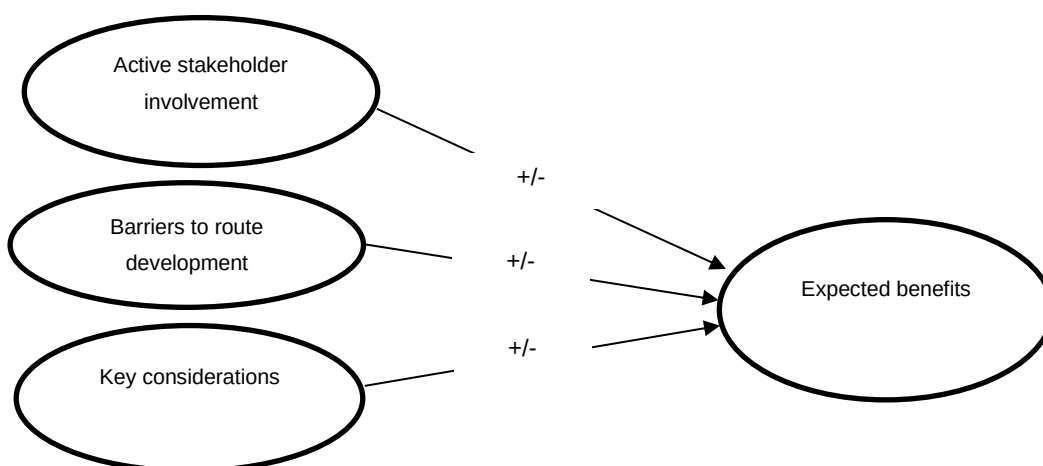


Figure 6-7: Hypothesised regression model for Expected benefits of route development

Table 6.16 indicates the statistically significant variables. First, for the factor, *integrated cooperation and involvement*, the perceived benefits, *integrated regional tourism development* ($\beta = 0.460, p = 0.000$), *integrated economic and marketing benefits* ($\beta = 0.370, p = 0.000$) and *integrated tourism advancement* ($\beta = 0.166, p = 0.000$), had positive relationships, implying that all four benefits are compatible with one another. Contrary to the previous results, the barrier, *insufficient integrated supply system* ($\beta = -0.143, p = 0.000$), had a negative relationship with the perceived benefit, implying that if this barrier is not addressed, the perceived benefit *integrated cooperation and involvement* will not be realised. Similarly, *active stakeholder involvement* ($\beta = -0.65, p = 0.000$) had a negative relationship, implying that if stakeholders are not well-managed, the perceived benefit, *integrated cooperation and involvement* cannot be realised.

For the factor, *integrated tourism advancement*, the perceived benefits, *integrated economic and marketing benefits* ($\beta = 0.348, p = 0.000$) and *integrated cooperation and involvement* ($\beta = 0.218, p = 0.000$) had positive statistically significant relationships, implying that both benefits are compatible with *integrated tourism advancement*. The key consideration, *route promotion and cooperation* ($\beta = 0.207, p = 0.000$), had a positive relationship, implying that the perceived benefit and *integrated tourism advancement* will be realised if well promoted and managed. The barriers displayed interesting results. *Insufficient integrated supply system* ($\beta = 0.135, p = 0.000$) had an unexpected positive relationship, while *insufficient integrated route governance* ($\beta = -0.212, p = 0.000$) had a negative relationship, implying that barriers need to be well managed in order to realise advancing *integrated tourism advancement*.

Table 6.16 further presents the statistically significant variables for *integrated economic and marketing benefits*. The perceived benefits *integrated regional tourism development* ($\beta = 0.325, p = 0.000$), *integrated cooperation and involvement* ($\beta = 0.268, p = 0.000$), and *integrated tourism advancement* ($\beta = 0.212, p = 0.000$), all had positive relationships implying that the benefits are all compatible and working together and must be managed together. Interestingly, one of the barriers, *insufficient route governance*, had a positive relationship, implying that this barrier must be managed to advance this expected benefit. The factor, *active stakeholder involvement*, had a negative relationship, implying that the perceived benefit, *integrated economic and marketing benefits*, will not be realised if

stakeholders are not actively involved.

Table 6.16 indicates the statistically significant variables for *integrated regional tourism development*. The perceived benefits, *integrated economic and marketing benefits* ($\beta = 0.387, p = 0.000$), and *integrated cooperation and development* ($\beta = .374, p = 0.000$), had positive relationships, implying that *integrated regional tourism development* will be realised when these perceived benefits are well managed. The key consideration, *route promotion and cooperation* ($\beta = 0.203, p = 0.000$), had a positive relationship, implying that *integrated regional development* will be realised when this key consideration is managed correctly.

Table 6.16 shows the variables that can enhance the expected benefits of tourism route development. The positive relationships between the barriers and the expected benefits are interesting and could be due to multicollinearity among the variables, and a suppression effect occurs as a result. It, however, remains essential that the barriers be decreased, and the expected benefits enhanced. The final proposed framework needs to address this and enhance *active stakeholder involvement*.

Table 6-16: Stepwise linear regression results for enhancing Expected benefits of tourism route development

Model: Integrated cooperation and involvement		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
6	(Constant)	-.074	.257		-.287	.775
	<i>Integrated regional tourism development</i>	.460	.061	.417	7.562	.000*
	<i>Integrated economic and marketing benefits</i>	.370	.071	.313	5.207	.000*
	<i>Insufficient branding and involvement</i>	.184	.041	.239	4.537	.000*
	<i>Integrated tourism advancement</i>	.166	.054	.141	3.063	.002*
	<i>Insufficient integrated supply system</i>	-.143	.044	-.176	-3.257	.001*
	<i>Active stakeholder involvement</i>	-.065	.022	-.117	-2.928	.004*

Model: Integrated tourism advancement		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
5	(Constant)	1.416	.276		5.122	.000
	<i>Integrated economic and marketing benefits</i>	.348	.074	.346	4.676	.000*
	<i>Route promotion and cooperation</i>	.207	.053	.203	3.891	.000*
	<i>Integrated cooperation and involvement</i>	.218	.063	.257	3.482	.001*
	<i>Insufficient route governance</i>	-.212	.050	-.297	-4.264	.000*
	<i>Insufficient integrated supply system</i>	.135	.048	.196	2.786	.006*
Model: Integrated economic and marketing benefits		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
5	(Constant)	.831	.224		3.710	.000
	<i>Integrated cooperation and involvement</i>	.268	.052	.317	5.180	.000*
	<i>Integrated regional tourism development</i>	.325	.054	.348	5.995	.000*
	<i>Integrated tourism advancement</i>	.212	.047	.213	4.548	.000*
	<i>Active stakeholder involvement</i>	-.054	.019	-.115	-2.941	.004*
	<i>Insufficient route governance</i>	.059	.028	.083	2.076	.039*
Model: Integrated regional tourism development		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
3	(Constant)	.221	.224		.983	.327
	<i>Integrated cooperation and involvement</i>	.374	.052	.413	7.135	.000*
	<i>Integrated economic and marketing benefits</i>	.387	.062	.361	6.282	.000*
	<i>Route promotion and cooperation</i>	.203	.044	.187	4.574	.000*

*Statistically significant, $p < 0.05$

This section discussed the results of the tourism business providers' involvement in the Free State tourism route development. An overview of the business' profile was first provided through descriptive statistics to give insights into their operations, main target markets, involvement in the route's development, and expected benefits and perceived

barriers to successful route development. Multi-variate statistics were performed to identify their involvement and perceptions regarding key considerations, expected benefits, and barriers in route development through EFAs. Since the research aims to develop a stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa, the final analyses involved Spearman's rank-order correlations and stepwise linear regression analyses where the dependent variables were *active stakeholder involvement* (c.f. Table 6.9) and the four expected benefit factors (c.f. Table 6.12). The results show the determinants that must be managed to enhance the dependent variables. It furthermore emphasises the critical marketing and managerial aspects that need to consider when developing the final framework to encourage more active involvement among tourism business providers as key stakeholders.

6.5 Conclusion

This Chapter discussed the results obtained from the quantitative surveys conducted among the tourism business providers. The following Chapter discusses the results of the interviews conducted among the residents – another critical stakeholder in the development of tourism routes.

CHAPTER 7 : EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS - RESIDENTS AS STAKEHOLDERS IN TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Introduction

This Chapter accounts for the qualitative results based on the twenty-five (25) interviews conducted amongst the residents of Paul Roux, Rosendal, Bethlehem, Fouriesburg, and Clarens. The findings were used to develop a suggested stakeholder involvement framework for sustainable tourism route development in South Africa, which would be helpful to tourism route developers, destination managers, policy planners, government agencies, and communities interested in tourism development.

7.2 Qualitative approach: Resident perspectives

The qualitative descriptive design encompasses the qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis, which are collections of tools for analysing textual material and exploring ideas (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2015:100). Identifying, evaluating, and reporting patterns (themes) within data is thematic analysis is all about. It is characterised as a descriptive method to reduce data in a flexible manner that can be combined with other data analyses (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018:808). The goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes or interesting patterns in data and then utilise them to address a topic or make a statement about it. A good thematic analysis does more than summarise the data; it analyses and makes meaning (Maguire & Delahun, 2017:3353). Sundler, Lindberg, Nilsson, and Palmér (2019:736) begin with textual data and organise the meanings uncovered into patterns and, eventually, themes. It is intriguing to use the thematic analysis as themes are obtained from the interviews conducted (Javadi & Zarea, 2016:34). It is suggested that thematic analysis is a valuable tool for exploring the views of different research participants, showing similarities and contrasts, and providing unexpected findings (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017:2).

At the very least, qualitative data analysis is about the organisation. At its most basic, qualitative data analysis are about organising data (coding) and isolating essential ideas and concepts (creating themes) that repeat or look significant due to their presence or absence (Liebenberg, Jamal & Ikeda, 2020:2). Data coding applies labels or codes to distinct parts of the text that relate to different issues in qualitative research (Akinyode &

Khan, 2018:166). A code is a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, prominent, essence-capturing, and evocative feature to a subset of language-based or visual data in qualitative research (Ganapathy, 2016:106). Therefore, before coding commences, one should always study, understand and be familiar with data (Stuckey, 2015:7). Coding assists in sorting data into categories (nodes) or themes, allowing data from many sources to be easily organised and compared. With significant themes classified in this fashion, researchers can review and retrieve motivating sections and examine them as separate files (Akinyode & Khan, 2018:167).

Therefore, thematic content analysis was applied to identify codes and sub-themes based on the participant responses.

7.2.1 Results from the qualitative interviews among residents

The research participants were all residents of the Dihlabeng Local Municipality, particularly from all five towns, namely Bethlehem, Paul-Roux, Rosendal, Clarens, and Fouriesburg. The participants were randomly selected from the street in each town and requested to participate in the survey, and once they agreed to participate, they were invited to a selected central place for an interview. Only participants who met the inclusion criteria were invited for an interview. In most cases, interviews were conducted at restaurants after permission was sought from the owner or manager and the permission granted. As with the preceding chapter, the researcher informed participants that their identities would be anonymous and that all information acquired would be considered confidential. All twenty-five participants were given enough time to read the letter attached to the interview schedule (informed consent letter) to fully comprehend the research's goal and the implications of participating in it.

7.2.2 Information regarding the date, location and duration of the interviews

The interviews were conducted in Bethlehem, Paul Roux, Rosendal, Clarens, and Fouriesberg. Participants were questioned about their preferred languages for the interview, and they all consented to have an interview in English. The interviews began on September 7, 2021, and ended on November 22, 2021, due to some participants' discomfort with doing oral interviews and instead opting for a written interview and emailing them to the researcher. The most extended interview of all twenty-five lasted for 10:46 minutes, and the shortest interview lasted for about 4:19 minutes, as indicated in

Table 7.1. Immediately after all interviews were concluded, the researcher commenced transcribing the interviews. Producing spoken words, such as recorded data from an interview and converting them into written form so that the data may be reviewed is known as transcription. The most common kind of transcription used in qualitative interviews is verbatim transcription. It refers to the vocal data being reproduced word for word, with written words being a copy of the audio-recorded utterances (McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl, 2019:1005). In addition, when a researcher transcribes his or her interviews, he or she acquires a better understanding of data interpretation and analysis (Johnson, 2011:92). Despite the time and effort involved, many researchers prefer to transcribe qualitative interviews themselves because it benefits getting to know the data. Researchers recommend that researchers transcribe the interview as early as possible once completed (McGrath *et al.*, 2019:1005). In this study phase, the researcher conducted and transcribed the interviews.

Table 7.1: Participant's date, location, and duration of the interviews

Participants	Date	Location	Duration
P1	08 September 2021	Paul Roux	09:39
P2	08 September 2021	Paul Roux	06:08
P3	09 September 2021	Clarens	08:15
P4	09 September 2021	Rosendal	04:19
P5	09 September 2021	Rosendal	05:40
P6	09 September 2021	Rosendal	05:01
P7	09 September 2021	Rosendal	07:16
P8	09 September 2021	Rosendal	07:08
P9	10 September 2021	Clarens	05:29
P10	10 September 2021	Fouriesburg	06:48
P11	10 September 2021	Fouriesburg	08:12
P12	10 September 2021	Fouriesburg	06:42
P13	10 September 2021	Fouriesburg	06:14
P14	10 September 2021	Fouriesburg	10:46
P15	12 September 2021	Clarens	09:39
P16	13 September 2021	Clarens	Written interview
P17	13 September 2021	Fouriesburg	05:10
P18	13 September 2021	Bethlehem	08:53
P19	13 September 2021	Bethlehem	07:16
P20	13 September 2021	Bethlehem	07:04
P21	14 September 2021	Fouriesburg	06:48

Participants	Date	Location	Duration
P22	14 September 2021	Bethlehem	07:27
P23	03 November 2021	Clarens	Written interview
P24	November 2021	Bethlehem	Written interview
P25	November 2021	Clarens	Written interview

In addition to Table 7.1, all oral interviews proceeded without any hindrance or technological glitches experienced. Furthermore, the researcher and all participants were conscious of the high prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa. During the one-on-one interviews, the researcher and the participants wore facial masks, and they applied hand sanitiser before and after the interview. Two telephone interviews were conducted, and both were audible and proceeded well. Lastly, as previously indicated, some participants were reluctant to participate in oral interviews due to COVID-19 and other unknown and undisclosed factors. Four participants submitted written interview schedules instead of oral interviews. After the interviews, the researcher kindly thanked all participants and indicated a mutual interest in meeting again in the future for a similar reason.

7.2.3 Demographic profile of participants

From Table 7.2, most of the participants in this research phase were males 15, and ten were females. Due to ethical considerations, race could not explicitly be asked. However, the researcher made notes and tried to approach participants representing the race distribution in the selected towns. As a result, 64% of the respondents were white, and 36% were black. Out of the twenty-five envisaged interviews from five different towns of Dihlabeng Local Municipality, eight interviews were conducted in Fouriesburg. Six interviews were conducted in Bethlehem, five in Rosendal, four in Clarens, and two in Paul Roux. Initially, it was envisaged that an equal distribution of five residents per town would be interviewed. However, some participants were reluctant for face-to-face interviews due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and in towns like Clarens, some participants stated that they were tired of being surveyed without any considerable feedback. On the other hand, participants in towns like Fouriesburg were more willing to participate in the survey as they believe that Fouriesburg is recognised, and they hope that participating in the research would bring positive changes to their historic rural community. According to Table 6.18, one participant reported living in the area for 65

years (P19), while P18 has been living there for 55 years, and about five participants indicated living there for less than a year. On average, participants have been permanent residents for 18 years.

Table 7.2: Demographic profile of participants

Participants	Gender	Town	Years of living in the town
P1	Male	Paul Roux	16 years
P2	Female	Paul Roux	13 years
P3	Male	Clarens	16 years
P4	Male	Rosendal	1 year
P5	Female	Rosendal	18 years
P6	Female	Rosendal	15 years
P7	Female	Rosendal	2 years
P8	Female	Rosendal	1 year
P9	Male	Fouriesburg	20 years
P10	Male	Fouriesburg	1 year
P11	Female	Fouriesburg	1 year
P12	Female	Fouriesburg	2 years
P13	Male	Fouriesburg	7 years
P14	Male	Fouriesburg	1 year
P15	Male	Bethlehem	34 years
P16	Male	Clarens	11 years
P17	Female	Fouriesburg	40 years
P18	Male	Bethlehem	55 years
P19	Male	Bethlehem	65 years
P20	Male	Bethlehem	36 years
P21	Female	Fouriesburg	6 years
P22	Male	Bethlehem	2 years
P23	Male	Clarens	10 years

Participants	Gender	Town	Years of living in the town
P24	Male	Bethlehem	37 years
P25	Female	Clarens	38 Years

7.2.4 Thematic content analysis results

The next section discusses the main themes and sub-themes from the interview responses and the deductive thematic content analysis. A comparison with the literature and the findings from the interviews with the tourism planners (Chapter 5) and the tourism business providers (Chapter 6) are made. Please note that the participants sometimes declined to answer the questions, especially those who opted for the written interviews.

(a) Theme 1: Route awareness and the influence of the route on the community

The first questions measured participants' awareness of the Eagle tourism route among the twenty-five participants. As shown in Table 7.3, 56% of participants indicated they are aware that they are living along a tourism route, while 44% of the participants are not aware of the existence of the Eagle tourism route. Out of all twenty-five participants, 84% do not know the actual name of the tourism route. These results are worrisome, and more should be done to increase awareness of the Eagle tourism route among the residents living along the route. Meanwhile, 12% know the route's name, while P20 mentioned another route other than the Eagle tourism route. In addition to the above results, 96% of participants do not know the year the route was established, while P3 estimated that the route was established 3 - 4 years ago with no specification to the actual year.

This section in the interview guide also assessed the influence of the route on the community and whether they perceived the route to have a positive or a negative influence. According to the responses captured in Table 7.3 on the influence of the route on the community in general, two sub-themes emerged, ***positive community impacts*** and ***adverse community impacts***, which are detailed below. The keywords that emerged within the positive impacts of the community and adverse community impacts were used to develop codes listed and discussed next.

(i) **Sub-theme 1: Positive community impacts**

According to the interviews, *positive community impacts* emerged as the first sub-theme. Five codes illustrate it, namely, *potential tourism growth* (9 mentions), *potential economic growth* (8 mentions), *potential job creation* (6 mentions), *potential route branding and marketing* (3 mentions) and *potential community pride* (1 mention). Regarding the ***potential tourism growth*** code, the following quotes fully amplify the expressions of participants.

P7 commented that *“I think tourism in any way would be massive. If we have a huge problem with lack of employment. So it will definitely create a fantastic employment opportunities, because Rosendal is actually a tourism town that’s the only thing that makes us different from other towns in the area that we are a tourism destination. People just come here for the peace and quiet, so that will obviously create more job opportunities”*. While P11, explained that *“It will definitely attract more visitors because they will view the area and if we can serve them, it’s a win-win situation”* and participant P15 commented that, *“If it was marketed properly or well promoted it make an impact in people’s lives, people will become aware of it. People will flog or use it often”*.

For the second code, ***potential economic growth***, one of the participants explained that *“I would say the community will gain by the money the tourist will bring along. It will be very positive for the businesses as well as the tourists to spend their money, etc”* (P19). Another participant commented that *“According to my little knowledge, the tourism routes around the world were established to positively impact the economies of the small and rural towns in terms of employment and high profit margins from the local shops due to tourist visiting the towns”* (P16).

The third code on the positive community impacts is ***potential job creation***, wherein the first participant (P1) commented: *“It can create a lot more jobs and there are so many talented people with so many skills that can benefit from something like this and get more economic growth”*. Another participant (P20) explained that *“I think if we were having some impact there were going to be a lot of jobs around our area, now we don’t have that much jobs. I think it’s not marketed well in terms of tourists”*. One participant commented that *“I think it will create job opportunities for the people around here”* (P22).

For the fourth code, **potential route branding and marketing**, P10 explained that *“Well, if there’s an established route that tourists know about then that’s a marketing point for us. If you can say come stay with us in Fouriesburg and explore the Maluti route it will have a big impact because then there’s things to see and things to do in that area”*. Another participant (P15) commented that *“People will become aware of it if it was effectively marketed or promoted. It will be exploited or used frequently”*.

Under the last code in sub-theme 1, **potential community pride**, P2 explained that *“Alright, I would say that if, let’s say for instance the tourism board or government did a good job at marketing the area and that sort of thing to tag more people into this town, small business would thrive, they would not be closing doors in this lock down period. Residents as well as the community would be more proud, obviously about this job creation and take pride. They attract more attention, they would be proud to be part of something like this”*.

(ii) Sub-theme 2: Adverse community impacts

Based on the interviews, the following codes were identified as *adverse community impacts* codes, namely *no influence* (6 mentions), *poor road infrastructure* (3 mentions), *lack of awareness* (3 mentions), *inequality* (2 mentions) and *poor infrastructure* (1 mention). According to the first unfavourable code **no influence**, one participant commented that *“I think not all, because I’m the only person in my community that knows about the Eagle route”* (P3). Another participant (P6) explained that *“I do not think it would possibly influence me because I’m here for peace and quiet”*. Most participants felt that the tourism route does not influence their community.

For the second adverse code **poor road infrastructure**, participant P21 commented, *“It doesn’t influence the community, because of the road conditions. No one wants to come to our town, no one wants to go to Ficksburg because people are scared their cars can get damaged because of all the potholes”*. While another participant (P12) explained, *“It will influence us a lot. We have got nice places around here, the problem is to get to those places, the roads are bad very bad. The people from Gauteng come here with their smart cars but it is a struggle for them to drive on these roads”*.

The third adverse code is **inequality**. *“Only the Town of Clarens is benefiting from the Tourism Route even though only those people who are in the Town of Clarens are rewarded*

by Tourism. The Black community is not benefiting at all” (P24). P25 explained that “What I can say is, the town of Clarens has benefited so much from tourism, the businesses are booming. But unfortunately, poor people in the township are still struggling”.

For the fourth adverse code, **poor infrastructure**, *“Definitely it will make a bigger impact if we can attract tourist and get our economy on our higher level but for that we also need to make sure that the infrastructure in the town is up to standard. I’m afraid at the moment it’s not there”* explained (P14).

The last adverse code in this sub-theme is **lack of awareness**. One participant (P2) explained that *“The effective marketing of the tourism routes by the tourism routes planners through residents’ involvement, local business would also benefit. This will enhance job opportunities for the locals and they would be proud of such endeavour”*. P15 almost echoed the same sentiments and commented that *“A well-marketed tourism route will lure tourist to the area and this will have a positive impact in the lives of the local community”*.

Based on the identified codes, the literature highlights the following important findings. Habibi, Rahmati and Karimi (2018:261) highlighted that tourism is a significant foreign exchange earner, allowing for the payment of imported capital goods or basic inputs utilised in the manufacturing process. Second, tourism stimulates investments in new infrastructure and competition between local enterprises and firms in other tourist countries. Third, tourism has a direct, indirect, and induced effect on other economic activities. Fourth, tourism contributes to job creation and income growth.

Increasing tourist awareness and providing alternatives by connecting major sites with community attractions in popular cities. It is a method of marketing a community's primary attractions through media such as pamphlets, visual media, multimedia, or online media (Ratanapongtra, Khamkerd, Kongdit & Nawatnatee, 2020:480). Therefore, local residents unaware of sustainability and the environment and the value their neighbourhood generates as a tourist destination will not recognise the necessity of preserving the area or demand government assistance in developing it (Nur Nobi & Majumder, 2019:10).

In the literature of Roy and Gretzel (2020:311), it is discovered that there are no co-branding initiatives in India, translating to a lack of knowledge of the themed routes as a

dynamic branded experience, however, themed route marketing is the concept that is commonly embraced by the tourism providers for service and experience model.

Domestic tourism has a more significant influence on lowering inequality than international tourism since the benefits of foreign tourists are taken by major hotel chains, which are usually multinational corporations (Ghosh & Mitra, 2021:1). As the industry grows rapidly, inequality becomes more visible in the tourism industry, as does the need for a more comprehensive and detailed understanding of them since tourism has long been a source and cause of social inequality (Cole & Morgan, 2010:10).

Infrastructure development, such as road construction, is essential for establishing new tourism destinations. Research by Rogerson (2004:24) on small tourist businesses in South Africa's rural areas, for example, states that "the underlying restrictions of poor infrastructure, poor transportation, and basic services must also be addressed". These findings were also emphasised by Giampiccoli and Saayman (2017:12).

Considering the identified codes, some interesting comparisons between the interviews between the tourism planners (Chapter 5) and the residents can be made. In Table 5.9, the interviewed tourism route planners P1 and P2 alluded that tourism routes' marketing is done through trade shows and brochures, and P4 indicated that the marketing is done through marketing platforms. However, in the study of Kontsiwe and Visser (2019:1340) regarding attendance of trade shows such as the Johannesburg Expo and Cherry Festival in the Free State Province, there are far fewer benefits from such marketing attempts. This implies that the marketing strategies applied by the FSGLTA are inconsistent with how the residents perceive the marketing of the route and with the recent researched marketing literature of the Free State.

Furthermore, in Table 5.13, tourism planners indicated "inclusivity, black communities were left out. Now the township Shisanyamas is in the mix". However, P24 and P25 in Table 7.3 contradict the latter statement as they both refer to inequality. Therefore, what the tourism planners think about the route as good, the community is not perceiving the same benefits.

Regarding positive attributes in the operation of routes, tourism planners mentioned that the government is now closer to the product owners, tourism routes gave the province an identity and that routes increase economy and occupancy rates, and none of them

mentioned that tourism routes created jobs. However, in Table 7.3, most participants indicated that, if well managed, tourism routes can create jobs and grow the economy.

Interestingly, tourism planners gave contrasting views regarding the year the routes were established; some said routes were established in 2012, others said 2014, and some were unsure. These results emphasise that greater awareness of the tourism route is essential among residents and planners. It is the same with the residents as only 12% know the route's name, and 96% of residents interviewed are unaware of the year the routes were established.

Table 7.3: Eagle Tourism Route awareness and the influence of the route on the community

THEME 1: ROUTE AWARENESS AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE ROUTE ON THE COMMUNITY

Participant code	Aware of the route?	Name of the route	Year the route was established	Influence of the route on the community in general	Code(s)
P1	Yes	Sun Gazer & Eagle route	No	"It can create a lot more jobs and there are so many talented people with so many skills that can benefit from something like this and get more economic growth"	Potential job creation Potential economic growth
P2	No	Do not Know	Not aware	"Alright, I would say that if, let's say for instance the tourism board or government did a good job at marketing the area and that sort of thing to tag more people into this town, small business would thrive, they would not be closing doors in this lock down period. Residents as well as the community would be more proud, obviously about this job creation and take pride. They attract more attention, they would be proud to be part of something like this"	Potential route branding and marketing Potential community pride Potential job creation
P3	Yes	Eagle route	3 or 4 years ago	"I think not all, because I'm the only person in my community that knows about the Eagle route"	Lack of awareness No influence
P4	No	Do not know	Do not know	"I assume that it has positively affected the area because of the social economic growth. That could open job creations and so forth. I currently with bad road and not the	Potential job creation Potential economic growth Poor road infrastructure

Participant code	Aware of the route?	Name of the route	Year the route was established	Influence of the route on the community in general	Code(s)
				awareness of the route whatsoever there's no effect on the community".	Lack of awareness No influence
P5	Yes	Do not know	Do not know	"I think it will bring people to the town and hopefully it will mean good business for the industries that are here"	Potential tourism growth Potential economic growth
P6	No	Do not know	Do not know	"I do not think it would possibly influence me because I'm here for peace and quite".	No influence
P7	No	Do not know	Do not know	"I think tourism in anyway would be massive. If we have a huge problem with lack of employment. So it will definitely create a fantastic employment opportunities, because Rosendal is actually a tourism town that's the only thing that makes us different from other towns in the area that we are a tourism destination. People just come here for the peace and quiet, so that will obviously create more job opportunities".	Potential tourism growth Potential job creation
P8	Yes	Do not know	Do not know	"It will give me hope for this country, when all the people living in risk know. I feel privileged to have a voice where a lot of people don't have a voice. It will create jobs".	Potential job creation
P9	Yes	Do not know	Do not know	It will bring more money	Potential economic growth

Participant code	Aware of the route?	Name of the route	Year the route was established	Influence of the route on the community in general	Code(s)
P10	Yes	Do not know	Do not know	"Well, if there's an established route that tourist know about then that's a marketing point for us. If you can say come stay with us in Fouriesburg and explore the Maluti route it will have a big impact because then there's things to see and things to do in that area".	Potential route branding and marketing
P11	No	Do not know	Do not know	"It will definitely attract more visitors because they will view the area and if we can serve them, it's a win-win situation"	Potential tourism growth
P12	Yes	Do not know	Do not know	"It will influence us a lot. We have got nice places around here, the problem is to get to those places, the roads are bad very bad. The people from Gauteng come here with their smart cars but it is a struggle for them to drive on these roads".	Potential tourism growth Poor road infrastructure
P13	No			"It can only influence us positively. And the reason being the only collective tourism industry needs to support each other and they can do that through a route like this".	Potential tourism growth
P14	Yes	Do not know	Do not know	"Definitely it will make a bigger impact if we can attract tourist and get our economy on our higher level but for that we also need to make sure that the infrastructure in the town	Potential tourism growth Potential economic growth Poor infrastructure

Participant code	Aware of the route?	Name of the route	Year the route was established	Influence of the route on the community in general	Code(s)
				is up to standard. I'm afraid at the moment it's not there".	
P15	Yes	Do not know	Do not know	"If it was marketed properly or well promoted it make an impact in people's lives, people will become aware of it. People will flog or use it often".	Lack of awareness Potential route branding and marketing
P16	No			"According to my little knowledge, the tourism routes around the world were established to positively impact the economies of the small and rural towns in terms of employment and high profit margins from the local shops due to tourist visiting the towns".	
P17	No	Do not know	Do not know	"Positively, it brings more tourist in to the area. So, all the shop in the area and guesthouses and everybody there will be doing good"	Potential tourism growth Potential economic growth
P18	Yes	Do not know	Do not know	"it is in the middle of a number of provinces. It is accessible and if exploited well, it can bring a lot of tourists".	Potential tourism growth
P19	Yes	Do not know	Do not know	"I would say the community will gain by the money the tourist will bring along. It will be	Potential economic growth

Participant code	Aware of the route?	Name of the route	Year the route was established	Influence of the route on the community in general	Code(s)
				very positive for the businesses as well as the tourists to spend their money, etc.	
P20	Yes	Wildhandes Kop & Lions rock	Do not know	"I think if we were having some impact there were going to be a lot of jobs around our area, now we don't have that much jobs. I think it's not marketed well in terms of tourists".	Potential economic growth Potential tourism growth
P21	Yes	Eagle route	Do not know	"It doesn't influence the community, because of the road conditions. No one wants to come to our town, no one wants to go to Ficksburg because people are scared their cars can get damaged because of all the potholes".	No influence Poor road infrastructure
P22	No	Do not know	Do not know	"I think it will create job opportunities for the people around here"	Potential job creation
P23	No	"Did not know this, its for the first time I hear this"	Do not know	-	-
P24	No	Do not know	Do not Know	"Only the Town of Clarens is benefiting from the Tourism Route even them only those people who are in the Town of Clarens are rewarded by Tourism. The Black community is not benefiting at all".	No influence Inequality

Participant code	Aware of the route?	Name of the route	Year the route was established	Influence of the route on the community in general	Code(s)
P25	Yes	Do not know	Do not know	"What I can say is, the town of Clarens has benefited so much from tourism, the businesses are booming. But unfortunately, poor people in the township are still struggling".	No influence Inequality

(b) **Theme 2: Resident support in sustainable tourism route development**

According to tourism academics, the local community supports tourism development because people perceive good benefits from tourism activities (Kanwal, Rasheed, Pitafi, Pitafi & Ren, 2020:3). Research on community attitudes toward tourism indicates that the perceived beneficial impacts of the industry influence the host population. Tourism creates more job opportunities and many other opportunities for the locals (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011a:978; 2011b). Based on the interviews regarding the importance of residents' support for sustainable tourism route development in Table 7.4, three sub-themes **essential resident participation outcomes**, **community indifference** and **essential external stakeholder participation outcomes** emerged with multiple codes identified under each sub-theme and discussed below.

(i) **Sub-theme 1: Essential resident participation outcomes**

Within the sub-theme, the following codes were identified, namely, *active community cooperation* (21 mentions), *employment opportunities* (4 mentions), and *exposure to local talent* (1 mention). The following quotes emphasised the participant's views regarding the first code, **active community cooperation**.

P1 commented that *"Yes. If everybody agrees and everybody can work together and that's what should be a big thing if everybody can stand together. They can do it as one they can make this thing work"*. One participant explained that *"Definitely. A lot of the residents have negative opinions about people trying to do something, but they are not the ones doing anything anyway. So, we need the positive support of everybody to progress"* (P11). Another participant (P3) explained that *"The support of the community is definitely what is needed to make any sustainable future for anything. So, definitely it's important to have support"*.

For the second code, **employment opportunities**, P8 commented, *"I actually think that it's the government's job, but we do it ourselves in any case here in Rosendal. We support one another's business and employ people from this town"*. Another participant, P17, explained that *"Yes, it is. Because of the need to support all businesses if there are no jobs then people will struggle."*

For the third code, **exposure to local talent**, *“Yes. Obviously in any initiative that you take you had to bring along or onboard all the stakeholders and communities as part of the stakeholders. For example, let’s say the people who are into art and crafts if they come on board then will sustain their livelihood and they will show case their stuff and it will benefit the route itself because it will bring more tourists”* explained P15.

(ii) Sub-theme 2: Community indifference

For the code, **unsupportive community**, P22 explained, *“I do not think there is a lot of support from the people of this town”*. Another participant, P6, commented, *“No, because for us to exist here we have to earn our income, so you have to look for your own source because we have got no outside help at all”*.

(iii) Sub-theme 3: Essential external stakeholder participation

Within the **essential external stakeholder participation outcomes**, the following codes emerged, *government support* (4 mentions), *investment opportunities* (5 mentions), *road infrastructure* (2 mentions), *improved marketing* (5 mentions) and lastly, *exposure to tourist attractions* (1 mention).

For the first code, **government support**, participant P8 commented that *“I actually think that it’s the government’s job, but we do it ourselves in any case here in Rosendal. We support one another’s business and employ people from this town”*. Another participant (P20) explained, *“Yes. The community is supported, but marketing from our government is not that much”*.

For the second code, **investment opportunities**, *“Yes. That is exactly what we are trying to achieve now as the residents of this town to start working together to improve and make sure that the municipal services are better, and the investors are attracted into this town in order to boost the tourism. But you can’t just do it as the tourism community we have to get all the residents together,”* explained P14. Another participant (P12) commented that *“Yes, it bringing capital into the area which is much needed”*.

In the third code, **road infrastructure**, participant P4 stated, *“Yes, definitely I think if the government helps support, they will be a massive change and like even if roads were fixed and everybody knew about this route it will have a massive impact on everyone in the community”*.

For the fourth code, **improved marketing**, participant P16 commented, "Yes, we cannot just be told about the tourism route and expected to own it but never been consulted about it. *The government must support all communities in which the route passes through by ensuring that the roads are up to standard, visible signage and general infrastructure*". Another participant (P20) explained "Yes. *The community is supported, but marketing from our government is not that much.*" Participant P18 emphasised, "Yes, *I do think so, but it depends on the awareness by the municipality, maybe by flyers*". Lastly, in this code, participant P19 reiterated that "Yes. *The 80% of the community is not aware of the route. We really need an awareness about the route*".

In the fifth code, **exposure to tourist attraction**, participant P21 explained, "Yes. *What should have happened before the government decided to start the Eagle route, they should've came to the tourism bodies of this town and say, how can we help you to attract tourists to your town. Half of places are not sure how to pull together. I mean Fouriesburg is a tiny little town and there is nothing about what we offer and activities that we have, the nice places, walking routes and hiking routes, the township tours and offers in the township, they are not benefiting at all*".

In Table 5.6, the tourism planners outlined the various responsibilities of their level of involvement in the tourism routes of the Free State Province. It is intriguing to note that their involvement is not inclusive of the collaboration or engagement of residents but only collaborating with the local and district municipalities, sidelining essential stakeholders, such as the residents. On the other hand, P16 emphasises that the government does not consult with the residents, and most of the residents in Table 6.20 encourage active community cooperation in tourism routes.

Government authorities and tourist planners must understand locals' perceptions of tourism development's impact and assess their support (Papastathopoulos, Ahmad, Sabri & Kaminakis, 2020:1119). According to Papastathopoulos *et al.* (2020:1119), recent studies revealed that tourist development could benefit communities, including job opportunities, government services and infrastructure improvements, and foster local entrepreneurship and economic development growth. Previous studies have shown that residents' support and engagement in tourism-related activities reduce tourism's adverse effects while enhancing the tourism communities' positive effects (Eslami, Khalifah,

Mardani, Streimikiene & Han, 2019:1066). The themes and emerging codes are consistent with the studies and the literature cited above.

Table 7.4: Do you feel that the support of the residents of this community is important for sustainable / further tourism route developments?

THEME 2: RESIDENT SUPPORT IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P1	"Yes. If everybody agrees and everybody can work together and that's what should be a big thing if everybody can stand together. They can do it as one they can make this thing work".	Work together	Active community cooperation
P2	Yes, we have committee in this town even though this village is very small that has a lot do with conservation and very proud of it".	-Committee -Conservation	Active community cooperation
P3	"The support of the community is definitely what is needed to make any sustainable future for anything. So, definitely it's important to have support"	-Sustainable future	Active community cooperation
P4	"Yes, definitely I think if the government helps support, they will be a massive change and like even if roads were fixed and everybody knew about this route it will have a massive impact on everyone in the community".	Government support Roads Community impact	Government support Road infrastructure Improved marketing
P5	"Yes. Well, we need to be positive towards a tourist if they arrive in town, we need to be friendly and not to be rude".	Positivity	Active community cooperation
P6	"No, because for us to exist here we have to earn our income, so you have to look for your own source because we have got no outside help at all"	No support	Unsupportive community
P7	"Yes. There is no development at the moment. I think if we can use the opportunity to train people get them employed. There will be more opportunities for themselves the way we have a beautiful village down here".	Less developments Opportunities for locals	Active community cooperation Employment opportunities

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P8	"I actually think that it's the government's job, but we do it ourselves in any case here in Rosendal. We support one another's business and employ people from this town"	Support of businesses Employment	Government support Employment opportunities
P9	"Yes, it is. The community must open restaurants and guesthouses to boost the tourism industry".	Community involvement	Active community cooperation
P10	"Yes, the residents make use of the roads"	Residents use infrastructure	Community support
P11	"Definitely. A lot of the residents have negative opinions about people trying to do something, but they are not the ones doing anything anyway. So, we need the positive support of everybody to progress"	Government support	Active community cooperation
P12	"Yes, it is bringing capital into the area which is much needed"	Capital	Active community cooperation Investment opportunities
P13	"Yes definitely. Without the support of the residents nothing will happen"	Resident's support	Active community cooperation
P14	"Yes. That is exactly what we are trying to achieve now as the residents of this town to start working together to improve and make sure that the municipal services are better, and the investors are attracted into this town in order to boost the tourism. But you can't just do it as the tourism community we have to get all the residents together".	Working together as residents Better municipal services Investors to boost tourism Community to get together	Active community cooperation Investment opportunities

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P15	“Yes. Obviously in any initiative that you take you had to bring along or onboard all the stakeholders and communities as part of the stakeholders. For example, let’s say the people who are into art and crafts if they come on board then will sustain their livelihood and they will show case their stuff and it will benefit the route itself because it will bring more tourists”.	Stakeholders and communities Arts and crafts Sustain livelihood Bring more tourist	Active community cooperation Employment opportunities Exposure of local talent
P16	“Yes, we cannot just be told about the tourism route and expected to own it but never been consulted about the route. The government must support all communities in which the route passes through by ensuring that the roads are up to standard, visible signage and general infrastructure”.	No consultation Government to support all communities Roads up to standard Visible signage Infrastructures	Active community cooperation Government support Road infrastructure Improved marketing
P17	“Yes, it is. Because of the need to support all businesses if there are no jobs then people will struggle”	Support of all businesses Jobs	Active community cooperation Employment opportunities
P18	Yes, I do think so, but it is depending on the awareness by the municipality, maybe by flyers”	Awareness	Active community cooperation Improved marketing
P19	“Yes. The 80% of the community is not aware of the route. We really need an awareness about the route”	Awareness	Active community cooperation Improved marketing
P20	Yes. The community is supported, but marketing from our government is not that much.	Community Marketing	Active community cooperation

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
		Government	Government support Improved marketing
P21	“Yes. What should have happened before the government decided to start the Eagle route, they should’ve come to the tourism bodies of this town and say, how can we help you to attract tourists to your town. Half of places are not sure how to pull together. I mean Fouriesburg is a tiny little town and there is nothing about what we offer and activities that we have, the nice places, walking routes and hiking routes, the township tours and offers in the township, they are not benefiting at all”.	Government Tourism bodies Tourists Walking routes & hiking routes Townships not benefiting	Active community cooperation Exposure to tourist attractions
P22	“I do not think there is a lot of support from the people of this town”	Lack of support	Unsupportive community
P23	“Yes, community support is crucial because they know the area and its history better”.	Community support Area History	Active community cooperation
P24	“Yes, because everybody has a relative and when they visit this area, they can advertise the area through word of mouth”.	Advertise Word of mouth	Active community cooperation
P25	“Answer: Yes, it is important because the residents of the community make up the tourism development. They know what needs development, how and why. The sustainability of tourism development depends on residents as much as it does on the tourists, because they are the employees in the tourism sector and they know the ins and outs of it”.	Community makes up tourism development Sustainability of tourism development	Active community cooperation

(c) **Theme 3: Resident collaboration in the planning, development and management of the route**

Academics believe that community involvement is fundamental in the development of sustainable tourism. Their input is important (Moyo & Tichaawa, 2017:4). Community involvement is endowed with many aspects, including providing the final goods and services to tourists, owning or co-owning accommodation establishments, and allowing service base products to be sold in and around the communities (Provia, Ronald & Michelle, 2017:16). Under this theme, inadequate resident involvement and active resident involvement emerged as sub-themes based on the responses. Several codes were identified and explained below (Table 7.5).

