Attributes that influence resort attractiveness: a case study of selected Kimberley resorts

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Abstract

Resorts have grown to dominate the accommodation sector of the world's tourism industry and are known as the key building blocks of tourism due to the impact the latter has on local and international economies. Resorts, as a component of the destination offer a unique combination of resources, attractions, and facilities; they also have unique physical environments, ecological conditions, and socio-cultural specifics. The attractiveness of a resort plays a role in a tourist's destination of choice, expectations of satisfaction, intentions to revisit, perceptions of benefits and motivations, positive perception of opinion leaders, the amount of money spent, and the duration of the stay. In order for a resort to be successful, sustainable and viable, it is important to identify the attributes that lead tourists to choose one destination over another. Despite this, a lack of research has been carried out to determine the underlying dimensions of resort attractiveness in South Africa. The aim of this research was to determine the attractiveness of selected Kimberley resorts in the Northern Cape, South Africa. These resorts have experienced low visitation and profit levels in the past. This leads to question whether visitors find the resorts attractive. In order to collect data a questionnaire was used to conduct interviews with visitors at the resorts. The results suggest that attributes of selected Kimberley resorts are perceived as being of average to poor quality.

Key words: Resort, attractiveness, Kimberley, destination attributes, South Africa

Introduction

Destination attractiveness is defined by Mayo and Jarvis (1981) as "the perceived ability of a destination to deliver individual benefits". The attractiveness of a destination plays a role in a tourist's destination of choice, expectations of satisfaction, intentions to revisit, perceptions of benefits and motivations, positive perception of opinion leaders, the amount of money spent, and the duration of the stay (Henkel et al., 2006). The better a destination meets the needs of the tourists, the more likely it is to be perceived as being attractive, and the more likely it is to be chosen by tourists (Vengesayi, 2003).

A tourism destination forms the cornerstone of tourists' experiences. The former South African Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, confirmed that tourism is one of the six pillars of economic growth in South Africa (NDT, 2015). According to Leiper (1995), destinations are generally regarded as a geographical area, town, or city. Kimberley is situated in the Northern Cape which forms a unique part of South Africa, and, according to the White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism in this area (NCPG, 2005), given the range and depth of assets on offer – has substantial tourism potential. Resorts, as a component of the destination offer a unique combination of resources, attractions, and facilities; they also have

unique physical environments, ecological conditions, and socio-cultural specifics of the communities inhabiting the zone. When comparing the definition of a resort to that of a destination, it is clear that a resort could be included under the umbrella term of 'destination'. Ramchander, Ivanovic and Foggin (2006) argue that a resort can be regarded as a destination because of its similar attributes, and its ability to attract tourists to the destination.

In line with this correlation the selected Kimberley resorts will be regarded as resort destinations located in the Sol Plaatje Municipality in Kimberley, Northern Cape (Harmse, Personal communication, 25 April 2012).

In order for a resort to be successful, sustainable and viable, it is important to identify the attributes that lead tourists to choose one destination over another. Emphasis needs to be placed on the pulling power of the resort, and assessing whether the resort is perceived to be attractive by tourists. Without destination resort attractiveness, tourism would cease to exist and there would be little to no need for tourist facilities and services.

Literature review

A tourism destination, resort in this instance, is a defined geographical area in which visitors spend at least one night, and comprises tourism products such as accommodation, transportation, infrastructure, facilities and services (Keyser, 2009). Resorts located at the destination attract tourists and aim to fulfil all the wants, needs, requirements and entertainment of a tourist in one of the premises in the area. The resort concept is developed through the provision of quality accommodation, food and beverages, entertainment, recreational facilities, health amenities, pleasant and restful surroundings, and high levels of service (Gee, 1996).

From a South African perspective, limited data exists regarding destination attractiveness, particularly relating to resorts. This knowledge gap compels the need for this research.

Attributes that affect the attractiveness of a resort

Destination or resort attributes such as scenery, climate, activities, accommodation, accessibility, cultural experience, security, serenity of environment, food and entertainment, service, reputation, price, friendliness of staff, safety and security, nightlife and entertainment are of the most important factors influencing its attractiveness and the tourist's decision to visit it or not (Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011). According to Pike (2002), such attractiveness is a mental image that is formed on the basis of the presence and/or availability of specific attributes at the resort or not. These attributes of attractiveness represent the comparative advantage of the resort, which can be turned into a competitive advantage – resulting in high levels of competitiveness and a favourable market position for the resort (Vengesayi, 2003; Cakici & Harman, 2007; Das, Mohapatra, Sharma & Sarkar, 2007; Kresic, 2007; Cheng-Fei et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2011).

