
TOURISM PLANNING POST DISASTER: COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to determine how a community undergoing disaster recovery perceives tourism development. This study utilizes qualitative and quantitative methods to capture the meanings, perspectives and attitudes of residents, stakeholders and Government. The results of the qualitative component are presented. This exploratory research contributes to the body of knowledge regarding tourism planning and development, particularly as it relates to the reemergence of a community's tourism industry following a disaster. Findings indicate that the context and timing of a destination under recovery require additional consideration. Ultimately, creating social capital is essential for the community planning process and requires participation beyond the typical seven steps of tourism planning model.

Keywords: *Community Planning, Tourism Planning, Post Disaster Tourism*

Introduction

An important reason for tourism planning is to help a destination anticipate changes in order to make decisions for future development. Because tourism impacts will have a lasting effect on the host destination, it is imperative to involve local residents and give voice to their wants and needs. Simply put,

when residents feel good about their surroundings, tourists feel good too. According to Simmons (1994), planners talk about community involvement models but very few studies actually have used public participation models. Tourism is a growing worldwide industry and much work remains in understanding the tourism planning and development process (Russo and van der Borg, 2002; Tosun, 2002; Pearce, 2000; Reid, Mair and George, 2004).

The purpose of this paper is to determine how a community undergoing disaster recovery perceives tourism development. This research will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding tourism planning and development, particularly as it relates to the reemergence of a community's tourism industry following a devastating disaster. How does a damaged community develop its tourism industry? What are the community's perceptions of tourism as a factor in economic recovery? What resources, both within and external to the community can be brought to bear?

Host perceptions of tourism impacts and development are essential for building social capital. In creating a strategic tourism plan for St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana resident's perceptions are vital to the success of tourism.

Research Overview

In late 2008, researchers approached the then Director of St. Bernard's office of Tourism and suggested that the development of a Strategic Tourism Development Plan could assist their efforts to recover from the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. In late January, 2009 a meeting was held with the St. Bernard Tourism Commission Board of Directors at which the Strategic Planning process was discussed. Subsequently, a meeting was held with the then Parrish President who approved the proposed planning process and authorized the development of a Strategic Tourism Plan for St. Bernard to proceed.

A series of workshops with constituencies in various locations throughout the parish were planned to access input from business people, residents, educators, returning retirees, commercial fisherman and trappers and other interested individuals. The workshops were scheduled to begin in late 2009 and continue into the first half of 2010. A questionnaire was developed to gather data regarding perceptions and attitudes toward tourism development in St. Bernard Parish and solicit ideas regarding the directions that tourism development should take.

In May of 2010 while in the midst of conducting workshops and collecting data, disaster in the form of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill occurred, landing a second devastating disaster to St. Bernard's struggle to recover from Hurricane Katrina. All workshops and data collection were suspended and did not resume until October 2010. Furthermore, to complicate matters more a scheduled election resulted in a change in the Parish's leadership and subsequent dismissal of the long standing Director of the St. Bernard Office of Tourism.

The last two major events to hit the St. Bernard area: Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, have heavily impacted those activities. Perez (2011) says history argues for the survival of the culture. Hurricane Katrina devastated St. Bernard Parish. Its infrastructure and economy were severely damaged including the growing tourism industry. Coupled with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Parish continued to struggle to reestablish its footing. Redeveloping and enhancing St. Bernard's fledgling tourism industry will contribute significantly to rebuilding the Parish.

Background: St Bernard Parish, Louisiana

As New Orleans' Most Historic Neighbor, St. Bernard Parish has the opportunity to further develop its tourism industry with an emphasis on cultural, historic, and environmental attractions. St. Bernard Parish is located five miles away from a major tourist hub, New Orleans, Louisiana. St. Bernard Parish has an area of 1,794 square miles, which includes 465 square miles of land and 1,329 square miles of water. The largest city of the Parish, Chalmette, is also its administrative center. Residents of St. Bernard Parish elect all of the local government officials and therefore participate in a democratic decision-making process. While the Western part of St. Bernard Parish consists of towns with historic neighborhoods, its Eastern part are represented by fishing villages. Because the Eastern St. Bernard is located on alluvial land with numerous canals and waterways, it is susceptible to severe flooding.

