

CULTURE AS A MARKETING MECHANISM FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS TO SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

When international tourists visit a foreign country, they want to interact with that country's unique mix of culture as part of the tourism experience. Cultural tourism may provide the opportunity for such interaction. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the tourism marketer determine the cultural preferences of international tourists to South Africa in order to provide them with a satisfactory cultural tourism experience.

The marketing of South Africa as a cultural destination requires knowledge of the country's cultural attractions, accessibility, amenities and atmosphere. The study indicated amongst other things that international tourists are generally relatively satisfied with the cultural offerings that they experience during their visit to South Africa; that cultural heritage sites, living historic cities and cultural landscapes are the main cultural preferences which international tourists would like to visit in South Africa; and that tourism marketers should make effective use of electronic marketing methods when targeting international tourists as many of the tourists consult the Internet before and after arrival in the country.

Keywords: Culture, cultural tourism, heritage, marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism involves "customised excursions into other cultures and places to learn about their people, lifestyle, heritage and arts in an informed way that genuinely represents those cultures and their historical contexts" (Craik, 1995:6). Dahles (as in Clarke, 2004) echoes this by describing the process of cultural participation as soaking up the atmosphere of the destination by sampling local food, visiting local neighbourhoods and taking on board the varied cultural constructions of those who are differently cultured. South Africa is "a world in one country" that exudes a multi-cultural charm that is unrivalled and often misunderstood (South African Tourism, 2005). The cultural product is a "way of life" as represented through daily activities, traditions and physical sites. The challenge is to attain a form of tourism that will enrich the visitor and Wall (1994) points out that this challenge may only be met if the host community has a well-established cultural identity.

According to Bennet (2000:12) the more the culture of a destination differs from that of the tourist, the stronger the desire to visit such a community. Whilst the diversity and richness of South African culture appears to be well recognised by many tourists, the key challenge seems to be showcasing it

with dignity and authenticity (GCP, 2004:37). It will therefore be safe to say that international tourists have a keen interest in visiting South Africa since it is home to very diverse cultures that have evolved their own unique and distinctive music, art forms and traditional rituals that symbolise their values and beliefs (South African Tourism, 2005).

Lipchak (HEINZ, 2001) reflects that "Cultural tourism assists a region's cultural community by developing new audiences beyond local attendees. It puts culture in the forefront and uses it to bring visitors to the region." Furthermore he states the fact that cultural tourists tend to have reasonably high levels of disposable income and discretionary time, and may generate an economic benefit not only to cultural attractions, but also to hotels, restaurants, retail shops and other businesses. These cultural tourists spend more money because of the length of their visit and the types of experiences they have when they visit. However, recent studies done by SA Tourism indicate that international tourist demand in terms of the cultural product has not been met. The European segment indicated an unmet demand of 16 percent, the Americas 35 percent and the Asian segment 22 percent. Industry also identified the cultural product of South Africa as one of the major areas where product gaps exist (GCP, 2004:37). It was also suggested that cultural experiences require improvement and diversification - museums, South African cuisine, curio shops and township experiences are but a few of the areas identified.

Craik (1997:176-195) observes that cultural tourism is a consequence of a convergence of commercialisation, a restructuring of cultural production into industries, government investment in culture, more training in this production and an increased consumption by people. Although the cultural resource is seen as a strong advantage, industry believes that it is underperforming relative to its potential and it lacks sustainable commercialisation. Figure 1 supports this view as it indicates that the cultural product needs to be more targeted, more authentic and more sophisticated according to qualitative industry interviews by Statistics SA (GCP, 2004:36). The cultural product is highly desired, but generally assessed to be underperforming (SA Tourism, 2004) and this remains a problem for the industry.

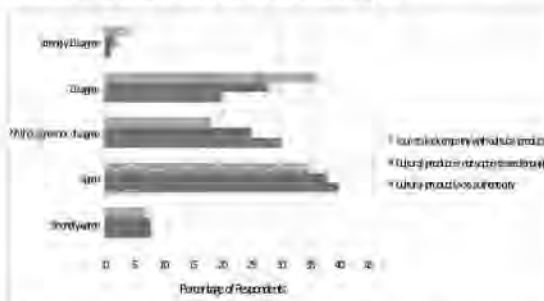


Figure 1: The performance of the South African cultural tourism product

Source: GCP (2004:33)

Well-preserved cultural features are part of a quality tourism experience (WTO, 2004) and are fundamental to the success of the tourism sector. Bennet and Strydom (2001:105) argue that in order for the cultural offering to be seen as an attraction, it must fulfil two basic functions in the tourism system:

- it should be strong enough to pull people away from their homes; and
- it should provide tourists with the satisfaction they derive from travel.

According to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, the cultural offering is one of the key attractions of South Africa and many tourists have expectations around this (GCP, 2004:33). George (2004:156) mentions that the SA tourist authorities have recognised the importance of the cultural tourism market and view it as one of the main reasons why international tourists visit the country. However, recent figures from the Annual Tourism Report (Statistics SA, 2004) indicate that cultural and heritage tourism ranks only in 7th place as an undertaken activity. The same report indicates that the cultural and historical tourism experience for international visitors performs below average. The cultural product is seen to have real potential, but it is underperforming and tourist expectations are not met (GCP, 2004:73). In other words, it possesses the pulling power to get visitors into the country, but it does not meet their expectations once they consume the product.

