

Determining Stakeholders' Perceptions Regarding the Environmental Impacts of World Heritage Sites: A Case Study in Vredefort, Free, State South Africa

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Abstract

Several World Heritage Sites (WHSs) play a significant role in conserving biodiversity and improving the livelihoods of stakeholders. The successful management of Vredefort Dome WHS's environmental impacts must consider stakeholders' perceptions to build a mutual relationship grounded on stakeholder involvement. The main aim of this research is to determine stakeholders' perceptions regarding the environmental impacts of tourism based on the Vredefort Dome WHS. This study consisted of a sample size of 490 stakeholders. The study followed the quantitative approach and used a descriptive research design, coupled with the non-probability purposive sampling technique collecting data from government officials and tourism business owners. Data collected from tourists, and the local communities used convenience sampling techniques. Majority of the respondents in the study displayed high levels of disagreement with the potential benefits of environmental impacts. Due to poor planning and management of tourism in the region, several negative tourism impacts, such as pollution and deterioration of infrastructure negatively influence the attitudes and perceptions of the local community regarding the benefits that could be associated with tourism. Recommendations suggested that stakeholders should reap the benefits of their local environment in relation to promoting long-term tourism growth. Tourism strategic planning, management and use of the Vredefort Dome WHS by the stakeholders would yield a great harvest of tourism benefits and improve not only the ambience and aesthetics of the region but also improve and preserve the infrastructure in the area.

Keywords

Stakeholders, perceptions, tourism, environmental impacts, World Heritage Site.