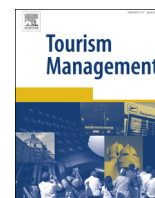


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Segmentation by motivation for rural tourism activities in The Gambia

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HIGHLIGHTS

- We conduct a survey of 430 tourists in The Gambia to find out about market potential for rural tourism.
- We employ a combined factor-clustering method to extract distinct market segments for tourism activities in The Gambia.
- We find four distinct market segments.
- There is high (latent) market potential for rural tourism businesses in The Gambia.
- We sketch out a ‘development path’ on how an event-based rural tourism can actually be implemented.

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ABSTRACT

In The Gambia, as in many other African countries, rural areas rarely profit from the turnover earned in the country's tourism sector. In academic and political literature, however, rural tourism is frequently identified as a diversification strategy that may trigger local economic development in remote communities. To promote rural tourism development, further knowledge is required to understand why tourists are motivated to engage in distinct tourism market segments. In this study, survey data was collected from 450 tourists in The Gambia using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed to identify the key characteristics and motivations of tourists so that the significant market segments could be categorized and the (latent) tourist demand for rural tourism activities could be gauged. This study identified four distinct segments of tourists in The Gambia: *heritage & nature seekers*, *multi-experiences seekers*, *multi-experiences & beach seekers*, and *sun & beach seekers*. Drawing on our key findings, we conclude by identifying a development path that could diversify Gambia's tourism sector. The development path would also include event-based rural tourism initiatives that align with the motivations of the identified market segments and may additionally benefit rural communities by reducing economic leakage rates.

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1. Introduction & background

In many developing countries, a growing tourism industry is seen as a potential solution to issues such as low employment rates

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or the need for foreign currencies and generating higher government revenues (Rahier, 2008). In The Gambia, the tourism industry's contribution to monetary GDP was an estimated 13% in 2004 and is projected to increase to approximately 18% in 2020 (Mitchell & Faal, 2007, p. 6). Likewise, in the same period of time, tourism-generated employment is projected to increase from around 16,000 jobs in 2004 to around 35,000 in 2020 (Rahier, 2008, p. 2).⁴ Still, The Gambia's most important source of income is groundnuts,

⁴ Employment figures are for full-time jobs, or full-time equivalents in the case of persons who may derive only part of their income from tourism. The total number of people either fully or partly dependent on tourism, i.e. in the informal sector, is larger than the employment figures alone would suggest.

“but it is unable to compete with subsidised American peanut farmers” (Goodwin & Bah, 2006, p. 1). Thus, developing the Gambian tourism industry has some major advantages, as developed countries cannot place tariff barriers against tourism exports.

Tourism development in The Gambia, however, is somewhat limited as it is mainly restricted to “sun and beach” activities and high seasonal fluctuations in tourism revenues (Job & Lutzenberger, 2009). Owing to the low diversification of tourism offerings, The Gambia has difficulties standing out from numerous other sun and beach destinations, although the tourism industry has been encouraged by the Gambian Government since the late 1960s to foster the country’s economic development (Thompson, O’Hare, & Evans, 1995, p. 580). Given the growing international competition in the global tourism marketplace, tourist destinations are trying hard to identify unique market positions to be able to compete effectively (Leslie & Wilson, 2006).

One way of achieving competitive advantage over other tourism destinations is to establish rural tourism as a tourism development strategy (Petrzelka, Krannich, Brehm, & Trentelman, 2005). Furthermore, rural tourism has been discussed as having some potential to combat the high leakage rate of foreign currency or the non-arrival of capital in the Gambian tourism sector (Rahier, 2008, p. 4). Currently, for The Gambia, a leakage rate of 75% is reported, due to repatriation of profits earned by foreign investors and tour operators, imported skilled labour and luxury products, and marketing, transport and other services based in the originating country (Ashley, Boyd, & Goodwin, 2000). Approximately 84% of tourists arriving in The Gambia are on package tours, which include flights, transfers and accommodation (Emerging Market Group, 2005). Package tourism significantly reduces the share from tourism turnover for Gambian tourism businesses, as most of the money spent by tourists remains in the countries of their origin (Job & Lutzenberger, 2009, p. 191).

It has been argued that one form of reducing leakages is through locals becoming more directly involved in terms of ownership and levels of control of tourism businesses (Ashley & Roe, 2002; Mahony & van Zyl, 2002; Scheyvens, 2002; Simpson, 2008, p. 6): Community-based tourism enterprises (CBTE) or Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) initiatives have been predominantly observed in collaboration with the informal tourism sector in The Gambia. Here, new partnerships and business linkages have been developed to encourage tourists to purchase locally produced crafts and curios (Bah & Goodwin, 2003; Goodwin, 2002, p. 7). Rural tourism can help remote communities to become directly involved in and benefit from tourism by generating and diversifying revenues for farmers and helping to create a value-added market channel for local products, such as handicrafts (Park & Yoon, 2009, p. 99). Snyman (2012) reports on various impacts of CBTE and ecotourism from studies in Botswana, Malawi and Namibia. Results show that additional jobs were created by community-based tourism initiatives in rural areas and “monthly income from ecotourism employment was shown to enable households to invest in assets, education and ‘luxury’ goods, which improved financial security and social welfare in remote, rural areas” (Snyman, 2012, p. 395). Mafunzwaini and Hugo (2005) found similar evidence from field surveys and interviews with stakeholders of the tourism industry in Limpopo province in South Africa, and reported that rural tourism was a viable development tool for that area (Mafunzwaini & Hugo, 2005). Likewise, Lapeyre (2010) reports on findings from field work in Namibia and states that a CBTE, the Daureb Mountain Guides association in the Tsiseb Conservancy in Namibia, indeed was proven to contribute to local livelihood, empowerment, training through on-the-job learning, diversification of income, and enhancement of resilience to unexpected negative shocks. Lapeyre (2010), however, also points to a negative development of

some CBTEs in the long run, as CBTEs can suffer from weak institutional and managerial capacity and inadequate support by donors and non-governmental organizations as well as lack of competitive advantages within a highly competitive tourism commodity chain.

More recently, community benefit tourism initiatives (CBTIs) have been discussed as a concept to develop a form of tourism that benefits local communities and hence reduces leakages. In CBTIs, community participation is aimed for but not seen as necessary to deliver benefits to local communities, as involving communities might prove difficult in achieving “the goal of benefit delivery [due to] internal conflicts or unrealistic expectations” (Simpson, 2008, p. 2). CBTIs focus on benefit delivery by the success of tourism enterprises and by implementing a professional management network of stakeholders (e.g. industry, government, and NGOs). Such investors may be more willing to invest in the development of rural tourism businesses and may be less concerned about including community shareholders and decision makers. In the past, some CBTIs proved that externally owned tourism businesses indeed delivered economic benefit to locals. Examples include direct employment or employment in related jobs, higher social standards, health care and health insurance, and educational benefits (Simpson, 2008).

Rural tourism activities, however, make for only a small proportion of the net earnings in the Gambian tourism sector at present. At the political level, alternative tourism strategies have been discussed for helping spread tourism business from the urban to the rural space; however, governmental bodies have not yet come to an agreement on appropriate concepts and development strategies (see Bah & Goodwin, 2003; Emerging Market Group, 2005; Republic of The Gambia, Office of the President, 2010). Other governmental or government-related agencies have set up tourism policy recommendations for The Gambia, such as the “Responsible Tourism Policy” (by the Responsible Tourism Partnership), that encourage locals to participate more in tourism (Goodwin, 2002). The Responsible Tourism Partnership has “an increasing interest [...] that over the next decade tourism will develop in the rural areas” (Goodwin, 2002, p. 5) in order to increase revenues earned in the tourism sector. The Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA) is seeking to implement this policy recommendation through partnerships with local communities and non-governmental associations in supporting rural tourism development.

Tourism in The Gambia is affected by seasonal climatic change, which leads to high seasonal variation in visitor numbers. In the low season, between April and October, turnover in tourism is very low and makes for only around 30% compared with high season earnings (Emerging Market Group, 2005). This recently led Job and Lutzenberger (2009) to state that “there has been no progress [in The Gambia] to extend the season into the European Summer” (p. 196). The authors, however, argue that tourist arrivals during the off-season period are low because no major new markets or market segments, such as rural tourism, have been developed. There is a need, therefore, not only to promote the country’s tourism sector but also to develop new tourism products that can both balance the seasonal fluctuations and benefit rural communities. Consequently, in this study, we investigate the market potential for rural tourism with a special focus on the off-season period.

The study aims to analyze the market potential for rural tourism activities in The Gambia by surveying tourists in The Gambia with regard to their characteristics, motivations, and preferences. The Gambia was chosen as the case study area as it has received little attention in tourism research and because it is predominantly regarded as a developing country where seaside tourism is the prevalent form of tourism (Job & Lutzenberger, 2009, p. 192). Having close to 111,000 tourist arrivals in 2005, The Gambia is one

of the key tourism destinations in West Africa (Mitchell & Faal, 2008, p. vii).

