



Creating a memorable experience for Nelson Mandela Heritage Site visitors

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Abstract

After being in prison for more than 25 years, Nelson Mandela was freed and became the first black President of South Africa to be elected democratically. He was at the vanguard of the South African people's fight for independence and racial equality. Nelson Mandela thus remains a prominent figure in cultural heritage, a niche for the country's emerging cultural heritage tourism. It is, therefore, unsurprising that some of this country's favourite cultural heritage attractions are associated with him. These attractions hold particular promise for the racial transformation of the tourism sector and the empowerment of previously marginalised communities regarding aspects such as job creation, poverty alleviation and local economic development. One of the most important aspects of promoting these attractions is to provide visitors with a memorable experience. Creating such an experience is crucial in retaining and growing the markets of such sites. The purpose of this research was to determine the aspects that create these kinds of visitor experiences at specific Nelson Mandela Heritage Sites (NMHS). The results revealed that the seven identified factors, collectively, are fundamental in creating a memorable visitor experience. This was the first time that memorable experience aspects were determined for NMHS, according to the authors' knowledge. Moreover, this research contributes towards the literature of memorable experience at heritage sites for great luminaries and also makes a practical contribution towards creating these types of experiences in confirming that all possible aspects should be well managed as a collective set to generate memorable site experiences for the majority of visitors.

Key terms: cultural heritage sites, cultural heritage tourism, memorable experience, Nelson Mandela, South Africa

Introduction

One of the most prominent figures in South African cultural heritage is Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela; a great statesman, exemplary humanist, freedom fighter, and strong opponent



of apartheid (Maanga, 2013:96). The annals of history indicate that Nelson Mandela sacrificed his very liberty as well as his private life to the struggle for freedom (Limb, 2008:11), remaining in prison for 27 years. After his release from prison on the 11th of February 1990, Nelson Mandela was elected as the first black South African president in the country's first democratic election. By the time of his death on the 5th of December 2013, Nelson Mandela had come to be widely considered "the father of the nation and the founding father of democracy" within South Africa (Limb, 2008). Across the world, Mandela earned acclaim for his activism in overcoming apartheid and fostering racial reconciliation (NDT, 2014:20).

The story of the struggle for freedom from the apartheid regime to South Africa's current "rainbow nation" forms an integral part of the country's heritage (Masilo & Van der Merwe, 2016:1) and offers a niche for the emerging cultural heritage tourism sector (Ivanovic & Saayman, 2013a:1138). The reason for this is because many of these types of sites, events and personalities are incorporated into cultural heritage products that commemorate or recall unpleasant or traumatic occurrences from the past (Ashworth, 2004; Ivanovic, 2011:62). However, the author argues that there should be no doubt that while the anti-apartheid events may have been dramatic and still memorable, the settings in which they took place are presently not (Ashworth, 2004:7). Therefore, it is imperative to regard them as part of the South African cultural heritage in a genuine spirit of national inheritance (Ivanovic, 2011:62). Furthermore, the birthplaces of some notable political luminaries, including two former Presidents of South Africa, Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, now also form part of the country's heritage (Acheampong, 2011:48).

The term 'Cultural Heritage Tourism' is defined by Richards (1997:24) as the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs. In essence, tourism of this kind is primarily about travelling to venues to experience the attributes of cultural heritage assets, such as monuments, museums as well as political and cultural heritage sites (Hou, 2009; Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2004). Both these definitions stress the importance of the cultural heritage tourist's experience. According to Laing, Wheeler, Reeves and Frost (2014:180), destination managers are increasingly keen to use cultural heritage assets as a platform for encouraging tourism activity. The increased use is due to the 'sustainable competitive advantage' that heritage is perceived to bestow on regional or rural communities (McKercher & Ho, 2006:474). Such perceptions might make the destination distinctive and, through generating revenue for preserving this heritage as well as making these places attractive, make the area liveable for residents (Laing *et al.*, 2014:180).