(i) **Sub-theme 1: Inadequate resident involvement**

According to the interviews, *inadequate resident involvement* emerged as the first sub-theme illustrated by two almost similar codes, namely *uninvolved* (18 mentions) and *unawareness* (7 mentions). Regarding the ***uninvolved*** code, the following quotes amplified the expressions of the participants.

P3 explained that *“The residents did not form part of anything from this route. We just also found out about it. So, the community where we live is not involved in the planning”*. Another participant detailed that *“No, I only got to know about the route through a friend of mine employed in government. I have never seen or experienced any community engagement or meeting called by the government to inform us about the route. I have not seen a single board or sign pointing in the direction of the route, I do not even know what to expect in the route in terms of amenities and activities in the route. I have not seen offices of the route operator nor how the route is operated, therefore I strongly believe that residents did not form part of the tourism route planning, development and management”* (P16). P24 commented that *“No, the community was not consulted even now the community does not know that there is a tourism route in this area”*. Another participant (P3) explained that *“The residents did not form part of anything from this route. We just also found out about it. So, the community where we live is not involved in the planning”*.

Within the **unawareness** code, one participant commented that *“No. They make a lot of promises about fixing the road. It’s heart breaking to hear stories about accidents, people dying and people that are sick that need to get to the hospital then the ambulance has to travel on this road. Sometimes get a flat tire. I’ve seen awareness campaigns, but I don’t think they were about the tourism route”* (P8). While another participant (P15) commented that *“I don’t think so from where I’m standing. I don’t think they were properly consulted and if they were consulted. I’m sure a lot of people would’ve known the name of the route”*. P20 explained that *“No, I do not think so. We have our radio station and we never heard anything from the government about the tourism plan.”*

(ii) Sub-theme 2: Active resident involvement

Interestingly, only participant P25 commented that *“Answer: Yes, the Clarens Tourism Forum is formed by mostly business owners. But I think they need to include members of the community in general”*. This is highly worrisome as only one respondent felt that residents were actively involved in the development and management of the route.

The comparison of the results in Table 5.17 and Table 7.5 regarding the involvement of residents as stakeholders is interesting in many aspects. In Table 5.17, one of the tourism planners indicated that residents were only consulted and not directly involved, and one other planner did not know if the residents were consulted. However, three other planners gave contradicting statements saying that residents were involved in developing tourism routes. On the other hand, residents made captivating views regarding their involvement in the development of tourism routes. In Table 7.5, 76% of residents indicated that they were not involved in the development of the route, and 24% were not also involved but further mentioned that they were not even aware of the route. This implies that residents were never involved in the route's development and are still not involved in the operation of the route.

Arnstein's (1969:217) developed a ladder of citizen participation which includes, among others, in no particular order, citizen control, partnership, consultation, therapy, manipulation, delegated power and informing. This is supported by Wondirad and Ewnetu (2019:3), demonstrating that non-participation represents manipulative involvement, in which citizens are duped by false engagement. Citizens and community members are not involved in the planning and development process. Citizens' tokenism follows, in which

authorities inform communities about their rights, obligations, and options and encourage them to express their opinions on the matter but do not provide them with the opportunity to make decisions. Lastly, the literature emphasises that community participation should provide a fair distribution of material resources and a significant knowledge transfer to achieve long-term community engagement (Wondirad & Ewnetu, 2019:4). The literature substantiates both themes and corroborates the emerging codes under each theme.

Table 7.5: Do you feel the residents formed part of the tourism route planning, development, and management?

THEME 3: RESIDENT COLLABORATION IN THE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE ROUTE

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P1	"I don't know much about the Eagle route and its contribution."	Unaware	Unawareness
P2	"They should, because there's nobody aware of it".	Not aware	Unawareness
P3	"The residents did not form part of anything from this route. We just also found out about it. So, the community where we live is not involved in the planning".	Community not involved	Uninvolved
P4	"I do not think they formed part".	No involvement	Uninvolved
P5	"No"	No involvement	Uninvolved
P6	"No, we do not form any part of tourism".	No involvement	Uninvolved
P7	"Definitely not. We don't even know about the route".	Lack of awareness	Uninvolved Unawareness
P8	"No. They make a lot of promises about fixing the road. It's heart breaking to hear stories about accidents, people dying and people that are sick that need to get to the hospital then the ambulance has to travel on this road. Sometimes get a flat tire. I've seen awareness campaigns, but I don't think they were about the tourism route".	Roads Lack of awareness campaigns	Uninvolved
P9	"No"	No involvement	Uninvolved
P10	"No"	No involvement	Uninvolved
P11	"I don't know, I'm new in the area"	Lack of awareness	Unawareness
P12	"I do not know"	Lack of awareness	Unawareness
P13	"No"	No involvement	Uninvolved
P14	"I haven't been here long enough to know the history but from what I've heard and from what I've observed my answer will be yes and no but more likely is no".	Lack of awareness	Unawareness

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P15	"I don't think so from where I'm standing. I don't think they were properly consulted and if they were consulted. I'm sure a lot of people would've known the name of the route".	Not properly consulted Don't know the name of the route	Uninvolved
P16	"No, I only got to know about the route through a friend of mine employed in government. I have never seen or experienced any community engagement or meeting called by the government to inform us about the route. I have not seen a single board or sign pointing the direction of the route, I do not even know what to expect in the route in terms of amenities and activities in the route. I have not seen offices of the route operator nor how the route is operated, therefore I strongly believe that residents did not form part of the tourism route planning, development and management".	Only know about the route by government employee No community engagements by government No signage Not sure about the amenities and activities of the route Don't know offices of the route operator Residents did not form part of the route	Uninvolved
P17	"I don't think so, because people do not know about the eagle, and I don't know about it. I'm sure they are. There is definitely tourism in this area but I'm not sure if they were involved in the specific route, the naming and its layout".	People do not know the route The name and layout of the route not appropriate	Unawareness
P18	"I do not think so. The community was never involved".	Community not involved	Uninvolved

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P19	"No. If the residents were part of this planning and development, they would have been aware of this route and partake in it".	Residents Planning and development Awareness	Uninvolved
P20	"No, I do not think so. We have our radio station and we never heard anything from the government about the tourism plan"	Radio station Government Tourism plan	Uninvolved
P21	"No"	No involvement	Uninvolved
P22	"I do not think so"	No involvement	Uninvolved
P23	"No, the residents were not adequately involved hence very few residents know about this tourism route"	Residents not involved Few residents know about the route	Uninvolved
P24	"No, the community was not consulted even now the community does not know that there is a tourism route in this area".	Community not consulted Community not aware	Uninvolved
P25	"Answer: Yes, the Clarens Tourism Forum is formed by mostly business owners. But I think they need to include members of the community in general".	Tourism forum Community	Involved

(d) **Theme 4: Barriers to resident involvement**

This theme represents and analyses the participants' understanding (from the community perspective) of the barriers that deter residents from being involved in the tourism route regarding the Free State Province (Eagle tourism route). The following question was asked to establish the participants' understanding of the possible barriers preventing residents from participating in the tourism route. "In your opinion, what are the biggest barriers that deter residents from participating in the tourism route". The study participants declared their understanding of the residents' barriers to tourism routes from many diverse angles through keywords. From the participant's opinions, keywords emerged, and several codes were developed that were directed to two significant sub-themes, ***inadequate route packaging*** and ***inadequate route development***, detailed below. The keywords and codes are presented in Table 7.6.

(i) **Sub-theme 1: Inadequate route packaging**

According to interviews, *inadequate route packaging* emerged as the first sub-theme and is demonstrated by two similar codes: *insufficient communication* (18 mentions) and *insufficient awareness* (11 mentions).

Concerning the ***insufficient communication*** code, the following quotes highlight participants' opinions. P1 commented, "*People should be aware of what's happening here. There should be more open communication about things, and I think there should be more community meetings as we as where people can come out and discuss things and give ideas. There is no limit where this thing can go, it can only get better*". "*Poor communication from the government and officials only communicate about their products to their close friends and relatives. The government is full of incompetent and illiterate officials who does not even know what is expected from them. The government complete disregard the communities and expect the same communities to support their tourism products*" as explained by participant P16. While P3 stated, "*The biggest barrier is the fact that the people are excluded. The people are not communicated with, the people are not being met with, the people are just ignored, and we do not know about them and they do not talk to us*".

Regarding the second code, **insufficient awareness**, participant P2 explained that *“Lack of communication. There’s no awareness, it would be nice to create awareness you can take it from there, but it needs to be a definite to communication between the tourism or government and the community or representatives of the community”*. *“There’s nothing stopping them if they know about it. I think most people being part of it, we are a very close community, we are multi and the new development on that side, so I think everybody would be super eager”* explained participant by P7. In comparison, P14 stated that *“The roads and the water supply which is inconsistent and unreliable. The communication between stakeholders. The lack of awareness about the Eagle route”*.

(ii) Sub-theme 2: Inadequate route development

Another sub-theme identified was *inadequate route development* which is demonstrated by five emerging quotes, namely *insufficient infrastructure* (9 mentions), *insufficient knowledge* (5 mentions), *insufficient resident involvement* (3 mentions), *insufficient government support* (1 mention) and lastly, *insufficient resources* (1 mention) as barriers that deter residents from being involved in the tourism route.

For the **insufficient infrastructure** code, one participant explained, *“Road quality is definitely probably the one with the highest priority currently and infrastructure is very important. I mean if the government can’t even look after their own places in town, like for instance, the municipal hall, the fire brigade station”* (P10). P17 mentioned that *“At the moment its Covid 19 and lack of tourists in the area. The communication between the government and the community is not very good just like in any government department. The road infrastructure is poor with many potholes. Tourists do not want to come to Fouriesburg if the roads are like that. The tourism business providers conduct their own tourism awareness in the area without the involvement of the government. There is no support from the government”*. Participant P6 commented, *“Well, its not on a major route. The infrastructure is almost non-existent”*.

Within the **insufficient knowledge** code, participant P25 mentioned that *“Answer: Lack of knowledge and capital to start your own business. There are many business-minded people who need empowerment and sponsorship”*. *The government is full of incompetent and illiterate officials who does not even know what is expected from them. The government complete disregard the communities and expect the same communities to*

support their tourism products” (P16). These comments indicate that the lack of knowledge applies to residents and the government, including other stakeholders.

For the third code, ***insufficient resident involvement***, P3 stated, *“The biggest barrier is the fact that the people are excluded. The people are not communicated with, the people are not being met with, the people are just ignored, and we do not know about them and they do not talk to us”. “I’ll say whoever was doing the planning maybe they missed something like getting the community as one of the stakeholders to come onboard. I think also maybe the lack of resources. I don’t know but in terms of doing proper marketing in a way of, let’s say, using campaigns or the material that will raise awareness or the issue”, explained P15.*

Within the ***insufficient government support*** code, only one participant stated, *“The government doesn’t interact with us. We’ve got a tourism group in Fouriesburg our little group and we support each other with that. Nothing from the government” (P12). Another participant (P17) commented that “At the moment its Covid 19 and lack of tourists in the area. The communication between the government and the community is not very good just like in any government department. The road infrastructure is poor with many potholes. Tourists don’t want to come to Fouriesburg if the roads are like that. The tourism business providers conduct their own tourism awareness in the area without the involvement of the government. There is no support from the government”.*

In the last code, ***insufficient resources***, P15 stated, *“I’ll say whoever was doing the planning maybe they missed something like getting the community as one of the stakeholders to come onboard. I think also maybe the lack of resources. I don’t know but in terms of doing proper marketing in a way of, let’s say, using campaigns or the material that will raise awareness or the issue”.*

The tourism route planners of the FSGLTA, as per Table 5.13 on the problems in the operation of tourism routes, highlighted aspects relating to poor infrastructure, which consists of most of the residents in Table 7.6 and tourism business providers in Table 6.7. In addition, FSGLTA highlighted an ungraded accommodation establishment, which residents did not view as a significant barrier. Interestingly, FSGLTA further pointed out that the tourism route ambassadors are not involved as they only enjoy driving around with no clear understanding of the operation of the route. P16 corroborates this sentiment

in Table 7.6: "*The government is full of incompetent and illiterate officials who do not even know what is expected from them*". The tourism business providers in Table 6.7 added that the government is poorly managing tourism routes. Table 7.6 reflects barriers such as insufficient communication, insufficient government awareness, and, most importantly, insufficient resident involvement, which the FSGLTA did not view as barriers to tourism route development. These aspects are critical and must be considered in the proposed sustainable tourism route development framework.

In Chili and Ngxongo's (2017:4) literature, a lack of community participation impedes tourism growth in developing countries. Obstacles include the centralisation of governments' authority on tourism development, a lack of coordination among concerned parties, and a lack of information made available to the local community of the tourist destination due to, but not limited to, insufficient data and poor information delivery. The study of Chkalova, Efremova, Lezhnin, Polukhina, and Sheresheva (2019:2053) included a lack of infrastructure, financial and human resources, and a lack of activity in local communities, and a hostile institutional climate as barriers. These barriers may stem from a lack of knowledge and incompetent leadership (Chili & Ngxongo, 2017:6). The literature validates most of the identified barriers, and all are aligned to most of the codes that emerged under sub-theme 1 and sub-theme 2.

Table 7.6: In your opinion, what are the most significant barriers that deter residents from being involved in the tourism route?

THEME 4: BARRIERS TO RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P1	" People should be made aware of what's going on here. There should be more open communication about things, and I think there should be more community meetings as we as where people can come out and discuss things and give ideas. There is no limit where this thing can go, it can only get better.	Communication Community meetings	Insufficient communication Insufficient awareness
P2	Lack of communication. There's no awareness, it would be nice to make awareness you can take it from there, but it needs to be a definite to communication between the tourism or government and the community or representatives of the community".	Lack of communication Lack of awareness Community involvement	Insufficient communication Insufficient awareness
P3	"The biggest barrier is the fact that the people are excluded. The people are not communicated with, the people are not being met with, the people are just ignored, and we do not know about them and they do not talk to us".	Exclusion of the residents Lack of communication	Insufficient resident involvement Insufficient communication
P4	"Definitely is communication. I think these people don't even know about it. I mean, there's no awareness or opportunity for people to be involved".	Lack of communication Lack of awareness Involvement of residents	Insufficient communication Insufficient awareness
P5	"A barrier is always communication. There's no communication between the government and us. Why would they change now when there's a tourism route? We've complaining about this road for 15 years"	Lack of communication Roads	Insufficient communication Insufficient infrastructure
P6	"Well, its not honor a major route. The infrastructure is almost non-existent".	Lack of infrastructure	Insufficient infrastructure

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P7	"There's nothing stopping them if they know about it. I think most people being part of it, we are very close community, we are multi and the new development on that side, so I think everybody would be super eager".	Lack of development	Insufficient awareness
P8	"Lack of communication"	Lack of communication	Insufficient communication
P9	"There is no communication between the government and the residents."	Lack of communication	Insufficient communication
P10	"Road quality is definitely probably the one with the highest priority currently and infrastructure is very important. I mean if the government cant even look after their own places in town, like for instance, the municipal hall, the fire brigade station"	Road quality Improved infrastructure Government support	Insufficient infrastructure
P11	"Lack of communication and lack of knowledge about what to do to help"	Lack of communication	Insufficient communication Insufficient knowledge
P12	"The government doesn't interact with us. We've got a tourism group in Fouriesburg our little group and we support each other with that. Nothing from the government".	No government interaction	Insufficient communication
P13	"Communication is the barrier"	Communication	Insufficient communication
P14	"The roads and the water supply which inconsistent and unreliable. The communication between stakeholders. The lack of awareness about the Eagle route".	Roads Inconsistent water supply Lack of communication Lack of awareness	Insufficient infrastructure Insufficient communication

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
			Insufficient awareness
P15	"I'll say whoever was doing the planning maybe they missed something like getting the community as one of the stakeholders to come onboard. I think also maybe the lack of resources. I don't know but in terms of doing proper marketing in a way of, let's say, using campaigns or the material that will raise awareness or the issue".	Failed planning Community as one stakeholder Lack of resources Proper marketing Lack of awareness campaigns	Insufficient resident involvement Insufficient resources Insufficient marketing Insufficient awareness
P16	"Poor communication from the government and officials only communicate about their products to their close friends and relatives. The government is full of incompetent and illiterate officials who does not even know what is expected from them. The government complete disregard the communities and expect the same communities to support their tourism products".	Poor communication from government Incompetent and illiterate government officials Disregard of communities by government	Insufficient communication Insufficient knowledge Insufficient resident involvement
P17	"At the moment its Covid 19 and lack of tourists in the area. The communication between the government and the community is not very good just like in any government department. The road infrastructure is poor with many potholes. Tourists dont want to come to Fouriesburg if the roads are like that. The tourism business providers conduct their own tourism awareness in the area without the involvement of the government. There is no support from the government".	COVID-19 Lack of tourists Poor communication between government the community Road infrastructure Lack of awareness	Insufficient communication Insufficient infrastructure Insufficient government support

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
		Awareness done by tourism businesses of the area Lack of government support	
P18	"Lack of communication and awareness and opportunities at hand are those barriers. I mean some of the rituals that have not been exploited to the fullest that might have made people be aware of such activities".	Lack of communication Lack of awareness Lack of opportunities	Insufficient communication Insufficient awareness
P19	"The lack of communication from the authorities or the government between the stakeholders and people in this area. The lack of awareness and opportunities for instance".	Lack of communication Government Lack of awareness and opportunities	Insufficient communication Insufficient awareness
P20	"The communication between the stakeholders and lack of awareness that causes low chances of opportunities"	Communication Stakeholders Lack of awareness Less Opportunities	Insufficient communication Insufficient awareness
P21	"Transparency is a big problem. The lack of communication"	Transparency Lack of communication	Insufficient communication
P22	"Lack of communication between the government and the community. The government is not doing enough in terms of awareness"	Lack of communication Government & community Lack of awareness	Insufficient communication Insufficient awareness

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P23	"Residents in this area do not know that there is a tourism office in the area. The residents have belief that tourism in this area is for big establish businesses. They have very little information about services that are provided by the tourism office"	Residents do not know the tourism office Tourism is for big establishments Less information about tourism services	Insufficient awareness
P24	"Most of the activities concerning tourism are advertised through social media and most residence do not have access that kind of information"	Advertisement Social media	Insufficient marketing
P25	"Answer: Lack of knowledge and capital to start your own business. There are a lot of business minded people who need empowerment and sponsorship".	Lack of knowledge and capital	Insufficient knowledge

(e) **Theme 5: Expected community benefits**

This theme represents and analyses the participants' understanding of the expected community benefits from the tourism route in their localities. The following question was asked to establish the participants' understanding of expected community benefits from the tourism route: "What benefits to the community do you expect to see because of the tourism route?". The study participants declared their understanding of community benefits from the tourism route in many different ways through keywords. The keywords that emerged were used to develop codes that led to two major sub-themes, namely **direct community benefits** and **ancillary community benefits**, and both are explained below. The keywords and codes are presented in Table 7.7.

(i) **Sub-theme 1: Direct community benefits**

As per the interviews conducted, *direct community benefits* emerged as the first sub-theme and are demonstrated by five codes that are closely related, namely, *employment opportunities* (21 mentions), *community upliftment* (8 mentions), *economic benefits* (7 mentions), *community involvement* (3 mentions) and lastly, *new business opportunities* (2 mentions).

Most interviewed participants emphasised **employment opportunities** as an expected benefit, and 84% of the participants mentioned this code, particularly in relation to youth empowerment. The first participant stated, "*There are so many jobs that can be created for artists, for people with guest houses. There are so many people that have been living here for so long that know the history of this place they can tell stories. Infrastructure improvement, and communities' involvement*" (P1). This was echoed by another participant, "*Yes, massive opportunities from employment opportunities to if there's more infrastructure development or businesses, it will completely lift up the environment and it will be better for the environment and for the people*" (P4).

Under the next code, **community upliftment**, the following aspects were mentioned. "*I mean the advantage of the tourism route, obviously is the marketing capacity of that because that's the crux of any business. Without any marketing the businesses will get marketed. Well, if you just look at the brochure that they gave us, there's not even one business in town. Actually, there's just one business in town that's been mentioned on*

this whole brochure which all the people don't even know. So, job opportunity again, if people market out village because a lot of businesses are too small to market themselves. Therefore, a route like this, which has got the budget and the capacity and the ability to market all the small businesses lifted up because more visitors are coming to this route. Businesses will expand and get more people employed. If there's more people there's more opportunities for youngsters" (P3). Another participant (P5) commented that *"Small town will have new businesses popping up and the current businesses making a living because currently we not making a living". "More visitors into the town can bring more money. It's easier to uplift the town like people that have shops that are in bad shape and they are mostly supported by the locals"* explained by P11. Under the same code of community upliftment, P16 stated, *"Job opportunities and enhanced local economy, exposure of the local culture, exposure of the local history, high occupancy at the local amenities. More jobs and opportunities for the locals to produce and sell the local products". "Youth empowerment and job creation"*, commented (P25). P20 added, *"Job opportunities, maybe our youth will benefit more in terms of jobs and education itself."*

Within the **economic benefit** code, *"If the tourism routes work properly, benefits is that people will start investing in this town and in tourism and that will lead to increased value of property and increased turnover and increase all logical economy for the area and the infrastructure is vital"* (P14). P15 explained that *"Financial benefits and job creations. Have exhibitions to showcase other skills"*

Regarding the **community involvement** code, P1 stated, *"There are so many jobs that can be created for artists, for people with guest houses. There are so many people that have been living here for so long that know the history of this place they can tell stories. Infrastructure improvement, and communities' involvement"*. Another participant, P18, commented that *"Job opportunities at stake and there might be a maintenance of infrastructure. And then the government always comes up with the so-called triple P that itself will involve the community and they will bring forth the finances to uplift and to the market the area, if those are exploited, I think everything will be fine"*.

Lastly, within the **new business opportunities** code, *"Like I said the biggest thing would be influx of the people into the town, there will be job creation, better quality life for everybody. With more jobs comes more expendable income with the community, so I think the major thing would be job creation and then also in building entrepreneurs about*

the job opportunities. Because we are a tourism destination so we already have quite a few guest houses there are many more coming up, so if we can fill those places, we can employ these people into the new hotel that has been built” (P7). While P5 explained that “Small town will have new businesses popping up and the current businesses making a living because currently, we [are not] not making a living”.

(ii) Sub-theme 2: Ancillary community benefits

Another sub-theme identified from this theme is *ancillary community benefits*, demonstrated by four emerging codes. Based on the interviews, the following codes were identified, *improved infrastructure* (10 mentions), *improved marketing* (4 mentions), *tourism opportunities* (4 mentions) and *investment opportunities* (2 mentions).

For the ***improved infrastructure*** code, *“I supposed it would bring more residents if there was more job opportunities. So, the town would grow. The infrastructure it’s just deteriorating because is not maintained” (P6). P18 explained “Job opportunities at stake and there might be maintenance of infrastructure. And then the government always comes up with the so-called triple P that itself will involve the community and they will bring forth the finances to uplift and to the market the area, if those are exploited, I think everything will be fine”.*

Within the second code, ***improved marketing***, P9 stated *“Create jobs and improve infrastructure and their marketing skill”*. While another participant mentioned that *“Well first of all, if you look at Drakensburg meander and the success that it has including the tourist and also marketing themselves as a collective then there’s a value for us in such a route. There will be job opportunities also” (P13).*

For the third code, ***tourism opportunities***, P11 explained *“More visitors into the town can bring more money. It’s easier to uplift the town like people that have shops that are in bad shape, and they are mostly supported by the locals”.*

Lastly, within the ***investment opportunities*** code, *“If the tourism routes work properly, benefits is that people will start investing in this town and in tourism and that will lead to increased value of property and increased turnover and increase all logical economy for the area and the infrastructure is vital” (P14).*

When comparing the results of tourism planners (FSGLTA), residents and tourism business providers regarding the expected benefits of tourism routes, all stakeholders expressed views more aligned to what they think should be their benefits without considering other stakeholders. For instance, in Table 5.7, the tourism planners mainly regard tourism product owners as beneficiaries with benefits such as increased occupancy rates and effective marketing by product promotion at the trade shows such as Tourism Indaba. The tourism planners regard residents as benefiting through community entrepreneurship, consistent with Motana and Mukwada's (2018) literature, wherein residents are expected to sell their locally produced tourism and non-tourism products. Tourism business providers agree with the tourism planners regarding the expected benefit of high occupancy rates and add that tour guides and operators must benefit from packaged tours that are currently non-existent. Lastly, in Table 6.23, residents expect different benefits from the tourism route, such as employment opportunities, investment opportunities and youth development, which are strangely not prioritised by the tourism planners.

Locals' lack of participation in tourist planning and development has occasionally resulted in conflict, with local populations blaming tourism for negative cultural consequences. In a study of mountain route tourism in South Africa, Motana and Mukwada (2018:62) illustrated the characteristics of communities who benefited from that type of tourism. The communities that benefited from mountain route tourism appear to have certain characteristics, according to Motana and Mukwada (2018:62), such as (1) local communities were fully involved in the planning and monitoring of tourism in their area, (2) local community members were able and willing to engage in entrepreneurial activities, such as starting their own tourism businesses, and (3) the tourism business had a limited number of external players. Local communities were fully involved in the planning and monitoring tourism in their area. Secondly, local community members were able and willing to engage in entrepreneurial activities, such as starting their own tourism businesses, and lastly, there were a limited number of external players in the tourism business. These characteristics resonate with the theme, and some of the codes emerged from the direct community benefit sub-theme.

Table 7.7: What benefits for the community do you expect to see because of the tourism route?

THEME 5: EXPECTED COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P1	There are so many jobs that can be created for artists, for people with guest houses. There are so many people that have been living here for so long that know the history of this place they can tell stories. Infrastructure improvement, and communities' involvement.	Job creation Infrastructure improvement Community involvement	Employment opportunities Improved infrastructure Community involvement
P2	"The big thing is job creation. I mean obviously if the business attracts more tourist to this town, your business is going to be better you can employ more people. The roads need to improve the N5 is good but the village roads are trash. Well once the lead is being created for people to come forward and participate in something like that, I mean everybody will be happy to do their part and to promote their business. Economic benefits"	Job creation Improvement of roads Community participation Economic benefits	Employment opportunities Improved infrastructure Economic benefits
P3	"I mean the advantage of the tourism route, obviously is the marketing capacity of that because that's the crux of any business. Without any marketing the businesses will get marketed. Well, if you just look at the brochure that they gave us, there's not even one business in town. Actually, there's just one business in town that's been mentioned on this whole brochure which all the people don't even know. So, job opportunity again, if people market out village because a lot of businesses are too small to market themselves. Therefore, a route like this, which has got the budget and the capacity and the ability to market all the small businesses lifted up because more visitors are coming to this route. Businesses will expand and get	Poor marketing Job opportunities' Brochure with less details Opportunities for youngsters	Employment opportunities Improved marketing

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
	more people employed. If there's more people there's more opportunities for youngsters".		
P4	"Yes, massive opportunities from employment opportunities to if there's more infrastructure development or businesses, it will completely lift up the environment and it will be better for the environment and for the people".	Job opportunities Infrastructure development Friendly environment	Employment opportunities Improved infrastructure Community upliftment
P5	"Small town will have new businesses popping up and the current businesses making a living because currently we not making a living".	Business opportunities	New business opportunities Community upliftment
P6	"I supposed it would bring more residents if there was more job opportunities. So, the town would grow. The infrastructure it's just deteriorating because it's not maintained".	Job opportunities Lack of infrastructure	Employment opportunities Improved infrastructure
P7	"Like I said the biggest thing would be influx of the people into the town, there will be job creation, better quality life for everybody. With more jobs comes more expendable income with the community, so I think the major thing would be job creation and then also in building entrepreneurs about the job opportunities. Because we are a tourism destination so we already have quite a few guest houses there are many more coming up, so if we can fill those places, we can employ these people into the new hotel that has been built"	Job creation Better quality of life More spending in the community Creation of new businesses More accommodation establishments	Tourism opportunities Employment opportunities New business opportunities Community upliftment

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P8	"There will be more job opportunities and people going their education. We dependent on Eskom. So that would be a totally off grid and not dependent at what the state offers at all"	Job opportunities	Employment opportunities
P9	"Create jobs and improve infrastructure and their marketing skill"	Job opportunities Infrastructure Marketing	Employment opportunities Improve infrastructure
P10	—	-	-
P11	"More visitors into the town can bring more money. It's easier to uplift the town like people that have shops that are in bad shape and they are mostly supported by the locals"	More visitors More money Support	Tourism opportunities Economic benefits Community upliftment
P12	"Revenue for the guest houses. Job creation. The road maintenance is the top thing for us. The sign boards for the route".	Job creation Road maintenance More revenue for businesses	Economic benefits Employment opportunities Improved infrastructure
P13	"Well first of all, if you look at Drakensburg meander and the success that it has including the tourist and also marketing themselves as a collective then there's a value for us in such a route. There will be job opportunities also".	Marketing Job opportunities	Improved marketing Employment opportunities
P14	"If the tourism routes work properly, benefits is that people will start investing in this town and in tourism and that will lead to increased value of property and increased turnover and increase all logical economy for the area and the infrastructure is vital".	Investment Increased value of property Increase of economy	Investment opportunities Economic benefits

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
		Infrastructure	
P15	"Financial benefits and job creations. Have exhibitions to showcase other skills"	Financial benefits Job creations Exhibitions	Employment benefits Economic benefits
P16	"Job opportunities and enhanced local economy, exposure of the local culture, exposure of the local history, high occupancy at the local amenities. More jobs and opportunities for the locals to produce and sell the local products"	Job opportunities Enhanced economy Exposure of local culture & history High occupancy rate Promotion of local products	Employment opportunities Economic benefits Community upliftment
P17	"There will be more tourists, and everybody will have jobs it will be going good then because there will be more cash involved in the area".	More tourists More Jobs More cash for the area	Employment opportunities Tourism opportunities
P18	"Job opportunities at stake and there might be a maintenance of infrastructure. And then the government always comes up with the so-called triple P that itself will involve the community and they will bring forth the finances to uplift and to the market the area, if those are exploited, I think everything will be fine".	Job opportunities Maintenance of infrastructure Government support Marketing	Employment opportunities Improved infrastructure Community involvement
P19	"The benefit would be job creation, infrastructure development. The big companies would come to this area and there would be a development. Marketing is important, stakeholders would really have to advertise and give information about it".	Job creation Infrastructure development Marketing Stakeholders	Employment opportunities Improved infrastructure

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
		Advertisement	Investment opportunities Improved marketing
P20	"Job opportunities, maybe our youth will benefit more in terms of jobs and education itself"	Job opportunities Youth benefit Education	Employment opportunities Community upliftment
P21	"Job creation. Tourism development and tourism education, Infrastructure development and maintenance. Township development	Job creation Tourism and township development Infrastructure development & maintenance	Employment opportunities Improved infrastructure Community upliftment
P22	"It can create jobs for youngsters. IF the route is well managed and advertised then it will attract tourists"	Jobs Youngsters Route management Advertisement	Employment opportunities Improved marketing Tourism opportunities
P23	"The most important benefit would be job creation. Infrastructure development and maintenance will appeal to the community and perhaps there will be greater participation form the public"	Job creation Infrastructure development Community participation	Employment opportunities Improved infrastructure Community involvement
P24	"Employment, sharing of wealth through arts and crafts and other cultural activities"	Employment Wealth	Employment opportunities

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
		Arts and crafts Cultural activities	Economic benefits
P25	"Youth empowerment and job creation"	Youth Empowerment Job creation	Employment opportunities Community upliftment

(f) **Theme 6: Critical tourism route development aspects**

This theme represents and analyses the participants' understanding regarding possible critical aspects for a successful tourism route concerning the Free State Province Eagle tourism route. The following question was asked to participants to establish their knowledge about the route and what it takes for a route to be successful, "In your opinion, what are the critical aspects of a successful tourism route". The study participants demonstrated their understanding of the critical aspects of a successful tourism route in many interesting ways through keywords. For instance, the keywords that emerged were utilised to develop codes aligned to two main subthemes, **route development and management** and **stakeholder involvement and route promotion**, and both sub-themes are detailed below. Table 7.8 presents the keywords and codes.

(i) **Sub-theme 1: Route development and management**

Concerning the interviews conducted, *route development and management* emerged as the first sub-theme within this theme and is demonstrated by three codes that are aligned, namely *infrastructure development and maintenance* (23 mentions), *route governance* (17 mentions) and *skills development* (3 mentions). The following quotes amplified participants' opinions according to **the infrastructure development and maintenance** code.

P1 explained "The road should be upgraded and make things more attractive. People want to get into a place where roads and things are looking in a better state. The infrastructure development is very important and the government involvement and support. The government run this country they should get involved. If they can do their part and empower people and teach people skills and give them jobs". Another participant, commented that "The road from Clarens to Fouriesburg is being known by the photographic society of South Africa, is the most photographed road in the country. I don't know if you are aware of that. But that road currently is full of potholes and every day is getting more and more. That road been used because Clarens got a high incoming group of people. People are coming here with Mercedes Benz, BMWs, Ferraris, Lamborghinis, and Porsches. The Ferrari club every year got a get together. 3000 people come here" (P3). "Number 1, definitely a road. I think even as an owner I don't like coming here like driving here. There's no road, there are lots of potholes. I think clear

communication between stakeholders and specifically the government. Thirdly, I assume it would be marketing if people are aware of this” explained P4.

For the second code, **route governance**, one participant commented *“Consultations of the local communities by the government and continuous engagement with the local communities. The community must inform the government what is it that can sell the area in terms of the history of the area, local produced products, best performing schools etc... The stakeholder participation and engagement to identify the best possible candidates to work and operate and market the route. The road infrastructure is one of the key aspects of a successful tourism route because if roads are poor, no one will visit our small towns” (P16).*

In the last code **skills development**, participant P13 commented *“Setup a communication structure between tourism and the government. Roads need to be fixed and maintained. The government should give the support and give training to people. Involve everybody, black and white”. P1 explained that “The road should be upgraded and make things more attractive. People want to get into a place where roads and things are looking in a better state. The infrastructure development is very important and the government involvement and support. The government run this country they should get involved. If they can do their part and empower people and teach people skills and give them jobs”. Another participant briefly commented that “Infrastructure, networking and leadership skills” (P25).*

(ii) Sub-theme 2: Stakeholder involvement and route promotion

Another sub-theme identified from this theme is *stakeholder involvement and route promotion* demonstrated by two emerging codes, namely, *community engagements* (9 mentions) and *route marketing and signage* (3 mentions) as critical factors for a successful tourism route.

For the **community engagement** code, one participant indicated *“The roads need to be fixed. Sometimes developments are bad because it falls in certain people’s hands. So, I almost feel like it should something neutral. People who put the effort in even communities must benefit, but it can’t just be for free. Even if you just work a bit even if you trim a tree or pick up a rubble” (P8).* P10 mentioned that *“Well, I bring a lot of experience to the table and just being part of the community and giving my feedback, giving my input can help us better the tourism industry”.*

Regarding the **route marketing and signage** code, P19 stated, *“The quality of the roads, they can impact traffic to this area. The government support is very important. Small businesses would like to develop. If the community is involved. They would support the tourism industry and partake in advertising and marketing the area”*. This view is almost similar to that of P20 *“Roads must be fixed. We also have a problem of dumping sites in our area, that will make tourists not interested. The government must assist with some marketing and communicate with some local communities either NGOs and other stakeholders”*. Lastly, P21 explained that *“Road marking. Up to date and interesting website, Infrastructure like roads need to be addressed. We need the government, actually a ward councillor coming to the town and township and hear us.”*

The business tourism providers and residents in which the route transverses were both asked to identify key considerations for the development of the tourism routes. In Table 5.6, tourism business providers considered tourism infrastructure development, road quality, and maintenance important when developing tourism routes. These are the same sentiment of the residents, as it is evident in Table 7.8 that all residents who participated in this research unanimously cited infrastructure development as one critical consideration when developing tourism routes. The tourism planners in Table 5.9 decries a website as one of the deficiencies in marketing the routes, and tourism business providers support this statement, and that website and App development are critical aspects for a successful tourism route. The tourism business providers and the FSGLTA advocate developing an App and website, but the residents emphasise that the website must be updated and interesting. On the other hand, the FSGLTA insists that the website must be improved for better marketing. Lastly, the FSGLTA in Table 5.9 suggests a need for a policy shift in that businesses must be registered to market their businesses.

This theme is supported by Dunets, Vakhrushev, Sukhova, Sokolov, Utkina and Shichiyakh (2019:1225). The authors stated that creating favourable conditions for developing tourism infrastructure through the attraction of investment and strengthening of economic ties depends on the transformation of the rural areas to long-term development and critical tourism policy review. As a result, creating a solid brand identity for the themed route is essential. Themed routes are marketed as brands in developed countries such as Australia and offer an experience. Brands have their own distinct designs, symbols, logos, slogans, and collateral that set them apart from other products or themed experiences (Roy & Gretzel, 2020:304).

Table 7.8: In your opinion, what are the critical aspects of a successful tourism route?

