

# Domestic Tourism In Botswana: An Examination Of Nature – Based Tourism Constraints

*Lesego S. Stone*

University of Botswana, Botswana  
Email: lsebele@ori.ub.bw; stonel@ac.ub.bw

*Tibabo M. Stone*

University of Botswana, Botswana  
Email: moren.stone@mopipi.ub.bw

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## ABSTRACT

During the last fifty years, Botswana's economy experienced one of the fastest growth in the world. The country has adopted tourism as one of its economic diversification development pillars, apart from mining and agriculture. Delivering on the new growth model for Botswana requires the country to practice sustainable tourism development. This paper provides a systematic assessment of nature-based tourism in Botswana by examining issues associated with its conception, design and implementation. The study explores factors that limit citizens' visitations to protected areas, the premier tourism destinations in the country. The Chobe National Park and Moremi Game Reserve were purposefully selected as study sites for effective domestic tourists while Maun, Palapye, Francistown and Gaborone were chosen as sites representing potential domestic tourists. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and the Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints (HMLC) guided the investigation. Results indicate that intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints play a significant role in limiting visitations to protected areas. Intrapersonal hindrances include the culture of leisure and travel being relatively new in Botswana while interpersonal obstacles include a shortage of reasonably priced accommodation for families. Structural constraints include the inaccessibility of protected areas and lack of finances. The findings are critical in informing tourism planners, managers, and policy makers to critically evaluate, assess and devise appropriate interventions to tap on this market segment.

Keywords: Botswana, domestic tourism, traveling constraints, protected areas, Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints

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## INTRODUCTION

At independence in 1966, Botswana was one of the world's ten poorest countries (World, Bank, 2015). The country is now considered one of the world's biggest development success stories of the past half-century with a Gross National Income (GNI) that has grown five times faster than the global average (World Bank, 2015). Despite this considerable progress and the attainment of upper middle-income status, a fifth of the country's citizens

still live in poverty, with 14% living in extreme poverty (ACET, 2014). In an endeavour to diversify its economy, Botswana realized that diamonds, the main contributor to the country's GDP, are not infinite, hence tourism has been identified as an asset and opportunity that can be sustainably exploited. The tourism sector is now the second contributor to the country's GDP (Lenao, 2015).

Although Botswana is a popular tourist destination for Westerners, particularly those from North America and Europe (Mbaiwa, 2011), domestic tourists visiting protected areas (the main tourism attractions) make up a small proportion of visitors. Of the 301 940 protected area visitors in 2013, only 24 737 (8.2%) were citizens compared to 214 577 (71.1%) international tourists (Department of Wildlife and National Parks, 2014). Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) is the leading reason for engaging in travel for 63.2% of domestic tourist; 85% of all overnight domestic tourists stay with friends/family (Department of Tourism [DoT], 2012). Although extant data indicates that most international tourists visit the Kasane/Chobe area, Maun, and the Okavango Delta, there is no indication where the 15.9% domestic leisure travellers travel (DoT, 2012). With 81.5% of accommodation facilities in the Okavango Delta being foreign owned, first class hotels and lodges rely on and are tailored to suit international tourists (Mbaiwa, 2005, 2011). This may explain the low visitations by locals. Although the low visitations might imply that Botswana are not leisure and recreation minded, this may be misleading and calls for an understanding of this market segment to determine why less locals travel to these popular leisure spaces.

In view of the above debate, this paper aims to assess domestic travel by citizens to nature-based tourism spaces. It is argued that making these spaces exclusive may limit park visits and have an impact on the future of protected areas and the resources they rely on. Since citizen participation is low, the paper focuses on Black Botswana, a group that makes up 97% of the country's population (Townsend, 2013). Research from leisure sciences indicates that reasons for park visitations differ by race/ethnicity (Byrne & Wolch, 2009; Pearce et al, 2013). Furthermore, historically, nature/wilderness has been a white middle and upper class domain, with national parks being created for whites and being exclusionary spaces (Roberts, 2009). Leisure and tourism researchers also argue that national parks are associated with racial exclusions and their benefits and costs are divided along racial lines (Ramutsindela, 2004; Schmidt-Soltau, 2003).

In countries such as Tanzania, Neumann, (1998, p. 139) argues that park advocates disregarded locals and ignored "the importance of encouraging humans, particularly the local residents, to visit and enjoy the parks". Commentators such as Mowatt (2009) have alluded to the existence of whiteness in leisure while others indicate that engagement in leisure has been generalised and assigned to all populations of colour despite cultural differences in interests, values and practices (Holland, 2002). It is for these reasons that there is a focus on black citizens, especially since statistics indicate their relatively lower consumption patterns. This paper therefore seeks to understand domestic tourists' seemingly lack of interest in visiting nature-based attractions and determine their motivations. The paper does not seek to promote the development of domestic tourism solely based on nature-based sites, but rather, it seeks to understand why the majority of the population rarely consume products offered at these sites and to assist in the development of appropriate measures to ensure that this market segment is tapped.

The paper proceeds with a review of literature focusing on domestic tourism globally and in Botswana. This is then followed by the theoretical groundwork, the methods section, results, discussions and conclusions and recommendations.

