

Enhancing international tourism to the Ditsong (South African)

National Museum of Military History

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Abstract

Attractions such as military history museums which exhibit a wide range of important historical artefacts are fundamental sub-elements in any tourism systems, and yet their study suffers from lack of theoretical depth. Military history is an integral element of the history of any nation and countless varieties of tourists both local and international, visit military museums whenever the opportunity presents itself because museums are generally stimulating places of interest. This article focuses predominantly on international tourists visiting the Ditsong National Museum of Military History. In addition to the interest that such museums generate, they play a key role as the organizational foundation stones of modernity. It is via their many interesting exhibits that museums enlighten us about the past that intrinsically highlights its distance from the present era. Museums also selectively reconstitute aspects of history and in so doing alienate many artefacts from their original context and yet manage to impart deep understanding of events that shaped the modern world.

Museums of all types thus impart knowledge and have a wide range of tales to tell concerning the many and diverse assortments of objects they hold. National pride is an obvious reason for having a military museum where the comprehensive display of military equipment is exceptionally unique while exhibition halls also offer an educational narrative of a nation's history. What is also of interest to many visitors is the type of research that is carried out in a multiplicity of ways. The huge global growth in tourism in recent years has contributed to many museums radically altering their exhibits in both content and manner of exhibition. This is significant given the reciprocal impact that museums and tourism have on one another. The attractions in museums are regarded by many to be central to the tourism process and these are very often the main reason for many tourists visiting a particular destination. The particular focus of this article is the role of Ditsong (South African) National Museum of Military History in promoting tourism and it suggests possible areas of development for the museum which would enhance its offerings and increase the number of tourist visits.

Introduction

There is a wide range of cultural attractions that tourists can visit including museums, heritage sites, parks and botanical gardens (Graham and Lennon, 2002). The Cambridge Dictionary Online defines museums as "*places of study, buildings where objects of historical, scientific or artistic interest are kept, preserved and exhibited*". Rojek states that human beings, irrespective of cultural background, have an innate urge to travel to witness for themselves the 'extraordinary' and often 'wonderful' objects they have read about or been taught about at school (Rojek, 1997).

According to Bennett (1995), museums have always been tourist destinations and they have been created to educate the uneducated masses. Museums, viewed as attractions are precise permanent resources that are managed for the education, pleasure, enjoyment, leisure time of their visitors (Middelton & 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 Ditsong National Museum of Military History in Johannesburg has always been a fascinating place to visit. Like similar museums abroad, it offers a very unique context for learning which is termed in literature as a "free-choice" learning environment (Falk & Dierking, 2000). The items on display in the museum are also distant enough to allow us to view the past and also look at ourselves in a different light. Visits to the museum are strongly related to the motivation and the characteristics of certain tourist typologies. The exhibits are special and very unique in an African context and yet more could be done to increase the number of tourist visits. The challenge for the museum is to better understand the needs of its diverse audience and provide experiences that meet and satisfy these needs in an environment of increasing global competition for tourists and huge scale socio-economic global change. It is said that 'museums are gatekeepers of modernity', if this is true then they have a great influence in affecting our perceptions.

Background to the museum

The South African Prime Minister in 1947, Field Marshal JC Smuts, at the opening of the museum referred to World War II and stated:

"...We are gathered here today to open what may not unfairly be looked upon as a memorial to the greatest united effort our country has ever been called upon to produce. Memorials, of course, have more than one use. They serve to remind us of what is past, of great deeds of heroism and sacrifice; they also serve as a pointer, and sometimes as a warning to the future. It is in these senses that the South African War Museum may be regarded as a Memorial. It will remind us, I hope, not only of the part we played in the recent great struggle to save civilization, but also of the horrors, the loss of life and the devastation, and serve as a warning to us to create a world in which we shall never have to use again the weapons of death and destruction we see here today, or those dreadful weapons to follow them..."