Analysis of attractiveness attributes, and their influence on the level of competitiveness of tourism destinations, has been thoroughly researched (Gearing, Swart & Var 1974; Ritchie & Zins, 1978; Ferrario, 1979; Haahti, 1986; Van Raaij,1986; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Kim, 1998; Crouch, 2006; Formica & Uysal, 2006; Das et al., 2007; Kresic, 2007; Cheng-Fei et al., 2009; Kresic & Prebezac, 2011). In these studies, the attributes (pull factors) have been grouped into main categories and sub-categories as indicated in figure 1 (below). These attributes were carefully incorporated into the questionnaire of this research and provide a useful reference-point for the research design.
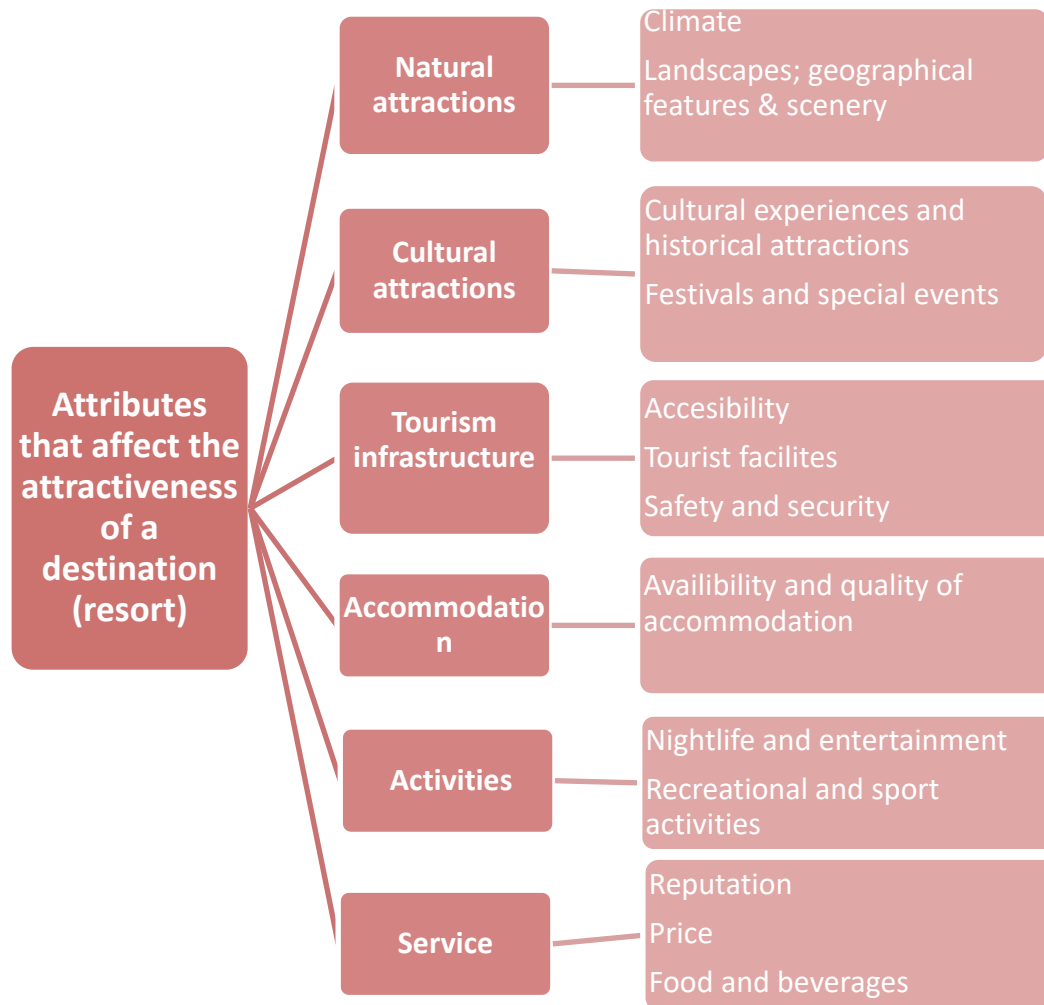
Figure 1: Flowchart of Destination (resort) Attractiveness Attributes (source: Author's own compilation from Gearing, Swart & Var 1974; Ritchie & Zins, 1978; Ferrario, 1979; Haahti, 1986; Van Raaij,1986; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Kim, 1998; Crouch, 2006; Formica & Uysal, 2006; Das et al., 2007; Kresic, 2007; Cheng-Fei et al., 2009; Kresic & Prebezac, 2011.)

The more a resort can meet the needs of its visitors, the more it is perceived to be attractive and the greater the probability that it will be selected as the final destination to visit (Cakici & Harman, 2007).

Natural Attractions

Natural attractions are understood to be those environmental attractions, which are not created artificially by man. These include wilderness areas, forests, mountains, waterfalls, flora and fauna, beaches and marine areas, natural wonders and special landscaping features, parks and conservation areas, beaches, seas, and rivers. Tourists are becoming more discerning and expect developers to pay more attention to quality and environmental management. Accordingly, the management of natural attractions requires a strategic approach to ensure the needs of tourists are met and exceeded – without destroying the irreplaceable natural resource (Ramchander et al., 2006).

Climate

Climate is considered to be a natural tourist attraction and was not created by man for tourist exploitation, but by the actions of natural forces (Kresic, 2007). Climate is an important criterion for locating tourism centres, and many resorts have prospered thanks to their ability to turn the local climatic conditions to their advantage (Kresic & Prebezac, 2011). Examples of this can be seen when destinations use climate in their marketing slogans and logos in order to attract tourists, such as in the case of the Maldives islands:

(*Picture credit*: Maldives Tourism website, 2016)

Climate also plays a decisive role in the selection of resorts and the tourist decision-making process, and becomes a factor in attracting people when tourists decide to buy products (Cheng-Fei et al., 2009). It is a natural tourism resource, and is an element that – thanks to human intervention – facilitates tourism and the satisfaction of demand

Landscapes, Geographical Features and Scenery

According to Keyser (2009) the features of the environment are often the main reasons why people are attracted to an area, and tourism is almost totally dependent on the environment. The landscapes and overall scenic beauty of an area may be a major attraction for tourists – especially if the natural character of the environment have been conserved. Areas of scenic beauty are settings for activities like sightseeing drives, hiking, camping and wildlife viewing. Remote scenic areas offer opportunities for adventure-orientated activities like river rafting, rock climbing, abseiling and hiking.

Cultural Attractions

Cultural Experience and Historical Attractions

Culture is another important factor that shapes tourists' perceptions (Bajs, 2011; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Honey, 2008; NCPG, 2005; NDT, 2012a; Ramchander et al., 2006). Authentic local culture, history and traditions can provide a framework for enriching the experience of a tourist destination. Historical attractions give tourists an opportunity to experience the uniqueness of that destination, and that conveys something about the past of the destination (Keyser, 2009).

