

# Implications of the Goal Theory on air show programs planning

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## Abstract

Events have long played an important role in human society (Shone & Parry, 2010: 3). The toils and efforts of daily lives have often been broken up by events of all kinds as humans seek an escape from the harsh reality of existence and events provide the outlet. Events are classified into four categories according to Shone and Parry (2010: 5) namely leisure (sport, recreation), personal (weddings, birthdays), cultural (art, folklore) and organizational (politics, commercial). Successful events either match or exceed visitor motives and goals. It is critical that data be collected from visitors to determine their motives and goals in order to satisfy them and thereby encouraging repeat visits.

One such event is the annual air show held at the Zwartkop Air Force Base (AFB) in Pretoria, South Africa. Zwartkop AFB is also home to the South African Air Force (SAAF) museum that also the hosts of the air show. Much of the museum's funds are generated through hosting the air show and sponsor contributions. Visitor goal satisfaction should therefore be of critically importance to the program planners. Military hardware has long held a fascination for those who used them and inspired the imagination of young and old. Such hardware often serves as a remembrance of times passed and as a testament to those who perished. For many visiting museums and air shows, curiosity plays a big role. The particular focus of this article will be on how the goal theory of leisure travel can be utilized by the air show organizers to enhance visitor experience to an air show.

**Keywords:** Goal theory, air show; visitor; events planning, QoL (Quality of Life), positive and negative affects.

## INTRODUCTION

There are a wide range of historic attractions that tourists can visit which including museums, heritage sites, parks and botanical gardens (Graham and Lennon, 2002). One could argue that the SAAF Museum at Zwartkops although not well known, plays an important part in preserving elements of South Africa's history. Furthermore the potential for domestic and international air show tourism generation should also be considered as a means for generating funds preserving history.

Museums have always been tourist attractions and have served as an educational tool for those who want to learn more. People regardless of their race have a thirst for seeing powerful military hardware on display at bases or in museums or at air-shows. There is something captivating and thrilling when viewing machines

of destruction. The power and grace of military airplanes and helicopters inspires the imagination and romanticises air combat and war. But for those that use/d the machines a more sombre picture comes to mind, that of destruction and death. Museums are viewed as attractions and a precious permanent resource that should be managed for the education, pleasure, enjoyment, leisure time of their visitors (Middleton & Clarke, 2001).

Consequently the exhibits in a museum and the manner in which they are set out allow tourists to essentially rise "above and beyond" the exhibition halls of the museum, as they recreate the past and shape individuals perceptions of the present. The SAAF museum Zwartkop has a distinct advantage as it hosts an annual air show which gives airtime to some of the museum aircraft fleet.

## BACKGROUND TO THE MUSEUM

The SAAF holds the prestige's title as the second oldest air force in the world (after the Royal Air Force). As such the collection of vintage aircraft should be on display. Unfortunately no effort was made to preserve the aircraft used after the First World War. In 1942 a War Museum was established in Johannesburg but no museum was dedicated to the needs of the air force. Historical aircraft used in the Second World War were also not preserved with most being scrapped. Retired aircraft slowly began to serve as "gate guards" at various military bases across South Africa.

During the SAAF 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations in 1970 little evidence was available to reflect its rich aviation past. During that time the war museum was rejecting numerous historical aircraft due to a lack of storing and display space. Several historical planes were disposed of such as the rare Tutor, Wapiti and Fury. Other historical pieces suffered from neglect and environmental exposure as they were displayed outside.

The SAAF Museum was established in 1973 under the guidance of Col. PJM McGregor. The headquarters of which are located at Swartkop Air Force Base, Pretoria. Satellite branches of the museum were also created at Ysterplaat Air Force base, Cape Town as well as Air Force Base Port Elizabeth. These museums enabled the SAAF to present various aspects of its aviation heritage and spread them across South Africa. These museums host various artefacts, aircraft and other memorabilia from the Air Force as well as private donations from the public who have South Africa's military aviation at heart. These donations have enabled the museum to present a useful insight into the history of the SAAF. Various programmes such as the Young Falcons Program are presently run by the museum to educate the youth on the history and importance of the SAAF. These initiatives serve to identify youth who can later enlist in the air force and follow a career as engineers, navigators or pilots once they have graduated. After the museum was opened in 1973 many aircraft were rescued from scrap-yards nationwide. Some aircraft were also donated to the museum by local and international donors.