Previous research on cultural heritage tourism was found to predominantly focus on cultural motivation, satisfaction and the cultural tourist (Leiper, 1990; Richards, 2002); the typology of cultural heritage tourists (McKercher & Du Cross, 2002); cultural heritage consumption (Richards & Palmer, 2010); as well as the authenticity of cultural heritage interpretation (Poria, Biran & Reichel, 2009). According to Hede (2007) and McKercher and Ho (2006), there is still a gap in understanding how visitor experiences develop round a set of heritage assets. In South Africa, as in most other parts of the world, research on cultural heritage tourism has been mostly product-driven (Ivanovic, 2011; Ivanovic & Saayman, 2013a; Ivanovic & Saayman, 2013b) with little research having been undertaken concerning the visitor experience aspect in general and on memorability in particular. The assessments on memorable visitor experiences in South Africa have been carried out in settings such as national parks (Du Plessis, Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2012), game viewing (Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2014) and sport



(Kruger & Saayman, 2012). For the cultural heritage arena, minimal academic literature exists regarding those aspects that contribute to memorable visitor experiences for cultural heritage assets. While a number of researchers have elucidated the importance of experiences in tourist activities around various fields, however, few cultural heritage asset studies of relevance exist.

Thus, the aim of this study was to determine the factors that are important, from a visitor's perspective, for a memorable visitor experience at Nelson Mandela's Heritage Sties (NMHS) in South Africa. Since heritage sites associated with the legacy of Nelson Mandela are some of the most probable reasons for tourists visiting and experiencing South Africa as a new, 'miracle democracy' (Ivanovic, 2011:62) and are receiving increasing interest from local and international visitors (NDT, 2014), it is important to deliver added value as a memorable experience to encourage more visits as well as higher spending by tourists.

Literature study

According to Voss (2004), the importance of experience has gained substantial support from academia and policy makers and is viewed as an essential means of creating superior customer value and competitive advantage in modern business. Pine and Gilmore (1998:98) explain that consumer experience is comparable to an organisation using 'services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event'. Brunner-Sperdin and Peters (2009) argue that the experience value of tourism is the overriding factor influencing customers' motivation to visit the attraction. Offering unusual experiences distinguish organisations from other competing tourism offerings because they have a special meaning for the tourist (Dalton, 2011). Experiences are increasingly being employed as distinct economic offerings in a broad spectrum of commercial contexts (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) and are especially important to cultural heritage tourism since many consumers consider that they help them connect with traditional culture and values (Dalton, 2011).

McIntosh and Prentice (1999:607) consider that many cultural heritage attractions have traditionally presented a 'show and know' version of the past, which lacks emotional impact and does not deliver the experience required by contemporary cultural heritage tourists. According to Timothy (1997) the attraction of a cultural heritage site is not limited to a desire to observe the physical asset, but is related to experiences derived from personal and emotional connections with heritage. Manners, Kruger and Saayman (2012) argue that a mere experience does not appear sufficient; therefore, the focus should shift towards a memorable experience. According to Pizam (2010:343) memorable experiences derive from both tangible and intangible attributes of a place and are regarded as the "raison d'être of the hospitality industry". For Manners *et al.* (2012) a memorable experience is an experience that is not only remembered, but also treasured.

As mentioned, there are very few relevant empirical studies on aspects of cultural heritage sites' memorable experiences, despite several researchers who have pointed out the importance of such aspects in tourist activities (Hede, 2007; McKercher & Ho, 2006). While cultural heritage tourism managers often wish to utilise heritage assets to create memorable visitor experiences, there is limited, if any, information available to these managers in understanding how these experiences might be perceived and valued for tourism purposes (Laing *et al.*, 2013). Tung and Ritchie (2011) conceded that destination managers could merely enhance the probability of delivering memorable



experiences to tourists, through various planning strategies. In cultural heritage tourism, discussions of tourism experience are often linked to those of authenticity, which refers to an experience or product that is original and real (Yeoman, Brass & McMahon-Beattie, 2007). This is because seeking a sense of authenticity is an important motivator for cultural heritage tourists (Poria, Reichel & Biran, 2006). The importance of authenticity in tourism experience and satisfaction is noteworthy (Chhabra, 2010). Chhabra (2010) argued that tourists' satisfaction with their authentic experience is not limited to object-based authenticity, but also includes negotiated and existential authenticities, in which negotiated authenticity involves educational experience and a sense of connections with one's heritage, while existential authenticity produces an emotional experience. In addition to the concern for tourists' authentic experience at a visited heritage site, a memorable tourism experience is also an important factor for enhancing tourists' satisfaction with the site visited (Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

