



**RURAL AND CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FOCUSING ON
COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM (CBT): THE CASE OF QWAQWA**

by

Tlhoriso L. Mohlakoana

Student number: 2014203133

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Supervisor: Prof. Lucius Botes (North-West University)

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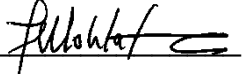
ABSTRACT

Rural communities have been finding it more difficult to sustain themselves in recent years due to the migration of large numbers to urban areas searching for more promising livelihoods. Rural areas face many challenges, including unemployment, poverty, lack of services, and other social ills. The unique culture and natural environment of rural areas can be explored through Community-Based Tourism (CBT). The South African government deems tourism as one of the vehicles that can be positively used to uplift rural communities and address the identified challenges these communities face. CBT dictates that the community's own tourism products found in their area should be involved in tourism development, subsequently deriving the most benefits from tourism initiatives. This study aimed to investigate whether CBT with a cultural emphasis can be used to uplift the rural communities of Qwaqwa in the Eastern Free State. This, firstly, required investigating the best practices to be used by rural communities for their socio-economic development. Secondly, it was necessary to determine the impacts of exposing rural cultures and natural environments to attract economic activity. Thirdly, it was necessary to explore guidelines on how to sustain CBT initiatives. Lastly, an investigation into the roles of different stakeholders in ensuring the sustainability of CBT projects had to be conducted. This study was qualitative in nature and used interview schedules to collect data from households and tourism businesses in Qwaqwa. After the data analysis, it became apparent that the study area did not have many CBT businesses, with many existing businesses requiring significant support. It further became evident that few community members are involved in tourism, subsequently not benefiting from it. As a result, it was recommended that the government, through its different agencies, educate and assist communities with the development of CBT projects.

KEYWORDS: Community-Based Tourism, Rural Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Tourism Development, Tourism Initiative

Declaration

I, Tlhoriso Mohlakoana, student number 2014203133, confirm that this master's degree research mini-dissertation submitted to the University of the Free State is my original work and has not been submitted for a qualification at any other institution of higher education. Moreover, all sources utilised for citation in this work have been appropriately acknowledged through in-text references and a reference list.

Student's signature 

Date: 13 September 2025

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It is through hard work and perseverance that this project came to completion. Let me first acknowledge God and my ancestors for carrying me through this journey. I also acknowledge myself for sacrificing many things, including my social life, and for remaining committed to giving my best for this project. This has shown me the magnitude of my strength and resilience through difficult times.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
IACD	International Association for Community Development
CBT	Community-Based Tourism
PPT	Pro-Poor Tourism
CBTI	Community Benefit Tourism Initiative
DACBT	Donor-Assisted Community-Based Tourism
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
LEDC	Less Economically Developed Countries
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
NDT	National Department of Tourism
DESTEA	Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs
MDS	Master of Development Studies

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The tourism industry is a leading sector of the South African economy with a remarkable ability to contribute positively to the socio-economic improvement of people living in rural areas in South Africa. Apleni (2013) maintained that the tourism sector's ability to uplift the social standing of community members through job creation and to generate foreign exchange is not realised. According to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (1996), rural communities, often excluded from participation in tourism development, possess significant tourism resources. These valuable resources are unique to a particular community and can help rural communities overcome poverty and unemployment. For example, each rural community has a unique oral history that community members can narrate to tourists. Also, most rural communities rely on subsistence farming, particularly animal farming, to make a living. These activities can create a new niche market by providing visitors with the whole experience of caring for animals, whilst the herders can narrate their community's history and stories to visitors. This is especially important as it is becoming more difficult for rural communities to sustain themselves by finding employment. It has been found that there has been an increase in the sale of tourism attractions and experiences in rural areas as a new form of income (Lempek, Tesits and Hovanyi, 2022).

This study sought to assess the possibility of utilising the history and traditions of the rural villages of Qwaqwa to create a tourism offering that can uplift their social and economic environment. Thus, the study first provides an extensive review of rural and community-based tourism literature. A discussion of the methodology follows the literature review. Thereafter, details about the fieldwork and the subsequent findings are presented and discussed, followed by the recommendations and conclusion emanating from the findings.

1.2 Problem statement

Rural communities still need to take advantage of the potential to develop their socio-economic environment presented by the tourism industry in South Africa. Most rural communities have a rich history and traditional way of life that remains largely untapped and, if explored, can significantly contribute positively to the livelihoods of

the people living in those rural areas. Mohammadi, Majdi and Hosseini (2022) found that when rural tourism increases, its social and economic footprint on improving villages also increases.

Creating a niche market that exposes a community's way of life and history could attract tourists to the rural community. This creation will set off the multiplier effect, subsequently improving the socio-economic situation of those communities (Van Zyl, 2005).

This study explored the viability of using storytelling as part of the area's history and subsistence farming in the form of animal herding as unique tourism products that can be developed to attract visitors to rural areas. The Basotho Cultural Village within the Golden Gate National Park is an example of an attraction that uses culture as a tourism offering in the vicinity of Qwaqwa (see <https://www.sanparks.org/parks/golden-gate-highlands/what-to-do/activities/basotho-cultural-village>). Another example is Malealea Lodge in Lesotho (see <https://www.malealealodge.com/>), which currently offers horse hiking trips accompanied by a local tour guide or on an overnight hiking trip with a guide, sleeping in local huts in a Basotho village. Both offer the niche aspect of culture. However, animal herding has yet to be provided as a tourism offering. According to Jeczmyk, Uglis, and Steppa (2021), tourism should continuously create new products, services and experiences. One newly introduced form of tourism is livestock welfare, which is termed agritourism. This form of tourism provides tourists with an experience of being close to the villagers, seeing their family habits and daily activities, watching them practice their culture and customs, and partaking in cultural sports and recreational activities. Furthermore, because all rural communities have a history and traditional way of living, it can be sold as a unique experience to visitors, including animal herding, as humans derive physical, mental, and social benefits from interaction with livestock. Evidently, rural areas need to have well-known tourist attractions.

1.3 Aim of the study

This study aimed to investigate the viability of developing cultural tourism as a form of community-based tourism initiative in rural communities of Qwaqwa.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study objectives were as follows:

- To determine best practices for rural communities to use cultural tourism for their socio-economic development.
- To explore the positive and negative impacts of using unique cultural practices and scenery as a tourism attraction in rural communities of Qwaqwa.
- To develop guidelines for the sustainability of community-based tourism organisations.
- To inquire about the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in developing cultural tourism in rural communities.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the study by outlining the problem statement, aims, and objectives. The chapter highlighted that the tourism industry in South Africa holds significant potential to improve socio-economic conditions in rural areas. However, this potential remains largely untapped. Rural communities (e.g., Qwaqwa) have rich cultural histories and practices, such as storytelling and animal herding, that could be transformed into unique tourism products. These offerings have the potential to create niche markets, drive job creation, and enhance community development. The study aimed to assess how cultural tourism, particularly involving traditional lifestyles and oral histories, can benefit Qwaqwa's rural communities. The next chapter reviews existing literature.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

More people worldwide show interest in sustainable tourism due to challenges such as global warming, which threatens the future existence of the human species. The negative impacts of humans on the natural environment are attributed to the highly unregulated, profit-seeking extraction of resources (Matteucci et al., 2022). Countries are committed to developing strategies to sustain the world, each having a role to play. Global warming and poverty alleviation are pressing issues worldwide, resulting in the emergence of new forms of tourism that seek to sustain the environment and develop the livelihoods of rural communities. Rural communities can benefit from tourism that prioritises local community development. Vogt and Jordan (2015) described community development as a collective solution to a common problem by community members. In tourism, community development aims to provide community members with skills to empower them to improve their communities. However, it is not only about benefiting the community. Consideration should also be given to the natural environment and the continuity of the programme.

The International Association for Community Development (IACD) (2016) provided a comprehensive definition of community development: urging participation from communities, fostering sustainable development, recognising the rights of community members, and delivering economic opportunities by forming community organisations, providing education, and uplifting communities through skills development in both urban and rural areas. The IACD's definition encompasses elements such as the importance of education and skills development, ensuring the sustainability of the community development initiative, and ensuring that the initiative benefits the community members and the natural environment.

Lo and Janta (2020) described Community-Based Tourism (CBT) as tourism that allows local communities to manage their cultural and natural resources to improve their economy, subsequently creating benefits for the community. Other concepts used to develop tourism in rural areas include Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT), which helps identify rural communities to reduce poverty and make a profit. For Guri, Osumanu and Bonye (2021), PPT aims to connect tourism development and poverty alleviation in local communities. In addition, Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs) aim

for an equal share of tourism benefits within a community without controlling tourism initiatives (Simpson, 2008; Nova, 2021), while donor-assisted community-based tourism (DACBT) strives to rid the community of poverty by enhancing subsistence economies and relying on natural resources to help the community earn an income (Harrison and Schipani, 2007). Table 1 presents the significant elements of different types of tourism, highlighting their similarities and differences.

TABLE 1: Summary of the characteristics of different types of community tourism

Community-based tourism (CBT)	Pro-poor tourism (PPT)	Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTI)	Donor-assisted community-based tourism (DACBT)
Benefits locals economically	Benefits locals economically	Focuses on providing livelihood to locals	Increased economic growth
Offers economic empowerment	Encourages community participation	Considers the broader social and economic context	Focuses on creating employment opportunities
Morally obliged to benefit the community	Empowers the locals	Transfers benefits to locals	Focuses on foreign exchange earnings
The community members make decisions	Uses and improves the infrastructure owned by the locals	May not always involve the community in decision-making	Improves infrastructure
Conserves the environment	Minimum focus on the environment	Sustainable conservation of the environment	Promotes conservation of natural and cultural heritage
Focuses on poverty alleviation	Focuses on poverty alleviation	Not exclusively focused on poverty alleviation	Aims to reduce poverty
Encourages local entrepreneurship	Encourages local entrepreneurship	Central or government ownership	Community and private sector participation
Cultural preservation and authentic experiences	Drives local economic development and cultural sustainability	Cultural preservation	Cultural immersion and authentic experiences

(Source: Researcher's own compilation)

Tourism development involves stakeholders, such as the government, to ensure development legislation and supply services and infrastructure, the private sector to

establish and manage tourism businesses, and various other organisations and individuals, of which the most important stakeholder is the community. Local communities' involvement in tourism benefits the community, improves their livelihoods and environment, and positively contributes to their cultural practices and heritage.

As a strategy, the development of rural tourism has received increasing attention in recent years to explore its ability to boost the economy of these rural communities, sustain their cultural practices and heritage, and preserve the natural environment (Chinawat, 2024). As noted in Chapter One, rural communities rely on subsistence farming to sustain themselves. Part of their rural lifestyle is livestock keeping. Jeczmyk, Uglis and Steppa (2021) asserted that animals are essential to tourists' recreational activities. They maintained that it is because animals have been a part of humans for centuries, adding that animals provide many tourists with the opportunity to interact with species they would typically not encounter, making these rare encounters an opportunity for rural communities to showcase their cultural lifestyles and earn a living through tourism.

However, sustaining such tourism initiatives requires the involvement of local communities. Tourism that does not involve local communities from the initial planning stage until the realisation of the goal tends to fail (Charkaewnapanon, 2019). Gohori and Van der Merwe (2021a) and Digun-Aweto and Van der Merwe (2020) emphasised that involving locals in tourism results in local community development and subsequent economic benefits (e.g., employment), subsequently also encouraging sustainable and responsible development. This is ascribed to the involvement of the locals in ensuring the success of tourism initiatives.

The top-down approach to economic development used in many countries has disempowered local communities. Recently, the focus has shifted to a bottom-top approach, which promotes the empowerment of communities due to their direct involvement in tourism initiatives (Gohori and Van der Merwe, 2021b; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Guri, Osumanu and Bonye, 2021). In addition, tourism has the potential to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to balance economic, social, and environmental benefits for the people. Thus, involving the community in tourism initiatives can contribute to the sustainable development of a rural area by

minimising socio-economic impacts and maximising the socio-economic benefits for the local community (Gohori and Van der Merwe, 2021c).

This study explored the possibility of exploiting the history and traditions of the rural villages of Qwaqwa to create a tourism offering that can uplift their social and economic environment. Chatkaewnapanon (2019) found that when a place is developed into a tourism destination, its rural landscape and community livelihoods must be incorporated into the development. Tourism, therefore, becomes the process of using the place's identity to create unique tourism products. This study also aimed to develop guidelines that the rural community of Qwaqwa can implement to ensure the sustainability of tourism initiatives in the area. CBT was the primary form of tourism that this study explored.

2.2 Global growth in tourism

According to Holik (2016), tourist arrival numbers have drastically increased over a period of sixty years, indicating that in 1950, the number of global tourist arrivals was 25 million. In 1980, the number increased to 277 million, with 1990 totalling 438 million travellers globally, which increased to 683 million in 2000. In 2008, the number of visitors worldwide totalled 919 million. However, it decreased to 880 million in 2009. These statistics indicate the ever-growing interest of people worldwide in travelling, exploring, and spending money in their destination countries. Nonetheless, the tourism industry does at times face challenges that lead to a decline in tourist arrival numbers, such as economic recessions, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and pandemics.

The number of tourists travelling worldwide has steadily increased yearly, with more than 900 million travelling internationally in 2022 (UNWTO, 2023). Tourism experienced a decline in visitors worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has since increased. The Dolma Foundation (2018) declared that global tourism has grown exponentially. This is evident in international financial data, showing that tourism's revenue accounts for 10% of the world's total revenue. Also, global tourism employs 10% of the world's labour force. Research on the worldwide tourism industry indicates the vast potential for developing nations, mainly rural communities. Chatkaewnapanon (2019) reported that research reports revealed that tourism creates direct income, new types of employment and skills, employs more females and establishes new entrepreneurs.

Tourism globally is expected to grow to 1.8 billion people visiting different destinations by 2030. An emerging trend from this growth is that tourists generally visit destinations far from their home countries, preferring more remote rural areas that offer natural and cultural experiences; this growth is creating different opportunities for the socio-economic circumstances of host countries (Holden, 2016). For developing countries to meet the demand from tourists, as shown by the new trends, communities must package tourism innovatively to attract new visitors. According to Statista (2023), travel and tourism's global gross domestic product (GDP) rose from 2020 to 2021, increasing by 21.7%. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant decrease in 2020. The increase in global tourism-related GDP amounted to 5.81 trillion U.S. dollars. Statista (2024) estimated that by the end of 2024, international tourism figures were expected to be more than pre-COVID-19 figures. This sharp growth demonstrates the unlimited opportunities tourism brings to developing countries, which are still ranked at the bottom of the list of destinations that receive numerous visitors globally.

In 2020, the Secretary-General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Zurab Pololikashvili (UNWTO, 2020), stated as follows about global tourism: "In these times of uncertainty and volatility, tourism remains a reliable economic sector. Therefore, tourism is at the heart of global development policies, making a real impact as the Decade of Action gets underway, leaving just ten years to fulfil the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals". The Economic Impact Report by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2022) revealed that the world tourism industry provided 333 million jobs in 2019, and in 2021, 289.5 million jobs supported tourism. The organisation forecasted an annual growth of 5.8% between 2022 and 2032. The tourism industry is the primary source of foreign exchange for 46 developing countries, one of the top three industries globally, and is the fastest-growing industry (Guri, Osumanu, and Bonye, 2021). Thus, tourism holds the potential to change the lives of rural communities in developing countries, including South Africa. This is evident in the fact that there is a changing tourist behaviour post the Covid-19 pandemic, showcasing new trends such as nature travel, digital nomads, well-being, authenticity, and local hood travellers (those who want to be immersed in the community); this brings opportunities for community-based tourism (Lopez-de-Avila, 2022).