In order to analyze preferences for rural tourism activities in The Gambia, 430 tourists to The Gambia were interviewed using a self-administered questionnaire. Considering the dearth of literature on African rural tourism, this study enters a new field of tourism research with regard to its regional scope and thematic outline.

The results of the study indicate high potential for rural tourism in The Gambia. Market segmentation also shows, however, that rural tourism activities should be considered as part of an attractive mix of tourism activities, including “sun & beach” activities. The discussion and conclusion sections are framed in terms of the “experience setting through event tourism” concept, and we discuss a development path for a new product of event-based rural tourism in The Gambia (see Mueller, Jans, & Scheurer, 2004).

The following section (Section 2) provides an overview of the literature related to tourist market segmentation approaches. Section 3 describes the survey design and analysis, Section 4 reports on the results of the factor-clustering and reliability analyses, and Section 5 discusses the main findings and concludes the paper.

2. The segmentation by motivation approach in tourism research

Roberts and Hall (2001) recommended that analysts and policy-makers undertake more efforts at national and regional levels in determining the consumption patterns of rural tourism demand through market segmentation methods. Market segmentation in tourism research has been defined as a process of dividing a market into market segments, which are defined as groups of consumers who are expected to exhibit similar purchasing responses (Smith, 1956) and are often developed from behavioural theories such as motivation or recreational specialization (Bryan, 1977; Ditton, Holland, & Anderson, 1992; Hunt, Haider, & Bottan, 2005, p. 297; Kim, Kim, & Ritchie, 2008; Venugopal & Baets, 1994).

In recreation research, market segmentation is a fundamental tool for identifying homogeneous groups of consumers (Beane & Ennis, 1987). Market segmentation has been widely used to understand the diversity of recreationists' tastes and preferences and to identify niche markets for different tourism products and services (Frochot, 2005; Molera & Albaladejo-Pina, 2007; Mykletun, Crofts, & Mykletun, 2001; Park & Yoon, 2009; Walker & Hinch, 2006). Through this, purpose-designed tourism products tailored to the needs of consumers could be identified, and the formulation, promotion, and delivery of such products are facilitated (Park & Yoon, 2009, p. 100). More specifically, market segmentation in tourism research is used to help tourism service providers evaluate new tourism product opportunities, including rural tourism offerings (Beane & Ennis, 1987). Surprisingly, despite the economic potential of rural tourism and the relevance of market segmentation efforts for tourism marketing, there is a dearth of literature identifying the potential of the rural tourism niche market using appropriate market segmentation methods (Park & Yoon, 2009, p. 101).

Roberts and Hall (2001) analyzed rural tourism demand within the framework of Sharples's (2000) consumption typology and concluded that although former studies have tried to associate demographic features to market segments of rural tourism demand, socio-economic data such as age or civil status have little predictive power for rural tourism marketing purposes. The authors additionally observed that rural tourism consumption is rather influenced by attitudes and motivational concepts of tourism activity choice. Similarly, consumer behaviour theory suggests “motivations” as key driving forces for human behaviour and consumer choice (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1978).

In recreation research, consumer behaviour theory was adopted to explain recreationists' choices by motivations, attitudes, and preferences, all of which are closely related concepts (Tarrant, Bright, Smith, & Cordell, 1999): Stankey and Schreyer (1987) considered motives to be a predisposition to fulfil specific types of needs, while Driver (1976) defined recreation experience preferences (REPs) as motivational reasons to participate in outdoor recreation, emphasizing the voluntary nature of behaviour based on preferences (Tarrant et al., 1999, p. 404). Crompton (1979) explores motivational push-and-pull factors to describe tourists' choices and behaviour: knowledge-seeking, relaxation, and family togetherness are referred to as push factors, while preferences for natural and historic environments, cost, facilities, safety, and accessibility are reported as pull factors (Jang & Wu, 2006). Tarrant et al. (1999, p. 404) noted that the importance of studying motivations for outdoor recreation lies in their potential to influence satisfaction through meeting an individual's needs, preferences, expectations, and/or desired outcomes. In this study, we investigated market segments of tourists in The Gambia to account for heterogeneity in tourists' tastes. Following Roberts and Hall's (2001) opinion, the authors of this study selected to investigate underlying motivations and measuring preferences by drawing on stated-preference data, such as a survey of tourists in The Gambia.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection and measurement

A survey was collected from 450 tourists to investigate tourists' preferences in The Gambia; of these, 430 were usable for analysis. The interviews were conducted at the Banjul International Airport's departure lounge between July and September 2006 using self-administered structured questionnaires. The airport was chosen as an appropriate site to conduct the interviews, as 95% of all tourists enter and leave the country through Banjul International Airport (Mitchell & Faal, 2008, p. 10). Accessing the interviewees at departure provides the opportunity to analyze Gambian tourism segments and tourists' motivations by interviews drawing on actual holiday experiences recently made by the tourists interviewed. The interviewees were selected by the rule that every third tourist was asked for an interview, thus avoiding pre-selection bias. The specific survey months were chosen to investigate rural tourism's potential to reverse the decline in tourism earnings during the off-season, in line with the study's objectives.

The questionnaire was constructed to investigate taste heterogeneities amongst tourists. Items measuring the level of trip satisfaction and willingness to re-visit, as well as some socio-economic characteristics of the tourists, were recorded. In order to discover the motivational concepts underlying the travel-choice behaviour of tourists coming to The Gambia, we used 15 items to measure the tourists' expectations towards a range of experiences that they would like to have had during their stay (“experience list”) as well as 7 items to measure the importance attributed to different tourism activities in The Gambia (“importance list”). These items were derived from a thorough review of travel motivation literature (Crompton, 1979; Driver, 1976; Jang & Wu, 2006; Stankey & Schreyer, 1987; Tarrant et al., 1999). In this paper, we interpret expected experiences and the evaluation of importance of tourism activities as motivational sub-dimensions that reflect differences in taste and hence influence tourism activities choice (Tarrant et al., 1999, p. 404). The respondents were asked to rate the relevance of the items in the questionnaire along a Likert-type scale: for items from the “experience list”, the scale ranged from 1 (=I strongly disagree) to 5 (=I strongly agree), and for items from the “importance list”, the scale ranged from 1 (=not at all important) to 5 (=very important).

3.2. Analysis

The factor analysis method, here the principal components analysis (PCA), was applied to explore motivational dimensions (Arlinghaus & Mehner, 2004a, pp. 333–334; Veal, 1997, p. 284). This methodological approach has been described in tourism literature as standard procedure to explore motives from survey data (for a review of this literature, see Kim et al., 2008, p. 204; Park & Yoon, 2009, p. 102). To calculate the PCA, the estimation method was determined by varimax rotation, and the following criteria were used: (a) factor loadings ≥ 0.40 as suggested by Buehl and Zoefel (2005, p. 496); (b) eigenvalues ≥ 1.0 as suggested by Hair, Black, Babin, and Tatham (2005, pp. 122–129); and (c) results of the factor analysis explaining at least 59% of the total variance. Also, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated as reliability parameter to indicate the internal consistency of the items with each motivational dimension that was extracted by the factor analysis.

In the next analytical step, the heterogeneous population of respondents was broken down into homogeneous subgroups of tourists using cluster analysis techniques. In tourism segmentation research, the *k*-means clustering method is recommended by Hair et al. (2005), as it is less susceptible to outliers in the data and the distance measures used. Using the *k*-means clustering method, however, requires the researcher to specify the number of segments prior to the clustering process. The researcher's a-priori decisions, e.g. the specification of the "appropriate" number of segments, have been criticized as "arbitrary decisions" that lead to significant deficiencies of the market segmentation technique (Bhat, 2002, p. 392). Therefore, we employed hierarchical cluster analysis with binary squared Euclidian distance and Ward-linkage (Kroemker, 2004) to identify the number of clusters and thus the number of groups of tourists with similar preferences in respect of tourism activities in The Gambia.⁵ Then, the *k*-means clustering technique was specified in relation to the number of segments as identified by the hierarchical cluster analysis, and the PCA factor loading scores were used to cluster individuals in such a manner that respondents within a cluster were more similar to each other than to respondents in other clusters.

In seeking to understand market segments, it is necessary to take into account the influence of some other variables that may be important in determining market segment characteristics. For example, a respondent's market segment affiliation may be systematically related to age, gender or income, or to whether an interviewee had visited The Gambia before or not. Hunt et al. (2005, p. 298), however, criticized that preference heterogeneity cannot be adequately explained through characteristics of individuals. Bramley and Power (2009, p. 36) recommend using data on individual characteristics such as age or socio-economic status as controls, which may be treated as descriptive exogenous influences for preference measurement. Hence, for the purposes of this study, socio-economic variables are essentially used to describe and characterize the market segments (Franz, 2006) that have been identified on the basis of attitudinal data (i.e. using motivational dimensions as composite variables) in prior steps of analyses (i.e. using the *k*-means clustering method; Park & Yoon, 2009). The differences among segments in socio-demographics and travel behaviour (descriptive data) were assessed by chi-square statistics for non-metric variables. ANOVA was used to analyze differences between clusters for metric variables with regard to a comparison of mean ratings of motivational dimensions. Prior to using parametric tests, the attribute's data were tested for normal distribution

using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (Buehl, 2005, p. 332). Discriminant analysis was also conducted to assess how accurately individuals were classified to the clusters.

