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Integrating frameworks for evaluating tourism partnerships: An exploration of success within the life cycle of a collaborative ecotourism development effort

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ABSTRACT

Partnerships and collaborations have been promoted as an effective economic development strategy within the recreation and tourism fields for several decades, particularly in rural areas. In turn, researchers have developed criteria for success, identified the stages and phases of collaborative processes, and proposed a "life cycle" of partnerships. Case studies of tourism partnerships have been explored in multiple countries (e.g., Australia, Canada, Kenya, Peru, United Kingdom, United States) and in multiple contexts (e.g., marketing, planning, policy networks). However, nearly all studies have been conducted in areas where tourism was previously established and most studies only examine success through the lens of one evaluative framework. In this study, we examine two frameworks—specifically, Wondolleck and Yaffee's (2000) set of eight lessons to making collaboration work and Caffyn's (2000) tourism partnership life cycle model—in the context of a rural area abundant in natural and cultural resources but unable to capture significant tourism revenue. This case study of the Tyrrell County Ecotourism Committee in eastern North Carolina, United States demonstrates the advantage of integrating multiple evaluative lenses and highlights the challenges of partnerships with limited structure and narrow vision. Furthermore, this case study documents the difficulties rural areas face when competing with nearby established destinations.

Management Implications: Despite the prevalence of partnerships for tourism development, collaborative efforts are not always apanacea. Collaborative efforts for ecotourism development have a life cycle, require certain elements to be successful, and need to be evaluated throughout their duration. Tourism managers need to recognize the limitations of partnerships, particularly in rural areas where destination marketing is insufficient for developing a robust ecotourism economy

1. Introduction

The increasing prevalence of partnerships and collaborative arrangements has been attributed to constrained organizational and agency resources for conservation, an increasing focus on funding multi-sector development projects, and a need to address social and environmental issues that top-down regulation alone cannot guarantee (Gruber, 2010). Since the 1990s, research has focused on how partnerships and collaborations may enhance tourism as a sustainable economic driver in rural areas (e.g., Bramwell, 1994; Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Cawley & Gillmor, 2008; Getz & Jamal, 1994; Hall, 2004), with significant focus on identifying the indicators of success (e.g., Bornhorst, Ritchie, & Sheehan, 2010; March & Wilkinson, 2009; Reid, Smith & McCloskey, 2008; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2007; Weiermair, Peters, and Frehse, 2008). However, Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) explained that collaborative success is "very difficult to achieve" and should not be expected (p. 52). Despite (and perhaps driven by) the challenge of collaboration, partnership evaluation has been the subject of research in numerous fields. Nevertheless, these evaluations have yet to examine how perceptions of success may be directly linked to stages within a partnership life cycle or how the incorporation of specific strategies into each stage of development may contribute to overall partnership success. In this paper, we synthesize two frameworks to evaluate how perceptions of success correspond to the different stages of a rural tourism partnership.

Tourism and ecotourism have been purported as alternative economic development strategies for decades (e.g., Boo, 1990;

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Moscardo, 2008; Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011; Place, 1995; Williams & Shaw, 1991). In fact, ecotourism has become such a key topic in sustainable development conversations that manuals have been written for conservation planners and managers, including sections on partnering for ecotourism development (Drumm & Moore, 2005). However, a clear, concise and widely agreed upon definition of ecotourism is lacking (Fennell, 2001), but tenets of ecotourism include activities that occur in natural areas, maintain conservation or preservation of natural and cultural resources while enabling social justice and development, provide opportunity for bio-cultural education, and improve quality of life and enhance social self-determination (Donohoe & Needham, 2006). As ecotourism has grown in popularity among tourists and in scholarly literature, it has emphasized the socio-economic tenets such as local involvement in conservation and development (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008; Fletcher, 2009); yet, not all ecotourism efforts have successfully met goals towards sustainable development and improving livelihoods of the involved communities, particularly in less developed countries (e.g., Belsky, 1999; Campbell, 1999; Loon & Polakow, 2001; Wearing & McDonald, 2002). More recently, research has emerged that highlights the use of ecotourism as a strategy in developed countries (Che, 2006; Hurley & Halfacre, 2011), as well as in tourism and ecotourism partnerships as a way to address fiscally stressed governments and organizations in rural peripheral regions (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Plummer, Telfer, & Hashimoto, 2006).