Tung and Ritchie (2011) explored the essence of memorable tourism experiences and identified four dimensions which were particularly memorable for tourists: affect, expectations, consequentiality and recollection. To enhance cultural heritage tourists' experience and satisfaction with the visited site, Lo (2013) argued that it is necessary to understand how tourists produce positive feelings as regards the visited site. The three psychological processes emerging from the belief-attitude-behaviour theory of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) pioneered a useful direction for how to examine the tourism experience. In recent years, Dijk and Weiler (2009) used 10 indicators, including tourists' knowledge, attitude, emotional thought and behavioural intention toward the heritage site, to evaluate tourism experience in terms of three aspects: cognitive, affective and behavioural construct.

Prentice and McGugan (1998) proposed four types of psychological processes in which tourists learned about heritage sites and engendered their memorable experience of the site: i.e. attentional, affective, cognitive and compensatory processes. Similarly, McIntosh and Prentice (1999) suggested that tourists affirm their experience of authenticity with a heritage site through three psychological processes of reinforced assimilation, cognitive perception and retroactive association, affecting empathy and satisfaction. Pearce (2009:40) recommended that researchers record 'tourists' on-site emotion as a sophisticated and more expansive view of tourists' experiences and satisfaction'. Filep and Deery (2010) also suggested that tourists' satisfaction can be evaluated during three phases of a tour: anticipation, on-site experience and reflections after the visit.

The studies mentioned above made a considerable contribution to the study of 'memorable experience' in tourism in general and cultural heritage tourism in particular. However, their research did not answer questions such as: What attributes from the cultural heritage tourists' perspective create memorable visitor experience? Is it the site (physical appearance or state and surroundings) and/or on-site activities that enhance memorable visitor experience? Is it the location or even the history of the cultural heritage site that makes the experience memorable? Is it the forms or means (audio-visual shows or display areas) that are used to interpret heritage sites? Alternatively, is it the presentation and interpretation of the site itself? These are just a few aspects that could play a role in creating cultural heritage tourists' memorable experiences. Therefore, it was anticipated that this study would make a definite contribution to the literature and to practitioners.

Method of study



Study area

The Nelson Mandela Museum was selected for this study in an attempt to determine the factors that create a memorable experience for NMHS visitors. Situated in the Eastern Cape Province, the museum was conceptualised as a single museum with three interrelated components. These components include the Bhunga Building (the management and administration centre of the museum); the Nelson Mandela Youth and Heritage Centre (a community museum) at Qunu; and the Mvezo homestead (the birthplace of Nelson Mandela). The museum was selected as it depicts the story of the life and times of one of South Africa's leaders. The museum's Footprints Trail extends from its physical facilities, through the schools and churches once attended by Nelson Mandela, through the playground (sliding stone of Qunu) of his childhood, through the villages that nurtured him, to the towns and cities beyond (NDT, 2014). According to Wisani (2015), the museum's popularity saw rapid growth following Nelson Mandela's death and a doubling of the daily number of local as well as international visitors.

Despite the increase in tourist numbers in the Eastern Cape Province, Acheampong (2011) emphasised that this province is one of the poorest and least developed provinces in South Africa with an indigent record of delivery of municipal services such as water, sewerage, sanitation, electricity, housing, roads and many others. A high unemployment level and an extreme degree of poverty constitute some of the biggest problems in the region (Acheampong, 2011).

Furthermore, the O.R. Tambo District Municipality (under which the administration of the study area falls) is rated the second most deprived local municipality (LM) in the province (DEDEAT, 2013), hardest hit by poverty (Acheampong, 2011). According to the Eastern Cape, Tourism Master Plan (ECTMP) foreign tourism market share in the province continues to decline, both in volume and value (DEDEAT, 2011). This is despite the province having potential due to the rich cultural heritage it possesses, being the birthplace of a number of struggle heroes (DEDEAT, 2013).

