

Chinhoyi University of Technology

Annals of social and Behavioural Sciences

<https://journals.cut.ac.zw/index.php/asbsj>



## **Packaging natural springs into community hubs for wellness and spa tourism: a case of Makonde district in Zimbabwe**

**Enes Madzikatire<sup>1</sup>, Clotildah Kazembe<sup>1</sup>, Molline Mwando<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe

### **ABSTRACT**

*Natural springs in Makonde district are generally remotely located, with poor infrastructure and undervalued as assets to Wellness and Spa tourism development in Zimbabwe. The strategies for packaging these natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism has remained a gap to be exploited for development. Therefore, this study explored strategies that could be adopted to package the natural springs to optimise their appeal for Wellness and Spa tourism. The research was carried out in the Makonde district of Mashonaland West province in Zimbabwe. The study adopted an exploratory case study design. It involved four (4) sites including one hundred and fifty (150) respondents purposively and conveniently selected from the members of the host communities, traditional demand leaders, academics and officers from the tourism industry. Data was collected using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, accidental observations and it was thematically analysed. Findings unveiled strategies that could be adopted to increase the demand for Wellness and Spa tourism included infrastructure development, research and innovation, product and site marketing, community socialisation and involvement. The study concluded that the proposed strategies have the potential to transform natural springs in Makonde district into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism. Therefore, there is need to develop a model for packaging the product so as to increase the demand for Wellness and Spa activities for tourism.*

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

---

*Annals of Social and Behavioural Sciences*

Volume 4, Issue 1, 2022, <https://journals.cut.ac.zw/index.php/asbsj>

Corresponding author: Enes Madzikatire ([emadzikatire@cut.ac.zw](mailto:emadzikatire@cut.ac.zw))

© Madzikatire et al., Enes Madzikatire, Clotildah Kazembe, Molline Mwando

ISSN: 2415-0851 (Print), ISSN: 2957-742X (Online)

Natural springs are unique water bodies that have stimulated interest in diverse tourism disciplines. These natural resources have also contributed to the development of different communities including the evolution of different traditions and cultures across nations. Wellness and Spa tourism is one discipline that was born from the exploitation of springs and spring water. Guzman et al., (2011) also noted that the increase of tourists looking for new experiences from such sites, presented opportunities that required new actors to help develop natural springs into centres for Wellness and Spa tourism. However, it has taken long for countries like Zimbabwe to develop some of its communities through packaging such resources into centres for tourism. Thus, the purpose of the research was to assess strategies that could be adopted to package natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism in Zimbabwe.

For centuries, natural springs have been viewed as cultural icons in Greece and Rome among an array of countries across the globe (Smith & Puczko, 2009). Greeks were amongst the first to identify the paybacks of natural springs from as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (Smith & Puczko, *ibid*). These benefits included how spring water cured diseases and other disorders. On the other hand, Romans built bath tubs from natural springs which later developed into prominent places for recreation that have attracted many tourists to this day. These Roman bath tubs that came into existence more than 20 centuries ago received a facelift that gave them the state of the art status with diverse tourism offerings (Erfurt-Cooper, 2009). As it is, most of the natural springs are still used by people for their health and Wellness benefits (Smith and Puczko, 2015) and this has raised Spa tourism to greater heights.

Natural springs have also contributed to the evolution and growth of different traditions and cultures in diverse communities across nations. According to

Rono (2015) sacred natural sites unveil reciprocity between the environment and tradition. As such, natural springs are continuing to receive some divine connotations according them some sacred status in most countries across the globe. These natural resources are also viewed as habitats for deities and as cradles of healing through water and plants or as places to connect with the divine (Graburn, 2016). Thus, they are perceived symbolic and iconic. Che Le et al., (2011) also observed some uniqueness in natural springs that are bordered by natural vegetation or forest reserves with scenic and quiet environment that habitats an assortment of species. Che Le et al., are of the view that such sites are preferred by tourists. The team posits that some nations have converted natural springs of similar characteristics into recreational parks providing an exclusive atmosphere, a gap in development that is experienced by Zimbabwe. However, Madzikatire (2018) observed that a lot of people have little or no information about such resources and yet they are significant to propelling economic and social development.