Pre Hurricane Katrina

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, St. Bernard Parish was a thriving community. According to the 2000 Census, St. Bernard had 67,227 residents or 25,123 households with a median household income of \$35,939, which is equivalent to \$45,509 in 2010 (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center [GNOCDC], 2006). Out of all people living in the Parish in 2005, 17.3% were below

poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). White comprised 84.3% of total population while proportions of African American, Asian, and Hispanic were 7.6%, 1.3%, and 5.1% respectively (GNOCDC, 2006). St. Bernard Parish was known for its oil and gas, commercial fishing, and seafood processing industries.

Post Hurricane Katrina

According to the 2010 Census, only 35,897 people continued living in St. Bernard Parish, which is 46.6% less than in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 (1)). The Parish remains home to 16,794 households with a median household income of \$36,660 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 (1)). Therefore, median household income has declined during the ten year period of 2000-2010. Out of all people living in the Parish in 2009, 17.8% were below poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). White comprised 74% of total population while the percentages of African American, Asian, and Hispanic were 17.7%, 1.9%, and 9.2% respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). Boasting an outstanding transportation infrastructure, St. Bernard Parish managed to retain the petrochemical, oil and gas, seafood processing, and commercial fishing industries (Greater New Orleans Regional Economic Alliance, 2011).

After the Oil Spill

While the long-term impacts of the BP Oil Spill on the Parish community are difficult to estimate, its immediate effects created unfavorable conditions for the local economy. Since the community relies on commercial fishing, fishermen, shrimpers, and crabbers were not allowed to sell their catch as the seafood could have been contaminated. As a result, fishermen incurred losses, and some of them went out of business. To compensate for the losses, British Petroleum reimbursed the fishermen and hired residents to assist in cleaning the coast. The Oil Spill also had a negative effect on the tourism industry, for potential visitors perceived St. Bernard Parish as an unsafe destination. The charter boat businesses experienced decline in booking activity for many consecutive months (Wiseman & Watson, 2010). Even when it was announced that the Gulf seafood was safe for consume, the public perception could not be easily adjusted.

Literature

Appropriate tourism planning is essential if a destination is to evolve into a competitive yet sustainable destination. Researches generally agree that the process of tourism planning involves a number of steps. For example,

Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) suggest that steps should include defining the system, gathering and interpreting data, creating preliminary plan, approving it, creating the final plan, and implementing the plan. Joppe (1996) and Gunn and Var (2002) divide the tourism planning process into four phases: preparatory phase, framework for long-term strategy phase, presentations phase, and implementation phase. According to the researchers, the preparatory phase should address such issues as creating a committee for tourism planning and assessing existing plans while the second phase should contain discussion of suggestions and recommendation. At the presentation phase, a consensus about the tourism plan should be reached. Finally, implementation phase implies assuming leadership and initiating the plan implementation (Gunn & Var, 2002).

Community Planning

The approach of participatory, or community planning gained momentum in developed countries in the early 1990s. The literature has responded to this shift by a series of publications on the topic during the last twenty years. Because the approach is comprehensive in nature, many themes have been researched in order to understand the mechanics of community planning.

1. Decision making process and role of community and government

Simmons (1994) was one of the first researchers to apply the concept of public participation to tourism planning. He emphasized the importance of community education and public awareness of tourism impacts as integral components of effective community involvement (Simmons, 1994). Further, since “tourism development takes on the characteristics of a public and social good whose benefits will be shared by the numerous stakeholders in the local destination” (Jamal & Getz, 1995, p.193), all of the stakeholders should be involved in a decision-making process. In community planning, a local government takes on a difficult role to balance diverse interests of the private sector with residents’ attitudes and concerns in order to create a sustainable tourist destination. Moreover, sometimes residents prefer to rely on the government to make all decisions concerning tourism development in their region (Madrigal, 1995). On the other extreme, Ross, Riley, and Rumpca (2007) describe the case of a Costa Rican town where the lack of collective action and government regulation led to negative social and environmental impacts.