Following Arlinhaus and Mehner's (2004b) recommendations, the authors carried out a regression analysis to test for reliability and construct validity of our survey instrument; for technical details and results, see Appendix A. In summary, a high degree of reliability and construct validity can be derived from the consistency of predicted and empirically analyzed coherences between independent and dependent variables as well as from the regression statistics.

4. Results

4.1. Participation characteristics

Descriptive analysis showed that 43% of the respondents were British, 40% were Dutch, 10% were German, 4% were US-American, and 3% of other origins. Some other socio-demographic characteristics of tourists in the sample are presented in Table 1. Tourists interviewed were predominantly women (58.7%) and only a small proportion of the tourists comprised families travelling with children under the age of 14 (9.3%). Tourists were predominantly relatively young: 36.1% were under 25 years old, 20.5% were

Table 1
Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents ($n = 430$).

Variable	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	175 (41.3%)
Female	249 (58.7%)
Age	
<25	150 (36.1%)
25–35	85 (20.5%)
36–45	68 (16.4%)
46–55	82 (19.8%)
56<	30 (7.2%)
Mean (\pm S.D.)	33.93 (\pm 13.8)
Level of education	
High school graduate or less	161 (37.4%)
College graduate or higher	254 (59.1%)
Families (with children under 14 years old)	40 (9.3%)
Came through tour operator	
Yes	350 (81.4%)
No	77 (17.9%)
Came as a group	
Yes	205 (47.7%)
No	225 (52.3%)
Visited The Gambia before	
Yes	73 (17.0%)
No	357 (83.0%)
Level of trip satisfaction	
Totally or mostly satisfied	358 (83.3%)
Neutral	50.0 (11.6%)
Totally or mostly dissatisfied	21.0 (4.9%)
Like to visit again	
Yes	309 (71.9%)
Maybe	17 (4.0%)
No	99 (23.0%)
Like to visit rural Gambia (at re-visit)	
Yes	349 (81.2%)
No	69 (16.0%)

Source: The Gambia tourists survey, 2006.

⁵ Euclidean distance was used as similarity measure between cases; the Ward method was used to maximize within-cluster homogeneity as recommended by Hair et al. (2005).

between 26 and 35, and only 7.2% of respondents were older than 56. About 82% of interviewees arrived through tour operators, and about 18% came on their own (e.g. backpackers).

These figures widely correspond to official statistics, where numbers are available for air-charter tourists only, where 55% of tourists are British, 11% are Scandinavian, 9% are Dutch, 5% German, 6% African, and 4% are Belgian or other European (Mitchell & Faal, 2008, p. 11). Unfortunately, no further data is available by official statistics to compare our sample data against.

Tourists in the sample showed high levels of education on average, as 59% of respondents had a college degree or higher: 36% with a bachelor's degree, 18.8% with a master's degree, and 4.2% with a doctorate. 47.7% of tourists interviewed came to The Gambia as a group, and 52.3% travelled individually.

Over 83% of respondents were either totally or mostly satisfied with their trip. Some 72% of the tourists surveyed intended to visit The Gambia again. However, 23% would not like to visit again. Of those willing to visit again, about 81% would be interested in visiting rural areas during their next stay.

4.2. Motivations and principal components analysis

In the questionnaire, twenty-two items were provided to measure motivational sub-dimensions underlying tourists' choices of tourism activities (see Section 3.1). These items were added to the principal components analysis. The first run produced a five-factor solution with eigenvalues greater than 1; however, the fifth factor contained two items, the "bird watching" and "fishing" items, and yielded a relatively low reliability coefficient, with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.393.⁶ In this study, therefore, the "fishing" and "bird watching" items were treated as separate, descriptive variables for further analysis or interpretation purposes, as suggested by Ohlwein (1999, p. 224). A new factor solution excluding the "fishing" and "bird watching" items was obtained with eigenvalues greater than 1 that resulted into a four-factor solution explaining 58% of variance in the data. A Kaiser–Mayer–Olkin measure was calculated to 0.886, and a Bartlett's test of sphericity showed high significance ($p < 0.001$), both demonstrating a high adequacy to conduct a factor analysis with the items chosen. Looking at the rotated factor matrix, all items showed factor loadings clearly related to only one factor each. The value levels of the Cronbach Alpha coefficients ranged from 0.597 to 0.857 and allowed summarizing all underlying sub-dimensions in terms of "dimensional concepts" (see Table 2). The factor analysis results showed that a visitor's choice of The Gambia as his or her tourism destination was characterized by a variety of preferences and expectations, which makes tourism in The Gambia a diverse sector.

According to the factor loading scores for each item, the four components are interpreted as four different motivational dimensions (Table 2), namely the "heritage & nature" motive, the "authentic rural experience" motive, the "learning" motive, and the "sun & beach" motive.

The first factor was labelled the "heritage & nature" motivational dimension and incorporates items on natural and rural tourism as well as on national parks and historical and cultural

attractions. The "heritage & nature" motivational dimension exhibited most of the variance (35.43%), with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.857. The second factor, labelled "authentic rural experience", summarizes six attributes that reflect high interest in the "real" social life of rural communities in The Gambia ("stay among rural populace", "real Gambian dishes/foods", "rural Gambians' way of life", "rural farm produce"). This dimension is also characterized by the wish to have "strong feelings of experience" and to "share interesting Gambian experiences" and accounts for 9.84% of the variance. The third factor (7.08% of variance) was labelled "learning", combining four items that indicate interest in "learning local languages" and "learning traditional dances", as well as learning about "myths and legends" and "local handicrafts". The fourth factor identified the "sun & beach" motivational dimension, explaining another 5.26% of variance. Apart from the "swimming" and "sun & beach" tourism sub-dimensions, it is interesting to note that the "sun & beach" factor also includes the item of "I like to expose the Gambians to the Western way of life". This motive can be interpreted as applying to an exaggerated opinion of the value of the Western way of life and hence is expected to correlate negatively with the readiness to embrace rural tourism activities. It should be pointed out that the "expose the Gambians to the Western way of life" sub-dimension shows one of the lowest mean scores in the list of motivational sub-dimensions (Table 2).

The results of the factor analysis are also given as combined means of individual items in the factor and standard deviation for factors to illustrate the rank ordering of factors on the motivational dimensions scale (Fig. 1).

4.3. Tourism market segmentation

In the next step of analysis, the motivational dimension scores (Table 2) were used to profile market segments. By introducing the factor loading scores as composite variables into a hierarchical cluster analysis, the statistical clustering procedure led to a four-cluster solution that was supported by the criterion of the relative increase of the agglomeration coefficient and the dendrogram (Buehl, 2005, pp. 527–528). Then, the *k*-means clustering technique was used to classify interviewed tourists to the four clusters according to their motivational dimensions that best discriminated them (see Section 3.2). According to the motivational dimensions' means, the clusters were labelled the *multi-experiences seekers*, *multi-experiences & beach seekers*, *heritage & nature seekers*, and *sun & beach seekers*.

A series of statistical tests – ANOVA and post-hoc as well as a discriminant analysis were carried out to test whether all motivational dimensions contribute to a statistically significant separation between segments; for technical details and results see Appendix B. The results of these statistical tests support the conclusion that through the clustering procedure described above, truly distinct clusters of respondents were identified (Table 3).

To describe the segments' profiles in more detail, socio-economic data as well as data on travel behaviour were used to cross-tabulate each cluster (see Table 4 for results). Chi-square statistics were employed to determine statistically significant differences.

4.3.1. 'Multi-experiences & beach' tourists

The *multi-experiences & beach seekers* exhibited high motivation in almost all factors and is the second largest segment of respondents (28.8% of sample). Tourists in this segment desired various types of motivation, including "sun & beach". Nature activities, such as "bird watching" and "fishing", however, were only of moderate interest (mean rating of 3.46 and 2.96, respectively).

The segment of *multi-experiences & beach seekers* shows the highest percentage of female tourists compared with the other

⁶ In the first run of the factor analysis, the fifth motivational dimension has been labelled "nature activities" (explaining 4.66% of variance), as it accounts for two outdoor tourism activities: fishing and bird watching. This dimension, however, shows a relatively low Cronbach Alpha of 0.393. Cronbach Alpha values are very sensitive to the number of items in the scale: Ohlwein (1999) points out that the value of the Cronbach Alpha is negatively correlated to the number of indicators/items included in one dimension, which explains the relatively low value of the "nature activities" – item's Cronbach Alpha to some extent. Commonly, a cut-off point of 0.5–0.7 is used for Cronbach Alpha values (Buehl, 2005; George & Mallery, 2003; Nunnally, 1978).

