IDENTIFYING KEY ISSUES IN HERITAGE ORGANISATION BEHAVIOUR TO FACILITATE SUSTAINED MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY FROM SOUTH AFRICA

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World Heritage sites are faced with many challenges and issues, which influence their sustained functioning. This article investigates the key organisational behaviour issues related to opportunities and challenges of sustained management at the Cradle of Humankind as an iconic South African World Heritage site and tourist destination. An exploratory qualitative research approach was followed, including a review of World Heritage literature, archival documentation and in-depth interviews with strategic stakeholders. Empirical research shows that knowledge of issues faced at World Heritage sites can facilitate a site's optimal organisational behaviour and sustained management and existence, by highlighting themes such as a site's organisational structure and management style, the way communication takes place and stakeholder relationships.

Key phrases: South African World Heritage, sustainability, organisational behaviour, exploratory qualitative research

INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Africa is the region with the most World Heritage sites on the *List of World Heritage in Danger* (UNESCO 2010a:Internet). World Heritage sites are considered unique and diverse tourist destinations that are part of our legacy. UNESCO encourages the worldwide identification, protection and preservation of heritage that is of exceptional value to humanity. UNESCO emphasises that heritage is not a renewable asset and through the World Heritage Convention seeks to protect heritage sites against the increasing threat of damage in a rapidly developing world (UNESCO 2008:Internet). The *List of World Heritage in Danger* is designed to inform the international community of conditions that threaten the very characteristics for which a property was inscribed on the *World Heritage List*, and to encourage corrective action. Poor management of World Heritage sites and potential listing on the *List of World Heritage in Danger* is associated with embarrassment and waste of effort and budgets, not to mention the potentially fatal damage done to exceptional icons.

World Heritage sites function in a dynamic environment with all the tasks, obligations and trials of any normal organisation but with the additional responsibility of being irreplaceable tourist destinations. Destinations such as Australia's Great Barrier Reef, the Grand Canyon in America, Stonehenge in Britain and the Pyramids in Egypt are examples of both World Heritage sites and important tourist attractions for their respective countries. World Heritage status holds considerable promise for economic and social growth, sustainability and development. It is unclear whether increased

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tourism activity is a direct or consequential result of listing as World Heritage sites; however, sites do experience increased tourism activity after listing (Hall & Piggin 2001:103-105; Leask & Fyall 2006:11-17). These protected areas face many challenges and issues affecting their sustainability, for example the management or decision-making style and fragmentation between stakeholders. According to the operating guidelines of the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO 2008:Internet), the elements of an effective heritage organisation should include a shared understanding of the property by all stakeholders and the involvement of partners and stakeholders, as well as an accountable, transparent management system.

Organisational effectiveness and the subsequent sustainability of a tourist destination are influenced by the destination's organisational behaviour, which is defined as the understanding of organisations, as well as the groups and individuals within organisations, and managing them to work effectively (Kreitner & Kinicki 2007:5). Important drivers of effective organisational behaviour include the design or structure of the World Heritage organisation; the dynamics within the organisation referring specifically to the management, culture and communication at the World Heritage site; as well as the strategic stakeholder relationships (Levin 2008:115). It should be a priority for any World Heritage site to ensure sustainable existence and to steer clear of the *List of World Heritage in Danger*.

Knowledge of organisational behaviour issues faced at World Heritage sites can facilitate sites' optimal and sustained management and existence by highlighting themes such as a site's organisational structure and management style, the way communication takes place and the relationship of the site with its stakeholders. World Heritage sites are a top tourism brand, and utilising organisational behaviour principles intended to enhance the management of World Heritage sites will assist management and stakeholders in moving towards sustainable destination management of heritage resources and sites.

The primary objective of the study on which this article is based, was to investigate the key issues that relate to opportunities and challenges of sustained tourist destination management at the Cradle of Humankind (hereafter referred to as the Cradle) as an iconic South African World Heritage site. An exploratory qualitative research approach was followed, including a literature review, archival documentation and in-depth interviews with strategic stakeholders to provide rich descriptive data. The investigation was within the context of organisational behaviour, which is considered particularly appropriate when studying the sustained management and existence of World Heritage sites. According to Hitt, Miller and Colella (2006:5), this involves organising and managing the knowledge and skills of

the individuals and groups within organisations effectively in order to implement the organisation's strategy and to gain a competitive advantage – useful knowledge when trying to avoid the *List of World Heritage in Danger*.

SUSTAINED HERITAGE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT THROUGH ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

When there are issues regarding the continued sustainability of a World Heritage site, immediate investigation and resolve is essential. To this effect, the World Heritage Convention ensures that heritage sites around the world are recognised and protected. According to the Convention's operating guidelines (UNESCO 2008), all inscribed sites must produce a management plan operated through participatory means. Scrutiny of these systems is rigorous and World Heritage status can be deferred or a site can be put on the *List of World Heritage in Danger* should it not comply with the Convention's operating guidelines.