The museum uses chronological as well as subjective display layouts which add realism and depth to relate the story of the SAAF development. Museum pieces such as the French Mirage III are excellent examples of early jets used in the SAAF. The aircraft on displays enable visitors to get 'up-close and personal' in order to experience the size of the aircraft as well as allow tangible contact.

**Hanger 1** is renowned for its helicopter display and features three helicopters that changed the history of rotary flight in South Africa. The primary display is the Alpha-XH1 developmental helicopter used in planning the Rooivalk attack helicopter. An example of an Allouette helicopter and a Puma helicopter are also on display. Other exhibits display important moments in South Africa's helicopter history through photographs and cabinet displays.

**Hanger 2** contains aircraft from the Cold War era such as the Mirage F1 and MIG 21. These planes took part in the South Africa-Angola conflict from 1960-1989 which was a controversial time in South Africa's political history when many young white South Africans were drafted into the armed forces or were sent to jail. South Africa's involvement in the Angola conflict was kept secret from its citizens for a long period.

**Hanger 3** is regarded as a treasure chest of South Africa's aviation history. The display features the locally developed Cheetah fighter aircraft (upgraded Mirage III); the P86 Sabre used during the Korean War, a de Havilland Vampire as well as a Buccaneer.

The main display hall offers an insightful history in to South Africa's aviation history. The hall exhibits rare aircraft, components and historical memorabilia to visitors. Several display areas are dedicated to campaigns the SAAF took part in during its history which include World War II (1939-1945), The Korean War (1950-1954) and The Bush War (1960-1989). There are also displays on the liberation struggle against Apartheid. The museum is also home to one of only two Feazler aircraft left in the world. Other exhibits showcase uniforms, medals and artefacts from famous South African aviators are displayed in glass cabinets.

The art gallery in the main hall features displays by various South African artists of the SAAF's aviation history.

### **Purpose of the museum**

- To collect, preserve, restore and exhibits articles, records and aircraft which embody the history and traditions of the SAAF.
- To educate and stimulate interest amongst the general public and youth in military aviation
- The museum is also tasked with research into the history and traditions of the SAAF.

The administrative headquarters of the museum is located at AFB Zwartkop. The staffs are responsible for historical research on behalf of squadrons as well as local and overseas researchers. Furthermore they are tasked with photographing and documenting the current SAAF aircraft as well as managing the model aircraft building.

An on-base library offers valuable periodicals on the SAAF history and technical books dating as far back as the First World War. Other items include aircrew logbooks, maps, posters, press cuttings and SAAF memorabilia.

Many retired aircraft such as Mustang Sally a P51 aircraft are used to perform air shows across the country. The "Historical Flight" division is responsible for operating and maintaining these aircraft as well as approving pilots to fly at such events. The logistical challenge facing the museum is the maintenance of these display aircraft as spare parts are not available any more.

### **IMPORTANCE OF MILITARY MUSEUMS**

Military Museums serve as a hub for the safekeeping of military machines, artefacts, records and memorabilia. They are charged with the preservation of history regarding important events that influenced the history of a country as well as the restoration and display of military vehicles and equipment. They serve as vital sources of "living history" and provide visitors with insight into the upcoming fragile world we inhabit (Nicolaidis, 2011: 5). Military museums

who offer guided tours provide background to the displays and enhance visitor knowledge and understanding. Tourists who visit museums see themselves and their culture reflected in such a way that they are encouraged to gain fresher perspectives, make new connections, understand in different ways and also learn more (Falk, 2004).

### **CHALLENGES FACING THE MUSEUM**

There are numerous challenges facing the SAAF museum Zwartkop both directly and indirectly. Due to financial constraints of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) the SAAF has begun a process of down scaling the museum's 45 strong aircraft fleet. Linkages with business have been sought and are still an ongoing process.