Table 2
Factor analysis: motivational dimensions, items and statistics.^{a,b,c}

Motivational dimensions	Items	Factor loading	Mean ± SD	Cronbach Alpha	Variance explained (%)	
Heritage & nature (combined mean: 4.23 ± 0.61)	Importance of tourism in natural areas	0.823	4.27	0.807	0.857	35.43
	Importance of Gambian history & culture	0.721	4.32	0.835		
	Importance of rural tourism	0.674	4.05	0.893		
	Experience wildlife forests and national parks	0.646	4.19	0.839		
	Historical attractions experience	0.619	4.22	0.784		
	Real culture and traditions experience	0.576	4.53	0.699		
	Experience rural landscape of The Gambia	0.562	4.20	0.816		
Authentic rural experience (combined mean: 3.76 ± 0.72)	Rural farm produce	0.751	3.31	1.029	0.837	9.836
	Sharing interesting Gambian experiences	0.723	3.73	0.937		
	Stay among rural populace	0.681	3.45	1.067		
	Strong feelings of experience	0.616	3.98	0.908		
	Real Gambian dishes/foods	0.549	3.96	1.042		
	Rural Gambians' way of life	0.510	4.20	0.847		
Learning (combined mean: 3.75 ± 0.76)	Learn traditional dances	0.679	4.04	0.944	0.755	7.084
	Learning local languages of The Gambia	0.650	3.13	1.194		
	Interest in myths and legends	0.566	4.11	0.886		
	Interest in local handicrafts	0.501	3.81	0.951		
Sun & beach (combined mean: 3.60 ± 0.79)	Importance of sun-beach tourism	0.852	3.95	1.002	0.597	5.256
	Importance of swimming	0.851	3.89	1.127		
	Expose Gambians to western way of life	0.454	2.95	1.106		

^a Items were arranged according to results of factorial analysis (eigenvalue > 1) and factorial loadings > 0.45.

^b All items included to the factorial analysis were measured along a 5-point Likert-type scale: for items from the "experience" list, the scale was: 1, I strongly disagree; 2, I tend to disagree; 3, I have no opinion on this; 4, I tend to agree; 5, I strongly agree; for items from the "importance" list, the scale was: 1, not at all important; 2, not very important; 3, I have no opinion on this; 4, quite important; 5, very important.

^c Overall Cronbach alpha: 0.853.

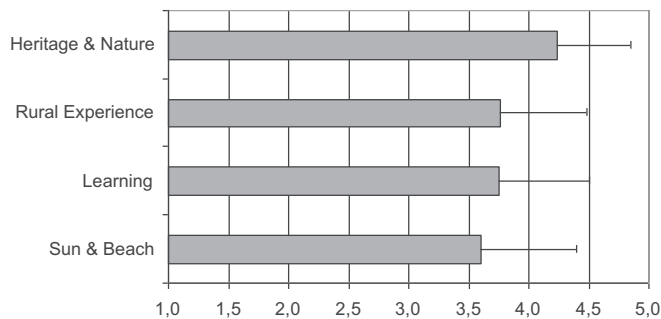


Fig. 1. Combined means of individual items in the factor and standard deviation for factors in the motivational dimensions scale. All items included to the factorial analysis were measured along a 5-point Likert-type scale: for items from the "experience" list, the scale was: 1, I strongly disagree; 2, I tend to disagree; 3, I have no opinion on this; 4, I tend to agree; 5, I strongly agree. For items from the "importance" list, the scale was: 1, not at all important; 2, not very important; 3, I have no opinion on this; 4, quite important; 5, very important.

Table 3
Motivational dimensions' means among market segments.^{a,b,c}

Motivational dimensions	Multi-experiences & beach seekers (n = 124/28.8%)	Multi-experiences seekers (n = 73/16.9%)	Heritage & nature seekers (n = 178/41.4%)	Sun & beach seekers (n = 55/12.8%)	Total mean ± S.D.	F-values
Heritage & nature***	4.67H	4.49H	4.13H	3.43M	4.23 ± 0.61	96.87
Authentic rural experience***	4.35H	4.14H	3.58M	2.63L	3.76 ± 0.72	170.26
Learning***	4.44H	4.14H	3.55M	2.60L	3.75 ± 0.76	188.33
Sun & beach***	4.02H	2.33L	3.81M/H	3.78M/H	3.60 ± 0.79	153.58

Note: For items from the "experience" list, the scale was: 1, I strongly disagree; 2, I tend to disagree; 3, I have no opinion on this; 4, I tend to agree; 5, I strongly agree. For items from the "importance" list, the scale was: 1, not at all important; 2, not very important; 3, I have no opinion on this; 4, quite important; 5, very important.

^a Motivational dimensions are given as combined means for each segment.

^b ANOVA tests were used to test for significant differences between the segments: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; ns = not significant; Kolmogorov–Smirnov tests for each factor/motivational dimension showed that normal distribution can be assumed for all factors (for $p < .05$) [missing cases: 70].

^c "H", "M" and "L" indicate high, medium or low levels of combined means for each segment.

segments, and respondents in this segment are the second oldest among segments.

Tourists interviewed in this study are predominantly visiting The Gambia for the first time; however, the segment of *multi-experiences & beach seekers* shows the highest proportion of tourists among the four segments wishing to visit the country again (86.5%), reflecting a high level of trip satisfaction. Also, in this segment, almost all tourists would like to visit rural areas when they come to visit The Gambia again (95.5%).

4.3.2. 'Multi-experiences' tourists

The second segment identified by cluster analysis is characterized as *multi-experiences seekers*. Compared to segment one, respondents of this cluster do not show interest in "sun & beach" activities but value the experience of distinct Gambian characteristics, such as "authentic rural experiences" as well as the experience of "heritage/nature" or "learning local dances and languages". Nature activities, such as "bird watching" and "fishing", however, are disliked by respondents in this segment (mean rating of 2.13 or 1.47, respectively). The segment is of relatively smaller size as compared to the *multi-experiences & beach* segment (16.9% of the sample).

In terms of demographic and other behavioural characteristics, the segment of *multi-experiences seekers* resembles the *multi-experiences & beach* segment in terms of a high proportion of female travellers, and also, in terms of a higher average age of tourists in these two segments: in other words, female and older tourists seem to prefer a higher variety of holiday activities compared to the more specialized segments of *heritage & nature seekers* and *sun & beach seekers*. These two more specialized segments are characterized by a relatively lower percentage of female and older tourists. It has to be pointed out, however, that the average age in the two “experiences” segments with the older tourists is still low with 34.7 and 35.5 years, respectively. Also, these segments show the highest proportion of tourists who have visited The Gambia before and, compared with the other segments, are characterized by a relatively high proportion of tourists having arranged their visit individually and not through a tour operator (34.9%).

Similar to tourists in the *multi-experiences & beach* segment, a large part of the *multi-experiences seekers* would like to visit The Gambia again, reflecting high trip satisfaction, and would like to also visit the country's rural areas (during a return visit).

4.3.3. 'Heritage & nature' tourists

The *heritage & nature* segment (41.4% of the sample) forms the largest segment of tourists identified in this study. Tourists in this segment particularly exhibited high motivation (overall mean of 4.13) for experiencing natural and cultural sites of The Gambia. However, compared with the *multi-experiences seekers* and *multi-experiences & beach seekers*, tourist in the *heritage & nature* segment do not particularly favour other motivations, except some minor interest in “sun & beach” activities. Hence, this group of tourists can be regarded as a specialized segment which is preliminarily motivated by an interest in experiencing wildlife, forests, rural landscapes and national parks as well as culture, traditions, and history. The *heritage & nature* segment is rather young, with an average age of 31.6 years. It also has the second highest proportion of male tourists compared with the other segments.

Around 70% of tourists in this segment would like to visit the country again, reflecting a somewhat lesser degree of trip satisfaction compared to interviewees in the *multi-experiences* and *multi-experiences & beach* segments. *Heritage & nature seekers*, however, would also like to visit rural areas if they were to return to the country for vacation.

4.3.4. 'Sun & beach' tourists

The fourth segment of tourists (12.8% of the sample) can be mainly characterized by the “sun & beach” motive. Compared to other clusters, tourists in this cluster place the highest importance (see Table 3, mean value of 3.78) to “sun-beach tourism” and “swimming” as well as on the “expose Gambians to the Western way of life” sub-dimension; hence this cluster was named the *sun & beach* cluster. Saying this, tourists in the *sun & beach* segment also show some interest in “heritage & nature” – historic and cultural sites, natural areas and national parks (see Table 3, mean value of 3.43 for the “heritage & nature” motive) – which indicates that the *sun & beach* segment is not entirely one-dimensional with respect to tourists' travel motivations and preferences. In addition, it is the only segment where the number of male tourists (55.3%) exceeds the number of female tourists (44.7%). *Sun & beach* tourists are significantly younger than tourists in other segments, showing an average age of 31.9 years. Furthermore, they are predominately making their first visit to the country (89.4%) and almost all of them came to The Gambia through tour operators (91.5%).

Tourists in the *sun & beach* segment were most dissatisfied with their trip compared to their counterparts in the other market segments, as over half of the *sun & beach seekers* would not like to visit

The Gambia again. Also, in this segment, there is the largest proportion of tourists who would not like to visit the country's rural areas (at re-visit).