World Heritage sites comprise a unique organisational grouping of different stakeholders having to work together to achieve separate and interdependent goals. Organisations are dynamic units interacting with their external environment and they are influenced by the behaviour of individuals and groups within the organisation (Cook & Hunsaker 2001:13; Greenberg & Baron 1997:5-9). Destination management experts and literature state that the effective management of important destinations impacts on their sustainability (Levin 2008:2). A heritage organisation is an open system with interrelated parts, and it depends upon its organisational dynamics, stakeholders and environment for its continued successful functioning (McShane & Von Glinow 2005:4).

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) highlights sustainability within heritage sites as a concern focussing in particular on the "recognition of ensuring sustainable growth in its environmental, social and economic dimensions, based on solid institutional and management structures" (World Tourism Organisation 2007:Internet). Sustainability can be seen as a balance between environmental, economic and social aspects. Holloway (2006:119) defines responsible as tourism underpinned by a properly thought-out management strategy, with collaboration between the public and private sector in order to prevent irreparable damage and to protect, enhance and improve the tourist destination. A necessary condition to reach sustainability objectives is a solid organisational and management structure (Holloway 2006:119). There are specific issues of management that are unique to tourism, especially for sites incorporating heritage. These include managing the influx of tourists, the impact on natural resources, as well as working with stakeholders.

The organisational framework of a heritage destination has a significant impact on the effectiveness of its functioning and its sustainability. Pearce (1992:3-5) states that organisations are set up to achieve goals and these are best met by united action accomplished through a formal structuring of the participants involved. A heritage destination is an organisation, which draws its membership from both the public and private sector, and cooperation between various stakeholders is necessary to promote and protect the destination (Holloway 2006:176). The effective management and support of a protected area involves a large number of organisations, agencies and individuals. Each of these participants has a specific role to play in the ongoing management and protection of World Heritage sites. As organisational groupings of different stakeholders with separate and interdependent goals, the World Heritage sites are unique and distinctive models for a study investigating key issues that affect heritage organisational behaviour.

On a strategic organisational behaviour level, three dimensions have been identified by Levin (2008:272-278) as critical to the sustained management of South African World Heritage sites:

- Firstly, constructive organisational design defines the formal division, grouping and coordination within organisations and can reduce ambiguity and clarify the roles for individuals and groups within the organisation, thereby influencing the attitudes and behaviours of the organisational members (Anand & Daft 2007:329-344; Deacon 2006:3; Greenberg & Baron 2008:586-593; McShane & Von Glinow 2005:449-455; Robbins 2001:436).

- Secondly, organisational dynamics are processes that influence and direct an organisation's optimal functioning. These include the type of management, culture and communication displayed within and by the organisation that influence the achievement of goals in an organisational context (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh 2004; De Vries 2004:183-200; Elenkov, Judge and Wright 2005:666; Greenberg & Baron 2008:544; Handy 1993:183-191; Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson 1996:337-343; Knights & Willmott 2007:258-437; Robbins 2001:528; Tracy, Myers & Scott 2006:283-308).

- Thirdly, stakeholder relationships were identified as key to sustained management of South African World Heritage sites. Stakeholder relationships refer to the individuals and groups who have to interact in order to achieve the organisation's objectives and successful organisational behaviour. Success is contingent upon the leveraging of the relationships between stakeholders and the bridging of social capital which must occur in order to achieve a common goal (Adler & Kwon 2002:17-40; Arregle, Hitt, Sirmon & Very 2007:73-95; Halpern 2005:1-2; Hitt, Lee

& Yucel 2002:353-372; Ireland, Hitt & Vaidyanath 2002:413-436; Pedersen 2002:37-44).

Different factors influence the behaviour of organisations. Organisational behaviour highlights the effect of internal and external forces relevant to an organisation's existence on the individual, groups or teams and the greater organisation, such as how organisational culture, climate, norms or structures shape the behaviour of the individual, groups or even the organisation as a whole. Strategic organisational behaviour involves harnessing the potential of entities within an organisational setting to achieve a common objective. According to Hitt et al (2006:6), an organisation's strategy must be implemented and its goals achieved by empowering these entities in order to utilise their capabilities to the benefit of the organisation. World Heritage sites are organisations that should have as a core strategy successful management of the sustained existence of cultural or natural heritage. Effectively organising and managing the actions, knowledge and skills of the individuals and groups within an organisational context will lead to strategic success, and this is known as the strategic approach to organisational behaviour. Organisational behaviour holds that one of the most valuable assets that an organisation possesses is its people (stakeholders). The stakeholders of an organisation influence the design and structure as well as the dynamics, such as culture and communication within an organisation (Hitt et al 2006:9), all of which has an effect on the successful implementation of its strategy and its sustained functioning.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach was followed most notably because of its ability to provide depth of understanding eloquently described by Constas (1992:254) as "that which is subtle becomes obvious… the invisible becomes visible. Veneers of phenomenological representation are removed so that we may become acquainted with subjective understanding and the meaning of human interactions".