Competition from other forms of tourism for tourists and tourist's pockets is also a relevant threat as people have limited leisure time and disposable income to spend. Tourists are now more knowledgeable through the use of the internet and are much more value conscious. The recent worldwide economic recession since 2011 has forced tourists to count their pennies and take shorter holidays closer to home. Tourists are constantly looking for shorter breakaway activities which are cheaper and offer more entertainment. The museum is a short drive (1½ hours) from anywhere in the Gauteng Province, which is the most populated province in South Africa making it an ideal day tour breakaway destination.

Rayner (2006) argues that a battlefield site's will only be preserved if it encourages development which is dependent on an increase in tourist numbers. The same argument can be made about military museums such as the SAAF museum Zwartkop. Although some of the museum-pieces are kept in hangars others are on display outside and as such vulnerable to the elements. Over time these museum-pieces will need maintenance and care in order to preserve their authentic look. It should be realised that the museum and its contents can only be preserved if they are economically viable investments for government or business. By increasing the museums and air show's commercial level, local/national government or even business

might be encouraged to invest in its long term future. A further consideration is authentic nature of the displays and air show performances. More and more visitors seek an authentic experience above all else. If a museum or air show does not fulfil the wants (goals) of the visitor they will simply never return. This poses a great challenge to any museum and air show but especially military museums and air shows where the military history of a country and equipment is portrayed. The SAAF museum Zwartkop is in a very privileged position as it is able to satisfy the visitor's need for authentic and live demonstrations during the air show held there.

### AIR SHOW

One of the biggest problems faced by event organisers is visitor desensitisation brought on by the digital age. Program planners not only compete with local air shows but with air shows globally. Visitor expectations change as they are exposed to what they see on TV, YouTube and social media. What they see becomes the expected standard for all similar events.

### Future attendance

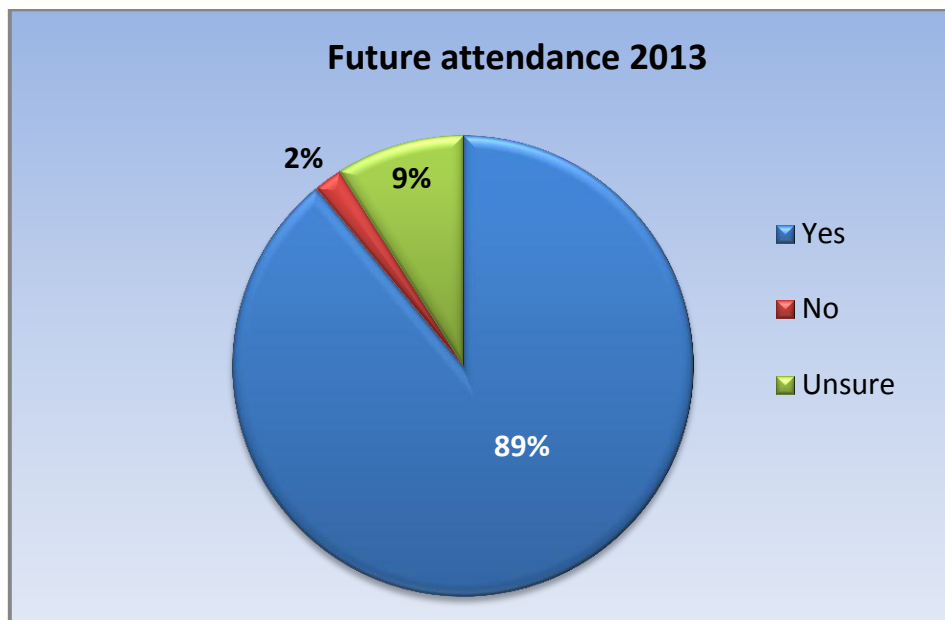


Figure 1: The 2012 visitor response to future attendance of the Zwartkop Air Show, 2013.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the majority (89%) of the respondents indicated that they would attend the air show again in 2013. Two percent

According to Shone and Parry (2010, p. 23) data on visitors is of vital importance to event organisers, not only for marketing purposes but also to ascertain visitors want (goals). With this in mind the researcher with permission of the Zwartkop museum management undertook visitor research during the 2012\2013 Zwartkop air show. Each year's sample size consisted of ±280 questionnaires with multiple demographic, geographic and visitor perception questions. The following three questions had the most relevance to this study and will be discussed next:

- Would you attend the Zwartkop air show the following year?
- What are your main reasons for attending the Zwartkop air show?
- What attractions or activities would you like to see more of in the future at the Zwartkop air show?

indicated that they would not return in 2013 and nine percent were unsure.

