

Development of a tourism management framework for Mapungubwe National Park

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SUMMARY

Development of a tourism management framework for Mapungubwe National Park (MNP)

MNP is one of the smallest and youngest national parks in the portfolio of South African National Parks (SANParks). The park is also a World Heritage Site because it contains the remnants of the ancient Kingdom of Mapungubwe, which was one of the first sophisticated southern African societies. The park currently faces challenges associated with mining in the area, the development of the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area, the presence of private and agricultural lands that split the park into two parts as well as management issues.

The management of national parks in South Africa is guided by a number of principles, one of which is strategic adaptive management, which is used by South African National Parks (SANParks) as the foundation of all the organisation's management plans. In addition, guidelines and legislation set by various international organisations and national government departments provide structures according to which protected areas, World Heritage Sites and national parks should function.

Sustainable tourism is the desired state for tourism. This means that tourism services should be managed towards achieving sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is considered a form of tourism that is strategic and that promotes the long-term integrity of natural and cultural resources, so that these resources are maintained as durable, permanent landscapes for future generations. Sustainable tourism strives to achieve economic viability without compromising the integrity of socio-cultural and natural environments. Therefore, sustainable tourism rests on three main pillars, namely socio-cultural integrity, economic integrity and environmental integrity.

The primary objective of this study was to develop a tourism management framework for the Mapungubwe National Park (MNP). It is a young national park that faces a unique set of management challenges. Currently the tourism management plan of the park is contained within the overall management plan of the park and it does not address the major management challenges of the park. For this reason it is imperative to develop a management framework in this regard that takes into account the management challenges that face the park in order to ensure that sustainable tourism is achieved.

The research approach used in this study included both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. An explorative research approach was followed through a self-administered online questionnaire with the aim of determining the perceptions of visitors about the importance of various management and sustainable tourism tasks and how effectively they perceived those tasks to be executed at MNP. Fifty-four constructs pertaining to aspects of park management and sustainable tourism were measured on a five-point Likert scale. These constructs were determined through a literature review. The sources consulted included the following: Saayman (2009), Swarbrooke (2002), George (2007), Mancini (2013), SANParks (2010), Keyser, (2002:351), Coetzee (2004:184), Himbira, Saarinen, Athlapheng and Manwa (2010:278), Borges, Carbone, Bushell, and Jäger (2011:8), Sebele (2010:146), Vanhove, (2011:223), Logar (2010:130) and Pedersen (2002:34).

The questionnaire was distributed electronically to a database of visitors who had stayed at MNP over a period of 12 months. The researcher also distributed questionnaires manually at the park. Data collection took place during March and April 2013. A total of 486 responses were received during the period of data collection. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the management of MNP and with surrounding land owners in the data-collection period.

The results of the empirical quantitative data were processed at the Statistical Consultation Services at the Potchefstroom Campus of North-West University. The data was analysed using version 21 of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. The statistical methods utilised included descriptive statistics through frequencies and means, exploratory factor analysis and t-tests. The interviews conducted were transcribed using F4 software and analysed by means of the ATLAS.ti software package. Data analysis included the use of data coding in order to identify underlying themes in the data.

The results of the descriptive data indicated that the following five management constructs were seen as most important from a visitor perspective: the cleanliness of ablution facilities, the cleanliness of accommodation facilities, the reintroduction of indigenous game species, the control of domestic animals in the park, and the professionalism of reception staff. In terms of the management effectiveness, the following five constructs were rated the highest: the cleanliness of ablution facilities, the performance of housekeeping staff, hours of operation of park reception, the value for money of accommodation at MNP, and the professional operation of tours to Mapungubwe Hill.

The exploratory factor analysis identified 11 factors related to management and sustainable tourism, namely (1) information and accessibility, (2) accommodation and ablution facilities, (3) food and beverages, (4) leisure facilities, (5) professionalism of tours, (6) conservation, (7) concessions, (8) human resources, (9) regulations and marketing, (10) socio-economic impacts and (11) environmental impacts. These factors were compared through a t-test and gaps in management effectiveness were identified in all factors with the exception of concessions.