Yin (1994:20) cautioned that the research questions determine the relevant strategy. For this research, the nature of the questions lead to an exploratory research study. The case study research methodology was employed and the open coding procedure of grounded theory was used to assist in data analysis in order to identify the highlighted themes and issues. An empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within real-life context is one situation in which case study methodology is especially applicable (Tellis 1997:Internet).

The case

Given South Africa's diverse culture and history as well as spectacular natural resources and wildlife, it currently features eight World Heritage sites (UNESCO 2010b:Internet). The Cradle, including the Fossil Hominid Sites of Sterkfontein, Swartkrans, Kromdraai and Environs, was inscribed in 1999 and extended in 2005. The site has produced an abundance of scientific information on the evolution of the human race over the past 3.5 million years (Fleminger 2006:9-11). The Cradle was selected as unit of analysis based on maturity and status as a well-established tourist destination and one of South Africa's oldest World Heritage sites (UNESCO 2010b:Internet). It was chosen specifically because it represents different facets of the heritage tourism field namely nature, as well as cultural and commercial aspects. In addition, key strategic stakeholders were interested in taking part and thus the units of data collection are the significant role-players of the World Heritage sites.

The methods

Multiple sources of data were utilised to ensure that the reliability. In-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the selected heritage site, who were able to provide a wealth of information. Qualitative interviews are a researcher's attempt to understand the subject's point of view and to derive meaning from that (Kvale 1994:152-159). Structured questions were asked but significant freedom was allowed to probe further in order to clarify understanding. The information is considered especially valuable and insightful as respondents felt free to express their honest opinions when they understood that they would remain anonymous. In presenting their comments, the respondents are referred to by their profile characteristics.

Interview subjects were selected by means of purposive non-probability sampling techniques in order to research the specific phenomenon being studied. The subjects were key stakeholders in the selected heritage site because they can affect or be affected by the organisation's actions, objectives, and policies. These stakeholders can be described through the following profile characteristics:

- local residents and landowners living within the geographical boundaries of the heritage site;

- a member of the site management;

- tour operators who are reliant upon the generation of business through the heritage site;

- a local tourism association representative; and

- representatives from the South African National Commission for UNESCO and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT).

Judgement sampling was utilised in selecting subject matter experts who could provide relevant information. Snowball and convenience sampling followed naturally, as respondents enabled the collection of data from other respondents who have the same common ground, and was based on availability and accessibility. The major disadvantage of this technique is the question of how representative the information is to the population as a whole. There are no statistical techniques that allow for the measurement of sampling error – it would thus be inappropriate to project the sample characteristics to the population (Cooper & Schindler 2001:192). However, focussed samples are preferable to large and random samples to gain a deeper understanding of phenomena. Thus, the information provided significant insights and was an excellent source of data for the exploratory research.

With the knowledge of the respondents, many of the interviews were recorded and the recordings saved and transcribed verbatim. Where this was not allowed detailed notes were made. The method of data analysis was data immersion. Finding meaning in the transcribed data involved a process of coding, finding themes and clustering data through expert reading, rereading and contemplation by the researcher. Potter (2002:149) refers to the researcher as "the most sophisticated analytical device around".

In order to develop categories and identify themes, the data had to be coded. Coding is used in qualitative research to structure and facilitate the analysis of the data and is a way of relating the data (Coffey & Atkinson 1996:27; Weaver & Atkinson 1994:31). Meaningful words, passages or topics were identified and labelled, collected and grouped so that similar information could be compared. The first stage of the coding process involved open coding where the focus was on general categories. The next step was axial coding where the initial list of categories was refined. Axial coding comprises the identification of core themes during qualitative data analysis. Within grounded theory, it refers to the process of relating categories and concepts to each other until the basic frame of generic relationships is understood to include phenomenon, causal conditions, context conditions, intervening conditions, action strategies and consequences (Shah & Corley 2006:1827-1828).

In addition to the interviews, a document search was conducted because according to Roberts (2005:25), organisational documentary sources provide an important source of data and information in organisational research, even though such sources

may contain errors and could be incomplete. Organisational reports are vital information sources and were used to triangulate and support the data collected from direct interviews.