The cultural understandings and cultural expectations of tourists vary across time, geography and experience (Clarke, 2004). Clarke notes that it is therefore difficult to know where to pitch the levels of interpretation of cultures to make them meaningful to the visitors. Valdez (2001:6-7) states that cultural tourism grew out of a desire of travellers to learn about the various manifestations of the cultural heritage of the planet. He also states the importance of the fact that cultural tourism has grown around the world over the past two decades. Culture is argued to be a major determinant of global tourism growth as the WTO asserts that cultural tourism accounts for 37 percent of global tourism and forecasts that it would grow at a rate of 15 percent per year. Richard (1994) cites various factors which have contributed to this growth, among them the following two, which are of great significance from a South African perspective:

- the current social trend towards understanding the heritage values and democratisation of a culture; and
- the modernisation and greater impact of promotional tools used in the different sectors of the tourism industry.

Given South Africa's relatively young democratic status (since 1994), the

country's cultural heritage intrigues international visitors, moving them to explore this by means of cultural tourism. Post-apartheid SA now competes globally for a share in the tourism market, and thus competes directly with the cultural offerings of other destinations. The growing maturity of the cultural attraction market and the growth in competition between attractions mean that more attention needs to be paid to the question of "why" people visit these cultural attractions (Richards 2001:13-19). According to Richards (2000) cultures provide a focus for much tourist activity and are an essential weapon in the arsenal of tourism destinations engaged in a competitive struggle for tourist business.

The traditional marketing concept holds that in order to reach marketing goals, the needs of the target market must be identified and then the desired satisfaction must be delivered more effectively than it is delivered by competitors (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 1999:31). Marketing in the cultural domain is a collection of activities, the purpose of which is to optimise the exchanges between one entity which produces and offers a product, and another which acquires it in order to satisfy one or more needs, each entity trying to maximise its benefits (Valdez, 2001:6-7). The more an individual believes a tourism region will satisfy his needs, the more attractive that region will be and the more likely it is to be selected as a potential travel destination (Hu and Ritchie, 1993:25-34). It is widely known that successful tourism marketing includes customer participation and finding out what customers (tourists) need. Naumann (1994:20) supports this statement by arguing that the customer defines the appropriate product and service quality, and that customer expectations are dynamic. Therefore, determining the international tourists' expectations and perceptions of South Africa's cultural product, is of the utmost importance in closing the gaps identified in Figure 1.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this article are:

- to define the various typologies of cultural tourism;
- to determine the cultural preferences of international tourists to South Africa; and
- to make recommendations toward the future marketing of South Africa as a cultural tourism destination amongst international tourist sources.

3. TYPOLOGIES OF CULTURAL TOURISM

A study of the various typologies of cultural tourism forms the point of departure for the compilation of the questionnaire that was used in this study. It provides a basic understanding as to what should be classified as cultural tourism.

According to UNESCO (2005), the following types of cultural tourism may be distinguished:

3.1. Cultural heritage sites

Cultural heritage sites are relatively diverse, and in the view of Prentice (1993:5), the term "heritage" does not include only landscapes, natural history, buildings, artefacts, cultural traditions and the like which are passed on from one generation to the next, but also those things (and sites) which may be portrayed for promotion of tourism products.

Man-made sites included in this category are monuments or groups of buildings that are witness to the civilizations that occupied them with their architecture, way of life, beliefs and social organisation. Cultural sites include religious and political monuments, simple constructions and dwellings, workshops and so forth that testify not only to architecture, but also to economic and social life and the history of technology.

Historic cities may be called "urban landscapes" and include the city's / town's heritage accumulation over time. This comprises the history of buildings, streets, districts and residents that could (and should) be regarded as the force and foundation of all sustainable development of cities and their future (UNESCO, 2005).

3.2. Cultural landscapes

Cultural landscapes have been created by domesticating and exploiting the natural environment and in particular by agro-pastoral activity by human beings (UNESCO, 2005). Watt, Raymond and Eschen (1999: 620) emphasise that these spaces include the community as cultural system, consisting of the interaction of historic buildings with more ordinary landscape elements that together give a place its meaning as a cultural landscape.

3.3. Natural sacred sites

Sacred natural sites are natural areas of special spiritual significance to peoples and communities, and include natural areas recognised as sacred by indigenous and traditional peoples and faiths as places for remembrance that play a key role in the traditions and lifestyles of a culture (Oviedo, Jeanrenaud and Otegui, 2005:3). UNESCO (2005) notes that the above-mentioned sites have no, or very little, material evidence and in most cases the site is purely symbolic with remarkable natural features. Stones, cliffs, mountains, trees, forests, water sources, lakes and rivers may be regarded as sacred due to their religious or spiritual significance.

3.4. Underwater cultural sites

Vital objects and sites of cultural heritage lie underwater, some yet to be discovered. Historical wrecks, such as sailing vessels, aircraft, other vehicles and their cargoes are included in this category. This also includes traces of human existence, submerged cities associated human objects and remains and prehistoric items such as underwater cave paintings (UNESCO, 2005). Forrest (2002:519) views the underwater cultural heritage as an integral part of the cultural heritage of humanity that plays an important role in the history of peoples, nations and their relations with each other.