Another observation made by LaMoreaux & Tanner (2001) also posit that Romans designed and transformed their natural springs to serve as centres for injured troopers in addition to their amusement needs. Similarly, the Greeks associated spring healing to divine interventions which resulted in worshipping spring water as deities. Thus, they built sanctuaries which signified such deities. Both hot and cold spring water served a multitude of purposes. Guzman et al. (2011) posit that the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century presented a significant growth trajectory of tourists that visited destinations with natural springs for varying reasons. However, hot and mineral springs popularly known as Spas, have attracted a significant attention among wellness seekers across the globe therefore, generating trillions of United States dollars for the tourism industry (Wellness Summit Global Spa International, 2013). A study conducted by Ogunberu in 2011, also indicates that Wellness and Spa tourism is a fast

growing phenomenon across nations. This study recognised the view that this form of tourism serves as bedrock for a variety of recreational offerings around the world. Table1 below shows how most natural springs are classified and defined.

**Table 1: Classification and definition of natural springs**

| Classification Category | Definition   |
|-------------------------|--|
| Geothermal Spring       | Are hot and extreme hot water bodies which are heated naturally while circulating through underground voids and pore spaces.   |
| Natural Hot Spring      | It is the generic term for geothermal springs with temperatures varying from the normal body temperature to above which generally recommended as pleasant bathing temperature and used for medicinal purposes and bathing. The water is naturally discharging from the subsurface. |
| Thermal Spring          | The water body which usually discharges warm and hot water which is generally above 25 <sup>0</sup> C. The water may be artificially heated and used for medicinal purposes & bathing in man-made Spas.  |
| Mineral Spring          | It is a water body that discharges either cold, warm, hot, extremely hot or artificially heated water which can be used for medicinal purposes and bathing   |
| Artesian Spring         | Comprise of naturally discharging water from the subsurface which will be warm to hot ranging from 25 <sup>0</sup> to 100 <sup>0</sup> C and used for medicinal purposes.  |
| Saline Spring           | A water body consisting of various temperatures with very high mineral salt content. It is in the form of seawater or with characteristics of seawater when used in man-made Spas. It is used for medicinal purposes and curative bathing.   |
| Geyser                  | Extremely hot spring -water reaches a boiling point and above used as a visual tourist attraction in geo tourism.  |
| Submarine Hot Spring    | Submarine vents are known as black smokers that emit extreme hot water enriched with mineral and metallic trace elements with the same characteristics as mineral hot springs.   |

Source: Erfurt-Cooper and Cooper (2009)

While natural springs are low hanging opportunities for Wellness and Spa tourism development, the absence of strategies for packaging of such resources into community centres for tourism has been a limitation to Spa tourism development in Zimbabwe. This observation concurs with a study by Boekstein in 2011, which notes that Zimbabwe has a multitude of natural springs yet it has the least developed springs. Meanwhile, natural springs have remained a cornerstone for Health and Wellness related activities around the globe from time immemorial (Ramos & Untong, 2016). Another study by Madzikatire in 2018, revealed that the exploitation of natural springs contributes to individuals' psychosocial and economic development. Moyo and Tichaawa (2017) are of the view that if any form of tourism has to be sustainable in any given society, it requires communities to be empowered so that they participate in related activities. Therefore, failure to identify effective strategies for packaging the available natural springs into community hubs for wellness and Spa tourism will leave host communities in the country economically strained and underdeveloped despite having these income generating resources at their disposal. Thus, the main objective of this study was to assess strategies that could be adopted to package natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism in Zimbabwe. In order to achieve the intended outcome, researchers commenced the study by establishing the state of natural springs in the Makonde district of Mashonaland West province. The team then explored activities that could be included for the development Spa tourism within host communities. Finally, the researcher assessed strategies that could be adopted to package natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism. The next section below gives an overview of how the research was carried out.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a qualitative stance. This is because in qualitative studies, researchers collect data from the respondents within their natural setting so as to derive meaning from how they view their surroundings. Such a methodological approach, allows researchers to gather rich case materials helps to view the life world using the respondents' lens.