To further guarantee reliability and validity, several tactics were employed to collect and analyse data and ensure that findings are credible. Solid descriptive data forms the basis of qualitative data and ensures that data is transferable for future use thus in an effort to ensure transferability, the data found in the interviews and documentation were described in detail. Member checking was employed to ensure that respondents verified data and the interpretation thereof. The interview data was triangulated with relevant supporting documentation. The research data and findings were revisited continuously in an effort to ensure dependability.

The limitations

The first limitation of this study is the fact that there is a lack of interdisciplinary knowledge as it relates to Organisational Behaviour applied within World Heritage sites. This article is an attempt to begin such an application. Secondly, while the sample attempts to be inclusive it is not statistically representative and the findings should not be generalised as the interpretations were based on the personal experiences of the specific stakeholders. It is the intent that the presented findings be used as a basis for discussion and to create awareness of the issues that impact on the sustainable organisational behaviour and management of World Heritage sites.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented below and contain the quoted responses from various respondents.

The exclusive design of the World Heritage site

In the case of the Cradle, the management authority is an existing organ of the state even though the Cradle is 98% privately owned (Levin 2008:47). A management representative explained that the management structure of a World Heritage site is appointed in terms of clauses in the World Heritage Convention Act, which, at the Cradle, allowed for the appointment of an existing organ of state as the management authority (South Africa 49/1999:Internet).

This structure seems to have created a management entity divorced from the stakeholders. Several of the interviewees including landowners, a DEAT representative and a local community representative echoed a comment made by a

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landowner who stated that in order to sustain the Cradle, its management must be made up of:

"...people picked from business, from landowners, from government… have a management with [including] landowners, scientists, professionals, businessmen, developers, tourism and government".

In the view of the management representative, the establishment of a representative board would be impossible as the site involves:

"...many interested parties with divergent views which would result in an unmanageable Board or one that would not be able to take decisions".

Although having too many stakeholders could paralyse the organisation, most interviewees felt that the management structure of the site were not inclusive and representative of stakeholders. The nomination document for the Cradle (Gauteng Provincial Government 1998:Internet) indicated that the composition of the management structure will be determined through participation and consultation with the state, landowners, the University of the Witwatersrand and other interest groups. However, government decided (after inscription was achieved) that this would not be feasible and opted for a structure made up of government officials.

A tourism association representative was of the opinion that "...a World Heritage site should be part of a larger organisation and should not function independently". One organisation cannot do everything that is required to maintain a World Heritage site. Failure to include all relevant parties and stakeholders in the structure could lead to an attempt to undermine the efforts of the current management structure. A benefit of being part of a larger organisation would be ensured sustainability.

The culture is influenced by the management

The leadership of a particular organisation will often determine what type of culture manifests in the organisation. In the case of the Cradle, the type of culture seems to indicate what Handy (1993:183-191) describes as a power culture and is not experienced as participatory by the stakeholders. A business owner expressed the wish that a climate could be created at the Cradle where stakeholders would be more cooperative with one another. He described the current scenario as one where stakeholders are "...divided and ruled by the current management structure".

It is important to note that the type of culture that works in one organisation, may not necessarily work for the next organisation. It may be argued that South Africa's World Heritage sites are relatively young and do not have all the necessary frameworks in

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place, and as such it is up to the leaders of those sites to manage the sites as they
see fit. It appears as if the concept of participation is only paid lip service at this
stage. However, it is important that participation should be implemented at ground
level. Most respondents described the culture of the respective organisations as
situations where management has all the power and that it operates independently
from stakeholder views and suggestions. The general feeling is negative and brings
into question the sustainability of the current status quo. A landowner also believed
that the relationship between the management and the residents and community
leaves a lot to be desired. He described the culture as "more negative than positive".

The literature suggests that an organisation's culture provides a competitive
advantage and contributes to its success (Rogers & Meehan 2007:254-261). A
management representative commented that all stakeholders at the Cradle, whether
they may complain and agree or disagree, feel passionate about the site and feel
ownership of it and this "creates a set of dynamics that have to be properly
managed". Culture is a most difficult organisational attribute to change, therefore, the
effect of the seemingly pervading culture of discontent on the sustained success of
these World Heritage sites could be destructive in the long run (Linn 2008:91).

A lack of communication leads to mistrust and antagonism

The way an organisation communicates can be influenced by many factors such as
the management style or the culture of the organisation. If the culture is not open and
participative, open discussion may be seen as a threat to the power and control of
management. In such cases, communication within organisations cannot build
relationships but will rather lead to mistrust and assumptions. The only way to
address such negativity is through open and consistently credible communication
where actions are experienced as consistent with words.