5. Discussion and implications

5.1. Heterogeneity in preferences for tourism activities in The Gambia

The clustering of tourists' motivations proved to be a valuable measure to segment the tourism market in The Gambia: from the four motivational dimensions identified by factor analysis, surprisingly the “sun & beach” motivational dimension that The Gambia is often associated with accounted for only 5% of variance explained. The “authentic rural experience” and “heritage & nature” motivational dimensions together accounted for about 45% of the total variance in the data and represent the motivations most directly associated with rural tourism. The fourth factor was labelled “learning” (languages, local dances, etc.) and accounted for another 7% of variance.

The “heritage & nature” motive had the strongest explanatory power (35.4% of variance explained), and also shows the highest mean value of combined means of the factors (Table 3), indicating that experiencing “historical attractions”, “culture and traditions”, or “wildlife, forests and national parks”, among other things, were primary motivations for visiting The Gambia. The “authentic rural experience” motive had the second strongest explanatory power (9.8% of variance explained) and hence must be regarded as an important distinguishing theme for visiting The Gambia. These findings are consistent with Cohen's (1988) and Silver's (1993) referenced popularly held images on “authentic” rurality.

In this study, four market segments of tourists choosing The Gambia as destination were identified based on tourists' motivations. A large segment (41.4% of sample) seemed to specialize in the “heritage & nature” aspects, and hence was named the *heritage & nature* segment. As mentioned before, the “heritage & nature” motive is closely associated with “rurality” or “rural areas”, as it incorporates sub-dimensions such as “importance of rural tourism”, “experience wildlife forests and national parks”, and “importance of Gambian history and culture”. Tourists in this segment show the least interest in “sun & beach” activities.

The segments of *multi-experiences seekers* and *multi-experiences & beach seekers* together account for another 45.7% of tourists interviewed. Both of these segments are strongly characterized by the wish to have a wide variety of “real Gambian” experiences, many of which can be associated with experiences in rural areas: the “authentic rural experience”, and the “heritage & nature”, as well as the “learning” motivational dimensions.

The group size of the first three clusters certainly exceeds what we expected to be the demand for rural area-related experiences or what is currently offered in The Gambia with regard to rural tourism activities. From this, we conclude that the tourism industry in The Gambia could profit more from rural tourism, given the high potential demand for rural tourism related activities identified in this study. This is supported by the findings of Job and Lutzenberger (2009, p. 203), who found that package tourists in The Gambia show high interest in participating in many kinds of activities outside their hotels and other than on the beaches.

According to the survey data, however, the fourth segment of tourists is predominantly motivated by “sun & beach” activities (*sun & beach seekers*) and does account for 12.8% of all tourists interviewed.

The profiles of the four motivational market segments identified showed statistically significant differences in socio-demographic characteristics and preferences (see Table 4): tourists in the largest segment of *heritage & nature seekers* have predominantly made their first visit to The Gambia and were younger in average (31.6

Table 4
Profile of the four clusters of tourism in The Gambia.^a

	Multi-experiences & beach seekers (n = 124/28.8%)	Multi-experiences seekers (n = 73/16.9%)	Heritage & nature seekers (n = 178/41.4%)	Sun & beach seekers (n = 55/12.8%)
Age*				
<25	30.93%	33.33%	42.07%	40.43%
25–35	22.68%	12.70%	24.14%	25.53%
36–55	38.14%	47.62%	31.03%	23.40%
56<	8.25%	6.35%	2.76%	10.64%
Mean (±S.D.)	34.7 years old (±13.3)	35.5 years old (±14.5)	31.6 years old (±12.3)	31.9 years old (±14.7)
Gender**				
Female	69.00%	57.14%	53.69%	44.68%
Male	31.00%	42.86%	46.31%	55.32%
Came through tour operator***				
Yes	83.00%	65.08%	87.92%	91.49%
No	17.00%	34.92%	12.08%	8.51%
Visited The Gambia before**				
Yes	17.0%	28.6%	8.7%	10.6%
No	83.0%	71.4%	91.3%	89.4%
Like to visit The Gambia again***				
Yes	86.5%	83.9%	66.7%	46.8%
Maybe	4.4%	4.8%	4.0%	0.0%
No	9.1%	11.3%	29.3%	53.2%
Wish to be exposed to the rural areas of The Gambia (at re-visit)***				
Yes	95.9%	91.9%	82.9%	51.1%
No	4.1%	8.1%	17.1%	48.9%

^a Chi-square tests were used to test for significant differences between the segments: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

years old). Tourists in this segment, however, also show high preferences to visit rural areas when returning to visit The Gambia again.

Tourists in both the *multi-experiences* and *multi-experiences & beach* segments are somewhat older in average (34.7 and 35.5 years old, respectively) and show higher proportions of female travellers. Interviewees in these two segments show high levels of trip satisfaction and also stated the wish to visit The Gambia again and when doing so would like to visit the country's rural areas. In contrast to the first three segments, the *sun & beach* segment is characterized by a higher proportion of male tourists as compared to the other segments as well as by a higher proportion of those who have booked their trip through tour operators. Sun & beach seekers were predominantly dissatisfied with their trip and would not like to visit rural areas (at re-visit).

We conclude, first, that the “classical” sun- and beach-type of tourism, for which The Gambia is well known, is the main or driving motivation for only one small segment of tourists specialized in “sun & beach” activities (12.8% of sample), who are often dissatisfied with their trip. Second, however, the sun- and beach-type of tourism forms an important part of the mix of motivations for the segments of *multi-experiences & beach seekers* (28.8% of sample) and *heritage & nature seekers* (41.4% of sample), who are mostly satisfied with their trip and would like to visit rural areas of The Gambia (at re-visit). Third, the “classical” sun- and beach-type of tourism is not important to the segment of the *multi-experiences seekers* (14.7% of sample), who are also predominantly satisfied with their trip and would also like to visit rural areas when they come to visit The Gambia again.

Other research has suggested that segments of tourists may have relatively homogeneous preferences for tourism activities in terms of their motivational data (see, for instance, Kim et al., 2008; Park & Yoon, 2009; Roberts & Hall, 2001). Building upon these studies, we chose a market segmentation approach to identify market segments in terms of different motivational dimensions related to tourism activities in order to segment and evaluate the market potential for rural tourism in The Gambia.

Drawing upon our findings, The Gambia has a strong potential to diversify its tourism industry, currently focussing almost solely on sun & beach offerings. From the large number of respondents looking for multi-experiences during their stay in The Gambia – many of these related to experiences provided by rural areas – and from the large number of respondents seeking these experiences along with some sun & beach activities, we conclude that a successful Gambian tourism diversification strategy should (1) advance rural tourism activities and develop tourism activity packages to cater to a diverse mixture of “authentic rural experiences” and “heritage & nature” motives (2) advance high quality “sun & beach” offerings to serve as a platform for 1-day or overnight rural tourism activity packages, and (3) advance management structures to interlink and organize the two.⁷

⁷ The large number of tourists in this study expressing their wish for a diverse set of experiences that can be linked to rural areas is a quite different result when compared with what studies in European rural tourism have discovered. In Europe, rural tourists prefer a peaceful atmosphere and nostalgia, e.g. for the “old ways of life” (Frochot, 2005; Kastenholz, Davis, & Paul, 1999). This discrepancy could be due to the fact that tourists with interest in authentic Gambian experiences as interviewed in this study were younger on average than European rural tourists. The average age of tourists interviewed in this study was 33.9 years old. In Germany, for instance, the main market segments for rural tourism are families and older couples (Rural Tourism International, no date). Another explanation for the strong wish for experiences in all of the market segments except the “sun & beach” cluster could be the association of Africa with adventure. European rural areas would have rarely been considered “adventurous”, while most rural places in African nations would certainly be associated with “wild-life”, “wild nature” or “adventure”, and this we assume to be part of the motivation to choose The Gambia as a destination. Job and Lutzenberger (2009, p. 204) investigated the relevance of package tourists for the informal sector in The Gambia based on qualitative interviews with tourists: the authors identified some key motivations for package tourists to participate in activities outside their hotels and highlighted the “experiences” and “adventure” motives. This would support the conclusion that our findings of a high (latent) demand for rural tourism as identified for the case of The Gambia in this study can be expanded on the cases of other African “sun & beach” destinations. More research, however, has to be carried out to investigate if and how the idea of “adventure” forms a substantial motivational dimension for tourists to visit African countries and how it can be used to develop rural tourism initiatives.

The results of this study have important implications for all stakeholders involved in tourism marketing and development in The Gambia. The market segments and socio-demographic profiles as described above can be used to develop marketing strategies and develop and target niche markets as part of a diversification strategy. New tourism products can be most effectively planned only if tourists' motivations are described, analyzed, and understood.

While it is outside the aim and scope of this paper to discuss all management implications deriving from such a diversification strategy, in the next section, we focus on the example of targeting a niche market of "event-based rural tourism" as response to the high preferences for both "rural tourism"- and "experiences"-related motivations as identified in this study.

