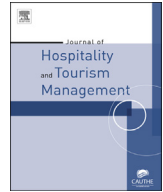


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Disaster collaboration in tourism: Motives, impediments and success factors

Yawei Jiang^{*}, Brent W. Ritchie

UQ Business School, The University of Queensland (St Lucia Campus), Brisbane, Queensland, 4072, Australia

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry is vulnerable to disasters due to its heavy dependence on natural resources. Despite growing studies on tourism disaster management, little research has been conducted from a stakeholder collaboration perspective, yet effective collaboration can improve recovery outcomes. This paper integrates stakeholder collaboration literature with a tourism disaster context – tourism threats from Cyclone Marcia in Queensland, Australia. This paper contributes to this gap by investigating (1) stakeholder's motivations for collaborative disaster management, (2) factors that facilitate or impede stakeholder collaboration-building, (3) successful elements and challenges for effective collaboration. Findings are drawn from in-depth interviews with key stakeholders that were directly involved in tourism disaster management. Motivations for collaboration-building are found to be resource and relationship related. Past experience and relationships can influence the development of collaboration after a disaster. Consistent communication and trust are two key elements of effective collaboration, while competing demands and poor relationships are key barriers. Findings from this research can help better understand stakeholder collaboration in tourism disaster management. Governments and tourism destinations can use these findings to develop interventions to improve effective tourism disaster management. Future research avenues based on the findings and a model are also outlined.

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1. Introduction

The physical world we live in is subject to the inevitable threat of natural disasters (Brown, 1989). United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) (2015) has reported that the accumulated economic damage caused by disasters has amounted to \$1.4 trillion from 2005 to 2014, and the number of people affected was nearly 1.7 billion. A disaster is defined as 'a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community/society to cope using its own resources' (UNISDR, 2009, p. 13). Both government and the tourism industry find it extremely difficult to cope with disasters (Laws & Prideaux, 2005) as they are hard to predict and usually bring severe negative effects (Evans & Elphick, 2005). In response to disasters, effective inter-agency collaboration is vital to the tourism response and recovery, which requires continuous

efforts focusing on the maintenance and development of collaborative relationships (Orchiston & Higham, 2016). As the tourism industry is a complex mix of numerous stakeholders, a strong collaborative network and concerted efforts can help mitigate the negative effects in disasters (Racherla & Hu, 2009).

The tourism industry has become the world's preeminent industry. In 2015, it contributed US\$7.2 trillion to the global GDP (9.8%), and generated 284 million jobs in the world (1 in 11 jobs on the planet) (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016). For many countries in the world, tourism has become the main source of income (Carlsen & Hughes, 2008). However, the tourism industry is more vulnerable to the prevalence of disasters than other industries (Henderson, 2002; Laws, Faulkner, & Moscardo, 1998) due to its fragile and perishable products and complex network (Evans, Campbell, & Stonehouse, 2003; Laws & Prideaux, 2005; Pottorff & Neal, 1994; Richter, 1999). Natural and cultural resources are usually viewed as the main tourist product and experience, and the severe damage of which after disasters can affect tourism demand leading to a downturn in the economy. The recent Nepal Earthquake is an example where hundreds of historical and cultural monuments (including 7 World Heritage sites) were destroyed or

^{*} Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: yawei.jiang@uq.net.au (Y. Jiang), b.ritchie@uq.edu.au (B.W. Ritchie).

extensively damaged by landslides triggered by the earthquakes. This resulted in 90% drop in foreign arrivals immediately after the disaster (Government of Nepal, 2015). Furthermore, the tourism industry relies on interrelated and interdependent individual businesses such as restaurants, transportation entities, accommodation, and attractions (Evans et al., 2003; Pottorff & Neal, 1994). Linkages and interdependencies amongst multiple stakeholders, who may have divergent views and values, have resulted in a complex and dynamic environment for the tourism industry (Jamal & Stronza, 2009; Laws & Prideaux, 2005). Therefore cross-sector stakeholder collaboration is important for managing extreme events (Waugh & Streib, 2006) especially when dealing with natural disasters that affect tourism industries (Coombes, 1999; Faulkner, 2001; Ritchie, 2004; Xu & Grunewald, 2009).

Stakeholders are defined as those individuals, groups, or organizations with an interest in a common problem or issue (Gray, 1989), who can affect or be affected directly by the actions that others take to achieve objectives or to solve problems (Freeman, 1984; Gray, 1989). Collaboration is described as a process of joint decision-making amongst key stakeholders of a problem domain (Gray, 1989) that incorporates the diverse views of multiple and interdependent stakeholders (Jamal & Getz, 1995). The main goals of stakeholder collaboration are to achieve common interests and benefits as well as to solve problems and issues. Jamal and Stronza (2009) noted a wide range of issues and problems that collaboration can attempt to solve in the context of tourism management. However, although stakeholder collaboration has been widely recognized as one of the important elements in effective tourism disaster management (Coombes, 1999; Faulkner, 2001; Pennington-Gray, Cahyanto, Schroeder, & Kesper, 2014; Ritchie, 2004; Xu & Grunewald, 2009), the application of stakeholder collaboration theories and concepts are still limited in tourism disaster management. Because of the urgent and unpredictable nature of disasters, application of stakeholder collaboration theories needs to be examined in this context. A deeper understanding of how tourism stakeholders collaborate in disaster management and how to improve effective collaboration is required. Such an understanding can assist the tourism industry to achieve better recovery outcomes and help restore tourism destinations faster.