According to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Land
Affairs (2000:17) there will be ongoing dialogue with landowners and residents in the
Cradle area. However, the Cradle follows a regulated approach with regard to
communicating with stakeholders whereby stakeholders are kept informed and
involved through media releases and newsletters, as well as general and issue-
specific stakeholder meetings. General public meetings are held biannually to update
stakeholders, or *ad hoc* issue specific meetings are held as required (Cradle of
Humankind World Heritage Site Management Authority 2008:11-13). According to a
management representative, the reasoning behind this is that:

"...the state's resources are limited and the extent to which you have staff capacity and
capability to have intensive consultation had to be balanced with implementing the plan".

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The stakeholders expect open and honest communication. Management should not appear to be withholding information, especially if it is information that affects on stakeholders, which is expected to be publicly available. It is important for management to be consistent and to deliver what they have promised. Some feel marginalised and indicated that communication consists of simply being informed of which decisions have been taken and what will be done. This leads to a climate of distrust, and it limits the management's ability to build relationships in order to foster the sustainability of the sites. One respondent, a land and business owner, commended the level of communication that took place during the initial inscription but described the communication since listing as "show-and-tell" rather than open and honest discussions. He suggested that the Cradle's management could perhaps:

"...instead of saying 'this is what we're going to do', should say for example 'what would you like us to do with this money in order to preserve this site for all humankind for the future'...".

The concept of World Heritage is not widely understood

UNESCO proclaims that World Heritage sites belong to all the people of the world and they strongly advocate participation between relevant stakeholders. It is evident from the nomination documents of the Cradle that this was the intent (UNESCO 1998:Internet). However, stakeholders sometimes have a misperception of the benefits that World Heritage status will bring and they are not made aware of the implied responsibilities. A tourism association representative remarked that, when a place is declared a World Heritage site, special attention had to be given to what such status means and how it is communicated. The heritage status often raises undue expectations with stakeholders thinking that the increase in tourism for example is going to be a "panacea to all their problems".

A UNESCO representative asserted that it is critical to "understand the core reasons why any particular site is on the *World Heritage List*". If the reasons behind the inscription of a site and its heritage status are not understood by the stakeholders, the existence and management of the site will not be sustained. A representative of the local community lamented the fact that most of the people on the ground do not understand what 'World Heritage' means. A tourism association representative stated that World Heritage sites are often viewed as so significant that they are put on a pedestal. To be able to sustain this image and to survive requires as much support as possible, both locally and internationally but a land and business owner stated that many of the communities have basic needs that are unfulfilled and until those are addressed, communities cannot conceive of the value of World Heritage. This was

confirmed by a DEAT representative, who stated that in some cases there is much antagonism with regard to heritage and conservation as there are instances where "the establishment of such sites were used in the past as a reason to displace people from their land". A landowner felt that "it is our responsibility as a country to protect it [World Heritage]… private ownership actually is … irrelevant".

A DEAT representative stated that he would like to see World Heritage sites branded, so that it is a widely recognised and valued brand, which stands out from other standard heritage sites. He felt that the presentation and status of a World Heritage site should reflect its significance:

> "People must be willing to pay more for the same thing because it comes from a World Heritage site – that's how much it should be valued".

In terms of UNESCO's role and responsibility, there appears to be the misperception amongst some respondents that UNESCO can reach out to a site and tell management what to do. It is important to remember however, that UNESCO has no governing authority within a country's borders. A UNESCO representative explained that because UNESCO is a voluntary body made up of and funded by member states, UNESCO cannot dictate to such states. However, the World Heritage Convention is an agreement by State Parties to adhere to certain principles, which is ratified by member states. The purpose is to "bring everybody to the same baseline of defining heritage sites" and UNESCO can only "make recommendations for compliance".

Relevant legislative framework

The South African government has converted the World Heritage Convention into the South African World Heritage Convention Act, the main aim of which is to provide the guidelines by which World Heritage sites in South Africa must be managed. It gives the sites the opportunity to manage themselves and it bestows power on them (Levin 2008:288). According to a DEAT representative, the South African World Heritage Convention Act (South Africa 49/1999:Internet), there is a definition of a World Heritage site that "it is a site that is inscribed by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee on the *World Heritage List* as well as proclaimed in terms of national legislation".

This interviewee further explained that the South African World Heritage Convention Act provides for the creation of entities to manage the sites that can function separately from state (South Africa 49/1999:Internet). He cautions however, that with independence comes accountability. If the managing organisation is not performing,

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they can be sued or the site they manage can be taken into custodianship. To prove non-performance there is a process to be followed as is outlined in the Act. However, the Act gives rise to much contention, as independent authorities have been established in order to get on with the business of managing the site as they see fit, to the perceived exclusion of other stakeholders.

According to Urquhart (2009:9), the concept of sustainable or responsible tourism is endorsed by South African policy and legislation. A range of mechanisms has been developed to translate this into concrete action, including guidelines for responsible tourism, the Fair Trade in Tourism initiative, and support to emerging and community-based tourism enterprises. District and local plans indicate a key role for the Cradle as an icon tourist attraction, however proposals for development challenge this as implementation of many of these proposals threatens the self-same heritage attributes the site is mandated to protect.