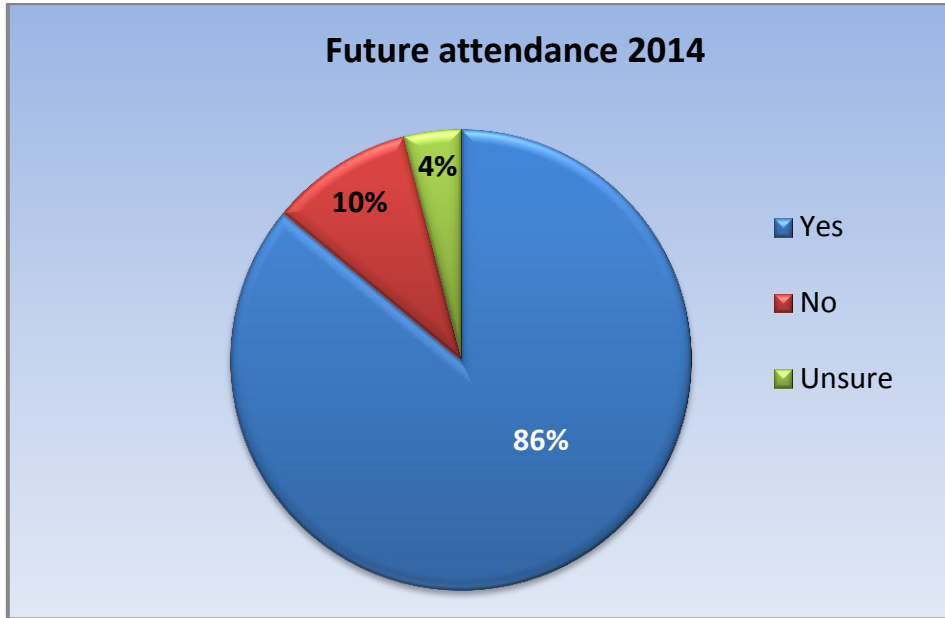


Figure 2: The 2013 visitor response to future attendance of the Zwartkop Air Show, 2014.

As can be seen in Figure 2, the majority (86%) of the respondents indicated that they would attend the air show again. Ten percent were not willing to go to the air show in 2014 and four percent were unsure.

When comparing Figure 1 and Figure 2 a disturbing trend emerges. The number of responded who indicated that they would not attend the Zwartkop air show again the following

year rose from two percent in 2013 to nine percent for 2014. That is an increase of 450% who would not attend during 2014. Coupled with the reported dwindling number of visitors, 60 000 visitors during 2011 (Oosthuizen, 2012) to 30 000 during 2014 (SAAF Museum, 2014) does not boast well for the air show as a means of generating money for the SAAF museum Zwartkop.