## **BACKGROUND LITERATURE**

### **Domestic Tourism**

The year 2014 marked the fifth consecutive year that above average growth were realized by the tourism industry since the 2009 economic crisis (Centre for Responsible Travel, 2015). The increased demand for travel and tourism, and the industry's ability to create employment demonstrates its significance in economic development (World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC], 2014). In 2013 the tourism industry contributed 9.8% to the global GDP (WTTC, 2014a). During the World Economic Crisis of 2007/8, there was a global decline in international tourism during the second half of 2008 and the first half of 2009, corresponding with prevailing financial conditions (Papatheodorou, et al., 2010). Due to this, most governments respond by promoting domestic tourism (Page, Song & Wu, 2011). Domestic tourism has the ability to redistribute wealth within a country, stimulate domestic demands and employment and counter the seasonal nature of international tourism (Okello et al., 2012; Rogerson & Visser, 2011).

Domestic tourists normally use locally owned facilities, thereby minimising leakages and promoting backward and forward tourism businesses linkages (Canavan, 2012). This is because the revenue made is retained locally. Moreover, growth in the tourism industry may lead to other industries that rely on and those that supply the tourism industry. Strengthened linkages and reduced leakages can be beneficial to Botswana where leakages are estimated between 70 - 90% (Baatweng, 2014; Mbaiwa, 2011). Despite its benefits, domestic tourism remains under-researched in many developing countries such as Botswana; hence the need for more studies focusing on this type of tourism (Ghimire, 2013; Kruger & Douglas, 2015). Global domestic spending for travel stands at 71.3% compared to 28.7% foreign visitor spending (WTTC, 2014a). Although data on domestic tourism is limited, estimates indicate that there were 750 million (16%) international and 4,000 million (84%) domestic tourists in 2005 (World Tourism Organization & United Nations Environment Programme, 2008). Domestic tourism in developing countries has grown during the last decade due to growths in second home ownership, improved road access and increasing incomes (Kruger & Douglas, 2015; Morrison, 2013). Domestic tourism is often undervalued due to government policies that encourage international tourism (Canavan, 2012; Kruger & Douglas, 2015). Hence, developing countries such as Botswana have no organized effort to make domestic tourism a priority, thereby limiting the ability to make concluding remarks about domestic tourism in the country. More research needs to be geared towards domestic tourists to establish their perceptions and constraints in travel and tourism.

### **Domestic Tourism In Botswana**

Like most countries in Southern Africa, Botswana's tourism industry heavily relies on wildlife resources and the wilderness. Tourism mainly takes place in protected areas, especially those in the northern and north-western parts of the country, particularly the Okavango Delta and Chobe National park (Lenao, 2015). To that end the country has set aside 39% of its land for nature-based activities. Although Botswana's tourism industry has been growing for the past two decades (Lenao, 2015), little is known about the country's domestic tourism market.

Botswana has experienced a rise in people's living standards over time; currently 48% of the population is classified as middle class (Deloitte & Touché, 2012). Like other African countries, the middle class has greater spending power, lives in urban centres, and has more recreational time (Deloitte & Touché, 2012). The middle incomes spending power and recreational time is beneficial to the growth of the tourism industry since the sector is influenced by the economic strength of a country and its people (Wen, 1997). Overlooking domestic travel could mean that Botswana will never realize the full potential of its tourism sector and fail to address issues that are very pertinent to this type of tourist. Research indicates that participation in tourism is a function of tourism constraints experienced by tourists themselves (Kruger & Douglas, 2015). Therefore, constraints to leisure participation are an important factor in determining tourist flows.

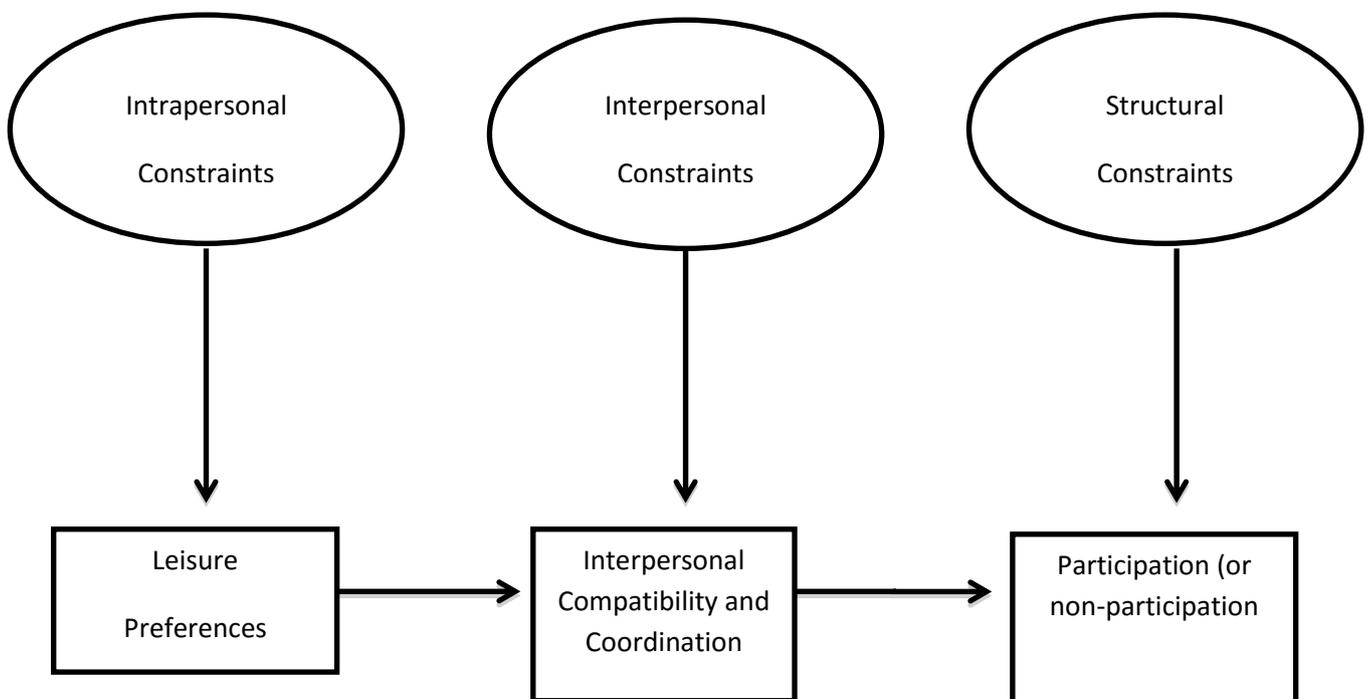
### **Conceptualising constraints To Leisure Participation**