2.3 Tourism and Development

Many countries, including South Africa, have adopted tourism as a vehicle for development. In 1996, the newly elected South African democratic government embarked on a development campaign that put tourism at the forefront. It even developed the White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism as a document that shapes tourism development in the country. Arontoko et al. (2020) emphasised that tourism should be encouraged as a development agent because it can benefit a country, community, and the environment. According to Strydom, Mangope, and Henama (2019), the tourism industry is the new gold for South Africa as it has surpassed the mining industry's contribution to GDP and job creation. Also, there is a high demand for investment in community-based tourism as it uplifts and empowers the marginalised and previously disadvantaged groups (Ramaano, 2021). Setokoe and Ramukumba (2020) found that South Africa has shown some level of success in achieving community participation in development. However, despite the legislation aimed at community participation in tourism projects being exemplary in many countries, the implementation of this legislation remains a challenge. In South Africa, as in other African countries, the benefits of tourism have only been realised by a few communities due to a lack of capacity and state support (Guri, Osumanu and Bonye, 2021). In this regard, Erbas (2023) highlighted that it is essential to study rural development to assist countries in reaching their development goals. Sharpley (2008) advised that the socio-economic growth of particularly poorer countries should be propelled by global tourism. However, the less economically developed countries (LEDCs) only receive a fraction of the world's tourist arrivals and profits; many tourists are still visiting developed countries. Also, half of the global tourists visit only ten developed countries.

Tourism earnings can be directly and indirectly injected into the host destination's economy and spill over into other sectors of the economy. This view is supported by Nyasha, Odhiambo, and Asongu (2020). They maintained that tourism, by its nature, involves different role players, including governments and the private sector. The private sector is involved in the supply of tourism products and services. The interdependence of the tourism sectors creates a multiplier effect whereby earnings from tourism may end up in other sectors of the economy, benefiting the whole economy. Thus, Africa, with its many natural tourism resources, can increase tourism

volumes and acquire a more significant share of the global tourism market and the economic growth prospects linked to tourism. However, tourism development initiatives have negative and positive effects (Dai et al., 2023). For a tourism project to be considered worthy of exploration, its benefits must outweigh its negative impacts. Tourism's negative and positive effects are based on the triple bottom line: the environment, people, and economy. Sustainable tourism development, encompassing the triple bottom line, began in the early 21st century. According to Sharpley and Telfer (2015), sustainable tourism development took centre stage in the early 2000s and became a primary tourism development paradigm, as it was deemed the best option to maximise the positive impacts of tourism on the destination, the tourism industry, the local communities, and the tourists. For Telfer and Sharpley (2016), sustainable tourism development is a “positive approach intended to reduce tensions and friction created by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, visitors, the environment and the communities which are host to holidaymakers.” Hannam (2002) added that it is an essential element of globalisation.

Tourism has changed into a vehicle that organises modern multinational life. Most of the world's population lives in countries where tourism development is part of the development policy, with the majority of developed countries continuing to reap the benefits of tourism. In recent decades, the developing world has also shown interest in using tourism to drive development. However, Telfer and Sharpley (2016) and Dluzewska and Giampiccoli (2020) found that tourism does not automatically lead to the improvement of rural lifestyles; studies have shown that high-level development does not constantly improve the standard of living for the communities, as foreign, not local, companies may benefit. Therefore, the destination itself does not benefit from tourism.

Countries with a large portion of their GDP derived from tourism also experience high poverty levels (Dluzewska and Giampiccoli, 2020). Although LEDC will attract more visitors and subsequently foreign exchange, local people will not necessarily benefit. Tourism is seen as a socio-economic activity, forming part of the network of partnerships between different global tourism systems and changes in the international political economy. However, this reduces its potential for contributing to development. Some developing countries consider tourism a development approach due to having limited options. Arintoko et al. (2020) found that rural tourism is a priority

in Indonesia's sustainable development strategy because it holds significant potential to support its development, which is also the case in many other developing countries. The most fundamental reasons for using tourism for development include its potential for job creation, contribution to economic growth, and as a source of foreign exchange. Charkaewnapanon (2019) further stated that tourism is a strategy for reducing poverty and providing additional income to rural communities, especially in developing countries.

Furthermore, beyond the primary reasons, factors such as the growth potential, redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor, the multiplier effect within an economy, tourism's use of natural resources that are acquired without any charge, and the few tourism trade barriers making it possible for people globally to travel from one country to another, also increase the value of tourism being used as a development instrument. In developing countries, the economic benefits of tourism are seen when the community shares in such benefits, especially in rural areas where people lack the knowledge and financial resources to be involved in development (Arintoko et al., 2020).

Community participation in tourism projects is an essential element of tourism development. Setokoe and Ramukumba (2020) and Matiku, Zuwarimwe, and Tshipala (2021) maintained that meaningful participation by the locals is at the centre of sustainable tourism and community development. Encouraging community participation is an important aspect of tourism focused on local communities. Therefore, planning for community tourism projects should have community participation as a process that involves all stakeholders, such as officials from the local government, locals themselves, architects, developers, businesses, planners, and other relevant stakeholders (Oladeji, 2015). Nova (2021) added that evidence from research revealed that it is crucial for the success of tourism projects that local people are part of the project, as it is unlikely that tourism will be sustainable without local support. Also, community participation in tourism initiatives intended to improve the community's lives is sometimes hindered by barriers that make it difficult for locals to participate actively, limiting tourism development. Community participation originated in the Western world, raising questions regarding its application in the African context and its associated characteristics (Setokoe and Ramukumba, 2020). This suggests

that community participation should be based on the characteristics and traits of each community instead of applying a blanket approach to all communities.

Tourism development is not immune to challenges. Sharpley and Telfer (2015) noted that tourism has had tremendous growth and diversification prospects over the past two decades. However, the hierarchical position between developed and developing nations in tourism remains unchanged. The developed nations continue to receive more than two-thirds of the global tourism market in terms of volumes and profits. Noteworthy is that the dominance of developed countries is gradually decreasing as there has been a rapid growth in travellers visiting new destinations. The latter is ascribed to the fact that people prefer to visit far-off, remote places where their visit will make a difference in the lives of the locals. However, leading tourism destinations also face challenges; their market share is affected by issues such as the declining value of their currency, global economic meltdowns, and structural adjustment policies imposed by international monetary institutions.

2.4 Community-based tourism (CBT)

CBT is introduced as an alternative to traditional tourism, using the same infrastructure and industry sectors as mainstream tourism. It is predicated on the premise of collective benefit and local governance. CBT has been introduced with hopes of attaining sustainability for rural communities based on economic benefits and tourism development. The concept of sustainability is the basis for adapting the term 'sustainable development' (Charkaewnapanon, 2019). Sustainable development was first defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987, p.27) as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Goodwin and Santilli (2009) and Nova (2021) defined CBT as tourism that prioritises the local social, cultural, and environmental aspects. It is initiated and managed by the community for its benefit and to ensure the visitors learn about the local way of life. Brohman (1996) provided a more in-depth definition: "Community-based tourism development would seek to strengthen institutions designed to enhance local participation and promote the popular majority's economic, social, and cultural well-being. It would also seek to strike a balanced and harmonious approach to development that would stress considerations such as the compatibility of various

forms of development with other components of the local economy; the quality of development, both culturally and environmentally; and the divergent needs, interests, and potentials of the community and its inhabitants.” It should be noted that sustainable development focuses on future generations, while CBT focuses on the present generation. However, these are not mutually exclusive but complementary.

From both definitions, CBT is based on the principles of intense community involvement and sustainability of natural resources within the catchment area of the local community. Furthermore, CBT is equal to traditional tourism (Magboo-Campo, 2024; Ndlovu, Nyakunu, and Auala, 2011), comprising several goals, as identified by Telfer and Sharpley (2016). Firstly, it must be socially sustainable; all activities are initiated and managed by the local people, and require active involvement by the majority of the locals. Secondly, a significant emphasis is placed on respecting the local culture, heritage, customs, and traditions. This respect will culminate in local pride in indigenous culture and the preservation thereof. Thirdly, CBT is expected to produce economic benefits for the local economy. Fourth is the creation of job opportunities for all community members, especially women and young people. Lastly, there is the emerging trend of collaboration between companies and communities working together on a tourism project. According to Ditta-Apichai, Kattiyapornpong, and Gretzel (2020), CBT can achieve the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in terms of reducing poverty and environmental degradation, and increasing job creation. Magboo-Campo (2024) added that tourism has the potential to contribute to all 17 SDGs directly or indirectly, with a more significant role being in goals 2 (zero hunger), 8 (inclusive and sustainable economic growth), 12 (sustainable consumption and production), and 14 (sustainable use of oceans and marine resources).

This type of tourism is a lucrative substitute for various tourist markets that focus on a destination's sustainability when deciding on a tour. Erbas (2023) explained that tourists nowadays prefer visiting more tranquil, natural, and original destinations as opposed to the traditional tourism destinations characteristic of sea, sand, and sun. Tourists now prefer rural and natural areas where they can be a part of the environment and immerse themselves in local cultures. According to the location theory, the proximity of a well-known tourist attraction to the rural villages is one of the unique advantages of a CBT initiative (Arintoko et al., 2020).

In the case of Qwaqwa, the area has three major tourist attractions: the Golden Gate Highlands National Park, the town of Clarens and the Drakensberg/Maluti Mountain range; these attractions attract many visitors to the eastern Free State. Therefore, this area can benefit from CBT, as CBT focuses on developing communities in rural, poor, previously neglected, economically depressed, and underdeveloped communities (Giampiccoli, Muhsin, and Mtapuri, 2020). Charkaewnapanon (2019) identified two essential stages for using CBT to develop rural communities. The first stage is evaluation, entailing assessing whether there are enough attractions, infrastructure, and facilities to allow tourism development within the community. The availability of natural and cultural resources is vital for attracting tourists to the community. Local communities jointly provide services to tourists in their villages, work as a partnership to manage their tourism activities, and share the proceeds equally. Tourists thus receive a first-hand experience of local culture and livelihoods (Nova, 2021). The second stage is implementing the CBT process in a specific community. This is a process of changing a community into a sought-after tourism destination. CBT aims to capacitate the locals with knowledge of tourism development, ensuring their involvement in tourism initiatives in their communities.

Any tourism project must first benefit the community where such a project is being implemented. Implementing unsustainable CBT initiatives serves no purpose; sustainability of CBT initiatives requires implementing them in communities where they can be maintained even after the initial investment has been stopped (Strydom, Mangope and Henama, 2019). Also, the local people must be a part of the project from the onset (i.e., planning stage), ensuring they understand the importance of cultural and natural resources in their village, as they are best-suited to care for their inheritance (Nova, 2021; Arintoko, 2020). The benefits should improve the lives of the people living in poor and underresourced areas (Strydom, Mangope and Henama, 2019; Charkaewnapanon, 2019; Giampiccoli, Muhsin and Mtapuri, 2020).

The active participation of community members in tourism is described as a missed opportunity in South Africa, as the tourism industry has always been enviously guarded against the previously marginalised groups by the minority privileged group (Apleni, 2013). This marginalisation emphasises why it is essential to develop rural tourism, as most of the people in those areas are the same previously neglected groups who did not benefit from what tourism can offer, such as creating jobs and

dealing with poverty. Tourism initiatives tend to succeed when there is community participation because the community members serve as ambassadors of the project by spreading positive word-of-mouth and protecting the industry from criminals. This protection is especially true when the community fully understands how the tourism project will benefit them individually and collectively. A closely connected community is desirable for CBT because successful CBT projects require closeness; they must also be determined and well-organised (Dluzewska and Giampiccoli, 2020).

Nova (2021) and Ditta-Apichai, Kattiyapornpong, and Gretzel (2020) categorised the elements of CBT as follows: typical principles of CBT, characteristics that make a destination suitable for CBT, and advantages of CBT. The next section explores these elements further.

Principles of CBT

- Its benefits must go to local communities, predominantly rural and peripheral areas. It must assist them and protect their cultural heritage and natural environment.
- Tourists must be accommodated within the local community, leaving most income in the community itself.
- Community members must coordinate the tourist activities.
- Members of the community must have an equal share of profits.
- Part of the profits must be reinvested in developing the community and protecting its cultural and environmental resources.
- The community must be involved from the planning stages.

Characteristics of the CBT destination

- The local community must have permission to use local resources, including legal and traditional permission from the relevant bodies.
- The previously neglected communities must benefit from triangular cooperation.
- The destination should have a significant cultural heritage, with sightseeing areas that attract tourists.
- Protection of the natural environment must be a priority.

Advantages of CBT

- It improves the locals' quality of life and delivers essential services to the community, making them less vulnerable.
- It solves the problem of urbanisation; villagers no longer have to seek better opportunities in urban areas.
- Families' income is improved, which leads to more learners attending school and improving education levels in the community.
- It creates and provides services that were not in the community before.
- It preserves water, the ecosystem, animals, and plants.

According to Dluzewska and Giampiccoli (2020), community-based tourism requires minimal capital, and even when modern facilities are needed, it can be done on a small scale. Modern tourists require exclusivity and, therefore, will appreciate facilities provided by CBT projects as a growing alternative to mainstream tourism.

2.5 Cultural tourism

Stastna et al. (2020) found that cultural tourism can significantly impact developing post-agricultural rural areas. However, the attractiveness of an area for cultural tourism depends on the history and culture prevalent in the area rather than the natural resources and picturesque scenery. Southern Africa is rich in different cultural resources such as ethnic groups, languages, communities, traditions, heritage, religions, museums, townships, battlefields, and San paintings, among others, which can be used as a base to attract visitors (Manwa, Moswete, and Saarinen, 2016). On the other hand, cultural destinations with natural resources and scenic beauty are more likely to attract visitors because of their varied tourism offerings. Rural tourism is associated with nature, while cultural tourism is linked to the history of the area and its people and communities.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (2017), cultural tourism is "a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage,

literature, music, creative industries, and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions". This definition includes a broad context of areas covered under cultural tourism. Due to this open context, types of rural cultural tourism include architectural and historical heritage (battlefields and other memorial sites), different kinds of museums (open-air museums, archaeological sites), gastronomy and beverage tourism, pilgrimage tourism (churches and church memorials), ethnography and intangible heritage (folklore and folk culture, festivals, cultural events), as well as nostalgia tourism (Stastna et al., 2020).

The UNWTO in 2018 estimated that cultural tourism accounts for 39% of all tourism activities globally (Matteucci et al., 2022). There is a growing trend of tourists partaking in exclusively authentic tourism activities, and cultural tourism is an activity that presents excellent growth potential. Cultural tourism will put the multiplier effect into motion as it will offset other tourism activities in the community. Communities that preserve their culture and heritage often experience rapid tourism growth (Sjaifurrachman, 2024). However, communities must protect their culture to ensure it is not negatively impacted by tourists entering their area. According to Fachria et al. (2023) tourism and culture cannot be separated as they are linked because cultural tourism attractions and activities are some of the most valuable tourism resources. Cultural tourism provides a significant exchange of cultures between tourists and visitors, which contributes to developing host communities. These authors added that cultural tourism's attractiveness remains underexplored in academic studies.

2.6 Negative impacts of tourism

The tourism industry can impact communities negatively or positively (Giampiccoli, Muhsin and Mtapuri, 2020). The benefits of tourism are discussed in different parts of this paper. However, to provide context to the disadvantages of tourism, the positive effects are highlighted here. Tourism attracts foreign exchange, generates income, creates jobs, contributes to GDP growth, and fosters regional development. It also improves the lives of residents, supports infrastructure development, and promotes the preservation of indigenous cultures and natural resources. Furthermore, tourism encourages cooperation and tolerance amongst different cultures.

Despite these positive impacts, Chakrabarty (2020) found that in countries that have reached their desired tourism development levels, further growth can also lead to an

increase in negative impacts. The adverse effects of tourism are often more detrimental than those of other industries because of the sector's sensitivity. Host communities are quick to react to any issues that visitors experience, which can slow development and negatively impact tourism overall. While some negative impacts are widespread and affect many destinations globally, others are specific to certain locations. Nevertheless, all adverse effects must be identified and addressed to ensure the success of tourism projects.

Chakrabarty (2020) describes several common negative impacts of tourism. Perceptions of individual gain from tourism development are not necessarily connected to socio-demographic traits, and support for further action by locals is tied to how they perceive tourism's positive or negative impacts. Although the economic benefits of tourism often outweigh the disadvantages, there are no clear guidelines addressing its environmental and socio-cultural effects. Tourism is only beneficial if its negative impacts on locals and the natural environment do not exceed the financial gains. For development to be effective, extensive infrastructure investment is required. A gap exists between theory and practice, as many tourism academics do not work within the industry. The growth of tourism in a particular area must be studied alongside the origins of tourists, their transit routes, and the environmental conditions in each region. Educating society about tourism and its role is essential to changing public attitudes and building local support for tourism initiatives. Additionally, a lack of support from various levels of government can limit tourism development. Local businesses may exploit tourists by inflating prices, which negatively affects locals who cannot compete with the visitors' greater purchasing power.