Reasons for attendance

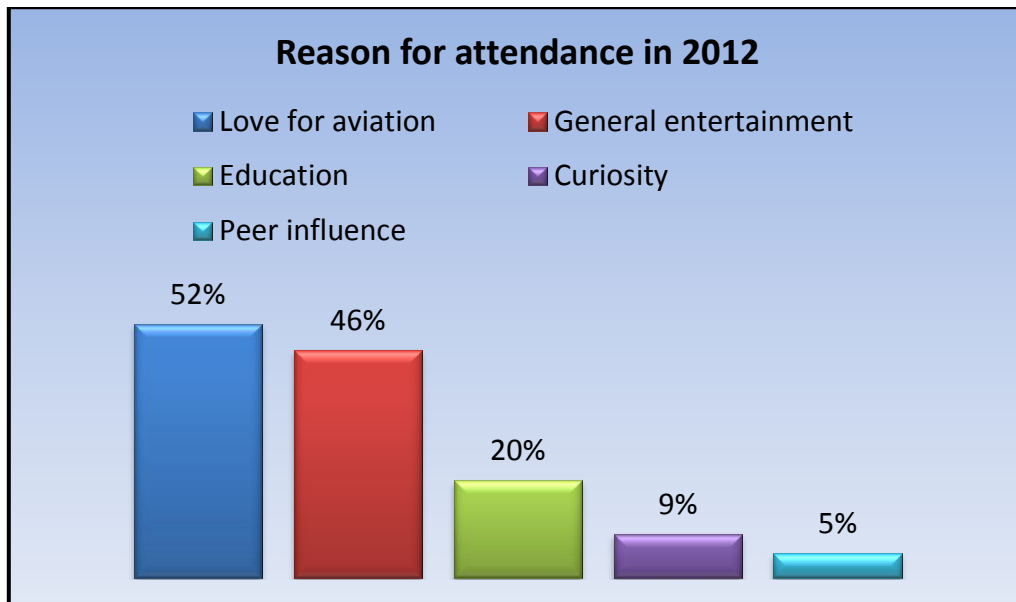


Figure 3: Reason for attendance. (Respondents could choose more than one reason for attending)

According to Figure 3, the majority (52%) of the respondents went to the air show due to their love of aviation. About 46% went for general

entertainment. A fifth of respondents (20%) went for educational reasons. Those who went due to curiosity made up nine percent. Only five percent went because of peer influence.

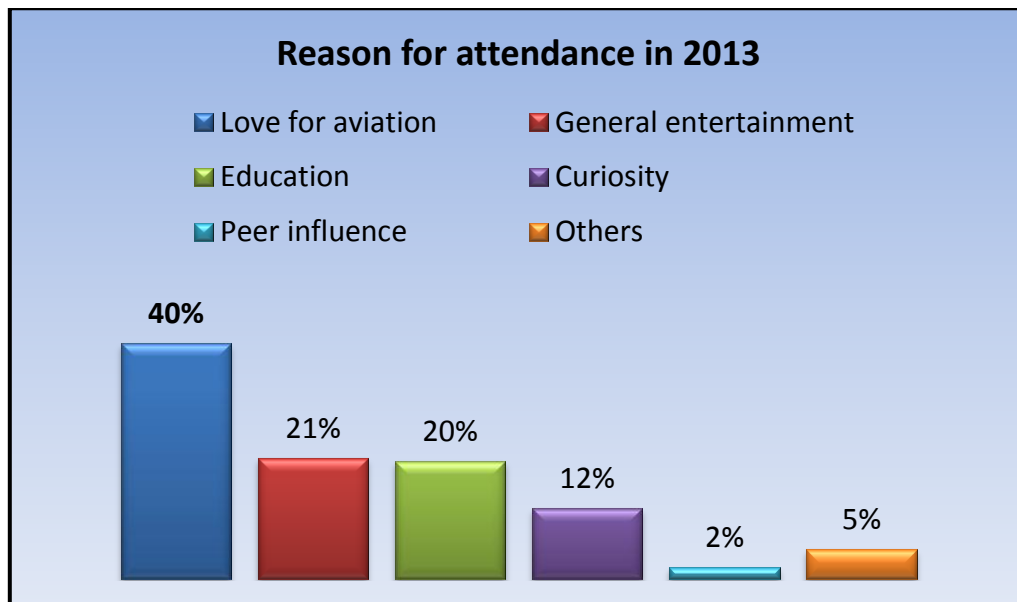


Figure 4: Reason for attendance. (Respondents could choose more than one reason for attending)

According to Figure 4, the majority (40%) of the respondents went to the air show due to their love of aviation while 21% attended for general entertainment and 20% for educational purposes. Only 12% of respondents indicated that they attended because they were curious. Two

percent of respondents attended due to peer pressure. It can clearly be seen from Figure 3 and 4 that visitors who attend the air show have a preconceived reason or motivation to attend and therefore a goal to achieve.