This paper is guided by the Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints (HMLC - see Figure 1). The HMLC was developed in the 1980s with its aim being to investigate factors that influence individuals' interest and participation in leisure activities. In their model, Crawford and Godbey (1987) identified three categories of constraints that influence leisure participation. The model demonstrates that people's aspirations to take part in leisure-related activities are hindered by intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints (Crawford et al., 1991). In the model, constraints are identified as those aspects that influence people's leisure preferences, deter participation and lessen the level of enjoyment and satisfaction in leisure, frequently leading in non-participation (Jackson, 1991; Jun, et al., 2008). According to the HMLC, intrapersonal constraints influence an individual's psychological state and shape the development of leisure preferences. These include the perceived suitability of various leisure activities, perceived self-skill, prior socialization into particular leisure activities, kin and non-kin reference group attitudes, religion, anxiety, depression, stress, shyness and fear (Crawford et al., 1991; Kruger & Douglas, 2015). Interpersonal constraints occur within social interactions and exchanges and include the lack of partners, and families and friends interest to participate (Thapa, 2012). Interpersonal constraints may change across life stages and are mainly influenced by types of activities, family size and marital status (Nyaupane & Andereck, 2007). Structural constraints are intervening factors that can be related to group attitudes concerning the suitability of certain activities, availability and knowledge about opportunities, the scheduling of work time, climate, season financial resources and family life cycle (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Constraints are experienced hierarchically with intrapersonal ones experienced first followed by interpersonal constraints

and then structural constraints (Thapa, 2012). Despite this, little empirical verification exists to validate the hierarchical relationship (White, 2008).

Participation occurs once structural constraints are overcome or negotiated. However, failure to overcome structural constraints leads to non-participation (Crawford et al., 1991). At first leisure constraints studies concentrated on constraints faced by past participants and nonparticipants, however it was discovered that even participants might be constrained (Zhang, et al., 2012). This is because individuals who participate in any given leisure activity may have negotiated a number of constraints whereas non-participants may be inhibited by any of the three constraints (Crawford et al., 1991; Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Zhang et al., 2012). Hence participation occurs where motivations and constraints balance, for instance, where constraints outweigh motivations, leisure activities may be modified or abandoned (Gage & Thapa, 2012).

Figure 1. A Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints



Source: Crawford et al, 1991

The HMLC has been used by a number of researchers covering a broad array of leisure contexts. Walker et al., (2007) used it to study the association between culture and leisure constraints. Walker et al., (2008) further examined the role self-construal plays in influencing perceptions of intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints. The model has also been tested using different leisure activities and markets such as skies (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000), older women (Son & Yarnal, 2011), university students (Walker et al., 2007; 2008) and park visitors (Thapa, 2012). The associations between socio-economics, age, gender and race/ethnicity and leisure constraints have also been studied (Li, 2008; Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008; Dong & Chick, 2012). Since the inception of the HMLC model, some

authors have also expanded the model. Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey (1993) extended their hierarchical leisure constraints model to include the role of negotiation and motivational processes. Kimm (2009) developed a pyramid model of leisure activity participation constraints and a three factor model of leisure activity participation constraints as an extension to the HMLC and Zhang et al. (2012) extended the model to develop a conceptual model of constraints' effects on preference, participation and satisfaction.

A number of researchers have also studied constraints in nature-based settings. In Zambia's Kafue National Park, Thapa (2012) found that international tourists experienced the following constraints; not enough quality lodges and camps, lack of available information about the park, unsuitable weather conditions, and fear for personal safety were found as major constraints whereas for domestic tourists financial cost and poor road conditions were the main obstacles. In Kenya, Okello et al., (2012) found that poor marketing and finances were the main constraints for local Kenyans. Preference for other forms of recreation and lack of information and time were identified as major constraints to parks visitations in Florida (Pennington-Gray, Thapa & Holland, 2002). Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter (2002) discovered that individuals perceive nature-based tourism constraints to be similar to those found in traditional leisure activities. Hence the authors established that the most significant constraints were structural. Although structural constraints are the most reported and investigated (Scott, 1991), other constraints have an impact on the way individuals regard the consumption of nature-based tourism activities and can be applicable to national parks all over the world (Kruger & Douglas, 2015).