3.5. Museums

Museums and galleries are significantly attractive to tourists seeking to understand the culture of the people in the destination they are visiting (Ward, Higson and Campbell, 1995:49). According to Vincent (2001:118) the internationally accepted definition of a museum is a "non-profit making, permanent institution, in the service of society and its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment." The primary purpose of a museum is then to preserve heritage as a whole, present the interactions between culture and nature and finally it works for the indigenous development of social communities whose testimonies it conserves while lending a voice to their cultural aspirations (UNESCO, 2005).

3.6. The movable cultural heritage

Cultural heritage comprises more than just exhibitions in museums: it also includes ancient jewellery discovered on archaeological sites, grave-goods, sacred art in religious buildings, sculpted stone from historic monuments, all kinds of works of art that are ancient or still in the hands of their creators, or on the market or in private collections (UNESCO, 2005). The objects may be found in places of worship, museums, public gardens or squares, to name but a few and include: paintings, drawings, sculptures, engravings, manuscripts, ancient works, books, seals, rings, coins, textiles, embroideries, carpets, furniture, musical instruments, photographs, films, stamps and fossils.

3.7. Handicrafts

Handicrafts are a living heritage as they are renewed by each generation. This is a continuous process where a craftsperson embodies a trade and expertise that are sources of income and that contribute to economic development. By creating things that are both beautiful and useful, handicrafts help humans to enhance their environment and even the most common objects may convey a unique interpretation of life for a specific culture. UNESCO (2005) therefore greatly emphasises that this ability of

cultures to give meaning and beauty to the mundane activities and objects in life, by means of handicrafts, is one of the fundamental values of a culture, and should therefore be sustained.

3.8. The documentary and digital heritage

Documentary and digital heritage constitutes a major part of the collective memory and reflects the diversity of languages, peoples and cultures such as documentary heritage on paper, leather, parchment, film or magnetic tape (UNESCO, 2005). Le Furgy (2005:163-168) states that the preservation of cultural expression in terms of a digital environment is challenging since no electronic format may hope to persist more than a short while without extensive care. Public libraries, archive buildings and the like serve as the universal gateways to these resources, and tourists engaging in information seeking or who visit places where these cultural compact discs, books, postcards or films of cultural reference may be viewed, may be regarded as cultural tourists.

3.9. The cinematographic heritage

Cinema is a gateway to culture and civilisation (UNESCO, 2005) and cultural tourism takes place when tourists view documentaries, fiction, video, or even old movie tapes relating to the culture of the destination they are visiting. Consequently Gorini (2004:2) notes that countries have even adopted policies for the preservation of cinema films as this has been fully recognised as an integral part of a nation's cultural and historical heritage. It may therefore be argued that cinema, documentaries and the like are considered an integral part of a nation's culture, and should therefore be preserved and included in the tourism offerings of a country.

3.10. Oral traditions

The world's culture has evolved and transmitted its body of knowledge and values to succeeding generations solely by word of mouth, relying on human memory alone (UNESCO, 2005). The distinctive factor of an oral tradition is that it needs to be transmitted (spoken and heard) or it may lead to the sudden disappearance of an age-old tradition. An example would be the Hudhud chants of the Ifugao in the Philippines, which is intangible but leaves the tourist with a unique cultural experience, stored only in memory.

3.11. Languages

Every language reflects a unique value system, philosophy and the particular cultural features of the people speaking it (UNESCO, 2005). Language (De Saussure, 2003:22) states that the term "language" should not be confused with "human speech" alone, but it is rather to be considered as a "social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that

have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty" pertaining to that society (or culture). Visiting a foreign destination where a different language is spoken is therefore the ultimate cultural experience as languages are essential to cultural identity and hearing; even trying to speak that particular language may be regarded as a form of cultural tourism.

3.12. Festive events

Zeppel (1992:69) states that festivals (and similar events) are held to celebrate dance, music, arts, crafts, ethnic and indigenous cultural heritage, traditions, historically significant occasions, food and wine, amongst other reasons, adding to the tourist appeal of a destination. According to Shone and Parry (2004:3) special festive events are a phenomenon arising from "non routine occasions, which have leisure, cultural, personal or organisational objectives", whose purpose is to "enlighten, celebrate, entertain or challenge the experience of a group of people".

3.13. Rites and beliefs

Rites are a conveyance and an expression of a social order that punctuate the lives of individuals and communities and give a social meaning to their culture (UNESCO, 2005). In an effort to narrow the spectrum of rites and rituals, Bell (1997:24) provides six categories of rites that form a compromise between the completeness and simplicity of the concept. These include rites of passage (life-cycle rites), commemorative rites, rites of communion, rites of affliction, rites of festival, feasting and fasting and political rites. Participation in or simply being a spectator to these special rituals and expressions of cultural beliefs may thus be regarded as forms of cultural tourism.

3.14. Music and song

Music, song and dance (classical, folk and contemporary) are considered to be typical features motivating cultural tourism (Richards, 1996:22). Musical practices are symbolic expressions of shared cultural values in terms of aesthetics, beliefs and creativity and they are closely linked to poetry, language, theatre and cinema. UNESCO (2005) furthermore describes these as vehicles for meditation, healing practices and ancestral communication.