#### Future activities and attractions

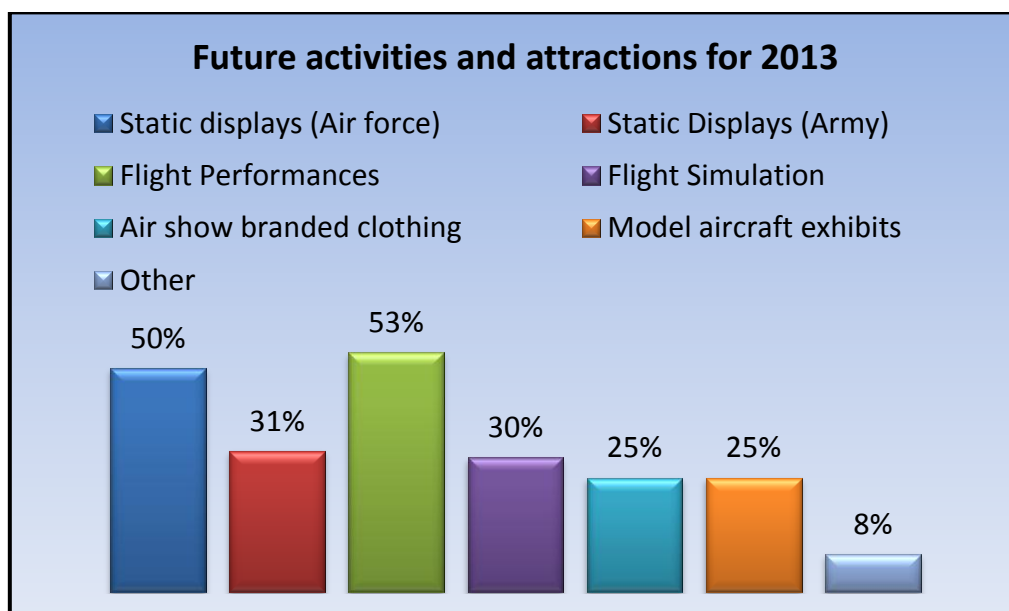


Figure 5: Activities and Attractions. (Respondents could choose more than one activity and attraction)

As shown in Figure 5, the majority of respondents (53%) wanted more flight performances during 2013 (especially jet aircraft) which indicates a great enthusiasm for military jet aircraft. Half of the respondents (50%) wanted to see more static displays of air force equipment. A greater selection of army equipment was the third most on demand (31%). Flight simulations were fourth on the list of sought after activities (30%). A quarter (25%) of the respondents also

wanted more air show branded clothing. The same number (25%) of respondents wanted model aircraft exhibits. The rest (8%) wanted other attractions and activities.

Based on the feedback received from the 2012 respondents, the air show organisers made improvements to the program planning which showed positive changes in the 2013 results.