The purpose of this paper is therefore to gain an understanding on why locals rarely visit protected areas despite these spaces being major tourism attractions in the country and a haven for international tourists. Systematically finding the root cause of why locals rarely partake in protected areas may add more insight to available literature on domestic tourism and protected areas in developing countries and inform planners on obstacles that need to be overcome to include locals as tourists to protected areas. Furthermore, it addresses a gap in the literature where the African voice is rarely heard. The paper uses the United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO] (2013) definition of a domestic tourist, defined as "someone who travels for business or leisure purposes, outside their usual environment but within the national borders of their country of residence, for a minimum of 24 hours". In this study, domestic tourists are only limited to Black citizens of Botswana.

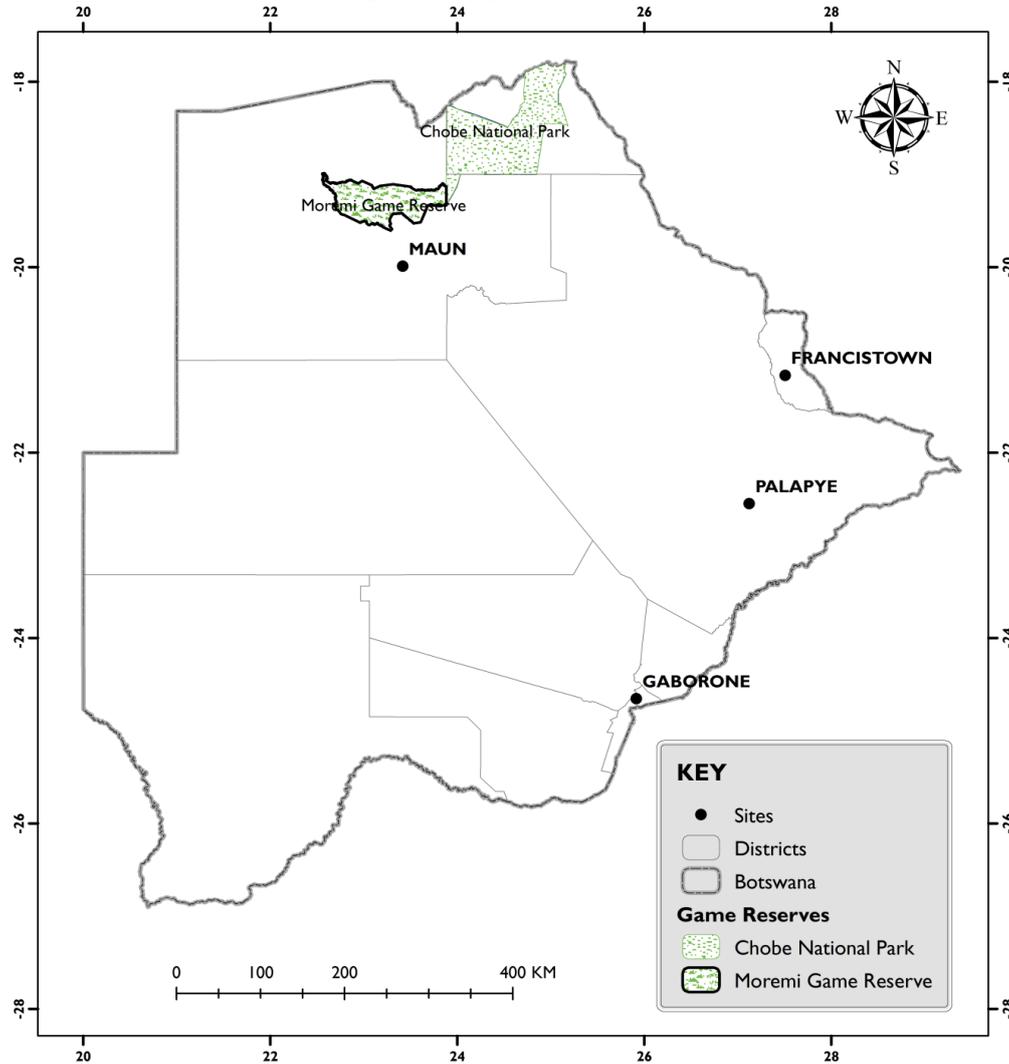
## METHODS

### Study Sites

Six sites of Moremi Game Reserve (MGR), Chobe National Park (CNP), Palapye, Maun, Gaborone and Francistown were purposefully selected (see Figure 2). Since the country promotes nature-based tourism taking place in protected areas, the inclusion of MGR and CNP were seen as beneficial since they are the most visited and popular sites in Botswana. The villages of Palapye and Maun were chosen to include the lower income groups, mostly said to be residing in rural areas and also having the propensity to travel for leisure purposes (Mazimhaka, 2007). As some of the biggest villages in the country, 75% of

their population engages in non-agricultural activities (Central Statistics Office, 2012). Most tourists visiting MGR and CNP enter Botswana through Maun; the village provides a gateway to these protected areas. Palapye is centrally located, it is midway between the two cities in the country, hence its selection. As the only two cities in the country, Gaborone and Francistown were selected since the majority of the middle class in Botswana resides in urban areas (Deloitte & Touché, 2012). This group has a greater spending power and leisure time.