### **Research design**

This qualitative study was interpretive in nature where an exploratory case study design was employed to assess strategies to package natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism. Having learnt that Zimbabwe has a host of underexplored and underexploited natural springs, the researchers purposively sampled a total of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents. The sample was determined by the level of data saturation. Three (3) communities with natural springs were involved to obtain quality data than the quantity of the units involved (Wahyuni, 2012 and Yuksel &Yildirim, 2015). The use of more than one community was meant to allow transferability of the initiative to other districts that share similar characteristics with sampled sites.

### **Ethical considerations and gaining access**

Procedures for gaining access were adhered to while ethical issues to do with data collection were followed. The researchers made sure that they kept the respondents' names anonymous. Consent was also sought from the respondents before engaging them in interviews and in focus group discussions. Researchers got clearance to proceed with the study from Chinhoyi University of Technology. Caution was taken to avoid violating the rights of the respondents. In addition, all respondents were not forced to take part in the study. Permission to gain access into communities was sought from the village leaders, headmen and chiefs. Permission to carry out the study was also sought from authorities in

the Makonde District through the District Administrators Office. The researchers made sure that they did not force respondents to take part in the study. Respondents were fully assured that the information that they provided remained strictly private and confidential.

### **Sampling**

The study adopted non probability sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select the study sites within Makonde district. The same sampling strategy was also used to select respondents for in-depth interviews while participants for focus groups were conveniently sampled. The criteria for sampling were based on the demographic and behavioural characteristics of the respondents and participants. The sampling design used managed to identify four (4) study sites, one hundred and thirty (130) respondents from the host communities and twenty (20) key informant who were believed to give expert opinions on the strategies that could be adopted for packaging the available natural spring into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism.

### **Data collection**

Initial observations were conducted to establish the state of the natural springs. Notes on issues of interest were captured. These included the nature, the size and the location and its accessibility. Researchers employed accidental observations to capture the potential for developing the springs' surroundings into a tourism centre or attraction within the district. In-depth interviews were conducted with members from the host communities, academics from Chinhoyi University of Technology and officers from the tourism industry. The interviews lasted between a minimum of one (1) hour to a maximum of two and a half (2 ½) hours with twenty (20) key informants. The interview guide used

comprised open ended questions. Data from the interview sessions were audio recorded and transcribed.

Data were also collected through eight (8) focus group discussions with one hundred and thirty (130) host community members at Dichwe (Village 2), Kaswa and Inyati farms in the same district. The researchers took advantage of the community gatherings and meetings as means to conduct the focus group discussions. The total number of groups engaged was determined by data saturation level. The demographic profile of the focus group discussion participants is indicated in Table 3.

### **Respondents' Profile**

The majority, seventy-seven percent (77%) were female and eighty-seven (87%) of these respondents depended on subsistence farming. Traditional leaders constituted two percent (2%), academics eight percent (8%) while officers from the tourism industry (EMA, ZTA, ZIMParks and the Zimbabwe Culture and Arts Council for Mashonaland West province) three percent (3%). About twenty percent (20%) were aged between twenty and twenty-nine years, forty-five percent (45%) were between thirty and forty years while the rest were aged fifty years and above.

Four (4) weeks were utilised for data collection. Each group comprised fifteen (15) to eighteen (18) units per session. However, the variations in the number of participants was due to the number of people who had attended a gathering at any given time. Three focus group sessions were organised. Each session was allocated a maximum duration of three and half ( $3\frac{1}{2}$ ) hours. The triangulation of data collection methods, study sites and respondents strengthened the validity and the reliability of the findings.



Data collected were transcribed and cleaned before the analysis. Data files were managed and also coded with the help of NVivo 12 Pro which is a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software. The analysis was augmented by qualitative data analysis tips from Braun and Clarke (2014). Themes derived from the analysis were categorised into major and sub themes.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The study sought to assess strategies that could be adopted to package natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism in Makonde. Before presenting actual findings on the strategies it is imperative to shed light on the state of natural springs first.

### **The state of natural springs in Makonde District**

Observations about the state of the natural springs in Makonde were categorised into a sub theme that focused on the included location and nature of the natural springs in Makonde district.