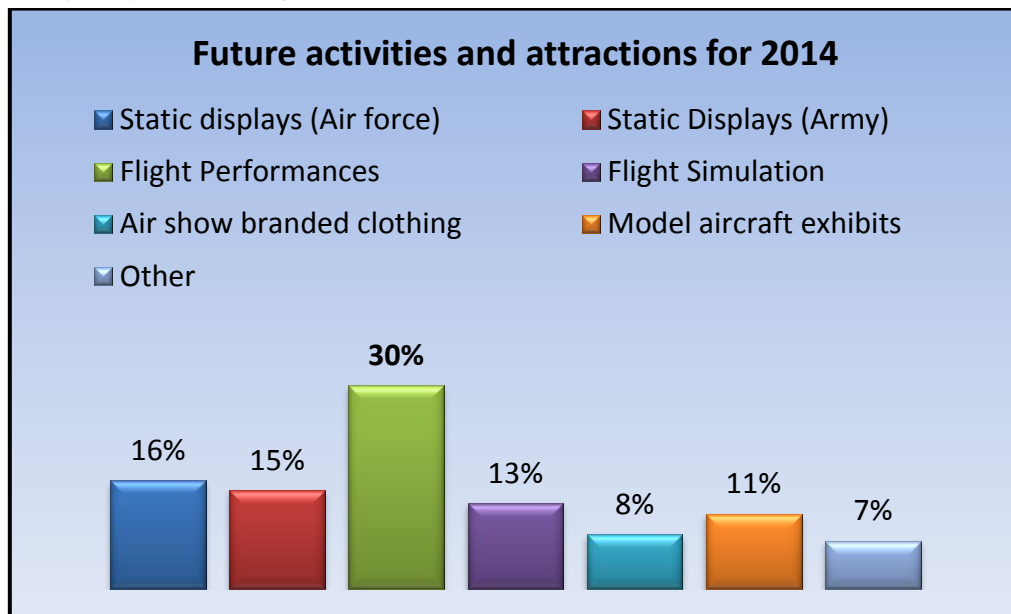


Figure 6: Activities and Attractions. (Respondents could choose more than one activity and attraction)

As shown in Figure 6, the majority of respondents (30%) wanted more flight performances during 2014 while 16 percent of the respondents wanted to see more static displays of the air force. A greater selection of army equipment was the third most on demand (15%). Flight simulations were fourth on the list of sought after activities (13%). But (11%) of the respondents also wanted to see more of the model air craft exhibits while eight percent want to see more air show branded clothing. The single biggest complaint voiced by respondents was that the Zwartkop air show program was too similar when compared to the previous year's (2012) and lacking jet aircraft performances such as the Gripen multirole fighter and Hawk advanced trainer aircraft.

**GOAL THEORY OF LEISURE SATISFACTION: APPLICATION ON AIR SHOW PROGRAMS PLANNING**

The goal theory of leisure travel satisfaction is based on research which seeks to explain goal related constructs such as goal selection, implementation and attainment which influence quality of life (QoL). In other words visitors to an event can experience higher levels of subjective well-being in QoL if they select goals that have high levels of positive valence (attractiveness) and expectancy (probability). In order for visitors to achieve their set goals events planners need to implement actions that will lead to achieving those goals. According to Sirgy (2010: 247) goal attainment can be achieved by understanding and seeking to achieve four major principles (Figure 7):

- *Selecting and pursuing travel goals where the achievement will most likely induce high levels of positive affect in the chosen live domains (goal valence).*

- *Selecting attainable goals* that will lead to high levels of positive affect in the chosen live domains (goal expectancy).
- *Taking actions to implement leisure travel goals* which will increase the likelihood of goal attainment thus achieving positive affect in the chosen live domains (goal implementation)
- *Achieving the leisure travel goals* thereby ensuring positive affect in the chosen live domains (goal achievement).



Figure 7: Major principles of Goal Theory, adapted from Sirgy (2010:247)

The following section will explain how each of the four major principles can be used to assist visitors in achieving their goals and so doing enhance their air show experience.

### Goal Valence

Goal valence implies that Quality of Life (QoL) is enhanced by selecting to pursue goals where the goal attainment is likely to induce high levels of positive affect in major life domains such as social life, emotional life, health and safety, financial life and leisure life (Sirgy, 2010:248). These domains have a direct impact on visitors QoL through leisure well-being and indirectly by enhancing well-being in non-leisure life domains such social life, emotional life, health and safety and financial life (Sirgy, 2010: 248). Therefore positive affect gained experiencing a satisfactory experience will enhances well-being and has a direct impact on a variety of life domains which intern impacts happiness and QoL. By selecting goals related to visitor’s air show experience, QoL can be enhanced. According to Sirgy (2010: 248) selecting goals that are likely to generate

high dose of positive affect when achieved is crucial to a person’s QoL.

It is therefore of critical importance that the air show program planners take heed of the feedback received from visitors during visitor survey’s. By implementing the requested improvements in the air show program identified by visitors, air show program planners can increase the likelihood of satisfying the visitor’s goals leading to an improvement in their QoL.