Figure 2: Map of Botswana showing the study sites



Source: Okavango Research Institute GIS Laboratory

### Data Collection

Open-ended, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 60 locals (28 males and 32 females) between June and September 2013. Qualitative methods were chosen to allow for open-ended questions that promote dialogue and probing between a researcher and respondents. A humanistic approach as adopted in this study has the strength to facilitate

such explorations (Patton, 1990) and can assist in the search for more localized understanding of constraints faced by potential and nature-based domestic tourists.

Only nine domestic tourists were identified and interviewed in MGR and CNP. The low number of respondents in the protected areas is a reflection of the numbers of locals visiting nature-based attractions for leisure purposes. To get diverse views from Botswana and to include the views of both visitors and non-visitors/potential tourists, 51 interviews with locals in Maun (14), Francistown (10), Palapye (10), and Gaborone (17) were also conducted. All Botswana aged 18 years and above were considered potential domestic tourists and their participation was sought to assess constraints associated with nature-based tourism. Interviews ceased at 60 respondents because no new information could be obtained from respondents. Once saturation was reached at each site, no more respondents were recruited. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes each. Respondents' ages ranged from 18-85 years and their educational levels were from never-been-to-school to a Master's degree.

Convenience sampling was used to ensure as many respondents as possible were recruited at MGR and CNP hence readily accessible subjects were selected. This was the most suitable strategy since statistics indicate domestic tourists visit protected areas in lower numbers (Department of Wildlife & National Parks, 2014). Purposeful sampling was used in the initial recruitment of respondents in other settings. It included the use of researchers' judgments in the selection of participants and study sites that could best provide the needed data (Patton, 1990). Purposeful sampling was used to facilitate the selection of 'information rich cases' for in-depth understanding (Patton, 2002). In rural areas, permission to conduct the study was sought from village chiefs and/or elders; due to their knowledge about their villages and people, a list of informants was also sought from them after an explanation of the aims of the study and its intention to get views from the wider society. The list included amongst others, the elderly, students and farmers. Respondents were selected to cover diverse views and groups in terms of occupation, age socio-economics, place of residence (village vs. city) and gender. More respondents were recruited through the snowballing technique. In cities, for instance, initial respondents were identified by going to places where individuals identified by the researcher might be located. Such places included schools, government offices and informal sector vendors. To locate more respondents to include in the study, the researcher would then ask initial respondents, whom should I talk to next? This was done after explaining the aims of the study to respondents. Snowballing is an effective strategy when it is difficult to locate respondents (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005), as was the case in this instance.

At MGR and CNP, prospective respondents were recruited at the park's entrance/exit gates. Some interviews were conducted at these points, however, most were conducted at lodges and campsites inside and outside the parks at times convenient for respondents. At other sites, residents were interviewed in different places including their offices and homes. Most interviews were conducted in English, only a few were done in Setswana. With respondents' consent, interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed verbatim and translated to English. For respondents that did not give their consent for audiotaping, the researchers took notes during interviews. Back translations were done to authenticate the accuracy of the translation.

Some of the questions respondents were asked include: Are you interested in visiting national parks? Have you visited any national park and/or game reserves in the country? If yes which ones (s), If no, why not? What are some of the obstacles you face that hinder travel to nature-based settings? Do you think it's important to visit nature-based attractions?

Secondary data sources such as websites, government policy documents, Botswana Tourism Organization reports, journal articles and DWNP reports were also important in complementing primary data sources.

## **Data Analysis**

Open, axial and selective coding was used to analyse the data. Open coding involved the early development of recurring themes and fracturing (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Transcripts were read and categorized line by line using different coloured pencils. Codes developed were then organized into an index system (see Moswete et al., 2012) with the Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints providing the frame on which codes were developed.

For axial coding the data was studied closely to acquire more themes and to make additional links between categories and subcategories (Strauss & Corbin 1998). This included searching for similarities and differences to show contrasts and to further understand the phenomenon at hand (Priest et al., 2002; Strauss & Corbin 1998). It also involved the grouping together of conceptually similar concepts to reveal theoretical properties of each category.

Lastly selective coding was conducted. It involved reorganising and incorporating themes into significant codes and categories. Selective coding is the "process of integrating and refining the theory" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p, 143) by finding a core category and connecting all other categories to the principal one as well as to other categories (Walker & Myrick, 2006).

To enhance consistency and credibility, the following were used; note taking and peer debriefing, audio-recording interviews and data triangulation.

## **RESULTS**

Overall, thirty-five (58%) respondents indicated they had visited protected areas in the country as part of school trips. Only fifteen of these indicated that they had visited after this initial encounter, although nine travelled there for work related activities. With twenty-five (42%) having never visited national parks in Botswana, forty-eight (80%) respondents indicated that with better conditions in place they would visit the protected areas for leisure purposes. Constraints related to nature-based tourism are discussed below.

### **Intrapersonal Constraints**

Visitors (30) and non-visitors (24) indicated similar intrapersonal constraints. Both indicated that the culture of travel for leisure is not well developed in Botswana and that culturally travel for leisure is not seen as very important. For instance one respondent

indicated, “*I grew up in a family where travel was considered a waste of money and time, what was important was cattle*” (Respondent 5, 45 years, male, MGR, visitor). Furthermore, respondents indicated that travel for leisure was not seen as important, what was important was travelling to visit and connect with other family members. This view was especially expressed mainly by the elderly and is encompassed in one respondent’s view that;

When we were growing up we were told that as women we have to stay home and take care of our families, travel was discouraged ...even when parks were created we were never interested in them. ... We never developed that culture for travel. We could only travel to visit family when necessary ... with permission from our husbands. ... (respondent 28, 71 years, no schooling, farmer, female, Palapye, non-visitor).