Potts and Harrill (1998) united the themes of social development and ecological sustainability to outline a community tourism planning approach

- travel ecology. This innovative concept emphasizes political ecology and moves away from sustainable tourism models. Travel ecology focuses on growth and integration as opposed to the sustainable tourism approach that emphasizes integration only. The Travel ecology approach is based on six principles: discovery (participation of all stakeholders), mutuality (visions for future development are uncovered, residents engage in conversation), locality (recognizing specific location), historicity (importance of historic past), potentiality (anticipating growth), and enhancement (democratic dialogue and participation). Similarly, Miyakuni and Vander Stoep (2006) considered the community-based tourism planning process to be structured around a series of linkages: physical, information, visual, transportation, interpretive, promotional and economic. According to the researchers, appropriate tourism linkages should be employed in the community planning process (Miyakuni & Vander Stoep, 2006). In another instance, Timothy (1999) views participatory planning from two perspectives: 1) involvement of locals in decision making and 2) involvement of locals in the benefits of tourism. Therefore, building public awareness through resident education should be an essence of community planning (Timothy, 1999). Collaborative theory was also borrowed to explore the community planning process since it helps understand interdependencies among multiple stakeholders and their divergent views on tourism planning (Jamal & Getz, 1995). Many researchers have adopted a case study approach to explore the dynamics of participatory planning in a certain geographical locale (Miyakuni & Vander Stoep, 2006; Marzuki, 2008; Harris, 2009; Pongponrat, 2011).

2. Stakeholders

Since a tourism destination's resources and assets are shared among many individuals within the host community including residents, local businesses, government, and non-governmental groups, organizations must agree on how to allocate the destination's resources among all interested parties. It is a recognized problem that at any stage of tourism planning "lack of coordination and cohesion within the highly fragmented tourism industry" inhibits the planning process (Jamal & Getz, 1995, p. 186). For this reason stakeholder participation in tourism planning has received much attention in literature (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Sautter & Leisen, 1999; Ruhanen, 2009; Wray, 2011; Jamal & McDonald, 2011). For example, Sautter and Leisen (1998) extended Freeman's stakeholder theory to develop a stakeholder orientation matrix. The matrix uses the orientation of two stakeholders on relationship/transaction continuum. The developed matrix is an attempt to find the most productive type of interactions between two stakeholders. According to the researchers, tourism planners should maximize the number of stakeholder

interactions that share the same orientation: either relationship/relationship or transaction/transaction (Sautter & Leisen, 1999). Authors argue that stakeholder theory can be used to promote collaboration among key players in a planning process. By distinguishing between relationship and transaction approaches, the planners can adopt an appropriate strategic orientation during the planning process (Sautter & Leisen, 1999).

3. Resident's Attitudes

Residents' tourism knowledge base and residents' perception of how their input will affect decisions play a crucial role in meaningful community participation (Simmons, 1994). For this reason, research on residents' attitude towards tourism development has been conducted extensively in various locations around the globe and in light of different theories (Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal, 2002; Madrigal, 1995; Reid, Mair, and George, 2004; Timothy, 1999; Tosun, 2002; Choi & Murray, 2010; Schofield, 2011; Draper, Woosman, & Noeman, 2011). For instance, Gursoy et al. (2002) applied the social exchange theory to investigate residents' attitudes towards tourism development in five countries that surrounded Mont Rogers National Park in Virginia. Among the other results, they found that perceived cost of tourism development does not necessarily contradict its support and that the concerns for economic well being of the community corresponds to higher level of support for tourism development (Gursoy et al., 2002). Madrigal (1995) utilized a cluster analysis to explore residents' perception of the role of government in tourism development process. The results indicated that differences in residents' attitudes towards government's role in tourism planning varied greatly across nested community clusters: realists (who agreed with both positive and negative sides of tourism); haters (who strongly disagreed with positive and agreed with negative sides of tourism); and lovers (who agreed with positive and strongly disagreed with negative sides of tourism) (Madrigal, 1995). Later, Reid et al. (2004) developed a community tourism self-assessment instrument to estimate a community's readiness to move forward with tourism development. The researchers designed a questionnaire to assess locals' inclination to tourism development across four factors: decision-making process and organization; emerging tourism problems, unplanned development; and motivation. The inquiries into residents' attitude towards tourism development have also produced a number of case studies from destinations worldwide (Tosun, 2002; Kuvan, 2005; Marzuki, 2008; Gursoy, Chi, and Dyer, 2010; Rastegar, 2010; Aref, 2010).