### Goal Expectancy

Goal expectancy explores the selection of leisure travel goals that are most likely to be achieved by visitors. These goals as highlighted by Sirgy (2010: 252) are goal motive congruence, goal-cultural value congruence, goal-resources congruence and goal conflict. By selecting goals that have a high probability of success a visitor can experiences greater satisfaction than those goals that are not realistic or feasible and is known as “goal expectancy” (Vallacher & Wegner, 1989: 665). The expectancy is defined by Chiang and Jang (2008: 314) as the perceived probability that effort will lead to good



performance which can be influenced factors such as self-efficacy, goal difficulty and perceived control. Visitors to an air show set high expectations only to realize their expectations cannot be met due to various factors such as weather, broken equipment or last minute changes to the program. An example can be drawn from the African Aerospace and Defence (AAD, 2014) exhibition 2014 hosted at the Waterkloof Air Force Base on 20\21 September 2014. The US Army K8 Golden Knight parachute team was scheduled to perform a parachute jump for visitors. Their performance was cancelled on the day scheduled without any explanation given to visitors. The goal expectancy principle can be applied well to air show program planning as the second major principle of Sirgy (2010: 252) QoL states that leisure travel satisfaction is enhanced by selecting leisure travel goals likely to be obtained.

Therefore goal attainment leads to high levels of positive affect, also known as goal expectancy. It is therefore of critical importance that air show program planners set programs with detailed information of what the various aircraft will do during the air show. Better informed visitors will not set expectations above what is offered and subsequently become disappointed (negative affect) when their expectations are not met. This will lead to more satisfied visitors which increase the number of return visitors.

### **Goal satisfaction**

The third major principle of Sirgy's (2010: 253) theory is that leisure travel satisfaction can be enhanced by taking active measures to ensure that goals implemented. Goal implementation increases the likelihood that a goal will be achieved and the experience of positive affect in targeted life domains.

It can be argued that a visitor who achieves their set goals will feel satisfied. Those visitors who develop strategies to increase their chance of goal attainment tend to experience higher levels of subjective well-being than those visitors with less effective strategies. Therefore the most prominent determinant of subjective well-being (QoL) for a visitor is the attainment of their individual goals while at the air show.

Air show program planners therefore need to provide as much accurate information on what will happen during the air show as well as keep promises made. A visitor who set the goal of seeing a ground battle at the air show will be disappointed when they missed it because there was a change in the program. Similarly, advertising the performance of a foreign air force at an air show and then subsequently withdraw can lead to a negative affect if it was the visitors goal to see them perform. Strict adherence to the times set and promises made will enhance the visitor experience and lead to an increase in their QoL.

### **Goal attainment**

According to Sirgy (2010: 255) leisure travel satisfaction can be increased by attainment of one's leisure travel goals, thereby ensuring the experience of positive affect in the targeted life domains and reducing negative affect. This can only be achieved if the visitor realises that they attained their set goal. QoL can be increased and dissatisfaction decreased through explicit recognition of attainment of the visitors goals. This can be done by repeat efforts at remembering the actual events that reflect the realization of their goals. By ensuring visitors have ample opportunity to take photos and record video the process of realising that their goal has been attainment can significantly enhanced which contributes positively to their QoL.

Another factor effecting goal attainment is the level and frequency of experience. According to Sirgy (2010: 256) people avoid intense positive experiences because of their associated costs which involve intense negative affect and lower positive affect of future positive experiences. According to Diener, Oishi and Lucas (2009: 121) the intensity of affect is more difficult for individuals to encode as no natural system exists to define or label emotional intensity. Furthermore positive affect generated from intense positive experiences is counterbalanced by the negative affect generated from intense negative experience. According to Diener *et al.*, (2009: 229) an intense positive experiences often diminish smaller positive future experiences. Air show visitors therefore compare future experiences with what they have experienced in the past. Thus an intense positive experience

raises the bar for the next expected positive experience. The higher the bar is set the more likely a future event will be judged as less satisfying.

The air show program planners need to take special care not to repeat too much of the same program year after year. A balance between what is possible and continuously improving the “wow” factor at the air show is vital to its continued long term success.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to highlight the implications of applying of the goal theory of leisure travel to air show program planning. As demonstrated in this article by using the SAAF museum Zwartkop as an example air show program planners need to understand the wants or goals of air show visitors. Most visitors set goals beforehand based on the air show program. A clear understanding of the various visitor goals will hopefully assist program planners in meeting those expectations which lead to a higher sense of well-being and positive emotion and thus QoL. In doing so they can plan the air show program to meet the maximum number visitor goals and thereby increasing their positive affect and reducing the negative affect experience at the air show.

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