3.15. The performing arts

Performing arts (live performances such as musicals, street performers, dancers, etc.) play a significant role in socio-cultural and ritual life and frequently give form to historical knowledge, symbolism and social values (UNESCO, 2005). Tassiopoulos (2000:15-17) views and defines performing art events as events "usually involving performers in front of audiences", and

mentions that this type of event is frequently found within the theme of “festive events”. Attending the performing arts as a tourist may be particularly fulfilling and is one of the best ways to experience and get the feel of a specific culture (Hughes, 2000:68).

3.16. Traditional medicine

According to UNESCO (2005), traditional medicine encompasses a number of practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs, including remedies drawn from natural extracts, in addition to spiritual, manual or psychological techniques such as massage and meditation. It includes innovations and practices indigenous to local communities and traditional lifestyles, and tourists engaging in any form of this, such as visiting a traditional healer or simply visiting a traditional medicine shop, are participating in the culture of the destination. Traditional health extends to the appreciation of plants, minerals and animals, and takes into consideration spiritual, socio-cultural and ecological factors (Bodeker, 2004:2).

3.17. Literature

Literature enriches humankind, as it is a reflection of the cultural life and the world and things as perceived by the writer (UNESCO, 2005). It is also a product of the mind and thus not always committed to material support (making it oral literature), yet literature has an extensive association with books that make this form of heritage tangible.

3.18. Culinary traditions

Culinary practice is highly symbolic and reflects the values of the society that it feeds. The act of cooking is a key factor in socialisation and affects what is regarded edible, the relations between sexes and generations, social ranking and ritual representation (UNESCO, 2005). Foodstuffs and the consumption thereof are significant to cultures. For example, Indian food is characteristically hot and spicy (curry and masala), and a visit to India would not be complete without such a renowned traditional meal.

3.19. Traditional sports and games

Whether involving skill, chance, corporal expression, and show of force or intelligence, sports and games have played a key role in human society's cultures. UNESCO (2005) observes that a society or culture's games throw light on relations between sexes, generations and conceptions of nature, the universe and life. Ultimately tourists enjoy this cultural sport tourism, involving histories and traditions, and the cultural experience, in terms of sport tourism, falls into two categories: travel to participate and travel to observe (Hall, 1992:147).

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Demarcation of the research area

The study is limited to the indigenous black South African cultures and tourism activities as experienced and perceived by international tourists upon their departure from South Africa.

4.2. Empirical research

The research design of the empirical study aimed to:

- explore the perception of the below-mentioned research population in terms of the South African cultural tourism;
- gather information on the types of cultural attractions visited;
- ascertain the extent to which cultural expectations were met; and
- assist in the formulation of possible recommendations.

The selected research instrument for the study was a questionnaire. A pilot study tested the questionnaire's contents and credibility and this was conducted by a reputable local data processing company one month prior to the actual study.

The research sample of the study consisted of international tourists (Africa excluded due to similarities in majority of cultural offerings) to South Africa. International visitors departing from Cape Town International Airport were included in the study as this city may well be regarded as South Africa's major tourism city (Pirie, 2007:223; Bowden, 2006:31).

A total number of 250 questionnaires were completed. The sample size of the study was based on a representative scientific formula which validated the study with a 9.8 percent allowable error and a 95 percent confidence level and was also based on the number of variables in the research questionnaire (ALPHA, 2005). The data was collected in September 2007 and 250 international tourists were randomly selected to complete the questionnaires in the departure lounge of the above-mentioned airport. In view of the fact that the researcher and a group of fieldworkers personally carried out interviews and provided continuous individual guidance during the completion of the questionnaires by the respondents, it was possible to achieve a 100% response rate. The questionnaires were completed according to the various departure timeslots during the month of September 2007 at the mentioned airport in order to ensure that the widest possible spectrum of visitors was included in the study.

After the data was collected, the information was statistically analysed in order to ensure that all relevant statistical issues were considered. Descriptive statistics were used for this purpose. These statistics provided summaries about the sample and the measure and were used to present quantitative descriptions in a manageable format. Open-ended responses were grouped into meaningful categories through content analysis to further ensure the study's statistical accuracy and adequacy.

5. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS

The main purpose of the empirical study is to provide an indication of the cultural tourism preferences, experiences and satisfaction levels of international tourists upon their departure from South Africa. The intention is neither to make a direct comparison between groups of tourists from the respective countries involved in the research, nor to prove significant differences between the responses of tourist groups between one another or an intended control group. For these reasons a statistical t-test would not have added value to the intended outcome of this study and was therefore omitted (Statsoft, 2008).

The results are organised into the following sections:

- Section A: Respondents' motivation for visiting South Africa
- Section B: The cultural preferences of respondents
- Section C: Cultural satisfaction of respondents
- Section D: Information sources used by respondents
- Section E: Profile of respondents

5.1 Section A: Respondents' motivation for visiting South Africa

This section of the questionnaire sourced information on the main motivations of respondents for visiting South Africa. Furthermore, their perception on cultural tourism to South Africa with regard to knowledge obtained, interesting things to do and see, as well as the atmosphere were tested.