As case studies about ecotourism in less developed countries dominate the literature (Weaver & Lawton, 2007), this paper furthers current knowledge by integrating evaluative frameworks to investigate factors that led to the disbanding of an eight-year long ecotourism partnership in a developed country. Specifically, we explore the Tyrrell County Ecotourism Committee (hereafter TCEC) of North Carolina (USA) by integrating Wondolleck and Yaffee's (2000) eight lessons of collaborative success to guide our inquiry and Caffyn's (2000) tourism partnership life cycle model to contextualize our interpretations of TCEC partners' perceptions of success. We use the term "ecotourism" in this paper to define and describe the intentions of the TCEC not to assess whether or not the efforts of the partnership align with the tenets of ecotourism. Given the transferability of our integrated assessment to more general tourism contexts, we align the study's implications to a broader tourism development audience.

2. Evaluative frameworks

The terms "collaboration" and "partnership" are often used interchangeably in describing joint efforts (Plummer & FitzGibbon, 2004; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). For example, Wondolleck and Yaffee used Gray's (1985) definition of collaboration as, "the pooling of appreciations and/or tangible resources, e.g., information, money, labor, etc., by two or more stakeholders, to solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually" (as cited in Wondolleck and Yaffee, 2000, p. xiii). Providing additional specificity, Caffyn (2000) used Long's (1997) definition of tourism partnerships, defined as:

> The collaborative efforts of autonomous stakeholders from organizations in two or more sectors with interests in tourism development who engage in an interactive process using shared rules, norms and structures at an agreed organizational level and over a defined geographical area to act or decide on issues related to tourism development. (as cited in Caffyn, 2000, p. 201)

For purposes of this study, we use Caffyn's (2000) definition of tourism partnerships while evaluating an ecotourism partnership through the lens of Wondolleck and Yaffee's (2000) eight lessons that are suggested to achieve collaborative success. Although Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) do not focus exclusively on tourism, their eight lessons, which emerged from a long-term study of community partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service, provide practical approaches to enhancing collaborative capacity and partnership synergy.

Various studies have tried to determine the key elements in successful tourism partnerships, as cross-sector collaboration can challenge the independent and competitive roles traditionally found within tourism entrepreneurship. For example, Watkins and Bell (2002) examined this paradoxical phenomenon in Australia, developing a continuum of tourism partnership dynamics (i.e., competitive, cooperative, collaborative) based on a list of business relationship dimensions (e.g., time, trust, commitment, goals, beneficiaries and decision-making). In the United Kingdom, Augustyn and Knowles (2000) identified five critical success factors for public-private partnerships in tourism: expert preparation, underlying objectives, developmental structure, effective and efficient actions, and sustainable nature of the partnership. Komppula (2014) emphasized the important role played by small businesses in tourism competitiveness in rural areas of Finland, demonstrating the importance of collaboration to enhance the destination image.

While many researchers have studied different aspects of partnerships including stakeholder analysis and theory (Mikalsen & Jentoft, 2001; Ramirez, 1999; Reed et al., 2009), community capitals (Emery & Flora, 2006; Mountjoy, Seekamp, Davenport, & Whiles, 2013; Taylor, 2000), and social networks (Bodin & Crona, 2009; Saxena, 2005), Wondolleck and Yaffee's (2000) lessons (Table 1) provide a framework that "others can use in building partnerships, resolving conflicts, and solving problems collaboratively" (p. 19). The focus on collaboration is critical in tourism partnerships as stakeholders benefit when diverse resources, knowledge, and skills are pooled (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). However, successful collaboration yields additional benefits such as building understanding of and support for decisions. As Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) explain, "even when the ultimate decisions are the same, people need the opportunity to engage as partners in the decision-making process so that they take ownership of outcomes" (p. 31).