THEME 6: CRITICAL TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P1	“The road should be upgraded and make things more attractive. People want to get into a place where roads and things are looking in a better state. The infrastructure development is very important and the government involvement and support. The government run this country they should get involved. If they can do their part and empower people and teach people skills and give them jobs”	-Road infrastructure -Infrastructure development -Community involvement -Skills -Jobs	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route governance Skills development
P2	“The road quality and maintenance that’s definitely a priority. Number 2 is the signage, clear signage, route signage more information and the infrastructure needs to be upgraded the government absolutely needs to support it and the community needs to be involved, to make a successful tourism route”	-Road quality -Signage -Route signage -Infrastructure upgrade -Government support -Community involvement	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route marketing and signage Route governance Community engagement
P3	“The road from Clarens to Fouriesburg is being known by the photographic society of South Africa, is the most photographed road in the country. I don’t know if you are aware of that. But that road currently is full of potholes and everyday is getting more and more. That road been used because Clarens got a high incoming group of people. People are coming here with Mercedes Benz, BMWs, Ferraris, Lamborghinis and Porsches. The Ferrari club every year got a get together. 3000 people come here”	Improvement of roads Potholes	Infrastructure development and maintenance

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P4	"Number 1, definitely a road. I think even as an owner I don't like coming here like driving here. There's no road, there are lots of potholes. I think clear communication between stakeholders and specifically the government. Thirdly, I assume it would be marketing if people are aware of this"	Roads Improved communication between stakeholders Marketing	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route marketing and signage Route governance
P5	"Well, first of all is the road. If the road is not fixed there's no tourism. Proper Infrastructure. If there's no water, people will not come back to us. If there's no electricity, they will not come back. There is no government support for a small town like this".	Good roads Good infrastructure Government support of small towns	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route governance
P6	"Road quality management of the local municipality, and the service delivery".	Road quality Service delivery	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route governance
P7	"If we have to pinpoint one thing right here, it's the roads they are in need of repairs and replacements. It's horrible so a lot of people come here they love the area but they say they will have to reconsider coming back because of the roads. We have again, like I said in Rosendal itself we have a fantastic community. We established our own council private town that involve people from here and we do fundraising to fix our roads and planting trees".	Road quality Fix roads	Infrastructure development and maintenance

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P8	"The roads need to be fixed. Sometimes developments are bad because it falls in certain people's hands. So, I almost feel like it should something neutral. People who put the effort in even communities must benefit, but it can't just be for free. Even if you just work a bit even if you trim a tree or pick up a rubble".	Good roads Community involvement	Infrastructure development and maintenance
P9	"The roads must be fixed and maintained"	Roads	Infrastructure development and maintenance
P10	"Well, I bring a lot of experience to the table and just being part of the community and giving my feedback, giving my input can help us better the tourism industry".	Community involvement	Community engagement
P11	"Road conditions and infrastructure development then it can grow. Infrastructure doesn't have to be huge. Even the old buildings are perfect but they need to make beautiful in front of them"	Roads Infrastructure	Infrastructure development and maintenance
P12	"The road quality is very important. The guests coming to this town hit potholes and lose tires and now everything is spoiled. They return with their money. Infrastructure development is important, also the government support is important".	Road quality Infrastructure development	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route governance
P13	Setup a communication structure between tourism and the government. Roads need to be fixed and maintained. The government should give the support and give training to people. Involve everybody, black and white"	Communication between the industry and government Roads	Route governance

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
		Government support Training of residents Inclusivity	Infrastructure development and maintenance Community engagement Skills development
P14	"Road quality is one of our primary objectives if you want to do something about tourism and really getting worse. The government support is not really there. The tourists don't like to drive to a place where the road is full of potholes and they don't like to drive around in a town where the road is really unpleasant to drive on. The government support is failing miserably".	Road quality Government support Potholes No government support	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route governance
P15	"Road quality and infrastructure development. Get government support. The community has the maintain the infrastructure and keep it alive"	Road quality Infrastructure development Government support Community involvement	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route governance
P16	"Consultations of the local communities by the government and continuous engagement with the local communities. The community must inform the government what is it that can sell the area in terms of the history of the area, local produced products, best performing schools etc... The stakeholder participation and engagement to identify the best possible candidates to work and operate and market	Consultation of the local communities by government Community engagements Community to inform government about best features of the area	Community engagement Infrastructure development and maintenance

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
	the route. The road infrastructure is one of the key aspects of a successful tourism route because if roads are poor, no one will visit our small towns”.	Stakeholder participation and engagements Community to identify best people to operate the route Road infrastructure	
P17	“Tourists, good roads, infrastructure, no crime and community involvement”	Tourists Roads Infrastructure No crime Community involvement	Infrastructure development and maintenance Community engagement Route governance
P18	“Access to the area that is now the quality of the roads and the maintenance of the infrastructure development and supports community involvement. I believe those could be some of key points that will definitely be successful towards the tourism. It is key in my perspective. I see a coherence. I mean some people those who might have been there will intend as they come back and invite others and then it will become a recurring decimal. The government support is very important”.	Road Maintenance Infrastructure development Community involvement Coherence Government support	Infrastructure development and maintenance Community engagement Route governance
P19	“The quality of the roads, they can impact traffic to this area. The government support is very important. Small businesses would like to develop. If the community is involved. They would support the tourism industry and partake in advertising and marketing the area”.	Road quality Government support Small businesses Community involvement	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route governance

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
		Advertisement and marketing	Community engagement
P20	"Roads must be fixed. We also have a problem of dumping sites in our area, that will make tourists not interested. The government must assist with some marketing and communicate with some local communities either NGOs and other stakeholders".	Roads Dumping sites Government Marketing and communication Communities NGOs and stakeholders	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route governance
P21	"Road marking. Up to date and interesting website, Infrastructure like roads need to be addressed. We need the government, actually ward councilor coming to the town and township and hear us"	Road markings Updated website Government Township	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route governance Route marketing and signage
P22	"We have to have good roads. If the government and the community is involved, then this route will be successful"	Good roads Government Community Route / successful	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route governance Community engagement
P23	"Road maintenance, infrastructure development, government support, community and local business support"	Road maintenance Infrastructure development Government support	Infrastructure development and maintenance

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
		Local business support Community support	Route governance Community engagement
P24	-	-	-
P25	"Infrastructure, networking and leadership skills"	Infrastructure Networking Leadership skills	Infrastructure development and maintenance Route governance Skills development

(g) **Theme 7: Resident considerations**

The last theme reflects and analyses the participants' considerations regarding the involvement of residents as tourism stakeholders in the tourism route. The question was posed to source participants' views regarding their involvement as residents as tourism stakeholders in the tourism route, "Do you have any suggestions regarding the involvement of residents as tourism stakeholders in the tourism route?". This was the last question posed to all participants who participated in this phase of the study, and out of twenty-five participants, 88% responded to this question, while 12% declined to comment. The study participants expressed their views of the question asked through keywords. The keywords that emerged from the participants' responses were used to develop codes pointing to two significant sub-themes; namely, **community inclusion and awareness** and **active community upliftment** and both the sub-themes and codes are discussed below. In Table 7.9, the keywords and codes are presented.

(i) **Sub-theme 1: Community inclusion and awareness**

Regarding the interview conducted, *community inclusion and awareness* emerged as the first sub-theme and are demonstrated by four codes that are interlinked, namely, *greater community involvement* (13 mentions), *stakeholder engagements* (8 mentions), *continuous communication* (5 mentions) and *effective awareness*.

Concerning the **greater community involvement** code, P1 commented "*I think the more people can get involved and show people the things that are not known to most people. There are so many beautiful places here that people are not aware of, and local people can be trained as guides, and they can take tourists out there. Teach them about the history of the area and show them all the beautiful nature of the place we are living in. It is a very beautiful part of the country and people should be able to experience that*". "We are busy at the moment working on our committee to get the things off the ground. We are planning certain things but what we've decided to do before we set up a structure. I mean pay people salaries, work together to set up a few tourism events for 2022 and see what works and what doesn't work in 2023. We want to culminate that into a festival for the town where everybody is involved" explained P13.

For the second code, **stakeholder engagements**, one participant commented "You know what, the resident we've got all of them sitting next to us on the table the only missing

from the table is the people from the route. I told you earlier on that we have an open invitation to our monthly meeting which not the local municipality, tourism officers attending nor the people from the route's attends. So, all that we are lacking is their presence, so the community is there, we are doing our thing we've realised we have to do it by ourselves and that's what we are doing" (P3). While P4 explained that "I think probably people need to know that it exists and the basic way of people to collaborate in these opportunities to make it just easy steps. I think sometimes these things are very big and people think they can support it or take part".

Regarding the third code, **continuous communication**, one participant commented "Of course, I have, because I believe that where people are involved there is a durability so as long as the communities are involved the community is made aware of it becomes an asset to them. I mean they do preserve such areas and then there is a line of communication and marketing" (P18). Meanwhile, another participant suggested that "I think they must use the radio stations to communicate with the community. They can also use NGOs around our area" (P20).

For the fourth code, **effective awareness**, P16 suggested "The government must at all times, engage the community and ensure that they all participate and give their inputs about the route. This can be done through community meetings, local newspapers, radio, social media and television just like the KZN and Gauteng tourism departments. The Free State Province must employ capable and competent people who will understand that the government is for the people by the people not the other way around".

(ii) Sub-theme 2: Active community upliftment

The first code in this sub-them is **community empowerment**, and one participant commented "They can get an educational program going on and get people involved, give them training and guides" (P12). "Look, I think it's important to include people in whatever you plan not just role players because the moment to feel you have ownership of something. I think you put in more if you just get paid or you get a little something for everybody that passes by and buy a product from your shop you will do your part, but it will be limited. I think if there can be some sort of it's a very grey area but if they can work on some of ownership-partnership then on both side, there will be more commitment as well" explained (P7).

For the second code, **improved infrastructure**, P2 stated *“For that basically comes back to your previous one where your roads and you’re marketing and everything else comes into plan because on leads to another. If you start off successfully and there’s communication between everybody continuously not just once every six months or just once, then they forget about you. It has to be an ongoing process where you can improve all the time”*. P10 reiterated that *“Government must fix the roads”*.

Lastly, for **support of local businesses**, *“The most important one is the participation of the government is support of the small businesses to develop. Government must really support the residents”* explained (P19). Finally, P9 hinted *“Just to assist us as tourism businesses”*.

The FSGLTA in Table 5.16 suggests that stakeholders played different roles in developing the tourism routes. In Table 5.16, some participants suggest that stakeholders assisted the FSGLTA in identifying and naming the route with names familiar to the region. Other participants indicated that stakeholders assisted in packaging the route through meetings and information gatherings. Interestingly, P5 indicated that the stakeholders were not involved during the conceptualisation of the route and that only after it was presented to the government executive committee and invited stakeholders when the Big 5 concept was launched. The sentiments of P5 in Table 5.16 confirm the views of tourism business providers in Figure 6.4 since 42% of the participants indicated that they were not involved in the development of the tourism route, 30% suggest that they are not even aware of the existence of the route while 15% explained that they were only informed about the route but not involved. In Table 7.9, 8% of participants did not provide possible considerations regarding their involvement in the tourism route. However, 92% of participants considered greater community involvement, improved infrastructure, stakeholder engagements, effective awareness, and continuous communication critical aspects of their tourism involvement. The FSGLTA needs to consider the residents' suggestions when deciding to review the routes since Table 5.12 P1, P2, P3, and P4 indicated that the routes were never reviewed, but P5 confidently stated that *“he personally reviews the route every year”*.

This theme is observed harmoniously with the literature of Nagarjuna (2015:16), and Ashley and Roe (1998), which suggested that employment in the tourism sector, local entrepreneurship, leasing out land for tourism, forming partnerships with tourism

operators, and participation in planning and decision-making relating to tourism, parks, and land uses are all examples of ways that the local community might be involved. According to some research, tourism development and governance should not be left solely in the hands of governments, as it is in many developing nations, but rather involve the entire community in planning and decision-making (Thetsane, 2019:128).

Table 7.9: Do you have any suggestions regarding the involvement of residents as tourism stakeholders in the tourism route?

THEME 7: RESIDENT CONSIDERATIONS

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P1	"I think the more people that can get involved and show people the things that are not known to most people. There are so many beautiful places here that people are not aware of, and local people can be trained as guides, and they can take tourists out there. Teach them about the history of the area and show them all the beautiful nature of the place we are living in. It is a very beautiful part of the country and people should be able to experience that"	Community involvement Training of guides Teach history	Greater community involvement Community empowerment
P2	"For that basically comes back to your previous one where your roads and you're marketing and everything else comes into plan because on leads to another. If you start off successfully and there's communication between everybody continuously not just once every six months or just once, then they forget about you. It has to be an ongoing process where you can improve all the time"	Roads Communication	Continuous communication Improved infrastructure
P3	"You know what, the resident we've got all of them sitting next to us on the table the only missing from the table is the people from the route. I told you earlier on that we have an open invitation to our monthly meeting which not the local municipality, tourism officers attending nor the people from the route's attends. So, all that we are lacking is their presence, so the community is there, we are doing our thing we've realised we have to do it by ourselves and that's what we are doing".	Monthly meeting with municipality Community involvement	Greater community involvement Stakeholder engagements

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
P4	"I think probably people need to know that it exists and the basic way of people to collaborate in these opportunities to make it just easy steps. I think sometimes these things are very big and people think they can support it or take part".	Collaboration Opportunities Support	Effective awareness
P5	"No, don't"	-	-
P6	"No".	-	-
P7	"Look, I think it's important to include people in whatever you plan not just role players because the moment to feel you have ownership of something. I think you put in more if you just get paid or you get a little something for everybody that passes by and buy a product from your shop you will do your part, but it will be limited. I think if there can be some sort of it's a very grey area but if they can work on some of ownership-partnership then on both side, there will be more commitment as well".	Involvement of residents More activities in businesses Partnership	Greater community involvement
P8	"I think Rosendal is doing well. I think there is a healthy participation from the community. They are already contributing and benefiting from what's happening at the moment"	Communication participation	Greater community involvement
P9	"Just to assist us as tourism businesses"	Support	Support of local businesses
P10	"Government must fix the roads"		Improved infrastructure
P11	"Amongst the residents to have information sessions maybe once after every 4 months or 6 months about the route"	Information sessions	Greater community involvement

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
			Continuous communication
P12	"They can get an educational program going on and get people involved, give them training and guides"	Educational programs Training of guides	Greater community involvement Community empowerment
P13	"We are busy at the moment working on our committee to get the things off the ground. We are planning certain things but what we've decided to do before we set up a structure. I mean pay people salaries, work together to set up a few tourism events for 2022 and see what works and what doesn't work in 2023. We want to culminate that into a festival for the town where everybody is involved".	Setup tourism events Festivals Involvement of everybody	Greater community involvement Community empowerment
P14	"Yes. If we can get the community to work all together to improve the town's infrastructure, the fields, the look of the standard of living in this town, then we can go somewhere with tourism we can improve the attractiveness of this area".	Community to work together Improved infrastructure Standard of living Improve attractiveness of the area	Greater community involvement Improved infrastructure
P15	"No"	-	-
P16	"The government must at all times, engage the community and ensure that they all participate and give their inputs about the route. This can be done through community meetings, local newspapers, radio, social media and television just like the KZN and Gauteng tourism departments. The Free State Province must employ	Government to engage the community Local newspapers, radio and social media Community meetings	Stakeholder engagements Greater community involvement

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
	capable and competent people who will understand that the government is for the people by the people not the other way around".	Employment of capable and competent officials	Community empowerment Continuous communication
P17	"The government and the community must all work together".	Government Community Work together	Stakeholder engagements
P18	"Of course, I have, because I believe that where people are involved there is a durability so as long as the communities are involved the community is made aware of it becomes an asset to them. I mean they do preserve such areas and then there is a line of communication and marketing".	Community involvement Awareness Communication and marketing	Greater community involvement Continuous communication
P19	"The most important one is the participation of the government is support of the small businesses to develop. Government must really support the residents".	Participation Government support Small businesses Residents	Stakeholder engagements Greater community involvement
P20	"I think they must use the radio stations to communicate with the community. They can also use NGOs around our area".	Radio station Communication Community NGO's	Continuous communication
P21	"The government needs to work with the tourism body and find out what does that township need. Not that we are opening a tourism route and will benefit".	Government Tourism body	Stakeholder engagements

Participant code	Response	Keyword(s)	Code(s)
		Township needs Tourism route Benefit	
P22	"No suggestions at the moment".	-	-
P23	"The first point of call for government must do community engagement. Many local residents know the area better and might have better ideas on how to improve tourism in the area. The residents might take care of the infrastructure if they are a part of the project"	Government Community engagement Local residents know the area better Infrastructure	Stakeholder engagements Greater community involvement Improved infrastructure
P24	"Local municipality must call meetings and workshops to empower the community with knowledge skills to sustain the route"	Meeting and workshops Community empowerment Skills to sustain the route	Stakeholder engagements Community empowerment
P25	"Clarens Tourism Forum must go to the community, get them involved"	Community involvement	Greater community involvement Stakeholder engagements

7.3 Conclusion

The main objective of this and Chapter 6 was to conduct an empirical analysis where the perceptions of tourism business providers and community forming part of the Eagle tourism route regarding their function as stakeholders through (a mixed-method approach) were analysed. The purpose of these chapters was to present the results and data analysis of the study's qualitative and quantitative components (Phase 2).

The analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study was done by analysing the profile of the tourism business providers and communities, their level of involvement in the development of the Eagle tourism route, the cooperation of tourism business providers and residents with the government, the tourism business's considerations and barriers in tourism route development and lastly, what type of benefits are expected by both tourism business providers and residents from the tourism route. The results from the community survey and tourism business providers were analysed, and a considerable comparison was made concerning their involvement as stakeholders during the tourism route's development, management and marketing. The comparison of the results included the critical aspects to be considered when routes are developed and the expected benefits of the tourism routes for both the residents and tourism business providers. After each discussion, the previous literature supported the comparisons to corroborate or contradict the results.

In this research phase, the chapter revealed some significant results to be considered by the government (FSGLTA) when developing tourism routes or reviewing the existing routes in the future. The results were considered when developing the final framework proposed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the developed stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa. In this study, as the case study, the views and perceptions of three stakeholders, i.e., route planners, tourism business providers, and residents along the Eagle Route in the Free State, were assessed. Five objectives were formulated in Chapter 1 and achieved in their respective chapters to achieve the study's goal. This chapter concludes the findings from Chapters 2 to 7 and makes recommendations based on the results. As a result, this chapter relates to the study's fifth and final objective: to draw conclusions and provide recommendations based on the stakeholder involvement framework to develop sustainable tourist routes in South Africa.

The recommendations are based on assessing the results that guide tourism route planners in the form of a framework. The framework includes guidelines on the critical success factors of route development and how to involve stakeholders and enhance stakeholder collaboration in developing tourism routes and improving the existing routes during the review process. The recommendations further guide tourism route planners on how to better manage and market tourism routes and manage the possible barriers that can deter stakeholders from being involved. Finally, the framework assists tourism route planners in capitalising on the associated benefits of tourism routes by considering the stakeholders' needs.

This study contributes to the literature on tourism route development by providing a developing country perspective. Specifically, it contributes to an improved understanding of what tourism routes are, the characteristics of tourism routes, an improved understanding of the contributions of tourism routes, a better understanding of who the tourism route stakeholders are, and ultimately, what the role of each stakeholder is. Finally, the framework contributes to this study's contribution to the literature regarding the upliftment of smaller, rural communities within a third-world context.

The conclusions relating to the literature and research results are first outlined. The practical recommendations and contributions follow. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research endeavours.

8.2 Conclusions

The conclusions consist of two parts, i.e., conclusions regarding the literature review(s) and conclusions about the results. The conclusions are linked to the objectives identified for this study, as specified in Chapter 1.

8.2.1 Conclusions concerning the literature review chapters

Conclusions are drawn in this section based on the two literature review chapters (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). The objective linked to each chapter is also provided to help guide the discussion.

Objective 1: Through an in-depth literature analysis, this objective critically reviewed the concept of tourism routes, the early ages of the tourism route development and the planning and establishment of tourism routes. This literature analysis also identified the different types of tourism routes in South Africa and highlighted some of the most successful tourism routes globally and the key success factors of such routes. Furthermore, a review of tourism sustainability addressed the economic, environmental, and social responsibility during tourism route development.

This objective was achieved in Chapter 2. In this chapter, it was found, through the in-depth literature analysis of the definition and characteristics of the tourism routes, that tourism routes emerged in the late 20th century, and destination marketing organisations (DMOs) formalised the itineraries and called them 'routes' or 'circuits' (c.f. 2.1 & c.f. 2.3.1). The establishment of tourism routes in the recent past has shown a growing interest in Northern Europe and many other nations. The establishment of tourism routes is constantly dependent on practical applications of attraction theory; some routes are meant to allow access to a single, principal tourism destination, while most routes recommend presenting and linking secondary attractions as clusters (c.f. 2.6). Tourism routes around the globe have unique characteristics as per the surroundings in which they are found. They are primarily themed in their locality and can be in the form of wine, culture, pilgrimage, arts and culture, or heritage inclined, and are primarily used in economically distressed areas for the creation of employment opportunities, poverty alleviation, and improving the quality of life of the community residing within the route (c.f. 2.6 & c.f. 2.11). The literature review revealed that South Africa has diverse routes (c.f. 2.4), including cultural, heritage, wine, and liberation routes. Several other types of routes are highly regarded. Successful commercial routes across the globe (c.f. 2.3.2) include

Route 66 and the Cascade Loop in the US, the Way of St. James to Santiago de Compostela in Europe, and the Queensland Heritage Trails in Australia. The following routes are considered well known in South Africa: Cape Wine Route, the Midlands Meander, and the Garden Route.

The key success factors of tourism route development found in this chapter firstly include tourist attractions, a place of interest that tourists visit, typically for its inherent or displayed cultural value, historical significance, natural or built beauty, and amusement possibilities (c.f. 2.9 & 2.9.1). Secondly, service quality is essential, demonstrating that the most critical factor when visiting a route should be visitor route satisfaction (c.f. 2.9 & 2.9.2). Thirdly, marketing is critical. Routes should be part of the tourist information systems, with maps. Brochures, road signage, attractions, and interpretation must highlight the importance of routes to prospective tourists (c.f. 2.9 & c.f. 2.9.3). Fourthly, a governing strategy is required. The governing strategy of tourism routes, local businesses, local stakeholder involvement, and the community at large is paramount, and this strategy is referred to as a bottom-up approach (c.f. 2.9 & 2.9.4). Fifthly, funding is considered important because funding strategies for routes differ. Some are partially dependent on the political influences on using state subsidies. On the other hand, it can be the administrative level responsible for route development (c.f. 2.9 & c.f. 2.9.5). Lastly, for economic enhancement and social activities in rural areas, many Western countries have turned to tourism routes as an alternative development strategy (c.f. 2.9 & 2.9.6).

Tourism development has typically been determined by dimensions of economic, environmental, social, cultural, and institutional perspectives that facilitate sustainability (c.f. 2.2 & c.f. 2.2.1). Sustainable tourism development is further demonstrated in a sustainable tourism development management model (c.f. Figure 2.1, c.f. 2.2.1). In all endeavours and strategies for developing tourism routes, identifying the types and characteristics of the route, the operations, management, sustainability, and benefits are important. A sustainable route benefits the product owners by exposing tourists to lesser-known attractions and rural areas, ultimately benefiting from route tourism development (c.f. 2.5). Additional benefits of tourism routes are not limited to 1) spreading tourism more widely by developing other tourist attractions, 2) additional employment and income, directly and indirectly through local facilities, and 3) the expansion of markets (c.f. 2.5). The local community as stakeholders are proven to be critical in the marketing and

management of the tourism route to benefit from government objectives such as job creation, economic enhancement, and, most importantly, environmental protection.

Objective 2: Through an in-depth literature analysis, this objective critically reviewed the concept of tourism routes, the early ages of the tourism route development and the planning and establishment of tourism routes. This literature analysis also identified the different types of tourism routes in South Africa and highlighted some of the most successful tourism routes globally and the key success factors of such routes. Furthermore, a review of tourism sustainability addressed the economic, environmental, and social responsibility during tourism route development.

The objective was achieved in Chapter 3. The literature review found that the efforts of early tourism planners proved that the concept of stakeholders is becoming more popular in the tourism industry (c.f. 3.1). Stakeholders are defined as the residents of any destination, including the government, promoters, agents, and tourists (c.f. 3.1). The literature emphasises that multi-stakeholder participation is essential for the sustainable development and implementation of a route development strategy (c.f. 3.1). The DMOs must consider the views of all stakeholders in the process of tourism development for better-aligned policies and strategies (c.f. 3.1). If professionally managed, the policies and strategies can enhance the economy of small towns and rural areas through tourism routes (c.f. 3.1). Governments and associations may influence tourism routes' legislation and management, and businesses are therefore considered important stakeholders in the tourism routes (c.f. 3.1). The government has spontaneously developed an interest in social relations between government, business, communities, and government changing structures (c.f. 3.2.1). The variety of stakeholders demonstrates that cooperation and coordination between these groups are crucial in assessing the planning process' performance and the destination's success (c.f. 3.2.1). The management intervention actively guides the ad-hoc relationship between stakeholders and their involvement (c.f. 3.2.1).

The literature in Chapter 3 further demonstrates that the stakeholder theory emerged in 1984 when Freeman penned *Strategic Management, A Stakeholder Approach* (c.f. 3.2.2). This objective found that the stakeholder theory is dissected into three related categories: descriptive, normative, and instrumental (c.f. 3.2.2). In the descriptive category, the theory is to set up a layout of the corporations' operations to collaborate with stakeholders to measure the performance of the theory (c.f. 3.2.2). The normative approach seeks to

compel stakeholders to increase shareholders' wealth (3.2.2), while the instrument approach asserts that ethics are beneficial for business by outlining outcomes of a particular treatment of stakeholders (c.f. 3.2.2). The literature demonstrates that sociological, economic, and psychological aspects are some of the multifaceted attributes of stakeholder theory (c.f. 3.2.2.2). Stakeholder theory is vital in developing a sustainable tourism ideology (c.f. 3.2.2). A well-developed practical tourism approach is bound to enhance positive returns to the general growth of the community (c.f. 3.2.2).

The chapter further found that the local government, tourism offices, chambers of commerce, public and private suppliers, associations, educational institutions, and DMOs are involved in developing and marketing tourism routes (c.f. 3.3). Stakeholder relationships are essential because, while networks benefit stakeholders, they can equally exclude stakeholders, which can impede the pursuit of sustainable tourism development (c.f. 3.3). Freeman identified stakeholders as an individual or noticeable group that can be impacted by actions, decisions, strategies, or organisational goals (c.f. 3.3.1 & c.f. 3.2.2). In addition, the literature found that tourism route stakeholders impact or are influenced by continuous planning and management of tourism routes (c.f. 3.3.1). Effective tourism route planning encompasses the knowledge of tourism assets, destination carrying capacity, infrastructure, market analysis, and the development of tourism quality standards, to name a few (c.f. 3.3.1). The benefits of stakeholder involvement are not limited to the generation of innovative ideas, trust increases between all stakeholder groups, a more cost-effective process, and promotion of shared resources and responsibility (c.f. 3.3.2). This implies that mutual respect from all stakeholders involved in the tourism route is essential (c.f. 3.3.2).

This chapter further demonstrates the stakeholders involved in tourism destination planning and development (c.f. 3.4 & Figure 3.1). The responsibility of core stakeholders is to offer tourism products on the route (c.f. 3.4.2). At the same time, enablers can influence decisions, and their activities may directly or indirectly impact the route's success (c.f. 3.4.2). Tourism associations within the tourism route are responsible for managing and marketing the route to local, regional, and national authorities (c.f. 3.4.3 & 3.4.3.5). This is emphasised by the route tourism association partnership model (c.f. 3.4.3.5 & Figure 3.3). The local government and DMOs have significant authority over other destination development (c.f. 3.4.3.1). The Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation and Tuson's typology of community participation demonstrates the extent of community

participation (c.f. 3.4.3.2 & Figure 3.2). Rural tourism development must be regarded as a local activity that includes the local government and small businesses and does not depend on outside businesses and organisations (c.f. 3.4.3.4). The non-tourism business providers are also essential and can contribute to the development of tourism routes (c.f. 3.4.3.4). The lack of genuine community involvement from mistrust and confusion of residents regarding tourism developments may impede the growth and management of the route (c.f. 3.5). However, the management of stakeholders necessitates a systematic approach to strategic decision-making in which the needs of many stakeholders in any organisation's endeavour are met and considered to the greatest extent feasible (c.f. 3.6). Previous studies have revealed a complete disregard for stakeholders during the review and re-launch of tourism routes following the mediocre performance. Tourism planners fail to consider stakeholders' perspectives, principles, and impact on the significant output of the tourism development process (c.f. 3.7). Therefore, the literature revealed that the tourism route might fail or not even be established without one or two of the stakeholders mentioned above.

The two literature review chapters identified notable gaps that the research attempted to fill, including assessing the perceptions of tourism planners (a supply-side perspective) and the residents (including tourism business providers and locals) on their involvement in the development and management of a route located in smaller, rural towns in South Africa.

8.2.2 Conclusions concerning the results

The following conclusions were drawn from the empirical objectives. The research followed a sequential mixed-method approach (c.f. Chapter 4). Therefore, the first part consists of the conclusions drawn from the interviews with tourism route planners (FSGLTA) (Chapter 5), and the second part consists of conclusions drawn from the tourism business providers (quantitative) (Chapter 6) and residents (qualitative) (Chapter 7). A semi-structured interview guide was developed, and tourism route planners were interviewed orally in a one-on-one setup (c.f. 4.4.4). The second survey was conducted through the distribution of questionnaires among tourism business providers in Paul Roux, Rosendal, Fouriesburg, Bethlehem, and Clarens (c.f. 4.5.1.3), and the last survey (qualitative) was conducted through an interview guide among the residents of the towns (c.f. 4.5.23). Therefore, the conclusions related to the results are linked to Objectives 3 and 4, as stated in Chapter 1.

(a) **Tourism route planners as stakeholders in route development**

The first phase involved tourism route planners, as stated under **Objective 3**: To establish route planners' (government) perceptions of the Eagle Tourism Route's planning, development and management and how the residents who live in communities along this route form part as stakeholders through interviews (qualitative approach). The findings from the qualitative research informed the next data collection phase. This objective was achieved in Chapter 5. This objective was reached by developing a semi-structured interview guide consisting of five sections (Appendix B) and conducting interviews with tourism route planners. The research participants were selected from the board of the Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority (FSGLTA) management committee (c.f. 4.4.2 and Table 5.1). These participants were selected since they had the experience and expertise necessary regarding the tourism route development in the case study (c.f. 4.4.2). The researcher conducted five oral interviews (c.f. 4.4.2). The interviews were recorded after the researcher requested permission from the participants. After completing the interviews, the data was transcribed from the audio recorder with the assistance of a professional transcriber for analysis (c.f. 5.3). Deductive thematic content analysis was applied to identify themes and descriptive codes based on the responses.

Table 8.1 summarises the main findings from the descriptive analysis presented in Chapter 5 regarding the socio-demographic profile of interviewed participants (c.f. 5.2). Table 8.1 shows that 60% of the participants were male, and 40% were female, with an average age of 48 years (c.f. 5.5.1). The table further shows that 40% of the participants possessed a master's degree with an average of eight years of service (c.f. 5.5.1).

Table 8-1: Profile of the participants (tourism route planners)

Categories	Tourism route planners' participation
Socio-demographic profile	
Gender	Male (60%) Female (40%)
Average age	48 years
Qualifications	Master's (40%) Bachelor's degree (40%)
Average years of service	8 years

The results revealed that all participants were conversant with the number and names of all five tourism routes in the Free State, including their locations in various regions of the province (c.f. 5.5.3). Interestingly, participants had different contrasting views regarding the conceptualisation and the implementation of the tourism routes. Some participants indicated that the routes were conceptualised in 2012 and implemented in 2014, while others indicated that the routes were conceptualised and implemented in 2012 and conceptualised and implemented in 2014 (c.f. 5.5.4).

Figure 8.1 summarises the main findings from the manual thematic content analysis, as presented in Chapter 5, regarding the importance of tourism route development (c.f. 5.6), tourism route planners' involvement in tourism route development (c.f. 5.7), the benefits of tourism route development (c.f. 5.8), current marketing of tourism routes (c.f. 5.10), improving the marketing of tourism routes (c.f. 5.10), barriers to the sufficient operation of tourism routes (c.f. 5.16), and lastly, stakeholders' roles and responsibilities in the operation of the tourism route (c.f. 5.21). Figure 8.1 reflects the most significant themes and codes constructed during the one-on-one interviews with the tourism route planners.

The codes streamline the perspective of tourism route planners in the development of tourism routes.

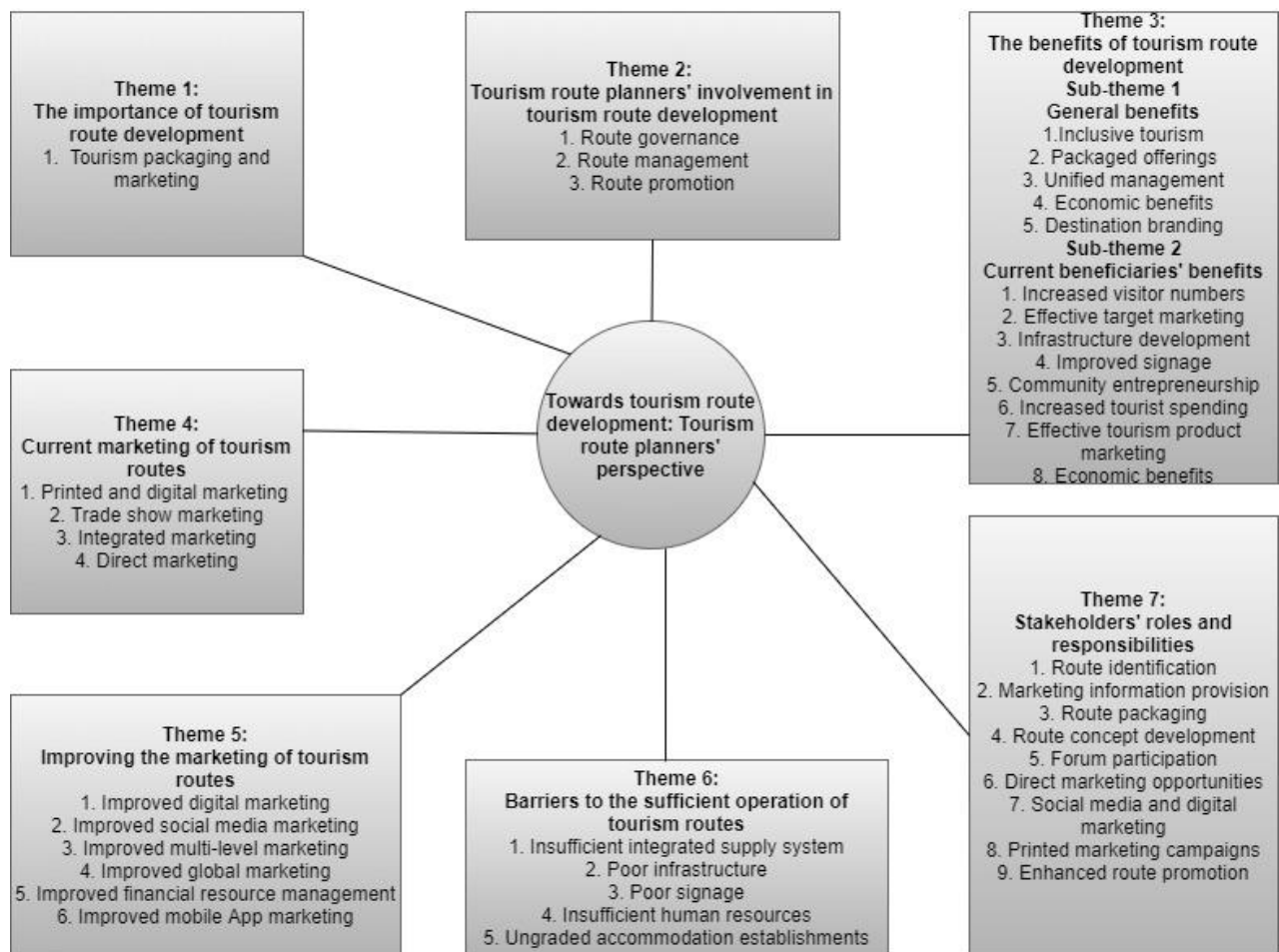


Figure 8-1: Summary of the findings related to the tourism route planners

Source: Researcher's compilation

Based on Figure 8.1, in the process of tourism route conceptualisation and implementation, the results revealed that the reason for the FSGLTA to develop tourism routes in the Free State was tourism packaging and marketing. The evidence emphasises that the development of tourism routes in the province was mainly to integrate and package all tourism products and market them together as one product. The results in Chapter 5 further revealed that participants have distinct levels of involvement in the tourism routes since they have distinct responsibilities. Most participants are involved in route management, while others are more in route governance and route promotion.

The responses revealed that the Free State tourism routes are linked to some benefits and current and intended beneficiaries (c.f. 5.8). According to tourism route planners, inclusive tourism, packaged offerings, unified management, economic benefits, and destination branding are among the benefits. The results further revealed that the intended beneficiaries of the tourism routes are the tourism product owners, the

communities and tourism as an industry. The results of representing intended beneficiaries are consistent with that of current beneficiaries. According to the tourism route planners, tourism product owners such as accommodation and tourism establishments currently benefit from the route, confirming the earlier results. In addition, the results revealed that the tourism route planners consider increased visitor numbers, effective marketing, infrastructure development and improved signage, community entrepreneurship and increased tourist spending as the benefits for current beneficiaries.

The management and marketing of tourism routes were also measured in this study (c.f. 5.10). Therefore, the results revealed diverse views regarding the management and marketing of the route. The results found that these responsibilities lie with the general marketing manager; contrastingly, results further revealed that the route ambassador is the responsible person. The tourism routes of the Free State are mainly marketed through digital media, printed and direct media, and trade show marketing. In this chapter, the tourism route planners further suggest that improved digital marketing, social media marketing, financial resources, and a mobile App can enhance the marketing of the tourism routes.

There are positive and negative aspects to consider in many tourism disciplines during the development of any tourism product (c.f. 5.16). According to the tourism planners, the common barriers in the operation of the tourism routes are insufficiently integrated supply systems and poor infrastructure. In addition, ungraded accommodation establishments and insufficient human resources are barriers to the operation of the tourism routes. As such, the participants suggested that tourism route ambassadors are not involved in the operation of the route.

The role of stakeholders in the development, management and marketing of the tourism routes was measured and discussed (c.f. 5.21). According to the tourism route planners, the role of stakeholders in the development of the tourism routes was mainly to identify and name the route, route packaging and route concept development. The stakeholders identified the routes through information gathering and relevant names for each route. According to the tourism route planners, stakeholders continue to manage and market the route through forum participation, social media and digital marketing initiatives, and information for marketing.

Additional critical conclusions from the interviews with the tourism planners:

- Among all five participants, none of the participants is involved or collaborating with residents in the tourism routes of the Free State (c.f. 5.22).
- **The review of the routes:** The tourism routes were never reviewed, but one of the participants surprisingly indicated that he personally reviews the routes every year (c.f. 5.14).
- **The primary stakeholders:** Most tourism route planners interviewed remarkably do not consider the community as primary stakeholders and only regard tourists, the accommodation sector (product owners), the government at the provincial and regional level, NGOs, and associations as primary stakeholders (c.f. 5.17).
- **The residents' involvement:** The interviews conducted with the tourism route planners revealed that residents were not involved in the development of the tourism routes, and this was proven by the statements of some of the participants, as some indicated that they never had time to engage residents prior 1994. Other participants unwittingly alluded that residents were only made aware through roadshows (c.f. 5.22).
- **The involvement of tourism and non-tourism providers:** The interviews further revealed that some tourism route planners agree to have involved and engaged the tourism business providers where the tourism routes transverse during the development of the routes, while another participant interestingly indicated that tourism business providers were not involved. On the other hand, non-tourism business providers were only informed via the media to attend the participation processes, and some participants tacitly explained that they were never consulted or involved (c.f. 5.20).

The themes and codes presented in Figure 8.1 and the additional key findings are significant as they provide a conclusive outlook of how the chapter was structured, particularly regarding significant results for achieving Objective 3. The results were accompanied by a comparison between the existing literature and the results and recommendations aimed at stakeholders based on their views regarding the tourism route development (c.f. 5.24). It is clear from the responses that there is a notable disconnect between the level of involvement of tourism planners and other key stakeholders, especially tourism business providers and residents.

(b) **Tourism business providers and residents as stakeholders in route development**

The next phase in the data collection followed a concurrent mixed-method approach linked to **Objective 4**: To demonstrate the perceptions of communities (both residents and tourism business providers) forming part of the Eagle tourism route regarding their function as stakeholders through questionnaires and interviews (mixed-method approach) and compare their views with those of the route planners. This objective was achieved in Chapter 6. The target population includes residents (qualitative approach) and tourism business providers (quantitative approach) (c.f. 4.5).

(i) **Tourism business providers' perspectives**

The questionnaire directed at tourism business providers was developed from previous studies and the interviews conducted with the tourism planners (c.f. 4.5.1.3). A convenience sampling method was applied, whereby all the tourism business providers in the Dihlabeng Local Municipality (c.f. 4.5.1.2) were identified. The profile of tourism business providers and business type (c.f. 6.2.2), including the number of years in operation and their involvement in developing the tourism route, is presented in Table 8.2.

Table 8-2: Profile and general perceptions of the respondents (tourism business providers)

Categories	Averages/Percentages
Businesses interviewed per town	
<u>Towns</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
1. Clarens	54%
2. Bethlehem	30%
3. Fouriesburg	8%
4. Paul Roux	4%
5. Rosendal	4%
Type of tourism business	
<u>Categories</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
1. Accommodation	48%
2. Hospitality (food and beverage)	26%
Years in operation	
<u>Categories</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
1. 6-10 years	38%

2. 11-20 years	24%
3. 3-5 years	21%

Job function/position

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
1. Owner	42%
2. Manager	41%
3. Administrative position	6%

Main target market(s)

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
1. All tourists	43%
2. Local tourists	18%
3. Other tourists	7%

The role played in the tourism route development

<u>Statement(s)</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
1. Not involved	42%
2. Unaware	30%
3. Member of association	21%

Expanding the tourism route

<u>Statement(s)</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
1. Development of active tourist attractions	20%
2. The intervention of the national government	19%
3. Involvement of private sector in tourism planning	11%

The importance of tourism business providers' support

<u>Statement(s)</u>	<u>Mean value</u>
1. It will grow the economy and create jobs	45%
2. For sustainability of small businesses	23%
3. To encourage stakeholders to join the business forum	16%

Suggestions regarding the involvement of tourism business providers

<u>Statement(s)</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1. Inclusive tourism stakeholder involvement	22%
2. Improvement of marketing and awareness about the route	21%
3. Government to invest in road infrastructure	16%

*Please note that only the highest percentages and mean values are included.