The results of this section indicated that:

- 68 percent of respondents had not visited South Africa before while 32 percent were return travellers;
- 80 percent of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that visiting the country had increased their knowledge of local cultures, while only 5 percent disagreed/strongly disagreed;

- the majority of respondents (87 percent) strongly agreed/agreed that there are plenty of interesting things to see and do in South Africa while only 2 percent disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement;
- 78 percent of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that South Africa has a pleasant cultural atmosphere while only 2 percent disagreed;
- the majority (68 percent) of respondents visited the country for holiday purposes, 11 percent visited friends and relatives, 6 percent visited because of cultural attractions, 5 percent for sport events, another 5 percent for business reasons and 1 percent for the purpose of shopping. It may be argued that although that the majority of respondents were on holiday, they might, as part of their holiday, have engaged in some form of cultural tourism;
- in terms of the type of holiday the majority of respondents (41 percent) were touring, 14 percent were on a city holiday, 12 percent on a cultural holiday, 11 percent on an eco/nature holiday, 8 percent enjoyed the sun and beach, 6 percent were on other unspecified vacations, 5 percent enjoyed a sport holiday while only 2 percent were on a rural holiday and 1 percent were on holiday for health and wellness. None of the respondents were on a creative/educational holiday.

5.2. Section B: Cultural preferences of responses

This section of the questionnaire sourced the cultural preferences which the respondents would most like to experience when on a cultural holiday. The culture offering types, from which respondents could select, were based on UNESCO's list which may be regarded as the most complete and up to date with regard to cultural products (UNESCO 2005). Respondents were also asked not only to select the cultural offering that they would like to experience, but also to indicate the top five choices of cultural offerings that they would most like to experience in order of importance.

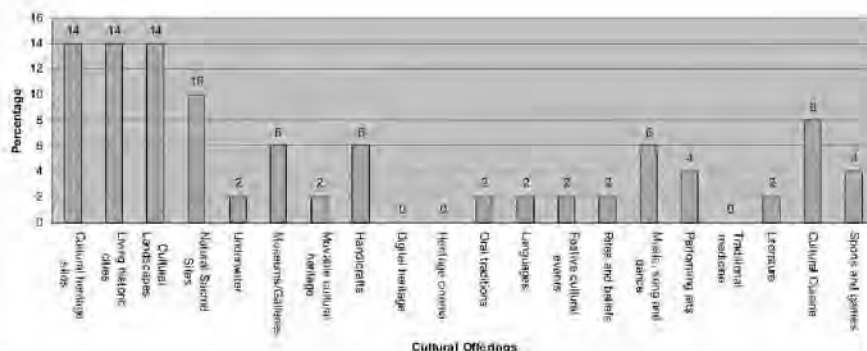


Figure 2: The collection of cultural offerings which respondents would most like to experience when on a cultural holiday

Figure 2 indicates the results of respondents regarding the cultural offerings which respondents would most like to experience when on a cultural holiday. The top three selections include cultural heritage sites (14 percent), living historic cities (14 percent), and cultural landscapes (14 percent). None of the respondents indicated that they would like to experience heritage cinema, digital heritage or traditional medicine. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the top four cultural offerings that respondents would most like to experience relate to sites, cities and landscapes. This may be because of South Africa's arguably well-marketed scenic beauty which international tourists find appealing.

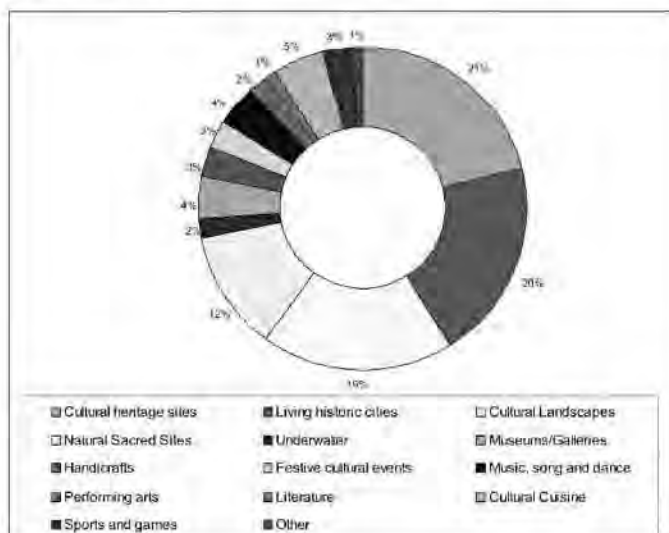


Figure 3: The cultural experiences regarded as most important

Twenty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they regard cultural heritage experiences as most important (Figure 3), while 20 percent regarded living historic cities as most important; 19 percent regarded cultural landscapes as most important; 12 percent of respondents maintained that natural sacred sites are most important. Cultural villages and heritage sites, with a combined percentage of 41 percent, indicate the respondents' desire to learn more about the South African culture, way of life and history.

5.3. Section C: Cultural preferences of respondents

This section investigates the cultural attractions and events that were visited by respondents while on holiday in South Africa, and tests satisfaction levels in this regard. The cultural attractions and events that are represented in this study are based on UNESCO's list of cultural offerings. The following satisfaction levels were indicated by respondents (based on a rating of between 1 and 10):

- **Museums:** 84 percent satisfaction since they rated the visit between 6 and 10 out of 10;
- **Monuments:** 90 percent satisfaction;
- **Art galleries:** 85 percent;
- **Religious sites:** 90 percent;
- **Historic sites:** 92 percent;
- **Theatres:** 86 percent;
- **Heritage/Craft centres:** 96 percent;
- **Cinema:** 91 percent;
- **Cultural villages:** 90 percent;
- **Traditional sports events:** 94 percent;
- **Cultural cuisine:** 93 percent;
- **Dance and music events:** 76 percent;
- **Traditional festivals:** 77 percent;
- **Sacred sites and landscapes:** 96 percent.