Questionnaire

A questionnaire consisting of twelve closed-ended questions and one open-ended question was developed. The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A of the questionnaire was developed with reference to related previous literature produced by researchers, including, Poria *et al.* (2004); Hou (2009); Ivanovic (2011); Ivanovic and Saayman (2013a); Ivanovic and Saayman (2013b); Masilo and Van der Merwe (2016), to name merely a few. This Section captured, firstly, socio-demographic details: gender, age, language, province, education; secondly, behavioural characteristics: mode of transport, NMHS visited, knowledge pertaining to the history and legacy of Nelson Mandela, words that best describe him as well as sources of information for NMHS. Section B measured 43 attributes for a memorable visitor experience and was devised on a 5-point Likert scale (where '1' = *not at all important* and '5' = *extremely important*).

Telephonic interviews were conducted with managers of selected heritage sites associated with the legacy of Nelson Mandela (including the Nelson Mandela Museum) from across South Africa, during April 2015, to obtain their views about what visitors to their heritage sites deem as memorable experiences. These interviews played a major role in the further development of Section B of the questionnaire. The following heritage site managers were contacted:



- Robben Island and Museum, Cape Town
- The Mandela Museum, (Bhunga Building), Eastern Cape
- Mandela Capture Site, Howick
- Voting Line Sculpture, Port Elizabeth
- Mandela House Museum, Soweto
- Liliesleaf Heritage Site, Johannesburg
- Nelson Mandela Youth and Heritage Centre (community museum), Mvezo
- Constitution Hill, Johannesburg
- Nelson Mandela Bridge, Johannesburg
- Alexandra Yard Precinct, Johannesburg
- Kliptown Open Air Museum, Soweto
- Hector Pieterse Museum, Soweto
- Alexandra Heritage Precinct, Alexandra

Survey and sampling method

The manner in which the data was collected is two-fold in the sense that the same questionnaire was distributed both online and physically at a NMHS.

For the first sample (online questionnaire), the questionnaire was ported to Google Forms where a link to the questionnaire was generated which was sent to the managers of the NMHS to place on their websites and social media pages, as well as other public tourism heritage groups on social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Using convenience sampling, a total of 123 (n) questionnaires were obtained through this sampling technique from July to September 2015.

For the second phase of sampling, a printed questionnaire was distributed by trained fieldworkers to willing respondents at the Nelson Mandela International birthday celebration from 17 to 18 July 2015 (two days) at the Nelson Mandela Youth Heritage Centre in Qunu (which, as noted, forms part of the NMHS for this study). By means of convenience sampling within stratified sampling, a total of 260 (n) questionnaires were obtained at four points in this area: Nelson Mandela Youth Heritage Centre (n=90), Nelson Mandela Youth and Heritage Centre sport grounds (n=35), Nelson Mandela Youth and Heritage Centre Amphitheatre (n=80) and Nelson Mandela Youth and Heritage Centre gardens (n=55).

When pooling the questionnaires of the two samples, the total sample was 383 (n), which may be interpreted as valid according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) who pointed out that one needs 383 (n) respondents for a population of 1 000 000 (N) in order to obtain a representative sample with 95% confidence and a $\pm 5\%$ sampling error.

Microsoft Excel was used to capture the data of the respondents, while SPSS (2015) was used to analyse the data. The first analysis that was employed used descriptive statistics in the form of frequency tables, which created an understanding of the respondents' socio-demographic information, as well as other preferences and behavioural aspects. The second analysis employed was a principal axis factor analysis, which assisted in the grouping of variables that referred to the various memorable experience statements. This factor analysis made use of an Oblimin rotation with Kaiser Normalization, which was performed on 39 memorable experience attributes, to explain the variance-covariance structure of a set of constructs through a few linear combinations of these variables.



The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was used to determine whether the covariance matrix was suitable for factor analysis. Kaiser’s criteria, for the extraction of all factors with eigenvalues larger than one, were used as they were considered to explain a significant amount of variation in the data. All items with a factor loading greater than 0.3 were considered as contributing to a factor, and all items with loadings less than 0.3 as not correlating significantly with this factor (Field, 2009). Any item that cross-loaded on two factors with factor loadings both greater than 0.3 was categorised in the factor where it was best interpreted. The percentage of variance explained by the factor analysis was 66.89%. A reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) was computed for each factor to estimate its internal consistency. All factors with a reliability coefficient above 0.6 were considered as acceptable in this study. The average inter-item correlations were also computed as another measure of reliability – these, according to Clark and Watson (1995), should lie between 0.15 and 0.55.