5.2. Implications to develop a new product of event-based rural tourism in The Gambia

Tourists interviewed in this study (tourists in the *multi-experiences & beach*, the *multi-experiences*, and the *heritage & nature* segments) expressed high preferences for a diverse set of rural "experiences". Liu (2006) noted that offering experiences in staging events has helped to shape the emerging form of rural tourism. Following Liu's opinion, the strong wish for experiences identified in this study could be imparted through launching a new product of event-based rural tourism in The Gambia.⁸

Drawing on our key findings as well as on some particularities of The Gambia's tourism sector, a *development path* for the implementation of event-based rural tourism will be laid out. While it is outside the scope of this paper to discuss this development path in all detail, we rather sketch out some of what we believe to be fundamental implications from our results.

5.2.1. A themed route for an event-based rural tourism: The River Gambia

A development path to initiate event-based rural tourism activities in The Gambia could be centred on the theme of River Gambia, as the river offers rich natural resources and cultural heritage to cater to the motivations in the "heritage & nature" segment and also, the river offers relatively easy access to rural areas from the main hotels situated along the Gambian coast (see *Emerging Market Group*, 2005). Moreover, following for example of Lourens' (2007) results from case studies conducted in the Camino de Santiago in Spain and the Midlands Meander in South Africa, themed tourism routes can serve as a potential driver for local economic development (Lourens, 2007). In his study, Lourens discusses how to successfully develop tourism routes as new tourism brand names that bring together a variety of activities and attractions under the umbrella of a unified theme.

While the River Gambia is predominantly marketed for "fishing" and "bird watching", in our study we found only few tourists interested in fishing or bird-watching activities. The results of the factor analysis and mean values of factors showed that the "heritage & nature" and "authentic rural experiences" items scored

highest among motivational dimensions mean values (Fig. 1). From this, we conclude, that the role of River Gambia for tourism activities should be shifted from fishing and bird-watching themes towards "experiencing heritage & nature" and "experiencing authentic rural Gambia", given the River Gambia's rich natural resources and cultural heritage.

Currently, only a few experiences-related tourism activities are offered by some small-scale businesses, such as The Gambia River Excursions Ltd. and Tribes Travel (Goodwin & Bah, 2006), which, for example, provide local guides for exploring natural areas around River Gambia by boat or making excursions to wildlife and nature hot spots in Jeeps. In some settings along the river, overnight stays in lodges are offered to experience the "original life" of villagers. With regard to excursions and lodges, however, providing reasonably decent accommodation seems to be the main drawback for a larger business model (Access Gambia, 2011).

Developing event-based rural tourism around "experiences" themes in The Gambia can also draw on the "learning motivation" identified in this study ("learn about myths and legends"/"local dances and languages"), predominantly allocated to the *multi-experiences & beach* as well as to the *multi-experiences* clusters. The Gambia has a rich culture of traditional myths and legends, such as bathing in sacred pools and the legendary search for the "Ninki Nanka" drake (Access Gambia, 2011). Event-based rural tourism offerings can draw on these themes by providing insight into the local culture, for example by sharing "traditional vibrant music and dances" or offering overnight stays within the villages (Goodwin & Bah, 2006).

Consequently, Gambia's rich cultural and natural heritage in rural areas sets the framework to actually implement an event-based rural tourism development. Some of the core assets of The Gambia's tourism industry, e.g. the Gambians' active involvement in rural development projects, friendliness and hospitality, and the country's rich natural and cultural heritage reflecting its different tribes, have been discussed as key determinants in rural tourism development in general (Bah & Goodwin, 2003; *Emerging Market Group*, 2005) and as strong assets for event-based rural tourism development (Job & Lutzenberger, 2009). In other words, rural Gambian communities are endowed with rich cultural and natural resources that can be used to create settings that can lead to touristic experiences through the hosting of events (Mueller et al., 2004).

An event-based rural tourism can contribute to the economic development of a country only if the earnings stay in the country and leakage rates are minimized. Presently, "the holiday package part of the tourist value chain (flights, plus bed and breakfast accommodation) largely bypasses the poor" (Mitchell & Faal, 2008, p. vii). To make new rural tourism initiatives succeed and to reduce leakages, we here suggest the development path for rural tourism activities in The Gambia to comprise of two steps of business development: the initial start-up phase and the "mature" phase of tourism business. This reflects the opinions of Lepp (2008), Simpson (2008), and Ezeuduji and Rid (2011), who recommend that new rural tourism products and services should be planned carefully and in a step-by-step fashion to avoid internal conflicts and reactions of distress.

5.2.2. Start-up rural tourism initiatives

One useful concept to reduce leakages – especially in the start-up phase of rural tourism initiatives – are Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs), with the goal of distributing benefits to a community, with the community being either directly involved in tourism management and ownership or not. "This gives governments, industry and NGOs the latitude and potential to be able to design and deliver benefits to a community without the 'baggage' that can come with community involvement in the decision-

⁸ Mueller et al. (2004) discussed the term "experience" as consciously or unconsciously perceived subjective inner feelings. "Experience" as such cannot be created by the tourism businesses; however, specific settings leading to experiences can be created, and "experience-setting" has therefore been described as providing spatially and temporally specific situations with a consciously animated atmosphere in order to provide the audience with such experiences (Mueller et al., 2004). One measure to create "experience settings" is the staging of "events". Mueller (2002) explained "event" to mean a staged, experience-oriented public function, which serves as a specific measure for marketing purposes; events can create an opportunity of imparting experiences to those involved (Mueller, 2002).

making processes” (Simpson, 2008, p. 2). While some might consider this approach less “bottom-up”, for The Gambia, CBTI might be a concept suited to successfully kick-start rural tourism development, as a major constraint for rural tourism development in The Gambia has been identified as a lack of training and proficiency on the part of the local communities. In other words, initiating community-owned new rural tourism businesses such as event-based rural tourism activities would – at least in the start-up phase – suffer from untrained staff and management.

Drawing on the CBTI concept, locals can benefit from becoming involved in rural tourism businesses by catering to the core motivations of tourists as identified in this study, such as serving as tour guides for excursions in rural areas and visiting natural and cultural sites (“heritage & nature” and “authentic rural experiences” motives), and providing events with local dances, presenting myths and legends, and teaching languages (catering to the “learning” motivation as identified in this study). In the initial phase of developing event-based rural tourism businesses, however, locals would have lower levels of ownership and control.

5.2.3. *Developing & sustaining rural tourism businesses*

After rural tourism initiatives have been successfully started up, as described in phase one of the development path suggested here, local communities can begin to take over higher levels of ownership and control in event-based rural tourism initiatives. This implies, however, that both issues of financing rural tourism initiatives and lack of training and proficiency on the part of locals are being successfully solved (Rahier, 2008, p. 4).

5.2.3.1. *Financing rural tourism initiatives.* As regards the former, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are needed to cooperate with private-sector tourism companies and to take the role of investment and equity holding in Gambian rural tourism projects, as suggested by Simpson (2008). NGOs need to pro-actively help bring commercial tourism know-how, local communities, and financing bodies together to kick-start event-based rural tourism businesses. It is the NGOs that are needed to support the application for funds, to get the tourism industry involved in creating concepts for event-based rural tourism initiatives that include the skill and workforce of local communities, and to consult governmental bodies on how to ensure long-term success. Private-sector tourism companies, such as the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) and TUI’s Environmental Unit, have increasingly shown interest in supporting local communities (Simpson, 2008, p. 9). Pressure from NGOs is needed to draw the private sector’s attention to support and invest in tourism initiatives.

There are already some initiatives in The Gambia that are helping kick-start sustainable “pro-poor tourism” (PPT) businesses, such as the British Department for International Development’s (DFID) BLCF grant (Business Linkages Challenge Fund), which supports collaboration with development agencies, sets up linkages within the private sector, and supports commercial projects. The Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism (ASSET) has been implemented to develop trade association functions for the informal sector, assisting the informal sector “to be more effective in selling products and services to the industry and the tourists” (Roe, Goodwin, & Bah, 2002, p. 3).

To successfully implement a tourism diversification strategy and develop event-based rural tourism products, these funding activities have to be expanded in order to start up and seed-fund event-based rural tourism initiatives. Goodwin recognizes this and is quoted as saying that “the Responsible Tourism Partnership will encourage the development of tourism in the rural areas and along the river and will work to create a framework within which capital can be raised for small-scale investments” (Goodwin, 2002, p. 5).

5.2.3.2. *Education & training in tourism management.* With regards to professional skills in tourism businesses as a further constraint to tourism development in The Gambia, higher levels of ownership and involvement of rural communities in rural tourism businesses are dependent on training in customer service, operational excellence, and product excellence. In the past, a few successful training schemes for promoting rural tourism services have been run by some NGOs. To successfully implement a new product of event-based rural tourism, training schemes have to be improved through close cooperation between the Gambian government, NGOs, and tour operators. Training courses should be supported and supplemented, for example with the training provided by the Gambian Hotel School (GHS). The GHS, which is under the umbrella of the Gambian government, for a long time served as the only dedicated training establishment for employees in the tourism sector in the country. Recently, some other tourism education institutions have been founded, including the International Business College and the International College of Business Administration and Human Resources Development, providing more opportunities for locals to attend schools and become accepted for training courses (Rahier, 2008, p. 5; Thompson et al., 1995, p. 557). To receive more funding for better training programmes in tourism education, parts of the levy charged to tourist arrivals in the peak season could be allocated to improve training activities (The Gambian Department of State for Tourism and Culture, 2012).