The main cultural experiences that respondents would have liked to experience, but that they were unable to experience in South Africa during

their visit were the following (open-ended questions were used to ascertain this information):

- Robben Island (was fully booked): 15 percent of respondents;
- a tour of the history of South Africa in combination with its diverse cultural origins: 5 percent of respondents;
- more authentic time with locals (the township tours were not regarded as authentic enough): 17 percent of respondents;
- more traditional cultural events and festivals: 11 percent of respondents; and
- more exposure to local tribes and tribal cultures: 7 percent of respondents.

5.4. Section D: Information sources used by respondents

This section of the questionnaire centres around the sources of information the respondents made use of in order to arrange travel and accommodation for their visit, as well as sources of travel information consulted before and after arrival in the country.

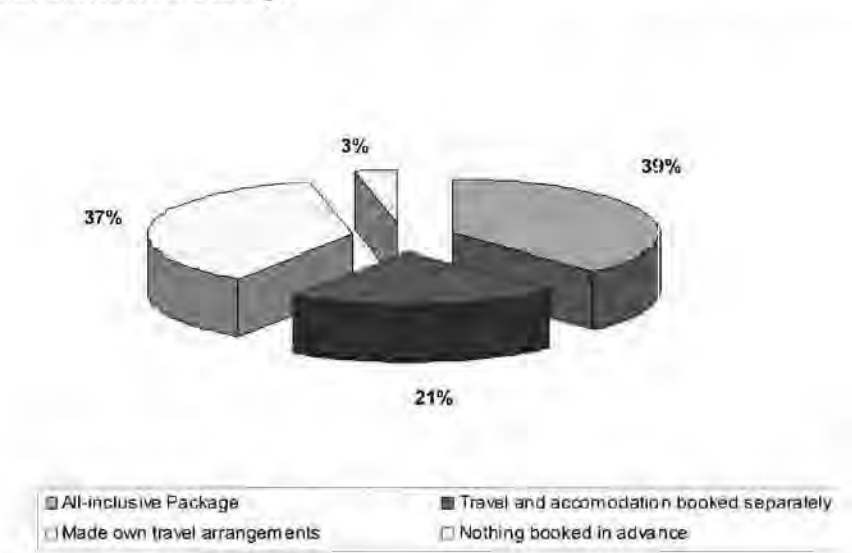


Figure 4: How arrangements were made for travel and accommodation

According to Figure 4, 39 percent of respondents made bookings through an all-inclusive package via a travel agent/tour operator, 37 percent made their

own travel arrangements, while 21 percent booked travel and accommodation separately via travel agents/tour operators and only 3 percent made no advance bookings. It is clear from this graph that the respondents were confident in making their own arrangements, and this may be due to more information availability and access due to the Internet.

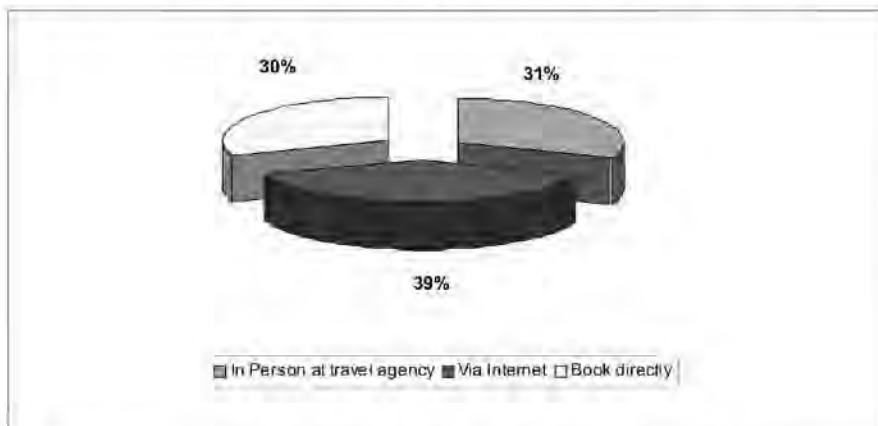


Figure 5: How travel and accommodation bookings were made

From Figure 5, it is apparent that Internet bookings were made by the majority of respondents (39 percent), while 31 percent booked in person at a travel agency and 30 percent of respondents booked directly by phone, fax or email. This graph supports the suggestion that respondents are confident in making their own travel arrangements due to the tangibility brought to the tourism industry via Internet marketing.