This indicates family members’ influence in shaping one’s views and thoughts on travel and tourism. By attaching labels to travel and tourism and encouraging the attainment of tangible benefits, travel for leisure is constrained. Fifty- four (90%) respondents indicated that due to their upbringing travelling to places such as national parks and game reserves is something new for them.

Both visitors and non-visitors also indicated a lack of interest. For visitors the lack of interest was related to national park activities not being exciting (7), going just because their partners are interested (2) and not seeing the need to revisit because they’ve already experienced and consumed the product (13). Table 1 summarizes intrapersonal constraints identified in the study.

**Table 1: Visitors and non-visitors intrapersonal constraints**

Constraints	Visitors	Non-visitors
<b>Intrapersonal</b>	Culture of leisure and travel is relatively new in Botswana Lack of interest Leisure travel not important to Batswana I have been there before, no need to go back Not exciting It is for foreigners, especially Whites In my mind I sometimes think is a waste of time	Tswana culture does not promote travel and tourism Not interested Wildlife is something we grew up with and therefore is not an attraction Can see what is seen there on TV Its of no benefit to me Resource is readily available for free Cattle post experience similar to national park experiences Fear of animals It is a White person’s activity

For non-visitors the lack of interest was attributed to the resource being readily available for free (19), having the ability to see what is seen at national parks on television (5), national park experiences being similar to traditional cattle post experiences and the fear of wild animals (8). Respondents indicated that they have been familiar with wildlife since at young age, having seen it at their cattle posts, hence it’s not an attraction for them. Furthermore, as one respondent indicated, when travelling between Francistown and Maun one passes through two national parks and gets to see wild animals by the roadside (respondent 37, 24 years, associate degree, self-employed, female). Hence there was a feeling that since the resource can be seen for free there was no need to go to a national park. This made visits to national parks common, mundane occurrences as opposed to extraordinary

ones. For those content with seeing wildlife on television, visitations to national parks were not deemed important. For respondents who expressed a fear of wildlife, national parks were associated with human-wildlife conflicts, specifically incidences of people being attacked and killed by wild animals. Maun respondents (9) expressed this viewpoint. This may be because their village is in the northern part of the country where most nature-based tourism activities take place. The lack of benefits was also a deterrent with respondents indicating they like their travels to be tied to their livelihoods. Hence cattle posts represent spaces for relaxation and leisure, but they also epitomize life and a means to improve their livelihood.

Perhaps the major constraint was the perception that national parks are for people from outside the country, especially Whites. This view was articulated by both visitors and non-visitors when asked what a tourist is. As one visitor indicated;

... to me a tourist is someone White; a White person coming to visit Africa. I guess they can be Black, but they have to be from outside the country. (respondent 13, 28 years, B.A. degree, unemployed, female, Maun).

A non-visitor re-iterated, “*tourists are White people who go to places such as Kasane where they can view wildlife*” (respondent 44, 18 years, female, high school student, Gaborone). Fifty respondents, even those who indicated they engage in tourism activities expressed this view.

Race was a dominant theme brought up by respondents when discussing nature-based tourism and tourists. This view was ascribed to tourism in Botswana having always been the domain of White people since its inception, the White ownership of tourism facilities and promotional and marketing strategies in place.

### Interpersonal Constraints

On being asked why they don’t visit nature-based settings, forty-nine respondents (29 visitors and 20 non-visitors) indicated they preferred travelling with family and friends. However, they highlighted that nature-based tourism services are designed for individuals and not families, especially those with children. As indicated by one respondent, “*Batswana like cheap things and travelling with their families ... you have to entice them with cheaper local packages for families*” (respondent 32, 19 years, male, undergraduate student, Palapye, visitor). Further constraining locals to travel is the perception that there is racism within some tourism establishments. However, respondents (5) could not substantiate these claims because they indicated they have never visited the sites.

**Table 2: Visitors and non-visitors interpersonal constraints**

Constraints	Visitors	Non-visitors
<b>Interpersonal</b>	Cheaper family friendly packages not available	Many family commitments (taking care of grandchildren) Family too poor to afford Perceived racism Family friendly accommodation not available

Additionally, for non-visitors family commitments were identified as a major constraint to park visitations. The presence of extended families and the sharing of material and non-material resources make it challenging to participate in travel and tourism. This is exemplified by a respondent's view that:

We have our grandchildren living with us ...if we just up and leave who will take care of all these responsibilities (respondent 12, 54 years, elementary school level, street hawker, female, Maun).

Furthermore, even though elderly non-visitors (9) reported they have retired, they reported that they are farmers and constantly have to work at their farms. For other (13) non-visitors constraints were associated with the family life cycle. Respondents indicated they grew up poor and their parents could not afford to take them to nature-based settings. Furthermore, they indicated they have not reached a stage where they are financially able to travel wherever they wished, hence their non-participation. Table 2 provides a summary of constraints obtained in the study and explained above.