Bhatta (2023) also points out that locals may imitate the lifestyles of visiting Western tourists, a phenomenon called the "demonstration effect," which erodes cultural uniqueness. Tourism can place pressure on local land use, leading to soil erosion, pollution, loss of sensitive ecosystems, and harm to endangered flora and fauna, ultimately damaging the natural resources upon which tourism relies (Agarwal, Kariyapol and Pienchob, 2019). Mass tourism may also destroy the natural environment and disrupt local culture by introducing outside influences and increasing crime rates. Rocca and Zielinski (2022) further note that tourism can lead to the intrusion of privacy, unwanted mass tourism, prostitution, and drug trade. Drug use, already a significant issue in South Africa, including rural areas, is exacerbated by

tourism. Tourism may also shift locals' livelihoods away from traditional ways of living to more urban-touristic models, causing them to abandon the very cultural uniqueness that initially attracted tourists (Chatkaewnapanon, 2019).

To counter these issues, tourism planners and developers must adhere to sustainable principles when designing community tourism initiatives. Blaga and Sibiu (2017) define sustainable tourism as an approach that seeks to reduce tensions between the community, tourists, the tourism industry, and the environment, aiming to benefit all stakeholders and preserve resources for future generations. Sustainable tourism development should seek to limit tourism's impact on nature and protect ecosystems while avoiding actions that undermine social cohesion. It should protect people's way of life, prevent the commercialisation and dilution of culture, and mitigate the negative effects of overcrowding, such as pollution. Sustainable tourism must also address rising crime rates, including theft, pickpocketing, and prostitution, which can be exacerbated by tourism growth.

It is clear that unsustainable tourism planning leads to the failure of development projects. Sustainable and responsible tourism is, therefore, essential. Pham, Andereck, and Vogt (2019:1) summarised the issue by stating that the negative impacts of tourism can often accompany its benefits. Poor tourism management can strain infrastructure and energy resources, worsen environmental problems, exploit natural resources, raise the cost of goods, services, and real estate, increase crime, and erode local culture. As a result, the negative impacts of tourism can ultimately reduce the quality of life for both residents and visitors.

2.7 Challenges of Rural Tourism

The concept of rural tourism development attracted attention in the 1990s and is deemed an evolving aspect of the tourism industry (Roberts, Hall and Morag, 2017). Rural tourism is part of the sustainable and responsible tourism family. It allows visitors to become involved in the daily practices of the residents. These communities are often poor, have few citizens, depend on subsistence farming, and have unique traditions and cultural practices (Priatmoko et al., 2023). There are many definitions of rural tourism. UNWTO (2022) provided the most comprehensive definition: "Rural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural

lifestyle/culture, angling, and sightseeing.” Some of the benefits of rural tourism, as mentioned by Priatmoko et al. (2023), include creating jobs in the rural areas, stimulating the development of much-needed infrastructure that will also benefit the residents, improving the living standards of locals, supporting local businesses and creating new companies, improvement of gender participation, arouse cultural and traditional awareness of rural communities, and the protection of natural resources and biodiversity.

However, challenges faced by rural areas prohibiting rural tourism development include the remoteness of the areas. Duval et al. (2022, p.32) explained remoteness as " better expressing space and time distance and other elements that contribute to perceived isolation." A lack of service delivery on electricity and water supply, infrastructure, network availability, the internet, clinics and hospitals characterises the remoteness of rural areas. Lack of service delivery is the responsibility of the government and other stakeholders. They should provide these services to allow tourists easy access to these rural areas. The government is the custodian of tourism through the now-renamed National Department of Tourism (NDT), which collaborates with other government agencies to provide much-needed infrastructure and services to rural areas to facilitate tourism development. Failure of the government to provide these services automatically leads to the loss of tourism development projects. If the needed services are provided to the rural communities, tourists would overlook the remoteness of the area and focus on the positive experience they would receive from visiting these areas.

Therefore, the government must develop stimulating policies to create a conducive environment for improving tourism in rural areas. All levels of the state are critical stakeholders in tourism development. The national government is guiding rural tourism to achieve the desired outcomes, while the local government manages tourism practices and coordinates with businesses and communities to provide services and solve problems. Thus, the roles of government and its agencies in supporting rural tourism initiatives should be tailored to the unique needs of each rural community. Rocca and Zielinski (2022) affirmed that the public sector should strengthen social capital by supporting tourism projects initiated between the state, communities, and other stakeholders. It is, therefore, necessary to develop clear guidelines on the South African context relating to how the government should support tourism in rural areas.

The government can assist rural communities with skills development in the services that visitors require to sustain employment from tourism. This will avoid a spillover effect of the tourism benefits into other communities, thereby not yielding the anticipated benefits for the community where the tourism initiative is based. Wani and Balamurgan (2022) maintained that infrastructure development and the tourism industry are interdependent: with better infrastructure, the tourism product owners can provide superior services, and the government, after supplying the proper infrastructure, also derives a financial benefit from providing its services.

Priatmoko et al. (2023) noted that rural tourism activities can damage the culture of the locals. For example, the locals could imitate the behaviour and practices of frequent visitors to the extent that they abandon the practices of their culture. In order to avoid this from happening, UNWTO (2020) emphasised that creating opportunities for rural tourism needs proper partnerships and investment, supporting efforts to protect heritage, improving digital transformation, empowering the locals with the required skills and products, and creating practical public-public cooperation. Value can only be established if all other tourism industry sectors are holistically engaged in the value chain.

The eastern part of the Free State Province is mainly mountainous. Most people living in mountainous areas live in poverty; tourism in such locations is essential to alleviate poverty and ensure development. However, such initiatives depend on the interest of these rural communities in tourism involvement. According to Dang, Ren and Li (2022), the participation of rural people in poor areas has not improved over an extended period, and both the inside and outside factors that play a role in the rural people's willingness to take part in tourism have changed over time. Rural tourism has reached a point where the development model needs to change. Rural populations are stratified because of urbanisation; young people are leaving rural areas for urban areas and seeking employment opportunities, leaving the senior citizens and children in the rural areas, which poses a challenge for locals to serve the visitors to the site.

Furthermore, some households are marginalised from participating in tourism because they need more resources or skill sets, while others struggle to make a living, leaving little scope for participation. Some government poverty alleviation strategies have brought new opportunities for rural populations, including the many grants people are

receiving. However, many people deem it unnecessary to be involved in tourism projects because they will receive a gift from the government.

Therefore, the government must establish enough supportive policies to motivate households to participate in rural tourism. With those policies, locals will benefit more from tourism development. The role of government is essential because rural tourism can only be achieved with its support (Giampiccoli, Muhsin and Mtapuri, 2020; Rocca and Zielinki, 2022). Dang et al. (2022) opined that the availability of rural people to take part in development initiatives is based on the following hypotheses:

- If livelihood resilience is high, the likelihood of farmers participating in tourism is higher.
- If buffer capacity is high, the chance of rural people taking part is more significant.
- If self-organisation capacity is high, it becomes easier for the rural population to be involved.
- If the learning capacity is high, then the chance of involvement is higher.
- If tourism poverty alleviation policies are favourable, people will participate more.
- If poverty alleviation assistance is more in-depth, people will participate more.

With the success of rural tourism evident in some parts of the world, the perceptions of rural areas have changed over the years, between those who view rural areas as abandoned and disadvantaged places and those who see rural areas as places for economic activity related to tourism. People's perceptions have also changed due to the development of rural tourism, making rural areas more attractive, especially to young people (Lin, Mi and Zhang, 2020) who tend to seek better opportunities in urban areas. Thus, with young people's change in perspective about rural areas, the issue of who will take over tourism activities after the current population is resolved.

However, the question arises of "How can rural cultures, traditions, and history be used to attract visitors"? According to Yuvarani (2022), tourists are more likely to visit cultural destinations where they will experience authentic culture, referring to it as 'creative tourism,' where tourists are treated as local community members and experience their lifestyle. For such tourists, it is about a shift from ordinary to extraordinary and conventional to unconventional experiences. This type of tourism is

based on providing services that allow tourists to understand and enjoy the uniqueness of the natural, cultural, and heritage features.

Most rural areas in the Free State host many traditional events, such as weddings and initiations. These ceremonies can provide the opportunity to develop rural communities, especially the events that represent an unusual and extraordinary heritage and culture, as they can be used as a unique selling point to attract visitors to the area (Topler, 2021). The advantage of developing a tourism product based on local culture and history is that the locals create a sense of pride in who they are and their area. They also become ambassadors for their local tourism market and protect it from criminality from within and outside forces, which are critical for the sustainability of rural tourism.

Rural tourism is the best method for dealing with the development challenges of rural areas in a sustainable way. Some of the pastoral development challenges experienced in South Africa include using natural resources in a way that does not protect them for the future, inadequate access to socio-economic and cultural infrastructure and services, lack of access to water for both households and agricultural development, low literacy rates and skill levels, migratory labour practices, decay of the social fabric and abundance of unexploited opportunities in many economic sectors (Haywood, et al., 2020). Most of these challenges can be mitigated by improving rural tourism, which improves communities' economic and social well-being.

From the literature review, it is evident that rural tourism has the potential to yield positive results for rural communities in South Africa. Tourism has been used worldwide as a vehicle for the socio-economic upliftment of the rural population. This study focused on developing tourism in rural communities of the Free State Province. However, due to the similar nature of rural areas throughout the country, it can be adapted to rural communities in other regions. For rural tourism to prosper, resources must be present to attract visitors; in other words, an experience must be showcased. There must also be infrastructure and superstructure to provide access to the area and to accommodate visitors. In addition, there must be support from the government and other stakeholders to deliver the services tourists need. Finally, the community must be willing to participate in tourism and must be involved from the onset (e.g., planning stages) of a tourism project.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the existing literature on rural and community-based tourism. Some of the findings from the literature revealed that CBT is an alternative tourism model that emphasises local governance, community benefit, and sustainability. It is rooted in sustainable development principles and aims to economically empower rural communities through tourism. Key goals include community involvement, respect for local culture, job creation, and environmental preservation. CBT supports the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially poverty reduction, sustainable growth, and environmental protection. It appeals to modern tourists seeking authentic, culturally immersive experiences in natural, rural settings. Cultural tourism involves travel focused on experiencing a destination's cultural heritage, such as traditions, festivals, architecture, and local lifestyles. Southern Africa is rich in cultural assets, making it a strong candidate for cultural tourism development. Cultural tourism has the potential to spur socio-economic growth in rural areas. It also acts as a multiplier by boosting related industries. However, careful management is required to avoid it negatively impacting local cultures.

Despite its benefits, tourism has several disadvantages. Issues include cultural erosion, environmental degradation, crime, inflated prices, and the 'demonstration effect,' where locals imitate tourists, risking cultural loss. Poor planning and a lack of sustainability can make tourism detrimental to communities. Rural tourism is vital for economic upliftment, but faces challenges such as remoteness, lack of infrastructure, government support, and youth migration. Government involvement is essential to provide infrastructure, create policies, and train locals. Successful rural tourism depends on community participation, resource availability, government and stakeholder support, and alignment with local culture and history. Cultural events and traditions can serve as unique attractions, fostering pride and sustainability. The research methods used in the study, population, and sample will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. A detailed description of the data gathering and analysis procedures will also be provided.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This section explores the methods used to study the feasibility of using rural tourism to improve the lives of rural communities. The research approach, design, data collection, population, and sampling are explained in detail.

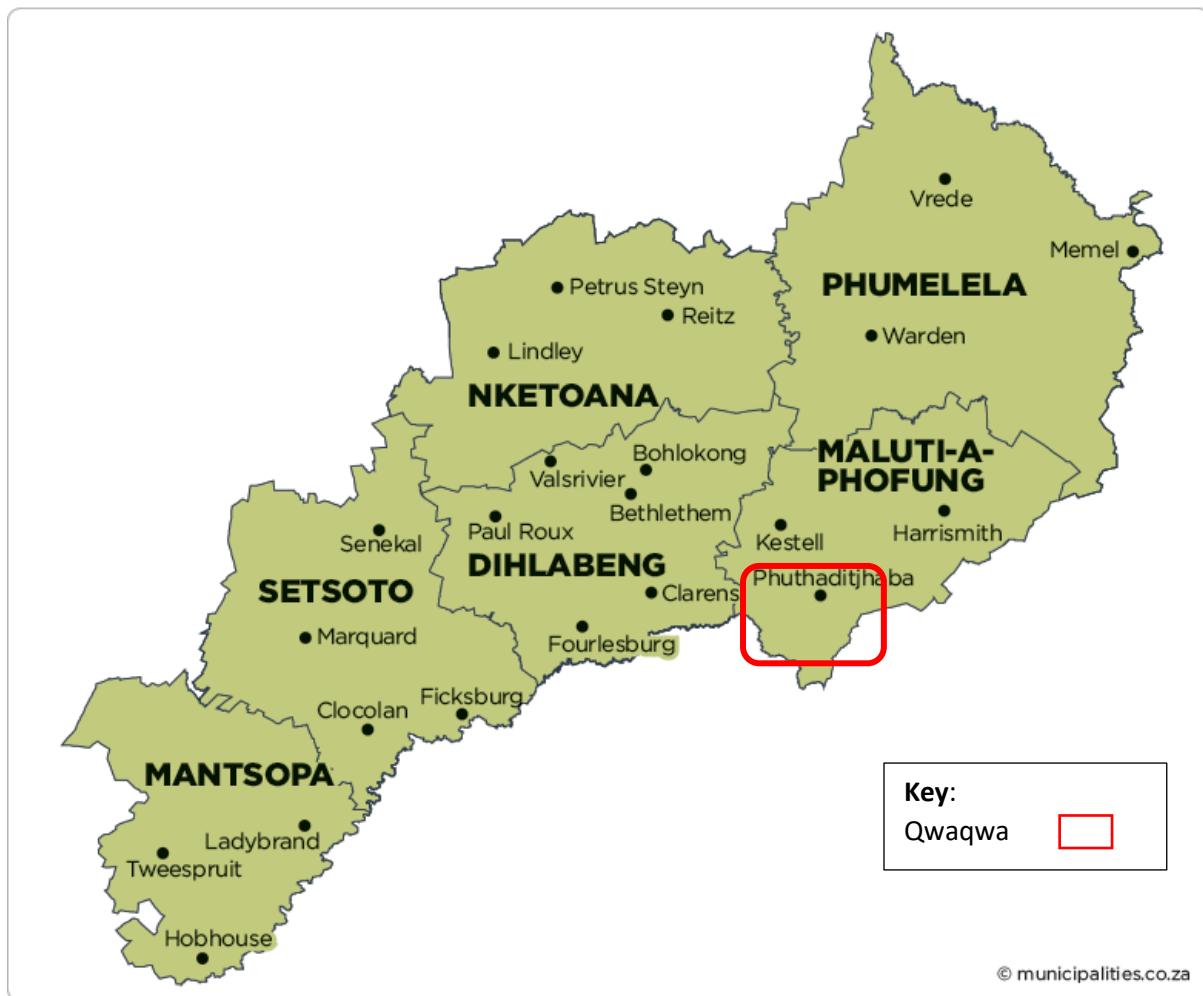
3.2 Approach

This study used a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is more inclined to an inductive approach, which aims to develop theories and interpretations (Bryman and Bell, 2019). This study was deemed naturalistic as it explored the happenings of a specific area with interaction and viewing of social life. For Nieuwenhuis (2019), qualitative research best seeks solutions to problems by studying different social settings and people who live there. The aim is thus to better understand how communities arrange themselves and make sense of their area through rituals and social roles.

3.3 Design

A single case study of Qwaqwa was used. It is a predominantly rural area nestled at the foot of the Maluti Mountains in the Eastern Free State (see Figure 1). This study used the community of Qwaqwa to determine how tourism may be used to alleviate deep-rooted poverty in that specific area. Still, the findings of this study may be extended for use by other rural communities that display the same characteristics as the Qwaqwa community.