Planning after disaster

Unexpected natural and man-induced disasters have immediate effects on the tourism industry. They can partially or completely destroy tourism infrastructure, create a negative destination image, and cause resident outflow that results in labor shortages. All these consequences can impede the recovery of the tourism industry. Despite of all the hardships, tourism businesses do recover. When Wang (2005) explored the motivation and types of redevelopment strategies after the 1999 earthquake in Taiwan, he found four types of reasoning behind the decision to resume operation: 1) determination; 2) employee consideration; 3) social responsibility, 4) and other reasons such as positive market outlook and provision of funds. Moreover, cooperation among stakeholders was noted as a key to disaster recovery and therefore tourism governmental offices and other tourism organizations should facilitate this cooperation (Hystad & Keller, 2008).

St. Bernard Parish, which was greatly affected by Hurricane Katrina, lies a short five miles southeast of downtown New Orleans. It is surrounded by the bountiful waterways of Lake Borgne, the Mississippi River, Breton and Chandler Sounds which house the barrier islands that border the Gulf of Mexico. This coastal area contains the Louisiana Marsh and Wildlife Management area that extends more than 40 miles east into Mississippi Sound. The salt water marsh that surrounds St Bernard Parish contains an abundant variety of fin and shell fish as well as many varieties of sea birds. It unfortunately is rapidly disappearing and serves as a glaring example of the effect of coastal erosion, significantly exacerbated by the impact of Hurricane Katrina. St. Bernard is also home to numerous venues of historic significance including the Chalmette National Park where General Andrew Jackson's troops defeated the British during the Battle of New Orleans and a number of revolution era forts that protected egress to New Orleans via the bayous that opened to Lake Borgne. San Bernardo Scenic Byway traverses the Parish and provides access to stately old plantation homes, ancient oaks and picturesque bayous.

The culture of St. Bernard Parish owes a significant part of its origin to a group of people known as Islenos. They were part of the Spanish colonial government's plan to develop Louisiana and resist British encroachment. Several thousand families from the Spanish mainland and the Canary Islands were sent to what is now St. Bernard Parish during the latter part of the 1700's. Today many of their descendants, who speak an archaic Spanish,

continue the tradition as fisherman in the salt marshes surrounding the Parish. The tradition of trapping fur bearing animals has ceased. However the Islenos culture and language are kept alive through the annual Islenos Fiesta held in the spring of each year. In the village of Arabi in addition to the historic LeBeau Plantation, Domino Sugar continues to operate a large sugar refining plant that has been in continuous business for more than 100 years and is now celebrated at the annual Old Arabi Sugar Festival. Due to the damage to its infrastructure, economy and the significant out migration of its inhabitants, St. Bernard Parish suffered extensive damage to its tourism assets and the human resources required to rebuild its emerging tourism industry.

Planning on Periphery

While peripheral regions are often defined by spatial characteristics, other dimensions must be considered while differentiating such destinations from core regions (Moscardo, 2005). Botterill et al. (2002) argue that peripheral regions typically have low levels of economic development and are dependent on traditional industries, rural and geographically remote, are reliant on imported technology and information, remote from decision-making. In addition, such regions have poor infrastructure and amenities and sometimes aging and declining population (Botterill 2002).