Heavily influenced by Butler's (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model, Caffyn (2000) introduced the idea of a tourism partnership life cycle model that merges elements of theory (a comparison of 11 different life cycle models) and practice (a case study of a rural tourism partnership and a comparative analysis of ten other tourism development partnerships). Caffyn's model demonstrates how tourism partnerships evolve, including how they might end, and was designed to aid in tourism partnership planning and management. Specifically, Caffyn identified six "phases" (i.e., pre-partnership, take-off, growth, prime, deceleration, and continuation or 'after-life' options) through which typical tourism partnerships proceed. We developed Table 2 to illustrate the phases and key attributes of each phase of Caffyn's model.

To date, Caffyn's model has only been employed in a destination marketing study that examined why a highly successful partnership disbanded (i.e., Plummer et al., 2006). Yet, Caffyn describes several outcomes, and notes that clear communication in the deceleration stage would assist partners to navigate the outcome of their collaboration. Despite its limited implementation in evaluative studies, we believe that the model's parsimony enhances its utility, as compared to more elaborate frameworks (e.g., Wang & Fesenmaier, 2007) that separate some success criteria from individual partnership stages. While not every tourism partnership follows the trajectory from pre-partnership to continuation or requires the presence of every characteristic described in each phase, Caffyn's life cycle provides an excellent visualization tool for partnership planning and evaluating collaborative success. Moreover, Caffyn's model to evaluate a tourism partnership can help to situate one group's shared experience among others with perhaps similar challenges. As Caffyn (2000) explained, "the critical factors in determining both the trajectory and characteristics of the life cycle are the funding arrangements and also how successfully partners work collaboratively" (p. 227).

Simply stating that collaborative success is difficult is not as helpful as explicating the process of partnership formation and sharing this

در اجرای درخواست شما مشکلی رخ داده است

با سلام متأسفانه مشکلی در فرایند اجرای درخواست شما رخ داده است

همکاران ما در حال تلاش برای رفع این مشکل هستند

لطفاً درخواست خود را در ساعات دیگری مجدداً تکرار فرمایید و اگر باز هم با این مشکل رو به رو شدید، از طریق فرم تماس با ما به واحد پشتیبانی اطلاع دهید

برای یافتن مطلب مورد نظر خود می توانید از روش های جستجوی زیر استفاده فرمایید :

جســـــتجو در میـــــان موضوعات

برای جستجو در میان موضوعات، به محض این که عبارت خود را در فیلـد زیر بنویسـید، موضوع های مرتبط در درخت سمت چپ با رنگ متمایزی مشخص می شوند.

جستجو ...

جســـــتجو در میـــــان مقالات

اگر موضــوع مــورد نظر شـــما در لیســت موضوعات اصلی وجود نداشت، با استفاده از فیلـــد زیر می توانیـــد آن را در بیـــن کل مقاله های سایت جستجو فرمایید.

جستجو ...

جستجو

لیست درختی موضوعات

- الگوریتم های هیوریستیک
- بازاریابی و مدیریت بازار
- حسابداری و حسابرسی
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- سازمان و مدیریت
- سیستم های اطلاعاتی
- علوم اقتصادی
- مدیریت استراتژیک
- مدیریت امور فرهنگی
- مدیریت تولید
- مدیریت دولتی
- مدیریت رفتار سازمانی
- مدیریت مالی
- مدیریت منابع انسانی
- مطالعات اسلامی
- کارآفرینی و مدیریت کسب و کار

تماس با واحد پشتیبانی

همکاران ما در واحد پشتیبانی آمادگی دارند تمـامی درخـواست هـای شـما عزیزان را بررسـی نمـوده و در اسـرع وقـت رسـیدگی نمایند

پیگیری خرید مقاله

پس از خریـد هر مقـاله، یـک کـد رهگیری منحصر به فرد به شما تقدیم خواهد شد که با استفاده از آن می توانید وضعیت خرید خود را پیگیری فرمایید

کد رهگیری

ارسال

پیگیری سفارش ترجمه

با ثبت کد رهگیری پرداخت، می توانید سفارش خود را پیگیری نموده و به محض اتمام ترجمه، فایل ترجمه مقاله خود را دانلود نمایید

کد رهگیری

ارسال