Figure 1: Map of Thabo Mofutsanyana District



According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), a case study can provide an understanding of the community. They may be applied in similar circumstances. Case studies are frequently associated with a community or an organisation in a specific geographical area, and information may be collected using one or a combination of data sources (Bryman, 2012; Bhattacharjee, 2012). For this study, the case study allowed the researcher to obtain as much information about the community as possible. Qwaqwa displays a unique combination of rural lifestyle and picturesque mountainous scenery that may be exploited to entice tourists. The case study also allowed the researcher to focus on a specific community and obtain hidden information about that community (Salkind, 2012).

The benefit of using a case study was that it tested the theory that tourism can be used to uplift rural communities. Another benefit of using a case study for this research was

that it allowed the researcher to adjust the research questions if the original questions were no longer relevant during the research process. The case study enabled the researcher to obtain a wide variety of contextual data so that the research subject could be analysed from different levels of analysis and studied from multiple participants' perspectives (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Nieuwenhuis (2019) emphasised that another advantage of case study research is the close working relationship between the researcher and the community, allowing the community to share their stories.

The disadvantages of using a case study for this research included a lack of experimental control, which impacted the strength of the internal validity of inferences. The inexperienced researcher may need more integrative powers, on which the quality of inferences from the case study depends. A more experienced researcher would be able to identify concepts and patterns in a case study; this may lead to criticism of subjective findings. As a result, it may be impossible to employ the inferences from this case study in other rural communities (Battacherjee, 2012).

3.4 Data collection

Various data collection methods in qualitative research allow the researcher to obtain valuable information for their study (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). In this study, the researcher interviewed ordinary community members and those in the tourism industry. Thus, the data collection method employed for the study was qualitative interviewing. Three rural villages (Monontsha, Tsheseng, and Thaba Bosiu) were identified based on their remoteness and proximity to the Maluti mountains. These were villages where the traditional way of living is still noticeable, making it easier to get participants who fit the study profile. Three individuals or families were identified in two villages, with the remaining four respondents being from the last village, resulting in a sample of ten community members.

The inclusion criteria encompassed families who kept livestock and were familiar with tourism. They were asked about these two aspects before the interviews commenced. The first point of contact was the traditional leaders or ward councillors in the three selected villages. These leaders were able to direct the researcher to the families that met the mentioned criteria. The leaders were able to indicate that more than the required number of families met the criteria. During the first meeting with the families,

the researcher established whether they were familiar with the concept of tourism or not. The first required number of families that met the two criteria were then interviewed. Purposive sampling was used for the community members.

Ten tourism businesses were used, and a snowball sampling technique was applied to locate tourism businesses that were not listed in the database of the Department of Small Business Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA). The researcher had already established contact with a representative of DESTEA to provide a list of registered tourism businesses in the identified area. The representative agreed to provide contact details for these businesses once the research was approved. The researcher contacted the community-based tourism businesses from the list provided. If the list did not have the required number of businesses, then snowball sampling was used to request the businesses willing to participate in the study to provide information about other businesses that may not have been registered with DESTEA yet. A semi-structured interview questionnaire was used to collect data.

Data saturation is achieved when respondents provide no additional information from the interviews already conducted. However, it was achieved when all ten participants from each group had been interviewed. The sampling strategy discussed is explained further in the following subsection.

3.4.1 Interview

Interviews are not a rigid method, allowing the researcher an opportunity to adjust the questions based on the direction of the answers being received from the respondent. It thus encourages the researcher to deviate from set questions (Bryman and Bell, 2019). Bryman (2016) stated that in qualitative interviewing, the respondent's point of view is more important than following the structure of the pre-determined questions.

Semi-structured interviews were used to interview ordinary community members to determine if they might have been interested in tourism projects where they would have to display their way of life and traditions to tourists for financial gain. The interviews took the form of a conversation because many people who resided in rural communities were not familiar with being interviewed. It was, therefore, important to create a relaxed setting to encourage them to share as much information as possible.

Nieuwenhuis (2019) asserted that in an open-ended interview, the interviewer intends to explore the interviewees' views, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes about a specific topic.

Semi-structured interviews were used for tourists and tourism businesses. The intention was to determine if tourists might be interested in exploring the cultural and historical aspects of the community as a tourism offering. Tourism businesses were explored to determine if they have identified a need from their tourists to infuse the community's culture and traditions into their offerings and their suggestions as service providers and links to the community. According to Nieuwenhuis (2019), this type of interview uses pre-set questions followed by probing questions to probe the interviewee to clarify their response.

3.5 Population and sampling

Purposive sampling was the basis of this research. Purposive sampling entails collecting data from different sources such as people, organisations, documents, and departments (Bryman, 2012). Due to time and financial constraints, involving the entire sampling context of the Qwaqwa population in this study was impractical and not feasible. The sampling technique discussed below assisted the researcher in obtaining the required information from the selected population using minimal resources and was representative of the study population.

3.5.1 Population

The study was based on the rural population of Qwaqwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District of the Eastern Free State. The area is mainly rural and poverty-stricken, although there are elements of urban lifestyles in more developed areas within Qwaqwa. The first group comprised individuals and families in the rural villages of Qwaqwa. For the second group, a more formal population, tourism businesses and tourists were interviewed in a formal setting while still displaying some informality due to the nature of the industry they are participating in.

3.5.2 Purposive sampling

This research used a non-probability sampling technique. It did not randomly sample respondents, but strategically selected a sample relevant to the study (Bryman, 2016). Generic purposive sampling was used for the research because it can be used in a fixed and a priori approach (Bryman, 2012). The people of this community lead unique

lives that may interest cultural tourists, and they are familiar with remote and scenic areas within the mountainous region. The ideal sample size was ten community-based businesses and ten individuals or families from the community. Thus, respondents who best fit the study profile. According to Nieuwenhuis (2019), there are no rules governing sample size selection for qualitative research. Many researchers have attempted to provide guidelines on sample size. However, they are yet to agree on fixed figures for a sample size. The sample size depends on the research questions, the research design, the skill and experience of the researcher, and the availability of time and funds to conduct the research. The researcher collected data from participants until data saturation was achieved, which, in many studies, is achieved before the predetermined sample size is reached. Bryman and Bell (2019) indicated that it is difficult to know the sample size upfront. In this study, data saturation was achieved when the researcher obtained the same responses from the same group of subjects. Community-based tourism initiatives listed by the DESTEA (Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs) were identified quickly, and the required number was selected.

3.5.3 Snowball sampling

This sampling technique was used to locate the individuals or families living in the mountains, as it was envisaged that identifying them would be challenging. The researcher also sought businesses that DESTEA does not list. Bryman (2016, p.415) described snowball sampling as “a technique in which the researcher initially samples a small group of people relevant to the research questions, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research. These participants will then suggest others and so on”.

3.6 Measurement map and data analysis

The study used the measurement map to guide the framing of the questions and the analysis of the data. This study's data analysis approaches comprised narrative analysis and literature analysis. Bryman (2016) described narrative analysis as an approach that seeks to extract and analyse data based on how the subjects narrate their experiences of issues that affect them. This approach shifts the focus from things that happened to how people understand and deal with what happened. The narrative approach was suitable for this study as the aim was to understand how the rural

community of Qwaqwa can be empowered to improve their socio-economic standing by using its culture and heritage as a tourism offering that will attract potential visitors and gain economic benefits from such visits. According to Hunter (2010), the inherent belief of narrative inquiry is that when people tell stories about themselves, it involves choice and action that is accompanied by moral and ethical dimensions. Importantly, the participant's experiences should be changed while narrating their story. At the core of this research was the desire to change the participants' perception towards realising that tourism has the potential to improve their socio-economic environment.

Literature analysis was used to explore the objectives of this study, which sought to understand policy related to the tourism industry in South Africa and cultural tourism and rural communities. Theming and coding of collected data were deemed suitable analysis techniques. Thematic coding is a data analysis method commonly used in qualitative research. It helps identify data with common themes and ideas. It assists in grouping data into categories and establishing a structure of thematic ideas (Gibbs, 2007). Table 2 illustrates a measurement map aligning the objectives with the research questions, instruments, and analysis.

Table 2: Measurement map

Objective/ Question	Construct	Variable	Data source	Data/Questions	Data analysis
Objective 3: To determine the socio-economic circumstances of the cultural villages in Thabo Mofutsanyana District	Socio-economic status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Education • Income 	Census data of 2022 for Thabo Mofutsanyana district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you employed? If not, how do you make a living? • What is your highest level of education? • If employed, what is the category of your household's income? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) R50 000 and less (b) R50 001 – 100 000 (c) R100 001 – 150 000 (d) R150 001 – 200 000 (e) R200 001 and more 	Thematic analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is a continuous and iterative process, meaning data collection, processing, analysis, and reporting are interconnected. The process

starts with the researcher observing some elements in the data, followed by data collection. It leads to reflection, where the researcher considers the data. This process is cyclical in nature. The reflection generates new ideas and follow-up questions, leading to more fieldwork to collect more data and interact with participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2019). Analysing data involves dissecting data into themes to establish the relationship between concepts and perspectives, and to allow the interpretation of data. Splitting data allows the researcher to understand the link between concepts and identify the trends that need to be isolated (Mouton, 2015).

According to Bryman (2012), data can be analysed using qualitative content analysis and coding by themes. Deductive and inductive reasoning were used to achieve the research objectives by asking open-ended questions to obtain rich information from the participants. Deductive reasoning was used to reflect on the collected data to establish explanations (Saldana, 2017).

3.7 Ethics

The ethical considerations in any study aim to protect the research participants and the researcher and to uphold the highest standards of integrity and credibility of the results (Orb et al., 2000). In this study, the interaction between the researcher and the participants was mutually respectful; expectations from the participants were reasonable and acceptable (Sarantakos, 2000). This research process exercised caution in not violating the human rights of any of the participants. Thus, the researcher did not interview any vulnerable person. The data collected from participants was voluntary only. Participants were informed of their right to stop the interview at any point and that there was no penalty for opting out or withdrawing from the study. The data collection process commenced once approval had been secured from the University's Ethics Committee (ethical clearance number: UFS-HSD2024/1358). Mouton (2015) suggested the following ethical considerations:

- Participants received a written consent form. The form highlighted the purpose of the research. Participants were expected to give their consent by signing the form. Before the participants consented to participate in the study, the researcher clearly explained the research objectives, the estimated length of the interview, and the process that would be followed to conduct the research.

Consent was also sought from the traditional leaders in the community before approaching potential participants.

- The participants' identities were protected using pseudonyms instead of their names.
- No promises were made to the participants about the socio-economic benefits of participating in the study.
- Reasonable measures were employed to prevent harm to the participants.
- The collected data were securely stored in a lockable cupboard in the researcher's office. The hard copies were scanned into a password-activated folder on the researcher's laptop.

3.8 Limitations

Before discussing the limitations specific to this study, general common criticisms are associated with qualitative research. Bryman (2016) asserted that qualitative research can be impressionistic and subjective, as the findings strongly rely on the researcher's views and the relationship the researcher has developed with the study participants. Qualitative research is also difficult to replicate because it is mainly unstructured and relies on the researcher's ingenuity. Furthermore, the researcher is the central part of data collection. Ultimately, what they observe and hear is the result of their preferences. It is also difficult to generalise a qualitative study's findings to other cases, as such findings are generalised to theory, not to the population. In addition, a lack of transparency makes it difficult to establish how the researcher arrived at the study or their role therein.

This study had several limitations. The study was only based on a single case study and did not compare with other rural communities to determine the existing similarities and differences. Also, the small population was not evenly spread across the entire area, but it was concentrated in some villages. Furthermore, most tourism organisations within the area that was the focus of the study were not registered and were operating without proper documentation. In addition, the possibility existed that the assigned chiefs of the villages might refuse to permit interviewing people if they did not receive some benefit. The regular occurrence of service delivery protests in the area posed a serious challenge for the researcher who interviewed community

members. Lastly, prolonged power outages made assessing information from the municipality's computerised system challenging.

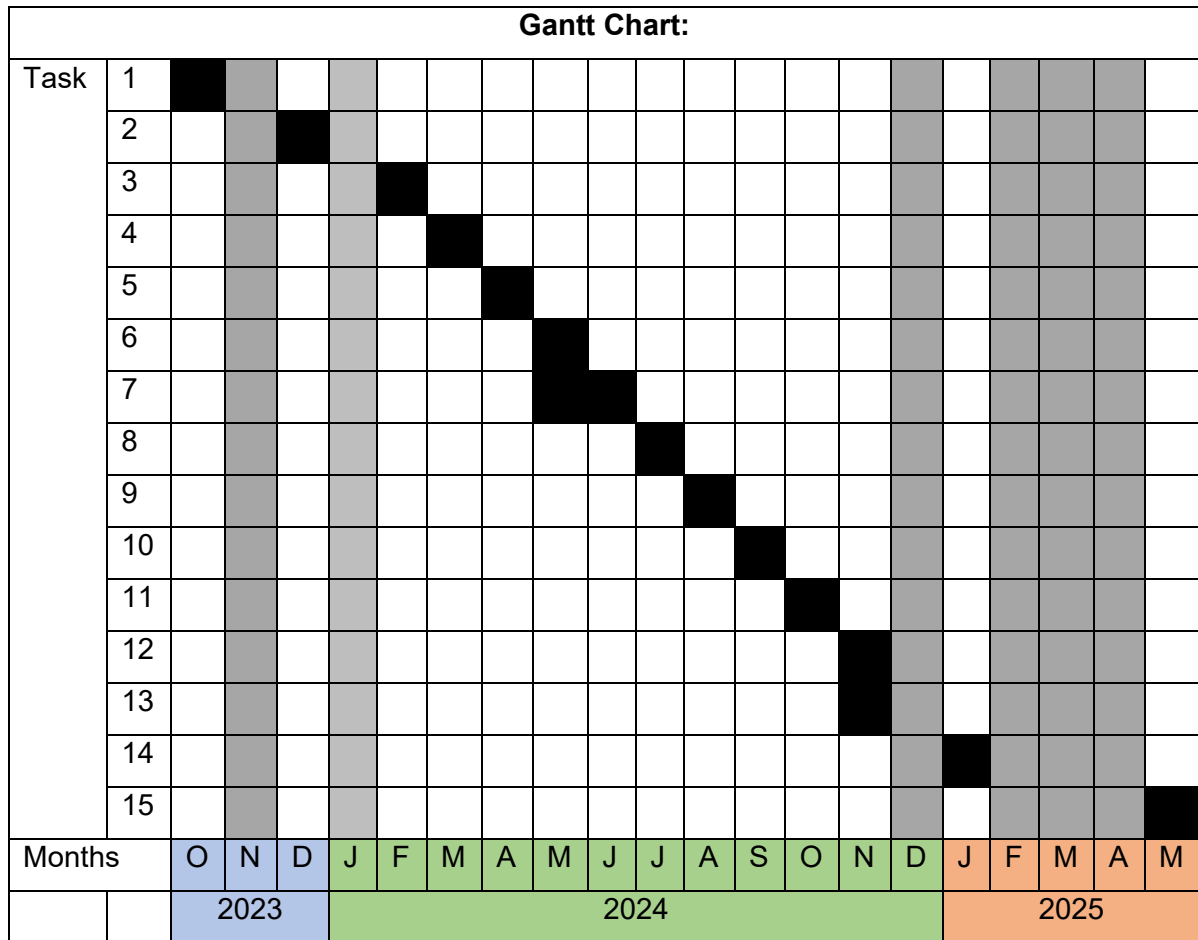
3.9 Potential benefits

Chinawat (2024) found that sustainable community-based tourism initiatives empower local communities, protect cultural resources, and enhance environmental sustainability within the community. The community of Qwaqwa could be empowered through active participation in tourism by being involved in decision-making, planning, and managing tourism initiatives, acquiring skills in those areas. Skills may be transferred through training programmes, workshops, and educational initiatives driven by other stakeholders. The community will thus have ownership of tourism initiatives developed in their communities, ensuring that proceeds are evenly distributed. The community will benefit economically from tourism initiatives, such as employment and generating income through entrepreneurial opportunities. Community-based tourism initiatives ensure cultural preservation. When locals share their culture with visitors, it becomes protected and promoted. The last benefit is linked to environmental protection, as locals tend to become part of environmental conservation efforts such as waste management, reforestation, and sustainable land use practices, aiming to protect natural resources, which could be a selling point to attract visitors to their area.