While St. Bernard Parish is located five miles away from a major tourist hub, New Orleans, and somewhat relies on outside technology and information, its population, in fact, is younger than the state average. Moreover, due to former residents returning to the area after being displaced by the hurricane Katrina, St. Bernard's population is growing and forecasted to reach 37,786 people by 2015 (Greater New Orleans Regional Economic Alliance, 2011). Boasting an outstanding transportation infrastructure, St. Bernard Parish is also a home to petrochemical, oil and gas, seafood processing, and commercial fishing industries (Greater New Orleans Regional Economic Alliance, 2011). Residents of St. Bernard Parish elect all of the local government officials and therefore participate in democratic decision-making process. As can be seen from the above, the destination does have to possess all characteristics of a peripheral region to be considered a periphery (Moscardo, 2005). However, despite St. Bernard's economic advancement, tourism development should still not be considered in such destinations, according to Pekka, Saarinen, and Leinonen (2009). They argue that "if the structural base of the regional economy is diverse but the tourism resources of the area are modest", the policy may develop both traditional, already existing industries, and add new

industries (Pekka et. al., 2009, p.430). However, the tourism industry should not be considered one of the options.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

Data Collection:

- Inventory of Resources (Cultural, Historic, Environmental)
- Survey of Residents (160 residents were surveyed; Questionnaire included 23 questions in addition to the background information section)
- Interviews with Stakeholders: Residents, Tourism Commission, Parish Government.

To move forward with a strategic plan, preliminary investigation into host's perceptions is necessary. Data collection included building a detailed inventory of the cultural, historic and environmental resources of St. Bernard Parish. This was achieved through focus groups and talking with local stakeholders. In addition, 160 residents were surveyed to determine their perceptions of tourism development and description of the positive and negative impacts of tourism. Furthermore, stakeholder interviews including residents, tourism commission members and Parish Government officials were conducted.

Descriptive Statistics

Five community meetings were held (see Table 1). The first meeting was held on March 11, 2010, at the Council on Aging, where 83 completed questionnaires were collected. The second meeting was held on April, 8, 2010, at a local restaurant in the Eastern part of the Parish. Eleven completed questionnaires were collected during this meeting. Third, 43 questionnaires were collected at a local Town Hall meeting that took place on September 30, 2010. Fourth, 23 additional questionnaires were collected on October, 25, 2010, at a Tourism Planning Workshop that was held at a local community college. Finally, 29 completed questionnaires were gathered at a meeting of the local Chamber of Commerce on April 4, 2011.

In terms of attitude towards future tourism development plans, Table 2 presents descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Frequency distributions for meetings

Item	Category	Meeting 1: Frequency (Percent)	Meeting 2: Frequency (Percent)	Meeting 3: Frequency (Percent)	Meeting 4: Frequency (Percent)	Meeting 5: Frequency (Percent)
Gender	Male	27 (32.9)	7 (32.9)	22 (51.2)	10 (43.5)	16 (55.2)
	Female	55 (67.1)	4 (67.1)	18 (41.9)	11 (47.8)	13 (44.8)
	Missing	1 (1.2)	0	3 (7.0)	2 (8.7)	0
	Total	82 (100)	11	43 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	29 (100.0)
Age	21-25	1 (1.2)	1 (9.1)	1 (2.3)	4 (17.4)	3 (10.4)
	26-34	0	0	0	7 (30.4)	4 (17.4)
	35-49	1 (1.2)	2 (18.2)	9 (20.9)	0	13 (44.8)
	50-64	10 (12.0)	6 (54.5)	22 (51.2)	10 (43.5)	7 (24.1)
	>65	71 (85.5)	2 (18.2)	11 (25.6)	2 (8.7)	2 (6.9)
	Total	83 (100.0)	11 (100.0)	43 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	29 (100.0)
Children under 18	0	69 (83.1)	8 (72.2)	34 (79.1)	9 (39.1)	13 (44.8)
	1	3 (3.6)	1 (9.1)	2 (4.6)	0	5 (17.2)
	2	3 (3.6)	2 (18.2)	2 (4.6)	5 (21.7)	8 (27.6)
	3	6 (7.2)	0	3 (7.0)	2 (8.7)	3 (10.4)
	4	1 (1.2)	0	0	2 (8.7)	0
	5	1 (1.2)	0	0	0	0
	Missing	0	0	2 (4.6)	5 (21.7)	0
	Total	83 (100.0)	11 (100.0)	43 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	29 (100.0)