In order to improve the quality of higher education, the Gambian government has implemented a number of support structures: for instance, The Gambia developed a private-sector-led Skills Development Policy to establish the technical and vocational education and training system (TVET) in the country, leading to the National Training Authority Act in 2002 and the establishment of The National Training Authority (NTA). The NTA is responsible for awarding national vocational qualifications (NVQ), which comprises some 30 skills standards and qualifications in four priority fields, including standard qualifications in Hospitality (Customer Care, Food Hygiene and Safety) and Key Skills (Literacy, Numeracy, ICT, English Communications, Work Skills and Life Skills) (The Gambian Department of State for Education, 2011).

In the long term, however, the success of higher education programmes is dependent on the quality of basic and secondary education in the country and the number of young students. The Gambian government adopted aspiring objectives in its “National Declaration on Education”, and more particular, its “Mission Statement of the Department of State for Education” with regard to basic and secondary education. Objectives include achieving nine years of basic education for every Gambian child with at least a 50% transition rate to secondary education. Furthermore, a participatory performance monitoring (PPM) scheme was established in Gambian schools. Monitoring shows that the net enrolment rate (NER) for the lower basic schools in 2006 was as high as 100% in the Banjul and Kanifing Municipal Councils, while the more rural Kuntaur and Basse Local Government Administrative areas (LGAs) recorded the lowest NER of 49% and 40%, respectively (The Gambian Department of State for Education, 2007). Likewise, participation levels in upper basic schools vary widely across LGAs in The Gambia: the capital’s Banjul City Council recorded the highest participation (94%) level and Basse the lowest (24%). Between 1999/2000 and 2005/2006, however, enrolment in the lower basic schools (primary) increased by some 18%.

To summarize, community-based rural tourism initiatives “cannot succeed if locals do not acquire [tourism management] skills as they are essential for the running of any successful business/enterprise” (Sebele, 2010, p. 144). In The Gambia, much effort is put into improving training schemes and education of local residents from both the government and the NGOs. This reflects

Simpson's (2008, p. 7) opinion that when considering capacity building, skills transfer and education, both NGOs and governmental agencies need to cooperate to ensure the best outcome.

5.2.4. Environmental assessment & monitoring of rural tourism businesses

Rural tourism initiatives might raise environmental concern. According to Roberts and Hall (2001), in order to ensure a sustainable form of tourism growth, regions marketing themselves as tourist destinations should monitor how the regional environmental quality is put at risk by intended tourism development processes.

Environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) procedures have been formulated by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to uphold the desired environmental standards (ECA, 2005). In The Gambia, all projects in tourism development are to go through an EIA process, as laid out in Part V of the National Environment Management Act (NEMA) implemented in legislation in 1994 (The Gambia, 1994). Monitoring and upholding environmental objectives in the long-term, however, is a challenging task for any developing country. Spenceley and Meyer (2012) provide a review of research on the assessment of impacts from tourism development and conclude that one of the main issues arising is the need for new techniques and resources in measuring and monitoring tourism impacts (Spenceley & Meyer, 2012).

To ensure sufficient resources and monitor environmental standards for a rural tourism development path as laid out by means of EIA in the initial stages of a tourism development project, we recommend a cooperation of stakeholders based on four pillars: (1) monitoring by governmental bodies, e.g. by the Gambian National Environmental Agency, (2) the programmatic work of NGOs, (3) the local communities, e.g. through means of a community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), and (4) tour operators' or investors' commitment and negotiated environmental agreement (see Simpson, 2008).

(1) With regard to the first pillar of cooperation, the National Environmental Agency (NEA) set up a framework for environmental monitoring and specified a series of statistical indicators and a reporting framework for the Monitoring and Assessment (M&A) strategy of the Gambian Environmental Action Plan (GEAP). A matrix designed to structure the State of the Environment Report (SOER) was introduced. As regards visual data to evaluate environmental changes, a large collection of aerial photographs exists for The Gambia: since 1945, new aerial photographs of the entire nation have been produced at least once every decade. Satellite imagery, on the other side, is not widely used in The Gambia. For the purpose of environmental monitoring on behalf of the Gambian government, there are indeed some data resources and strategic systems already available and implemented in the Gambian legislation; however, support is needed to collect and analyze relevant data as part of a sophisticated monitoring system (United Nations Statistics Division, undated).

(2) In The Gambia, the help of NGOs are urgently needed to strengthen capacity building and provide expertise and support training initiatives, for example in terms of implementing standard workflows and instrumentation for monitoring and regular data collection that can be carried out and maintained by less-skilled workforce. Some NGOs have specialized in assisting with environmental monitoring, such as the Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG) located in Cape Town, South Africa, which has observer status with the UNFCCC and whose goals include local capacity creation of community-based organizations for managing their own environmental resources.

(3) With regard to the third pillar, community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) concepts have been developed to promote rural community participation in both rural tourism initiatives and in the conservation of natural resources (Phuthego & Chanda, 2004; Sebele, 2010). Consequently, CBNRM has been defined as a "project or activity where a community (one village or a group of villages) organize themselves in such a way that they derive benefits from the utilization of local natural resources and are actively involved in their use and conservation" (Arntzen et al., 2003, p. 12). The concept of CBNRM has been frequently criticized. However, Sebele (2010) discusses a case study in Botswana and finds that CBNRM – despite all challenges that come along with its implementation – can indeed lead to both economic and environmental benefits for rural communities (Sebele, 2010, p. 144). As of today, some 135,000 people have been involved in CBNRM programmes across the country. For example, in Botswana's Controlled Hunting Areas (CHAs), the use and protection of natural resources has devolved to community-based organizations (CBOs), one of which is the Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust (KRST) and in the centre of Sebele's study. Through interviews and focus group discussions, Sebele identifies a number of challenges for CBNRM with the KRST, the most dominant being a low sense of ownership of the project due to lack of community involvement and participation. Sebele concludes that "community-based tourism can improve the lives of rural people through the creation of employment, generating income through the renting of houses for workers at KRST and the sourcing of locally available goods and services. [...] However, if participation is minimal or non-existent, communities may not be compelled to use natural resources wisely" (Sebele, 2010, p. 144).

Many African nations, including Zimbabwe, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi, and Botswana, have adopted CBNRM strategies or policies. Given the above-mentioned advantages of the CBNRM concept and the well-known and well-researched challenges in implementing it, we recommend following the Botswana role model and implementing a community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) policy in The Gambia to help install an ecotourism model that benefits rural communities and upholds environmental standards in the long term. However, if a CBNRM is to be successful, a high degree of community participation has to be ensured.

(4) With regard to the fourth pillar of ensuring environmental monitoring, the private sector, e.g. tour operators or investors, must show an increasing interest in protecting natural resources and supporting local communities to develop a new market of rural tourism (Simpson, 2008). Spenceley and Goodwin (2007), however, found evidence from a case study in Kruger National Park that isolated efforts from individual tourism companies "have little tangible impact on the majority of people living in [...] rural communities but impacts are substantial for the few people who directly benefit" (Spenceley & Goodwin, 2007, p. 255). We conclude that a combination and cooperation of stakeholders (the "four pillars" as suggested above) is needed to bring about benefits for both economic development and environmental quality in the long run.

Marketing activities are needed to support the development path for rural tourism as suggested here. Our results show that there is indeed high (latent) demand for experiences-based rural tourism activities, especially for tourism activities focussing on "heritage & nature" as well as on "authentic rural experiences" themes. This, along with The Gambia's rich cultural and natural

heritage, can set the framework for a professional marketing strategy to promote event-based rural tourism. Again, support from experienced external institutions and organizations is urgently needed to implement such a marketing strategy. In his article “Responsible Tourism Policy for The Gambia”, Goodwin lays out such a policy while recognizing the importance of marketing: “The way in which The Gambia is marketed is a central part of the process of implementing responsible tourism principles in The Gambia [and] we seek to grow the industry by attracting market segments which value the natural and cultural heritage assets of The Gambia” (Goodwin, 2002, p. 6). In targeting tourism market segments, the suggested marketing strategy can draw upon some of our core findings, e.g. with regard to motivational dimensions of segments and its socio-demographic descriptions.