3.10 Timeline

The initial process of completing this Master of Development Studies (MDS) was scheduled to take one year. However, this study commenced in 2023, which was the researcher's first year enrolled in the MDS. In 2024, the researcher completed a mini-dissertation, which required developing a project schedule to map a timeline of all the activities needed to complete the mini-dissertation. Project management entails steering a particular objective from its inception until it is realised (Portny, 2010). According to the Project Management Institute (2017), "Developing a schedule is the process of analysing activity sequences, durations, resource requirements, and schedule constraints to create a schedule model for project execution and monitoring and controlling. The key benefit of this process is that it generates a schedule model with planned dates for completing project activities. Chart 1 illustrates the project schedule for completing a mini-dissertation, as represented by a Gantt chart.

Chart 1: Gantt Chart



The vertical column on the left side of the chart lists the activities to be completed, starting with the earliest at the top and the last at the bottom. The activities are represented by numbers assigned to each, and the meaning thereof are as follows:

- 1 = Submission of EDSD Assignment 3/Proposal to CDS office via Blackboard
- 2 = Allocation of students to supervisors by the CDS office
- 3 = Student contacts supervisor
- 4 = Student submits final proposal to the supervisor
- 5 = Student submits literature study to supervisor
- 6 = Student submits methodology to supervisor
- 7 = Student applies for ethical clearance via RIMS
- 8 = Report on fieldwork

- 9 = Submit results, data analysis, and discussions to the supervisor
- 10 = Submit conclusions and recommendations to the supervisor
- 11 = Submit a copy of the draft mini-dissertation to the supervisor
- 12 = Have dissertation language edited and style edited
- 13 = Submit final mini-dissertation to CDS and supervisor
- 14 = CDS forwards the mini-dissertation to an external assessor
- 15 = Student graduates

The rows next to the activities have black bars showing the time spent on each activity or the estimated duration. The horizontal row at the bottom of the chart indicates the months of the year when the activity will be carried out. The months are represented by the first letter of each month, starting with October 2023 and following the sequence until May 2025. The grey columns indicate months where no activity is scheduled for submission, allowing the researcher to complete other parts of the research.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological approach used to assess the feasibility of rural tourism in improving the lives of the Qwaqwa community. A qualitative research design was adopted to explore lived experiences and community dynamics. The study focused on a single case study in Qwaqwa, chosen for its rural character and tourism potential, allowing for in-depth, context-specific insights. Semi-structured interviews were employed as the main data collection method, targeting two groups (rural community members and tourism businesses). A total of twenty participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling. Data was analysed using narrative and thematic analysis, guided by a measurement map aligning research questions, instruments, and objectives. Ethical standards, including informed consent, anonymity, and data security, were strictly followed. The following chapter presents the study's results derived from the collected and analysed samples.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This section discusses and presents the research findings. The section first presents the demographic descriptive analysis of the household and the business interviews, followed by the research findings. In the first section on demographics, the household interviews comprised questions based on household dynamics, educational background, source of income, types of livestock kept by households, and how the livestock is fed. The business demographics questions explored the length of existence, the nature of the business, the business offering, and the number of employees working there. Ten business participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Ten household participants were selected using a snowball sampling technique. In total, there were twenty participants in this study. A thematic analysis of the collected data is included in the presentation and discussion of the findings section, showing how the themes were developed and analysed using tables, focusing on the research questions posed to participants. This section is directly linked to the main aims and objectives of the study.

4.2 Demographics: Descriptive Analysis

The first part of this subsection presents the household demographics, followed by those of the businesses that participated in this study.

4.2.1 Households

Question 1.1 Please provide us with the following information:	Response
How long have you been living here?	
How many people live in this household?	
How many are adults?	
How many children are younger than 18 years?	
How many children attend school (primary or secondary)?	
How many people attend a tertiary institution?	
How many household members are females?	
How many household members are males?	
How many people live with any form of disability?	
How many adults are employed?	
Which cultural group do you belong to?	

Table 1: Responses to household dynamics

Sub-questions	Frequency	Percentage
How long have you been living here?	40 years plus = 5 30 - 39 years = 3 20 - 29 years = 1 10 - 19 years = 1 Total: 10 respondents	50% 30% 10% 10% Total: 100%
How many people live in this household?	1 person = 1 2 people = 2 3 people = 4 4 people = 2 6 people = 1 Total: 10 respondents	10% 20% 40% 20% 10% Total: 100%
How many are adults?	1 adult = 1 2 adults = 7 3 adults = 1 5 adults = 1 Total: 10 respondents	10% 70% 10% 10% Total: 100%
How many children are younger than 18 years?	0 children = 3 1 child = 7 Total: 10 respondents	30% 70% Total: 100%
How many children attend school (primary or secondary)?	No children = 3 Primary = 7 Secondary = 0 Total: 10 respondents	30% 70% 0% Total: 100%
How many people attend a tertiary institution?	No children = 10 Total: 10 respondents	100% Total: 100%
How many household members are females?	No female = 1 1 female = 4 2 females = 4 3 females = 1 Total: 10 respondents	10% 40% 40% 10% Total: 100%
How many household members are males?	1 male = 6 2 males = 3 4 males = 1 Total: 10 respondents	60% 30% 10% Total: 100%
How many people live with any form of disability?	No disability = 9 1 disabled person = 1 Total: 10 respondents	90% 10% Total: 100%
How many adults are employed?	Not employed = 4 1 employed = 3 2 employed = 3 Total: 10 respondents	40% 30% 30% Total: 100%
Which cultural group do you belong to?	Sesotho = 9 Zulu = 1 Total: 10 respondents	90% 10% Total: 100%

Table 1 shows that of the 10 households interviewed, 50% have lived in the study area for over 40 years. Most households (70%) comprise two adults, a mother, and a father, with the majority of these households having one child under the age of 18. Most of the children younger than 18 (70%) attend primary school, while no household has children in tertiary education. Almost all the households (90%) do not have people with disabilities, and they belong to the Sesotho ethnic group.

Question 1.2: What are the education levels of the adults in the household?

Table 2: Educational background of the participants

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Grades 0 – 3	4	17%
Grades 4 – 7	3	13%
Grades 8 – 10	3	13%
Grades 11 – 12	8	35%
Tertiary	5	22%
Total	23	100%

Table 2 depicts that most adults in the households (48%) completed Further Education and Training (FET), the education level provided between grades 10 and 12. Those who have received an education at higher education institutions comprise 22%, with participants not being schooled or only attending up to Grade 3, totalling 17% of the adults in the households. The remaining 13% of adults fell within the category of grades 4 and 7.

Question 1.3: How does the household earn money?

Table 3 shows how households earn their living. For some of these households, it is a combination of income sources. Each of the 23 adults in the households has a specific source of income. Self-employed participants comprised 22% of the adults. Their income is derived from selling livestock and doing construction work. Those within the ‘other’ category either receive a stipend from a tourism learnership placement initiated by the National Department of Tourism (NDT) working as tourism monitors or from working under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) initiated by the government or from donations received from visitors interested in the experience of living with a person who looks after animals in the mountains. According

to Sarudzai and Geoffrey (2020), poverty in Qwaqwa has persisted, as unemployment and poverty rates continue to rise rapidly.

Table 3: Source of income

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Wage/salary	5	22%
Child grant	6	26%
Disability grant	0	0%
Old age pension	4	17%
Self-employed (specify)	5	22%
Other (specify)	3	13%
Total	23	100%

Question 1.4: Which livestock do you keep as a household?

Table 4: Livestock kept by households

Category of livestock	Frequency	Percentage
Cattle	7	70%
Sheep	6	60%
Goats	4	40%
Pigs	5	50%
Horses	4	40%
Donkeys	1	10%
Other (specify)	7 (Chickens and ducks)	70%

It was found that most families keep more than one type of animal as their livestock. Table 4 shows that of the ten households interviewed, 70% have cattle and other livestock. The 'other' category represents chickens and ducks. The second-largest group of animals kept in the area is sheep at 60%, with 50% of households having pigs.

Question 1.5: Do your animals get fed in the kraal or go to graze accompanied by a herdsman?

Table 5: How livestock is fed

Feeding strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Get fed in the kraal	3	70%
Go out to graze	7	30%
Both	2	20%

Table 5 reveals that of the ten households, most livestock go to the veld to graze (70%). Pigs are fed in the kraal (30%) and kept in a pigsty. A total of 20% of participants indicated feeding the livestock in the kraal during the winter months when there is a scarcity of food in the veld, but let their animals graze during the seasons when there is an abundance of food.

4.2.2 Businesses

Question 1.1: How long has the business existed?

Table 6 shows that 30% of participating businesses have been operating between two and four years, and 10% have only operated for less than a year. In the other categories (5-7 years, 8-10 years, and more than 10 years), there were two businesses (20%) in each.

Table 6: The period of business existence

Period of existence	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	1	10%
2 – 4 years	3	30%
5 – 7 years	2	20%
8 – 10 years	2	20%
More than 10 years	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Question 1.2: What is the nature of the business?

Table 7: Type of business

Types of business	Frequency	Percentage
Community initiative	1	10%
Partnership	2	20%
NGO	0	0%
Private	7	70%
Other (specify)	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 7 indicates that only three different types of businesses are represented by those interviewed. The first is the community initiative, which only has one business (10%) forming part of the total participating businesses. The second is a partnership with two businesses (20%). Lastly, most businesses are private, with seven (70%) falling in this category.

Question 1.3: What is the business's primary tourism offering?

Table 8 presents the primary offerings of businesses participating in the study. Most do not offer only one service or product but a combination. Seven (70%) businesses offer accommodation as their leading service, followed by six (60%) offering food. This indicates a combination of food and accommodation.

Table 8: Businesses' primary tourism offering

Primary tourism offering	Frequency	Percentage
Accommodation	7	70%
Food	6	60%
Transport	4	40%
Tourism activities (specify)	5 Meetings Conferences Adventure Travel agency and tour guide Cultural activities	50%
Other (specify)	1 Planting food Medicines	10%

Question 1.4: How many employees does the business have?

Table 9: Number of employees

Number of employees	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5	6	60%
6 – 10	2	20%
11 – 15	0	0%
16 – 20	0	0%
More than 20	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 9 shows that most businesses (60%) employ between one and five people. Businesses employing between six and ten people and more than 20 people comprised 20% of the participating businesses.

4.3 Analysis and discussion of the themes

The researcher used ATLAS.ti version 25.0.1.32924 to code the data. Maree (2019) described coding as “the process of reading carefully through your transcribed data,

line by line, and dividing it into meaningful analytical units". The coding led to identifying the main themes of this study, including the sub-themes.

Thematic analysis is described as one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2012). The researcher grouped the codes by identifying the questions that addressed each study objective, subsequently identifying emerging themes. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To determine best practices for rural communities to use cultural tourism for their socio-economic development.
- To explore the positive and negative impacts of using unique cultural practices and scenery as a tourism attraction in rural communities of Qwaqwa.
- To develop guidelines for the sustainability of community-based tourism organisations.
- To inquire about the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in developing cultural tourism in rural communities.

The researcher identified two sets of themes. The first set focused on household responses, and the second on business responses.

The themes for household interviews included the following:

- Theme 1: Socio-economic benefits of community tourism
- Theme 2: Harmonising adventure and conservation for sustainable tourism
- Theme 3: Tourism promotes culture and history in a community
- Theme 4: Stakeholders' collaborative development of community tourism

The themes for business interviews included the following:

- Theme 1: Annual turnover, number, and source markets
- Theme 2: Importance of community involvement
- Theme 3: Potential types of tourism
- Theme 4: Entrepreneurship opportunities for the community
- Theme 5: Stakeholder Involvement

4.3.1 Household analysis

4.3.1.1 Theme 1: Socio-economic benefits of community tourism

Six questions from the interview schedule could be linked to Objective 1 of the study. These questions were the following:

2.1 Do you know what tourism is?

2.2 Can you briefly explain what you think tourism is?

2.8 Do you think herders will want to be accompanied by tourists and share their experiences with them?

2.9 How do you feel about caring for the natural environment?

2.10 What measures are you putting in place to ensure the sustainability of the natural environment? Explain.

2.13 How do you want to see the whole community benefiting from tourism?

Table 10: Socio-economic benefits of community tourism

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Theme 1: Socio-economic benefits of community tourism	Business opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Business partnerships with tourists ➤ Corporate Social Investment by businesses ➤ Entrepreneurial opportunities
	Benefits of tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Benefit from selling arts and crafts ➤ Economic benefits for the youth ➤ Herders see an opportunity to make money ➤ Selling arts and crafts, traditional clothes, and vegetables to visitors ➤ Creation of job opportunities ➤ Employment for the youth ➤ Job opportunities and new infrastructure
	Educating community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educating community about dangers of destroying nature ➤ Education about indigenous flora ➤ Lack of conservation ➤ Sharing of knowledge by tourists
	Display of cultural lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Already showcasing my life to visitors ➤ If they will do as I ask ➤ Showcasing culture ➤ If tourists show interest ➤ I can showcase my lifestyle if arranged in time ➤ I can showcase my lifestyle for money
	Economic benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Motivation is money ➤ An opportunity for extra income ➤ I make money by passing on knowledge ➤ Making money from dance ➤ I can make money by selling arts and crafts ➤ I can make money by selling traditional food and medicine ➤ I can make money by selling vegetables and traditional clothes

The data in Table 10 shows that for the rural community to derive socio-economic benefits from cultural tourism, the best practices should involve the community

benefiting from cultural tourism, such as employment and business opportunities (e.g, entrepreneurship). Goodwin and Santilli (2009) found that CBT provides a powerful alternative to traditional tourism by placing the community at the centre of tourism initiatives. It encourages them to participate actively and benefit directly from tourism development. The participants viewed obtaining tangible benefits as a significant contribution of tourism to their livelihoods because of their dire circumstances. According to research done in Qwaqwa, several tourism businesses send visitors to the hiking trails in this mountainous region, although locals seldom participate in these activities themselves. Reducing poverty and achieving the SDGs in Qwaqwa may result from increased community involvement in tourist development. Residents of Qwaqwa and the other villages have ample opportunity to participate in community-based tourism, cultural tourism, and rural ecotourism (Sarudzai and Geoffrey, 2020). One participant shared as follows:

Participant 9: Employment opportunities for the community, especially the youth. Tourism businesses must participate in Corporate Social Investment initiatives that benefit the community. Food, toiletries, and food parcels can be donated to the community. People who plant vegetables can supply the hotels. 9:13 ¶ 156 in Participant 9

Another participant indicated that the community can also contribute to creating socio-economic benefits.

Participant 8: There are many people who know how to knit traditional items; they should be given an opportunity to showcase and sell their creations. 8:13 ¶ 156 in Participant 8

In this regard, Dodds and Butler (2010) added that in South Africa, the different cultural tourism initiatives showcase the rich cultural heritage of the local communities, protecting traditions and promoting cross-cultural harmony. Corporate social responsibility has been emphasised as a means for rural communities to benefit from tourism businesses in their area. According to Paluseri et al. (2024), as a type of human endeavour in the business sector, every organisation has a moral obligation to sustain a healthy and balanced corporate connection with the local community and environment in accordance with public culture, norms, and values.

Furthermore, the researcher found that most of the community members were not familiar with sustainable principles, requiring education to collectively work towards preserving the natural environment essential to tourism development. Programmes for environmental conservation are critical to protecting rural areas' biodiversity and natural resources. These programmes support reforestation, watershed management, eco-friendly tourism, and sustainable land use, all of which contribute to the region's long-term environmental sustainability (Chinawat, 2024). It was also found that the locals are keen to share and showcase their lifestyle to visitors if they can earn a living from it. Notably, some of the locals have already been involved in cultural tourism as a means to earn an extra income.

4.3.1.2 Theme 2: Harmonising adventure and conservation for sustainable tourism.

The study's second objective was to explore the positive and negative impacts of using unique cultural practices and scenery as tourism attractions. Based on the interview schedule, five of the interview questions were directly related to this objective. The questions were the following:

2.3 Do you think you can use culture to earn a living from tourism?

2.4 Which elements of your culture are most important to you?

2.5 On a scale of 1 – 5 (1 = very low; 2 = low; 3 = average; 4 = above average; 5 = very high), how would you rate the way your household follows culture and tradition?