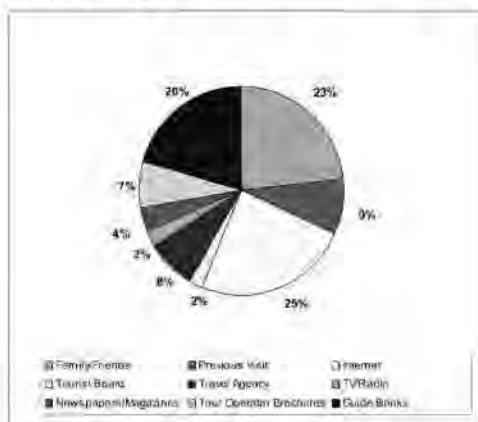


Figure 6: Information sources consulted before arrival

A substantial number of respondents (25 percent) consulted the Internet for information prior to visiting the country, 23 percent consulted family or friends,

20 percent made use of guide books and 9 percent used their previous visit as a reference. Eight percent of respondents consulted travel agencies, 7 percent used tour operator brochures, and 4 percent sourced information from newspapers and magazines while an equal 2 percent of respondents consulted tourist boards and television/radio respectively. This indicates that respondents use the Internet when planning their holiday in their country of residence, arguably due to the ease of access and abundance of information available on the Internet nowadays on South Africa as a tourism destination.

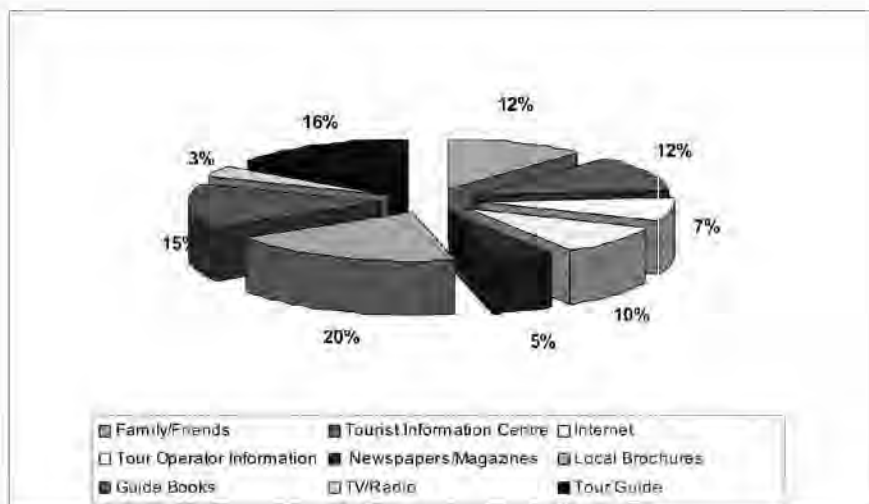


Figure 7: Information sources consulted after arrival

According to Figure 7 respondents indicated that they mostly consulted local brochures (20 percent), followed by tour guides (16 percent), guide books (15 percent) and family and friends (12 percent) as well as tourist information centres (12 percent). Ten percent consulted tour operators, 7 percent consulted the Internet, and 5 percent used local newspapers and magazines while only 3 percent sourced information from South African TV/Radio. Interestingly, respondents' sources of information while in South Africa changed quite a bit from that which they consulted prior to their visit. Primarily local brochures and local tour guides are consulted by the respondents in their search for information on attractions and travel information while in the country. Before any final conclusions may be made, the profile of the respondents has to be ascertained, as this knowledge will provide insight on the type of tourists that participated in this study in terms of certain demographical factors which may be vital to the formulation of a successful marketing strategy in light of this study.

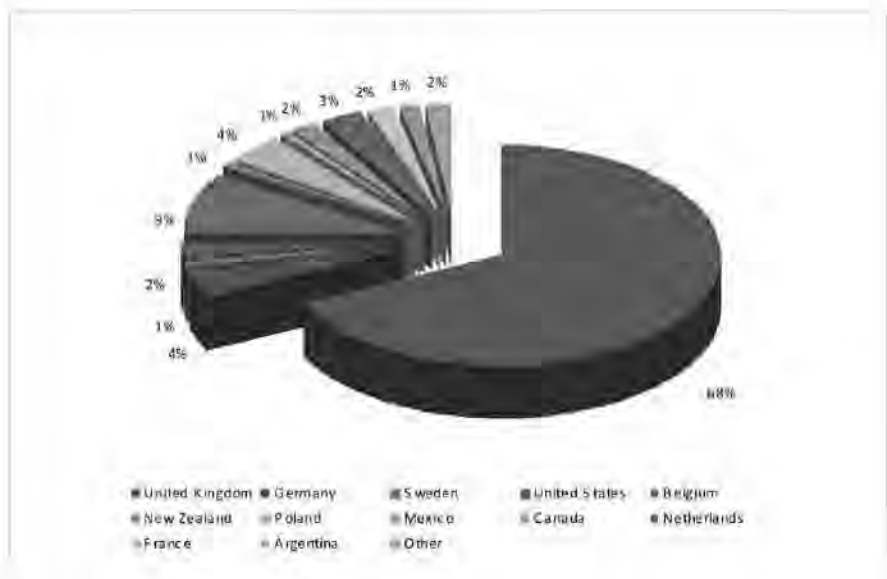


Figure 8: Country of residence

From Figure 8 it is clear that the majority (68 percent) of respondents come from the United Kingdom, followed by Belgium (9 percent), the Netherlands (4 percent) and Germany (4 percent).