Many of the interviewees were concerned about the interpretation of our legislation and the perceived amount of control it afforded current management authorities. South African legislation gives the management authorities the opportunity to be legal and separate entities, which can function independently from stakeholders. A land and business owner questioned the "absolute power" that the World Heritage Convention Act gives the management of South African World Heritage sites and said further that… "nobody in that position should have that decision-making power to say yes or no".

Governance and vision

Participative leadership is very important and entails involving stakeholders in making decisions that impact on themselves and the organisation. Participation encourages members of the organisation to contribute to group goals and to share responsibility and is the psychological result of supportive management (Levin 2008:136-139). Elenkov et al (2005:666) define strategic leadership as the process of forming a vision for the future, communicating it to subordinates, stimulating and motivating followers, and engaging in strategy-supportive exchanges with peers and subordinates.

Even though many heritage organisations are relatively small, general terms of business are as applicable to them as to large corporations. These terms of business include that heritage organisations need to have strategic plans, mission statements, objectives and continuous performance monitoring which refer to the management of the organisation that is well known to all stakeholders (Middleton 1994:9-10). According to the operating guidelines of the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO

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2008:27), the elements of an effective management system should include a shared understanding of the property by all stakeholders and the involvement of partners and stakeholders, as well as an accountable, transparent management system. The general perception evident from the interviews is that stakeholders do not share the vision of the management authorities for the heritage sites because of a lack of communication of what the vision entails. A DEAT representative stated that the management plans of World Heritage sites are important, as they should become "an agreement or contract between the management and stakeholders". The only way to prove that a management authority is not performing is when a management plan exists against which performance can be measured. A local community member stated that he has to date not seen the management strategy document and did not know what the long-term vision for the site was.

A management representative describes the management of the Cradle as "a constant balancing act" in terms of the different interest groups and between balancing development and protection of the site. She explained that managing the Cradle's conflicting interest groups is particularly difficult. She stated that the reason for the Cradle's management approach to managing the site in a specific way is to get the balance right between "consulting and getting on with planning and development".

The current World Heritage legislation in South Africa gives managing entities the power to be separate entities leading to the perceived exclusion of many stakeholders at the selected sites. Some respondents felt that the management structure was not inclusive and representative of all stakeholders. One interviewee, a landowner, questioned the transparency of the management of the Cradle and cited as an example how difficult it was to get insight into the budget of the organisation: "...it is impossible to find the budget – it's buried in another budget, which is buried in another budget". He described the management of the Cradle as a "dictatorship" that does not take heed of suggestions or requests from other stakeholders.

Participation and stakeholder relationships

Participatory management is fostered in cases where the local population is both informed and involved. This is backed by the World Heritage Convention, which states that heritage should have a function in the life of a community (UNESCO 2008:123). To make a site successful requires the cooperation of many parties, firstly during the process of inscription and afterwards, in the daily management of the site. A management representative states that the World Heritage Convention Act (South Africa 49/1999:Internet) makes extensive reference to collaboration with parties

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involved in a site, but states that the realities of a site like the Cradle is "that there are competing and conflicting priorities and they're irreconcilable in many instances". A tourism association representative asserted that to ensure a World Heritage site retains its status requires effective partnerships, and "the lack of partnership may lead to a site's demise". Heritage sites need tremendous resources, not only monetary, but also political support, specialist knowledge and all these aspects are not necessarily embodied in the management authority of a site. When partners are isolated, these support mechanisms break down, signalling danger for the sustainability of a site.

It is a concern that the management of heritage sites are often made up of heritage or conservation management specialists with little or no expertise in financial aspects, human resources or marketing, and this confirms the importance of being part of a larger network or organisation where such expertise can be drawn upon. The organisational framework of a heritage destination will often be complex and may be fragmented. The organisational framework of a destination such as a World Heritage site, may have a significant impact on the effectiveness of its functioning as an organisation, as well as the continued sustainability of the destination. The stakeholder relationships impact on the long-term sustainability of the World Heritage sites and as such the objectives of a heritage organisation should be to foster cooperation between various stakeholders and to act in unison to promote and protect the destination (Holloway 2006:176).

Tourism destination sustainability

Tourist attractions at the Cradle include the paleontological offerings and other cultural establishments, wildlife concerns, restaurants, wedding venues, nature reserves and conservancies, and various types of accommodation. Key trends and developments in and around the Cradle are mostly tourism-related. Although visitation levels are not at the projected levels yet, there has been recognition for the key attractions in the Cradle in the form of several awards, including the Sustainable Tourism Investment of the Year award in 2008 (Urquhart 2009:14-15).