### Structural Constraints

Both groups identified a number of structural constraints, the most common of which was the expensive nature of travel to nature-based attractions. All respondents identified pricing and the undeveloped tourism infrastructure as major stumbling blocks. As indicated by one visitor;

Although park entrance fees are P10.00 ... you need comfortable accommodation, ... if you do not own a 4x4 vehicle you will need to hire one and they charge exorbitant prices (respondent 50, 29 years, male, bachelor's degree, risk assessor, Gaborone).

**Table 3: Visitors and non-visitors structural constraints**

Constraints	Visitors	Non-visitors
<b>Structural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too expensive to travel in Botswana</li> <li>Lack of information about sites</li> <li>It is too far</li> <li>It is not appealing, there are more interesting places for Batswana</li> <li>Poor infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National parks not easily accessible</li> <li>Lack of finances</li> <li>Time commitments</li> <li>Lack of information about the sites</li> <li>Lack of finances, too expensive</li> <li>Don't have specialised equipment needed to navigate the terrain (e.g. 4 x 4's)</li> <li>Activities are not appealing</li> <li>It is very far</li> <li>Poor infrastructure</li> <li>Affordable facilities not preferred e.g., camping</li> </ul>

As a result forty-two respondents (17 visitors and 25 non-visitors) indicated that even though local park fees may seem low at P10.00 per day, the price does not really capture the cost of the trip nor does it give locals access to national parks. The high prices charged could be ascribed to the country's tourism policy that promotes 'high-cost, low-volume' and puts a

lot of emphasis on the conservation of natural resources; it is believed that high prices will lead to a low demand and consequently decrease ecological impacts (Beeton & Benfield, 2002). However, one can conclude that the policy has resulted in the marginalization of a majority of locals and the inclusion of only wealthy locals and foreigners. Closely related to the issue of pricing was the perception that nature-based attractions were located far away (27) from places of residence, thereby requiring long travelling distances, specialized equipment like 4 x 4's and expensive accommodation. Difficult road terrains leading to and in protected areas were also identified as an impediment. Despite the availability of camping as a cheaper alternative, respondents indicated that camping is not suitable because they require a certain level of comfort when on holiday. The disapproval of camping was also related to the fear of wild animals. Structural constraints identified in the study are shown in Table 3 above.

Respondents also attributed their low visitations to lack of information about national parks and the activities they offer. Thirty-seven respondents (15 visitors and 22 non-visitors) stated that they do not know of any nature-based tourism promotional activities (as shown in Table 4). Respondents indicated they heard about national parks at school, through word of mouth, educational tours and school-based environmental clubs.

**Table 4: Respondents knowledge of sources of information about tourism**

Source of tourism promotion	Number of respondents
I don't know any	37
Word of mouth	45
Educational tours and school-based environmental clubs	48
Radio, newspapers	10
BTO sponsored TV adverts	8
I know about CBNRM	3
Billboards	10
Wildlife television channels	25

Respondents also indicated national parks are not appealing to them. They indicated their preference for engaging in various activities, hence their displeasure with the packaging of nature-based tourism products in Botswana. Noise and time restrictions were also identified as major constraints that affect the enjoyment of a trip. Due to the promotion of isolated, wild spaces with no human habitation and quietness, for thirty-three respondents (14 visitors and 19 non-visitor) nature-based settings do not offer the kind of environment they want when participating in tourism activities. As one respondent affirmed,

I don't like places that are quite and have few people ... I prefer places like shopping malls and theme parks ... (respondent 19, 25 years, associate degree, middle school teacher, female, Maun).

On being asked to identify sites and attractions they prefer, the following were listed shopping malls, modern buildings, arts and culture shows, the nightlife, sports events, and

agricultural shows. Twenty-five respondents (14 visitors and 11 non visitors) indicated they go to South Africa and Namibia to engage in these activities.

## DISCUSSIONS

The study aimed to identify constraints limiting national park visitations by Batswana. Results indicate a cultural labelling of leisure travel as a money wasting activity. Tourism and the culture of travel are relatively new within this market. Results of the study are similar to Lai, Li & Harrill's (2013) study, with similar intrapersonal and structural constraints experienced by both visitors and non-visitors indicating that prior travel to national parks does not change people's perceptions. For non-visitors, the fear of wildlife as a barrier is an important issue as risk perceptions influence tourists' decision-making process and subsequent behaviours (Matyas, Srinivasan, Cahyanto, Thapa, Pennington-Gray, & Villegas, 2011). Perhaps similarities in constraints can be attributed to difficulties in negotiating some constraints, especially those related to culture and those requiring major changes such as issues of access, infrastructure and distance.

Due to the promotion of tangible benefits and the focus on livelihoods, nature-based tourism is seen as being non-beneficial to this market. Similar results were obtained in South Africa amongst the emerging Black market where it was found that the culture of travel does not exist and the majority within the market seldom go on holiday (Kruger & Douglas, 2015). The cultural labelling of leisure supports the view that culture influences constraints (Godbey, Crawford & Shen, 2010). According to Nyaupane & Andereck (2007), intrapersonal constraints are more difficult to overcome and entail much more than place marketing since they require altering people's psychological obstacles. Interpersonal constraints found in both segments were related to the 'expensive destination' perception and the non-availability of cheaper packages and accommodation for those travelling with family. The expensive image of nature-based tourism in Botswana as well as the poor infrastructure leading to and within national parks was identified as a major constraint for both segments.