Education	Grammar school High school Vocational/technical Some college Bachelor's Master's PhD/MD Missing Total	7 (8.5) 47 (57.3) 6 (7.3) 15 (18.3) 5 (6.1) 1 (1.2) 1 (1.2) 1 (1.2) 83 (100.0)	0 0 3 (27.3) 0 2 (18.2) 4 (36.4) 2 (18.2) 0 11 (100.0)	0 0 23 (53.5) 7 (16.3) 7 (16.3) 4 (9.3) 1 (2.3) 1 (2.3) 43 (100.0)	0 1 (4.3) 3 (13.0) 7 (30.4) 3 (13.0) 4 (14.4) 5 (21.7) 0 23 (100.0)	0 8 (27.6) 0 11 (38.0) 6 (26.1) 2 (6.9) 1 (3.5) 1 (3.5) 29 (100.0)
Ethnicity	White African-American Hispanic Isleños Other Missing Total	73 (88.0) 0 1 (1.2) 7 (8.4) 2 (2.4) 0 83 (100.0)	7 (63.6) 0 0 4 (36.4) 0 0 11 (100.0)	30 (69.8) 5 (11.6) 1 (2.3) 6 (14.0) 1 (2.3) 0 43 (100.0)	20 (87.0) 0 0 1 (4.3) 1 (4.3) 1 (4.3) 23 (100.0)	28 (96.5) 0 0 0 1 (3.5) 0 29 (100.0)
Duration of residence	Less than 4 years 5-10 years 11-20 years 21-34 years >35 years All my life Missing Total	3 (3.6) 0 1 (1.2) 7 (8.4) 8 (9.6) 48 (57.8) 16 (19.3) 83 (100.0)	1 (9.1) 0 0 0 3 (27.3) 5 (45.5) 2 (18.2) 11 (100.0)	1 (2.3) 0 1 (2.3) 7 (16.3) 10 (23.3) 24 (55.8) 0 43 (100.0)	1 (4.3) 1 (4.3) 0 5 (21.7) 7 (30.4) 7 (30.4) 2 (8.7) 23 (100.)	Not available

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Table 2. Attitudes towards Future Tourism Development, Descriptive Statistics

Item		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Missing	Total
Question 1	f	22	7	3	56	99	2	189
Increasing the number of tourists improves the local economy	%	11.6	3.7	1.6	29.6	58.4	1.1	100.0
Question 2	f	15	11	17	76	64	6	189
The benefits of tourism outweigh its negative consequences	%	7.9	5.8	9.0	40.2	33.9	3.2	100.0
Question 3	f	16	9	20	72	70	2	189
Tourism development provides good jobs for local residents	%	8.5	4.8	10.6	38.1	37.0	1.1	100.0
Question 4	f	19	13	21	70	61	5	189
Tourism development increases the number of recreational opportunities for local residents	%	10.1	6.9	11.1	37.0	32.3	2.6	100.0
Question 5	f	13	25	22	74	51	4	189
Tourism development increases local traffic	%	6.9	13.2	11.6	39.2	27.0	2.1	100.0
Question 6	f	17	43	57	47	19	6	189
Tourism leads to more litter	%	9.0	22.8	30.2	24.9	10.1	3.2	100.0