Other interesting results regarding the profile of visitors are that:

- 51 percent of the respondents were male and 49 percent female;
- the majority of respondents (36 percent) were aged sixty or over, 18 percent were aged twenty to twenty-nine, 17 percent were aged fifty to fifty-nine, 14 percent were aged thirty to thirty-nine, 13 percent were aged forty to forty-nine and 2 percent of respondents were aged sixteen to nineteen. There may be a greater number of older respondents (53 percent of respondents were 50 years of age and older) due to the fact that, in general, they have relatively more time and disposable income available to take such trips;
- most of the respondents (39 percent) had Bachelor's/Honours degrees while 25 percent had vocational/professional qualifications, 21 percent had secondary/high school qualifications and 15 percent indicated that they have Master's/Doctoral degrees;
- most of the respondents were employees (43 percent), 29 percent were retired, 19 percent were self-employed, 5 percent were students and 1 percent were housewives or stay-at-home care-

givers.

- most of the respondents (30 percent) were directors/managers, while 25 percent were professionals and 12 percent were working in the technical trade. Eleven percent fell in the clerical occupational group, 10 percent fell under the category of other, 6 percent were in the service industry while only 3 percent were involved in manual labour.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research concludes that South Africa's nine provinces offer a variety of cultural offerings; however, the quest for obtaining information on these products proves to be very challenging, making it less accessible to the international market. Therefore, destination marketing organisations (DMOs) should strongly consider marketing these unique products more effectively in their respective provinces as part of South Africa's unique range of offerings. The following recommendations are made:

- Provincial websites should be updated with current information regarding the cultural offerings, including upcoming or annual cultural events. From the results in this study most respondents made use of the Internet in order to gather information. If these sites are easy to navigate and up to date, they will support the attraction of international tourists to the particular province.
- In many cases cultural encounters are not considered authentic according to the respondents of this study. DMOs should ensure authenticity in staged cultural encounters through educating the different provinces' local communities on authentic cultural showcasing.
- In an effort to compile a relatively complete list of cultural offerings, this research found that South Africa is home to numerous cultural villages. However, very little is known about these cultural villages, where they are located, and which cultures they represent. Seeing that cultural villages and historic cities were indicated by respondents of this study to be one of the most important cultural experiences that they would like to have while visiting the country, it is recommended that DMOs include more information on these villages in their marketing efforts.
- In terms of our world famous heritage site, Robben Island, there is currently only one boat servicing this very popular cultural site. This study indicates that many tourists (15 percent) were unable to visit due to the boat being fully booked with only a limited number of trips depending on the day of the week. Recommended is a more extensive accessibility plan, either by hours of operation or more boat trips to the site. Care should however be taken not to overcrowd the

facility, and therefore capacity and quality of experience should be considered when introducing more boats. Other excursions, for example guided helicopter flips over, or rubber-ducking trips to Robben Island, may also add some adventure flair to marketing efforts.

- The marketing efforts of South African cultural products, according to this study, should be aimed at the United Kingdom market to a large extent, as most of the visitors (68 percent) come from that area.
- Cultural product marketing brochures should be updated and attentively designed to pull the international tourist market, seeing that the majority of respondents (20 percent) make use of this type of information source once they have arrived in the country.
- Tour guides and guide books are valuable information sources once tourists are in the country (16 percent of the respondents of this study made travel decisions based on tour guide information and 15 percent consulted guide books). Tour guides must be invited to take familiarisation trips to current cultural offerings in order to experience the product with their own eyes before including it or recommending it as an excursion to tourists. Guide books should also contain updated information on what exactly is offered and should include directions and contact information to make destinations more accessible to tourists in general.
- Some of the very positive cultural experiences as indicated by the respondents include cultural cuisine, heritage sites and sacred sites. These products may be used to further enhance the perception that South Africa offers quality cultural experiences through maintaining the product's appeal, and educating staff in how to reinforce the image of the product.
- The Internet was consulted by most of the respondents of this study before their arrival in South Africa (25 percent). One of the most effective ways to promote a cultural product website is to register with a major search engine such as Google or Blackle (the environmentally friendly version of Google). Virtual marketing is also recommended.
- The study indicates that most of the respondents have high levels of education (39 percent have Bachelor's/Honours degrees and 25 percent have vocational or professional qualifications). Cultural tourism packages should be compiled and targeted to satisfy this demanding market's requirements. For example, cultural encounters should include heritage education and be showcased as interestingly as possible.

- All efforts should be made by DMOs to research the most popular travel literature and other quality overseas magazines in order to identify possible print media sources to promote their cultural products. This study indicates that 68 percent of respondents were from the United Kingdom, and therefore it is recommended to start with that particular country's print media as a first phase.

7. SUMMARY

To summarise the study by taking the research results into consideration, it is clear that cultural tourism in South Africa may not necessarily be as favourable as it should be in terms of attracting international visitors to the country. Furthermore, although the study finds the tourists to be generally satisfied with the cultural experiences they encountered during their visit, there is still room for improvement, and the offering of a greater variety of cultural attractions of world-class quality should be considered.

The marketing message that ought to be used by DMOs to promote the destination as culturally sound should be powerful and strong enough to out-position competing destinations with a strong cultural flavour. It is very important for the country to educate the locals on cultural hospitality and the importance of fostering a unique cultural identity, different from that of any other country. The overseas market should know exactly what cultural products are on offer and that they will be welcomed to participate in the country's way of life whilst on holiday.

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