Regarding the distribution of tourism business providers, 54% were from Clarens, 30% were from Bethlehem, 8% from Fouriesburg and 4% from Paul Roux and Rosendal, respectively. Among all tourism businesses participating in the survey, 48% were accommodation establishments, and 26% were in hospitality (food and beverages). Most participants were owners (42%) or managers (41%) of these establishments. The tourism businesses that participated in the survey have vast experience in the industry, and 38% have been operating for not more than ten years. It was further revealed that 24% of the tourism businesses have been operating for almost two decades, while 21% have been operating for almost five years. Evident from Table 8.2 is that 42% of the tourism business providers were not involved in developing the tourism routes. Identifying a suitable market is essential in many other services or product-oriented businesses. In this regard, the results from the tourism businesses survey revealed that they mainly target all types of tourists. Table 8.2 shows that 20% of the participants suggested that the tourism routes can be further expanded by developing active tourist attractions, while 45% indicated that the support of tourism business providers is essential as it will grow the economy. Table 8.2 further reveals that 22% suggested inclusive stakeholder involvement as a way to involve tourism business providers.

Exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) were performed (c.f. 6.3), and several distinct factors were highlighted in this process, including the involvement of tourism business providers as stakeholders in the development of tourism routes (c.f. 6.3.2). The identified factors are summarised in Table 8.3. Most notable for Table 8.3 is the rating of *active stakeholder involvement* ($\bar{x} = 3.07$), indicating that tourism business providers neither agreed nor disagreed (neutral) with the factor, implying their lack of involvement as stakeholders. Regarding key considerations in route development, *route packaging and development* and *route promotion and cooperation* are essential. *Insufficient route governance* and *insufficient integrated supply system* were the main barriers to sustainable route development, while *integrated cooperation and involvement*, *integrated tourism advancement*, *integrated economic and marketing benefits* and *integrated regional tourism development* are the expected benefits.

Table 8-3: A summary of the EFA results

The involvement of stakeholders in the tourism route development

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Mean value</u>	<u>Likert-scale</u>
Active stakeholder involvement	3.07	5-point Likert scale of agreement (1=completely disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = completely agree)

Key considerations in tourism route development

<u>Factor(s)</u>	<u>Mean value</u>	<u>Likert scale</u>
1. Route packaging and development	4.51	5-point Likert-scale of importance (1 = not at all important, 2 = unimportant, 3 = neutral, 4 = important and 5 = extremely important).
2. Route promotion and cooperation	4.40	

Key barriers in tourism route development

<u>Factor(s)</u>	<u>Mean value</u>	<u>Likert-scale</u>
1. Insufficient economic benefits	3.69	5-point Likert-scale of agreement (1=Completely disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Completely agree)
2. Insufficient route governance	4.07	
3. Insufficient tourism management	3.57	
4. Insufficient integrated supply system	4.01	
5. Insufficient branding and involvement	3.85	

Expected tourism benefits

<u>Factor(s)</u>	<u>Mean value</u>	<u>Likert-scale</u>
1. Integrated cooperation and involvement	4.30	5-point Likert-scale of agreement (1=completely disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 =
2. Integrated tourism advancement	4.50	

3. Integrated economic and marketing benefits	4.46	neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = completely agree)
4. Integrated regional tourism development	4.45	

The final analysis involved Spearman's rank-order correlations and stepwise linear regression analyses. The dependent variables were *active stakeholder involvement* and the four expected benefits. Table 8.4 summarises the stepwise linear regression analysis results and shows which independent variables had a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variables (indicated with a checkmark [✓]). The brackets indicate whether the variable had a positive or a negative relationship.

The results for enhancing *active stakeholder involvement* yielded interesting relationships as a negative relationship for *integrated economic and marketing benefits* and a positive relationship for *insufficient tourism management*, were revealed. It would be anticipated that the expected benefits would yield positive relationships, while the barriers would have negative relationships. The results show that *route packaging and development* is a key consideration to enhance *active stakeholder involvement*, while *insufficient integrated supply system* as a barrier needs to be managed. Furthermore, *active stakeholder involvement* negatively correlated with *integrated cooperation and involvement* and *integrated economic and marketing benefits*. This is another surprising result as a positive relationship is expected, especially since *active stakeholder involvement* is critical to enhancing the expected benefits from route development. The results emphasise the importance of managing *active stakeholder involvement* in route development, which is a critical aspect the proposed framework needs to address.

Table 8-4: Summary of the stepwise linear regression analyses

Regression models	Dependent variables				
Independent variables	Active stakeholder involvement	Integrated cooperation and involvement	Integrated tourism advancement	Integrated economic and marketing benefits	Integrated regional tourism development
Active stakeholder involvement	-	✓ (-)	✗	✓ (-)	✗
Expected benefits					
Integrated cooperation and involvement	✗	-	✓ (+)	✓ (+)	✓ (+)
Integrated tourism advancement	✗	✗	-	✓ (+)	✗
Integrated economic and marketing benefits	✓ (-)	✓ (+)	✓ (+)	-	✓ (+)
Integrated regional tourism development	✗	✓ (+)	✗	✓ (+)	-
Key considerations					
Route packaging and development	✓ (+)	✗	✗	✗	✗
Route promotion and cooperation	✗	✗	✓ (+)	✗	✓ (+)
Barriers					
Insufficient economic benefits	✗	✗	✗		✗
Insufficient route governance	✗	✗	✓ (-)	✓ (+)	✗
Insufficient tourism management	✓ (+)	✗	✗	✗	✗
Insufficient integrated supply system	✓ (-)	✓ (-)	✓ (+)	✗	✗
Insufficient branding and involvement	✗	✓ (+)	✗	✗	✗

Source: Researcher's compilation

Other notable observations from the results include the following:

- The expected benefit factors have positive relationships, implying that they do not function in isolation. Therefore, ensuring that the expected benefits are realised for successful and sustainable route development is essential. For example, *integrated cooperation and involvement* is key to enhancing *integrated tourism advancement*, *integrated economic and marketing benefits* and *integrated regional tourism development*. *Integrated economic and marketing benefits* is another important expected benefit with multiple relationships, including enhancing *integrated cooperation and involvement*, *integrated tourism advancement* and *integrated regional tourism development*.
- Regarding the key considerations, *route promotion and cooperation* enhances *integrated tourism advancement* and *integrated regional tourism development*. Therefore, *route promotion and cooperation* are essential when the objective is to grow regional tourism.
- The barriers yielded interesting results with unexpected positive relationships with the expected benefits. *Insufficient economic benefits* are the only barrier that did not yield statistically significant relationships. Nevertheless, it is essential to manage the barriers to route development which is another critical aspect for which the proposed framework needs to provide guidelines.

(c) Residents' (community members') perspectives

Table 8.5 summarises the main findings from the descriptive analysis as presented in Chapter 7 regarding the socio-demographic profile of participants who took part in the interviews. Table 8.5 shows that 60% of the participants were male, and 40% were female. Regarding race distribution, 64% of the participants were white, and 36% were black. It is further revealed that 32% of the participants were from Fouriesburg, 24% from Bethlehem, 20% from Rosendal, 16% from Clarens, and 8% from Paul Roux.

Table 8-5: Profile of the participants (residents)

Categories	Participant characteristics	
Demographic profile		
Gender	Male (60%) Female (40%)	
Race	White 64% Black 36%	
Average year of stay	18 years	
Towns of participants	TOWN	%
	Paul Roux	8%
	Rosendal	20%
	Fouriesburg	32%
	Bethlehem	24%
	Clarens	16%
	TOTAL	100%

Figure 8.2 summarises the main findings from the thematic content analysis, as presented in Chapter 7, regarding the route awareness and influence of the route, residents' support, residents' collaboration, barriers to resident involvement, expected community benefits, critical aspects of tourism route development and residents' considerations regarding the development of tourism routes. The latter is represented by the significant themes and sub-themes constructed during the one-on-one interviews with the residents of Dihlabeng Local Municipality, particularly those residing in Paul Roux, Rosendal, Fouriesburg, Bethlehem and Clarens. Figure 8.2 reflects the significant sub-themes and codes constructed from the above themes. The themes, sub-themes, and codes highlighted in Figure 8.2 provide an overall outlook of the chapter's structure and highlight the most significant results in reaching Objective 4. In addition, comparisons of the significant constructed themes and the results were drawn from the existing literature regarding residents' perspectives on tourism route development.

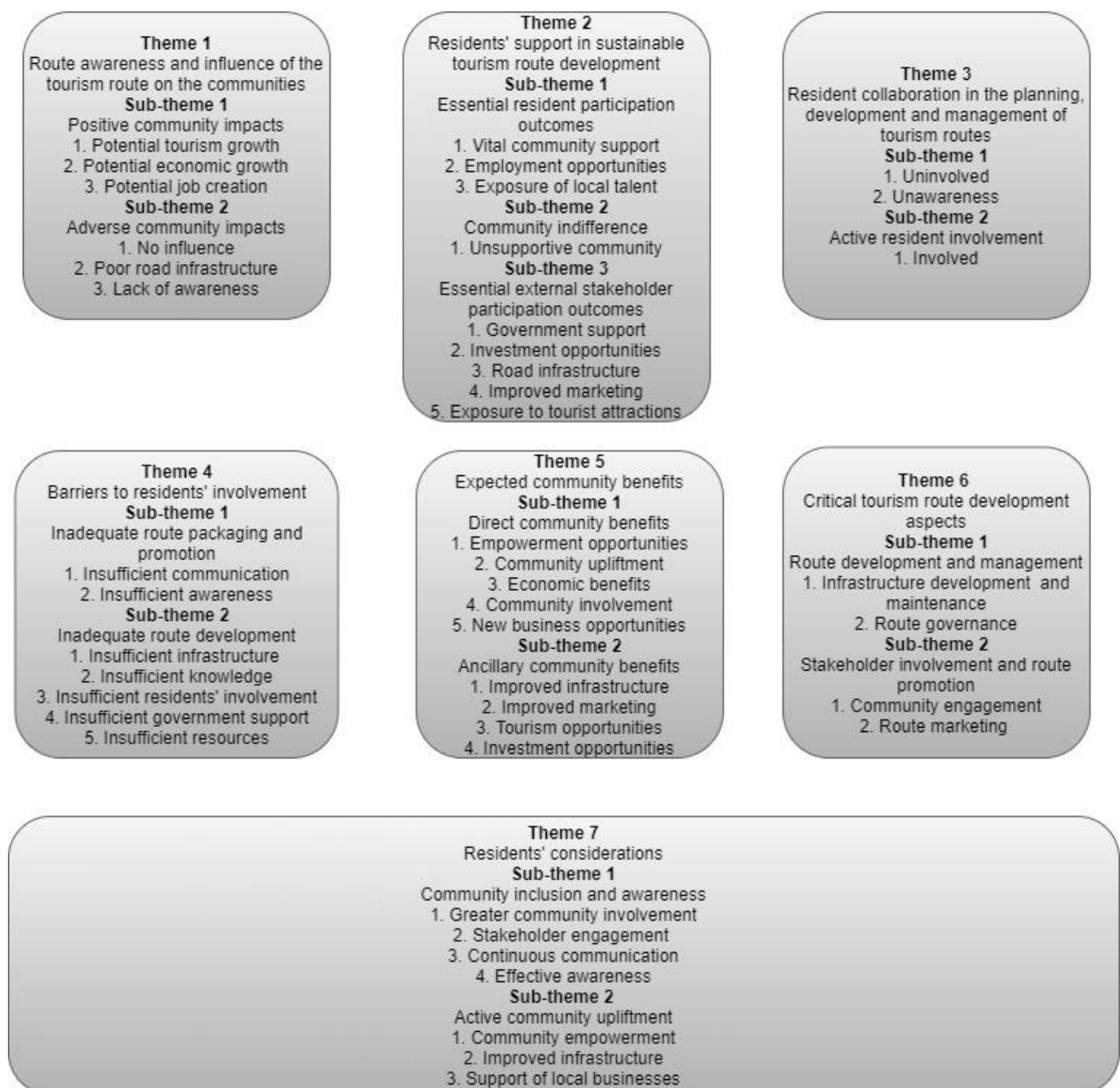


Figure 8-2: Summary of the findings related to the residents

Source: Researchers' compilation

(d) A comparison of the stakeholders' perceptions in route development

The following section compares the results of the interviews conducted with the tourism route planners and residents, the themes identified in Figure 8.1 and Figure 8.2, and the results from the tourism business providers (Table 8.2).

(i) Awareness of the tourism routes

The planners displayed a deep knowledge of the names of all tourism routes in the Free State, their numbers, themes, and localities. However, about 30% of the tourism business

providers were unaware of the existence of the tourism routes, which contradicted the sentiments of tourism route planners. On the other hand, 44% of the residents contradicted the tourism route planners by saying they were unaware of the route. Interestingly, 54% of residents support the tourism route planners, stating that they are aware of the tourism route. However, contradicting their answers, 84% do not even know the name of the tourism route. Amid the contradictions regarding the awareness of the tourism routes, there seems to be confusion among the tourism route planners regarding the conceptualisation of tourism routes in the Free State, as some indicated that routes were conceptualised in 2012 and implemented in 2014, while another participant indicated that tourism routes were conceptualised and implemented in 2014. Astonishingly, none of the residents interviewed knew the year the tourism routes were established.

(ii) The involvement of stakeholders

Figure 8.2 reflects aspects regarding residents' support, which are crucial to developing tourism routes. The identified themes from the interviews with the residents revealed that residents' support could be overflowing with benefits from the tourism route as it is perceived to create employment opportunities and expose local talent. This sentiment is emphasised by the tourism business providers, wherein 45% of the participants indicated that support for tourism business providers would grow the economy and create jobs. However, some residents strongly believe that the community must work and support one another in tourism for everyone to succeed. Twenty-three percent (23%) of tourism business providers acceded that support is necessary for the sustainability of small businesses. On the other hand, some residents doubted the expected support from the local residents. Some participants expressed views suggesting that the government should have involved the residents in the initial stages of the development of the route for the maximum support of the local residents. The tourism business providers also agree with the involvement of stakeholders, since 16% suggested that the support of tourism business providers should encourage stakeholders to join the business forum. Another essential sentiment of the residents about the route is the need for the government to support all communities in which there are activities related to the tourism routes through infrastructure development, an aspect beyond the residents' control.

The tourism route planners were the first to benefit as stakeholders involved in the tourism routes. In the interviews conducted with the tourism route planners, it is shocking to learn

that most participants did not mention residents as stakeholders involved in tourism routes. However, it is worth noting that only one participant mentioned communities. However, the sentiment was not regarding involvement but instead related to being made aware of the route. The residents, in their responses, confirm that they were never involved in tourism route planning and development. Most of them were unaware of the route and only knew about it during the interview, as no signs pointed to it. The tourism route planners' sentiments amplify this statement that they did not involve residents. Instead, residents were only invited to participate through media invitations. In comparison, tourism planners divulged that they did not involve the residents in tourism route development, their active role as stakeholders related to identifying the route and packaging the route. In all interviews conducted with the residents, strangely, only one participant indicated that the Clarens Tourism Forum (CTF) and businesses were informed and suggested that the government must include residents. Regarding the involvement of tourism businesses, 22% suggested that there must be inclusive tourism stakeholder involvement, and 21% emphasised an improvement of marketing and awareness about the route.

(iii) Barriers to sustainable route development

The tourism route planners highlighted some of the good aspects of the routes. It is worth noting that some challenges are linked to the tourism routes. During the interviews, the tourism planners admitted that the roads in which the route is traversing are in poor condition and that the signage is also poor. The residents shared this sentiment. The tourism business providers also indicated poor road conditions and lack of signage as barriers to tourism route development. The tourism route planners further conceded that insufficient staff and the fact that the tourism route ambassadors are uninvolved hinder tourism route operation. This was also the view of the tourism business providers that government officials do not have adequate knowledge about the tourism industry. Furthermore, the residents pointed to the lack of education by government officials as one of the barriers to tourism route development. The residents further highlighted a few more significant barriers that were entirely missed by the tourism route planners, namely poor communication from the government, lack of awareness, lack of resident involvement and lack of economic opportunities, to name but a few.

(iv) Benefits of tourism route development

Amid insurmountable contradictions and challenges in tourism route planning, development, and operations, tourism routes possess considerable benefits if well planned. The planners highlighted a few benefits associated with the tourism routes: increased marketing opportunities such as attending trade shows and general marketing of all tourist attractions. According to the tourism business providers, the benefits related to increased economic opportunities are attached to employment creation for the residents. The tourism business providers have specific expected benefits in mind, such as the need for the tour guides and tour operators to benefit from the packaged tourism product, the need to attract more tourists and an expectation of high occupancy rates by the local businesses, which the tourism route planners also highlighted. The residents have similar expectations. The residents expect employment opportunities, economic benefits, and community involvement as some of the benefits of tourism route development, and the tourism route planners also mention this. The residents added investment opportunities and improved infrastructure as some expected benefits, which the tourism route planners do not mention.

8.3 Key findings based on the results

The following section outlines a critical synthesis of the main findings based on the results and how it is supported and contradicted by the existing literature.

- Developing tourism routes can have numerous advantages. The Free State tourism route planners strongly believe that tourism routes are developed for tourism packaging and marketing. Their objective deviates from the literature by Meyer (2004:3) that tourism routes are developed as a tool for economic and community development, to increase the overall appeal of a destination, to increase the length of stay and spending by tourists, to lure new tourists and attract repeat tourists, and finally, to increase the sustainability of tourism products. Hardy (2003:14) emphasises that the development of tourist routes is due mainly to the awareness that an increasing number of people demand a right to self-travel experience and local communities' recognition that tourism may provide an economic alternative to the related fall in agriculture. Goodwin
- (2006) added that the growth of small businesses in the local economy could be enhanced through routes. As indicated by the tourism business providers and

residents, the expected benefits align with the existing literature indicating a mismatch between the needs of the different stakeholders.

- The level of involvement and role of the tourism routes planners in the tourism route of the Free State are related to route governance, route promotion and route management. Supporting the level of involvement and role of the tourism route planners, McLaren (2011:34) indicated that the local, provincial, and national governments' roles as authorities are expected to create an enabling environment for the route's operation, including influencing tourism planning, providing funding, assisting with physical infrastructure, marketing, and disseminating services in the areas where the route transverses. Nevertheless, tourism route planners need to do more as active stakeholders.
- The development of any tourism initiative or product is anticipated to yield benefits in the locality where tourism is being developed. In this regard, the tourism route planners believe that packaging tourism products, increased visitor numbers, and occupancy rates, including inclusive tourism, are the main benefits of tourism routes. According to the tourism route planners, the current beneficiaries of the route are the tourism product owners, the communities, and the tourism industry. This statement is supported by Viljoen *et al.* (2010:69-70) that the benefits of route development are shared by all participants, regardless of their socioeconomic status. However, considering the results from the tourism business providers and the residents, even though they are regarded as current beneficiaries, their lack of involvement leads to the insufficient distribution of benefits.
- Marketing is one of the most critical aspects of promoting products or services, including destinations and tourism products in the tourism industry. Tourism route planners currently market tourism routes through printed and digital marketing, trade shows, and other marketing platforms. The tourism route planners suggested that the FSGLTA, through the general manager of marketing and tourism and the route ambassador, are the custodians of the management and marketing of the routes. Fyall *et al.* (2016) disagree with the tourism route planners by saying that tourism route marketing is vital for ensuring the routes are recognised and visible to travellers. Most routes are promoted through local, regional, and national cooperation between non-profit organisations and government institutions. In addition, the residents vehemently contradicted the tourism route planners, as 84% of residents interviewed do not even know the name of the tourism route in

their area. Residents further contradict the statement by the tourism route planners by suggesting improved awareness about the route since they are unfamiliar with it. Due to a lack of awareness about the existing tourism route in their backyards, the residents suggested stakeholder involvement and collaboration.

- In terms of the fundamental considerations of the stakeholders who need to be involved in the development and management of the tourism route, the results revealed multiple findings from the tourism planners, tourism business providers and residents. The results showed that tourism route planners only involved the other government department and entities during the planning and development of the tourism routes, such as tourism (LED) offices with the municipalities, the leading department (DESTEA), the Department of Art and Culture and SEDA, with the exception to the most significant stakeholders, including the community. Antonson and Jacobsen (2014:344) contradict the tourism route planners by saying that local businesses, local stakeholder participation, and the community must be prioritised in most literature on tourism route governing methods. This model is known as a bottom-up approach. The residents corroborated this statement, where the majority indicated that they were not involved in the tourism route's planning, development, and management.
- Tourism development, in general, is endowed with some positive and negative impacts, irrespective of how good a tourism product or service is. Similarly, tourism routes also have some positive aspects. The tourism route planners consider the packaging of tourism products and the closeness of the tourism office, increased economy, and inclusivity as positive attributes of the route. Rolfe and Flint (2018:169), on the other hand, stated that some of the positive aspects of tourist route development in rural regions are that it helps to reorganise the struggling agricultural sector and overcome concerns such as emigration of highly educated young, declining rural modernisation, and declining economic activity. All these are inconsistent with the attributes indicated by tourism route planners but align with the needs of the residents.
- The involvement of residents as stakeholders is equally significant to the government's involvement as enabling stakeholders. Residents were not involved in planning, developing, and managing tourism routes. Getz and Timur (2012:230) highlighted that responsible authorities or destination marketing organisations (DMOs) must consider the perspectives of various stakeholders, including the

tourism industry, residents, special-interest groups representing the environment, community, and even tourists, when developing tourism development strategies and policies. Rasoolimanesh and Jaafar (2017:34) added that, according to the stakeholder theory, residents' perceptions as stakeholders are vital in attaining sustainable tourism development.

- The non-tourism business providers are also considered significant stakeholders in the tourism route development (Glen & Mearns, 2018:109). However, the results revealed that non-tourism business providers were not involved in the tourism route's planning, development, and management as per the many contradicting opinions from the route planners. The tourism business providers further contradict the tourism route planners, with the majority stating that they were never involved. The residents also disagreed with the tourism route planners, as most of them said they were not involved in planning, developing, and managing the tourism routes.
- Irvine *et al.* (2016:389) suggested that all stakeholders must cooperate in conceptualising and creating their future. Chen (2015:226) added that tourists, local residents, government, and businesses form an integrated sustainable development decision-making network. The tourism route planners suggest that residents were highly involved in the development of the tourism route and that they assisted in identifying the route, packaging the route, and aided in conceptualising the route, which is supported by the literature of Irvine *et al.* (2016) and Chen (2015). However, the tourism business providers and residents insisted they never played any significant role in developing, managing, and marketing tourism routes.
- Additional findings are sourced from the critical aspects of tourism route development, as suggested by the residents. The results revealed a need for route development and management in that road infrastructure needs to be improved and well maintained. In addition, from the residents, it is suggested that the community and government must work together and that the community should advise the government on bestselling features of the area for better route governance. These statements are supported by the literature of Manhas *et al.* (2014:147). The primary reason for the increased interest in tourism collaborations is that combining the expertise, talents, resources, and other capabilities of many stakeholders, tourist destinations, and organisations would gain a competitive edge.

- The residents highly recommend community engagement, which relates to inclusivity and that most community members participate in developing the route and eventually benefit from its existence. Xu *et al.* (2016:277) emphasise that another key impediment to the expansion and management of tourism routes is the absence of proper community engagement because of citizens' scepticism and ignorance about tourism development. Included in the findings is the consideration of marketing and signage. In the results, the residents suggested that the tourism route marketing should include visible road signage, which the tourism route planners highlighted as a challenge to the operation of the tourism route. McLaren and Heath (2013:23) added that the provincial departments, such as the Department of Transport, primarily responsible for roads and road signage, must also impact rural routes.
- Furthermore, the residents consider greater community involvement, stakeholder engagement, continuous communication, and effective awareness as significant aspects to consider when developing or reviewing the existing routes in the future. The suggestions for the residents' considerations are supported by the recent literature discussed below. In tourist planning, community engagement may be defined as a process that allows everyone (local authorities, residents, architects, developers, businesspeople, and planners) to participate in decision-making (Ramsoolmanesh *et al.*, 2018:339). On the one hand, the lack of meaningful communication may exacerbate local conflicts, while on the other hand, the lack of platforms for exchanging information will result in an inefficient tourist structure and insufficient media knowledge (Pan *et al.*, 2018:457). Tourism awareness and tolerance may be increased by engaging the community and building networks for successful communication (Weber *et al.*, 2017:8).
- Residents consider community empowerment, improved infrastructure, and support of local businesses essential when developing tourism routes. Retnosary *et al.* (2020:18) support the residents' considerations by adding that governments are typically responsible for developing tourism as stakeholders with authority over society's situation for economic empowerment. McLaren and Heath (2012:95) added that tourism planning, development, finance, physical infrastructure, and marketing, which enable the route to work efficiently and tourists to enjoy it, are influenced by local, regional, provincial, and national government entities. Komppula (2014:364) supports the residents' considerations that rural tourism

development must be viewed as a local activity involving local government and small companies rather than intrinsically dependent on foreign firms and organisations. The literature further highlights that tourism routes would aid in creating employment and allow for business opportunities as more tourists will travel through the area.

8.4 Research contributions

The contributions of the research are outlined in the following sub-sections.

8.4.1 Theoretical contributions

This study contributes to tourism route literature in that it examined the planning and management of tourism routes in South Africa (a developing country) from the perspective of three key stakeholders: the planners, tourism business providers and local residents. This study contributes to a better knowledge of tourism routes in South African communities and gives recommendations for the Free State Province's review, development, management, and marketing of tourism routes (the case study). The research, therefore, contributes to the literature regarding the upliftment of smaller, rural communities within a third-world context. Additional theoretical contributions are as follows:

In terms of the literature review in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, the following gaps were revealed: a lack of community consideration during tourism product development and a lack of collaboration between the industry, government, and community. Therefore, the study contributes to the realisation of efficient community consideration during the development of tourism products, such as tourism routes, and effective collaboration between the tourism industry, government, and the community on essential tourism route development aspects of common interest. This study further contributes to the body of knowledge by examining the role of stakeholders in developing, marketing, and managing tourism routes. The findings emphasise the necessity of incorporating stakeholders in the development of tourism routes and the consequences of not including stakeholders in the administration and marketing of routes. In addition, a lack of stakeholder engagement and continuous collaboration are some of the identified gaps that this study filled.

Furthermore, the lack of partnership between the public sector, private sector, and local communities and the lack of government education and training of local communities

were identified as additional gaps in the literature. Therefore, the study contributes to the current literature regarding the importance of the partnership of public sector, private, and local communities through community engagements and continuous collaborations. Moreover, the study contributes to understanding the importance of extensive education and training of local people on the government's significant aspects of tourism route development, marketing, and management. Similarly, tourist planners (government) must have some qualifications and the necessary expertise to develop, promote, and manage tourism routes to maintain the tourism routes' long-term sustainability.

The stakeholders examined in other studies differ from those identified for this study. In other studies, public sector stakeholders are more involved and active in tourism route development. In comparison, this study is different in that it considered government departments as stakeholders in developing tourism routes and stakeholders such as residents, tourism and non-tourism business providers, and tourism associations. Moreover, this study contributes to the literature on the development of tourism routes by not disregarding the importance of stakeholders in the development of tourism routes.

This research fills additional gaps existing in the literature and other studies conducted previously. The stakeholder analyses in identifying stakeholders and communication and invitation are some concepts that could not be found in the literature, which are presented as phases and steps in the present research as part of the final proposed framework. Furthermore, stakeholder engagements by the tourism route planners and route consolidation through stakeholder collaboration are some of the literature gaps filled by this study, as shown in Figure 8.4. This study contributes to new information and guidance on launching a new tourism route or re-launching an existing tourism route and a tourism route review. The tourism route launch occurs after stakeholder engagements, route consolidation and stakeholder collaboration are completed. In the event of tourism route re-launch, this information guides the planners, independent route developers, tertiary institutions, scholars and researchers to re-launch the tourism route if it is not operating as planned and not yielding expected benefits. Finally, the study contributes to the in-depth knowledge of the steps to follow should the need for a tourism route review arise. The review takes place if the tourism route planners and other stakeholders regard the route as obsolete or operating contrary to how it was planned – such reviews should take place at regular intervals (For example, every 3rd year). The review of the tourism route should be done through continuous research by the dedicated research team among

tourism planners. This should be done at regular intervals once a year for the benefit of tourism route planners to know the current state of the route.

8.4.2 Practical contributions

This study contributes to developing a framework that route developers can use to manage sustainable tourism routes that will attract tourists to the smaller, more rural communities in South Africa. Sustainability is essential to tourist policies in 101 UNWTO member states, not only in Europe (UNWTO, 2021). Therefore, to ensure long-term tourism sustainability, an adequate balance between the three principles of sustainability, namely environmental, economic, and socio-cultural components of tourism development, should be established (UNWTO, 2022). Economic sustainability is defined by Dembovska and Zvaigzne (2021:698) as the development of wealth at all levels of society while also addressing the overall cost-effectiveness of all economic activities. Environmental sustainability refers to protecting and managing resources, particularly those not renewable or in sustainment conditions, whereas social sustainability is defined as upholding human rights and fair opportunity for everyone in society. Leung, Spenceley, Hvenegaard, Buckley and Groves (2018:1) emphasise that sustainable tourism, which is defined as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities”, should be promoted in protected areas. This is significant within routes, even though they are not designated as ‘protected areas’. According to Kaper (2018:583), sustainable development is defined in environmental protections to the broadest extent possible. However, references to it may also be found in various other legislation and strategy documents created at the national and local levels.

The governance of tourism route sustainability includes tourism route development, management, and marketing, with the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes. Therefore, this study focused on the sustainable governance of a tourism route by tourism route planners in collaboration with selected stakeholders such as government, residents, tourism business providers, non-tourism providers, tourism associations and non-profit organisations, in Figure 8.3, by developing a framework. The framework aims to better understand communities’ role in tourism routes and ensure that communities fully support tourism routes. In addition, the framework aims to consider the tourism businesses and the level of government involvement in the process, development and management.

The study identified methods and elements that could develop tourism routes sustainably, such as greater community involvement, stakeholder engagement, infrastructure improvement, and support by local businesses. Finally, this study contributes to understanding tourism in the Free State Province and provides recommendations on developing and improving the management of tourism routes in this province. The empirical results of this study can further benefit the Free State Province by improving planners' knowledge and understanding of the planning, marketing and management of tourism routes. With enhanced knowledge about the management of the tourism routes, the province is bound to attract investors and tourists for economic growth and development. The empirical results, if correctly applied, may aid other regions and provinces in enhancing their knowledge regarding tourism routes and assist in better developing, managing, and marketing the tourism routes. In the case of regions or provinces with existing tourism routes that are not productive or not operating as planned and are not yielding expected benefits, the empirical results can aid tourism route planners in other provinces to effectively review and re-launch these tourism routes. The framework can further assist planners in ensuring that the route performs optimally by attracting more tourists, luring investors, and supporting local tourism and non-tourism businesses that will eventually encourage the economic growth of the provinces.

8.5 A stakeholder involvement framework in sustainable tourism route development

The following section details and explains the critical consideration for the tourism route development followed by the stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa as per the study's goal.

8.5.1 Critical aspects and considerations for the development of a tourism route

In developing a stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa, Figure 8.3 represents tourism route development's considerations and critical aspects. This figure consists of the possible stakeholders for tourism route development. Furthermore, the critical aspects and considerations for tourism route development are highlighted. The figure highlights possible barriers and benefits associated with developing tourism routes. Lastly, in the figure, tourists are featured at the bottom, as the tourism routes are developed to fulfil their needs through the experience of tourism services or products. The stakeholders mentioned above,

critical aspects, considerations, barriers, and benefits in developing tourism routes, including tourists, are based on the empirical results in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. These considerations were used in conjunction with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 to develop a stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa.

Figure 8.3 was developed from the literature reviews and empirical data analysis to determine the underlying aspects that weigh in on understanding, planning, and managing tourism routes. This information is embedded within the framework developed in the study. The following significant features are depicted: the stakeholders necessary to develop a tourism route, including the government. Secondly, Figure 8.3 contains information regarding critical considerations essential for developing a successful tourism route. Thirdly, the figure reflects possible barriers to the development of a route. Fourthly, the figure outlines the benefits associated with the existence of a tourism route. The last component of the figure is tourists who are to experience the tourism offering within the particular destination. These components listed above are discussed and aided in developing a final framework. As discussed in the next section, this information must be filtered between phases and steps of tourism route development. For ease of reference, the boxes in Figure 8.3 are assigned alphabetic letters from 'A' to 'F', identifying certain sustainable tourism route development factors.

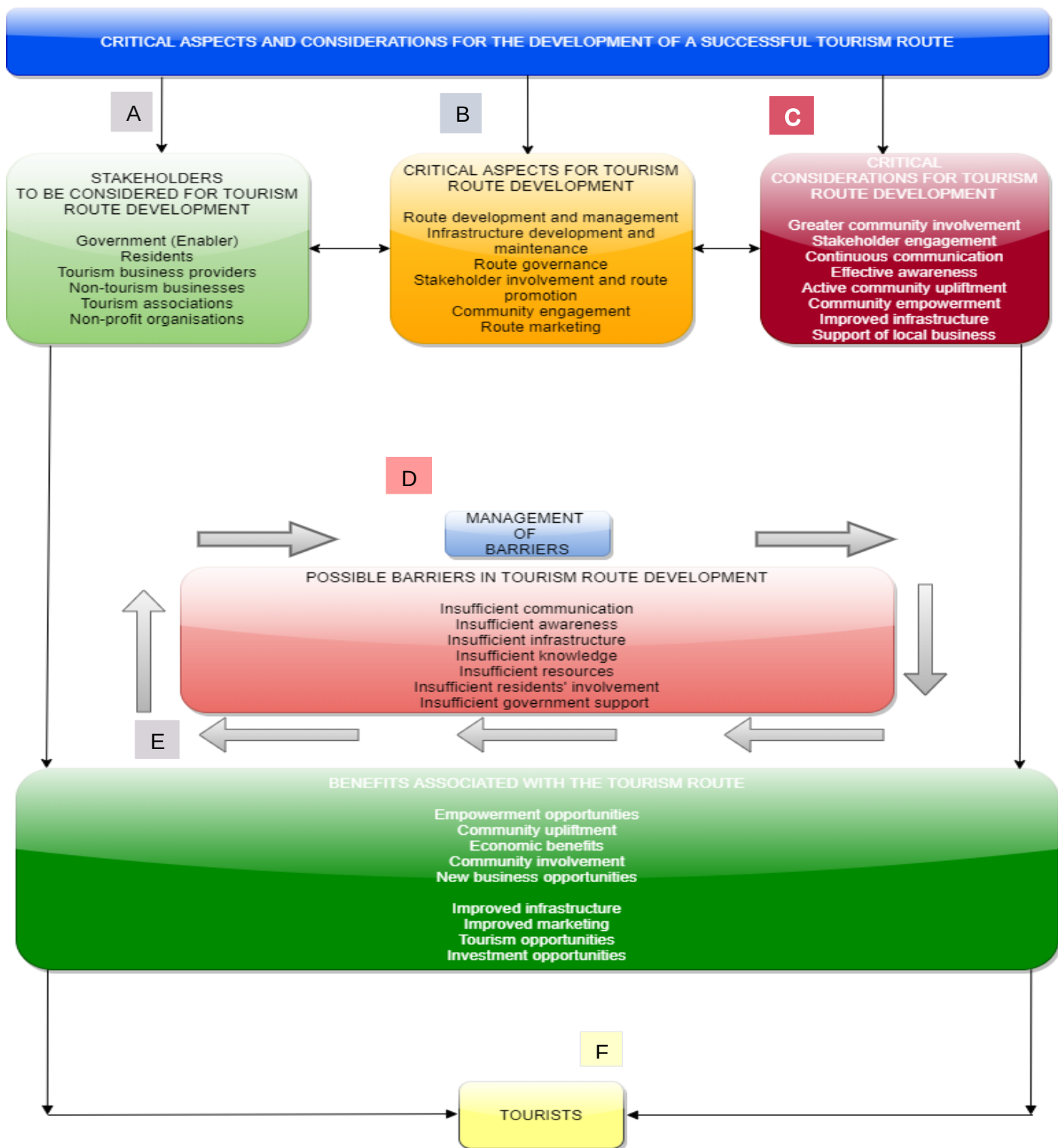


Figure 8-3: Critical aspects and considerations for the development of a tourism route

Source: Researchers' compilation

(a) Stakeholders to consider for tourism route development

The first section in the diagram, highlighted with a lime colour (A) in Figure 8.3, displays the primary stakeholders to consider during tourism route planning, development and management. The government, as an enabler, should facilitate tourism development and marketing by providing the necessary infrastructure to support and promote tourism activities in the area. Therefore, as an enabler and planner, the government should consider these stakeholders to develop a successful tourism route. Spasojevic, Lohmann and Scott (2019:1) indicated that several tourism destinations rely on their capacity to develop a network of involved stakeholders to generate visitor demand, boost competitiveness, and create value. Leadership and strong governance have been highlighted as drivers of stakeholder involvement that improve tourist growth. Some government efforts should include well-maintained roads and efficient tourism road signage; well-functioning tourism information offices; the development, support, and maintenance of public and community-owned tourism resources; and facilitating umbrella branding and marketing initiatives for the areas under their jurisdiction (McLaren & Heath, 2012:102). Governments can make the tourism sector more sustainable and attract tourists by acting as tourism enablers (Cura, Signh & Talaat, 2017:14). On the other hand, the residents, tourism business providers, non-tourism businesses, tourism associations, and non-profit organisations interested in tourism also play an essential role in the planning, developing, and managing of tourism routes. These stakeholders listed herein are widely discussed within the Stakeholder Theory literature in Chapter 3.

(b) Critical aspects of tourism route development

Furthermore, Figure 8.3, in a box highlighted with an amber colour (B), shows the critical aspects to consider for tourism route development, and the box highlighted with a red colour (C) reflects the necessary considerations for tourism route development. These critical aspects include route development and management, infrastructure development and maintenance, route governance, stakeholder involvement and route promotion, community engagement, and route marketing. It is worth noting that these critical aspects and critical considerations for tourism route development are based on the empirical results from all three phases of the research.

In Figure 8.3, in a box highlighted in red (C), there are a few critical considerations for tourism route development based on the empirical results in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. These considerations include greater community involvement, stakeholder engagement, continuous communication, effective awareness, active community upliftment, community empowerment, improved infrastructure, and support by local businesses. These are all necessary considerations for developing a sustainable tourism route, and if not carefully implemented, the anticipated tourism route might not even be successful or sustainable. Therefore, it is vital for all tourism planners who wish to develop tourism routes to consider these considerations for developing a successful and sustainable tourism route through stakeholder involvement.

(c) Possible barriers to tourism route development

The second section of Figure 8.3, in the box highlighted in pink (D), reflects the possible barriers such as insufficient communication, insufficient awareness, insufficient infrastructure, insufficient knowledge, insufficient resources, insufficient residents' involvement and insufficient government support in tourism route development. The barriers to tourism route development are mainly based on the empirical findings in Chapters 6 and 7 that correlate with the literature in Chapter 3. These barriers need to be carefully managed by tourism route planners for the seamless development of a sustainable and successful tourism route. The barriers should be well managed for the route to yield expected benefits.

(d) Expected benefits associated with the tourism route

The next section of Figure 8.3 is highlighted in green (E) and highlights the expected benefits of a properly planned and managed tourism route. These benefits, such as community empowerment, economic benefits, and new business opportunities, to name but a few, will only be realised if the barriers are well managed. These benefits are experienced by the local residents and tourism business providers. The expected benefits of the tourism route are based on the empirical findings that correlate with the literature. For tourism routes to be considered sustainable, these benefits should be realised.

(e) **Tourists**

Finally, tourists are shown in yellow (F) in the figure. Even though they are not included as primary stakeholders (A), they are one of the most significant components of tourism route development. Denstadli and Jacobsen (2011:781) clarify that tourists' contentment with diverse aspects of a destination enhances overall satisfaction and loyalty to the destination. It is critical to give tourists tour itineraries most suited to their specific demands to address the challenge of improving the tourist experience (Zheng, Liao & Qin, 2017:335). Therefore, the benefits identified by the residents and tourism business providers should be realised since, without their support, tourists may have a negative experience along the route. The benefits to tourists are more aligned to satisfaction with tourism services and products and correctly clustered tourism products experienced within the tourism route.

The following section discusses the developed framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa as designed by the researcher.

8.5.2 A practical framework towards sustainable tourism route development

In Figure 8.4, there are three phases, as indicated earlier, and eight steps with two steps in Phase 1, three steps in Phase 2, and another three steps in Phase 3. The following section outlines and explains the three phases: stakeholder analysis, planning and cooperation, implementation, and the eight steps towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa. These steps are to be discussed concurrently with Figure 8.3, as the elements in the figure are essential to developing a successful tourism route. The framework is circulatory in form, and all eight steps must be followed sequentially through all three phases. Therefore, the following section should be interpreted through the phases mentioned above and in sequential order from step 1 to step 8 based on the empirical results highlighted in Figure 8.3. Figure 8.4 is further discussed in detail.

The stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa is not developed to be implemented solely by the Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority (FSGLTA). The FSGLTA can use this framework to review and enhance its existing non-functional tourism routes in the Free State Province. Since the Free State tourism routes are not functioning as planned (from the interviews and empirical data), the FSGLTA can use this framework to review their existing tourism

routes. Other provincial counterparts (governments), independent tourism route planners, scholars, local DMOs, researchers, and other route developers can also implement this framework. This framework is to be implemented by other provinces to develop new tourism routes or review existing ones that do not operate as planned. Tertiary institutions can also use this framework in the theory of their curriculum to educate and prepare scholars who might choose to specialise in tourism and tourism route development. The framework is user-friendly and beneficial to researchers and practitioners interested in tourism route development to establish new facts and discoveries about the tourism route, such as newly developed tourism routes, interesting and most successful in South Africa or be analysed and adapted to specific country situations for a global reach. Local DMOs and other tourism route developers can also implement this framework in their related platforms. Local DMOs and tourism route developers in small and rural communities are also entitled to use this framework to develop small-scale tourism routes in their communities. The edge can prompt the development of tourism routes to promote their small towns and attractions, economic enhancement, and support for local businesses. In general, anyone intending to promote and market their small town or rural area can use and implement the route to achieve the benefits listed in Figure 8.3 in the green box (E).

A STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT FRAMEWORK TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

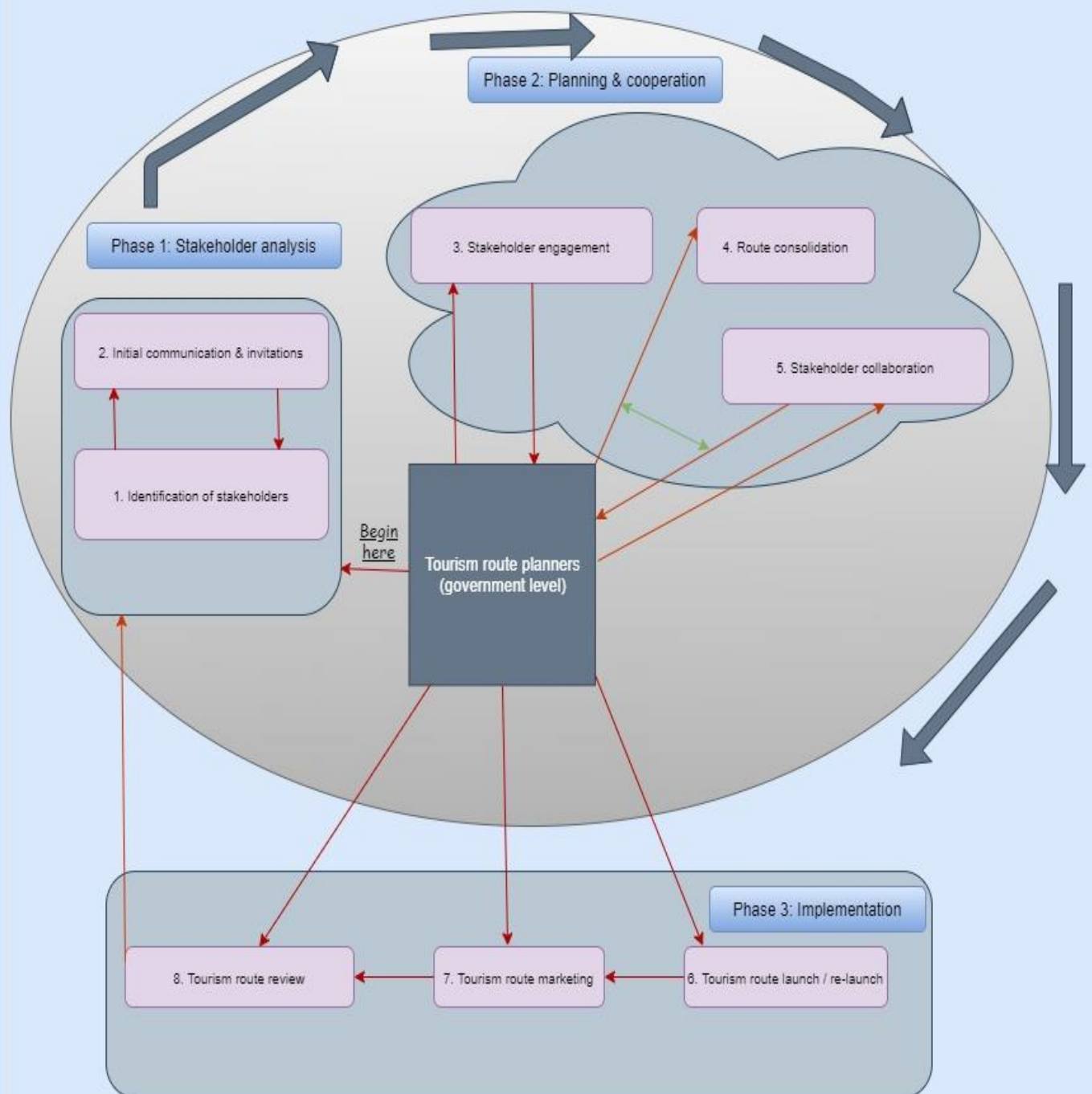


Figure 8-4: A stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development

Source: Researchers' compilation

The stakeholder analysis (phase 1) consists of two steps, namely the identification of stakeholders (step 1) and initial communication and invitations (step 2). In phase 2 (planning and cooperation), there are three steps, namely stakeholder engagement (step 3), route consolidation (step 4), and stakeholder collaboration (step 5). Lastly, phase 3, execution/implementation of the tourism route, consists of the following three steps, namely tourism route launch/re-launch (step 6), tourism route marketing (step 7) and tourism route review (step 8). In all three phases and eight steps of tourism route development, the government at the provincial level as tourism route planners plays a prominent role from the beginning of the route development until the end. In Figure 8.4, at each phase in the process, it is clear that some of the steps are related and changeable from the tourism route designers' (government) perspective, detailed in the next section. In addition, the following section and sub-sections further detail the relationship between Figure 8.3 and Figure 8.4 and how the aspects considered during tourism routes are filtered between the phases and steps of the framework.

(a) Phase 1: Stakeholder analysis

This section seeks to detail and explain the first two steps under phase 1, namely the identification of stakeholders and initial communication and invitation of stakeholders and further explain the linkage of these steps to Figure 8.3. Stakeholder analysis provides a monitoring tool through which the persons affected by tourism are identified and consulted regularly, thereby recognising and averting negative cultural trends when analysing the effects of tourism on communities and the 'tourist culture' (Hardy, 2005:111).

(i) Step 1: Identification of stakeholders

Tourism route planners must first identify stakeholders involved in the tourism route planning, development, and management of the route. The identification and recognition of stakeholders necessitate the participation in the decision-making processes of those with a vested interest in tourism development, including marginalised stakeholders such as those who were previously disadvantaged and were never involved in any tourism development endeavours in the past (Nyanjom, Boxall & Slaven, 2018:680). The legislation restricting the mobilities and movements of persons belonging to the black, coloured, and Indian designated race groups was one of the fundamental violations committed against citizens during South Africa's apartheid era (Adinolfi, Harilal & Giddy,

2021:306). During the stakeholder analysis phase, tourism route planners identify possible stakeholders interested in or affected by tourism within the earmarked community to be involved in the tourism route planning. In this phase, stakeholders such as residents, tourism and non-tourism business providers, tourism associations, and non-profit tourism organisations are identified within the community where the tourism route is to be developed. The tourism route planners will later engage the identified stakeholders through invitations in the next step. As indicated in Figure 8.3, stakeholders such as local residents, tourism business providers, non-tourism business providers, tourism associations, non-government organisations, and government at provincial and regional levels must be considered during tourism route development. In the stakeholder analysis phase, step 1 of stakeholder identification is interlinked to step 2, wherein, after the tourism route planner has analysed the potential stakeholders, the stakeholders are invited to attend meetings.

(ii) Step 2: Initial communication and invitations

Then, Felisa and Irene (2021:61) concluded that sustainable tourism development may be achieved on a modest scale initially and that all stakeholders should be invited and should work together to carry out the plans. In this step, the tourism route planners must initiate communication with the identified stakeholders and proceed with the invitations in preparation for stakeholder engagements. In this step, tourism route planners are to source the views of possible stakeholders within the area during community meetings and other forms of meetings with stakeholders other than residents. During these meetings, stakeholders are informed about the possible development of a tourism route and their requested input. This process allows stakeholders to decide and indicate their intentions to participate in developing a tourism route. This step is supported by Figure 8.3 [highlighted with lime colour (A)].

In the case of the Eagle Route, there are already monthly community meetings in some communities. Therefore, tourism route planners must take advantage of such platforms to communicate and invite stakeholders. Tourism route planners can also take advantage of existing tourism forums such as the Clarens Tourism Forum (CTF) to invite stakeholders such as the tourism business providers and non-government organisations co-existing with the CTF. In addition, tourism planners should use local newspapers, local radio stations, social media, and television, just like in the Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng

Provinces, as suggested in the empirical findings (c.f. Table 5.9). The communication and invitations by the tourism route planners are directed to the stakeholders within a lime box (A) outlined in Figure 8.3. Unlike the historic conventional media such as newspapers, radio, and tourist news channels, the development of highly interactive, rich text, and communicative social media platforms is increasingly challenging the marketing tools for local and global tourism (Rambe, Mosweunyane, & Dzansi, 2019:3). According to Chen *et al.* (2017), the importance of social media marketing is to promote DMOs to enhance their interactions with their customers through streamlined and effective communication networks. In addition, the use of social media by DMOs to create a positive image among all stakeholders should be consistent (De Las Heras-Pedrosa, Millan-Celis, Iglesias-Sánchez & Jambrino-Maldonado, 2020:3). Therefore, usage of conventional media such as radio, newspapers, digital and social media such as Facebook and Twitter are equally essential in communicating with stakeholders, and the image and the message being communicated must be consistent.

(b) Phase 2: Planning and cooperation

Phase 2, planning and cooperation, highlights all three steps in Figure 8.4: Stakeholder engagements, route consolidation, and stakeholder collaboration. The planning and cooperation of a tourism route relate to the critical aspects of tourism route development, which are prominent in Figure 8.3 [highlighted with an amber colour] (the route development and management, route governance, community engagement, infrastructure development and marketing and route marketing). They need to be performed by the tourism route planners and other stakeholders (highlighted in lime in Figure 8.3). Therefore, sustainable planning is critical for long-term growth and development and sustainable communities (Santos, Castanho & Lousada, 2019:20). In addition, the impact of the tourism-related structure on community benefits, life quality, and hospitality businesses at the destination can all be improved with suitable tourism development that encourages collaboration among stakeholders (Kuščer & Mihalj, 2019:13).

(iii) Step 3: Stakeholder engagements

In the second phase, planning and cooperation, the tourism route planners in Step 3 should now commence the process of stakeholder engagements with the identified stakeholders in the first step after the communication and invitations. The stakeholder engagements can be through various methods, such as community meetings, radio and newspaper interactions, formal letters, and social media such as Facebook (c.f. Table 5.9). The stakeholder engagement process is for the planners to engage, for example, the local residents about the planned tourism route and subsequently source the residents' views about the proposed tourism route. During stakeholder engagements, tourism route planners are to engage stakeholders about the idea of the tourism route and develop a sense of interest and involvement. At the end of all engagements with general stakeholders, tourism planners will revert to those stakeholders with a better understanding of the tourism route idea and those with a keen interest in the planning, development, and management of the route and invite them for the next step, which is tourism route development.

In this step, various stakeholders will provide their insights regarding the route, assist with gathering information, route packaging, route conceptualisation, and the type of route to be developed as per the best features of the area using the best available tourist attractions in the area. For example, participate in forum meetings, provide marketing information, and participate in social media and digital marketing platforms (c.f. Table 5.9). Continuous communication among stakeholders aids in developing a sustainable tourism route through sharing information pertinent to the route and creating awareness within the community about the possible route development and its positive and negative implications. This step is further supported by Figure 8.3 [highlighted with a red colour (C)], wherein tourism route planners need to adequately involve and engage the community through continuous communication and conduct effective awareness to enhance community empowerment by supporting local businesses operating within the route. Dragouni and Fouseki (2018:263) suggest that tourism development may be perceived as threatening destination identity; consequently, communication and engagement initiatives must convey the need for collaborative planning in averting unwanted tourism transformation. The communication aspect was identified as one of the barriers by residents and further recommended by the same residents as one of the key aspects for consideration when developing tourism routes. As a result, one of the main

goals of communication is to improve the quality of sources of information, clear up misconceptions, and raise awareness about essential aspects of tourism (Nyanjom *et al.*, 2018:690). Within the context of this study, continuous communication is essential, as indicated in Figure 8.3 [red box (C)], as one of the critical considerations.

(iv) Step 4: Route consolidation

After the stakeholder engagements, route consolidation follows. In this step, after considering the opinions and insights of stakeholders, the tourism route planners must consolidate all the information obtained during stakeholders' engagements and design the envisaged route. In the same step, the tourism route planners must revert to the stakeholders to present the consolidated tourism route and allow for finalising the tourism route as agreed during stakeholder engagements. As indicated in step 1, the tourism route idea will be tabled and outlined in totality to stakeholders. In the previous step, tourism route planners need to process the information obtained from the stakeholder engagements. Furthermore, a tourism route idea will be formulated and then outlined to stakeholders in the following step and request their feedback if available. During the stakeholders' engagement, tourism route planners should physically distribute samples of a suggested tourism route on paper for stakeholders to give input. Therefore, during this step, stakeholders are allowed to make their inputs on the packaging of the route in terms of, for example, the geographical location, the length of the route, the number of tourist attractions, and the types and numbers of activities of the tourism route. As most familiar with the area, the stakeholders will suggest the amenities and attractions included in the route. This implies that the tourism route consolidation process will allow stakeholders to make inputs such as suggesting a suitable name and theme for the tourism route per the best features and tourist attractions identified by stakeholders and endorsed by tourism route planners.

However, for other stakeholders, the same route example can also be posted on social media or local newspapers with easy access to provide their input. The route consolidation process is the responsibility of all stakeholders, as indicated in a lime colour in Figure 8.3 [with considerations highlighted in red in the same figure]. Internal tourism along the Cultural Route 'El Abra' in Cuba was consolidated on the Isle of Youth, allowing for the use of natural and historical-cultural resources in the area, based on the country's tourism development objectives and the rising demand for this tourist activity (Pérez,

Curbelo & Musterlier, 2021:2). In addition, in Colombia, the consolidation of cultural tourism, particularly tourism in rural areas, necessitated a concerted and coordinated effort of governmental institutions and private businesses in regional and local development (Rubén Pérez, Martínez & Galindo, 2020:57). Similarly, the route consolidation process in this study is not limited to tourism route planners only. Stakeholders identified in step 1, such as residents, tourism and non-tourism business providers, tourism associations, and non-profit organisations, should form part of the route consolidation process through stakeholder collaboration.

(v) Step 5: Stakeholder collaboration

The stakeholder collaboration theory takes the critical aspect analysis to a new level, identifying common ground on which stakeholders might cooperate and share information, allowing them to determine a path forward using the wealth of insights available (Towner, 2018:281). In step 5 (stakeholder collaboration), the tourism route planners must strive to collaborate with the identified stakeholders and clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group. In this step, the collaboration aims to establish the stakeholder responsible for route governance, route promotion, and route management. For instance, stakeholder collaboration in route governance entails government support in ensuring the infrastructure is up to standard and well maintained. The stakeholder collaboration extends to the government's provision of resources to the community and support of local businesses to ensure that the route continues to thrive and yield expected benefits such as employment creation, economic development, and new business opportunities.

According to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, tourist route management comprises crucial tourism planning decisions that benefit the local economy. All parties present during the route's planning and development should be involved in its management. The control of routes created to enable tourists to access and sightsee sites easily and comfortably is included in tourist route management. The management entails firm coordination from the route operator, encouraging other stakeholders to provide all necessary information and tourism products and services within the route for effective operation.

At the same time, during the stakeholder collaboration, stakeholders will provide more insights into how they can contribute to the success of the tourism route and further highlight their preferred support from the tourism route planners (government) and resources needed, which are at the disposal of the government. The tourism route must be registered with the appropriate authorities during stakeholder collaboration. The study by Van Wyk-Jacobs (2018:177) suggested that Companies and the Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) and the South African Tourism Services Association (SATSA) must first register tourism businesses along the tourism route. In contrast, the tourism association must register with the local or provincial tourism authority, and the tourism route must register with the local tourism authority and the South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL). It is worth noting that there is an interaction between step 4 (route consolidation) and step 5 (stakeholder collaboration). After consolidation, tourism route planners will proceed to route collaboration, as indicated in Figure 8.4.

However, tourism route planners can revert to step 4 to consolidate the route and back to stakeholder collaboration after route collaboration with stakeholders, as indicated with a green arrow ↔ between the two steps. Step 5 is further supported by information on possible barriers to tourism route development that the planners need to mitigate by enhancing communication among stakeholders, improving community awareness, and fostering infrastructure development for better roads. The tourism route planner must adequately involve residents and provide necessary resource support for all stakeholders, as indicated in pink (C) in Figure 8.3. However, leadership, trust, financial resources, governmental assistance, social and cultural backgrounds, awareness level, and entrepreneurial skills of individuals all impacted stakeholder collaboration, which is critical for long-term tourist growth (Wondirad, Tolkach & King, 2020:2). Stakeholder collaboration is also crucial in this study because tourism route planners and other stakeholders such as residents, tourism and non-tourism business providers, tourism associations and non-profit organisations need to collaborate to develop a sustainable tourism route. The stakeholder collaboration will aid with the optimal and efficient management of resources, support local businesses, and enhance community awareness about the route and its sustainability.

(c) Phase 3: Implementation of the tourism route

In the last phase, the implementation of the tourism route, the tourism route planners must consider the information in Figure 8.3 to finalise the route by launching the route (step 6), followed by tourism route marketing (step 7), and finally, review the tourism route (step 8). Tourism routes are tourism products that rely on a specific area's natural and human heritage, are organised around a unified theme, and provide educational experiences that increase enjoyment. Therefore, it is recommended that the route be refined before it is implemented and introduced to the tourist market (Ilić, Lukić, Snežana Besermenji & Blešić¹, 2020:91).

(vi) Step 6: Tourism route launch

The last phase of the framework is the implementation/execution of the tourism route (Phase 3). This phase consists of three crucial steps. Step 6 involves tourism route launch/re-launch (if the tourism route has been reviewed after a certain period and adapted). After successfully identifying the stakeholders and initiating communication with stakeholders, tourism route planners (government) will now engage with stakeholders. The implementation phase will commence after the route consolidation process and stakeholder collaboration. The tourism route launch can unfold in diverse forms preferred by planners and stakeholders. In the Eagle Route case, the route was launched during the Tourism Indaba at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban (c.f. Table 5.4). In agreement with all stakeholders involved, the tourism route planners can, for example, follow a similar approach and launch or re-launch the tourism route at the same tourism spectacle. In 2019, it was expected that over 7 000 delegates from 80 countries would attend the tourism indaba (Africa Travel Indaba, 2019). The tourism indaba is one of the appropriate platforms for launching tourism routes as per the stipulated number of attendees from various countries across the globe. Therefore, it is recommended that, after the tourism route launch on the global stage, the tourism route planner must continue with launch processes in the province, district, and local municipalities, including the locality from where the tourism route originates. Unlike in the previous launch of the Free State Big 5 tourism routes, which took place only once at the Tourism Indaba and was not introduced or launched in the community where from it originates, the launch process can also be done conversely (bottom-up), from where the tourism route is planned to be implemented and on

international platform such as the tourism indaba spectacle in Durban or any other related international tourism trade show. The tourism planners interviewed in the present study provided contradicting statements on the operation and effectiveness of the tourism routes (c.f. 5.13). Therefore, it is essential for the tourism route planners, after realising that the route is not operating according to how it was planned, the steps of tourism route development must be revisited and, eventually, a re-launch of the route.

In Spain, the launch phase of the tourism route commences when the various public and private organisations involved in the tourist product (hotels, restaurants, public administrations, wineries, among others) form a route management body and adapt their members' facilities and services to the quality standards (López-Guzmán, Cañizares & García, 2009:426). However, in the literature of Briedenhann and Wickens (2004:78), the Open Africa project was launched through a private-sector effort and anticipated true collaboration and cooperation between the public and commercial sectors and local communities to ensure its long-term sustainability. In support of the statements above, Figure 8.3 [highlighted in lime] reflects the same stakeholders applicable for a successful launch of a tourism route.

(vii) Step 7: Tourism route marketing

Step 7 relates to tourism route marketing. In this step, the tourism route planners are expected to market the route in collaboration with the other stakeholders to yield the expected benefits. (As also emphasised by residents on the critical aspects for a successful tourism route). Tourism route planners can employ various marketing strategies and tools, such as brochures, newspapers, updated websites, and a functional tourism route App (c.f. Table 5.9 and Table 5.16). While the route promotion is expected to be done by all stakeholders coordinated by the tourism route planners (c.f. Table 5.5 and Table 5.16), the empirical findings suggest that route promotion should be done through attending trade shows such as tourism indabas with tourism product owners brought together to market their area. In addition, visible signage and community awareness about the tourism route are essential components of effective route promotion. In addition, the route promotion should also be done through an updated App and website, brochures, flyers, newspapers, and tourism planners must make tourism route offices more accessible (c.f. Table 5.5).

In this step, the successful marketing of a tourism route must result in additional benefits aimed at uplifting the community through empowerment opportunities and community involvement. This will translate to more economic benefits and new business opportunities in the community where the tourism route traverses. The improvement of infrastructure within the locality of the tourism route will create more tourism opportunities and investment opportunities for residents, tourism business providers, and many other interested organisations, as indicated in Figure 8.3 [in the green box].

Denstadli and Jacobsen (2011:781) indicated that, in most cases, neither the route operators nor the destination/route marketing organisation has complete control over a route as an attraction cluster or a constellation of tourist and hospitality items. This study identified tourism route marketing as one of the main critical aspects of tourism route development, as shown in Figure 8.3 [highlighted in amber colour (B)]. The marketing of tourism routes follows after the tourism route launch or re-launch. Tourism route marketing aims to make the tourism route known to the local community and other prospective tourists outside the host community. The continued marketing of the route will also emphasise and educate stakeholders on the potential benefits that might emanate due to the existence and cooperation of and within the route. The sufficient marketing of the tourism route will translate to expected benefits, as shown in Figure 8.3 [highlighted in green (E)], such as empowerment opportunities, community upliftment, economic benefits, and investment opportunities, to name a few.

(viii) Step 8: Tourism route review

Step 8, tourism route review, is the last step in tourism route planning, development, and management. The review includes scientific, 'route-specific' objectives, economic protection, and conservation values (primary values), as well as functional and additional tourist product values (tourism-specific values) (Božić & Tomić, 2016:26). The reviewed literature does not have enough information relating to the review of tourism routes years after it was launched. However, planners need to review the tourism route when they see fit. This will aid the route planners in determining whether the route is operating as planned, well managed, and yielding expected benefits. No Free State tourism routes have ever been reviewed to establish the route's productiveness and assess whether the route is beneficial (c.f. Table 5.12). In Figure 8.4, it is revealed that after the review of the

tourism route, it is equally essential to revert to stakeholders to communicate and inform them of the progress of the route.

Sustainable tourism route development is a continuous process that requires constant evaluation, which will translate to the reassessment of a decision made about developing a tourism route. The implication is that tourism route development steps are circulatory in a sense that, once the last step is reached, after a certain period, step 1 is to be followed with the other steps in sequential order again until the last step. An evaluation is necessary to measure its performance since it was initiated considering different characteristics of the tourism routes. Therefore, there is a need for constant evaluation of a tourism route to assess the tourists' experiences visiting the route and the level of satisfaction. In addition, the evaluation process will aid tourism route planners in assessing the host community's position and views about the tourism route. The community will guide tourism route planners on the progress of the route and even advise on how to improve or restructure the tourism route. Bottom-up evaluation needs multi-stakeholder methods to evaluate tourist organisations to actively engage in the sustainability evaluations of their day-to-day operations – in close partnership with their stakeholders. This reiterates that assessing sustainability in tourism cannot be considered a top-down effort solely at the destination level (Gracia-Rosell & Mäkinen, 2013:397). Božić and Tomić (2016:27) emphasise that, since there is no model for evaluating cultural routes to assess their current value and potential, many authors still recognise the potential of tourism and economic development through cultural trails emphasising their significance for both developing and developed countries. In addition, the review of existing tourism routes is essential in tourism route development. The review process is to follow after the other steps have been completed, which means that all steps will be repeated after the route is implemented, but not performing as planned and not yielding the expected results as indicated in the green box (E) in Figure 8.3.

8.6 Similar stakeholder involvement studies in tourism route development

This section details similar studies conducted by different authors six years apart from each other and with the last study conducted four years prior to the present research study. The selected studies are compared with the study under review regarding uniqueness, similarities and differences in how the studies were conducted. The comparison includes the stakeholders involved and critical considerations for tourism

route development and the empirical results for the selected study and the study under review.

8.6.1 The public sector as a key enabler in sustainable rural tourism

McLaren and Heath (2011:96) developed a framework for public sector stakeholders in tourism route development and marketing using two tourism routes in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. The framework reflects the stakeholders deemed essential to developing and marketing a tourism route. These stakeholders include the national and provincial government departments that are sacrosanct to developing and marketing tourism routes, such as the department of economic and development, transport department and agriculture, and the district and local municipalities. This framework also encompasses destination marketing stakeholders such as South African Tourism and community tourism organisations, tourism route members, and organisations. These stakeholders are consistent with the stakeholders identified in Figure 8.3 and further explained in step 1 of Figure 8.4. McLaren and Heath (2011:102) concluded that further research in the development and marketing of the routes in other provinces and countries would aid tourism planners in enhancing the livelihoods of the communities residing in rural areas. The empirical findings in Chapter 5 also suggest benefits associated with tourism routes, namely community upliftment, economic benefits, new business opportunities, and investment opportunities, to name a few, as reflected in Figure 8.3.

8.6.2 Astro-tourism in the Karoo arid region

A few comparisons can be made with another similar study by Van Wyk-Jacobs (2018:2014). The author's framework comprises six phases with additional sub-phases in phase 1, phase 3, and phase 4. In the first phase of this framework, market analysis and destination supply and demand situational analyses are made. In the second phase, emphasis is placed on the packaging of the tourism products and offerings. In the third phase, the government provides an enabling environment wherein an olive branch is extended to the community to take an active part in developing a tourism route. In phase 4, the registration of businesses, tourism forums, and the tourism route are now advanced, with all relevant stakeholders represented. Phase 5 seeks to name, brand, and market the tourism route through the assistance of local, provincial, and national tourism agencies. The last phase of this framework consists of the continuous monitoring

and evaluation of the tourism route undertaken together with Phase 5. This will assist in the packaging and realignment of the route if there are changes and new trends in the industry.

On the other hand, the framework developed in this study is somewhat different from the two earlier discussed frameworks but has similar aspects in some steps and phases. Figure 8.4 is structured differently and consists of only three phases with eight sequential steps in between phases. Phase 1 of Figure 8.4 is stakeholder analysis and two steps of stakeholder identification and initial communication and invitation. This phase and the contents of both steps are not the same as the Astro-tourism route, which makes it unique with new information. The second phase of Figure 8.4 is planning and cooperation, with the third step of the framework named stakeholder engagement, being unique compared to other studies wherein stakeholder engagement is minimal. The uniqueness of Figure 8.4 continues in steps 4 and 5, where the tourism route planners consolidate the route in collaboration with stakeholders. The third phase of Figure 8.4 is implementation, which consists of the route's launch, tourism route marketing, and tourism route review. Figure 8.4 is unique in that more insights regarding the launch and the review of the tourism route are now accessible for future researchers to be used in the event the route is no longer effective or when the tourism route transforms.

8.7 Limitations of the research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the results of this study. The researcher acknowledges these limitations. However, given the challenges faced by the tourism industry due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the results should be considered sufficiently relevant and significant.

The researcher acknowledges the limitation of an unrepresentative tourism business provider sample size. The envisaged sample size related to the number of residents interviewed in each town could also not be reached. This was mainly due to COVID-19 and the consequent restrictions imposed by the South African government. Many tourism business providers and residents were hesitant to form part of the research due to 1) their COVID-19 status and 2) social distancing and hesitation for in-person contact. Other external factors also played a role, including poor road infrastructure (frequently

highlighted in the responses), making it difficult for the researcher and the research team to travel to certain business providers.

The case study area is also over-researched, and respondents reported they are overwhelmed by too many surveys in their region that have not yielded any results. This implies that some earmarked participants displayed less interest in the survey and did not consent to the interviews. The resistance of some of the participants of both these surveys will have a long-standing negative impact on much other research aimed in this area if researchers do not provide feedback after completing their surveys. This emphasises the importance of the current study and the critical role that stakeholder involvement plays. After research projects of this nature, stakeholders must be provided with feedback to ensure their cooperation. Therefore, the proposed framework intends to fill this crucial communication gap.

8.8 Recommendations for future research

The following recommendations are made concerning future research:

- The empirical results in Table 5.13 yielded mixed opinions regarding the operation of the tourism routes in terms of their functionality and benefits. It is proven in the literature and empirical results that the tourism routes do not continue operating as they were envisaged to perform and do not always yield the expected benefits. Therefore, comparing the remaining four tourism routes in the Free State Province focuses on reviewing, re-launch, and evaluating the tourism route is a future aspect that research needs to address. Therefore, a survey on the operation of the tourism routes must be conducted in other Free State tourism routes to prepare for the re-launch of the route if the route is not operating as planned. This will aid the FSGLTA in keeping track of the state of the tourism route, assessing its profitability through review, and monitoring its positive or negative impacts.
- In the past, research has been conducted from a different viewpoint, focusing more on government stakeholders (enablers) to develop the tourism route framework without ignoring tourists as stakeholders. It is therefore recommended that future research should also examine the demand side/tourists, as this stakeholder is the one that is attracted to the route, and if the route is well managed, it can create additional benefits that can ensure the sustainability of these routes. It is essential

to understand this group of stakeholders as it will affect the marketing and management of the tourism route and derail the expected benefits emanating from the route. Furthermore, the tourism routes rely on many aspects to ensure their sustainability during and after such routes are developed. As consumers of tourism routes, tourists are often lured to experience the tourism routes through meaningful and exciting tourist attractions. Therefore, it is recommended that research on assessing tourists' experiences regarding the tourist attractions operating within the tourism routes should be done in the future. This assessment will bring tourism route planners closer to what tourist attractions are appealing to tourists and which ones to discard for the betterment of the route.

- The tourism routes internationally are purported to be employment creators and poverty alleviators. From the results, it is clear that the communities in which the tourism routes traverse anticipate many economic benefits such as infrastructure development, support of local business, and employment emanating from the routes. The high occupancy rate influences this expectation at the accommodation establishments, overbooked restaurants, and additional feet at the local tourist attractions. Therefore, it is recommended to assess the employment opportunities existing within tourism routes and how to maximise them. The assessment of the employment opportunities through a social impact study should be done through a survey among residents who are eligible for employment and those already employed in the tourism and non-tourism businesses in communities where the route(s) traverse(s). This will aid tourism route planners in making informed decisions on route development in towns or previously disadvantaged regions with high unemployment rates.
- The tourism industry does not operate independently in terms of sustainability. An inclusive and dedicated survey on the profitability of non-tourism businesses operating within the communities where the tourism route traverses should be conducted, focusing on non-tourism businesses. The tourism industry works interdependently with other industries and sectors such as agriculture, mining, arts and culture, and retail, categorised as non-tourism business providers. This non-tourism infrastructure brings life into the tourism industry as some goods and services are sourced from such businesses. Therefore, the profitability of these non-tourism businesses needs to be assessed to indicate how much impact the tourism routes have on non-tourism businesses operating within the route.

- The existence of a tourist attraction in a particular locality and region comes with various positive and negative impacts. Some negative impacts of tourism and tourism activities are overcrowding and overcapacity at tourist attractions, littering, noise nuisance, and disregard or ignorance of the local community's culture and customs. Therefore, a concurrent social impact study directed at the management of tourist attractions and residents should be done to determine how much of an impact the overcrowding, overcapacity, littering, noise nuisance, and disregard of the local community's culture have on the tourist attractions and within their communities. In addition, principles of responsible tourism must also apply within the context of tourism routes for the community to welcome and accept tourists in their communities and respect the locals to enjoy their travelling and touristic experiences without hostility.
- The performance of tourism routes is not always as envisaged by tourism route planners. The tourism routes either perform well or poorly, and this assessment can be done by tourism route planners and all those involved in its operation. Therefore, a qualitative study approach should assess the experiences, expertise, and qualifications of persons responsible for marketing and managing tourism routes. This will aid tourism route planners in employing or deploying persons with relevant experience and qualifications in the correct positions of responsibility.
- Tourism and tourism route developments depend on good quality infrastructures, such as road, rail, telecommunications, water, waste management, and power and energy. These infrastructural developments are sacrosanct to the sustainability of tourism routes if well managed. Similarly, the quality of tourist attractions needs to be preserved and conserved for their sustainability, enjoyment and appreciation by tourists. If the tourist attractions are not well managed, that will negatively impact the sustainability of such attractions, leading to low tourist turnout and unpleasant word-of-mouth feedback. As evident from the empirical results and previous literature, poor general infrastructure is one of the most fundamental contributors to low turnouts of tourists in some towns and communities. Therefore, future researchers should conduct government interdepartmental and multidiscipline research to assess the state and quality of all essential infrastructure needed in towns and communities where a tourism route is to be developed.

- The tourism routes are used as tools for economic development and a model for diversifying rural routes in many parts of the world. If the tourism route is appropriately registered, tourism agencies, associations, and planners (government) will likely promote such routes in their publications and other related mediums, which translates to maximum benefits. The legislation, registration, and signage for registered routes are likely to positively impact tourism routes' promotion and marketing. Therefore, in future, researchers should investigate the authenticity of the existing tourism routes since some of the routes only exist by names and not in reality. This investigation should be done with tourism planners and DMOs that have tourism routes as some of their products by verifying their registration with the relevant bodies to promote such routes through national and provincial signage and other related publications for added benefits.

8.9 Conclusion

This study aimed to develop a stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development through stakeholder involvement in South Africa with the Eagle tourism route in the Free State as a case study. This study was undertaken to assist the FSGLTA with an in-depth understanding and knowledge of tourism routes' development, management, marketing, and operation. The aim of this study was achieved through the research process of comprehensive literature analyses and collaborative empirical data from various stakeholders such as tourism route planners, community/residents, and tourism business providers.

The reviewed literature provided background and knowledge on how the tourism routes function. Therefore, from the literature review, it was revealed that there are gaps in the understanding of tourism route development, a lack of community consideration during the development of a tourism product, a lack of collaboration between industry, government, and community, lack of stakeholder engagements, and continuous collaboration. To fill the gaps, interviews with the tourism route planners (government) and stakeholders were conducted to get their perspectives. These interviews were followed by additional interviews with the community and a survey (questionnaire) distributed to the tourism business providers for their perspectives on tourism routes.

The interviews with tourism route planners and the community of the Dihlabeng Local Municipality and the survey of tourism business providers were followed by thorough data analysis. The researcher critically reviewed the results from both research phases to develop a framework for the sustainable development of tourism routes in South Africa. When this framework is implemented correctly, its application can benefit economic investment, tourism and new business opportunities, economic benefits, community involvement, improved infrastructure, and marketing. Enhancing the afore-mentioned benefits by managing potential barriers is invaluable for provinces such as the Free State (the case study), other provinces in South Africa with existing tourism routes, DMOs and tourism authorities wanting to introduce new tourism routes and other developing countries. Therefore, this framework adds value to the current tourism route development literature and future research. Finally, the stakeholder involvement framework applies to the general industry, academic institutions, local tourism route developers, Free State Gambling, Liquor, Tourism Authority (FSGLTA), other provincial and national tourism authorities, scholars and researchers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, R., Adeleke, F., Anderson, D., Bawa, A., Branson, N., Christoffels, A., Vries, J.D., Etheredge, H., Flack-Davison, E., Gaffley, M. & Marks, M. 2021. POPIA code of conduct for research. *South African Journal of Science*, 117(5-6):1-12.

Adams, W.C. 2015. Conducting semi-structured interviews. In: Newcomer, K.E., Hatry, H.P. & Wholey, J.S., eds. *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley. pp. 493-505. Available from Wiley Online Library: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch18> Date of access: 14 Jul. 2022.

Adhabi, E. & Anozie, C.B. 2017. Literature review for the type of interview in qualitative research. *International Journal of Education*, 9(3):86-97.

Adinolfi, M.C., Harilal, V. & Giddy, J.K. 2021. Travel stokvels, leisure on lay by, and pay at your pace options: The post COVID-19 domestic tourism landscape in South Africa. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 10(1):302-317.

Ager, A. & Strang, A. 2008. Understanding integration: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(2):166-191.

Agyeiwaah, E., McKercher, B. & Suntikul, W. 2017. Identifying core indicators of sustainable tourism: A path forward? *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 24:26-33.

Akama, J.S. 2002. The role of government in the development of tourism in Kenya. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4(1):1-14.

Akbar, I., Yang, Z., Mazbayev, O., Seken, A. & Udahogora, M. 2020. Local residents participation in tourism at a world heritage site and limitations: AksuJabagly state nature reserve, Western Tian-Shan, Kazakhstan. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 28(1):35-51.

Akinyode, B.F. & Khan, T.H. 2018. Step by step approach for qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Built Environment and Sustainability*, 5(3):163-174.

Albalade, D. & Bel, G. 2010. Tourism and urban public transport: Holding demand pressure under supply constraints. *Tourism Management*, 31(3):425-433.

- Albatineh, A.N., Al-Taiar, A., Al-Sabah, R. & Zogheib, B. 2021. Psychometric properties of the Arabic version of the hospital anxiety and depression scale in hemodialysis patients. *Psychology, Health and Medicine*, 26(1):1-16.
- Alexis-Thomas, C. 2020. An examination of issues related to tourism and health and well-being as a sustainable development goal by tourism providers in Tobago. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 2(3):293-303.
- Almeida, F. 2018. Strategies to perform a mixed methods study. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 5(1):137-151.
- Amankwaa, L. 2016. Creating protocols for trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 23(3):121-127.
- Amerta, I.M.S., Sara, I.M. & Bagiada, K. 2018. Sustainable tourism development. *International Research Journal of Management, IT and Social Sciences*, 5(2):248-254.
- Andereck, K.L. 2009. Tourists' perceptions of environmentally responsible innovations at tourism businesses. *Journal of sustainable tourism*, 17(4):489-499.
- Andriotis, K. 2005. Seasonality in Crete: Problem or a way of life?. *Tourism Economics*, 11(2):207-224.
- Antonson, H. & Jacobsen, J.K.S. 2014. Tourism development strategy or just brown signage? Comparing road administration policies and designation procedures for official tourism routes in two Scandinavian countries. *Land Use Policy*, 36:342-350.
- Aral, S., Dellarocas, C. & Godes, D. 2013. Introduction to the special issue-social media and business transformation: a framework for research. *Information Systems Research*, 24(1):3-13.
- Arnstein, S.R. 1969. A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4):216-224.
- Aronsson, L. 1994. Sustainable Tourism Systems: the Example of Sustainable Tourism in Sweden. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 2(1/2):77-92.

- Ashley, C. & Hayson, G. 2008. The development impacts of tourism supply chains: Increasing impact on poverty and decreasing our ignorance. In: Rylance, A. & Spenceley, A., eds. *Responsible tourism. Critical issues for conservation and development*. London: Earthscan. pp. 129-156.
- Ashley, C. & Roe, D. 1998. *Enhancing community involvement in wildlife tourism: Issues and challenges*. Nottingham, UK: Russel Press.
- Ashley, C. 2006. *How Can Governments Boost the Local Economic Impacts of Tourism? Options and Tools*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Asmelash, A.G. & Kumar, S. 2019. Assessing progress of tourism sustainability: Developing and validating sustainability indicators. *Tourism Management*, 71:67-83.
- Astivia, O.L.O. & Zumbo, B.D. 2017. Population models and simulation methods: The case of the Spearman rank correlation. *British Journal of Mathematical and Statistical Psychology*, 70(3):347-367.
- Azmi, A., Abdullah, A., Nurhidayati, S.E. & Shaw, G. 2020. Shopping and tourism: A state of the art review. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology*, 43(2):639-655.
- Azungah, T. 2018. Qualitative research: Deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 18(4):383-400.
- Bănică, A. & Camară, G. 2011. Accessibility and tourist function development of the Romanian small towns. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 7(1):22-133.
- Baum, T. 2018. Sustainable human resource management as a driver in tourism policy and planning: a serious sin of omission? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(6):873-889.
- Bearman, M. 2019. Eliciting rich data: A practical approach to writing semi-structured interview schedules. *Focus on Health Professional Education: A Multi-disciplinary Journal*, 20(3):1-11.
- Beavers, A.S., Lounsbury, J.W., Richards, J.K., Huck, S.W., Skolits, G.J. & Esquivel, S.L. 2013. Practical considerations for using exploratory factor analysis in educational research. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 18:1-13.