The aim of this paper is to investigate stakeholder collaboration-building and its influence on effective tourism disaster management. To the best of our knowledge, empirical research on this topic is lacking in tourism and this is the first detailed study to have examined tourism stakeholder motivations, impediments and the factors that influence successful collaboration in a tourism disaster setting. Due to the lack of empirical research, this study is a qualitative study that collects in-depth information from a case study of Cyclone Marcia in Queensland, Australia. Since Queensland has a long history of natural disaster management and has developed a collaborative disaster management framework with a comprehensive approach (Crawford, Langston, & Bajracharya, 2013), the insights from this case study are likely to be useful for other countries and tourism destinations.

2. Literature review

2.1. Stakeholder collaboration and tourism disaster management

Stakeholder involvement has been a major requirement for effective and efficient risk governance (Renn, 2015). Stakeholder collaboration is also studied as 'Collaborative Governance' (Ansell & Gash, 2008), 'Cross-sector Collaboration' (Simo & Bies, 2007), and 'Collaborative Partnership' (Selin & Chavez, 1995) in the field of public administration and general management. These collaboration models usually indicate clear collaboration stages, such as (i)

stage of collaboration establishment, (ii) stage of collaborative process, and (iii) stage of outcomes and reflection (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Selin & Chavez, 1995; Simo & Bies, 2007). In the collaboration building stage, elements in building collaborative relationship amongst stakeholders are highlighted, such as starting conditions, institutional design, direct antecedents, and event environment (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Simo & Bies, 2007). In the collaborative process stage, other models focus on steps in operating collaboration (Gray, 1989; Selin & Chavez, 1995), key actions in collaboration process (Simo & Bies, 2007), and the significant role of collaborative communication (Pennington-Gray et al., 2014; Renn, 2015).

The majority of studies on stakeholder collaboration in tourism disaster management were conducted in the 1990s. After the 21st century, most studies highlighted the recovery strategies for a single tourism business/organization or a single destination, rather than establishing regional collaboration for disaster management. In addition, most stakeholder collaboration studies in tourism field focus on sustainable tourism development and community-based tourism planning in normal conditions (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Graci, 2013; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Waayers, Lee, & Newsome, 2012) instead of extreme events management such as disasters. Although some tourism researchers have studied collaborative disaster management in tourism (Hystad & Keller, 2008; Pennington-Gray et al., 2014), the adoption of stakeholder collaboration concepts is lacking. Scarpino and Gretzel (2014) highlighted the importance of numerous groups working together to overcome obstacles during crises/disasters by discussing the critical resources and external stakeholder relations, but empirical study is still lacking. This is somewhat surprising considering the importance of stakeholder collaboration for effective tourism disaster recovery.

2.2. Motivations for stakeholder collaboration

In tourism disaster management, Fyall, Garrod, and Wang (2012) classified several theoretical perspectives to help understand collaboration within and between destinations. Three types of theories are identified as foundations and motivations for stakeholder collaboration, namely (i) resource-based theory, (ii) relationship-based theory, and (iii) politics-based theory. Based on the classification and further explanation by Pennington-Gray, Cahyanto, et al. (2014), the following paragraphs will discuss these theories that help understand collaboration in tourism disaster management.

Resource-based theory focuses on the use of available resources to form collaborative efforts with other entities (Pennington-Gray et al., 2014). It realizes the limitation of resources and the need to gain resources through collaboration, which provides a rationalization for the mutual-trust collaboration (Fyall, Oakley, & Weiss, 2000). Cioccio and Michael (2007) argued that sharing knowledge/information and gaining funding support from government are needed for community collaboration in the after-math of a disaster. Resource-sharing is considered as the foundation of stakeholder collaboration (Nyaga, Whipple, & Lynch, 2010; Sowa, 2009; Zhang, Yu, & Liu, 2008) which is applicable for tourism disaster management. Because tourism businesses are usually small businesses with more uncertain resource bases, being without resources becomes more severe after a natural disaster as businesses suffer from the loss of tourism assets and income (Beeton, 2001). These tourism businesses could have cash flow problems and are more motivated to collaborate to gain resource from others. These shared resources not only include tangible assets such as financial support (Sharpley & Craven, 2001) and collaborative capital (Healey, 1996), but also include intangible assets, such as information, knowledge and capabilities (Nyaga et al., 2010).

Relationship-based theory is propelled by the

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