2.6 Would you be willing to showcase your lifestyle to tourists for a fee?

2.7 Do you know the history of your area?

Table 11 illustrates harmonising adventure and conservation for sustainable tourism.

Table 11: Harmonising adventure and conservation for sustainable tourism

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Theme 2: Harmonising adventure and conservation for sustainable tourism	Touristic exploration and adventure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Experiencing other places ➤ Tourism is nature and travelling ➤ Tourism is visiting other places, attractions and cultures ➤ Travelling to experience nature, plants and animals ➤ Travelling worldwide for attractions, culture, food, technology, and music. ➤ Visiting for adventure activities ➤ Visiting protected, beautiful places ➤ Interacting with other ethnicities and knowing the indigenous fauna and flora
	Conservation of the touristic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I do not disturb nature ➤ I protect nature ➤ Nature must be protected for future generations ➤ Not allowing animals to graze near scarce and sensitive plants ➤ Monitoring and warning offenders ➤ Prevention of pollution. ➤ The environment is very important for all organisations ➤ Stop veld fires ➤ Reusing materials ➤ Protecting plants and animals when there are fires ➤ Using renewable energy
Theme 3: Tourism promotes culture and history in a community	Levels of cultural practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Above-average practice of culture ➤ Average practice of culture ➤ Very high practice of culture ➤ Very low cultural practice
	Community value of cultural elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I like arts and crafts, cuisine, music and dance ➤ I like arts and crafts ➤ I like arts and crafts, and music ➤ I like arts and crafts, music, and dance ➤ I like cuisine ➤ I like cuisine, music and dance ➤ I like music and dance ➤ Music ➤ Music and traditional dance
	Familiarity with the community's history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Familiarity with the history of the area ➤ Unfamiliar with the history because of a short stay

Table 11 indicates that cultural tourism creates harmony between adventure and conservation, leading to sustainable tourism. Community-led sustainable tourism initiatives highlight the significance of empowering local communities, conserving cultural heritage, and advancing environmental sustainability in the growth of the tourism industry. These programmes support the general well-being of rural communities while providing travellers with genuine and enriching experiences by encouraging meaningful interactions between tourists and locals, embracing traditional knowledge and practices, and prioritising ecological integrity (Chinawat, 2024). The participants stated as follows:

Participant 7: Visiting other places from your place of origin and being involved in tourism activities such as hiking. [7:2 ¶ 123 in Participant 7](#)

Participant 4: It is something that takes care of an area and protects it. People visit beautiful places. [4:2 ¶ 121 in Participant 4](#)

4.3.1.3 Theme 3: Tourism promotes culture and history in a community

The participants indicated that through tourism, the culture and history of local communities are promoted, because as the visitors return to their home countries, they share their experiences of visiting the rural communities, encouraging others to visit the same communities to experience it for themselves. However, Paluseri et al. (2024) cautioned that inadequate infrastructure, a lack of promotion, and subpar goods or services can negatively impact tourist interest.

4.3.1.4 Theme 4: Stakeholders' collaborative development of community tourism

The fourth objective of the study was to inquire about the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in developing cultural tourism in rural communities. Participants were asked two questions from the interview schedule to answer this objective. The questions were as follows:

2.11 Which stakeholders do you think should be involved in making sure that tourism flourishes in your community?

2.12 Explain the roles of the different stakeholders you mentioned in 2.11.

Table 12 shows the different stakeholders' collaborative development of community tourism.

Table 12: Stakeholders' collaborative development of community tourism

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Theme 4: Stakeholders' collaborative development of community tourism	The role of government and community in tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Academic institutions ➤ Advocacy and marketing by local government ➤ Build a fence and stop illegal activities ➤ Community creates arts and crafts and sells food ➤ Community cultural groups established ➤ Community members monitor each other ➤ Community provides information and protection to tourists ➤ Community, police, and traditional leaders ➤ Create business opportunities ➤ Establish a tourism information centre ➤ Funding for accommodation establishments ➤ Government ➤ Infrastructure development ➤ Investors ➤ Laws to govern awareness of nature and tourism education ➤ Local government ➤ Municipality develops tourism destinations ➤ Municipality, community, and the chief's council ➤ Municipality, traditional leaders, and schools ➤ Police must patrol to prevent illegal activities ➤ Provide permission for entry ➤ Research scientific ways of promoting tourism by academic institutions ➤ Schools introduce tourism as a compulsory subject ➤ Stakeholders work together ➤ The chief provides tour guides ➤ Traditional leaders ➤ Traditional leaders convene monthly meetings with community ➤ Traditional leaders convene monthly meetings with community ➤ Traditional leaders must be given authority ➤ Traditional leaders must protect tourism facilities ➤ Traditional leaders, schools, and community ➤ Visitors and the community ➤ Visitors make donations to improve tourism

The collected data in Table 12 shows that the participants view the government and the community as the most important stakeholders in cultural tourism development. To develop cultural tourism meaningfully, the two identified stakeholders must work together in a partnership. Although the participants mentioned different stakeholders, they can largely be placed into the categories of different government levels and entities within the community itself. Thus, the government will realise its poverty alleviation goal, and the community will benefit from tourism. For Okazaki (2008), collaboration and forming partnerships are crucial for sustainable growth. Given the numerous external elements that affect tourism, partnerships should involve various stakeholders, including cross-sectoral planning, community-private sector partnerships, public-private sector partnerships, shared decision-making procedures, and an effort to overcome cultural differences. In the tourism sector, a well-known occurrence is a lack of cooperation. Schoeman (2002) conducted an investigation into

why tourism is not developing in Qwaqwa National Park (QNP). She found the following main factors influencing the growth of ecotourism in the region, despite the QNP having all the resources and features required to offer specialised tourist facilities:

- (1) Disagreement regarding the property encompassed by the QNP's legal tenureship.
- (2) Constant reorganisation and restructuring of Agri-Eco's and the Free State Provincial Government's departments and reporting systems.
- (3) The Free State Provincial Government's incapacity to offer precise guidelines and guidance for the growth of ecotourism in the QNP.
- (4) The inefficiency of the Free State Provincial Government.

To secure advantages and resolve issues among stakeholders, cooperation is essential. Despite all stakeholders being interdependent, cooperation is critical in achieving the end goals. The participants shared the following regarding stakeholder cooperation and involvement:

Participant 10: Local government for advocacy and marketing of the area. Traditional leaders to mobilise communities and guarantee the safety of tourists. Academics must research more scientific ways to promote tourism. [10:12 ¶ 153 in Participant 10](#)

Participant 2: The government must put up a fence to close off the area, protecting the fauna and flora from illegal activities. Anybody who enters must have permission. The community must work together with the government by protecting their area from criminals and enforcing by-laws. [2:11 ¶ 153 in Participant 2](#)

Participant 9: The chiefs must protect tourism facilities such as hotels, so they become sustainable for a long time. Schools must introduce tourism as a subject for the kids living in these rural areas, with a lot of potential for tourism to grow. Tsheseng schools must make tourism and hospitality studies compulsory because accommodation establishments can be revived, and jobs will be created for them. The community must establish cultural groups that know music and other cultural elements. [9:12 ¶ 153 in Participant 9](#)

4.3.2 Business analysis

4.3.2.1(a) Theme 1: Annual turnover, number, and source markets

From the business interview schedule, six questions could be linked to the first objective of determining the best practices for rural communities to use cultural tourism for their socio-economic development. The questions were the following:

- 1.5 What is the annual turnover of the business?
- 1.7 How does the business benefit from the community?
- 1.8 How can the community add value to the business?
- 1.9 How does the business benefit the community?
- 2.1 How many visitors does the business serve annually?
- 2.2 Which is the source market for the business? Where do they come from?

Table 13: Annual turnover, number, and source markets

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Theme 1: Annual turnover, number, and source markets	Annual number of visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1000 visitors ➤ 12 000 clients annually ➤ 1240 clients annually ➤ 1440 clients annually ➤ 158 visitors annually ➤ 288 clients annually ➤ 336 in seven months ➤ 3600 clients per annum ➤ Between 100 and 150 visitors ➤ Between 500 and 1000 pre-COVID-19
	Annual turnover of the business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Between R100 000 and R150 000 ➤ Between R80 000 and R120 000 ➤ R15 000 000 annual turnover ➤ R200 000 annual turnover ➤ R30 000 post COVID-19 turnover ➤ R42 300 annual turnover ➤ R5 000 000 annual turnover ➤ R500 000 ➤ R70 000 pre COVID-19 turnover ➤ No annual turnover yet
	Source markets of tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ African tourists ➤ Interprovincial tourists ➤ International tourists ➤ Intra-provincial tourists ➤ Local tourists ➤ Regional tourists

Table 13 indicates that the annual number of visitors to the Qwaqwa area ranges from 100 for new businesses to 12,000 visitors per annum for well-established businesses. The annual turnover ranges from R30,000 for smaller businesses up to R15 000 000 for businesses that have been operating for over ten years and are well known. These numbers appear to corroborate the assertion made by Sarudzai and Geoffrey (2020) that, on average, employees in Qwaqwa's tourism sector make between R2500 for managers and R1500 for waiters and waitresses each month. Tourists who use the services of these businesses are from all over the world. Some businesses' market segments consist mainly of international clients, while they also get domestic and regional clients.

On the other hand, there are businesses whose main segment comprises domestic visitors, while also receiving international and regional visitors. According to the Department of Tourism (2016), tourism has high returns but low manpower and capital requirements. Therefore, caution must be exercised when creating items that demand a significant financial outlay. Understanding profitability margins is crucial, especially in locations where operations are overly dependent on borrowed funds, even if most CBT operators stated that tourism has the potential to expand other sectors and opportunities. A strong return on investment is necessary for CBT initiatives to continue operating. Profitability is defined as the ability to generate money above and beyond the initial investment. However, other factors can impact the profitability of running a CBT project. Some participants shared the following about their businesses:

Participant 6: We have 15 rooms, which are full most of the time. A room without meals is R1000, with breakfast and supper it is R1350. So annually, we make around R5 000 000. [6:1 ¶ 81 in Participant 6](#)

Participant 9: We get all of them, locals, mostly inter and intra-provincial, regional, from our neighbours, some from African and international countries. [9:7 ¶ 102 in Participant 9](#)

4.3.2.1(b) Theme 2: Importance of community involvement

This theme formed part of the first objective and involves the same questions stated in Section 4.3.2.1 (a).

Table 14: Importance of community involvement

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Theme 2: Importance of community involvement	Provision and use of community resources by businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Allow business to use community resources ➤ Business utilises community resources ➤ Client referrals ➤ Community provides accommodation for our clients ➤ Community shares folklore with our clients ➤ Display of local culture by community ➤ Participation in cultural festival ➤ Provision of security ➤ Volunteers from community

Table 14 reveals that it is important for CBT businesses and initiatives to have access to community resources needed to serve the visitors. Community resources include immovable and movable assets and the community members themselves. Some of the services community members provide are necessary to attract visitors to the tourism businesses. The Municipality or the community itself occasionally grant land

for CBT projects. Community members select trainees, and candidates receive training in restaurant service, food preparation, tourist guiding, and other areas according to the project's needs (Department of Tourism, 2016). In this regard, Participant 4 stated as follows:

Participant 4: The community is rich in culture. They are already letting us use their resources. They also provide security for the business. 4:4 ¶ 90 in Participant 4

Participant 4: The business relies on community resources such as food, cattle, and horses to enhance the tourist experience. 4:3 ¶ 87 in Participant 4

4.3.3(a) Theme 3: Potential types of tourism

Two themes stemmed from the third objective of the study. The objective entailed developing guidelines for the sustainability of community-based tourism organisations. Only two questions from the interview schedule directly addressed this objective. They were the following:

2.3 Which type of tourists does the business serve?

2.4 How can the local culture and traditions enhance the business offering?

Table 15: Focus types of tourism

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Theme 3: Potential types of tourism	Focus types of tourists for businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adventure tourists ➤ Business tourists ➤ Cultural tourists ➤ Eco-tourists ➤ Educational tourists ➤ Leisure tourists ➤ Religious tourists

The researcher wanted to understand which types of tourism should be the focus of the rural businesses in the Qwaqwa area, subsequently considering information provided by existing businesses. In this regard, Sarmiadi, Suryani, and Sumiarti (2021) stated that the idea for a tourism attraction or activities must come from the community itself, using the existing potential. CBT prioritises social, cultural, and environmental sustainability. The data revealed that, although some types are more popular, adventure (hiking trails and mountainous scenery of the area) has already been shown to be a preferred type of tourist activity. The business tourists are largely government employees from different departments who visit the area to perform certain duties.

Most cultural tourists are there for weddings, funerals, and Thanksgiving ceremonies, as displayed in Table 15. The following is an account of one participant regarding the types of visitors they usually get:

Participant 7: We get business, adventure, and cultural tourists attending the Basotho New Year held at Basotho Cultural Village in addition to those who visit for weddings and funerals. 7:8 ¶ 105 in Participant 7

4.3.3(b) Theme 4: Entrepreneurship opportunities for the community

Table 16: Entrepreneurship opportunities

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Theme 4: Entrepreneurship opportunities for the community	Cultural activities required by visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Authenticity to local culture ➤ Community tells history to visitors ➤ Cooking cultural food for visitors ➤ Create cultural theme to attract visitors ➤ Education about traditional medicine ➤ Hosting cultural events ➤ More marketing of cultural events ➤ No business enhancement by culture ➤ Offer horseback riding ➤ Practice of authentic culture by locals ➤ Provide cultural activities for guests ➤ Selling traditional clothing to visitors ➤ Serving cultural food ➤ Teaching visitors cultural games

The respondents highlighted the community's existing business opportunities to earn a living from tourism (see Table 16). The visitors need to be told the history of the area, indicate an interest in traditional food and clothing, and be educated about traditional medicine, amongst other interests. CBT's primary goal is long-term local development, benefiting several social actors and not just a few business owners (Giampiccoli, Muhsin and Mtapuri, 2020). Arintoko et al. (2020) added that, particularly in developing nations where most of the population lives in rural areas with natural, cultural, and indigenous life, rural tourism has the potential to grow and become a strategy for sustainable national development. Because it is intimately linked to local production methods, local citizens' lifestyles, cultural festivities, heritage, and natural tourism in rural or suburban regions, sustainable tourism has the potential to improve the nation's total identity. Two participants stated the following:

Participant 1: Hosting cultural events in the mountains. People who know traditional medicine can accompany tourists and teach them about it. There are still a lot of

people who know traditional medicines. Community members can offer horseback riding as one of the activities tourists are interested in. [1:9 ¶ 108 in Participant 1](#)

Participant 6: Culture has the potential to increase the number of guests for the business. Serving traditional food may enhance the business. Staff uniforms could be culturally themed to attract more cultural tourists. [6:9 ¶ 108 in Participant 6](#)

4.3.4: Theme 5: Stakeholder involvement

This theme focused on the fourth objective of the study, which explored the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in developing cultural tourism in rural communities. Four questions were asked to meet this objective:

- 1.6 Is the business registered with DESTEA or any other agency?
- 2.5 Does the business receive any support from the government?
- 2.6 Describe the type of support given to the business by the government.
- 2.7 What kind of support does the business still require from any stakeholder?

Table 17 presents the findings of Theme 5.