- Bendito, V.V.F. & Ramírez, A.M. 2011. New campaigns of tourism promotion and marketing. the importance of specialisation in the image of European brochures. *Economics and Management*, 16:1225-1230.
- Berglin, C.G. 1982. Birth order as a quantitative expression of date of birth. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 36(4):298.
- Besculides, A., Lee, M.E. & McCormick, P.J. 2002. Residents' perceptions of the cultural benefits of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(2):303-319.
- Bialostocka, O. 2014. Using the past to build the future: A critical review of the Liberation Heritage Route (LHR) Project of South Africa. *Africa Insight*, 44(2):94-107.
- Bianchi, R. 2018. The political economy of tourism development: A critical review. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 70:88-102.
- Biggs, D. & Purnell, C. 2003. The African dream: a pan-African e-community project. In: Huysman, M. Wenger, E. & Wulf, V., eds. *Communities and Technologies*. Dordrecht: Springer. pp. 227-240.
- Binkhorst, E. & Den Dekker, T. 2009. Agenda for co-creation tourism experience research. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 18(2-3):311-327.
- Boluk, K. 2011. In consideration of a new approach to tourism: A critical review of fair trade tourism. *The Journal of Tourism and Peace Research*, 2(1):27-37.
- Booyens, I. & Rogerson, C.M. 2016. Responsible tourism in the Western Cape, South Africa: An innovation perspective. *Tourism*, 64(4):385-396.
- Boyd, S.W. 2017. Heritage trails and tourism. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12(5):417-422.
- Bramwell, B., Higham, J., Lane, B. & Miller, G. 2017. Twenty-five years of sustainable tourism and the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*: looking back and moving forward. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(1):1-9.

- Brás, J.M., Costa, C. & Buhalis, D. 2013. Network analysis and wine routes: the case of the Bairrada Wine Route. In: Scott, N. & Laws, E., eds. *Advances in service network analysis*. London: Taylor and Francis. pp. 47-68.
- Bregoli, I., Hingley, M., Del Chiappa, G. & Sodano, V. 2016. Challenges in Italian wine routes: Managing stakeholder networks. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 19(2):202-224.
- Brenner, N. & Schmid, C. 2015. Towards a new epistemology of the urban? *City*, 19(2-3):151-182.
- Brentjens, J. & Lenders, W. 2018. The Liberation Route Europe: Challenges of exhibiting multinational perspectives. In: Mehring, F., Bak, J. & Roza, M., eds. *Politics and Cultures of Liberation-Brill*. pp. 360-372.
- Briedenhann, J. & Wickens, E. 2004. Tourism routes as a tool for the economic development of rural areas—vibrant hope or impossible dream?. *Tourism Management*, 25(1):71-79.
- Briedenhann, J. 2000. *An integrated tourism policy for South Africa: Problems and challenges*. High Wycombe: Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College. (Thesis – PhD).
- Brouder, P. & Fullerton, C. 2015. Exploring heterogeneous tourism development paths: Cascade effect or co-evolution in Niagara. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 15(1\2):152-166.
- Brower Stahl, A. 2010. 'Route work 'through alternative archives: reflections on cross-disciplinary practice. *South African Historical Journal*, 62(2):252-267.
- Brown, A. & Danaher, P.A. 2019. CHE principles: Facilitating authentic and dialogical semi-structured interviews in educational research. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 42(1):76-90.
- Brown, T. 2003. Towards an understanding of local protest: Hospital closure and community resistance. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 4(4):489-506.

- Bruwer, J. 2003. South African wine routes: Some perspectives on the wine tourism industry's structural dimensions and wine tourism product. *Tourism Management*, 24(4):423-435.
- Buckley, R. 2012. Sustainable tourism: research and reality. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(2):528-546.
- Bujang, M.A., Omar, E.D. & Baharum, N.A. 2018. A review on sample size determination for Cronbach's alpha test: A simple guide for researchers. *The Malaysian Journal of Medical Sciences*, 25(6):85-99.
- Burbano, D.V. & Meredith, T.C. 2021. Effects of tourism growth in a UNESCO World Heritage Site: Resource-based livelihood diversification in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(8):1270-1289.
- Burgess, S., Gea-Valor, M.L., Moreno, A.I. & Rey-Rocha, J. 2014. Affordances and constraints on research publication: A comparative study of the language choices of Spanish historians and psychologists. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 14:72-83.
- Butler, G. & Ivanovic, M. 2016. Cultural heritage tourism development in post-apartheid South Africa: Critical issues and challenges. In: Manwa, H., Moswete, N. & Saarinen, J., eds. *Cultural tourism in Southern Africa*. Buffalo, NY: Channel view publications. pp. 58-75.
- Butler, R. & Hall, C.M. 1998. Image and reimagining of rural areas. In: Richard, B.C., Hall, C.M. & Jenkins, J., eds. *Tourism and Recreation in Rural Areas*. New York: Wiley. pp. 115-122.
- Byrd, E.T. 2007. Stakeholders in sustainable tourism development and their roles: applying stakeholder theory to sustainable tourism development. *Tourism review*, 62(2):6-13.
- Calcagni, F., Maia, A.T.A., Connolly, J.J.T. & Langemeyer, J. 2019. Digital co-construction of relational values: Understanding the role of social media for sustainability. *Sustainability Science*, 14(5):1309-1321.

- Cambourne, B., Macionis, N., Hall, C.M. & Sharples, L. 2009. The future of wine tourism. In: Hall, M.C., Sharples, L., C. Cambourne, B. & Macionis, N., eds. *Wine Tourism Around the World*. Routledge. pp. 297-320.
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D. & Walker, K. 2020. Purposive sampling: Complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8):652-661.
- Carson, D. & Cartan, G. 2010. Touring routes - types, successes and failures: an international review. In: Prideaux, B. & Carson, D., eds. *Drive tourism: trends and emerging markets*. New York: Routledge. pp. 296-310.
- Cartan, G. & Carson, D. 2009. Local engagement in economic development and industrial collaboration around Australia's Gunbarrel highway. *Tourism Geographies*, 11(2):169-186.
- Casanueva, C., Gallego, Á. & García-Sánchez, M.R. 2016. Social network analysis in tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 19(12):1190-1209.
- Castleberry, A. & Nolen, A. 2018. Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: is it as easy as it sounds? *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning*, 10(6):807-815.
- Castro, S.R., Silva, S.C. & Duarte, P. 2017. Does Digital Marketing really boost city tourism? Evidences from Porto's Experience. *European Journal of Applied Business and Management*, 3(3):84-100.
- Caton, K. & Santos, C.A. 2007. Heritage tourism on Route 66: Deconstructing nostalgia. *Journal of Travel Research*, 45(4):371-386.
- Cenamor, I., de la Rosa, T., Núñez, S. & Borrajo, D. 2017. Planning for tourism routes using social networks. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 69:1-9.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2016.10.030>
- Chamidah, N., Guntoro, B. & Sulastri, E. 2020. Marketing communication and synergy of Pentahelix strategy on satisfaction and sustainable tourism. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics, and Business*, 7(3):177-190.

Cheer, J.M. & Lew, A.A. 2017. Sustainable tourism development: Towards resilience in tourism. *Interaction*, 45(1):10-15.

Chen, H., Kacperczyk, M. & Ortiz-Molina, H. 2012. Do nonfinancial stakeholders affect the pricing of risky debt? Evidence from unionized workers. *Review of Finance*, 16(2):347-383.

Chen, J.S. & Chen, Y.L. 2016. Tourism stakeholders' perceptions of service gaps in Arctic destinations: Lessons from Norway's Finnmark region. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, 16:1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jort.2016.04.006>

Chen, J.S. 2015. Tourism stakeholders' attitudes toward sustainable development: A case in the Arctic. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 22:225-230.

Cheng, S., Hu, J., Fox, D. & Zhang, Y. 2012. Tea tourism development in Xinyang, China: Stakeholders' view. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 2:28-34.

Chili, N.S. & Ngxongo, N.A. 2017. Challenges to active community involvement in tourism development at Didima Resort—a case study of Umhlwazini community in Bergville. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 6(2):1-15.

Chili, N.S. & Xulu, N. 2015. The role of local government to facilitate and spearhead sustainable tourism development. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 13(4):27-31.

Chinsomboon, M. 2019. Community participation in developing tourism attractions in Watthana Nakhon, Sa Kaeo, Thailand. *PSAKU International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 8:49-56.

Chkalova, O., Efremova, M., Lezhnin, V., Polukhina, A. & Sheresheva, M. 2019. Innovative mechanism for local tourism system management: a case study. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 6(4):2052-2067.

Choi, H.C. & Murray, I. 2010. Resident attitudes toward sustainable community tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18(4):575-594.

- Cholik, M.A. 2017. The development of tourism industry in Indonesia: Current problems and challenges. *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Management Sciences*, 5(1):49-59.
- Clark, L.A. & Watson, D. 2016. Constructing validity: Basic issues in objective scale development. *American Psychological Association*, 7(3):209-319.
- Clarke, J. 1999. Marketing structures for farm tourism: Beyond the individual provider of rural tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 7(1):26-47.
- Clemente-Ricolfe, J.S., Escribá-Pérez, C., Rodriguez-Barrio, J.E. & Buitrago-Vera, J.M. 2012. The potential wine tourist market: the case of Valencia (Spain). *Journal of Wine Research*, 23(2):85-202.
- Clifford, J. 1997. *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cloutier, L.M., Renard, L., Arcand, S. & Laviolette, E.M. 2016. Rejuvenating the Cider Route in Quebec: An action design research approach to stakeholder collaboration and innovation. *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 6(11):6-17.
- Cohen, J.W. 1988. *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. 2nd ed. Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Cole, S. & Morgan, N. 2010. Introduction: Tourism and inequalities. In: Cole, S. & Morgan, N., eds. *Tourism and Inequality: Problems and Prospects*. pp. 15-23.
- Cole, S. 2014. Tourism and water: from stakeholders to rights holders, and what tourism businesses need to do. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22(1):89-106.
- Connelly, L.M. 2016. Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Medsurg Nursing*, 25(6):435.
- Corby, D., Taggart, L. & Cousins, W. 2015. People with intellectual disability and human science research: a systematic review of phenomenological studies using interviews for data collection. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 47:451-465.
- Correia, L., Passos, M.J. & Charters, S. 2004. Wine routes in Portugal: A case study of the Bairrada Wine Route. *Journal of Wine Research*, 15(1):15-25.

Correia, R. & Brito, C. 2016. Wine tourism and regional development. In: Peris-Ortiz, M., de la Cruz Del Río Rama, M. & Rueda-Armengot, C., eds. *Wine and tourism*. Springer, Cham. pp. 27-39.

Creswell, J.W. & Creswell, J.D. 2017. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. 5th ed. California: SAGE.

Creswell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L. 2011. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Creswell, J.W. 1998. *Qualitative research and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. London: Thousand Oaks.

Creswell, J.W. 2014. *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. California, CA: SAGE.

Crick, M. 1989. Representations of international tourism in the social sciences: Sun, sex, sights, savings, and servility. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 18:307-344.

Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A. & Sheikh, A. 2011. The case study approach. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 11(1):1-9.

Cura, F., Singh, U.S. & Talaat, K. 2017. Measuring the efficiency of tourism sector and the effect of tourism enablers on different types of tourism (Kurdistan). *Turizam*, 21(1):1-18.

Dabphet, S. 2012. *The key stakeholders in the implementation of sustainable tourism development in two rural towns of Thailand*. Paper delivered at the International Conference on Tourism, Transport and Logistics Challenges and Opportunities of Increasing Global Connectivity, Paris. http://www.ijbts-journal.com/images/main_1366796758/0029-Siripen.pdf Date of access: 12 Nov. 2020.

Dadras, O., Alinaghi, S.A.S., Karimi, A., MohsseniPour, M., Barzegary, A., Vahedi, F., Pashaei, Z., Mirzapour, P., Fakhfouri, A., Zargari, G. & Saeidi, S. 2021. Effects of COVID-19 prevention procedures on other common infections: A systematic review. *European Journal of Medical Research*, 26(1):1-13.

Dalmoro, M. 2013. The formation of country wineries networks for internationalisation: An analysis of two new world wines regions. *Journal of Wine Research*, 24(2):96-111.

Day, J. 2016. *Sustainable tourism model. An integrated systems approach to managing tourism growth: a destination marketing organization perspective*. West Lafayette, In: Purdue Tourism and Hospitality Research Center. pp. 1-21.

<https://www.purdue.edu/colombia/partnerships/orinoquia/docs/3241%20An%20Integrated%20Systems%20Approach%20to%20Managing%20Tourism%20Growth.pdf> Date of access: 1 Jun. 2020.

De Ascaniisa, S., Garbani-Nerinia, E., Sedanob, C.I. & Cantonia, L. 2020. Online communication strategies of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. HTHIC, 81. [file:///C:/Users/13018493/Dropbox/PC/Downloads/2020%20HTHIC%20Conference%20Preceedings%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/13018493/Dropbox/PC/Downloads/2020%20HTHIC%20Conference%20Preceedings%20(1).pdf) Date of access: 23 Apr. 2022.

De Cantis, S., Ferrante, M. & Vaccina, F. 2011. Seasonal pattern and amplitude—a logical framework to analyse seasonality in tourism: an application to bed occupancy in Sicilian hotels. *Tourism Economics*, 17(3):655-675.

De las Heras-Pedrosa, C., Millan-Celis, E., Iglesias-Sánchez, P.P. & Jambrino-Maldonado, C. 2020. Importance of social media in the image formation of tourist destinations from the stakeholders' perspective. *Sustainability*, 12(10):1-27.

De Rada, V.D. & Martín, V.M. 2014. Random route and quota sampling: Do they offer any advantage over probably sampling methods? *Open Journal of Statistics*, 4(5):391-401.

De Vet, H.C., Mokkink, L.B., Mosmuller, D.G. & Terwee, C.B. 2017. Spearman-Brown prophecy formula and Cronbach's alpha: different faces of reliability and opportunities for new applications. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 85:45-49.

De Vos, A.S., Delport, C.S.L., Fouché, C.B. & Strydom, H. 2011. *Research at grass roots: A primer for the social science and human professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Del Chiappa, G., Bregoli, I. & Kim, A.K. 2019. Inter-sectorial collaboration in networks: A boundary object approach to wine routes. *Tourism Planning and Development*, 16(6):591-611.

- Del Chiappa, G., Lorenzo-Romero, C. & Gallarza, M. 2018. Host community perceptions of cruise tourism in a homeport: A cluster analysis. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 7:170-181.
- deMarrais, K. & Lapan, S.D. eds. 2004. *Foundations for research: methods of inquiry in education and social sciences*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Dembovska, I. & Zvaigzne, A. 2021. Sustainability and its challenges in destinations that highly depend on tourism: a thematic literature review. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 13(6):697-708.
- Denstadli, J.M. & Jacobsen, J.K.S. 2011. The long and winding roads: Perceived quality of scenic tourism routes. *Tourism Management*, 32(4):780-789.
- Denstadli, J.M. & Jacobsen, J.K.S. 2011. The long and winding roads: Perceived quality of scenic tourism routes. *Tourism management*, 32(4):780-789.
- Dodds, R. & Ko, S. 2012. Assessing stakeholders' views of tourism policy in Prince Edward County. *Environmental Management and Sustainable Development*, 1(1):1-52.
- Donaire, J.A. & Galí, N. 2008. Modeling tourist itineraries in heritage cities. Routes around the Old District of Girona. *Comité Editorial Director: Agustín Santana Talavera*, 6(3):435-449.
- Donaldson, R. 2018. *Small town tourism in South Africa*. Cham: Springer International.
- Donaldson, R., Du Plessis, D., Van Niekerk, A. & Spocter, M. 2012. Towards generic interventions to stimulate growth potential in small towns of the Western Cape Province, South Africa. *South African Geographical Journal*, 94(2):120-136.
- Donaldson, T. & Preston, L.E. 1995. The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence, and implications. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(1):65-91.
- Donohoe, H.M. 2012. Sustainable heritage tourism marketing and Canada's Rideau Canal world heritage site. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(1):121-142.
- Dragouni, M. & Fouseki, K. 2018. Drivers of community participation in heritage tourism planning: an empirical investigation. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 13(3):237-256.

- Duarte Alonso, A. & Nyanjom, J. 2016. Volunteering, paying it forward, and rural community: a study of Bridgetown, Western Australia. *Community Development*, 47(4):481-495.
- Duarte Alonso, A. & Nyanjom, J. 2017. Local stakeholders, role and tourism development. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 20(5):480-496.
- Duarte Alonso, A. 2016. Stakeholders, collaboration, food, and wine: The case of Jumilla's Gastronomic Days. *Journal of Convention and Event Tourism*, 17(3):173-191.
- Duarte Alonso, A.D. & Northcote, J. 2010. The development of olive tourism in Western Australia: A case study of an emerging tourism industry. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12:696-708.
- Dudensing, R.M., Hughes, D.W. & Shields, M. 2011. Perceptions of tourism promotion and business challenges: A survey-based comparison of tourism businesses and promotion organizations. *Tourism Management*, 32(6):1453-1462.
- Duk, N.M., Sumatokhina, I.M. & Dmytrenko, I.S. 2020. Heritage objects as a resource for the development of tourism within the states and territories of Australia. *Journal of Geology, Geography and Geoecology*, 29(1):49-56.
- Dunets, A.N., Vakhrushev, I.B., Sukhova, M.G., Sokolov, M.S., Utkina, K.M. & Shichiyakh, R.A. 2019. Selection of strategic priorities for sustainable development of tourism in a mountain region: concentration of tourist infrastructure or nature-oriented tourism. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 7(2):1217-1229.
- ECI Africa. 2006. Community/routes tourism sector study: growth strategy. Unpublished Report prepared for FRIDGE Trade and Industry Chamber, Johannesburg.
- Elliott, R. & Boshoff, C. 2008. The influence of business orientations in small tourism businesses on the success of integrated marketing communication. *Management Dynamics: Journal of the Southern African Institute for Management Scientists*, 17(4):32-46.

Ellis, S.M. & Steyn, H.S. 2003. Practical significance (effect sizes) versus or in combination with statistical significance (p-values): research note. *Management Dynamics*, 12(4):51-53.

Énalan, D. & Soteriades, M. 2012. Tourism destination marketing: Approaches improving effectiveness and efficiency. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 3(2):107-120.

Engelbrecht, E. 2019. *The South African Dictio–Pedia: A tourism Dictionary/Encyclopaedia*. Cape Town: PJ Bookbinders.

Erkuş-Öztürk, H. & Eraydin, A. 2011. Factors of global connectivity in Antalya's tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4):1300-1321.

Ernawati, N.M., Sanders, D. & Dowling, R. 2017. Host–guest orientations of community-based tourism products: A case study in Bali, Indonesia. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 19(3):367-382.

Eslami, S., Khalifah, Z., Mardani, A., Streimikiene, D. & Han, H. 2019. Community attachment, tourism impacts, quality of life and residents' support for sustainable tourism development. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 36(9):1061-1079.

Etikan, I. & Bala, K. 2017. Combination of probability random sampling method with non-probability random sampling method. *Biometrics and Biostatistics International Journal*, 5(6):1-5.

Etikan, I., Musa, S.A. & Alkassim, R.S. 2016. Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1):1-4.

Evans, C. & Lewis, J. 2018. *Analysing semi-structured interviews using thematic analysis: exploring voluntary civic participation among adults*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Festa, G., Shams, S.R., Metallo, G. & Cuomo, M.T. 2020. Opportunities and challenges in the contribution of wine routes to wine tourism in Italy: A stakeholders' perspective of development. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 33:1-9.

- Finch, W.H. 2020. Using fit statistic differences to determine the optimal number of factors to retain in an exploratory factor analysis. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 80(2):217-241.
- Fisher Jr, W.P. & Stenner, A.J. 2011. Integrating qualitative and quantitative research approaches via the phenomenological method. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, 5(1):89-103.
- Fleming, J. & Zegwaard, K.E. 2018. Methodologies, methods and ethical considerations for conducting research in work-integrated learning. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 19(3):205-213.
- Flyvbjerg, B. 2006. Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2):219-245.
- Font, X. & McCabe, S. 2017. Sustainability and marketing in tourism: Its contexts, paradoxes, approaches, challenges and potential. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(7):869-883.
- Francis, J.J., Johnston, M., Robertson, C., Glidewell, L., Entwistle, V., Eccles, M.P. & Grimshaw, J.M. 2010. What is an adequate sample size? Operationalising data saturation for theory-based interview studies. *Psychology and Health*, 25(10):1229-1245.
- Freeman, R.E. & Reed, D.L. 1983. Stockholders and stakeholders: A new perspective on corporate governance. *California Management Review*, 25(3):88-106.
- Freeman, R.E. 1984. *Strategic management: a stakeholder approach*. Boston: Pitman.
- Frenzel, F. & Blakeman, S. 2015. Making slums into attractions: The role of tour guiding in the slum tourism development in Kibera and Dharavi. *Tourism Review International*, 19(1-2):87-100.
- Frochot, I. 2009. Wine tourism in France: a paradox?. In: Hall, M.C., Sharples, L., C. Cambourne, B. & Macionis, N., eds. *Wine tourism around the world*. Routledge. pp.67-80.

- Fyall, A., Templeton, A.J., Fjilestul, J. & Sonmez, S. 2016. The emergence of green drive tourism: a comparative study of existing drive tourism routes [Academic paper]. https://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra/2016/Academic_Papers_Oral/6/ Date of access: 14 Jul. 2022.
- Garanti, Z. 2022. Digital Marketing. In: Buhalis, D., ed. *Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing*. Cheltenham, England Edward Elgar Publishing. pp. 1-3.
- George, C. 2007. Consolidating authoritarian rule: calibrated coercion in Singapore. *The Pacific Review*, 20(2):127-145.
- George, D. & Mallery, P. 2019. *IBM SPSS statistics 26 step by step: a simple guide and reference*. 6th ed. New York: Routledge.
- Getz, D. & Timur, S. 2012. Stakeholder involvement in sustainable tourism: balancing the voices. In: Theobald, W.F. ed. *Global tourism*. 3rd ed. London: Elsevier. pp. 230-247.
- Ghaderi, Z., Abooli, G. & Henderson, J. 2018. Community capacity building for tourism in a heritage village: the case of Hawraman Takht in Iran. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(4):537-550.
- Ghosh, S. & Mitra, S.K. 2021. Tourism and inequality: a relook on the Kuznets curve. *Tourism Management*, 83, e104255. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104255>
- Giampiccoli, A. & Saayman, M. 2017. Community-based tourism, responsible tourism, and infrastructure development and poverty. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 6(2):1-28.
- Giampiccoli, A. & Saayman, M. 2018. South African community-based tourism operational guidelines: Analysis and critical review. *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 10(6):759-770.
- Gilbert, D. 1989. Rural tourism and marketing: Synthesis and new ways of working. *Tourism Management*, 10(1):39-50.
- Glen, N. & Mearns, K. 2018. The role of tourism associations in supporting sustainable tourism industries: as study of N3 Gateway Tourism Association. In: Pearce, J., ed.

Conference proceedings of BEST EN Think Tank XVIII: Innovation and Progress in Sustainable Tourism. Townsville, Australia: James Cook University. pp. 109-139.

Gomez-Oliva, A., Alvarado-Urbe, J., Parra-Meroño, M.C. & Jara, A.J. 2019. Transforming communication channels to the co-creation and diffusion of intangible heritage in smart tourism destination: Creation and testing in ceutí (Spain). *Sustainability*, 11(14):3848.

Gonzalez, V.M., Coromina, L. & Gali, N. 2018. Overtourism: residents' perceptions of tourism impact as an indicator of resident social carrying capacity-case study of a Spanish heritage town. *Tourism Review*, 73(3): 277-296.

Goodwin, J. 2006. A theory of categorical terrorism. *Social Forces*, 84(4):2027-2046.

Goodwin, H. & Santilli, R. 2009. *Community-based tourism: failing to deliver?* Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, id21 Insights, No. 62.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265278848> Date of access: 1 Jul. 2022.

Gorny, A. & Napierała, J. 2016. Comparing the effectiveness of respondent-driven sampling and quota sampling in migration research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 19(6):645-661.

Grady, C. 2015. Enduring and emerging challenges of informed consent. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 372(9):855-862.

Gretzel, U. 2019. The role of social media in creating and addressing over tourism. In: Dodds, R. & Buttler, R., eds. *Over tourism: Issues, realities and solutions*. Berlin: De Gruyter. pp. 62-75.

Gunawan, F.X.C. 2020. Community based sustainable tourism development in the district of East Sumba. *Journal Economics and Business Atmajaya Indonesia*, 4(1):1-12.

Gupta, S.K., Antony, J., Lacher, F. & Douglas, J. 2020. Lean Six Sigma for reducing student dropouts in higher education—an exploratory study. *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence*, 31(1-2):78-193.

Habibi, F., Rahmati, M. & Karimi, A. 2018. Contribution of tourism to economic growth in Iran's Provinces: GDM approach. *Future Business Journal*, 4(2):261-271.

- Hall, C.M. 2011. Policy learning and policy failure in sustainable tourism governance: From first-and second-order to third-order change? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19(4-5):649-671.
- Hall, C.M. 2019. Constructing sustainable tourism development: The 2030 agenda and the managerial ecology of sustainable tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 27(7):1044-1060.
- Hall, D. & Richards, G. 2000. The community: a sustainable concept in tourism development? In: Richards, G. & Hall, D., eds. *Tourism and Sustainable Community Development*. London: Routledge. pp. 1-13.
- Hanrahan, J., Maguire, K. & Boyd, S. 2017. Community engagement in drive tourism in Ireland: Case study of the Wild Atlantic Way. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12(5):509-525.
- Hardy, A. 2003. An investigation into the key factors necessary for the development of iconic touring routes. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 9(4):314-330.
- Hardy, A. & Pearson, L.J. 2018. Examining stakeholder group specificity: An innovative sustainable tourism approach. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 8:247-258.
- Hardy, A. 2005. Using grounded theory to explore stakeholder perceptions of tourism. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 3(2):108-133.
- Harrill, R. & Potts, T.D. 2003. Tourism planning in historic districts: Attitudes toward tourism development in Charleston. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 69(3):233-244.
- Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R. & Mills, J. 2017. Case study research: Foundations and methodological orientations. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 18(1):1-17.
- Harrison, J.S. & Wicks, A.C. 2013. Stakeholder theory, value, and firm performance. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 23(1):97-124.

Harrison, J.S., Freeman, R.E. & Abreu, M.C.S.D. 2015. Stakeholder theory as an ethical approach to effective management: Applying the theory to multiple contexts. *Review of Business Management*, 17(55):858-869.

Harrison, P. & Todes, A. 2015. Spatial transformations in a 'loosening state': South Africa in a comparative perspective. *Geoforum*, 16:148-162.

Harrison, R.L., Reilly, T.M. & Creswell, J.W. 2020. Methodological rigor in mixed methods: An application in management studies. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 14(4):473-495.

Hashim, Z. & Ismail, W.R. 2017. Self-drive tourism route in Terengganu: an application of goal programming model. *Sains Humanika*, 9(1-5):51-57.

Hatipoglu, B., Alvarez, M.D. & Ertuna, B. 2016. Barriers to stakeholder involvement in the planning of sustainable tourism: The case of the Thrace region in Turkey. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 111:306-317.

Haxton, P. 2015. A review of effective policies for tourism growth. OECD Tourism Papers, No. 2015/01, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5js4vmp5n5r8-en>. Date of access: 23 Apr. 2022.

Hazra, S., Fletcher, J. & Wilkes, K. 2017. An evaluation of power relationships among stakeholders in the tourism industry networks of Agra, India. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 20(3):278-294.

He, W., Wang, F.K. & Zha, S. 2014. Enhancing social media competitiveness of small businesses: insights from small pizzerias. *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, 20(3):225-250.

He, W., Wang, F.K., Chen, Y. & Zha, S. 2017. An exploratory investigation of social media adoption by small businesses. *Information Technology and Management*, 18(2):149-160.

Herrera, M.R.G., Sasidharan, V., Hernández, J.A.Á. & Herrera, L.D.A. 2018. Quality and sustainability of tourism development in Copper Canyon, Mexico: Perceptions of community stakeholders and visitors. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 27:91-103.

- Herrera, M.R.G., Sasidharan, V., Hernández, J.A.Á. & Herrera, L.D.A. 2018. Quality and sustainability of tourism development in Copper Canyon, Mexico: Perceptions of community stakeholders and visitors. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 27:91-103.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. 2018. Sustainable tourism: Sustainable tourism or something more. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 25:157-160.
- Hmidani, M.Z. & Sguenfel, M. 2018. Tourist routes at tafilalet oasis and the prospects of territorial development. *International Journal of Scientific Management and Tourism*, 4(3):139-147.
- Hsieh, L.F., Lin, L.H. & Lin, Y.Y. 2008. A service quality measurement architecture for hot spring hotels in Taiwan. *Tourism Management*, 29(3):429-438.
- Hultman, M., Yeboah-Banin, A.A. & Formaniuk, L. 2016. Demand- and supply-side perspectives of city branding: A qualitative investigation. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(11):5153-5157.
- Hunter, C.A. 2017. *The development of wine tourism in South Africa*. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University. (Thesis – PhD).
- Hyett, N., Kenny, A. & Dickson-Swift, V. 2014. Methodology or method? A critical review of qualitative case study reports. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 9(1):23606.
- Idajati, H. & Nugroho, F.E. 2019. Creating cultural and heritage tourism route as tool for development tourism strategy (Case study: Surabaya Kalimas River Area). *Earth and Environmental Science*, 340(1):1-14.
- Iles, A. & Prideaux, B. 2011. The Savannah way: Developing a successful touring route. In: Prideaux, B. & Carson, D., eds. *Drive tourism: Trends and emerging markets* Routledge. p. 311-322.
- Iliyasu, R. & Etikan, I. 2021. Comparison of quota sampling and stratified random sampling. *Biometrics and Biostatistics International Journal*, 10:24-27.
- Imran, A. & Yusoff, R.M. 2015. Empirical validation of qualitative data: a mixed method approach. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 5(1S):389-396.

Inskeep, E. 1991. *Tourism planning: an integrated and sustainable development approach*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Irshad, H. 2011. Impacts of community events and festivals on rural places. *Government of Alberta: Agriculture and Rural Development Division*, 1-17. [https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/csi13702/\\$FILE/Community-events-and-festivals.pdf](https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/csi13702/$FILE/Community-events-and-festivals.pdf) Date of access: 1 Jul. 2022.

Irvine, P.M., Kepe, T., De Wet, D.T. & Hamunime, N.P. 2016. Whose Mecca? Divergent experiences of post-productivism and tourism in Nieu Bethesda, South Africa. *South African Geographical Journal*, 98(2):386-401.

Jacobs, L., Du Preez, E. & Fairer-Wessels, F. 2019. Rough road to the stars: A route development framework for Astro tourism in Karoo arid region. In: Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally. Conference proceedings. 2019 TTRA International Conference Navigating shifting sands: Research in changing times. Melbourne, Australia. pp.1-10.

Jacobsen, M. 2006. Doing business the Chinese way? On Manadoese Chinese, entrepreneurship in North Sulawesi. *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 24(2):105-136.

Jaikaew, A. & Chum-un, M. 2019. Development of marketing and tourism for community enterprise, a case study of Muangkaen Municipal, Mae Tang District, Chiang Mai. *Rajabhat Journal of Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 20(1):145-155.

Jeong, M. & Shin, H.H. 2020. Tourists' experiences with smart tourism technology at smart destinations and their behavior intentions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 59(8):1464-1477.

Jinks, P.C. 1964. An investigation into the effect of date of birth on subsequent school performance. *Educational Research*, 6(3):220-225.

Johnson, B.E. 2011. The speed and accuracy of voice recognition software-assisted transcription versus the listen-and-type method: A research note. *Qualitative Research*, 11(1):91-97.

- Jones, C.E.K., Severo, M. & Guido, D. 2018. Socio-spatial visualisations of cultural routes. Exploring collective memory on Instagram. *Netcom. Réseaux, Communication et Territoires*, 32(3/4):305-330.
- Jones, T.M., Harrison, J.S. & Felps, W. 2018. How applying instrumental stakeholder theory can provide sustainable competitive advantage. *Academy of Management Review*, 43(3):371-391.
- Jovicic, D.Z. 2016. Key issues in the conceptualization of tourism destinations. *Tourism Geographies*, 18(4):445-457.
- Jovicic, D.Z. 2019. From the traditional understanding of tourism destination to the smart tourism destination, *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(3):276-282.
- Jussila, J.J., Kärkkäinen, H. & Aramo-Immonen, H. 2014. Social media utilization in business-to-business relationships of technology industry firms. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 30:606-613.
- Kafle, N.P. 2011. Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 5(1):181-200.
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A.M., Johnson, M. & Kangasniemi, M. 2016. Systematic methodological review: developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12):2954-2965.
- Kang, S. & Rajagopal, L. 2014. Perceptions of benefits and challenges of purchasing local foods among hotel industry decision makers. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 17(4):301-322.
- Kantsperger, M., Thees, H. & Eckert, C. 2019. Local participation in tourism development—Roles of non-tourism related residents of the Alpine destination Bad Reichenhall. *Sustainability*, 11(24):1-23.
- Kanwal, S., Rasheed, M.I., Pitafi, A.H., Pitafi, A. & Ren, M. 2020. Road and transport infrastructure development and community support for tourism: The role of perceived benefits, and community satisfaction. *Tourism Management*, 77(1):e104014.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.104014>

- Kapera, I. 2018. Sustainable tourism development efforts by local governments in Poland. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 40:581-588.
- Kemperman, A.D., Borgers, A.W. & Timmermans, H.J. 2009. Tourist shopping behavior in a historic downtown area. *Tourism Management*, 30(2):208-218.
- Kempiak, J., Hollywood, L., Bolan, P. & McMahon-Beattie, U. 2017. The heritage tourist: An understanding of the visitor experience at heritage attractions. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 23(4):375-392.
- Keogh, B. 1990. Public participation in community tourism planning. *Annals of tourism research*, 17(3):449-465.
- Keyser, H. 2009. *Developing tourism in South Africa: Towards competitive destinations*. 2nd ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Khokhar, K. & Ellahi, A. 2020. Impact of social media tourism advertisement factors on visit intention of customers. *NUML International Journal of Business and Management*, 15(1):1-14.
- Khoo, S. E., Hugo, G. & McDonald, P. 2008. Which skilled temporary migrants become permanent residents and why?. *International Migration Review*, 42(1):193-226.
- Khoo-Lattimore, C., Mura, P. & Yung, R. 2019. The time has come: A systematic literature review of mixed methods research in tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(13):1531-1550.
- Khovanova-Rubicondo, K.M. 2012. Cultural routes as a source for new kind of tourism development: Evidence from the council of Europe's Programme. *International Journal of Heritage in the Digital Era*, 1(1_suppl): 83-88.
- Kiger, M.E. & Varpio, L. 2020. Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131. *Medical Teacher*, 42(8):846-854.
- Kimbu, A.N. 2010. *Sustainable tourism development management in Central Africa: A case study of the tourism industry in Cameroon*. United Kingdom: Nottingham Trent University. (Dissertation – PhD).

- King, J. 2002. Destination marketing organisations: Connecting the experience rather than promoting the place. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 8(2):105-108.
- Kirkman, A., Strydom, J.W. & Van Zyl, C. 2013. Stellenbosch Wine Route wineries: Management's perspective on the advantages and key success factors of wine tourism. *Southern African Business Review*, 17(2):93-112.
- Klijn, E.H., Eshuis, J. & Braun, E. 2012. The influence of stakeholder involvement on the effectiveness of place branding. *Public Management Review*, 14(4):499-519.
- Knight, D.W. & Cottrell, S.P. 2016. Evaluating tourism-linked empowerment in Cuzco, Peru. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 56:32-47.
- Knight, D.W. 2018. An institutional analysis of local strategies for enhancing pro-poor tourism outcomes in Cuzco, Peru. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(4):631-648.
- Koh, E. & Fakfare, P. 2019. Overcoming "over-tourism": The closure of Maya Bay. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 6(2):279-296.
- Koiri, S.K. & Mukherjee, S. 2018. Opportunities and challenges of tourism industry: Haflong a wonder land of Assam. *International Journal of Transformation in Tourism and Hospitality Management and Cultural Heritage*, 2(1):1-7.
- Kokt, D. 2017. *The perceptions of stakeholders on local economic development and route tourism on the four deserts tourism route in Southern Namibia*. Bloemfontein: Central University of Technology. (Thesis - PhD).
- Komppula, R. 2014. The role of individual entrepreneurs in the development of competitiveness for a rural tourism destination: A case study. *Tourism Management*, 40:361-371.
- Kontsiwe, N. & Visser, G. 2019. Tourism as a vehicle for local economic development in small towns? When things go wrong: The case of Aliwal North, South Africa. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 27(4):1334-1346.
- Korstjens, I. & Moser, A. 2018. Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1):120-124.

- Kovács, I. & Martyn, Z. 2013. Thematic routes in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county according to the visitors' opinion. *Forum Geographic*, 12(2):219-225.
- Krejcie, R.V. & Morgan, D.W. 1970. Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3):607-610.
- Kristjánsdóttir, K.R., Ólafsdóttir, R. & Ragnarsdóttir, K.V. 2018. Reviewing integrated sustainability indicators for tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(4):583-599.
- Kubickova, M. 2016. The role of government in tourism: Linking competitiveness, freedom, and developing economies. *Czech Journal of Tourism*, 5(2):73-92.
- Kumar, G. 2014. Importance of sample size in clinical trials. *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Physiology*, 1(1):10-10.
- Kumari, K. & Yadav, S. 2018. Linear regression analysis study. *Journal of the Practice of Cardiovascular Sciences*, 4(1):33.
- Kuščer, K. & Mihalič, T. 2019. Residents' attitudes towards overtourism from the perspective of tourism impacts and cooperation: the case of Ljubljana. *Sustainability*, 11(6):1-13.
- Ladkin, A. Bertramini, A.M. 2002. Collaborative tourism planning: a case study of Cusco, Peru. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 5(2):71-93.
- Lai, I.K., Hitchcock, M., Yang, T. & Lu, T.W. 2018. Literature review on service quality in hospitality and tourism (1984-2014). *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(1):114-159.
- Lam, I.K.V. & Wong, I.A. 2020. The role of relationship quality and loyalty program in tourism shopping: a multilevel investigation. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 37(1):92-111.
- Lancaster, K. 2017. Confidentiality, anonymity and power relations in elite interviewing: conducting qualitative policy research in a politicised domain. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 20(1):93-103.

- Lane, R., Horne, R. & Bicknell, J. 2009. Routes of reuse of second-hand goods in Melbourne households. *Australian Geographer*, 40(2):151-168.
- Lanquar, R. 1985. Sociologie du tourisme et des voyages [Sociology of travel and tourism]. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Laosa, L.M. 1984. Ethnic, socioeconomic, and home language influences upon early performance on measures of abilities. *ETS Research Report Series*, 1984(2): i-79.
- Lee, T.H. & Hsieh, H.P. 2016. Indicators of sustainable tourism: A case study from a Taiwan's wetland. *Ecological Indicators*, 67:779-787.
- Lee, T.H. & Jan, F.H. 2019. Can community-based tourism contribute to sustainable development? Evidence from residents' perceptions of the sustainability. *Tourism Management*, 70:368-380.
- Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2010. *Practical research: Planning and design*. New Jersey, NJ: Pearson.
- Leggat, P.A. & Klein, M. 2001. Personal safety advice for travelers abroad. *Journal of Travel Medicine*, 8(1):46-51.
- Leiper, N. 1979. The framework of tourism: Towards a definition of tourism, tourist, and the tourist industry. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6(4):390-407.
- Lemky, K. 2017. The revitalisation of a heritage travel route: Canada's Cabot Trail. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12(5):526-535.
- Lemmetyinen, A. 2010. *Coordination of cooperation in tourism business networks*. Turku: Turku School of Economics. (Thesis – PhD).
- Lemon, L.L. & Hayes, J. 2020. Enhancing trustworthiness of qualitative findings: Using Leximancer for qualitative data analysis triangulation. *The Qualitative Report*, 25(3):604-614.
- Leshem, S. & Trafford, V. 2007. Overlooking the conceptual framework. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 44(1):93-105.

Leung, L. 2015. Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 4(3):324-327.

Leung, Y.F., Spenceley, A., Hvenegaard, G. & Buckley, R. eds. 2018. *Tourism and visitor management in protected areas: guidelines for sustainability*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.

Liebenberg, L., Jamal, A. & Ikeda, J. 2020. Extending youth voices in a participatory thematic analysis approach. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19:1-13.

Liu, C., Dou, X., Li, J. & Cai, L.A. 2020. Analysing government role in rural tourism development: An empirical investigation from China. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 79:177-188.

Liu, J. & Ma, Y. 2017. The perceptual differences among stakeholders in the tourism supply of Xi'an City, China. *Sustainability*, 9(2):214 (1-21).
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su9020214>

Liu, Y.D. 2014. Cultural events and cultural tourism development: Lessons from the European Capitals of Culture. *European Planning Studies*, 22(3):498-514.