One of the key criticisms of organisational behaviour is that it tends to focus on psychological issues and perhaps does not take full cognisance of the social and economic workings that may impact on the organisation (Furnham 2004:429-431; Martin 2004:415). Tourism is the economic means by which heritage information and awareness is imparted to the public. Tourism is an essential part of the sustainability of World Heritage organisations and should be managed sustainably (Andah 1990:116). Tourism in protected areas has benefits and risks, yet through

sustainable destination management, the risks can be mitigated and the benefits reaped. Destination management entails a coalition of stakeholders working towards the viability and integrity of a destination (World Tourism Organisation 2007:Internet).

A DEAT representative stated "a World Heritage site by its existence is a tourist destination". This was supported by a management representative who defined the Cradle as a heritage site whose "main economic activity is tourism". The latter described the development of the Maropeng and Sterkfontein Caves interpretation centres as a "pull factor" for tourists, explaining that "the only way you can protect it [the World Heritage site] is if you've got thriving economic activity that contributes to creating a sense of place" and the Cradle has won certain tourism awards. However, one of the key concerns noted during the interviews, is the lack of stakeholder say in what is to be done with regard to tourism at the World Heritage sites. Frustration exists because the stakeholders feel left out of making decisions that often directly influence them. This is evidenced in one land- and business owner's dislike of Maropeng as well as a tourism association representative's feelings of being left out of significant tourism marketing activities.

CONCLUSION

The above discussion investigated the key issues that relate to opportunities and challenges of sustained tourist destination management at the Cradle as an iconic South African World Heritage site. The results suggested that three organisational dimensions are potentially critical to the sustained heritage management including constructive organisational design, organisational dynamics (open and participative management, culture and communication) and lastly positive stakeholder relationships. Within the framework of the afore-mentioned organisational dimensions, several issues surfaced that impact on the sustainable destination management of a heritage organisation such as the Cradle.

Recommendations

It is problematic that South African sites are managed in such a fragmented and decentralised way and it is not sustainable to have independent managing bodies for each site. In terms of best practices, the focus in organisational design is gravitating towards collaborative or partnership designs (Anand & Daft 2007:329-344). The result of such designs would be that management would lose direct control over resources required for performance and would have to depend on others over whom there is little or no direct control, yet retain responsibility for performance. It appears

from the research findings that the management of the selected World Heritage site is not yet ready to opt for more collaborative or partnership organisational structures.

The suggestion of a neutral management structure overseeing all the World Heritage sites in South Africa ensuring that sites perform according to standard or addressing stakeholder complaints, is deemed very positive. Currently such a structure does not exist. The World Heritage Convention Act (South Africa 49/1999:Internet) provides the opportunity for such an entity to be created. Such an independent structure could consolidate knowledge and resources, which would be available for all sites to utilise. It could also apply for funding for all sites and distribute funds according to need. Considering the vast resources required by each site, it makes sense to pool expertise and share knowledge and best practices. If some of the functions are shared, that would ensure that a site's authority will have access to the best experts in various fields and will not have to do it all themselves. As the DEAT representative stated, government has learnt from its mistakes in the sense that allowing a site to have an exclusive and independent authority will result in setting such sites up for failure. It is often difficult for one organisation to have all the resources necessary to manage a World Heritage site optimally.

A culture can be created and enforced by an organisation's management that shapes a common vision and implements the organisation's strategy. It may be argued that South Africa's World Heritage sites are relatively young in terms of international standards and do not have all the necessary frameworks in place. As such, it is up to the leaders of those sites to manage the site as they see fit even though it is effected by means of power and bureaucracy. However, at this stage there are quite a number of vocal calls for a more participatory culture, facilitated by participatory management at the Cradle. The situation is not improved by the fact that the concept of a participatory culture is only paid lip service; it must be implemented at ground level.

Sharing power does not mean abdicating managing authority; it can enhance and strengthen management. When there is little alignment with organisational values and control must be exercised through extensive procedures and bureaucracy (McFarlin 2002:Internet), the culture is considered weak. At the Cradle, it appears from the research as if there is a weak alignment with organisational values from the organisational members and thus bureaucracy is used to maintain control. A move away from a bureaucratic power-type culture to a more inclusive and participatory culture may go far in alleviating many of the negative feelings currently in existence.

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Best practice with regard to communication would be to be open and honest and not to create the perception that information is being withheld, especially if it is information that is expected to be publicly available and which impacts on stakeholders, such as is the case at the Cradle. It is also important to be consistent and to deliver what has been promised. If this is not possible, then management need to be honest about the reasons for failure. In all cases, the keywords with regard to communication, which currently seems to be lacking are openness, access to information and consistency.