Festivals and Special Events

Given that events play an important role by attracting tourists to a particular destination, and serve as an economic stimulator whilst entertaining and cementing society, they will be discussed in more detail. Events generate tourist traffic, and influence a number of elements

of the surrounding space (Cudny, 2013). Various researchers (Backman, Backman, Uysal & Mohr, 1995; Burns, Hatch & Mules 1986; Hall, 1992) indicate that events enhance a destination's image and improve awareness of that destination.

The major demand generated by an event is, for the most part, not the demand for the event itself – but for a range of related services like accommodation, food, transport and entertainment (Cudny, 2013; Burns, Hatch & Mules, 1986; Shone & Parry, 2010). Events are those phenomena arising from non-routine occasions which have leisure, cultural, personal, or organisational objectives set apart from daily life, and whose purpose is to enlighten, celebrate, entertain or challenge the experience of a group of people. Examples of events include the Formula One Grand Prix held in several international countries; the annual Tourism Indaba held in Durban, and the annual Gariep Kunstefees held in Kimberley.

Tourism Infrastructure

Infrastructure provides the basic framework for the effective functioning of development systems like cities. Adequate infrastructure is also essential for the successful development of tourism (Kresic, 2007; Laws, 1995; Leiper, 1995; Lubbe, 1998; Swarbrooke, 1995; Vengesayi, 2003). Tourist activities and movements are not limited to the interior of tourism facilities, and tourists' experience and perception of the resort are therefore informed by a larger context and the setting in which these encounters take place (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

According to Bajs (2011) and Ramchander et al., (2006), tourism-related infrastructure mainly includes:

- Transportation networks, terminals and communications (access to the destination in terms of time, distance and means).
- Water supply and the sewage system.
- Electricity supply and air conditioning.
- Safety for tourists.
- Health services and their condition.
- Postal and other communication services (telephone, email, computerisation, internet access).

Accessibility

Accessibility may be defined as the ease to approach, reach, enter or use a certain product, service or destination, and it includes elements such as infrastructure(roads, airports, seaports, railways), transportation equipment (size, speed and range of options available), operational factors (routes, frequency of services and prices charged), and government regulations that relate to transport options – for example the number of adults per bus or coach (Akso & Kiyci, 2011; Bajs, 2011; Bennett et al., 2005). Accessibility of a destination affects the holiday cost, and the speed and convenience at which a traveller may reach a destination, and encapsulates more than the physical transport. It is the degree to which a product, device, service or environment is available to as many people as possible. Development of appropriate access for visitors to and within a destination includes consideration of several key factors. The key factors include: creating a barrier-free destination; transport; high quality services; and information accessible to all (Akso & Kiyci, 2011; Bajs, 2011; Bennett et al., 2005).

Tourist Facilities

Tourist facilities provide the foundation upon which a tourist industry is based (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). The existence of various amenities and ancillary services to meet the needs of visitors is critical to the success of any resort. It is a wide-ranging set of activities required by

tourists, and may include (Inskeep, 1991; Kresic, 2007; Kresic & Prebezac, 2011; Laws, 1995; Lopes, 2011):

- Travel and tour operators.
- Tourist guiding services.
- Food and beverage outlets.
- Tourist information.
- Shopping facilities.
- Convenience and personal services.
- Banking and foreign exchanges.
- Media (including newspapers, magazines, television/radio).
- Insurance and assurance services.
- Health support and medical consulting.
- Internet and email access.
- Postal services.
- Laundry and dry-cleaning.
- Infrastructure (including water, sewerage, electricity and telephone services).
- Local authority management and development control.

The nature, quality and diversity of amenities and facilities depend on the nature of tourist demand, the types of tourists and any needs they might have. The attractiveness of a destination is enhanced by its ability to provide facilities that tourists can use at the destination (Vengesayi, 2003). The competitiveness of a destination is achieved when the provision of services and facilities is competitive versus alternative destinations.

Safety and Security

"Nothing kills tourism like a dead tourist" (Bennet, 1995). Safety and security are vital to providing quality in tourism. More than any other economic activity, the success or failure of a resort depends on being able to provide a safe and secure environment for visitors. Crime and violence are probably the most unpredictable factors in the tourism industry (NCPG, 2005) and have the potential to cause tremendous damage to the industry. According to the White Paper Northern Cape (NCPG, 2005), tourism security concerns are one of the key constraints to tourism growth in South Africa, and visitor safety remains an important topic worldwide.

According to Chiang (2000) if visitor health and safety are not well - managed, adverse incidents can significantly affect the profitability and sustainability of a resort or destination. If a visitor feels unsafe during a trip, this may affect the length of stay and expenditure in a destination, and also decrease the likelihood of repeat visitation and word-of-mouth referrals. If a destination develops a negative image for visitor safety, this will likely result in declining visitor market for the region.

Accommodation

Availability and Quality of Accommodation

Accommodation plays an important role in the selection of a resort, and is the base from which tourists' pursue activities. Availability of accommodation is vital but seasonal demand is often a huge challenge for accommodation establishments, resorts and tourist facilities. It is the responsibility of resort marketers and managers to ensure that a similar number of tourists are attracted throughout the year (Vengesayi, 2003).

According to Keyser (2009), the competitiveness of a resort is often indicated by the extent of seasonality in accommodation offerings. Destinations have to invest in the delivery of high-

quality products in order to stand out from competition. The accommodation sector is very competitive (Ramchander et al., 2006). Grading systems usually protect the interest of tourists and assist help them to assess the variety of accommodation establishments found at a resort. The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) is one of the most recognised, credible quality-assurance bodies for tourism products in South Africa (TGCSA, 2014). The TGCSA focuses on visitor expectation, with the star-grading system rating establishments from one to five stars based on certain criteria.