#### **A pristine state**

Initial observations revealed that natural springs in Makonde district are still in their natural state with very limited interference from human activities. The springs are remotely located and are situated in places that are not easily accessible. However, the resources are within a walking distance from the places of residence. When asked why the springs are secluded, the majority of the respondents indicated that these springs are still revered. An interesting response was given by one of the elders who said,

*It is by God's design that the springs are located where they are and they are habited by our ancestral spirits. This is also the reason why we have our homestead away from them so that we do not contaminate*

*them. They are a heritage from our ancestors and we have to keep them safe from destruction.*

The views of the majority of the host community members are in line with Graburn (2016)'s observations that such places are viewed as dwelling places for ancestral spirits who have the divine power to heal through spring water and plants. Indeed, natural springs were and are still regarded as homes for deities and are believed to link people in the host communities with their ancestors. While the springs are viewed as remotely located, they served as an attraction to some of the members from host communities who were seen in the vicinity. However, the majority of the respondents who took part in the focus group discussions were concerned about the state of the springs in the district. The respondents said that it is difficult for outsiders to appreciate the springs or visit them if their communities remain in the state in which they are. They indicated that visitors expect certain things in order to make them enjoy their visits in the area and to the springs.

Another observation revealed that all the springs that were involved in this study were in areas that are generally underdeveloped with a poor infrastructure. While the springs were accessible through the use of dust roads, findings revealed that there was a myriad of other challenges to get to the spring without getting lost. There were poor road networks, unreliable means of transport and no signage to the springs. The highlighted concerns were also cited by most respondents during the interview and group discussion sessions. These findings support the observations by Boekstein (2011) who concluded that Zimbabwe has the least developed springs in Africa. Thus, these findings support the researchers' assumptions that there is a gap in development in communities that house natural springs in the country.

Observations indicated that about all of the springs sampled for the study were in their natural state and not tempered with in terms of site face uplifting. However, web like patterns of foot paths showing movements to or from the water source were noted. The springs discharged water from underground. Observations revealed that the discharged water collected in naturally formed pools while the excess flowed adrift watering the vegetation around. It was also noted that the springs were surrounded by shrubs, bushes, trees and grasses of different types. An elder who was found at one of the springs said that a forest with indigenous fruit trees that grew around the spring was called 'Gute'. The respondent said that the name is given to fruit forests found where there is a sacred water body at its heart.

The majority of the respondents who were interviewed revealed that the available springs discharged cold water while a few produced warm to hot water. They were of the view that most of the cold springs are still vibrant and still perceived sacred.

One of the female host community members at Dichwe said,

*It is taboo to say negative things while you are around the spring. We treat them with respect and they are sacred. There are some elders that perform certain rituals in times of need at the spring and as instructed by traditional leaders and spirit mediums. This is done if there is a problem affecting the whole community.*

These findings are synchronous with Graburn,(2016) who observed that natural sites are given divine status. Thus, natural springs are also valued as cultural icons by residents in Makonde an observation that was also made by Smith & Puczko,(2009) concerning the natural springs in Greece.

### **Activities for Wellness and Spa tourism development**

The study established an assortment of activities around the natural springs that

could be used as stimulants for Wellness and Spa tourism. Some of the activities were cited by respondents during the focus group discussions and interviews while others were noted by the researchers during the site observations. The following sub themes were derived from the cited and observed activities: leisure and religious activities.

### **Leisure activities**

Findings revealed that people visited the spring sites to while up time during weekend and holidays. The majority of the respondents indicated that the vegetation around the springs presented scenic views that provided convenient backgrounds for photo shooting. However, the community elders lamented that it was taboo to engage in sexual activities at the site. Some respondents cited bird and butterfly watching as activities that drew people to the springs. A few of the respondents interviewed revealed that there are some rare species that are found at such places that include fish, frogs, crabs, birds, butterflies and small wild animals. A young lady from Kaswa said,

*Zimbabwe is blessed to have such resources. Visiting them freshens up your mind because there is a lot to see and the water from the spring can keep you entertained. The water from the springs is actually a precious gift that can serve a myriad of purposes. As for me, I use the bushes surrounding our spring as a hide-out and I enjoy that because I will only have birds singing into my ears.*

These findings reveal that the springs are also used as recreational facilities. Researchers also spotted some people by the springs. Some young men were sited under trees watching their cattle grazing while others were just loitering.

A fisherman that participated in one of the focus group discussions said,

*We also receive people that visit only to fish from one of the pools near Mutemarongo springs. Mutemarongo was adopted as an iconic name for our chiefs and traditional leaders...Those who visit for herb*

*searching end up fishing because there are fish worms around. Others also swim in the pool. Some fish for enjoyment but others do it to feed their families. Some of us wish to have gardens nearby with a much tighter security or something like a fence.*

This is an indication that natural springs provide visitors with varied experiences which present opportunities that require new actors to help develop them into centres for wellness and Spa tourism as noted by Guzman et al. in 2011. In addition, the researchers observed that the springs were surrounded by a thicket of flora of different heights which host community members viewed as giving the area a being conducive environment for recreation. Che Le et al. (2011) also noted that such fauna and flora gave natural springs some unique characteristics that are instrumental in stimulating tourism. Thus, the flora around the springs in Makonde district provided an aesthetic environment also conducive for Wellness activities.

The majority of the respondents from the tourism industry that were interviewed also revealed that an assortment of activities can be included if this form of tourism was to be a niche for host communities, the tourism industry and the country at large. One of the interesting responses that was given by a tourism guru was that the packaging of natural springs would only work when all the surroundings were taken into consideration. The officer said that the utilisation of the physical features such as mountains and kopjes surrounding some of the host communities and spring sites would offer opportunities for rock climbing, hiking, animal and scenery viewing. Another ZIMParks officer said that the surroundings could be transformed into Eco parks, while another officer from ZTA indicated that a centre to provide visitors with information about the springs will go a long way to market such places. These findings support the views by Che Le et al., who observed that some nations have converted natural springs of similar characteristics into recreational parks providing an exclusive atmosphere favoured by tourists.

An academic from Chinhoyi University of technology also suggested that the ponds can be utilised for fish and crocodile farming, gardening projects for flowers and herbs around the spring. However, the traditional leaders were of the view that all these projects were only going to succeed if the help of their ancestors who needed to be consulted and involved in the entire process. The traditional leaders' views revealed that they also worshipped springs as deities as did the Greeks and Romans as indicated in Guzman et al, (2011)

### **Religious Activities**

The majority of respondents interviewed from the host communities viewed the natural springs as sacred and survived with the help of traditional ceremonies conducted by traditional leaders. Some revealed that traditional elders gathered at the springs for certain rituals while others indicated that only the esteemed traditional elders had the authority to perform rituals at the springs when the community was in crisis or when something good had happened. The findings revealed that most of the traditional ceremonies were accompanied by traditional dances and songs. These findings are in tandem with Guzman et al, (2011) that some nations built sanctuaries for the deities.

Other religious activities mentioned by the respondents from all the host communities included herb searching around the springs by members of the community. One elderly woman said that oral tradition has it that springs are surrounded by plants that take care of different ailments. Her views were also supported by a traditional elder from Inyati farm who revealed that most plants that grow near the springs actually constitute herb gardens. Other respondents were of the view that forest trees around the springs produced healthy indigenous fruits that are usually gathered by women and children. One of the councillors who was also an elder in Ditchwe said that people come from different places to gather fruits but those that cut down trees are arrested.

Another interesting religious activity gleaned from the study was curative bathing. The majority of the respondents indicated that spring water has been used by people to heal different diseases. Some members of the Apostolic church that participated in the study revealed that they collected the water from the springs and used it for healing and for solving different problems faced by people. Other members revealed that young boys and girls swim in the pools which keep their bodies strong.

The interviewed tourism officials and academics also revealed that the water served different purposes that help to improve skin condition and also treat certain disorders when taken. However, one academic said that most people do not know how to use the water for such therapies. An official from the tourism industry also said that there was need to test the water to determine its quality in order to safely package it. These findings reveal that springs in the district can be packaged for Wellness and Spa tourism. Thus activities identified in the district indicate potential for embracing it and lifting it to greater heights. The section below discusses the proposed strategies for packaging natural spring into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism.

### **PROPOSED STRATEGIES**

After establishing the state of the natural springs and exploring the activities that were viewed as stimulants for Wellness and Spa tourism, the study assessed strategies that could be adopted to increase the demand for Wellness and Spa activities leading to the transformation of Makonde into a hub for Wellness and Spa tourism.

Responses from the academics, traditional leaders and officers from the tourism industry who were interviewed on the basis of their expertise, identified community involvement; infrastructure development; site marketing; product

awareness and innovation as strategies that could help to package natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism.

### **Community socialisation and involvement**

About all members of the host communities that participated in the study were of the opinion that the packaging of natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism was possible only when affected stakeholders are consulted and involved in decisions made at different level. This view was explicitly expressed by one of the traditional leaders who said,

*To be honest with you, if the custodians of the tradition are left out, nothing good will come out of it. All residents in the concerned wards, their village leaders and headmen including spirit mediums and other elders should be consulted before embarking on any projects. I believe they can help with one or two sensible ideas. Projects have failed to kick-off or grow due to leaving out people who are affected positively or negatively by any projects. I think we all know what is good for us.*

Academics and tourism officers that participated in the study concurred that stakeholder consultation and involvement was key if packaging of natural springs into community hubs for Wellness tourism was to succeed. Moyo and Tichaawa (2017) posit that communities should be involved and participate at all the critical stages of tourism including planning and decision making, implementation as well as benefits sharing. These finding concur with the Freeman's (1984) Stakeholder Theory, which posits that all stakeholders should be regarded important and that their consent should be sought if any project should succeed.

### **Infrastructure development**

Through observations and discussions, researchers established a great potential for harnessing the existing activities at the natural springs for Wellness and Spa tourism if the infrastructure was improved. Observations by the researchers



revealed that the existing natural springs were not easily accessible. Poor communication networks were identified as an impediment to packaging natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism.

While a few of the respondents indicated that there was need to protect the springs, most of them had the view that the environment is very important since it prescribes the what, where and how of the infrastructure. According to respondents, infrastructure development requires the consideration of certain environmental dynamics which include the natural, the built and the business environment. These views were captured in an excerpt from a tourism academic who said,

*Good roads and communication lines are important for tourism development. Tourists visiting these natural springs require accommodation and food outlets. They also need internet facilities which mean that digitalization should also be considered. Meanwhile, such improvements may also lead to the destruction of flora and fauna and land degradation if caution is not taken during the construction.*

Different views were also obtained from other respondents. About forty percent (40%) of the members from the host communities were concerned about the preservation of the traditional state of the natural springs including keeping them in their sacred state. Another respondent from Tourism who supported infrastructure development at and around natural springs said,

*I want to believe that infrastructure development is important in transforming natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism. However, there is need for a buy in from the residents. If host communities are consulted, they suggest brilliant projects. I see these natural springs transforming into recreation and amusement parks, traditional food production entities, therapeutic service providers as well as wellness facilities. Such infrastructure development can help the tourism industry to generate revenue from the increased volumes of visitors.*

From these responses, it can be argued that infrastructure development can help in packaging natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism in Zimbabwe. Indeed, the state of the natural springs in Makonde is an indication that a lot has to be done in terms of developing the Wellness and Spa tourism in Zimbabwe. This observation supports what Boekstein (2011) noted when he said there are very few springs that are well developed specifically in Zimbabwe.

### **Education and Training**

Responses revealed that there were few individuals who are knowledgeable about Wellness and Spa tourism in Zimbabwe. As such, about all the respondents indicated that education and training was necessary if packaging natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and spa tourism was to be a success story for Makonde. Some respondents from the host communities indicated that they lacked expertise in starting projects let alone how to market their springs and related offerings. Others were of the view that education and training would equip them with the essential knowledge to receive tourists and guide them accordingly. Therefore, they suggested that awareness campaigns and workshops would improve their skills.

On the contrary, some academics argued that awareness campaigns are short lived and rather demanding. A female academic with a similar view said,

*Schooling is a better option than awareness campaigns. There should be programmes that are tailor-made to assist host communities appreciate this form of tourism so that they could run their own projects using the resources that are available in their communities.*

From the respondents' views, education was critically important for transfer. The responses suggest that knowledge and skills impartation is instrumental in coming up with strategies for packaging natural springs into centres for

developing Wellness and Spa tourism. The responses provided suggest that the knowledge and skills impartation are instrumental in optimising Wellness and Spa tourism. The findings support the observations by Madzikatire (2018) that a lot of people have little or no information about such resources and yet they hold the keys for propelling economic and social development.

Responses from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations indicate that some natural springs in Makonde district have the potential to be transformed into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism if effective strategies are identified. While infrastructural challenges and other related problems were noted, a community such as Dichwe in ward 2 was identified as having better opportunities to be used as a starting point for such an initiative.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study established strategies that could be adopted to package natural springs into community hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism. From the existing state of the natural springs, the activities identified and the strategies proposed, it can be concluded that Makonde district's natural springs have a potential to be packaged in a manner that increases the demand for Wellness and Spa tourism, which could also help to transform host communities into hubs for Wellness and Spa tourism. However, it is recommended that there is need to develop a model for packaging the product as well as to test it for feasibility.

## **REFERENCES**

Boekstein, M. (2011). Revitalising the healing tradition-health tourism potential of thermal springs in Western Cape. Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

- Boekstein, M. S., & Spencer, J. (2013). International trends in health tourism: Implications for thermal spring tourism in the Western Cape Province of South Africa: tourism and hospitality. *African Journal for Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, 19(2), 287-298.
- Boekstein, M. (2014). Healing waters: balneological classification of thermal springs in South Africa: tourism. *African Journal for Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, 20(Issue-21), 557-568.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2014). What can “thematic analysis” offer health and wellbeing researchers? *International journal of qualitative studies on health and well-being*, 9.
- Che Leh, F., Nayan, N. & Baharom, A.A. (2011). Hot springs for health tourism destination in Perak, Malaysia. *Elixir Tour. Management*.
- Erfurt-Cooper, P., & Cooper, M. (2009). *Health and wellness tourism: Spas and hot springs*: Channel View Publications.
- Global Spa and Wellness Summit International, (2013). <https://www.globalwellnesssummit.com/industry-resource/research/>
- Graburn, N (2016). The Past and the Present in Japan: Nostalgia and Neo-Traditionalism in Contemporary Japanese Domestic Tourism. In R. Butler and D. Pearce, *Change in Tourism: People, Places and Processes* (pp. 47-70), Routledge, London.
- Guzman, L.T., Sanchez, S. and Pavon, V. (2011). Community-based tourism in developing countries: A case study. *Journal of tourism*. (69-84).

- LaMoreaux, P.E and Tanner, J.T. (2001) Eds. Springs and Bottled waters of the World: Ancient History, Source, Occurrence, Quality and Use. New York, Springer-Verlag ISBN 10:9783540618416
- Kazandzhieva, V. (2014, October). Trends in the development of spa and wellness tourism. In International Tourism Forum “Spa and Wine (pp. 1-8).
- Koncul, N. (2012). Wellness: A new mode of tourism. Economic research-Ekonomska istraživanja, 25(2), 525-534.
- Madzikatire, E. (2018). The contribution of the Spa technology consumption to one’s psychosocial and economic development in Zimbabwe. Doctor of Philosophy-Thesis. Chinhoyi University of Technology.
- Moyo, S. & Tichaawa, T., M. (2017). Community involvement and participation in tourism development: A Zimbabwe African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 6(1):1-15.
- Ogunberu, A. F. (2011). Socio-economic impact of tourism development in Nigeria: Case study of tourist attractions along the coastline of Lagos. (Degree- thesis Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences) Lagos, Nigeria.
- Okech, R. N. (2014). Promoting the spa tourism industry: Focus on coastal resorts in Kenya. Athens Journal of Tourism. (pp.67-77).
- Ramos, V., & Untong, A. (2016). Spa tourism Encyclopedia of Tourism (pp. 886-888): Springer

- Rono, C. F. (2015). Influence of Participatory Development on Sustainability of Spring Protection Projects In Bomet Central Sub-County, Kenya. Master's thesis, University of Nairobi.
- Smith, M. K., & Puczko, L. (2015). Health and Wellness Tourism: Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.
- Silverman, D. (2011). *Interpreting qualitative data: A guide to the principles of qualitative research*: SAGE Publications Limited.
- Thammajinda, R. (2013). Community participation and social capital in tourism planning and management in a Thai context (Doctoral dissertation, Lincoln University).
- Yuksel, P. & Yildirim, S. (2015) Theoretical Frameworks, Methods and Procedures for Conducting Phenomenological Studies in Educational Setting, Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry 6 (1) pg 1-20