Results of study

Respondents’ profile

Table 1 presents the profile of survey respondents. The percentage of females (56%) was slightly higher than that of male respondents (44%). Most of the respondents (77%) were between the ages of 20 to 39 years with an average age of 31.82 year. Regarding language, the majority (65%) of the respondents spoke isiXhosa. Such a ratio (65%) could also have been affected by the fact that most of the responses (n=260) were obtained from the respondents who visited the Nelson Mandela Museum (Qunu) during his International birthday celebrations, as described above. South African citizens accounted for 96% of the respondents. The majority of the respondents came from the Eastern Cape Province (68%). The larger percentage of Eastern Cape respondents is attributed to the fact that a physical questionnaire was distributed in this area. Respondents were well educated with 44% having obtained a diploma or degree and 24% who had obtained a post-graduate degree.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Characteristic	Aspect
Gender	Female (56%), Male (44%)
Age	20-29 years (51%), 30-39 years (26%); Average age:31.82
Home language	isiXhosa (66%), English (13%), Afrikaans (10%), Other: African (9%), Other: European (2%)
Country of origin	South Africa (96%)
Province of residents	Eastern Cape (68%), Gauteng (10%), North West (7%)
Education	Diploma/Degree (44%), Post Graduate (24%), Matric (24%)

Memorable experience factors

Table 2 reports the seven factors identified according to the Likert scale. These factors all obtained mean values between 3.66 and 3.99 and are therefore seen as important



factors contributing to memorable experience. These factors are discussed in order from the one that obtained the highest mean value, to the one that obtained the lowest value.

Accessibility (Factor 4), obtained a mean value of 3.99, making it the most important factor that may contribute to visitors' memorable experience. This factor contributed aspects such as: staff should be able to assist disabled persons, flexible hours (open early, close late), and facilities accessible to the handicapped (disabled friendly) should be available. *Quality service* (factor 2) was considered as the second most important factor (mean value of 3.94) comprising variables such as: staff should be friendly, staff should be knowledgeable about all aspects of the heritage site, the heritage site should be clean (no litter, pollution), staff need to be willing to assist visitors. The third most important factor, *Interpretation* (Factor 6) had a mean value of 3.93 and contained such aspects as signage showing visitors where to go, signage interpreting heritage sites to visitors and facilities which have the ability to encourage learning.

Convenience (Factor 7) included statements such as: parking facilities (located close to facilities), sufficient number of parking spaces, reasonable prices (entrance, curios), and experienced tour guides able to interpret all aspects. This factor obtained a mean value of 3.84 and was considered to be the fourth most important factor contributing towards a memorable visitor experience for NMHS. *Amenities* (Factor 3) was rated the fifth most important factor with a mean value of 3.82. This factor included such aspects as the following: the site must provide a fun experience, a sufficient number of ablution facilities (toilets, washing basins) and site buildings should complement the building designs of the area while there should be ample seating areas.

Modern facilities (Factor 5), as well as *Technology* (Factor 1) factors, obtained the lowest mean values (3.70 and 3.66, respectively). Factor 5 included mostly aesthetic attributes such as: facility interiors should be modern and clean, there should be a restaurant, site setting attractive (beautiful natural environment), and buildings modern and appealing, whilst Factor 1 captured aspects such as the latest forms of technology, sufficient informative multimedia, interpretation for children's' understanding, safe facilities, eco-friendly sites (solar panels, recycling), efficient and reliable bookings/reservation systems, and children's facilities (play areas, informative videos). It is interesting to note that the mean values do not differ significantly, which suggests that respondents value these factors almost equally in providing a memorable experience.