Activities

Nightlife and Entertainment

Nightlife and entertainment should offer the chance of enjoyment, self-expression and satisfaction, should take place in time set aside from obligation such as business or family care, and should not be an obligatory undertaking: entertainment should come freely (Swarbrooke et al., 2003).

Entertainment tourism is a popular niche of tourism. Just as the book "*Eye witness travel*" on northern Spain dedicated pages to entertainment in northern Spain, most tourists now approach tourism with different expectations. Rather than just going on a sightseeing tour and sitting on the beach all day (World Tourism Organisation, 1999), tourists often search for more intense and energetic experiences, like parties or concerts and would rather choose to go on a vacation to a more entertaining area so as to 'have fun' and to enjoy memorable moments away from their busy schedules, rather than end up on another stressful journey.

Recreational and Sport Activities

Several major elements in tourism enterprises which are closely linked to the growth of tourism as a form of recreation are the theme parks, water parks, fun centres and sports' tourism. Recreational activities include all kinds of sports, both team and individual, such as baseball, football, basketball, tennis, badminton, swimming and skiing. Hiking, jogging, aerobics and rock climbing are active forms of recreation. Passive recreational activities include reading, fishing, listening to music, playing computer games, and watching television or movies. The most common form of recreation is participation in sports and games. Recreational activities area rewarding form of human experience and constitute an important aspect of economic development and government responsibility (Tumanque, Escoto, Dizon & Cabagan, 2014).

Service

Service starts with understanding what good service is from the tourists' point of view, and how it can affect the attractiveness of a resort. The Tourism Enterprise Programme (2014) defines good service as an experience for every visitor, which they will remember, as well as in terms of giving visitors what is expected and meeting individual needs. A product's value may be enhanced through service excellence (Olivier, 2010). Some destinations are known for service excellence and this depends on various factors such as the staff selling the product, the appearance of staff, competence and attitude, friendliness, and helpfulness and social interaction with the consumer at the destination (Swarbrooke, 1995). According to Hayes and Dredge (1998) and TEP (2014), 'good service' needs to be driven by visitors' needs and expectations.

Reputation

Tourism destinations are complex places which need to manage their organizational reputation (Marchiori, Inversini, Cantoni & Dedekind, 2010). Reputation is considered as "a

perceptual representation of a destination's past actions and future prospects that describes the destination's overall appeal to all of its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals" (Fombrun, Gardberg & Sever, 1999). The reputation of a destination plays a vital role in many areas, and a destination experiences many benefits should a good reputation exist (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Yoon, Guffey & Kijewski, 1993),

Price

Traditionally, price has always been a major determinant in the choice made by tourists (Haarhoff, 2007). Price remains 'one of the most important elements' for consumers (Kotler, 2000; Middleton, 2001) and is significant in the economy, the tourist's mind and for the individual resort (Etzel, Walker & Stanton, 2004). Tourists use a fixed budget when planning a holiday, which often involves a period of saving, and therefore before making a final decision prices are compared and the final choice is based on the option that offers the best value for money (Seaton & Bennett, 1996). According to Laws (1995), a London travel agency displaying a variety of "Late Offer" destinations in its shop window attracts tourists to the destination based on price – above any other destination characteristics.

Price has a different meaning to the tourist. It represents the amount of money he or she pays for a product, and thus represents the satisfaction of a need that he or she receives when purchasing the product. George (2008) confirms that the consumer's perception of price plays an important role, and is the most crucial external factor affecting the price. The consumer will view the price as acceptable if he or she receives the value received – as being equal to, or more, than the value of money paid for the product (Cant et al., 2009). Some prospective tourists may be interested in relatively low prices, whereas another segment may be concerned with other factors like service, quality, value, and brand image.

Food and Beverages

Food has been considered as being an important attraction at prospective destinations. Fresh seafood in beach resorts, traditional cookery, famous restaurants in expensive hotels and on cruise liners or in major commercial centres are built for this purpose. Some countries and cities expand their unique food experiences in order to engage and attract more travellers (Dann, 1996; Noguchi, 1992). Without food and beverages, a tourist's needs cannot be completely satisfied. Food service forms part of the experience and therefore of the general image of a resort. Therefore, the importance of food service in the tourism industry cannot be over-emphasised. The provision of food and beverages is an integral part of tourism and hospitality (Ardabili, Rasouli, Daryani, Molaie & Sharegi, 2011).

Background to the problem

Despite its tourism potential, the Northern Cape is the least visited province in South Africa (STATSSA, 2012). The Sol Plaatje Municipality in Kimberley, Northern Cape (NC), manages four resorts termed "Kimberley Resorts" (Harmse, Personal communication, 25 April 2012), and, according to Prideaux (2009), resorts are the key building blocks in the development of the global (and domestic) tourism system. Two similar resorts – Riverton and Langleg have been selected for this research. The selected resorts are located adjacent to each other on the banks of the Vaal River near a township called Riverton. Both resorts host various annual events, have day-visitor facilities with entertainment such as swimming pools, a children's playground, mini golf, and provide self-catering accommodation, which attracts both day and overnight visitors. The other two resorts cater for day visitors only.

According to Ackharwary (2012), the visitation levels of Kimberley Resorts have been low over past years and this has resulted in resorts not making a profit or being able to reap the benefits that tourism offers. These factors bring the tourism industry to the point where destinations within the NC Province – especially the Sol Plaatje Municipal Area which covers an

approximate 30km radius around Kimberley – have to become competitive and focused on meeting the needs of visitors, in order to compete with other destinations. According to Ackharwary (2012), Kimberley Resorts have reported consecutive years of low visitation and profit levels.