Table 17: Stakeholder involvement

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Theme 5: Stakeholder involvement	Business requirements from stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accreditation support by SAT ➤ Borehole from municipality ➤ Building a dining hall ➤ Building a swimming pool ➤ Business management workshops by DESTEA ➤ Camping equipment support ➤ Constant water and electricity supply from the municipality ➤ Direction boards from DESTEA ➤ Financial injection ➤ Funding for resources ➤ Hiking and camping equipment needs ➤ Historical education of the area ➤ Marketing opportunity support at travel trade shows ➤ Marketing support by DESTEA ➤ Opportunity to market at Tourism Indaba ➤ Provision of solar panels ➤ Provision of stable water supply ➤ Removal of alien trees ➤ Require affiliation with booking platforms ➤ Require the building of Chalets ➤ Road maintenance ➤ Service excellence training ➤ Solar panels from the municipality ➤ Support from the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs ➤ Support from the National Department of Tourism ➤ Training by universities ➤ Training requirements for business operations ➤ Visits by institutions of higher learning ➤ Workshops ➤ Registration for operation
	Relevant stakeholders for businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Registered with City Travel ➤ Registered with the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs ➤ Registered with Fair Trade Tourism ➤ Registered with the Free State Gambling and Liquor Board ➤ Registered with the National Youth Development Agency ➤ Registered with Small Business Development Agency ➤ Registered with South African Tourism ➤ Registered with the South African Township and Village Tourism Association ➤ Registered with the Southern Africa Tourism Services Association ➤ Registered with the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa ➤ Registered with Tourvest Travel Services ➤ Registered with Wings Global Travel ➤ Registration with Companies and Intellectual Property Commission ➤ Not registered

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Theme 5: Stakeholder involvement	Stakeholder benefits to businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accompany DESTEA roadshows ➤ Branding by the National Youth Development Agency ➤ Government making bookings ➤ Internship placements by NDT ➤ Jojo tank, seeds, wheelbarrows, spades and hosepipe from municipality ➤ No ➤ No government support ➤ Tour guide, first aid and environmental training by DESTEA ➤ Tour guiding training by DESTEA ➤ Tourism monitors by NDT ➤ Yes
	Benefits to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Donation of school shoes ➤ Donation of sunscreen for albinos ➤ Employment for community ➤ Internships for community members ➤ Payment for use of community resources ➤ Procurement of resources from the community ➤ Provide entrepreneurial opportunities for the community ➤ Provide vegetables to needy families ➤ Providing facilities for community events ➤ Providing water for community when there is a need ➤ Outsource electricians and plumbers from community ➤ Marketing the community ➤ Sponsor food to an old age home ➤ Sets multiplier effect in motion
	Benefits to the business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bookings from locals ➤ Cleaning the environment ➤ Marketing the business ➤ Fight for water and electricity provision ➤ Maintenance of infrastructure ➤ Noise reduction over weekends ➤ Provide tour guiding services to the business ➤ Support business events ➤ Support from traditional leaders ➤ Support from Ward Councillor ➤ Support outdoor adventure activities ➤ Washing cars and doing laundry for guests

Table 17 shows that tourism businesses need several stakeholders, which depend on the type of business. Tourism businesses also indicated inherent benefits for themselves and the community when there is support from the stakeholders. Tourism businesses further shared that they need support with facilities, workshops, marketing, and the delivery of services such as water and electricity. Many businesses added that it is critical that they are assisted with different company registrations, especially since they are not receiving any support from the government at any level. In addition, some reiterated the importance of removing alien tree species in the area, indicating their willingness to assist with physical labour in the process. In contrast, others indicated that they have received support from the government through its different agencies. Businesses that receive support find it easier to support the community, indicating that they donate various items to the community or outsource services they require from

the community, such as electricians. The most significant benefit that businesses receive from the community is telling potential customers about their businesses, thereby improving their customer base through positive word-of-mouth. Telfer and Sharpley (2016) maintained that collaborations are particularly crucial for community-based tourism in poor nations where funding may be limited. Therefore, various organisations must collaborate for a product to be developed, promoted, and operated effectively. Some of the participants shared the following:

Participant 9: Thabo Mofutsanyana municipality gave us a JoJo tank, seeds, wheelbarrows, spades, and a hosepipe for our agricultural operation. DESTEA trained us as tour guides and gave us first-aid and environmental training based on occupational health and safety. They also involve us in their roadshows. [9:11 ¶ 114 in Participant 9](#)

Participant 3: We need to be assisted with marketing by DESTEA. We must also be accredited by SAT to use that accreditation in our marketing campaigns. [3:12 ¶ 117 in Participant 3](#)

Participant 4: We need the municipality to fix roads. DESTEA to provide funding for resources such as tents and others. We also require institutions of higher learning to support us by visiting our areas and providing us with training. There are alien species of trees that are damaging the environment; they use a lot of water, and they must be removed to make way for indigenous species. [4:12 ¶ 117 in Participant 4](#)

4.4 Conflicting views and interpretations in the findings

Community Support vs. Limited Participation

The findings reveal a strong sense of community support for tourism, with many participants expressing enthusiasm and a willingness to showcase their culture. Some even reported that they are already engaged in cultural tourism activities, which indicates a positive outlook on tourism development. However, this optimism contrasts with the findings of Sarudzai and Geoffrey (2020), who argue that locals seldom participate in tourism activities themselves. This tension highlights a gap between expressed willingness and actual participation, suggesting that structural barriers such as limited funding, poor organisation, or lack of market access may be preventing meaningful involvement. Addressing these barriers could help translate community support into more tangible participation.

Positive Socio-economic Benefits vs. Persistent Poverty

Tourism was widely viewed by respondents as a potential solution to poverty, with participants highlighting its role in creating employment, encouraging entrepreneurship, and driving corporate social investment. Despite these perceived benefits, Sarudzai and Geoffrey (2020) report that unemployment and poverty in Qwaqwa continue to rise, indicating that the economic impact of tourism is currently limited or unevenly distributed. This mismatch points to a gap between tourism's perceived potential and its measurable outcomes, suggesting that tourism development efforts may still be too fragmented or small-scale to create significant socio-economic change.

High Cultural Practice vs. Low Infrastructure and Promotion

Respondents rated their level of cultural practice as above average or very high, emphasising the strength of cultural identity in the area and positioning cultural tourism as a potential growth driver. Nevertheless, literature by Paluseri et al. (2024) cautions that inadequate infrastructure, poor promotion, and low-quality services can undermine tourism development. This contrast suggests that while the cultural foundation for tourism is strong, its potential may be underutilised due to infrastructural and marketing challenges. Strategic investment in infrastructure and promotion would be necessary to fully capitalise on these cultural resources.

Government Stakeholder Role: Strong Support vs. Perceived Absence

There were mixed perceptions of government support among businesses. Some reported receiving tangible assistance such as JoJo tanks, training opportunities, and participation in marketing roadshows, which reflects positive engagement from stakeholders like DESTEA. In contrast, other businesses cited a lack of assistance, particularly in areas such as business registration, funding, road maintenance, and marketing. This inconsistency points to unequal access to government resources and information, resulting in perceptions of neglect. Ensuring consistent and inclusive stakeholder support could strengthen trust and encourage broader participation in tourism development initiatives.

Tourism's Economic Potential vs. Risk of Overinvestment

While some businesses reported substantial turnover—suggesting that tourism can be highly profitable—the Department of Tourism (2016) warns that tourism is a volatile sector that requires cautious investment. This highlights the tension between optimism about tourism's profitability and the risk of over-reliance on a single economic sector in a vulnerable rural context. Careful planning, diversification, and risk management are therefore critical to ensure that tourism contributes to economic resilience rather than exposing the community to potential financial shocks.

Community Willingness to Conserve Nature vs. Limited Knowledge of Sustainability

Participants expressed a strong willingness to conserve nature and protect their environment, citing practices such as preventing veld fires and reusing materials. However, the research also revealed that most community members were unfamiliar with the principles of sustainable tourism. This indicates that while pro-conservation attitudes exist, they may not yet be supported by the knowledge and skills necessary for long-term implementation. Targeted education and capacity-building initiatives could help close this gap and promote a deeper understanding of sustainability in tourism practices.

Stakeholder Collaboration is Seen as Key — But Past Research Shows Conflict

Collaboration among government, community members, and traditional leaders was consistently emphasised as a prerequisite for tourism development. Yet, earlier studies, such as Schoeman (2002), reported that legal tenure disputes, government inefficiency, and the absence of clear development guidelines have historically hindered collaboration. This indicates that while the aspiration for partnership is present, achieving it may require deliberate conflict resolution strategies, improved governance, and the establishment of clear policies and roles for each stakeholder group.

4.5 Conclusion

The study's findings and themes from the data analysis have been presented and discussed in this chapter. Quotes from participant responses have been used to bolster the core ideas of the developing themes presented in this chapter. The

researcher connected the main findings and examined them using an integrated approach. This chapter also discussed the findings according to the research questions and connected the research findings to the literature's findings and the participants' opinions on the research issues, subsequently linking these findings and opinions to the study's primary goals and research question.

Overall, the findings reveal a landscape of strong potential but persistent gaps between expectations and outcomes. Communities express readiness to engage in tourism, yet face structural and educational barriers that limit actual participation. Economic opportunities exist but are unevenly distributed and potentially volatile, underscoring the need for risk management and diversification. Similarly, strong cultural assets are undermined by weak infrastructure and marketing, while government support remains inconsistent. These tensions highlight that successful tourism development in Qwaqwa will depend on integrated, multi-stakeholder strategies that address both hard constraints (such as infrastructure and funding) and soft constraints (such as knowledge, collaboration, and governance). Future policy interventions should prioritise capacity-building, equitable resource distribution, and coordinated planning to transform tourism's promise into sustained and inclusive socio-economic development.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter provides a summary of the key findings of this study. Chapter One introduced the study and explained why this study was deemed relevant, outlining the problem statement, aims, and the study's objectives. Chapter Two comprised a literature review of other researchers' findings about the topic of interest. The chapter discussed global growth in tourism, tourism and development, community-based tourism, cultural tourism, negative impacts of tourism, and challenges of rural tourism. Chapter Three encompassed the research methodology, explaining how the research was conducted in order to arrive at the findings. It presented the approach, design, data collection, interviews, population and sampling, measurement map, data analysis, ethics, limitations, potential benefits, and the timeline. The latter could not be adhered to due to various challenges during the study period. Chapter Four comprehensively discussed the findings of the collected data. ATLAS.ti version 25.0.1.32924 software programme was used to develop the themes from the collected data. Chapter Four also presented the demographics, descriptive analysis, and an analysis of the meaning of the themes. This chapter summarises the study's findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the findings.

5.2 Summary of findings

This study was conducted by collecting qualitative data from interviews with 10 individuals from tourism businesses and 10 from rural households familiar with the concept of tourism. In addition, the households had to be involved in keeping livestock. The study area comprised the rural villages of Qwaqwa and the businesses operating in all the areas of Qwaqwa due to the limited number of tourism businesses in the villages. The study aimed to explore the viability of using rural and cultural tourism to uplift the socio-economic situation of the rural community of Qwaqwa. The data collected revealed valuable information, which is discussed in the next sections.

5.2.1 Family dynamics

Most families living in the rural villages have been there since birth. These people have a rich historical background that can be shared with visitors. However, unlike in the past when rural families used to have many children, most of these families now only

have two or four members, two of whom are adults. The data further revealed that the families are relatively young because most have children attending primary school, and none attend tertiary institutions. Unfortunately, the data showed that many of the adults in this community are unemployed despite all of the participants being literate (all attended school, and the majority have attained Grade 12). Many families rely on child grants, old age pensions, and others do unskilled jobs to sustain themselves, which shows that tourism is an avenue worth exploring to provide this community with much-needed jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities. Cattle are the most common animals kept because they provide milk and meat for these families and can also be sold to make an income. From a tourism perspective, having cattle and horses is an advantage, as this type of lifestyle can be used to showcase their daily living to tourists for a fee. Tourists can accompany locals when they take their animals grazing daily, horses can be used, and the history of the area can be shared during the journey. Thus, tourists will have the opportunity to experience the picturesque scenery of the Maluti mountains, especially given that many tourists have already shown an interest in experiencing the unique cultural lifestyles of rural communities.

5.2.2 Business dynamics

It became evident that most of the tourism businesses in the area are still young, in that they have not been operating for more than ten years. Only a few of the businesses are community-based, while the majority are privately owned, emphasising that for most of the community members to benefit from tourism, there must be a balance between private ownership and community-based tourism businesses. The data revealed that most businesses offer accommodation and food as their main offering. Thus, other forms of tourism must be developed and marketed to attract a different type of tourist, increasing the number of visitors to the area. The data also showed that some community members view planting food and plant medicines as a form of tourism that should be explored. Furthermore, most businesses only employ between one and five employees, showing that employment opportunities are scarce in the area and highlighting the need for the development of tourism, as it is known to be an industry with the ability to create many jobs. The development of tourism in this area will support South Africa's development goals, particularly that of eradicating poverty.

5.2.3 Community benefits from tourism

The community views tourism as having the potential to create entrepreneurial opportunities to sell their arts and crafts, subsequently establishing partnerships with tourists to market and sell their products in other parts of the world, thereby increasing their revenue. The Department of Tourism is responsible for educating community members about the importance of preserving their indigenous flora and fauna, and to help increase the community's pride in their culture, mostly the Basotho culture. The participants of the study indicated a willingness to showcase their way of life to visitors for a fee and on the condition that visitors respect them and do as told. Some of the community members mentioned already sharing their lives with tourists, stating that they are happy with the gifts that tourists give them. However, they do not have a set fee for such encounters, but indicated they appreciate what they receive from visitors. The locals emphasised the need to get more involved with tourism because of its extra income opportunity. It is evident that the community understands the benefits of tourism and does not focus on the negative impacts of tourism.

5.2.4 Sustainability of culture and natural environment

The data revealed that tourism is deemed a way of travelling from a person's place of origin to other places to experience the natural environment, including adventure activities, and cultures offered by the destination. Most of the community members indicated that protecting nature is very important not only for tourism but for their survival as well. Some measures have already been put in place, such as monitoring offenders of veld fires during the winter season. Some members indicated that they try not to disturb nature but focus on protecting it because they understand its importance. To grow rural tourism in the rural and peri-urban areas of Qwaqwa, it is vital to educate communities about the conservation of nature and indigenous cultures. Despite the influence of Western cultures and technology, a large portion of the Qwaqwa community still practices their culture in pure form in the villages. This is a significant way to attract cultural tourists. The participants maintained that arts, crafts, music, and dance are the main offerings of the community in terms of what they can show visitors.

5.2.5 The role of government in community tourism development

Evidence from the data revealed that the participants in community-based tourism identify three main stakeholders. The government at all levels is the first stakeholder, with the municipality, as the local government, playing a pivotal role in developing tourism in its locality. The participants indicated they need support with aspects such as marketing, creating a platform for locals to create business opportunities, and supplying services such as water and electricity. Creating bylaws to promote the protection of tourism resources is another responsibility of the local government. The police must enforce the laws to ensure adherence. Educational institutions such as universities and schools are responsible for educating rural communities about the tourism industry by offering training courses and introducing tourism as a school subject to develop interest from an early age.

The community itself is the second important stakeholder. Without the community's involvement and commitment, no community-based tourism initiative will be successful. The roles of the community include creating the arts and crafts that will be sold to the visitors, as well as other products and services required by tourists. The community can also start functional cultural groups that will showcase their culture through different means, including music and dance. Part of the community is the role of the traditional leaders, as they are still recognised in the rural villages. Their responsibilities include overseeing the protection of community resources and the dissemination of educational information about the importance of tourism to the community. The traditional leaders are responsible for liaising with all other stakeholders to ensure the success of tourism initiatives that benefit their communities.

Visitors are recognised as the third important stakeholder in developing community-based tourism. The respondents indicated that tourists can become investors in the community to establish the necessary facilities to enable tourism. The visitors can link the entrepreneurs in the community and the rest of the world by showcasing their products in their home countries, enticing others to visit the local area. The locals can promote the local cultures and natural resources by showing interest and donating to improve tourism. Mutual benefits will be experienced if all the main stakeholders work collaboratively.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

To increase the number of visitors and the income made by tourism businesses in Qwaqwa, the local government must provide the needed services to enable businesses to function. Presently, the roads are not in good condition, and there is no stable water and electricity supply in the area, prohibiting the influx of visitors to the area. The local and district governments must create and maintain an enabling environment for local tourism enterprises to thrive. The municipality must promote this area as a desirable cultural, natural and adventure destination throughout the country to attract more visitors. There must also be collaboration with other government agencies that deal with tourism to develop community-based tourism in the area, because the locals have shown an interest in tourism.