Qualitative data analysis of the interviews with local land owners revealed a number of themes that highlighted the concerns experienced by these stakeholders. These themes were local land owner issues, mining issues, management issues, transfrontier conservation area issues and world heritage issues. The main themes arising from interviews with management included local land owner issues, mining issues, MNP management issues, transfrontier conservation area issues, tourism issues and world heritage issues.

This research made the following contributions to the field of sustainable tourism management in protected areas:

- ✚ This study contributed a critical assessment of literature based on park and protected area management frameworks. These frameworks were presented in chronological order and provide a theoretical basis for the future development of management frameworks for parks and protected areas.
- ✚ This study proved that tourism management frameworks should be park specific and not generic in nature as all national parks have their own unique set of environmental conditions.
- ✚ This study developed the first integrated framework for the management of tourism services at MNP.
- ✚ This study has proved that SANParks has to manage all three spheres of management, namely conservation, ecotourism and constituency building, effectively in order to bring about the effective management of national parks in South Africa. In the case of MNP, management does not engage successfully with visitors (tourists) and the local community (local land owners), which has led to a mutual aversion and to misunderstandings between the parties. This highlights the necessity of involving all stakeholders in park management in order to stimulate greater cooperation and mutual understanding between all parties.

- ❏ This study is the first to analyse the management effectiveness of tourism service provision at MNP and in the northern region of SANParks. This fulfils a gap, which may lead to future linear studies at other national parks in the region.
- ❏ The results of this research will provide much needed input towards the overall strategic management of tourism services at MNP and SANParks by identifying ten gaps in management effectiveness.
- ❏ This study is the first study to analyse the perceptions of the management of tourism in a World Heritage Site inside a national park in South Africa.
- ❏ The findings of this study have been presented at various forums, including The Greater Mapungubwe Network (Musina, 26 July 2013) and the Southern Africa Institute for Management Scientists Conference (Potchefstroom, 15-17 September 2013).
- ❏ Finally, this study contributed to the database of research concerning national parks, heritage management and protected area management in terms of tourism management.

Keywords: framework, heritage tourism, national parks, sustainable tourism, transfrontier conservation areas

OPSOMMING

Ontwikkeling van 'n toerismebestuursprogram vir die Mapungubwe Nasionale Park

MNP is een van die jongste en kleinste nasionale parke in die portefeulje van Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Parke (SANParke). Die park is ook 'n Wêrelderfenisgebied omdat dit die oorblyfsels bevat van die antieke Mapungubwe-koninkryk, wat een van die eerste gesofistikeerde suider-Afrikaanse gemeenskappe was. Die park kom tans voor uitdagings te staan wat verband hou met mynboubedryghede in die gebied, die ontwikkeling van die Groter Mapungubwe-oorgrensbewaringsgebied, privaat en landbougrond wat die park in twee verdeel en bestuurskwessies.

Die bestuur van nasionale parke in Suid-Afrika geskied volgens 'n aantal vaste beginsels. Een daarvan is strategiese aanpassingsbestuur, wat deur SANParke gebruik word as die vertrekpunt vir al sy bestuursplanne. Ook verskaf riglyne en wetgewing wat deur verskeie internasionale organisasies en nasionale staatsdepartemente neergelê is, strukture waarvolgens beskermde gebiede, Wêrelderfenisgebiede en nasionale parke moet funksioneer.

Volhoubare toerisme is die ideale stand van toerisme. Dit beteken dat alle toerismediensle so bestuur moet word dat die ideaal van volhoubare toerisme uiteindelik bereik word. Volhoubare toerisme word gesien as 'n vorm van toerisme wat strategies van aard is en wat die integriteit van natuurlike en kulturele hulpbronne oor die lang termyn bevorder sodat hierdie hulpbronne behou word as bestendige permanente landskappe vir toekomstige geslagte. Volhoubare toerisme streef daarna om ekonomies lewensvatbaar te wees sonder om die integriteit van sosiokulturele en natuurlike omgewings in gevaar te stel. Gevolglik berus volhoubare toerisme op drie hoofbeginsels, naamlik sosiokulturele integriteit, ekonomiese integriteit and omgewingsintegriteit.

Hierdie studie se primêre doelwit was om 'n toerismebestuursprogram vir die Mapungubwe Nasionale Park (MNP) te ontwikkel. MNP is 'n jong nasionale park wat voor 'n unieke stel uitdagings te staan kom. MNP se toerismebestuursraamwerk word behandel binne in die algehele bestuursplan van die park en dit bespreek nie die hoof bestuur struikelblokke nie. Gevolglik is dit noodsaaklik om 'n bestuursraamwerk in hierdie verband te ontwikkel wat die tersaaklike bestuursuitdagings in ag neem, ten einde te verseker dat die doelwit van volhoubare toerisme behaal word.

Die navorsingsbenadering wat in hierdie studie gevolg is, het sowel kwantitatiewe as kwalitatiewe metodologieë ingesluit. 'n Verkennende navorsingsbenadering is gevolg met die gebruik van 'n selftoegediende aanlyn vraelys met die doel om besoekers se persepsies te bepaal van die belangrikheid van verskeie bestuurs- en volhoubaretoerismetake, asook hoe doeltreffend daardie take na hulle mening by MNP uitgevoer word. Vier en vyftig konstrukte wat verband hou met aspekte van parkbestuur en volhoubare toerisme is op 'n vyfpunt-Likertskaal gemeet. Hierdie konstrukte is met behulp van 'n literatuuoroorsig bepaal. Die volgende bronne is onder meer geraadpleeg: Saayman (2009), Swarbrooke (2002), George (2007), Mancini (2013), SANParke (2010), Keyser, (2002:351), Coetzee (2004:184), Himbira, Saarinen, Athlapheng and Manwa (2010:278), Borges, Carbone, Bushell, and Jäger (2011:8), Sebele (2010:146), Vanhove, (2011:223), Logar (2010:130) en Pedersen (2002:34).

Die vraelys is elektronies versprei aan 'n databasis van besoekers wat in 'n tydperk van 12 maande by MNP oorgebly het. Die navorser het vraelyste ook per hand by die park versprei. Data-insameling het in Maart en April 2013 plaasgevind. In die data-insamelingstydperk is 486 response ontvang. Ook is semigestruktureerde onderhoude in die data-insamelingstydperk gevoer met die MNP-bestuur en met grondeienaars in die omgewing.

Die resultate van die empiriese kwantitatiewe data is deur die Statistiese Konsultasiediens op die Potchefstroomkampus van die Noordwes-Universiteit verwerk. Die data is met behulp van SPSS-sagteware (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences-sagteware) ontleed. Die statistiese metodes wat gebruik is, was beskrywende statistiek deur frekwensies en gemiddeldes, verkenningsfaktorontleding en t-toetse. Die onderhoude wat gevoer is, is met behulp van F4-sagteware getranskribeer en met die ATLAS.ti-sagtewarepakket ontleed. Data-ontleding het die gebruik van datakodering ingesluit om onderliggende temas in die data te identifiseer.

Die resultate van die beskrywende data het aangedui dat die volgende vyf konstrukte uit 'n besoekersoogpunt as die belangrikste beskou is: skoon ablusiegeriewe, skoon akkommodasiegeriewe, die hervestiging van inheemse wildsoorte, beheer oor die plaasdiere in die park, en professionele personeel by ontvangs. Wat betref bestuurdoeltreffendheid is die volgende vyf konstrukte as die belangrikste geag: skoon ablusiegeriewe, werkverrigting van huishoudelike personeel, kantoorure van die park se ontvangspersoneel, die waarde vir geld van akkommodasie in MNP en die professionele bedryf van toere na Mapungubwe-heuwel.

Die verkennende faktorontleding het 11 faktore geïdentifiseer wat met bestuur en volhoubare toerisme verband hou, naamlik (1) inligting en toeganklikheid, (2) akkommodasie- en ablusiegeriewe, (3) voedsel en drank, (4) professionele uitvoer van toere, (5) vermaak, (6) bewaring, (7) konsessies, (8) menslike hulpbronne, (9) regulasies en bemarking, (10) sosio-ekonomiese impakte en (11) omgewingsimpakte. Hierdie faktore is deur middel van 'n t-toets met mekaar vergelyk en tekortkomings in bestuursdoeltreffendheid is by al die faktore geïdentifiseer, met die uitsondering van konsessies.