Methodology

The population of the research included overnight visitors to Riverton and Langleg resorts. As no data of the visitor numbers are available, the population was estimated to be 8 000. Only visitors over the age of 18 years were included in this research, and respondents were briefed about the purpose of the research beforehand by trained field workers. Convenience sampling was used to select a sample of 400 at the respective resorts. Israel (2013) suggests that 201 respondents (n) may be regarded as representative (7% sample error) of a population of 15 000 (N). The 400 (n) is therefore considered far greater than the number required taking into consideration the population size of 8000 people which is used for this research. The instrument used to gather quantitative data was a newly developed questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: socio-demographic information and destination attributes. The socio-demographic section contained questions to extract demographic and social information of respondents. It was important to create a profile of visitors to the resorts to provide useful data to resort management. In the destination attribute section, respondents were asked to rate 24 destination attractiveness variables. Each variable was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). This was done in order to determine the attractiveness of the attributes of the selected resorts. Data was captured, cleaned and recoded in Microsoft Excel, while STATISTICA was used to analyse the data. The analysis includes descriptive statistics to profile visitors for respective resorts, and a factor analysis determined the principle factors that lead to destination choice. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for continuous variables and thereafter means, medians and ranges were determined.

Respondents were asked to rate each of the destination attractiveness variables in determining the attractiveness of the resorts on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good) (see table 1 below).

Question Number	Destination Attractiveness Questions	References from the Literature Review
	Questions start with: How would you rate each of the following attributes at the resort	
1	Natural scenery and landscape: Scenery, trees and grass, and appearance	Ramchander *et al.* (2006) Swarbrooke (1991)
2	Geographical features: Vaal River	Keyser (2009)
3	Accessibility of the resort with regard to: - The N12 - The road leading to the resort	Aksoy & Kiyci (2011) Bajs (2011) Bennett *et al.* (2005)
4	The Riverton tearoom café	Ardabili *et al.* (2011) Dann (1996) Noguchi (1992)
5 (a) (b) (c) (d)	*Infrastructure with regard to the following*: - Water supply - Electricity supply - Roads inside the resort - Bathrooms and ablutions	Kresic (2007) Laws (1995) Leiper (1995) Lubbe (1998) Swarbrooke (1995) Vengesayi (2003)
6	Safety and security at the resort	Bennet (1995) NCPG (2005) NDT (2012a)
7 (a) (b) (c)	*Tourist facilities*: - Tennis facilities (Riverton only) - Swimming pools - Super tube (Riverton only)	Crouch & Ritchie (2003) Inskeep (1991) Kresic & Prebezac (2011) Kresic (2007)

(d) **(e)** **(f)**	• Fishing facilities • Mini golf (Riverton only) • Children's playground		Laws (1995) Lopes (2011) Vengesayi (2003)
8	*Staff:* • Quality of service received from staff • Friendliness of staff		Burton (1994) Hayes &Dredge (1998) Kolb (2006) Olivier (2010) Swarbrooke (1995) TEP (2014)
9 **(a)** **(b)** **(c)** **(d)**	*Price of the following*: • Accommodation type used • Super tube • Mini golf • Riverton tea room (shop/café)		Kotler (2000) Cant *et al.* (2009) Etzel *et al.* (2004) George (2008) Haarhoff (2007) Laws (1995) Middleton (2001) Seaton & Bennett (1996)
10 **11**	Quality of accommodation Cleanliness of accommodation		Keyser (2009) Ramchander *et al.* (2006) TGCSA (2014) Vengesayi (2003)

Table 1: Questions from the Destination (resort) Attractiveness Dimension

Results

In survey research, some respondents do not fill out the entire questionnaire. The unanswered questions become the missing values, and, according to Welman *et al.* (2005) these values should be excluded during the analysis. For this reason, the sample number (n) of 400 may vary in discussion of some results. It should be noted, that Riverton resort had more visitors than Langleg resort, and data collection at the former was quicker and easier – whereas at the latter resort the researcher had to travel for an extra day to collect data from visitors.

Socio demographic profile of visitors

The majority (81.2%) of respondents reside in Kimberley equally divided in gender. Respondents were mostly single (54.75%) and indicated Setswana as their home language (39.75%). A large majority was African (60.25%) and completed secondary school as the highest form of education (60.75%). Respondents further indicated that 60.50% were employed, either full-time (60.50%), part-time (10.25%), or self-employed (5.50%). The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 70 years with a mean of 40.57%. Interestingly 90.75% of respondents travelled in a group of more than 5 people. Table 2 provides a socio-demographic summary.

Characteristic	Best Option	Majority %
City of residence	Kimberley	81.20
Gender	Female/Male	50/49.75
Language	Setswana	39.75
Race	African	60.25
Marital Status	Single	54.75
Educational Level	High School	60.75
Employment	Full-time	60.75
Age	40	Average
Number in Travelling Party	5	90.75
Fellow Travellers	Friends/Family	79.44
Reason for Travel	Holiday	70.03
Mode of Transport	Own Vehicle	53.25
Accommodation Type	Self Catering Chalet	89.20
Length of Stay	2 nights	41