Table 2: Factor analysis results of aspects of memorable visitor experience

Aspects that contribute to a memorable experience	Factor 1: Technology	Factor 2: Quality service	Factor 3: Amenities	Factor 4: Accessibility	Factor 5: Modern facilities	Factor 6: Interpretation	Factor 7: Convenience
MEAN VALUES	3.66	3.94	3.82	3.99	3.70	3.93	3.84
RELIABILITY COEFFICIENT	0.91	0.94	0.88	0.66	0.81	0.79	0.83
INTER ITEM CORRELATION	0.55	0.58	0.55	0.41	0.52	0.44	0.54
Latest forms of technology should be used at the heritage site	.641						
Sufficient informative multimedia (videos, sound clips, etc.)	.626						
Interpretation should be made in such a way that young children will also understand	.593						
Safe facilities where visitors can store their belongings	.590						
The site should be eco-friendly (solar panels, recycling, etc.)	.568						
Facilities for children (play areas, informative videos, etc.)	.500						
Shaded areas should be available (to shelter from the sun)	.412						
Mobile sound devices with recorded information on the site should be made available to visitors	.362						
Staff should be friendly		-.741					
Staff should be knowledgeable pertaining to all aspects of the heritage site		-.705					
Heritage site should be clean (no litter, pollution, etc.)		-.704					
Staff should be willing to assist visitors		-.681					
Location should be easily accessible (e.g. good road infrastructure)		-.534					
Proper contextualisation of history (explain how his history affects us today)		-.523					
Promises made to visitors should be kept		-.521					
Brochure with map and details of area should be provided		-.419					



Efficient reception desk (enough staff. short queues, etc.)		- .353				
General maintenance of facilities should be good		- .317				
Temperature control inside buildings (for comfort)		- .306				
The site must provide a fun experience			- .730			
Sufficient number of ablution facilities (toilets. washing basins etc.)			- .681			
Site buildings should complement the building designs of the area			- .622			
Sufficient seating areas			- .537			
A person should be able to learn from the site			- .530			
Personal belongings should be on display to create a more intimate experience			- .518			
Flexible hours (open early. close late)				.889		
Facilities should be accessible for disabled persons (disabled friendly)				.550		
Staff should be able to assist disabled persons				.391		
The site should have a restaurant					- .698	
Site setting must be attractive (beautiful natural environment)					- .691	
Buildings should be modern and appealing					- .577	
Facility interiors should be modern and clean					- .325	
Signage interpreting heritage sites to visitors						.413
Facilities must have the ability to encourage learning						.385
Signage showing visitors where to go						.355
Convenient parking facilities (located close to facilities)						.762
Sufficient number of parking spaces						.667
Reasonable prices (entrance, curios etc.)						.646
Skilled tour guides to interpret all aspects						.392



Findings and implications

The findings of this study are discussed from two points of view: firstly, the respondents' socio-demographic profile and secondly, the memorable experience factors.

Socio-demographic findings

Firstly, when examining respondents' ages, it becomes apparent that a younger generation is interested in NMHS, in comparison to other studies (Huh, 2002) which revealed that visitors to cultural heritage sites are of a more mature age. However, this study's finding is supported by Hou (2009) as well as Ivanovic (2011). Nelson Mandela exercised a profound influence on the lives of many people, in recent history, meaning that most people alive now might have been impacted by him in one way or another. As a result, people of all ages might feel a sense of loyalty towards NMHS. The latter is necessary for marketing purposes in that marketing messages should attempt to create a direct personal link between the heritage sites and the visitors in order make more people feel that they need to visit (out of loyalty).

Secondly, studies by Nkwanyana (2012), Ivanovic (2011) and Hou (2009) as well as Huh (2002), reveal that females are frequent consumers of cultural heritage more than males. This study supports that notion. Those who spoke IsiXhosa and were from the Eastern Province made up the majority of the respondents. This finding corresponds with that of Nkwanyana (2012) but contradicts the findings by Khumalo, Sebatlelo and Van der Merwe (2014), who found that English-speaking respondents dominated the cultural heritage visitors. Cultural heritage visitors and non-visitors tend to be well educated as many of them have attained some form of diploma or degree. The findings of the current study support the studies of Ivanovic (2011), Huh (2002) and Hou (2009). However, it contradicts the findings of Nkwanyana's research (2012) that indicate that cultural heritage tourists mostly have just secondary level education. This information, as a collective, can be used to create marketing strategies to attract visitors to NMHS. Except for the English marketing messages, which are aimed at a more international audience, the marketing messages should also be translated into various South African languages to make it more inclusive in that these sites also apply to most South Africans.

Memorable experience findings

The analysis identified seven factors that play a role in creating a memorable visitor experience at NMHS (in order of importance): *Accessibility, Quality service, Interpretation, Convenience, Amenities, Modern facilities* and *Technology*. This study is the first of its kind (to the authors' knowledge) to determine factors that create a memorable experience specific to cultural heritage tourism arena; the findings were therefore compared to other studies undertaken about tourism experience in general.