Awareness programmes must be focused and dedicated to heightening the rural community's knowledge of the tourism industry and its benefits. Through collaboration with other stakeholders, the community must be taught how to create products and services of high quality that tourists would like to consume, as well as the acceptable levels of service delivery that visitors expect. The community must revitalise their indigenous knowledge and teach it to the current generation to ensure the unique knowledge does not get lost. The importance of preserving the natural environment is another aspect of knowledge that must be imparted to the local rural communities.

The relevant authorities must support community-based tourism initiatives. The district and local municipalities should prioritise tourism as a vehicle to drive change in the area. There is great potential for the tourism industry to flourish in Qwaqwa because of the rich history associated with the Basotho inhabiting this beautiful mountainous area. This montane area is close to the Maluti mountains, offering great scenery and indigenous fauna and flora. The area is known to be one of the poorest in the country, with tourism able to bring socio-economic benefits and achieve some of the country's development goals.

5.4 Further studies

- Further research should be conducted to determine the challenges rural tourism businesses face regarding registering with relevant bodies or associations.
- Research should be conducted to determine the potential economic impact of cultural tourism on rural economies and families.
- Research should be done to identify the causes of hindrance to the municipality's ability to support existing small-town and rural village tourism businesses.

5.5 Conclusion

This study has shown that cultural tourism in Qwaqwa has excellent potential to improve the living conditions of the rural villages. A key finding is that the area has the potential to be further developed into a cultural and adventure destination of choice. The stakeholders who should play an essential role in the development and maintenance of tourism were identified, and their roles were outlined. Much more work is still needed to improve tourism in the area, and the community must play a pivotal role in all community tourism initiatives. Much training is also required in communities regarding protecting and conserving tourism resources. Private individuals own most businesses and are in the accommodation sector. These businesses can be improved by providing training on business management and service delivery to sustain them. This study will be helpful to the rural communities and tourism businesses in the area, as the findings revealed that tourism can improve their lives and address the development challenges they experience.

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Annexures

Annexure 1: Ethics approval



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

Registration Number: REC-112922-058

10-Sep-2024

Dear Mr Tlhoriso Mohlakoana

Application Approved

Research Project Title:
RURAL AND CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FOCUSING ON COMMUNITY-BASED
TOURISM (CBT): THE CASE OF QWAQWA

Ethical Clearance number:
UFS-HSD2024/1358

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted via an Amendment on RIMS to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit a Final Report on RIMS for your study/research project to the ethics office once the project has concluded. Should you require more time than the allotted 12 months to complete this research, please apply for an extension by submitting a Continuation/Report on RIMS. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance. We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,


Dr Adri Du Plessis
Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Dr Adri
du
Plessis

Digitally
signed by Dr
Adri du Plessis
Date:
2024.09.10
20:26:40
+02'00'

205 Nelson Mandela P.O. Box 339
Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: +27(0)514019337
duplessisA@ufs.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za



Annexure 2: Business interview consent form



Research study information leaflet and consent form

Date: 17 September 2024

Date of the research project:

Title of the research project

RURAL AND CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FOCUSING ON COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM (CBT): THE CASE OF QWAQWA

Principle investigator / researcher(s) name(s) and contact number(s):

Tlhoriso Mohlakoana (A Master of Development Studies Student at UFS doing research for my master's degree)

2014203133 083 320 5649

Faculty and Department:

Name of Faculty: Economic and Management Sciences

Name of Department: Centre for Development Studies

Study leader(s) name and contact number:

Prof. Lochner Marais

051 401 2978

What is the aim / purpose of the study?

The proposed study aims to investigate the viability of developing cultural tourism as a form of community-based tourism initiative in rural communities of Qwaqwa.

Who is doing the research?

My name is Tlhoriso Mohlakoana. I work for the Free State Department of Education. I am doing this project because I want to investigate if the communities of Qwaqwa can use their culture to uplift themselves through community-based tourism initiatives. I am Master of Development Studies Student at UFS doing research for my master's degree



Has the study received ethical approval?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Approval number: (UFS-HSD2024/1358)

Why are you invited to take part in this research project?

I chose tourism businesses because they may know visitors' experiences through interaction, and they can shed more information on how community-based tourism initiatives can be improved. I first approached DESTEA to request a list of tourism businesses in Qwaqwa with their contact details. I will be interviewing ten tourism businesses in the area.

What is the nature of participation in this study?

The role of the participants is to answer the questions posed to them. The study involves semi-structured interviews. Questions for tourism businesses are related to demographics and tourism-related matters. The interview duration is expected to be 30 minutes. No emotional or physical pain will be caused to the participants due to this interview.

Can the participant withdraw from the study?

Participation is voluntary, and there is no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation. Being in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What are the potential benefits of taking part in this study?

There are no benefits for taking part in this study for the participant, but the result of the study may bring forth economic, environmental, and social benefits for the entire community at a later stage. The information shared by the participant will be kept

confidential, only the PI will know the participant's personal information and will not divulge such information.

What is the anticipated inconvenience of taking part in this study?

The inconvenience that participants will experience due to participating in this study is the possibility of losing 30 minutes of their working time. This loss of working time will be minimised by scheduling interviews conveniently for the participants.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one can connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym, and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Only the researcher, language editor and study supervisor will have access to the information shared, and they will sign a confidentiality agreement. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for ensuring that research is done properly, such as members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. Your information may be used anonymously in research reports, journal articles, conference presentations, etc. A study report may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. You can stop being in the study at any time without getting in trouble. The interviews will be recorded on a password-protected cellphone and will then be stored on a password-protected laptop; these gadgets are only used by the researcher.

How will the information be stored and ultimately destroyed?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at my lockable office, which I will not share with anybody. For future research or academic purposes, electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After five years, hard interview copies will be shredded to pieces, and the paper will be recycled. Electronic recordings will be permanently deleted from the laptop.

Will I receive payment or any incentives for participating in this study?

The study is not financed by any institution, so there are no financial incentives for participating in this study. The participant is not expected to incur any costs related to their participation in the study. The only inconvenience that may be costs is using the participant's valuable time to partake in the study. There are no foreseeable risks associated with taking part in this study.

How will the participant be informed of the findings / results of the study?

If you want to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Tlhoriso Mohlakoana on 083 320 5649 or email: tlhoriso19@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for twelve months after the study has been concluded. Please contact the researcher if you require further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study. Should you have concerns about how the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof. Lochner Marais by email: MaraisJGL@ufs.ac.za at phone number: 051 401 2978.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Consent to participate in this study

I, the undersigned,

_____ (the "Participant")

confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study referred to as the "Rural and Cultural Tourism Development focusing on Community-based Tourism (CBT): The Case of Qwaqwa". (the "Study") in relation to a dissertation for a Master of Development Studies qualification and which Study is being conducted by Tlhoriso Mohlakoana (the "Researcher").

I, the undersigned Participant, further confirm that–

1. the Researcher has explained the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my participation in the Study;
2. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the Study as explained in the attached information sheet;
3. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the Study;
4. I understand that my participation in the Study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable);
5. I voluntarily provide the UFS and the Researcher with my personal information and consent to the UFS and the Researcher collecting, disclosing and processing my personal information in order to conduct the Study and any related activities in relation thereto;
6. I hereby acknowledge and confirm that I understand the purpose for which the UFS and the Researcher may collect, store, use, delete, destroy, outsource, transfer or otherwise process, as the context and circumstances may require and as contemplated in terms of POPIA, my personal information as set out herein;
7. I am aware that the findings of the Study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings and that my personal information will be aggregated and deidentified at such stage;

8. I also give the UFS permission to share, without notification, the collected data with other researchers at the UFS or other Higher Education Institutions. This permission is dependent on the same principles of ethical research practices, anonymity/confidentiality, safekeeping of information, and other issues listed above applying.

I, the Participant, agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview.

Full Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s):

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Annexure 3: Household interview consent form



Research study information leaflet and consent form

Date

Date of the research project:

Title of the research project

RURAL AND CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FOCUSING ON COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM (CBT): THE CASE OF QWAQWA

Principle investigator / researcher(s) name(s) and contact number(s):

Tlhoriso Mohlakoana (A Master of Development Studies Student at UFS doing research for my master's degree)

2014203133 083 320 5649

Faculty and Department:

Name of Faculty: Economic and Management Sciences

Name of Department: Centre for Development Studies

Study leader(s) name and contact number:

~~Prof Lochner~~ Marais
051 401 2978

What is the aim / purpose of the study?

The proposed study aims to investigate the viability of developing cultural tourism as a form of community-based tourism initiative in rural communities of ~~Qwaqwa~~.

Who is doing the research?

My name is Tlhoriso Mohlakoana. I work for the Free State Department of Education. I am doing this project because I want to investigate if the communities of ~~Qwaqwa~~ can use their culture to uplift themselves through community-based tourism initiatives. I am Master of Development Studies Student at UFS doing research for my master's degree

Has the study received ethical approval?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Approval number: UFS-HSD2024/1358

Why are you invited to take part in this research project?

I chose households that are keeping livestock and know about tourism because they can share their experiences of culture. I first went to the village chief/~~ward councillor~~ who permitted me to research the area and pointed out the potential participants who met the



project's inclusion criteria. I will be interviewing ten households and ten tourism businesses in the area.

What is the nature of participation in this study?

The role of the participants is to answer the questions posed to them. The households may have to show their kraals where they keep their livestock. The study involves semi-structured interviews. Questions for households are related to demographics and tourism-related matters. The interview duration is expected to be 30 minutes. No emotional or physical pain will be caused to the participants due to this interview.

Can the participant withdraw from the study?

Participation is voluntary, and there is no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation. Being in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What are the potential benefits of taking part in this study?

There are no benefits for taking part in this study for the participant, but the result of the study may bring forth economic, environmental, and social benefits for the entire community at a later stage. The information shared by the participant will be kept confidential, only the PI will know the participant's personal information and will not divulge such information.

What is the anticipated inconvenience of taking part in this study?

The inconvenience that participants will experience due to participating in this study is the possibility of losing 30 minutes of their working time. This loss of working time will be minimised by scheduling interviews conveniently for the participants.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one can connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym, and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Only the researcher, language editor and study supervisor will have access to the information shared, and they will sign a confidentiality agreement. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for ensuring that research is done properly, such as members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. Your information may be used anonymously in research reports, journal articles, conference presentations, etc. A study report may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. You can stop being in the study at any time without getting in trouble. The interviews will be recorded on a password-protected cellphone and will then be stored on a password-protected laptop; these gadgets are only used by the researcher.

How will the information be stored and ultimately destroyed?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at my lockable office, which I will not share with anybody. For future research or academic purposes, electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After five years, hard interview copies will be shredded to pieces, and the paper will be recycled. Electronic recordings will be permanently deleted from the laptop.

Will I receive payment or any incentives for participating in this study?

The study is not financed by any institution, so there are no financial incentives for participating in this study. The participant is not expected to incur any costs related to their participation in the study. The only inconvenience that may be costs is using the participant's valuable time to partake in the study. There are no foreseeable risks associated with taking part in this study.

How will the participant be informed of the findings / results of the study?

If you want to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Tlhoriso Mohlakoana on 083 320 5649 or email: tlhoriso19@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for twelve months after the study has been concluded. Please contact the researcher if you require further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study. Should you have concerns about how the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof. Lochner Marais by email: MaraisJGL@ufs.ac.za at phone number: 051 401 2978.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Consent to participate in this study

I, the undersigned,

(participant's full names to be included), (the "Participant")
confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study referred to as the

_____ (the "Study") in
relation to

_____ and which Study is being conducted by

_____ (insert the name of the researcher), (the "Researcher").

I, the undersigned Participant, further confirm that–

1. the Researcher has explained the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my participation in the Study;
2. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the Study as explained in the attached information sheet;
3. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the Study;
4. I understand that my participation in the Study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable);
5. I voluntarily provide the UFS and the Researcher with my personal information and consent to the UFS and the Researcher collecting, disclosing and processing my personal information in order to conduct the Study and any related activities in relation thereto;
6. I hereby acknowledge and confirm that I understand the purpose for which the UFS and the Researcher may collect, store, use, delete, destroy, outsource, transfer or otherwise process, as the context and circumstances may require and as contemplated in terms of POPIA, my personal information as set out herein;
7. I am aware that the findings of the Study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings and that my personal information will be aggregated and deidentified at such stage;
8. I also give the UFS permission to share, without notification, the collected data with other researchers at the UFS or other Higher Education Institutions. This permission is dependent on the same principles of ethical research practices, anonymity/confidentiality, safekeeping of information, and other issues listed above applying.



I, the Participant, agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview.

Full Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant: _____

Date:

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s):

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Annexure 4: Business interview schedule

Tourism Business Interview Schedule

Rural and Cultural Tourism Development of Qwaqwa

Date of interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interview schedule No.: _____

Location: _____

1. Demographics

1.1 How long has the business been existing?

Less than 1 year	2 – 4 years	5 – 7 years	8 – 10 years	More than 10 years

1.2 What is the nature of the business?

Nature of business	Tick
Community initiative	
Partnership	
NGO	
Private	
Other (specify)	

1.3 What is the main tourism offering of the business?

Tourism offering	Tick
Accommodation	
Food	
Transport	
Tourism activities (specify)	
Other (specify)	

1.4 How many employees does the business have?

1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 – 20	More than 20

1.5 What is the annual turnover of the business?

R _____

1.6 Is the business registered with DESTEA? Or any other agency

Yes (specify)	No
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1.7 How does the business benefit from the community?

1.8 How can the community add value to the business?

1.9 How does the business benefit the community?

2. Tourist information

2.1 How many visitors does the business serve annually?

2.2 Which is the source market for the business? Where do they come from?

Locals (residing within the municipality)	
Intra-provincial	
Inter-provincial	
Regional (SADC)	

Africa	
International	

2.3 Which type of tourists does the business serve?

Leisure	
Business	
Adventure	
Cultural	
Eco-tourists	
Other (specify)	

2.4 How can the local culture and traditions enhance the business offering?

2.5 Does the business receive any support from government?

Yes	No

2.6 Describe the type of support given to the business by the government.

Household Interview Schedule

Rural and Cultural Tourism Development of Qwaqwa

Date of interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interview schedule No.: _____

Location: _____

1. Demographics

1.1 Please provide us with the following information.

	Answer
How long have you been living here	
How many people live in this household	
How many are adults	
How many children under 18 years	
How many children attend school (primary or secondary)	
How many people attend a tertiary institution	
How many household members are females	
How many household members are males	
How many people live with any form of disability	
How many adults are employed	
Which cultural group do you belong to	

1.2 What are the education levels of the adults in the household?

Grade	0 – 3	4 – 7	8 – 10	11 – 12	Tertiary

1.3 How does the household earn money?

Source	Tick more boxes if your household has different forms of income.
Wage/salary	
Child grant	
Disability grant	
Old age pension	
Self-employed (specify)	
Other (specify)	

1.4 Which livestock do you keep as a household?

Category of animals	Tick (you may select more than one category)
Cattle	
Sheep	
Goats	
Pigs	
Horses	
Donkeys	
Other (specify)	
None	

1.5 Do your animals get fed in the kraal or do they go out to graze accompanied by herdsman?

Get fed in a kraal	Go out to graze	Get fed in the kraal and go out to graze

2. Tourism-related matters

2.1 Do you know what tourism is?

Yes	No

2.2 Can you briefly explain what you think tourism is?

2.3 Do you think you can use your culture to earn a living from tourism?

Yes	No

2.4 Which elements of your culture are most important to you?

Arts and crafts	
Cuisine	
Music	
Dance	
Other (specify)	

2.5 On a scale of 1 – 5 (1 = very low; 2 = low; 3 = average; 4 = above average; 5 = very high) how would you rate the way your household follows culture and tradition.

Very low	
Low	
Average	
Above average	
Very high	

2.6 Would you be willing to showcase your lifestyle to tourists for a fee?

Yes	No

2.7 Do you know the history of your area?

Yes	No

2.8 Do you think herders will want to be accompanied by tourists and share their experiences with them?

Yes	No

2.9 How do you feel about caring for the natural environment?

2.10 What measures are you putting in place to ensure the sustainability of the natural environment? Explain.

2.11 Which stakeholders do you think should be involved in making sure that tourism flourishes in your community?

2.12 Explain the roles of these different stakeholders you mentioned in 2.11

2.13 How do you want to see the whole community benefiting from tourism?

FIELDWORK NOTES:
