

## PROVIDER VALUE PERCEPTION IN CO-CREATION, ECOTOURISM OFFERING DEVELOPMENT AND CLASSIFICATION AT DUNGA BEACH IN KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA

This study aimed at exploring how providers perceive and create value for themselves in experiential value co-creation, in tourism new offerings development and how their perceptions of intrinsic offering attributes can be used in a timeless classification of tourism offerings. Specifically, the study sought to 1) assess if providers co-create value for themselves in experiential value co-creation and to establish the significance of this value, 2) assess how providers integrate environmental and biodiversity sustainability in their new offerings development and 3) explore how providers' value perceptions could be used to ideographically classify tourism offerings. The study was largely exploratory in design and cross-sectional in nature. Experiential value co-creation was theoretically guided by the Service-Dominant Logic, Ecological Value Perception by Product Lifecycle Assessment, and offering classification by Cross-Perspective Classification Approach. Data on experiential value co-creation was collected by interviewing six kayaking tour guides and analysed through content analysis. Findings reveal that providers in value co-creation do experience fun, gain skills and derive physical fitness from their activities. The fun they enjoy contributes to their job satisfaction. By means of a case study of Dunga Ecotourism and Environmental Youth Group (*DECTA*), data on providers' ecological value perceptions (environmental and biodiversity conservation) in new offerings development and classification were collected through group discussions and observation. Classification of tourism offerings was based on intrinsic nature attributes, means of consumption and resultant experiential values. Data on ecological value perceptions were analysed by means of Kruskal-Wallis test and critical analysis against waste management hierarchy while that on offering classification was analyzed by Two Step Cluster Analysis. Results on ecological value perception show that environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation are significant screening factors for tourism new offering concepts before development. Strategies used to achieve environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation included non-consumptive use of wildlife, awareness creation, harvesting of predators and invasive species, reuse and recycling of wastes. Strategies of biodiversity conservation were proactive while those on pollution control reactive and largely not sustainable. Findings on tourism offerings classification demonstrate that intrinsic nature attributes, means of consumption and resultant experiential values each on its own were not able to distinctively classify all tourism offerings. However, when combined, they have potential to offer a timeless classification typology; a typology that can enable researchers to speak in one language concerning the nature of tourism offerings. This study concludes that 1) providers co-create value for themselves in accordance with the Service-Dominant Logic, 2) provider skills and tourist cooperation are the two most important factors affecting the value co-creation process, 3) environmental and biodiversity conservation are significant factors in the screening of new service concepts, 4) providers' waste management strategies at DECTA are rather reactive than proactive, and 5) all intrinsic nature attributes, consumption means and resultant experiential values except smelling and olfactory value are important in characterizing and classifying tourism offerings for an understanding of their natures. This study recommends that 1) providers train and acquire coping skills for quality experiential value co-creation, 2) the prerequisites model for offerings development be improved to include environmental and biodiversity conservation as screening factors for new service concepts, 3) providers integrate proactive waste management strategies in their product life-cycles for sustainable environments, 4) tourism providers

systematize the ecological values screening model proposed in this study in screening their service concepts to ensure environmental and biodiversity conservation, and 5) researchers utilize intrinsic offering attributes for the classification of tourism offerings based on their natures.