Table 2: Tourist profile of Visitors to Selected Kimberley Resorts

Frequency of Visiting the Resort

Frequency of visiting the resort refers to the number of times respondents had been to the resort in the past. Only 11.75% of the respondents were new to the resorts, while a large majority (71.75%) had visited the resort more than three times before as depicted in figure 2.
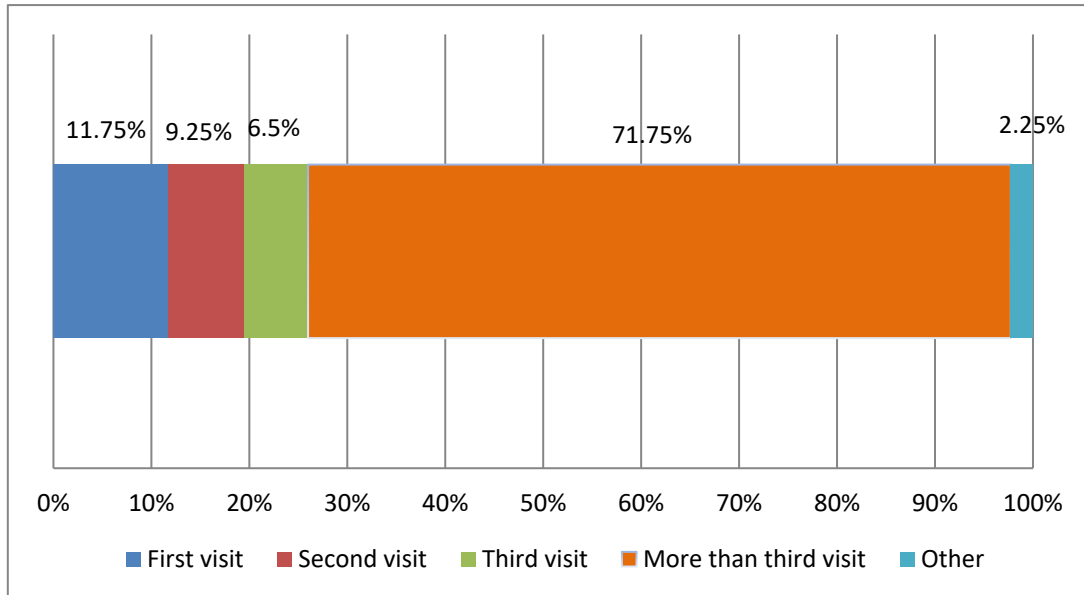
Figure 2: Frequency of Visiting the Resort

Scoring resort attributes

Visitors scored various destination attributes on a 5-point Likert scale – from very poor to very good. Each resort attribute was scored individually by respondents. Table 3 provides a summary of the 24 attributes rated. Each rating was considered as follows:

- Poor to very poor = 1-2
- Average = 3
- Good to very good = 4-5

Resort Attribute	Average Rating	Average Score
Natural attractions	Average	3
Accessibility:		
Local road	Average	3
N12	Average	3
Riverton tea room café	Average	3
Infrastructure:		
Ablution facilities	Poor to very poor	2
Road inside the resort	Average	3
Electricity supply	Average	3
Water supply	Average	3
Safety	Average	3
Activities:		
Children's playground	Average	3
Mini golf	Poor to very poor	2
Fishing	Average	3
Super tube	Average	3
Swimming pools	Average	3
Tennis	Poor to very poor	2

Staff:		
Friendliness	Average	3
Service	Average	3
Price:		
Riverton café	Poor to very poor	2
Mini golf	Poor to very poor	2
Super tube	Average	3
Accommodation	Average	3
Accommodation:		
Quality	Average	3
Cleanliness	Average	3
OVERALL SATISFACTION	Average	3

Table 3: Resort attribute ratings

From table 3 it is evident that majority ratings for resort attributes were average – followed by poor to very poor. Notably, there were no average ratings for attributes that were rated good to very good.

In total, 24 resort attributes were rated at selected Kimberley resorts. Some 75% of the attributes received an average score of three by respondents, while the remaining 25% received a two score. When asked to rate the overall satisfaction of a resort, 39.50% of respondents rated average. This indicates that most attributes at selected Kimberley resorts were perceived to be of average quality – followed by poor to very poor quality. It can also be assumed that very few of the attributes were perceived as being good to very good quality.

Overall satisfaction tests
In table 4 (below) the researcher wanted to establish if there was any association between gender and overall satisfaction. A bar chart showing the overall representation of overall satisfaction between male and female participants' is given in table 4:

Overall Satisfaction by Gender			
Overall satisfaction	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Very poor	12 (3%) [12.44]	13 (3.25%) [12.56]	**25**
Poor	18 (4.5%) [19.4]	21 (5.25%) [19.6]	**39**
Average	78 (19.5%) [78.61]	80 (20%) [79.4]	**158**
Good	80 (20%) [77.61]	76 (19%) [78.39]	**156**
Very good	11 (2.75%) [10.95]	11 (2.75%) [11.06]	**22**
TOTAL	**199**	**201**	**400**

Table 4: Overall Satisfaction by Gender

Table 4 shows that overall satisfaction when compared by gender had few differences in scores. The Chi-Square independence test was used to decide whether an association exists between the two variables. The null and the alternate hypotheses are given as:

H_0 : There is no association between gender and overall satisfaction.
H_a : There is an association between gender and overall satisfaction.
The Chi-Square observed value is found to be: χ^2_{obs} = 0.3883. Also, the critical value (where degrees of freedom = 4) is found to be: χ^2_{crit} = 9.488 at the 5% level of significance. Since the observed value (0.3883) is less than the critical value (9.488), the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is no association between gender and overall satisfaction. This was further confirmed when using the SAS package. The Chi-Square value = 0.3887 and the *p*-value = 0.9834 > 0.05.

In order to perform a hypothesis test to decide whether two variables are associated, the following three assumptions are made:

1. All expected frequencies are greater than or equal to 1.
2. At most 20% of the expected frequencies are less than 5.

However, when assumption (1) or both assumptions (1) and (2) are violated, three approaches are possible. Rows or columns can be combined to increase the expected frequencies in those cells in which they are too small; certain rows or columns in which the small expected frequencies occur can be eliminated or the sample case can be increased (Weiss, 2012).