Although park entrance fees were deemed low, respondents indicated these do not reflect the cost of the trip. This creates a financial burden for most domestic and potential visitors. While this may be a constraint to the domestic visitors, it is a deliberate plan by the government to limit the number of tourists through the "high cost – low volume" policy, which is pro-conservation and discourages high inflows of tourists to protected areas. In Bhutan, Nyaupane & Timothy (2010) found that the high cost – low volume" policy has also resulted in the exclusion of low spending tourists who are prohibited by the set requirements of being accompanied by a certified guide, having a set packaged itinerary and high costs. The finding on distance in this study is contradictory since some respondents indicated they travel to distant sites in Namibia and South Africa for different tourism products altogether.

Further constraining visitations for both segments is the lack of information about sites. This calls for more awareness and education about nature-based tourism settings to make national parks more appealing to locals. Advertising and promotional campaigns are needed to make domestic tourists aware of tourism offerings within the country (Thapa, 2012). There is a need to improve communication channels to give this market more access. Results of this study are consistent with other constraints studies indicating that structural

constraints are the most important, most researched, and most challenging (Jackson 2005).

Results also indicate that constraints are interconnected. For instance, closely related to the fear of animals (intrapersonal constraint) is an aversion for camping (structural constraint), the expensive nature of national parks (structural constraint) is closely connected to the perception that protected areas are spaces for White people (intrapersonal constraint). This study is useful in helping tourism planners become aware of and respond to visitors and potential visitors' needs and preferences. By understanding constraints to leisure, travel tourism marketers can come up with strategies to overcome them. This is of outmost importance for countries such as Botswana where there is a heavy reliance on the international market and there is need for a sustainable long-term strategy to be adopted.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Results indicate the suitability of the HMLC in analysing leisure constraints in a non-Western setting (Lai, Li & Harrill, 2013) as indicated by constraints such as cost and time which have also been identified in Western settings (see Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008). Despite this, some constraints specific to Botswana have also been identified. This calls for a need by tourism stakeholders to identify and address political, cultural and social issues that impede travel amongst locals.

The identification of site-specific intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints can assist the Department of Tourism, Botswana Tourism Organization and other related tourism stakeholders in promoting, marketing and planning for the country's tourism resources. As indicated by other researchers, nature and wilderness travels have traditionally been associated with the white-upper-middle class (Fletcher, 2014; Stone & Nyaupane, 2016), hence frequent visits by whites make locals relate tourism to such spaces with whiteness. In addition, results indicate the role government policies play in constraining locals' access due to the poorly developed infrastructure that requires specialized equipment such as four-wheel drive vehicles. An in-depth examination of these underlying forces will improve protected areas stakeholders' understanding of domestic and potential tourists' constraints and needs in travel and tourism. Although 80% of respondents indicated a desire to visit if present constraints are addressed, respondents also identified a preference for shopping, modern buildings, arts and culture shows, the nightlife, sports events, and agricultural shows, hence there is also a need to diversify the tourism sector to include these and promote tourism for locals. A more informed understanding will direct stakeholders in the development of marketing strategies, facilities and infrastructure custom-built for domestic tourists wishing to visit protected areas.

The Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints has largely been used in North America where most leisure studies take place (Kimm, 2009). This study therefore addresses the gap that exists in the literature where studies from the developing world are very sporadic and scarce. By exploring locals' perspectives, the study bridges the gap that currently exists where there is a lack of knowledge about the motivations and constraints of non-visitors in most developing countries. Botswana has a comparative advantage in biodiversity resources, for instance, the recently UNESCO listed Okavango Delta as a world heritage site, the magnificent Chobe and the Kalahari all add to the rich biodiversity the country possesses to

pursue nature-based tourism and promote the economic and cultural development of Botswana's rural areas. To benefit from these natural resources is paramount hence there is a need to understand the domestic market's nature-based tourism consumption, tastes and constraints. This study has provided the starting point in providing answers as to why locals' visitations to nature-based settings are low compared to the international market.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on results obtained in this study, there is a clear need to promote education and other measures that facilitate and encourage national parks visitations by locals. This is especially needed since travel and tourism has only been recently adopted as one possible trajectory of economic development and diversification by the government of Botswana. Furthermore, by understanding the locals' voice, researchers, policy makers, and planners can use different channels to develop nature-based tourism products for the local market. The continued growth in Botswana's per capita income offer hope for expanding domestic tourism growth; therefore there is a need to come up with domestic marketing campaigns that can tap into this market.

Although this study is qualitative in nature and cannot be generalized to the whole population, it provides an in-depth analysis of nature-based tourism constraints, their nature and how they come about. For more generalizable results, further research using a larger sample and quantitative data is needed. Furthermore, other leisure constraints studies indicate the role of gender, socio-economic status, age, race and ethnicity in influencing constraints (see Godbey, Crawford & Shen, 2010; Crawford, 2005; Shores, Scott & Floyd, 2007), hence a study incorporating all these variables needs to be carried out to determine whether these have an impact on nature-based tourism constraints for domestic tourists in Botswana. Although the current study gives locals a voice in tourism literature, it did not focus on differentiating between locals. Therefore, future research is needed to compare the views of various groups within the society. Moreover, the enduring ramifications of the high-cost low-volume policy adopted by the country have to be investigated, specifically to find out how it impacts the indelible existence of national parks and the capital they host. The study highlights the need to carry out a domestic tourism market survey to determine market needs and preferences.

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