Lo, M.C., Ramayah, T. & Hui, H.L.H. 2014. Rural communities perceptions and attitudes towards environment tourism development. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 7(4):84-94.

Lobato, J. & Bowers, J. 2000. Three perspectives in research on functions: multi-representational, quantitative, and phenomenological. Paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED441866> Date of access: 15 Jul. 2022.

Lopez, L., Nicosia, E. & Lois González, R.C. 2018. Sustainable tourism: a hidden theory of the cinematic image? A theoretical and visual analysis of the way of St. James. *Sustainability*, 10(10):1-24.

López-Guzmán, T., Cañero Morales, P.M., Moral Cuadra, S. & Orgaz-Agüera, F. 2016. An exploratory study of olive tourism consumers. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 22(1):57-68.

- López-Guzmán, T., Sanchez Canizares, S.M. & García, R. 2009. Wine routes in Spain: a case study. *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal*, 57(4):421-434.
- López-Guzmán, T., Sánchez-Cañizares, S. & Pavón, V. 2011. Community-based tourism in developing countries: A case study. *Tourismos*, 6(1):69-84.
- Lordkipanidze, M., Brezet, H. & Backman, M. 2005. The entrepreneurship factor in sustainable tourism development. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 13(8):787-798.
- Lourens, M. 2007a. Route tourism: A roadmap for successful destinations and local economic development. *Development Southern Africa*, 24(3):475-490.
- Lourens, M. 2007b. *The underpinnings for successful route tourism development in South Africa*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand. (Dissertation-PhD).
- Lu, C., Pang, M., Yang, J. & Wang, D. 2018. Research on interactions between the economy and environment in tourism development: Case of Qingyang, China. *Sustainability*, 10(11):1-23.
- Lu, J. & Nepal, S.K. 2009. Sustainable tourism research: an analysis of papers published in the Journal of Sustainable Tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(1):5-16.
- Luangsa-Art, N. 2016. Guideline in developing a tourism route: A case study of Tambon Bang Nok Khwaek, Samutsongkharm province. *International Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, 2(3):101-104.
- Lue, C.C., Crompton, J.L. & Fesenmaier, D.R. 1993. Conceptualization of multi-destination pleasure trips. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 20(2):289-301.
- Luo, X. & Bao, J. 2019. Exploring the impacts of tourism on the livelihoods of local poor: The role of local government and major investors. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 27(3):344-359.
- MacLeod, N. 2016. Self-guided trails: A route to more responsible tourism. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 41(2):134-144.

- Maguire, M. & Delahunt, B. 2017. Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Higher Education*, 8(3):3351-3364.
- Mainardes, E.W., Alves, H. & Raposo, M. 2011. Stakeholder theory: issues to resolve. *Management Decision*, 9(2):236-252.
- Mak, B.K.L., Cheung, L.T.O. & Hui, D.L.H. 2017. Community participation in the decision-making process for sustainable tourism development in rural areas of Hong Kong, China. *Sustainability*, 9(10):1695.
- Malek, A. & Costa, C. 2015. Integrating communities into tourism planning through social innovation. *Tourism Planning and Development*, 12(3):281-299.
- Manhas, P.S., Kour, P. & Bhagata, A. 2014. Silk Route in the light of circuit tourism: an avenue of tourism internationalization. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 144:143-150.
- Manwa, H., Saarinen, J., Atlhopheng, J.R. & Hambira, W.L. 2017. Sustainability management and tourism impacts on communities: Residents' attitudes in Maun and Tshabong, Botswana. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 6(3):1-15.
- March, R. & Wilkinson, I. 2009. Conceptual tools for evaluating tourism partnerships. *Tourism Management*, 30(3):455-462.
- Maree, K. 2007. *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Marques, B.C. & Santos, C.H.S. 2014. Tourist routes strategies of local development. *Pasos: Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 12(3):539-548.
- Marschall, S. 2012. Sustainable heritage tourism: The Inanda heritage route and the 2010 FIFA world cup. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(5):721-736.
- Marzuki, A. & Hay, I. 2016. Stakeholder, tourism. In: Jafari, J. & Xiao, H., eds. *Encyclopedia of Tourism*. New York, NY: Springer. pp. 896-898.

Masualle, P. 2017. Revitalising towns and villages has become essential. [Business Report]. <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/revitalising-towns-and-villages-has-become-essential-10874154> Date of access: 12 Jul. 2022.

Mathfield, D. 2000. *Impacts of accommodation and craft-based tourism on local economic development: The case of the Midlands Meander*. KwaZulu-Natal: University of KwaZulu-Natal. (Thesis - MA).

Maxim, C. 2019. Challenges faced by world tourism cities: London's perspective. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(9):1006-1024.

Mayoh, J. & Onwuegbuzie, A.J. 2015. Toward a conceptualisation of mixed methods phenomenological research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9(1):91-107.

McCabe, S. 2005. 'Who is a tourist?' A critical review. *Tourist Studies*, 5(1):85-106.

McComb, E.J., Boyd, S. & Boluk, K. 2017. Stakeholder collaboration: A means to the success of rural tourism destinations? A critical evaluation of the existence of stakeholder collaboration within the Mourne, Northern Ireland. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 17(3):286-297.

McGrath, C., Palmgren, P.J. & Liljedahl, M. 2019. Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical Teacher*, 41(9):1002-1006.

McKibbin, J., Binns, T. & Nel, E. 2012. Uplifting small towns in post-apartheid South Africa: The experience of the Amathole Regional Economic Development Agency (Aspire). *Local Economy*, 27(4):388-402.

McLaren, L. & Heath, E. 2013. Towards a framework for identifying and engaging rural tourism route stakeholders in Southern Africa. *Africanus*, 43(1):18-32.

McLaren, L. & Heath, E.T. 2012. The public sector as a key enabler in sustainable rural tourism. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 5(2):93-104.

McLaren, L. 2011. *Critical marketing success factors for sustainable rural tourism routes: a KwaZulu-Natal stakeholder perspective*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. (Dissertation – PhD).

- McQueen, J. 2012. *Building Brand Trust: Discovering the Advertising Insights Behind Great Brands*. Xlibris Corporation.
- Mearns, K.F. & Boshoff, D. 2017. Utilising sustainable tourism indicators to determine the environmental performance of the Sun City Resort, South Africa. *African Journal for Physical Activity and Health Sciences*, 23(1):89-114.
- Medlik, S. 2012. *Dictionary of travel, tourism and hospitality*. 3rd ed. Great Britain: Taylor & Francis.
- Mei, X.Y., Lerfald, M. & Bråtå, H.O. 2017. Networking and collaboration between tourism and agriculture: Food tourism experiences along the National Tourist Routes of Norway. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 17(1):59-75.
- Meng, F. & Hudson, S. 2016. Drive tourism in rural destination development: dual perspectives from industry stakeholders and potential visitors. *Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally*, 48:1-6.
- Meyer, D. 2004. *Tourism routes and gateways: Key issues for the development of tourism routes and gateways and their potential for pro-poor tourism*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Meyer-Cech, K. 2004. Theme trails and sustainable rural tourism- opportunities And Threats. *WIT Transactions on Ecology and the Environment*, 76:117-126.
- Meyer-Cech, K. 2005. Regional cooperation in rural theme trails. In: Hall, D., Kirkpatrick, I. & Mitchell, M., eds. *Rural tourism and sustainable business*. Great Britain: Cromwell. pp. 137-148.
- Migiro, S.O. & Magangi, B.A. 2011. Mixed methods: A review of literature and the future of the new research paradigm. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(10):3757-3764.
- Mihalic, T. 2016. Sustainable-responsible tourism discourse: Towards 'responsustable' tourism. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 111(Part B):285-540.
- Miles, S. 2017. Stakeholder theory classification: A theoretical and empirical evaluation of definitions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 142(3):437-459.

- Mingaleva, Z., Sheresheva, M., Oborin, M. & Gvarliani, T. 2017. Networking of small cities to gain sustainability. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 5(1):140-156.
- Mnguni, E.M., Giampiccoli, A. & Mtapuri, O. 2020. Conceptualising the role of local government in community-based tourism development in the South Coast, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Journal for New Generation Sciences*, 17(2):44-53.
- Mnguni, M.E. & Giampiccoli, A. 2017. Community-based tourism development: A hiking trails perspective. *Environmental Economics*, 6(1):1-17.
- Moe, A. 2020. A new Russian policy for the Northern sea route? State interests, key stakeholders and economic opportunities in changing times. *The Polar Journal*, 10(2):209-227.
- Molefe, B. 2021. Final Eagle route accommodation database, Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority (Brochure) [e-mail correspondence]. 13 Aug.
- Molina-Azorín, J.F. & Font, X. 2016. Mixed methods in sustainable tourism research: an analysis of prevalence, designs and application in JOST (2005-2014). *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 24(4):549-573.
- Montgomery, D.C., Peck, E.A. & Vining, G.G. 2021. *Introduction to linear regression analysis*. 6th ed. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Moric, I. 2013. The role and challenges of rural tourism development in transition countries: Montenegro experiences. *Turizam*, 17(2):84-95.
- Morrison, A.J., Andrew, R. & Baum, T.G. 2001. The lifestyle economics of small tourism businesses. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Research*, 1(1-2):16-25.
- Morse, J.M. & Cheek, J. 2015. Introducing qualitatively driven mixed-method designs. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25(6):731-733.
- Morton, F.B. & Altschul, D. 2019. Data reduction analyses of animal behaviour: avoiding Kaiser's criterion and adopting more robust automated methods. *Animal Behaviour*, 149:89-95.

- Morupisi, P. & Mokgalo, L. 2017. Domestic tourism challenges in Botswana: A stakeholders' perspective. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 3(1):1-12.
- Mottiar, Z., Boluk, K. & Kline, C. 2018. The roles of social entrepreneurs in rural destination development. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 68:77-88.
- Moulin, C. & Boniface, P. 2001. Routeing heritage for tourism: Making heritage and cultural tourism networks for socio-economic development. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 7(3):237-248.
- Moyle, C.L., Moyle, B., Ruhanen, L., Bec, A. & Weiler, B. 2018. Business sustainability: How does tourism compare? *Sustainability*, 10(4):1-15.
- Moyo, S. & Tichaawa, T.M. 2017. Community involvement and participation in tourism development: a Zimbabwe Study. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 6(1):1-15.
- Mtapuri, O. & Giampiccoli, A. 2013. Interrogating the role of the state and nonstate actors in community-based tourism ventures: Toward a model for spreading the benefits to the wider community. *South African Geographical Journal*, 95(1):1-15.
- Mukhamadaliyeva, N. B. & Tilyabaeva, G. 2020. Socio Demographic and Travel Related Variables Affecting Tourist Route Choice Behaviors. Case of Study Samarqand city, Uzbekistan. *Indonesian Journal of Law and Economics Review*, 7(May): 10-21070. <https://doi.org/10.21070/ijler.2020.V7.485>
- Murphy, P.E. & Murphy, A.E. eds. 2004. Strategic management for tourism communities. In *Strategic Management for Tourism Communities: bridging the gaps*. Clevedon; Buffalo: Channel View Publications.
- Murphy, P.E. 1985. *Tourism: a community approach*. London: Methuen.
- Murray, M. & Graham, B. 1997. Exploring the dialectics of route-based tourism: The Camino de Santiago. *Tourism Management*, 18(8):513-524.
- Mutana, S. & Mukwada, G. 2018. Mountain-route tourism and sustainability: a discourse analysis of literature and possible future research. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, 24:59-65.

- Myburgh, E. & Saayman, M. 2002. *Ecotourism in action: Guidelines and principles*. Potchefstroom: Institute for Tourism and Leisure Studies.
- Mylan, J.A. 2018. Sustainable tourism in Costa Rica: Aligning tourists' interests with local development. *PURE Insights*, 7(1):1-12.
- Nagarjuna, G., 2015. Local community involvement in tourism: A content analysis of websites of wildlife resorts. *Atna Journal of Tourism Studies*, 10(1):13-21.
- Nagy, K. 2012. Heritage Tourism, Thematic Routes and Possibilities for Innovation. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3639435> Date of access: 14 Apr. 2021.
- Naidoo, P., Pearce, P. & Sharpley, R. 2017. The contributions of enclave tourism to community wellbeing in Mauritius: Host community perspective. In: Saufi, A., Andilolo, I.R., Othman, N. & Lew, A.A., eds. *Balancing development and sustainability in tourism destinations*. Singapore: Springer. pp. 179-188.
- Nair, V., Munikrishnan, U.T., Rajaratnam, S.D. & King, N. 2015. Redefining rural tourism in Malaysia: a conceptual perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(3):314-337.
- Naser, S.S. & Saeideh, H. 2017. Impact of empowering local stakeholders in tourism development and sustainability of marginal rural settlements in Iran. *WIT Transactions on Ecology and the Environment*, 226:493-504.
- Newton, C. & Schuermans, N. 2013. More than twenty years after the repeal of the Group Areas Act: Housing, spatial planning and urban development in post-apartheid South Africa. *Journal of Housing and Built Environment*, 28(4):579-587.
- Nicolaides, A. 2015. Tourism stakeholder theory in practice: Instrumental business grounds, fundamental normative demands or a descriptive application. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 4(2):1-27.
- Nistor, A. & Nedelea, A.M. 2018. The role of mass-media on tourism development. *Revista de Turism-studii si Cercetari in Turism*, 1(26):1-7.

- Nogueira, S. & Pinho, J.C. 2015. Stakeholder network integrated analysis: the specific case of rural tourism in the Portuguese Peneda-Gerês National Park. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 17(4):325-336.
- Notarstefano, G. & Gristina, S. 2021. Eco-Sustainable Routes and Religious Tourism: An Opportunity for Local Development. The Case Study of Sicilian Routes. In: Grasso, F. & Sergi, B.S., eds. *Tourism in the Mediterranean Sea: an Italian perspective*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited. p. 217.
- Nowell, L.S., Norris, J.M., White, D.E. & Moules, N.J. 2017. Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1):1-13.
- Nowers, R., De Villiers, E. & Myburgh, A. 2002. Agricultural theme routes as a diversification strategy: The Western Cape Wine Routes case study. *Agrekon*, 41(2):195-209.
- Nunkoo, R. & Ramkissoon, H. 2011a. Developing a community support model for tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(3):964-988.
- Nunkoo, R. & Ramkissoon, H. 2011b. Residents' satisfaction with community attributes and support for tourism. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 35(2):171-190.
- Nunkoo, R. 2015. Tourism development and trust in local government. *Tourism Management*, 46:623-634.
- Nur Nobi, M. & Majumder, M. 2019. Coastal and marine tourism in the future. *Journal of Ocean and Coastal Economics*, 6(2):12 1-18
- Nyanjom, J., Boxall, K. & Slaven, J. 2018. Towards inclusive tourism? Stakeholder collaboration in the development of accessible tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 20(4):675-697.
- Nyawo, J. & Mubangizi, B.C. 2015. Art and craft in local economic development: Tourism possibilities in Mtubatuba Local Municipality. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 4(2):1-15.

- Okazaki, E. 2008. A community-based tourism model: Its conception and use. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(5):511-529.
- O'Keeffe, J., Buytaert, W., Mijic, A., Brozović, N. & Sinha, R. 2016. The use of semi-structured interviews for the characterisation of farmer irrigation practices. *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences*, 20(5):1911-1924.
- Oliveira, V., Teixeira, L. & Ebert, F. 2020. February. On the adoption of kotlin on Android development: A triangulation study. In *2020 IEEE 27th International Conference on Software Analysis, Evolution and Reengineering (SANER)*. IEEE. pp. 206-216
- Oliver, D.G., Serovich, J.M. & Mason, T.L. 2005. Constraints and opportunities with interview transcription: Towards reflection in qualitative research. *Social Forces*, 84(2):1273-1289.
- Olsen, D.H. & Trono, A. eds. 2018. Religious pilgrimage routes and trails: Sustainable development and management. Wallingford, Oxfordshire: Boston. MA: CABI.
- Olsen, M. 2003. Tourism themed routes: A Queensland perspective. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 9(4):331-341.
- Olsen, M. 2003. Tourism themed routes: A Queensland perspective. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 9(4):331-341.
- Orjuela, A., Escobar, D.A. & Moncada, C.A. 2020. Conditions of territorial accessibility offered by the network of sustainable tourism routes that are part of the coffee cultural landscape-Colombia. *Geo Journal of Tourism and Geosites*, 32(4):1290-1298.
- Palinkas, L.A., Wu, Q., Fuentes, D., Finno-Velasquez, M., Holloway, I.W., Garcia, A. & Chamberlain, P. 2015. Innovation and the use of research evidence in youth-serving systems: A mixed-methods study. *Child Welfare*, 94(2):57-85.
- Pallant, J. 2016. SPSS survival manual: a step-by-step guide to data analysis using SPSS. 6th ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Palmer, A.J. 1996. *An analysis of the determinants of successful horizontal collaborative marketing organisations*. Leicester, England: De Montfort University's. (Thesis-PhD).

- Pan, S.Y., Gao, M., Kim, H., Shah, K.J., Pei, S.L. & Chiang, P.C. 2018. Advances and challenges in sustainable tourism toward a green economy. *Science of the Total Environment*, 635:452-469.
- Papastathopoulos, A., Ahmad, S.Z., Al Sabri, N. & Kaminakis, K. 2020. Demographic analysis of residents' support for tourism development in the UAE: A Bayesian structural equation modeling multigroup approach. *Journal of Travel Research*, 59(6):1119-1139.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. & Berry, L.L. 1985. A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of Marketing*, 49(4):41-50.
- Pathumporn, J. & Nakapaksin, S. 2015. Participatory action research model for sustainable community-based tourism development. *International Journal of Business and Administrative Studies*, 1(3):89-93.
- Pauw, J. 2009. Challenges to sustainability in the Garden Route: Water, land and economy. George, South Africa. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth.
<http://sru.mandela.ac.za/sru/media/Store/documents/Publications%20and%20Reports/Pauw,-2009--Challenges-to-sustainability-in-the-Garden-Route---.pdf> Date of access: 22 Apr. 2022.
- Pavluković, V., Kovačić, S. & Stankov, U. 2020. Cycling Tourism on the Danube Cycle Route in Serbia: Residents' Perspective. *Eastern European Countryside*, 26(1):259-285.
- Pearce, F. 2018. *When the rivers run dry: water-the defining crisis of the twenty-first century*. Boston: Beacon.
- Pechlaner, H., Raich, F., Beritelli, P., Presenza, A. & Cipollina, M. 2010. Analysing tourism stakeholders' networks. *Tourism Review*, 65(4):17-30.
- Peric, M., Đurkin, J. & Lamot, I. 2014. Importance of stakeholder management in tourism project: Case study of the istra inspirit project1. In *Faculty of tourism and hospitality management in Opatija. Biennial international congress. Tourism and hospitality industry*. University of Rijeka, Faculty of Tourism & Hospitality Management. pp. 273-286. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Marko-Peric/publication/337111163_IMPORTANCE_OF_STAKEHOLDER_MANAGEMENT_I

[N TOURISM PROJECT CASE STUDY OF THE ISTR INSPIRIT PROJECT/links/5dc57cff92851c81803ac739/IMPORTANCE-OF-STAKEHOLDER-MANAGEMENT-IN-TOURISM-PROJECT-CASE-STUDY-OF-THE-ISTRA-INSPIRIT-PROJECT.pdf](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1724&context=ttra) Date of access: 15 Jan. 2020.

Phiri, A.C. 2016. Tourism and economic growth in South Africa: Evidence from linear and nonlinear co integration frameworks. *Managing Global Transition*, 14(1):31-53.

Piartrini, P.S. 2018. The relationship among community based tourism application, community attitude, community empowerment, and community life satisfaction. *E-Journal of Tourism*, 5(2):130-143.

Pike, S. & Page, S.J. 2014. Destination Marketing Organizations and destination marketing: a narrative analysis of the literature. *Tourism Management*, 41:202-227.

Pike, S. 2007. *Destination marketing organisations*. [Place of publication not identified]: Routledge.

Piskóti, I. & Nagy, K. 2016. Route-based tourism product development as a tool for social innovation: History valley in the Cserehát region. *Theory of Methodology Practice: Club of Economics in Miskolc*, 12(02):75-86.

Pivčević, S., Mikulić, D. & Pranić, L. 2019. Matching tourism development priorities and policy measures: An experimental method to reconcile the key stakeholders' views. *Tourism in South East Europe*, 5:567-580.

Plichta, J. 2019. The co-management and stakeholders theory as a useful approach to manage the problem of overtourism in historical cities—illustrated with an example of Krakow. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 4(5):685-699.

Polit, D.F. & Beck, C.T. 2010. Generalization in quantitative and qualitative research: myths and strategies. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 47(11):1451-1458.

Poudel, S. & Nyaupane PhD, G.P. 2016. Understanding Tourist Environmental Behavior: An Application of the Theories on Reasoned Action Approach. *Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally*. 20.

<https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1724&context=ttra> Date of access: 12 May 2021.

- Poudel, S., Nyaupane, G.P. & Budruk, M. 2016. Stakeholders' perspectives of sustainable tourism development: A new approach to measuring outcomes. *Journal of Travel Research*, 55(4):465-480.
- Proos, E. & Hattingh, J. 2020. Advancing heritage tourism in the central Karoo: The South African War Battlefields Route. *Development Southern Africa*, 37(4):678-693.
- Proos, E., Kokt, D. & Hattingh, J.L. 2017. Marketing and management effectiveness of Free State section of Maloti Drakensberg Route. *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*, 39(1):135-147.
- Provia, K., Ronald, K. & Michelle, K. 2017. Community Capacity Building, Local Community Involvement in Tourism Activities and Community Welfare in Uganda. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Sports*, 27:15-29.
- Puczko, L. & Ratz, T. 2007. Trailing Goethe, Humbert, and Ulysses: cultural routes in tourism. In: Richards, G., ed. *Cultural tourism: global and local perspectives*. London: Routledge. pp. 131-148.
- Radhika, P. & Johnson, J. 2017. Identifying government's role towards developing sustainable strategies in tourism industry. *Pacific Business Review International*, 10(6):67-72.
- Rambe, P., Mosweunyane, L. & Dzansi, D. 2019. Examining tourism SMMEs' extent of use of social media technologies to position and market brands. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 8(2):1-16.
- Ramos-Morcillo, A.J., Leal-Costa, C., Moral-García, J.E. & Ruzafa-Martínez, M. 2020. Experiences of nursing students during the abrupt change from face-to-face to e-learning education during the first month of confinement due to COVID-19 in Spain. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(15):5519.
- Ramos-Soler, I., Martínez-Sala, A.M. & Campillo-Alhama, C. 2019. ICT and the sustainability of world heritage sites. Analysis of senior citizens' use of tourism apps. *Sustainability*, 11(11):3203.

- Ramrathan, L., Le Grange, L. & Shawa, L.B. 2017. *Education Studies for Initial Teacher Development*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Ramukumba, T. & Ferreira, I. W. 2016. The role of government in support of tourism businesses: A perspective from guest houses in the Eden district region. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 5(1):1-14.
- Ramukumba, T. 2019. Community views on the role of tourism in local development: A South African study. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 25(2):638-647.
- Ramukumba, T., Pietersen, J., Mmbengwa, V.M. & Coetzee, W. 2011a. Participatory development of peri-urban and rural poor communities in tourism in the Garden Route area of Southern Cape, South Africa. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 1(4):1-9.
- Ramukumba, T., Pietersen, J., Mmbengwa, V.M. & Coetzee, W. 2011b. Exploring peri-urban and rural tourism stakeholders' perceptions of the social impacts of tourism in the Garden Route, South Africa. *Journal of Hospitality Management and Tourism*, 2(4):57-65.
- Rasoolimanesh, S.M. & Jaafar, M. 2017. Sustainable tourism development and residents' perceptions in World Heritage Site destinations. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 22(1):34-48.
- Rasoolimanesh, S.M., Ramakrishna, S., Hall, C.M., Esfandiar, K. & Seyfi, S. 2020. A systematic scoping review of sustainable tourism indicators in relation to the sustainable development goals. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, (2020):1-21. doi: 10.1080/09669582.2020.1775621
- Rasoolimanesh, S.M., Ringle, C.M., Jaafar, M. & Ramayah, T. 2017. Urban vs. rural destinations: Residents' perceptions, community participation and support for tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 60:147-158.
- Ratanapongtra, T., Khamkerd, T., Kongdit, S. & Nawatnatee, T. 2020. Value creation of local identity in Thailand: Marketing promotion for enhancing community-based cultural tourism. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 13(6):475-488.

Reimann, C., Filzmoser, P., Hron, K., Kynčlová, P. & Garrett, R.G. 2017. A new method for correlation analysis of compositional (environmental) data: A worked example. *Science of the Total Environment*, 607:965-971.

Retnosary, R. & Salleh, N.Z.B.M. 2020. Government responsibility as the main stakeholder in tourism development with collaboration approach: Literature review on heritage tourism. *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, 149:18-21. doi:10.2991/aebmr.k.200812.004

Rhoden, S. & Kaaristo, M. 2020. Mobile landscapes and transport tourism: The visual experience of mobility during cruises and coach tours. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 14(3):307-319.

Richards, G. 2010. The traditional quantitative approach. Surveying cultural tourists: Lessons from the ATLAS cultural tourism research project. *Cultural tourism research methods*, pp. 13-32.

<http://sherekashmir.informaticspublishing.com/774/1/9781845935184.pdf#page=27>

Date of access: 12 Jul. 2022.

Richter, U.H. & Dow, K.E. 2017. Stakeholder theory: A deliberative perspective. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 26(4):428-442.

Ridley, D. 2012. *The literature review: A step-by-step guide for students*. London: Sage.

Rodríguez, B., Molina, J., Pérez, F. & Caballero, R. 2012. Interactive design of personalised tourism routes. *Tourism Management*, 33(4):926-940.

Rogerson, C.M. 2009. Tourism strategies and local responses in southern Africa. In: Hottola, P., ed. *Local economic development and tourism planning in Africa. Evidence from route tourism in South Africa*. pp. 27-40. Finland: University of Oulu.

Rogerson, C.M. & Rogerson, J.M. 2011. Craft routes for developing craft business in South Africa: Is it a good practice or limited policy option? *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(30):11736-11748.

- Rogerson, C.M. & Rogerson, J.M. 2019. Tourism, local economic development and inclusion: Evidence from Overstrand Local Municipality, South Africa. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 25(2):293-308.
- Rogerson, C.M. 2004. Urban tourism and small tourism enterprise development in Johannesburg: The case of township tourism. *GeoJournal*, 60(3):249-257.
- Rogerson, C.M. 2007. Tourism routes as vehicles for local economic development in South Africa: The example of the Magaliesberg Meander. *Urban Forum*, 18(2):49-68.
- Rogerson, C.M. 2010. Local economic development in South Africa: Strategic challenges. *Development Southern Africa*, 27(4):481-495.
- Rogerson, C.M. 2010. The enterprise of craft: constraints and policy challenges in South Africa. *Acta Academica*, 42(3):115-144.
- Rogerson, C.M. 2013. Tourism and local development in South Africa: Challenging local governments. *African Journal for Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, 19(3):9-23.
- Rolfe, J. & Flint, N. 2018. Assessing the economic benefits of a tourist access road: A case study in regional coastal Australia. *Economic Analysis and Policy*, 58:167-178.
- Roy, N. & Gretzel, U. 2020. Themed route marketing in India. *Anatolia*, 31(2):304-315.
- Rubén Pérez, L., Martínez, L.M. & Galindo, S.L. 2020. El fomento de rutas turístico-literarias en el Caribe: el caso de Aracataca y la “Ruta Macondo” (The promotion of tourist literary routes in the Caribbean: the case of Aracataca and the ‘Macondo Route’). *Turismo y Sociedad*, 27:57-76.
- Ruhanen, L. 2009. Stakeholder participation in tourism destination planning another case of missing the point. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 34(3):283-294.
- Ruhanen, L. 2013. Local government: facilitator or inhibitor of sustainable tourism development? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 21(1):80-98.
- Saayman, M., Rossouw, R. & Krugell, W. 2012. The impact of tourism on poverty in South Africa. *Development Southern Africa*, 29(3):463-487.

- Sabir, B. 2019. Developing a multidisciplinary tourism planning approach on cultural routes. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Academic Tourism*, 4(1):37-47.
- Saito, H. & Ruhanen, L. 2017. Power in tourism stakeholder collaborations: Power types and power holders. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 31:189-196.
- Samuels, P. 2017. Advice on exploratory factor analysis. Technical Report. http://bcu-test.eprints-hosting.org/6076/1/_staff_shares_storage%20500mb_Library_ID112668_Stats%20Advisory_New%20Statistics%20Workshops_18ExploratoryFactorAnalysis_ExploratoryFactorAnalysis4.pdf Date of access: 23 Apr. 2022.
- Sánchez Cañizares, S.M., Castillo Canalejo, A.M. & Núñez Tabales, J.M. 2016. Stakeholders' perceptions of tourism development in Cape Verde, Africa. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 19(10):966-980.
- Sandaruwani, J.R.C. & Gnanapala, W.A.C. 2016. The role of tourist guides and their impacts on sustainable tourism development: A critique on Sri Lanka. *Tourism, Leisure and Global Change*, 3:62-73.
- Santos, R., Castanho, R.A. & Lousada, S. 2019. Return migration and tourism sustainability in Portugal: Extracting opportunities for sustainable common planning in southern Europe. *Sustainability*, 11(22):1-22.
- Saraniemi, S. & Kylänen, M. 2011. Problematizing the concept of tourism destination: An analysis of different theoretical approaches. *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(2):133-143.
- Sarma, H., Uddin, M.F., Islam, M.A., Rahman, M., Aaron, G.J., Harbour, C., Banwell, C. & Ahmed, T. 2021. Use of concurrent evaluation to improve implementation of a home fortification programme in Bangladesh: a methodological innovation. *Public Health Nutrition*, 24(S1):37-47.
- Sarstedt, E. & Mooi, M. 2019. *Concise guide to market research: the process, data, and methods using IBM SPSS statistics*. 3rd ed. Berlin: Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

- Saufi, A., O'Brien, D. & Wilkins, H. 2014. Inhibitors to host community participation in sustainable tourism development in developing countries. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22(5):801-820.
- Saxena, G. & Ilbery, B. 2008. Integrated rural tourism a border case study. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(1):233-254.
- Scharp, K.M. & Sanders, M.L. 2019. What is a theme? Teaching thematic analysis in qualitative communication research methods. *Communication Teacher*, 33(2):117-121.
- Scheyvens, R. & Biddulph, R. 2018. Inclusive tourism development. *Tourism Geographies*, 20(4):589-609.
- Schmudde, U. & Sörensson, A. 2020. Tourism development in rural areas in Sweden: In the shadow of a well-established destination. *Athens Journal of Tourism*, 7(1):55-74.
- Scholtz, M. & Saayman, M. 2018. Diving into the consequences of stakeholders unheard. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 20:105-124.
- Schoonenboom, J. 2018. Designing mixed methods research by mixing and merging methodologies: A 13-step model. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 62(7):998-1015.
- Segal, D.L., Coolidge, F.L., O'Riley, A. & Heinz, B.A. 2006. Structured and semi structured interviews. In: Hersen, M., ed. *Clinician's handbook of adult behavioral assessment*. Bosten: Academic Press. pp. 121-144.
- Sekole, M.Q. 2016. *A community perceptions based on cost-benefit analysis approach to developing a tourism route: a case study of Umjindi Local Municipality*. Polokwane: University of Limpopo. (Thesis – PhD).
- Şener, İ., Varoğlu, A. & Karapolatgil, A.A. 2016. Sustainability reports disclosures: Who are the most salient stakeholders? *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 235:84-92.
- Severino, A., Martseniuk, L., Curto, S. & Neduzha, L. 2021. Routes planning models for railway transport systems in relation to passengers' demand. *Sustainability*, 13(16):8686. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13168686>

- Shafieisabet, N. & Haratifard, S. 2020. The empowerment of local tourism stakeholders and their perceived environmental effects for participation in sustainable development of tourism. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 45:486-498.
- Sharma, B. & Gursoy, D. 2015. An examination of changes in residents' perceptions of tourism impacts over time: the impact of residents' socio-demographic characteristics. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(12):1332-1352.
- Sharma, G. 2017. Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 3(7):749-752.
- Sheehan, L.R. & Ritchie, J.B. 2005. Destination stakeholders exploring identity and salience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(3):711-734.
- Sheik, Z.B. 2013. *Reviving 'White Elephants': A culture-centred approach to the African Ivory Route Tourism Partnership*. KwaZulu-Natal: University of KwaZulu-Natal. (Thesis – PhD).
- Shih, H.Y. 2006. Network characteristics of drive tourism destinations: An application of network analysis in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 27(5):1029-1039.
- Simpson, M.C. 2008. Community benefit tourism initiatives: A conceptual oxymoron? *Tourism Management*, 29(1):1-18.
- Simsiri, S., Smitinand, R. & Eiambua, M. 2018. Packaging development for promotion dam tourism community: Ratchaprapa Dam, Khaosok National Park, Surat Thani Province. *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal*, 3(7):183-189.
- Sirirak, W. & Pitakaso, R. 2018. Marketplace location decision making and tourism route planning. *Administrative Sciences*, 8(4):1-25.
- Smith, S.L. 2014. *Tourism analysis: A handbook*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Snowball, J.D. & Courtney, S. 2010. Cultural heritage routes in South Africa: Effective tools for heritage conservation and local economic development? *Development Southern Africa*, 27(4):563-576.

Spasojevic, B., Lohmann, G. & Scott, N. 2019. Leadership and governance in air route development. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 78, art. # 102746.
doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2019.102746.

Starman, A.B. 2013. The case study as a type of qualitative research. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies/Sodobna Pedagogika*, 64(1):28-43.

Stats SA (Statistics South Afrika). 2011. *South African census 2011*. (Statistical release (Revised) P0301.4). <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P03014/P030142011.pdf>
Date of access: 14 Jul. 2022.

Stephenson, C., Lohmann, G. & Spasojevic, B. 2018. Stakeholder engagement in the development of international air services: A case study on Adelaide Airport. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 71:45-54.

Stoddard, J.E., Pollard, C.E. & Evans, M.R. 2012. The triple bottom line: A framework for sustainable tourism development. *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration*, 13(3):233-258.

Stoddart, H. & Rogerson, C. 2008. Tourism routes, local economic promotion and pro-poor development: The case of the crocodile ramble. *Africa Insight*, 38(4):10-26.

Stoddart, H.I. 2008. Route tourism and local economic development in South Africa: the Magalies Meander and the Crocodile Ramble. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand. (Thesis – MA).

Stoffelen, A. 2018. Tourism trails as tools for cross-border integration: A best practice case study of the Vennbahn cycling route. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 73:91-102.

Stors, N. & Kagermeier, A. 2013. Crossing the border of the tourist bubble: Touristification in Copenhagen. *Tourismus und Grenzen*. Mannheim, S, 115-131.
<https://nataliestors.de/assets/pdf/sft13-touristification-copenhagen.pdf> Date of access: 22 Apr. 2022.

Strydom, A.J., Mangope, D. & Henama, U.S. 2018. Economic sustainability guidelines for a community-based tourism project: The case of Thabo Mofutsanyane, Free State Province. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 7(5):1-17.

- Strydom, A.J., Mangope, D. & Henama, U.S. 2019. Making community-based tourism sustainable: Evidence from the Free State Province, South Africa. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 24(1):7-18.
- Stuckey, H.L. 2015. The second step in data analysis: Coding qualitative research data. *Journal of Social Health and Diabetes*, 3(1):7-10.
- Stylidis, D., Biran, A., Sit, J. & Szivas, E.M. 2014. Residents' support for tourism development: The role of residents' place image and perceived tourism impacts. *Tourism Management*, 45:260-274.
- Sugandini, D., Irhas Effendi, M., Sasmito Aribowo, A. & Sri Utami, Y. 2018. Marketing strategy on community-based tourism in Special Region of Yogyakarta. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*, 9(4):733-743.
- Suhartanto, D. 2017. The role of store coopetition and attractiveness on the performance of tourism destination and its retail stores. *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, 7(2):151-165.
- Sundler, A.J., Lindberg, E., Nilsson, C. & Palmér, L. 2019. Qualitative thematic analysis based on descriptive phenomenology. *Nursing Open*, 6(3):733-739.
- Suntikul, W. 2011. Linkages between heritage policy, tourism and business. *Institute for Tourism Studies*, pp. 1069-1076. http://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/1350/1/V-1-E-Article3_Suntikul.pdf Date of access: 25 Feb. 2021.
- Swank, J.M. & Mullen, P.R. 2017. Evaluating evidence for conceptually related constructs using bivariate correlations. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counselling and Development*, 50(4):270-274.
- Taherdoost, H. 2016. Sampling methods in research methodology; How to choose a sampling technique for research. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management*, 5(2):18-27.
- Taniguchi, E., Imanishi, Y., Barber, R., James, J. & Debauche, W. 2014. Public sector governance to implement freight vehicle transport management. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 125:345-357.

- Tavakol, M. & Dennick, R. 2011. Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2:53-55.
- Telfer, D.J. & Wall, G. 2000. Strengthening backward economic linkages: Local food purchasing by three Indonesian hotels. *Tourism Geographies*, 2(4):421-447.
- Telfer, D.J. 2001a. From a wine tourism village to a regional wine route: An investigation of the competitive advantage of embedded clusters in Niagara, Canada. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 26(2):23-33.
- Telfer, D.J. 2001b. Strategic alliances along the Niagara Wine Route. *Tourism Management*, 22(1):21-30.
- Terrell, S.R. 2012. Mixed-methods research methodologies. *Qualitative Report*, 17(1):254-280.
- Then, J., Felisa, H. & Irene, N. 2021. Sustainable tourism development in the Mandeh tourism area, Padang, West Sumatra. In *International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals*, 1(1):48-62.
<file:///C:/Users/13018493/Dropbox/PC/Downloads/1389-3508-1-PB.pdf> Date of access: 23 Apr. 2022.
- Theodoulidis, B., Diaz, D., Crotto, F. & Rancati, E. 2017. Exploring corporate social responsibility and financial performance through stakeholder, theory in the tourism industries. *Tourism Management*, 62:173-188
- Thetsane, R.M. 2019. Local community participation in tourism development: The case of Katse villages in Lesotho. *Athens Journal of Tourism*, 6(2):123-140.
- Timothy, D.J. & Boyd, S.W. 2015. *Tourism and trails: Cultural, ecological and management issues*. Canada: Channel View.
- Timothy, D.J. 1998. Cooperative tourism planning in a developing destination. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 6(1):52-68.
- Timur, S. & Getz, D. 2008. A network perspective on managing stakeholders for sustainable urban tourism. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 20(4):445-461.

- Tinsley, R. & Lynch, P. 2001. Small tourism business networks and destination development. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 20(4):367-378.
- Todd, L., Leask, A. & Ensor, J. 2017. Understanding primary stakeholders' multiple roles in hallmark event tourism management. *Tourism Management*, 59:494-509.
- Toerien, D. 2020. Tourism and poverty in rural South Africa: A revisit. *South African Journal of Science*, 116(1-2):1-8.
- Toerien, D.F. & Seaman, M.T. 2014. Enterprise richness as an important characteristic of South African towns. *South African Journal of Science*, 110(11-12):1-9.
- Tongco, M.D.C. 2007. Purposive sampling as a tool for informant selection. *Ethnobotany Research and Applications*, 5:147-158.
- Tosun, C. 2006. Expected nature of community participation in tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 27(3):493-504.
- Tosun, C. 2006. Expected nature of community participation in tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 27:493-504.
- Tourism Western Australia. 2009. *Five A's of tourism*. <http://www.tourism.wa.gov.au>
Date of access: 17 Jul. 2018.
- Tovmasyan, G. 2016. Tourism development trends in the world. *European Journal of Economic Studies*, 3:429-434.
- Towner, N. 2018. Surfing tourism and local stakeholder collaboration. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 17(3):268-286.
- Tsai, C.Y. & Chung, S.H. 2012. A personalised route recommendation service for theme parks using RFID information and tourist behavior. *Decision Support Systems*, 52(2):514-527.
- Tuohino, A. & Konu, H. 2014. Local stakeholders' views about destination management: Who is leading tourism development? *Tourism Review*, 69(3):202-215.

Turner, C.E. 2018. *Community tourism as a form of empowerment for women: the case of the Mothers of Creation Route, Western Cape, South Africa*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. (Dissertation – MA).

Tussyadiah, I.P. & Zach, F.J. 2012. The role of geo-based technology in place experiences. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(2):780-800.

Untari, D.T. & Satria, B. 2019. Measuring website effectiveness in communicating tourism destinations in Jakarta, Indonesia. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 8(4):1-16.

Uriely, N., Israeli, A. & Reichel, A. 2003. Religious identity and residents' attitudes toward heritage tourism development: The case of Nazareth. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 27(1):69-84.