The researcher found that the expected frequencies in some cells were too small and violated assumption (2). Thus, the researcher decided to combine some rows and columns to increase the expected frequencies in those cells in which they were too small. This method was applied to the three sections that follow:

Overall Satisfaction by Employment Status
Here the researcher wanted to investigate if there is any association between levels of overall satisfaction and employment status of respondents.

Overall Satisfaction by Employment			
Overall Satisfaction	**Not Employed**	**Employed Part-Time**	**Employed Full-time**	**Total**
Not satisfied	12 (3%) [14.08]	7 (1.75%) [6.56]	45 (11.25%) [43.36]	**64**
Quite satisfied	30 (7.5%) [34.76]	21 (5.25%) [16.20]	107 (26.75%) [107.05]	**158**
Well satisfied	46 (11.5%) [39.16]	13 (3.25%) [18.25]	119 (29.75%) [120.60]	**178**
TOTAL	**88**	**41**	**271**	**400**

Table 5: Overall Satisfaction by Employment Status

Table 5 depicts the overall satisfaction by employment status. The null and alternate hypotheses are given as:
H_0 : There is no association between employment and overall satisfaction.
H_a : There is an association between employment and overall satisfaction.

Using the Chi-Square test, it is found that χ^2_{obs} = 5.20, and χ^2_{crit} (df = 4) = 9.488 at the 5% level of significance. Since the observed value (5.20) is less than the critical value (9.488), the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, it is concluded there is no association between employment and overall satisfaction.

Overall Satisfaction by Marital Status

Now, the researcher wants to investigate whether there is an association between marital status and overall satisfaction. The table below gives the necessary information. The same Chi-Square test was used to determine whether a relationship exists.

Overall Satisfaction by Marital Status				
Overall satisfaction	Single	Married	Divorced/Widowed	Total
Not satisfied	31 (7.75%) [36.96]	28 (7%) [23.20]	5 (1.25%) [3.84]	64
Quite satisfied	87 (21.75%) [91.5]	59 (14.75%) [57.28]	12 (3%) [9.48]	158
Well satisfied	113 (28.25%) [102.8]	58 (14.5%) [64.53]	7 (1.75%) [10.68]	178
TOTAL	231	145	24	400

Table 6: Overall Satisfaction by Marital Status

Table 6 represents overall satisfaction by marital status. The null and alternate hypotheses are given as:

H_0 : There is no association between marital status and overall satisfaction.
H_a : There is an association between marital status and overall satisfaction.

Using the Chi-Square test, it is found that χ^2_{obs} = 6.165, and χ^2_{crit} (df = 4) = 9.488 at the 5% level of significance. Since the observed value (6.165) is less than the critical value (9.488), the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is no association between marital status and overall satisfaction.

Overall Satisfaction by Educational Level

Lastly, the researcher wanted to know if there is an association between level of education and overall satisfaction. Table 7 (below) provides the necessary information:

Overall Satisfaction by Education Level				
Overall satisfaction	Primary	High School	Tertiary	Total
Not satisfied	4 (1%) [1.92]	38 (9.5%) [38.88]	22 (5.5%) [23.2]	64
Quite satisfied	6 (1.5%) [4.7=5]	92 (23%) [95.99]	60 (15%) [57.28]	158
Well satisfied	2 (0.5%) [5.34]	113 (28.25%) [108.14]	63 (15.75%) [64.53]	178
TOTAL	12	243	145	400

Table 7: Overall Satisfaction by Education Level

Table 7 presents the overall satisfaction by employment status. The null and alternate hypotheses are given as:

H_0 : There is no association between level of education and overall satisfaction.
H_a : There is an association between level of education and overall satisfaction.

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Using the Chi-Square test, it is found that $\chi^2_{obs} = 5.31$, and χ^2_{crit} (df = 4) = 9.488 at the 5% level of significance. Since the observed value (5.31) is less than the critical value (9.488), the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is no association between level of education and overall satisfaction.

Mean Level of Overall Satisfaction
The researcher also carried out the One-Way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test. This test was performed to determine the mean level of overall satisfaction with regard to gender, employment, marital status, and educational level.
Let $\mu_1, \mu_2, \mu_3,$ and μ_4 denote the means of gender, employment, marital status, and education level, respectively. Then the hypotheses to be tested are:
H_0: $\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4$ (all the means are equal)
H_a: Not all the means are equal.
Using SAS to conduct the ANOVA test, the *p*-value = 0.0041 is obtained, which is less than α, where $\alpha = 0.05$.

Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and it is concluded that the means are not equal. That is, there are differences in the levels of overall satisfaction with regard to gender, employment, marital status, and level of education. The differences in the levels of overall satisfaction were not statistically significant.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Since the selected Kimberley resorts were rated average and poor to very poor by most respondents, resort management should consider scrutinising the attributes at the resorts. Recommendations to address the major problem areas for the attributes are:

Natural scenery and landscape: Many visitors complained about the condition of landscape at the resorts. It is important for the landscape to be perceived as attractive by visitors, as it is one of the attributes that has pulling power to the resorts. To increase the attractiveness of this attribute, it is recommended that resort management and staff keep the lawns clean and watered regularly, and invest in water-wise plants and grass in order to be environmentally friendly.

The local road: Since accessibility affects the holiday experience, it is imperative that the road leading to the resorts be upgraded – with light poles and signage. The resort should request that the municipality upgrade the road. Signage must be visible and should include standardised tourist information boards that indicate main tourist routes – as well as nearby attractions. The road leading to the resort raised much concern for respondents, and it is advised that it be widened to a safer width, and that clear and visible signage be added to the road.