Lastly, some limitations of this study need to be mentioned. The development path for an event-based rural tourism as presented here might be criticized for leading to negative externalities. We have already discussed some issues here on how to uphold environmental quality through environmental assessment, monitoring, and a closer cooperation of stakeholders. Another issue, however, might arise from locals who received training in tourism management by getting involved in community-based rural tourism initiatives (as suggested by the development path presented here), but would leave rural areas for potentially higher-paying jobs in the urban areas along the coast during the peak season. Thus, newly established rural tourism initiatives would suffer from a reduced degree of local participation and a “brain drain” during the peak season. This argument, however, implies a series of assumptions about individual decision making by rural residents in The Gambia, e.g. mobility and willingness-to-move for jobs, and, most importantly, the assumption that rural tourism would not as much profit from peak season increase in tourism revenues compared to the tourism businesses along the coast and in the more urban areas of the country. All these issues have not yet been researched. The study presented here was conducted to find out how to improve the degree of diversification of the Gambian tourism industry and to discover new strategies for improving low tourism turnovers during the off-season. Consequently, this study sampled interviewees from the population of off-season tourists. From the results, we conclude that there is a (potential) need for rural tourism initiatives in The Gambia during the off-season; however, further empirical research has to be carried out to cover seasonal effects. Likewise,

Bosworth recommends identifying the needs of customers and trying to fulfil them as the most useful marketing concept in terms of providing long-term objectives for organizations (Bosworth, 1995), including rural tourism organizations. In this study, we researched the tourism sector in The Gambia in a general manner to identify tourism market segments with special regard to identifying potentials for rural tourism. We did not investigate the specific needs of rural tourists in The Gambia, for example with regard to type of accommodation, willingness-to-pay, or length of stay. Determination of the specific needs of rural tourists in The Gambia is regarded as an important area for future research in order to fill the knowledge gaps of the development path for an event-based rural tourism that we sketched out in this section.

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Appendix A

Following Arlinghaus and Mehner (2004b), the match of theoretical considerations, with analytical outcomes confirms to some degree the reliability (as indicating reproducibility and stability of a measure; Carson, Flores, & Meade, 2001) and the construct validity (as the degree to which the theoretical construct is being truly measured; Mitchell & Carson, 1989). Regression analyses, however, is recommended to test for reliability and construct validity of the analytical instrument (Arlinghaus & Mehner, 2004b, p. 62): if the sign of significant independent variables are those suggested by theoretical considerations, e.g. the concept of specialization (Bryan, 1977), regression analysis can be used to demonstrate construct validity. In addition, respectable correlation measures ($r^2 \geq 0.15$) from regression statistics can be interpreted as indicating high reliability (Arlinghaus & Mehner, 2004b, p. 62). In the study presented here, tourists were asked if they would like to visit rural areas of The Gambia in case they return to the country for recreation. A stepwise backward multiple linear regression was used to investigate the construct validity of the willingness to be exposed to rural Gambia (at re-visit) as the dependent variable and the sub-dimensional motives (items) as independent variables.

Table 5

Results of stepwise backward multiple linear regression of motivational sub-dimensions as independent variables on willingness to visit rural Gambia at next visit as dependent variable.^{a,b}

Independent variables	Standardized coefficient	Standard error	p-Value	Effect	
				Predicted coherence	Empirical coherence
Experience rural Gambians' way of life	0.204	0.048	0.080	Pos.	Pos.
Real culture and traditions experience	0.521	0.061	0.000	Pos.	Pos.
Myths and legends	0.208	0.038	0.047	Pos.	Pos.
Importance of Gambian history & culture	0.224	0.045	0.052	Pos.	Pos.
Local handicrafts	-0.389	0.035	0.000	?	Neg.
Visited The Gambia before	0.363	0.138	0.000	Pos.	Pos.
Model statistics	$r^2_{adj} = 0.214$; $F = 17.689$; $df = 6$ (regression); 365 (residuals); $p < 0.001$; Durban–Watson = 1.766				

^a Only significant attributes ($p < 0.1$) are shown.

^b All items included to the regression analysis were measured along a 5-point Likert-type scale: for items from the “experience” list, the scale was: 1, I strongly disagree; 2, I tend to disagree; 3, I have no opinion on this; 4, I tend to agree; 5, I strongly agree. For items from the “importance” list, the scale was: 1, not at all important; 2, not very important; 3, I have no opinion on this; 4, quite important; 5, very important.

we recommend further research to cover not only tourism demand but also behaviours of Gambians employed in the tourism industry in order to understand migration trends induced by dynamics in the tourism job market.

The multiple regression model (Table 5) shows high consistency of expected outcomes with the empirical results of the regression analysis, indicating high construct validity. Tourists who would like to be exposed to the rural countryside (at re-visit) are assumed to

have a strong wish to experience the “rural Gambians’ way of life”. The experiences of “real” traditions, history, culture, and myths and legends are also positively related to the wish to visit rural areas (at re-visit). The “local handicrafts” item, however, was negatively correlated with the dependent variable. This could be because local handicrafts are the major souvenirs sold to tourists all over the country through informal sector micro-enterprises, especially in the tourism centres along the beaches and urban areas (Job & Lutzenberger, 2009, p. 199). Accordingly, “local handicrafts” might be less associated with a visit to rural areas.

Building upon the concept of specialization, it can be expected that tourists who have specialized through repeated visits prefer more specialized forms of tourism activities (Bryan, 1977; Ditton et al., 1992). This assumption was confirmed by the regression outcomes, where the item of “visited The Gambia before” is significantly and positively related to the willingness to visit rural Gambia (at re-visit).

As regards reliability, the percentage of variance of willingness to be exposed to rural Gambia (at re-visit) explained by the independent variables was measured using r^2 , which achieved a score ($r^2_{adj} = 0.214$, see Table 5) well above the threshold of $r^2_{adj} \geq 0.15$, set for reliability measures by Arlinghaus and Mehner (2004b, p. 62) or Mitchell and Carson (1989).

Appendix B

Three discriminant functions were calculated, using discriminant analysis with the four segments identified by cluster analysis as dependent and the four motivational dimensions identified by factor analysis as independent variables.⁹

Table 6
Summary of discriminant analysis results.^a

	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3
<i>Discriminant loading</i>			
Heritage & nature	-0.492	0.934	-0.424
Authentic rural experience	-0.373	0.747	-0.068
Learning	0.370	0.644	1.004
Sun & beach	1.232	0.406	-0.492
<i>Eigenvalue</i>			
	1.054	1.025	0.446
<i>Variance explained (%)</i>			
	41.7	40.6	17.7
<i>Canonical correlation</i>			
	0.716	0.712	0.555
<i>Wilks' lambda test statistics</i>			
Wilks' lambda	0.166	0.342	0.692
Chi-square	636.845	381.378	130.848
df	12	6	2
Sign.	0.000	0.000	0.000

^a 94.4% of Original grouped cases correctly classified.

Table 6 provides standardized structure coefficients to interpret each function in the way that the structure coefficients represent the value of the relative contribution of the respective attributes to the discriminant function (see Table 6 for discriminant loadings). The statistics of the canonical correlation between the first discriminant function and all of the predictors was 0.716, between the second discriminant function and all of the predictors 0.712, and 0.555 for the correlation between the third discriminant function and the predictors.

⁹ A discriminant analysis involves deriving the linear combination of the independent variables that will discriminate best between a priori defined groups (Hair et al., 2005).

To test the statistical significance of each of the discriminant functions, a Wilks' lambda test was conducted. SPSS used chi-square statistics, which resulted in 636.85 ($df = 12$; $p < 0.001$) for the first function, 381.38 ($df = 6$; $p < 0.001$) for the second function, and 130–85 ($df = 2$; $p < 0.001$) for the third function. Thus, the derived discriminant functions are statistically significant.

In more detail, a Wilks' lambda test and F -statistics were used to analyze the statistical significance of each of the motivational dimensions included in the discriminant functions (see Table 7).

Table 7
Wilks' lambda and F -statistics on equality of group means of factors.

	Wilks-lambda	F statistic	df1	df2	Sign.
Heritage & nature	0.752	39.132	3	356	0.000
Rural experience	0.876	16.817	3	356	0.000
Sun & beach	0.622	72.088	3	356	0.000
Learning	0.445	147.884	3	356	0.000

The tests showed that all motivational dimensions and items analyzed made a statistically significant contribution to the discriminant function. In other words, all motivational dimensions and items contribute to a statistically significant separation between segments.

Overall, the derived discriminant functions could correctly classify 85.5% of the cases.¹⁰ Classification by chance is 0.25 because of four clusters identified. The discriminant function, however, classifies the cases into their corresponding groups much better (85.5%) than can be done by chance.

Table 8
Classification results.

Clusters	Predicted group membership				
	Multi-experiences & beach seekers	Multi-experiences seekers	Heritage & nature seekers	Sun & beach seekers	Total (n)
Multi-experiences & beach seekers	77.9%	11.6%	7.4%	3.2%	n = 100 (100%)
Multi-experiences seekers	7.1%	79.8%	6.1%	7.1%	n = 63 (100%)
Heritage & nature seekers	4.5%	0.9%	91.0%	3.6%	n = 150 (100%)
Sun & beach seekers	0.1%	3.6%	1.8%	94.5%	n = 47 (100%)

More specifically, among the *multi-experiences & beach seekers* (total = 100), 77.9% of the respondents were correctly classified, among the group of *multi-experiences seekers* (total = 63), 79.8% were correctly classified, among the *heritage & nature seekers* (total = 150), 91.0% were correctly classified and among the segment of *sun & beach seekers* (total = 47), 94.5% respondents were correctly classified (see Table 8).

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¹⁰ In Buehl and Zoefel (2005, p. 468), the threshold for a “good” cluster formation is given by a classification result of 75% or more of all cases correctly classified.

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