Accessibility obtained the highest mean value, revealing that it is regarded as the most important aspect. The high mean value implies that tourism managers must manage those aspects that they do have control over (or at least to some extent) such as effective accessibility to the sites. This factor includes features such as roads which must be in good condition as well as proper signage. Therefore, management should ensure that all aspects of accessibility are well managed, including disability friendly facilities. Marketing messages should also clearly showcase the particular NMHS's accessibility. The findings of this study support the work of Hun (2002) and Hou (2009).

It was found that the aspect of *quality service* obtained the second highest mean value. Cultural heritage tourism management exercises direct control over this factor and



should, therefore, pay close attention to it. This finding implies that the management should ensure that performance of staff is at optimal levels as it is crucial in creating a memorable experience. Staff training should thus be an on-going process for managers as staff members are instrumental in shaping the on-site experience due to continuous interactions with visitors through various activities. This finding supports the study by Hun (2002) who regarded quality service as essential for overall satisfaction of visitors within heritage sites. As with Lo (2013), *interpretation* was identified as another important factor in creating memorable visitor experiences. One explanation is that effective on-site interpretation contributes greatly to raising visitors' awareness of the cultural value of the visited site. This implies that managers and marketers should make use of a variety of forms and means, including audio-visual shows and display areas to interpret heritage sites to visitors.

The fourth as well as the fifth findings which revealed that *convenience* as well as *amenities* are crucial for visitors at Heritage sites, reflecting similar findings in this regard to those by McLean (1997) and Hou (2009). This implies that managers and marketers should properly manage and enhance these aspects in order to create memorable visitor experiences. As an example, tourism managers should emphasise and promote parking options available at the sites. Parking facilities may be a limiting factor and thus deter visitors from travelling to or stopping at the site. With respect to amenities, tourism managers and marketers should ensure that there are enough resting areas within the sites, specifically for the elderly and disabled, adequate, clean and hygienic ablution facilities as well as visible dustbins within the site.

The study pointed to *modern facilities* as well as *technology* as factors that also contribute towards creating memorable experiences, but to a slightly lesser extent when compared to the other factors. The importance of these aspects concurs with research done by Nguyen and Cheung (2015:1004) but contradicts the work of Boswijk, Thijssen and Peelen (2007). Although the factor of *technology* was regarded as the least significant memorable experience contributor in this study, its mean value still points to a significant influence and should therefore also be investigated. Given that the profile also pointed towards a younger market, technology might play a more important role for them. This implies that this market is likely to regard technology as imperative because of its current ubiquitous role in their lives.

Although there are differences in the importance of the memorable experience factors, it should be noted that all factors are deemed as important and therefore, all of them should be taken into account when attempting to create memorable visitor experiences at NMHS.

Conclusions

The aim of this research was to determine the aspects that respondents perceive as essential for creating a memorable visitor experience at NMHS. Seven important contributing factors were identified (in order of importance), namely quality service, accessibility, convenience, amenities, interpretation, technology, and modern facilities. For the purpose of this study, these aspects are all regarded as important and, therefore, attention should be given to all of them in planning, managing and marketing. A memorable experience, according to the respondents, will not be generated by paying attention simply to one or two aspects, but rather to a host of aspects that should be managed in such a way as to create a total memorable visitor experience. This article makes two contributions to the current literature; firstly, this study contributes towards the



understanding of what people might expect from a NMHS, for instance, in order to come to know who Nelson Mandela was, as well as to experience what he accomplished in such a way that they will leave with a sense of altered perceptions. Secondly, considering the growth and popular appeal of cultural heritage tourism, there will undoubtedly be greater competition amongst destinations, making this study valuable as its findings contribute towards the sustainable, optimal managing of cultural heritage site visitor experiences. This research also highlights the fact that much more research at such sites should be done to develop theories and models that address the aspect of memorable experience in cultural heritage sites as well as cultural heritage routes that are still being contemplated, such as the Nelson Mandela Freedom Route. This research should also be diversified to encompass other cultural heritage assets such as museums, cultural events and festivals, cultural villages.

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