Roads inside the resorts: Respondents were unhappy with the condition of the roads in the resort and mentioned that they could damage vehicles and are not user-friendly. These roads form part of the basic infrastructure of the resorts and need to be up-graded so that they can be more user-friendly. It is recommended that the roads inside the resorts be re-tarred or paved, and potholes should be filled during quiet periods.

Activities at Riverton: Upgrading and development of existing activities with particular attention to the tennis courts, fishing facilities, and mini golf. These activities are sources of revenue for the resorts and should be in good condition in order for the resort to benefit from them. Upgrading the children's playground, super tube and swimming pools, will enhance the perception of visitors to the resorts.

New and authentic cultural experiences at the resorts need to be developed and marketed – as part of the activities at the resort. These cultural experiences would need much involvement from the local community at Riverton Township. This could be done in the form of a township tour of Riverton Township, where the locals could be trained to be the tour guide and could explain the history and development of the township. The local community could also develop a beer-making demonstration for visitors, where visitors could learn how home-made beer is made – with a tasting session after the demonstration. The locals could also have story-telling at night around the fire, where visitors listen to cultural stories. The local community could also develop cultural food-making lessons where visitors are taught to make local cuisine and to enjoy the food after the lesson. The resort could host weekly or monthly performances by locals as a concert on a Saturday night – as a motivator to attract overnight visitors. These cultural activities would not only diversify the product offering at the selected Kimberley resorts, but would also give the local community a chance to benefit economically from the resorts and give the locals a sense of belonging and pride.

Tours of the Riverton Water Pump Station should be developed, where visitors have the opportunity to see how water from the Vaal River is purified and transported to the surrounding areas for consumption. This could attract more visitors from outside of Kimberley and could promote the selected Kimberly resorts. This tour could also be incorporated as part of the tourist packages for families, and could be marketed to nearby schools as part of a sustainable development initiative.

Activities at Langleg: Langleg resort is less occupied than Riverton (cf. 5.2). This could be due to there being fewer activities at Langleg than at Riverton. More activities like a super tube and fishing facilities should be developed at Langleg. Activities also have the pulling power to motivate tourists to stay for a longer period of time. This will increase the numbers of visitors to the resorts.

Friendliness and service from staff: Employees should exhibit high levels of competence, a caring attitude, assurance, reliability and responsiveness, when dealing with visitors at the resorts. Existing staff should be better trained to extend their knowledge base on tourism, customer service, and of the city and province. People employed in leadership positions must have an extensive knowledge of the tourism industry in order to have the skill set and knowledge to manage and plan more effectively for service quality in tourism. Provision should also be made for academic bursaries for management and staff to enable them to promote their studies and training in the tourism field.

Price at resorts: The Riverton tearoom café was one of the main facilities that visitors perceived as being too expensive. The price of products available for sale at the café should be reviewed in order to be sold at more affordable prices. This should include considering the prices of two activities: mini golf and the super tube at the Riverton resort. The price of the activities should be lower in order to increase sales. The prices can also be incorporated as a package deal, where, for example, 5 mini golf games and 25 super-tube rides be sold to groups of 5 people.

Accommodation prices were also perceived as being too expensive. Lower prices and costs increase the attractiveness of some destinations to many travellers. The price of accommodation should be compared to similar accommodation establishments with similar product offerings – in order to be priced fairly and competitively. Research should be conducted on the pricing strategy of similar establishments which the Kimberley resorts could be benchmarked against.

Negative responses were also received with regard to the booking procedure at the resorts. Some visitors were overcharged, while others lost their booking due to overbooking by reception. It is important for the booking procedures to be standardised and benchmarked against other accommodation booking procedures. A computerised booking system is recommended, in order to avoid similar problems in the future. The booking procedure can also be enhanced by developing an online booking system, where visitors can book on a website instead of calling the resort which is only open during working hours (7.30 am to 4:00 pm). Currently, visitors only have one payment method option: cash. This creates a safety risk and is not user-friendly. It could be the reason why some visitors paid more than others. A card swipe machine should be installed at both reception areas, in order to add to the convenience, safety and the important first impression of the resorts.

Cleanliness and quality of accommodation: Both were rated average to very poor by most respondents – which leaves room for much improvement. The accommodation establishments should be cleaned on time, on a daily basis. The quality of accommodation can be improved by upgrading the chalets and bungalows. Upgrading includes adding more comfortable mattresses to the beds, fixing air-conditioning, and having DSTV channels available on working television sets. Reviewing the décor of accommodation is recommended – as this has an impact on the first impression of visitors. Trendier curtains, duvet covers and accessories can also be added, to improve the quality of the accommodation establishments. Unless the standard of the resorts is up-graded, it is not recommended that the prices be increased – as this may disadvantage the resorts. The standards and quality of the resorts should match their pricing strategy and be graded with the TGCSA, in order to introduce quality assurance to visitors.

In total, 24 resort attributes were rated at the selected Kimberley resorts. Some 75% of the attributes received an average score of three by respondents, while the remaining 25% received a two score. When asked to rate the overall satisfaction of a resort, 39.50% of respondents rated average. This indicates that most attributes at selected Kimberley resorts were perceived to be of average quality – followed by poor to very poor quality. It can also be assumed that very few of the attributes were perceived as good to very good quality. Since resort attributes have a major impact on resort attractiveness, and also based on the above ratings, it can be concluded that visitors to selected Kimberley resorts were not satisfied and were displeased with the quality of resorts attributes. It is important that the tourism industry be proactive in its pursuit of high-quality visitor experiences – rather than be reactive to individual problems that arise as a result of tourist dissatisfaction after a visit. Tourism research is a way of acquiring knowledge in order to explain the mystery of certain phenomena. A study is needed to determine why visitors to selected Kimberley resorts still return to them and recommend the resorts to others – despite being dissatisfied and unhappy with the resorts.

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