Much still needs to be done with regard to awareness-building around the concept of World Heritage. Stakeholders sometimes have a misperception of the benefits that World Heritage status will bring and are not made aware of the implied responsibilities. Specific concerns are to educate and inform stakeholders with regard to what it means to be living as part of a local community in a World Heritage site and what the implications are for their daily lives. The World Heritage Tourism Programme emphasises several activities in order to achieve the above-mentioned aims including building increased awareness of the objectives of the World Heritage Convention, raising public awareness of World Heritage Outstanding Universal Values and building pride and intercultural dialogue with local communities and visitors through conservation education.

More training and raising public awareness should take place at both the site and at national level in South Africa. The general South African public is still unaware of the significance of World Heritage listing and the related implications in terms of their daily lives. According to a representative of the South African Department of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, South Africa is still, in many ways, building a conservation culture and dealing with past prejudices against the negative actions such as forced removals, in the name of conservation. As such, training related to tourism should be provided to local communities in order to receive the benefit of tourism, which in turn will provide a rewarding educational experience to the tourist.

The lack of understanding and knowledge of the vision and management plan for the Cradle is a concern and indicates an area for improvement in terms of best practices, as leadership and strategy are crucial for achieving and maintaining strategic competitiveness. Urquhart (2009:38) found that there was a need for an overarching strategic vision for the Cradle and strong leadership to implement this vision. She stressed that such a vision should be developed collectively to ensure buy-in from the many stakeholders. It should go beyond the current mission statement in order to clarify the end goal of development and conservation of the Cradle.

There is a need for management to be integrated and participatory. A significant finding of both the literature review and the interviews was that the type of management influences the culture of the organisation, which in turn influences communication and relationships within the organisation. Urquhart's study of the tourism status quo at the Cradle pointed out that an underlying issue was the system of governance that had been employed in the area. Management authority staff feel that in general, interaction with stakeholders is at too high a level and that it could be improved. External stakeholders feel that the bureaucracy is not conducive to progress, with agreements made but often not followed through. While these are perceptions, perceptions should be addressed as they have strong effects on successful governance (Urquhart 2009:28). It is clear from the responses that an autocratic type of leadership is experienced as very negative by the stakeholders and as a result, the sustainability of such a structure is questioned.

World Heritage sites should be about partnerships. It is the responsibility of the management authority to encourage the development of partnerships in a pro-active manner (Urquhart 2009:33). The representative from DEAT explained that once a site is declared a World Heritage site its problems become the shared responsibility of the parties involved responsible for World Heritage. In terms of best practices, a tourism association representative suggested that any World Heritage site must have "strong partnerships, local, government and international" especially in terms of the focus on tourism. All stakeholders should be enabled by legislation as well as general goodwill, to work together in partnership and to intervene because they have a common purpose, namely to preserve and sustain the World Heritage site (Levin 2008:230).

Stakeholder participation is important for any World Heritage site. It is however important to note that stakeholders are not always the experts but their insights are valuable especially for site-specific issues, which outsiders may not regard as important. In terms of the study, it was found that stakeholders currently have very little input with regard to the management of the site. World Heritage sites need all the resources available and management cannot afford to push away anyone who is a significant part of such a positive initiative. Urquhart (2009:40-44) reiterates this point by stating that the Cradle is mostly privately owned and thus co-operation and the buy-in by landowners is critical and a key success factor for the Cradle. In order to achieve collaborative management, partnerships must be enhanced and a more hands-on approach to engagement with stakeholders should be developed to ensure sustainability at the Cradle.

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World Heritage is often a driver for tourism demand but there is a fine balance between managing a site as a tourist destination and managing the site for its intrinsic value. One cannot only focus on managing the tourist numbers even though tourism is the result of the numbers that come to experience the value of the site. The literature showed that tourism has the potential to create jobs, increase education and uplift communities. Most notably tourism can be the vehicle by which heritage is protected and cherished. As suggested by Urquhart (2009:4), strategy and framework must be developed by the management of the Cradle in partnership with the stakeholders to promote tourism with an emphasis on the ecological and social aspects of sustainability. Any further tourism activity in the Cradle should only be allowed within this framework.

In conclusion, the above discussion provides substantive evidence that awareness of organisational behaviour holds tremendous potential in terms of sustainable management and performance of World Heritage sites. The literature review and the comments of the respondents have provided evidence that the identified elements of Organisational Behaviour are interrelated and significant for the continued sustainability and successful management of World Heritage sites in South Africa. In order to optimise the organisational behaviour at World Heritage organisations, it is necessary that the organisations understand and manage the identified issues related to the structure or design of the World Heritage organisation, open and effective communication, supportive and cooperative management, a participatory culture, as well as positive stakeholder engagement and relationships. This will ensure sustainable existence.

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