Kwalitatiewe data-ontleding van die onderhoude met plaaslike grondeienaars het 'n aantal temas aan die lig gebring wat hierdie belanghebbende partye se bekommernisse uitgelig het. Hierdie temas was plaaslikegrondeienaarskwessies, mynboukwessies, bestuurskwessies, oorgrensbewaringsgebiedkwessies en wêrelderfenisgebiedkwessies. Die hooftemas wat voortgevloei het uit onderhoude met die bestuur was plaaslikegrondeienaarskwessies, mynboukwessies, MNP-bestuurskwessies, oorgrensbewaringsgebiedkwessies, toerismekwessies en wêrelderfeniskwessies.

Hierdie navorsing het die volgende bydraes gelewer tot die terrein van volhoubaretoerismebeheer in beskermde gebiede:

- ❏ Hierdie studie het bygedra aan 'n krietsiese analiese van literatuur, gefokus op park en bewaararea bestuursraamwerke.
- ❏ MNP is 'n park met 'n unieke stel bestuursuitdagings. Hierdie studie is die eerste studie wat MNP se vernaamste uitdagings uit die oogpunt van verskeie belanghebbende partye ontleed.
- ❏ Hierdie studie is die eerste wat die bestuursdoeltreffendheid van toerismediensvoorsiening in MNP en in SANParke se noordelike streke ontleed.
- ❏ Hierdie navorsing se resultate sal noodsaaklike insette lewer tot die oorkoepelende strategiese bestuur van toerismediens by MNP en SANParke.
- ❏ Hierdie studie het bewys dat SANParke al drie die bestuursfere – bewaring, ekotoerisme en gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid – effektief moet bestuur om die nasionale parke in Suid-Afrika goed te kan bestuur. In MNP se geval is die bestuur se interaksie met besoekers (toeriste) en die plaaslike gemeenskap (plaaslike grondeienaars) nie suksesvol nie, wat wedersydse afkeer en misverstande tussen die partye tot gevolg het. Dit beklemtoon die noodsaaklikheid

daarvan dat alle belanghebbendes by die bestuur van parke betrek word om beter wedersydse samewerking en begrip te bewerkstellig.

- ✚ Hierdie studie is die eerste wat die persepsies van die bestuur van toerisme by 'n Wêrelderfenisgebied binne in 'n nasionale park in Suid-Afrika ontleed. Die studie het bewys dat die verhouding tussen Wêrelderfenisgebiede en nasionale parke ingewikkeld is, dus benog parke wat Wêrelderfenisgebiede insluit hul eie unieke bestuurprogramme om hierdie twee komponente te integreer.
- ✚ Hierdie studie se bevindings is reeds by verskeie forums aangebied, onder meer Die Groter Mapungubwe Netwerk (Musina, 26 Julie 2013) en die Suider-Afrikaanse Instituut vir Bestuurswetenskaplikes se konferensie van 15 tot 17 September 2013 in Potchefstroom.
- ✚ Laastens lewer hierdie studie 'n bydrae tot die databasis van navorsing oor nasionale parke, erfenisbestuur en die bestuur van beskermde gebiede in die konteks van toerismebestuur.

Sleutelwoorde: erfenistoerisme, nasionale parke, oorgrensbewaringsgebiede, raamwerk, volhoubare toerisme

ACRONYMS USED IN THIS STUDY

CNRBM	Community-based natural resource management
ECOS	Ecotourism opportunity spectrum
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LAC	Limits of acceptable change
MCL	Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape
MNP	Mapungubwe National Park
NDT	National Department of Tourism
PAVIM	Protected area visitor impact management
ROS	Recreation opportunity spectrum
SANParks	South African National Parks
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
TOMM	Tourism optimisation model
TFCA	Transfrontier Conservation Area
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VAMP	Visitor activity management process
VERP	Visitor experience and resource protection
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
XBR	Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve

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