Uwaisy, M.A., Baizal, Z.K.A. & Reditya, M.Y. 2019. Recommendation of scheduling tourism routes using tabu search method (case study bandung). *Procedia Computer Science*, 157:150-159.

Uysal, M., Perdue, R.R. & Sirgy, M.J. eds. 2012. *Handbook of tourism and quality-of-life research: Enhancing the lives of tourists and residents of host communities* (Vol. 1). Dordrecht: Springer.

Vaismoradi, M., Jones, J., Turunen, H. & Snelgrove, S. 2016. Theme development in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 6(5):100-110.

Van der Merwe, C.D. & Rogerson, C.M. 2018. The local development challenges of industrial heritage in the developing world: Evidence from Cullinan, South Africa. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 21(1):186-199.

Van der Merwe, C.D. 2014. Battlefields tourism: The status of heritage tourism in Dundee, South Africa. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, 26(26):121-139.

Van der Merwe, P. 2019. Tourism sustainability [e-mail]. 1 May, Potchefstroom.

Van Wyk-Jacobs, L. 2018. *Astro-tourism as a catalyst for rural route development*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. (Thesis – PhD).

- Vargas, A., Plaza, M.A. & Porras, N. 2007. Industrial tourism development and local community perceptions: the case of 'Minas de Riotinto '(Spain). *Advances in Tourism Economics. Portugal, Instituto Piaget*, (4):25:32.
- Vernon, J., Essex, S., Pinder, D. & Curry, K. 2005. Collaborative policymaking: Local sustainable projects. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(2):325-345.
- Viljoen, F. 2007. *Sustainability indicators for monitoring tourism route development in Africa*. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch. (Thesis – PhD).
- Viljoen, F., Viljoen, J. & Struwig, J. 2010. Pro-poor tourism routes: The Open Africa experience. *Acta Academica*, 42(4):65-90.
- Viljoen, J. & Tlabela, K. 2007. *Rural tourism in South Africa: trends and challenges*. HSCR. <https://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/books/rural-tourism-development-in-south-africa>
Date of access: 22 Apr. 2022.
- Vink, P., Imada, A.S. & Zink, K.J. 2008. Defining stakeholder involvement in participatory design processes. *Applied Ergonomics*, 39(4):519-526.
- Visser, G. & Kotze, N. 2004. Towards a tourism development strategy for the Free State Province. Centre for Development Support (CDS). 2004. Towards a tourism development strategy for the Free State Province. CDS Research Report, LED and SMME Development, 2004(6). Bloemfontein: University of the Free State (UFS).
[https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider23/centre-for-development-support-documents/all-documents/led---research-report-2004\(6\)-72-eng.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=0](https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider23/centre-for-development-support-documents/all-documents/led---research-report-2004(6)-72-eng.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=0) Date of access: 22 Apr. 2022.
- Visser, G. & Kotze, N. 2006. The Free State tourism economy: current dynamics, immediate challenges and future research prospects. *South African Geographical Journal*, 88(1):88-101.
- Visser, G. & Rogerson, C.M. 2004. Researching the South African tourism and development nexus. *GeoJournal*, 60(3):201-215.

- Vogt, C., Jordan, E., Grewe, N. & Kruger, L. 2016. Collaborative tourism planning and subjective well-being in a small island destination. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 5(1):36-43.
- Vujko, A. & Gajić, T. 2014. The government policy impact on economic development of tourism. *Economics of Agriculture*, 61(3):789-804.
- Waligo, V.M., Clarke, J. & Hawkins, R, 2015. Embedding stakeholders in sustainable tourism strategies. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 55:90-93.
- Waligo, V.M., Clarke, J. & Hawkins, R. 2013. Implementing sustainable tourism: A multi-stakeholder involvement management framework. *Tourism Management*, 36:342-353.
- Wang, H., Yang, Z., Chen, L., Yang, J. & Li, R. 2010. Minority community participation in tourism: A case of Kanas Tuva villages in Xinjiang, China. *Tourism Management*, 31(6):759-764.
- Warcholik, W. & Chmielowska, D. 2021. Profile of a participant in mantrailing in Poland. *Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe*, 4(3):143-154.
- Ward-Perkins, D., Beckmann, C. & Ellis, J. 2020. Tourism routes and their identity. In: Ward-Perkins, D., Beckmann, C. & Ellis, J., eds. *Tourism Routes and Trails: Theory and Practice*, UK: Severn, Gloucester. pp. 1-15.
- Wattanacharoensil, W. & Schuckert, M. 2016. Reviewing Thailand's master plans and policies: Implications for creative tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 19(10):1045-1070.
- Weber, F., Stettler, J., Priskin, J., Rosenberg-Taufer, B., Ponnappureddy, S., Fux, S., Camp, M.A. & Barth, M. 2017. *Tourism destinations under pressure-Challenges and Innovative Solutions*. Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Institute of Tourism ITW: Lucerna, Switzerland.
- [file:///C:/Users/13018493/Dropbox/PC/Downloads/WTFL_study_2017_short_version .pdf](file:///C:/Users/13018493/Dropbox/PC/Downloads/WTFL_study_2017_short_version.pdf) Date of access: 23 Apr. 2022.
- Widodo, H.P. 2014. Methodological considerations in interview data transcription. *International Journal of Innovation in English Language Teaching and Research*, 3(1):101-107.

- William, P. W. & Ponford, I.F. 2009. Confronting Tourism's Environmental Paradox: Transitioning for Sustainable Development. *Futures*, 41(6):396-404.
- Willis, D.G., Sullivan-Bolyai, S., Knafl, K. & Cohen, M.Z. 2016. Distinguishing features and similarities between descriptive phenomenological and qualitative description research. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 38(9):1185-1204.
- Wilson, S., Fesenmaier, D.R., Fesenmaier, J. & Van Es, J.C. 2001. Factors for success in rural tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 40(2):132-138.
- Wisdom, E. 2015. *The impact of e-marketing on business performance: A case study of the Midlands Meander Association members*. Durban: Durban University of Technology. (Thesis – PhD).
- Wondirad, A. & Ewnetu, B. 2019. Community participation in tourism development as a tool to foster sustainable land and resource use practices in a national park milieu. *Land Use Policy*, 88, art. #104155. doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2019.104155
- Wondirad, A., Tolkach, D. & King, B. 2020. Stakeholder collaboration as a major factor for sustainable ecotourism development in developing countries. *Tourism Management*, 78:1-21.
- Wong, I.A. & Lam, I.K.V. 2016. A multilevel investigation of the role of retail stores in cross-border shopping. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 33(6):837-853.
- Woo, E., Uysal, M. & Sirgy, M.J. 2018. Tourism impact and stakeholders' quality of life. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 42(2):260-286.
- World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). 2021. *International Tourism Highlights, 2020 Edition*. Available from UNWTO e-Library: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284422456> Date of access:
- World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). 2022. Sustainable development. <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development> Date of access: 23 Apr. 2022.
- Worthington, M. 2013. *Differences between phenomenological research and a basic qualitative research design*. London: Capella University.

- Xiang, Z., Wober, K. & Fesenmaier, D.R. 2008. Representation of the Online Tourism Domain in Search Engines. *Journal of Travel Research*, 47(2):137-150.
- Xiang, Z., Wöber, K. & Fesenmaier, D.R. 2008. Representation of the online tourism domain in search engines. *Journal of Travel Research*, 47(2):137-150.
- Xiong, W. 2017. Study on integrative development of regional tourism of Nanchang-Fuzhou. *Conference proceedings*. 2016 International Conference on Engineering Management (Iconf-EM 2016), Nanchang Normal University. China: Nanchang Jiangxi, Atlantis Press. pp. 54-59.
- Xu, S., Barbieri, C. & Seekamp, E. 2020. Social capital along wine trails: Spilling the wine to residents?. *Sustainability*, 12(4):1592.
- Xu, S., Barbieri, C., Anderson, D., Leung, Y.F. & Rozier-Rich, S. 2016a. Residents' perceptions of wine tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 55:276-286.
- Xu, S., Leung, Y.F. & Barbieri, C. 2016b. Characterizing themed touring routes: A geospatial and tourism evaluation of wine trails. *Tourism Planning and Development*, 13(2):168-184.
- Yamamoto, S. 2006. A functional study on tourism associations in Japan. *Journal of Nagoya Gakuin University*, 53(3):163-170.
- Yang, L., Liu, S., Tsoka, S. & Papageorgiou, L.G. 2016. Mathematical programming for piecewise linear regression analysis. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 44:156-167.
- Yang, R., Wang, Y. & Nie, H. 2012. The Political Promotion for Quasi-Government Officers: Evidence from Central State-owned Enterprises in China]. MPRA Paper 50317, University Library of Munich, Germany.
- Yfantidou, G. & Matarazzo, M. 2017. The future of sustainable tourism in developing countries. *Sustainable Development*, 25(6):459-466.
- Yoon, Y., Kim, S.S. & Kim, S.S. 2015. Successful and unsuccessful film tourism destinations: From the perspective of Korean local residents' perceptions of film tourism impacts. *Tourism Analysis*, 20(3):297-311.

Zajadacz, A. 2015. Evolution of models of disability as a basis for further policy changes in accessible tourism. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 1(3):189-202.

Zajadacz, A. 2015. Evolution of models of disability as a basis for further policy changes in accessible tourism. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 1(3):187-200.

Zeng, B. 2018. How can social enterprises contribute to sustainable pro-poor tourism development? *Chinese Journal of Population Resources and Environment*, 16(2):159-170.

Zeng, W., Shen, Q., Jiang, Y. & Telea, A. 2019. Route-Aware Edge Bundling for Visualizing Origin-Destination Trails in Urban Traffic. *Computer Graphics Forum*, 38(3):581-593.

Zhao, H., Zheng, J., Xu, J. & Deng, W. 2019. Fault diagnosis method based on principal component analysis and broad learning system. *IEEE Access*, 7:99263-99272. doi: 10.1109/ACCESS.2019.2929094

Zheng, W., Liao, Z. & Qin, J. 2017. Using a four-step heuristic algorithm to design personalized day tour route within a tourist attraction. *Tourism Management*, 62:335-349.

Zhou, X., Gao, K., Lun, Y., Zhu, J., Yang, Z. & Tong, Q. 2018, March. Tourism Route Plan Algorithm Based on Sight Spot Buffer Motive Iteration. In *2018 International Conference on Mathematics, Modelling, Simulation and Algorithms (MMSA 2018)*. Atlantis Press. pp. 169-172.

[file:///C:/Users/NWUUSER/Downloads/25894292%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/NWUUSER/Downloads/25894292%20(1).pdf) Date of access: 12 Jul. 2022.

ANNEXURES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE NUMBER

Phase 1



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Economic and Management Sciences Research
Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)
Tel: 018 299-1427
Email: Bennie.Linde@nwu.ac.za

30 August 2019

Dr M Scholtz
Per e-mail
Dear Dr Scholtz

EMS-REC FEEDBACK: 30082019
M J Ramoliki (26879557)(NWU-01317-19-A4)
MCom in Tourism Management – Dr M Scholtz

Your ethics application on, *A stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa*, that served on the EMS-REC meeting of 30 August 2019, refers.

Outcome:

Approved as a minimal risk study. A number **NWU-01317-19-A4** is given for three years of ethics clearance. It is suggested that the researchers' contact details are provided in the questionnaire and that the time to complete the questionnaire is revisited (15 minutes for 40 items seem more appropriate).

Kind regards,

Prof Bennie Linde
Chairperson: Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)
Potchefstroom Campus

Phase 2



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Economic and Management Sciences Research
Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)

30 August 2021

Prof M Kruger and Prof M Scholtz

Per e-mail

Dear Prof Kruger and Prof Scholtz

EMS-REC FEEDBACK: 27082021

Student: Ramoliki, MJ (26879557)(NWU-01317-19-A4)

Applicant: Prof M Kruger and Prof M Scholtz – PhD in Tourism

Your ethics application on, ***A stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa***, which served on the EMSREC meeting of 27 August 2021, refers.

Outcome:

The next phase of the minimal research phased study has been approved. A number **NWU-01317-19-A4** is given for one year of ethics clearance.

Please note that the ethics approval of this application is subject to the Covid-19 protocols.

Kind regards,

Mark
Rathbone

Digitally signed by Mark Rathbone
DN: cn=Mark Rathbone, o=North-
West University, ou=Business
management,
email=mark.rathbone@nwu.ac.za,
c=ZA
Date: 2021.08.31 10:21:00 +02'00'

Prof Mark Rathbone

**Chairperson: Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee
(EMS-REC)**

*Please note that Higher Degrees suggested an amendment to the title on 23 March 2022, and therefore, a new Ethics clearance letter had to be issued to reflect the new title. Since the original title did not include the word “Developing”, the informed consent letters for both Phases of data collection do not reflect the verb in the title. This cannot be changed on the letters as it was approved as part of the original ethical clearance process.



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-4849
Email: nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za

31 March 2022

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)** on 25/03/2022, the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-RERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Developing a stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa																																						
Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof M Kruger / Prof M Scholtz – PhD in Tourism																																						
Student: Ramoliki, MJ (26879557)																																						
Ethics number:		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>7</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>9</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Institution</td> <td colspan="5">Study Number</td> <td colspan="2">Year</td> <td colspan="4">Status</td> </tr> </table>								N	W	U	-	0	1	3	1	7	-	1	9	-	A	4	Institution			Study Number					Year		Status			
N	W	U	-	0	1	3	1	7	-	1	9	-	A	4																								
Institution			Study Number					Year		Status																												
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation																																						
Application Type:		Risk: Low																																				
Commencement date: 31 March 2022																																						
Expiry date: 31 March 2023																																						
Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.																																						

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

•

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EMS-REC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EMS-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
 - In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EMS-REC reserves the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;

- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
- withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EMS-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- Please note that the ethics approval of this application is subject to the Covid-19 protocols.

The EMS-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

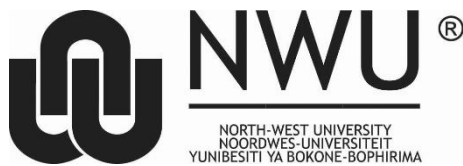
**Mark
Rathbone**

Digitally signed by Mark Rathbone
DN: cn=Mark Rathbone, o=North-
West University, ou=Business
management,
email=mark.rathbone@nwu.ac.za,
c=ZA
Date: 2022.04.01 12:18:35 +02'00'

Prof Mark Rathbone

Chairperson: NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE AIMED AT TOURISM ROUTE PLANNERS



Dear participant,

My name is Mpho Ramoliki, and I am a PhD student at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. The title of my study is “A stakeholder involvement framework towards tourism route development in South Africa”. The role of participants in this survey is to assist the research with all necessary information as per the below-listed questions to attain the objective of “A stakeholder involvement framework towards tourism routes development in South Africa”. This includes your perceptions of Eagle Tourism Route’s planning, development and management and how the residents who live in communities located on this route form part as stakeholders in the route. It is important that you, as a potential participant, read and take note of the following before deciding to participate in this study:

- This interview will take about fifteen minutes of your time.
- You do not need to answer questions you are not comfortable with.
- The reasons for asking socio-demographic questions are to obtain more information about the different types of participants and help me better understand other aspects of the research. You do not have to worry about being singled out in the research as such information will be reported in aggregate, meaning that you will not be connected to the socio-demographic information in any way.
- Please note that you will not receive any form of compensation for participating.
- You may stop the interview at any point in time as and when you feel uncomfortable.
- With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded. All recordings will be held on a secure server at the university with limited access. After all the data has been processed, the recordings will be destroyed.

By signing below, you confirm that you will participate in this interview, acknowledge that you understand this study's aim, and accept the information provided above.

Signature

Date

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

TOURISM PLANNERS – FREE STATE GAMBLING, LIQUOR AND TOURISM AUTHORITY

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS

- 1.1 Gender: _____
- 1.2 Year of birth: _____
- 1.3 Highest Qualification: _____
- 1.4 Years of service at the Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority: _____

SECTION B: MORE INFORMATION ABOUT JOB POSITION

- 2.1 What are your current job responsibilities?
- 2.2 What level of government do you report to?
- 2.3 What are you reporting about?
- 2.4 How do you report to your seniors?
- 2.5 How often do you report to your seniors?
- 2.6 Is there anything you would like to add about your job position?

SECTION C: INVOLVEMENT IN TOURISM ROUTES

- 3.1 What are the names of your tourism routes in the Free State, and how many are there?
- 3.2 When were these tourism routes conceptualised and implemented?
- 3.3 What was the purpose of developing these tourism routes in the Free State and in all five districts of the Province?
- 3.4 What is your involvement in the tourism routes of the Free State?
- 3.5 What are the benefits of these tourism routes?
- 3.6 Who were the intended beneficiaries of the development of these tourism routes?
- 3.7 Who is currently benefiting from these routes?
- 3.8 How do they benefit?
- 3.9 Is there anything you may like to add about your involvement in tourism routes that we did not discuss?

SECTION D: THE STATE OF TOURISM ROUTES IN THE FREE STATE

- 4.1 How do all the Free State tourism routes operate?
- 4.2 Who is responsible for the management and marketing of the tourism routes of the Free State?
- 4.3 How are these routes marketed?
- 4.4 How can the marketing of these tourism routes be improved?
- 4.5 Who else is actively involved in the tourism routes? What role do they play?
- 4.6 Do you have any associations involved in the tourism routes?
If yes, what are their roles?
- 4.7 What types of attractions are included in the tourism routes?
- 4.8 Where these routes ever reviewed since they were developed?
- 4.9 Are these routes still operating according to how they were developed?
- 4.10 What is one good aspect of these tourism routes?
- 4.11 What are general problems experienced in the operation of these tourism routes?
- 4.12 Is there anything you may like to say about the state of tourism routes that did not discussed?

SECTION E: ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN TOURISM ROUTES DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 Who are the routes' primary stakeholders?
- 5.2 How many tourism and non-tourism stakeholders do the tourism routes have?
- 5.3 What was the level of involvement of the residents as stakeholders in the development of tourism routes?
- 5.4 How are tourism business owner stakeholder involved in the tourism routes?
- 5.5 How are the non-tourism business owners involved in the tourism routes?
- 5.6 What role did the stakeholders play during the development of the tourism routes?
- 5.7 What role is the stakeholders playing in the management and marketing of tourism routes?
- 5.8 Were these stakeholders involved during the development of the tourism routes?
- 5.9 How were these stakeholders involved in the development of the tourism routes?
- 5.10 Are there any benefits available for the stakeholder's involvement in the tourism routes?

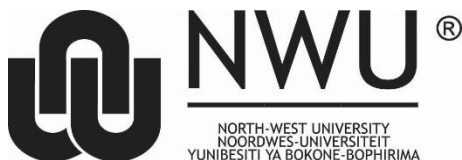
5.11 What types of benefits are there for the stakeholders?

5.12 Is there any other thing that you may like to add about the involvement of stakeholders that was not discussed?

Thank you for your participation.

Should you have any further questions regarding this survey, please feel free to contact me at mphor@live.co.za / 083 698 7319 or my study leader at Marco.Scholtz@nwu.ac.za / 081 232 2543.

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE AIMED AT TOURISM BUSINESS PROVIDERS



Private bag X05, Noordbrug
South Africa, 2522
Tel: 018 299-2000
Fax: 018 299-2999
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>
TREES
Tel: 018 299 1980
Fax: 018 299 4140

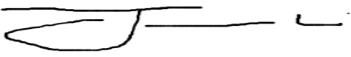
Dear Respondent,

I am **Mpho Ramoliki**, a PhD student at North-West University (NWU). As part of my PhD studies, I am conducting research and request you to form part of it. The title of my study is **Stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa. The ethical clearance number for the project is NWU-01317-19-A4**. The primary goal of this research is mainly for academic purposes. The study seeks to develop a framework towards sustainable tourism route development through stakeholder involvement in South Africa with the Eagle tourism route in the Free State Province as a case study.

Please note the following:

- Your participation in this research is entirely voluntarily, and you will receive no form of compensation.
- Any personal identifying information (such as business information) will remain confidential and is handled in line with the rules formulated in the Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013). Only the student and the research supervisors will have access to this data.
- Your business information will thus not be used to single you out from the sample but will instead be used as part of a collective profile of participants. This profile is important for comparing the characteristics of participants and their views regarding the Eagle tourism routes for research purposes.
- The survey includes questions concerning the Eagle tourism route. The tourism route development in the Free State is measured, and the tourism route stakeholders involved in the tourism route will also be measured. The questionnaire will further request your views regarding your involvement as a tourism business provider during the planning and development of tourism routes, management and marketing of the tourism route, and the local economy's growth and the local community benefiting from the tourism route. Your views will assist in the development of a stakeholder involvement framework for sustainable tourism route development. Your opinions will also be used as part of a collective profile; thus, no individual responses will be singled out.
- Your information will remain anonymous – no personal information that can link the data to you will be asked. Responses from each individual will not be identified, but the results will be presented in aggregate (the group's results will be presented as a whole), and no individual results will be reported.
- All data obtained will be securely stored at the tourism research entity (TREES) at the NWU, with only the primary researchers having access to the data. The data will be stored for five years, in line with good research practice.
- The research results will be published as a chapter in my thesis and in the form of peer-reviewed academic publications and conference presentations.
- This questionnaire should take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete.
- While it will be required that respondents answer each question, if you feel, at any time, that you want to halt participation in this study, please feel free to do so without judgement.

If you are comfortable with the content and have no objections, please complete the questionnaire. By continuing with this questionnaire, you agree to the terms and conditions of this research. You agree that you have read the above information and give permission to use your responses as stated above. Moreover, you consent that your business information may be used to develop a profile of the tourism business providers participating in the survey. For any further information, feel free to contact the principal researcher, or my supervisors.

Researcher: Mr Mpho Ramoliki mphor@live.co.za 083 698 7319 	Promotor: Prof Marco Scholtz marco.scholtz@thomasmore.be 	Co-Promotor: Prof Martinette Kruger Martinette.kruger@nwu.ac.za Tel: (018) 299 1980 

Thank you for your participation!

TOURISM BUSINESS PROVIDERS AS STAKEHOLDERS OF A TOURISM ROUTE

SECTION A: TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

This section contains questions related to your business profile. This information will not be used to single you out from the sample but will instead be used as part of a collective profile.

1. What type of tourism business do you own or work at?

Transportation service	1	Tourist attraction	7
Travel agency	2	Outdoor recreation and activities	8
Tour operator	3	Other, please specify below	9
Guided tours and tour guide	4		
Accommodation	5		
Hospitality (food and beverage)	6		

2. Indicate the number of years that your business/company is in operation. years

3. What is your job function/position? _____

4. Who is your main target market(s)? e.g., young couples from Gauteng interested in adventure activities.

SECTION B: TOURISM BUSINESS PROVIDERS AS STAKEHOLDERS IN THE TOURISM ROUTE

5. Which of these sentences best describes how you formed part of the tourism route planning, development, and management? You may select **more than one** option.

1. I took part in the planning process.	1
2. I was invited to make inputs.	2
3. I am part of the planning committee.	3
4. I was only informed about the route (not involved in the planning and management at all).	4
5. I am not involved at all.	5
6. I am unaware of the tourism route.	6
7. I am a member of the tourism association.	10
8. I am a primary stakeholder in this route.	11

6. Do you feel that tourism can be further developed / expanded along the Eagle Route? Please elaborate.

7. Do you feel that the support of the tourism business providers is important for sustainable / further tourism route developments? Please elaborate.

8. Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements regarding cooperation and tourism business providers' involvement as stakeholders in the tourism route development.

	Completely agree				
	Agree				
	Neutral				
	Disagree				
	Completely disagree				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. The government actively involved tourism business providers in the tourism route development.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Tourism planners involved non-tourism businesses (e.g., retail, hardware etc.) in the development of the tourism route.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Meetings were regularly held with tourism business providers to get their say / opinions of the route.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Tourism business providers are made well aware of the existence of the tourism route.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Product owners who were previously disadvantaged now form part of the tourism route.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The tourism route brings in more money to the district.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Regular information updates about the route are received from the tourism planner.	1	2	3	4	5
8. There is a good level of communication between the planners and the tourism business providers.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Tourism and non-tourism businesses form part of the tourism route.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Tourism business providers are involved in the management and marketing of the route.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND BARRIERS IN TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

9. What do you think is key in developing a sustainable tourism route?

	Extremely important				
	Important				
	Neutral				
	Unimportant				
	Not important at all				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Road quality and maintenance.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Tourism infrastructure development.					
3. Branding of the route.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Linkages with other sectors e.g., the private sector.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Tourism activities and products along the route.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Website development.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Information platforms e.g., websites, social media engagement and a route App.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Information boards and signage.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Attending trade shows to market the route.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Getting tourism product owners to join as members of the route.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Location to target market(s), i.e., market is easily accessible.	1	2	3	4	5

12. Government funding and support.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Board of directors / committee that can manage the route with the necessary skills.	1	2	3	4	5
14. The route must be en-route to major tourist destinations.	1	2	3	4	5

10. To what extent do you see the following as barriers to tourism route development to reach its full potential?

	Completely agree				
	Agree				
	Neutral				
	Disagree				
	Completely disagree				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Tourism business providers and the government do not understand one another.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The government is doing a bad job at managing the tourism route.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The government is making decisions about the tourism route without talking to the tourism business providers.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The government is not planning tourism products very well.	1	2	3	4	5
5. There are too many of the same tourism products (i.e. Cherry farm in Ficksburg and Cherry wine farm in Clocolan).	1	2	3	4	5
6. The government is not providing funding to operate the tourism route.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The government is not embarking on tourism route awareness campaigns.	1	2	3	4	5
8. There is poor policy development around the development of the tourism route.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The roads are in poor condition, and there is a lack of signage.	1	2	3	4	5
10. There are not many tourist attractions in the district.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Tourism products and services are inaccessible either as an entrepreneur or tourist.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The tourism products and attractions are not well maintained.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Lack of funding is slowing the speed at which the tourism routes can develop.	1	2	3	4	5
14. There is no cooperation between government, private sector, local communities and tourism business providers.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Government officials do not have enough knowledge about the tourism industry.	1	2	3	4	5
16. There is a limited understanding of the tourism industry by the local community.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The government is not training entrepreneurs who work within the route.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Tourism businesses are not supported well enough by the government.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Tourism route associations are not actively involved in the operation of the route.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Tourism businesses are not benefiting from the route.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Local communities are not benefiting from the route.	1	2	3	4	5
22. There are few economic benefits for the local communities.	1	2	3	4	5
23. The route creates no adequate job opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
24. The marketing of tourism route is bad / poor.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Tour guides and operators are not involved in the operation of the route.	1	2	3	4	5
26. The stakeholders do not trust one another.	1	2	3	4	5

27. It is challenging to get the community to take part in tourism activities on this route.	1	2	3	4	5
28. The theme / name of the route does not work / fit with the district.	1	2	3	4	5
29. There is no App available that acts as a tourism route guide.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Many accommodation establishments are still not graded even though the route is there.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: PERCEIVED TOURISM ROUTE BENEFITS

11. To what extent do you expect the following benefits as a result of the tourism route?

Because of the tourism route...	Completely agree				
	Agree				
	Neutral				
	Disagree				
	Completely disagree				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Tour guides and tour operators need to benefit from packaged tourism products.	1	2	3	4	5
2. All tourism stakeholders must work together in the operation of the route.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The area needs to attract more tourists.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Together with the tourism business providers, the community members need to be more involved in the tourism route.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Local tourism products must be more recognised.	1	2	3	4	5
6. More job opportunities need to be created.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The district must experience economic growth.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Tourism business providers in the area must be included in the provincial government brochures.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Tourism business providers in the area market must be able to market themselves as part of the route.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The government website must be accessible and regularly updated with new route information.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The government tourism offices must be accessible and known to tourism business providers.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The route ambassadors and tourism business providers must meet regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Tourists need to be aware and use the provincial government tourism route App.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Tourism route associations must work together with all stakeholders.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Tourism-related businesses must feel supported by the government.	1	2	3	4	5
16. The tourism route must be operational on full-time basis (seven days a week).	1	2	3	4	5
17. The "I love Free State" Facebook page must be known to tourism business providers.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Shisanyamas need to identify themselves as part of the tourism route.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Previously disadvantaged residents must be included in the tourism route.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Township products must form part of the tourism route.	1	2	3	4	5
21. The road infrastructure of the area must improve.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Job opportunities must be created for the local community residents.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Local tourism businesses need to experience high occupancy rates.	1	2	3	4	5

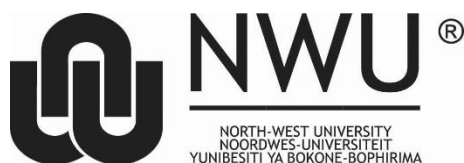
12. Do you have any suggestions regarding the involvement of tourism business providers as stakeholders in the tourism route?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Research conducted by Tourism Research in Economics, Environs and Society, North-West University.

Copyright ©2021

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE AIMED AT PERMANENT RESIDENTS



Private bag X05, Noordbrug
South Africa, 2522
Tel: 018 299-2000
Fax: 018 299-2999
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>
TREES
Tel: 018 299 1980
Fax: 018 299 4140

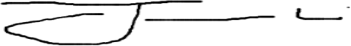
Dear Respondent,

I am **Mpho Ramoliki**, a PhD student at North-West University (NWU). As part of my PhD studies, I am conducting research and request you to form part of it. The title of my study is **Stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa. The ethical clearance number for the project is NWU-01317-19-A4**. The primary goal of this research is mainly for academic purposes. The study seeks to develop a framework towards sustainable tourism route development through stakeholder involvement in South Africa with the Eagle tourism route in the Free State Province as a case study.

Please note the following:

- Only permanent residents can form part of the research.
- Your participation in this research is entirely voluntarily, and you will receive no form of compensation.
- Any personal identifying information (such as biographic information) will remain confidential and is handled in line with the rules formulated in the Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013). Only the student and the research supervisors will have access to this data.
- Your information will thus not be used to single you out from the sample but will instead be used as part of a collective profile of participants. This profile is important for comparing the characteristics of local residents and their views regarding the Eagle tourism routes for research purposes.
- The interview includes questions concerning the Eagle tourism route. The tourism route development in the Free State is measured, and the tourism route stakeholders involved in the tourism route will also be measured. The interview questions will further request your views regarding your involvement as a community resident during the planning and development of tourism routes, management and marketing of the tourism route, and the local economy's growth and the local community benefiting from the tourism route. Your views will assist in the development of a stakeholder involvement framework for sustainable tourism route development. Your opinions will also be used as part of a collective profile; thus, no individual responses will be singled out.
- Your information will remain anonymous – no personal information that can link the data to you will be asked. Responses from each individual will not be identified, but the results will be presented in aggregate (the group's results will be presented as a whole), and no individual results will be reported.
- All data obtained will be securely stored at the tourism research entity (TREES) at the NWU, with only the primary researchers having access to the data. The data will be stored for five years, in line with good research practice.
- The research results will be published as a chapter in my thesis and in the form of peer-reviewed academic publications and conference presentations.
- This interview should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.
- While it will be required that respondents answer each question, if you feel, at any time, that you want to halt participation in this study, please feel free to do so without judgement.

If you are comfortable with the content and have no objections, we will start with the interview. By participating in this interview, you agree to the terms and conditions of this research. You agree that you have read the above information and give permission to use your responses as stated above. Moreover, you consent that the interview may be recorded. For any further information, feel free to contact the principal researcher, or my supervisors.

Researcher: Mr Mpho Ramoliki mphor@live.co.za 083 698 7319 	Promotor: Prof Marco Scholtz marco.scholtz@thomasmore.be 	Co-Promotor: Prof Martinette Kruger Martinette.kruger@nwu.ac.za Tel: (018) 299 1980 

Thank you for your participation!

INTERVIEW GUIDE: LOCAL RESIDENTS

Stakeholder involvement framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa

Interviewer notes will be captured regarding the participant remarks. Probing questions will be used to encourage participants to elaborate on particular comments. After the completion of the interview, the participants will be thanked for their participation.

Only community members of the town can be included.

Screening question: Are you a local resident? If yes, the interview will continue. If no, the interviewer will thank the participant and explain why they cannot form part of the research.

SECTION A: PARTICIPANT PROFILE

1. How many years have you lived in this town?

SECTION B: EAGLE TOURISM ROUTE AWARENESS

2. Do you know that you are currently living along a tourism route?

If the participant is aware, follow-up questions will include if they know the name of the route and the year the route was established. The rest of the interview will also continue.

If the participant is unaware, they will be asked to answer the rest of the questions.

3. How does the (Eagle) tourism route influence your community in general? (Participants will be asked to elaborate if they feel that the route positively or negatively influences the community and residents.)

SECTION C: RESIDENTS AS TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

4. Do you feel that the support of the residents of this community is important for sustainable / further tourism route developments? (Participants will be asked to elaborate on their answer.)

5. Do you feel that the residents formed part of the tourism route planning, development, and management? (Participants will be asked to elaborate on their answers. For example, if they indicated yes, they need to elaborate to what extent they were involved.)

6. In your opinion, what is the biggest barriers that deter residents from being involved in the tourism route? (Participants will be asked to elaborate on their answers. Probes will include a lack of communication between stakeholders, a lack of awareness and opportunities for residents etc.)

7. What benefits to the community do you expect to see because of the tourism route? (Participants will be asked to elaborate on their answers. Probes include more job opportunities, infrastructure development and maintenance, greater participation and awareness of the route, improved marketing of the area etc.)

8. In your opinion, what are the critical aspects for a successful tourism route? (Probes include road quality and maintenance, infrastructure development, government support, community involvement etc.)

9. Do you have any suggestions regarding the involvement of residents as tourism stakeholders in the tourism route? (Participants will be asked to elaborate on what they feel should improve for them to benefit from the tourism route and how greater involvement can be ensured.)

APPENDIX E: PHASE 2 INSTRUMENT VARIABLES

Question/Variable	Author(s) adapted from
SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
Year of birth	Jinks (1964); Berglin (1982)
Home language	Burges <i>et al.</i> (2013); Laosa (1984)
Permanent resident of the district	Khoo <i>et al.</i> (2008)
SECTION B: AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM ROUTE	
Existing tourism routes	Rogerson (2007); Rogerson and Rogerson (2011)
How do tourism routes influence your community	Lopez-Guzmán <i>et al.</i> (2011); Xu <i>et al.</i> (2016a, b); Nyaupane <i>et al.</i> (2006)
How do tourism routes influence you in general	Mnguni and Giampiccoli (2017); Lopez-Guzmán <i>et al.</i> (2011); Xu <i>et al.</i> (2016a, b); Nyaupane <i>et al.</i> (2006); McLaren (2011)
Potential for further tourism growth	Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Haxton (2015)
Support of residents is important for sustainable tourism route development	Lopez-Guzman <i>et al.</i> (2011); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Meyer (2004); Besculides <i>et al.</i> (2002); Uriely <i>et al.</i> (2003)
SECTION C: RESIDENTS AS STAKEHOLDERS IN THE TOURISM ROUTE	
I took part in the planning process	Besculides <i>et al.</i> (2002); Xu <i>et al.</i> (2016a, b); Akbar <i>et al.</i> (2020); Meyer (2004); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011a)
I was invited to make inputs	Uriley <i>et al.</i> (2003); Xu <i>et al.</i> (2016a, b); Harrill and Potts (2003); Fernades <i>et al.</i> (2012)
I am part of the planning committee	Uwaisy <i>et al.</i> (2019); Lourens (2007a, b)
I was only informed about the development of the route (Not involved at all)	Leiper (1979); Xu <i>et al.</i> (2016a, b)
I am unaware of the tourism route	Meyer (2004); Stors and Kagermeier (2013); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Pavluković <i>et al.</i> (2020)
I provide accommodation or catering	Rogerson (2007); Meyer (2004); Leiper (1979); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004)
I provide non-tourism services on the route	Stoddard <i>et al.</i> (2012); Tsai and Chung (2012)
I am a tour guide within the tourism route	Rodríguez <i>et al.</i> (2012); Sandaruwani and Gnanapala (2016); Leiper (1979)
I am a member of the tourism association	Lourens (2007a, b); McLaren and Heath (2003); Rogerson (2009); McLaren (2012)
I am a primary stakeholder in this route	Stephenson <i>et al.</i> (2018); Meyer (2004); Bruwer (2003); McLaren (2011)
To what extent do you agree with the following statements	
The government involved residents in the tourism route development	Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Meyer (2004)
The tourism association (s) played a role in the development of tourism routes	Rogerson (2007); Bruwer (2003); Burgess <i>et al.</i> (2014)
The government involved non-tourism businesses in the development of the route	Viljoen (2007); McLaren and Heath (2013); Xiang <i>et al.</i> (2008); Komppula (2014)
Meetings were regularly held with residents	Gonzalez <i>et al.</i> (2018)

Tourism planners were receptive to inputs of the residents	Xu <i>et al.</i> (2016a, b); Harrill and Potts (2003); Fernades <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Residents are made aware of the existence of the tourism routes	Meyer (2004); Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010)
Previously disadvantaged now form part of the tourism route	Meyer (2004); Lourens (2007a, b); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Rogerson (2002)
Tourism routes enhance the economic growth of the district	Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Notarstefano and Gristina (2021); Rogerson (2007); Meyer (2004)
Regular updates about the routes from the tourism planners	Khovanova-Rubicondo (2012); De Ascaniisa <i>et al.</i> (2020)
Good level of communication between planners and residents	Meyer (2004); Snowball and Courtney (2010)
Tourism and non-tourism businesses form part of the route	Kemperman <i>et al.</i> (2009)
Residents are involved in the management and marketing of the routes	Xu <i>et al.</i> (2016a, b); Xu <i>et al.</i> (2020); Corigliano (2002); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004)
Visible printed tourism route marketing material in the community	Rogerson (2007); McLaren (2011); Biggs and Purnell (2003)
Visible tourism route's digital marketing efforts	Garanti (2022); Castro <i>et al.</i> (2017)
SECTION D: EXPECTED TOURISM ROUTE BENEFITS	
Packaged tourism products benefit tour guides and operators	Meyer (2004); Frenzel and Blakeman (2015)
All tourism stakeholders work together within the routes	Bregoli <i>et al.</i> (2016); Lohmann and Vianna (2016); McLaren (2011)
There have been many tourists in the area since its establishment	Meyer (2004); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004)
Retail shops are always busy to the many tourists	Viljoen (2007); McLaren and Heath (2013)
Communities are now selling more wares	Sekole (2016)
Local tourism products are now more recognised	Meyer (2004); Lourens (2007a,b); Rogerson (2007); Bruwer (2003)
There are more job opportunities for the community	Rogerson (2007)
The district is experiencing economic growth	Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Notarstefano and Gristina (2021); Rogerson (2007); Meyer (2004)
Tourism products are now in the brochures	Bendito and Ramirez (2011)
The government website is accessible	Untari and Satria (2019)
Government tourism offices are now accessible and known to residents	Ramukumba and Ferreira (2016)
The route ambassador and residents meet regularly	Taniguchi <i>et al.</i> (2014)
Arts and crafts are being sold more	Rogerson and Rogerson (2011); Meyer (2004)
Residents regularly see route advertisements in media	Khokhar and Ellahi (2020)
Residents and tourists make use of the government tourism route App	Ramos-Soler <i>et al.</i> (2019); Gomez-Oliva <i>et al.</i> (2019); Jeong and Shin (2020)
Tourism-related businesses feel supported by the government	Ramukumba and Ferreira (2016)
Tourist attractions operate on a full-time basis	Tussyadiah and Zach (2012)
Visible activities (roadshows)	Lourens (2007a, b); Meyer (2004)

Stakeholders use ' <i>I love Free State</i> ' Facebook page for marketing	A statement that required verification based on the qualitative interviews
' <i>I love Free State</i> ' Facebook page is known to all stakeholders	A statement that required verification based on the qualitative interviews
Shisanyama are now active	Sekole (2016); A statement that required verification based on the qualitative interviews
Previously disadvantaged are more involved in tourism	Meyer (2004); Lourens (2007a, b); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Rogerson (2002); A statement that required verification based on the qualitative interviews
Township products are now recognised	Storrdart and Rogerson (2009); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); A statement that required verification based on the qualitative interviews
Road infrastructure is made durable for the traffic flow	Vujko and Gajic (2014); Orjuela <i>et al.</i> (2020)
Hotels and restaurants purchase more local products	Telfer and Wall (2000); Kang and Rajagopal (2014)
Local tourism businesses experience high occupancy rates	De Cantis <i>et al.</i> (2011); Andriotis (2005); A statement that required verification based on the qualitative interviews

APPENDIX F: PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING

To whom it may concern

Cecile van Zyl
Language editing and translation
Cell: 072 389 3450
Email: Cecile.vanZyl@nwu.ac.za

7 April 2022

Dear Mr / Ms

Re: Language editing of thesis (Developing a stakeholder involvement
framework towards sustainable tourism route development in South Africa)

I hereby declare that I language edited the above-mentioned dissertation by Mr Mpho Ramoliki (student
number: 26879557).

Please feel free to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Kind regards



Cecile van Zyl
Language practitioner
BA (PU for CHE); BA honours (NWU); MA (NWU)
SATI number: 1002391