Question 7 Tourism increases crime	f %	21 11.1	67 35.4	53 28.0	29 15.3	15 7.9	4 2.1	189 100.0
Question 8 Tourism development has a negative impact on the local environment	f %	26 13.8	81 42.9	28 14.8	26 13.7	21 11.1	7 3.7	189 100.0
Question 9 Tourism has the potential to stimulate the economy for St. Bernard Parish	f %	16 8.5	8 4.2	10 5.3	77 40.7	72 38.1	6 3.2	189 100.0
Question 10 Tourism will strengthen the cultural assets in our community	f %	16 8.5	12 6.3	15 7.9	74 39.2	67 35.4	5 2.6	189 100.0
Question 11 St. Bernard residents will benefit from creation of new attractions	f %	15 7.9	12 6.3	17 9.0	71 37.6	73 38.6	1 0.5	189 100.0
Question 12 St. Bernard residents will benefit from creation of new infrastructure	f %	20 10.6	9 4.8	12 6.3	72 38.1	73 38.6	3 1.6	189 100.0
Question 13 Tourism development is too dominant an industry for our community	f %	21 11.1	74 39.2	36 19.0	31 16.4	20 10.6	7 3.7	189 100.0

Question 14 Local residents do not want to see anymore tourism development take place in our community	f 26 %	77 40.7	30 15.9	30 15.9	19 10.1	7 3.7	189 100.0
Question 15 Local residents are on in agreement on how tourism should develop in the future	f 10 5.3 %	42 22.2	65 34.4	45 23.8	14 7.4	13 6.9	189 100.0
Question 16 Most residents would be willing to attend a community meeting to discuss an important tourism issue	f 3 1.6 %	25 13.2	50 26.5	66 34.9	34 18.0	11 5.8	189 100.0
Question 17 Everyone in the community needs to be involved in tourism development and not just the business community	f 5 2.6 %	26 13.8	27 14.3	78 41.3	48 25.4	5 2.6	189 100.0
Question 18 This community should expand the current lodging inventory	f 8 4.2 %	11 5.8	32 16.9	71 37.6	57 30.2	10 5.3	189 100.0
Question 19 Residents would welcome tourists visiting St. Bernard parish for the day	f 15 7.9 %	12 6.3	17 9.0	80 42.3	61 32.3	4 2.1	189 100.0

Question 20 Residents would welcome tourists staying overnight in St. Bernard Parish	f %	16 8.5	12 6.3	18 9.5	80 42.3	57 30.2	6 3.2	189 100.0
Question 21 Residents would like to share their culture with tourists interested in learning about people, history, and lifestyle of St. Bernard Parish.	f %	15 7.9	13 6.9	14 7.4	71 37.6	72 38.1	4 2.1	189 100.0
Question 22 The community would support official tours of St. Bernard Parish	f %	12 6.3	17 9.0	12 6.3	74 39.2	70 37.0	4 2.1	189 100.0
Question 23 I would like to see tourism in St. Bernard grow within the next five years	f %	19 10.1	10 5.3	9 4.8	59 31.2	86 45.5	6 3.2	189 100.0

Conclusion

This purpose of this paper was to determine how a community undergoing disaster recovery perceives tourism development. Clearly St. Bernard Parish has numerous tourism related assets, some of which were actively being exploited in their tourism initiatives. By assisting Parish tourism leaders in the development of a strategic tourism plan and data collection process these and other touristic resources are likely to result in a more effective program that will significantly enhance the rebuilding of St. Bernard's infrastructure and economic foundation.

It is evident from the responses to the surveys employed in this study that the citizens of St. Bernard who returned subsequent to Hurricane Katrina and the BP disasters are overwhelming supportive of the Parish's reemerging efforts to rebuild and enhance its tourism industry (see Table 2). However, based on the survey, it appears that residents have differing viewpoints about how to proceed with tourism development. Question 15 states Local residents are in agreement on how tourism should develop in the future. This response is to be expected with a community that has undergone a series of disasters and uncertainty. The evidence reveals strong community support for tourism development, an important first step in the process. This paper represents an attempt to understand the operations (what is being done) and strategic (what can be done) aspects of regional tourism planning in developing destinations as advised in the Western planning literature.

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