After South Africa's participation in World War I (1914-1918), on the side of the allied forces, and her subsequent involvement in World War II

(1939-1945), the official historian of the Union Defence Force, Captain J Agar-Hamilton came to the realization in 1940, that South Africa's involvement in World War I was not documented at all. Consequently, countless valuable artefacts and material heritage were lost, never again to be seen. As this was an unsatisfactory state of affairs, Captain J Agar-Hamilton began to put in place the fledgling South African War Museum. Due to his efforts, a very wide range of historical documents and military related materials were conserved. In addition to his efforts, the government of the day hired seven artists to document the war and set up a unique collection of roughly 850 works of art. In 1975, the name of the museum changed to the South African National Museum of Military History. The museum complex honours our nation's military and its many dedicated and exceptional soldiers, sailors and airmen. The complex spotlights the service and sacrifice of all South Africa's military through a variety of museum galleries dedicated to South Africa's military, both prior to and post the South African Democratic Revolution of 1994, and including inter-alia, the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, World War I, World War II, Korea (1950-1953) and the South African Liberation Struggle.

The museum's comprehensive collection of information, artefacts and images thus covers a wide range of events that shaped South Africa's history and keeps the nation's history alive. Although the scope and exhibitions have altered and new buildings had been constructed, every conflict that South Africa has ever been a part of is depicted in the Museum. The various sections in the exhibition halls follow an innovative progression that is generally chronological but they also reveal, within the various exhibits and assemblages, an almost thematic coherence. The museum also has a very important conservation and restoration role and it is this department which attracts a great many visitors due to the high standard of restoration projects. These are so well researched that they are known and appreciated internationally.

The Director of the Museum, Major John Keene, is doing a sterling job and has an able staff complement, amongst whom, are the curator Allan Sinclair, who also serves as a

Communication Science/PR officer and art and aviation specialist and Hamish Paterson, an education coordinator who clearly loves his role of imparting knowledge to visitors to the museum. Despite having able staff, the Museum is clearly short-staffed and should employ more able-bodied staff if it is to become a truly great and globally recognised heritage site.

The primary function of the Museum is to make authentic information, collections and research available to a wide range of visitors. The Museum thus documents, monitors, collects, inspects, stores, examines and exhibits a wide range of historical artefacts of a military nature, which give evidence of and provide information about historic events, every-day life and the many achievements of South African soldiers and armed forces throughout history. The research activities of the museum play an important role in its operation as well over 2 000 emails are received per annum and approximately 1 000 detailed answers are provided to information seekers by the curators. This is an important part of the educational activities where the museum is able to inform especially researchers, on specific items held at the museum.

A future short-term project of the Museum is to create a Transformation Display emphasizing the Liberation Struggle which should also prove to be of great interest to tourists. Tourists both local and international, military experts as well as military historians are afforded opportunities to gain valuable insight into the different historical periods which have contributed to the creation of present-day South Africa. Andreas Huyssen identified what he termed the “*transnational movement of memory discourses*”, and this plays a very important role in what and how museums exhibit artefacts (Huyssen, 2003). By attention to the legacy of South African involvement in wars, the museum should also play an important role in trying to show what the ‘enemy’ at any one time felt, and it should also to an extent focus on the importance of all war’s within the South African domestic culture. It has done this to an extent but more could be done.

Many South African and indeed foreign veterans and reserve soldiers view the Ditsong National

Museum of Military History, as a sort of headquarters. They reminisce about their sacrifices in times of conflict, as well as their many fallen comrades as well as their victories. The museum is unique on the African continent in its coverage of conflicts involving especially the South African military apparatus and it provides for, and promotes, the study and appreciation of the history of modern war and war-time experiences. The Director of the Museum, Major John Keene and Susanne Blendulf who heads the Curatorial Department are clearly experts at what they do and having such employees is critical to the museum’s success.

The Museum, currently houses a collection of 44,000 items which are as wide-ranging as military aircraft, a single-man submarine, tanks, cannons, armoured vehicles, medals, uniforms, many weapon types, photographs and documentation, as well as memorials. The library possesses a unique collection of journals, archival materials and historical books covering over 150 years of South African and global history. The development of warfare weaponry is also exhibited, such as combat uniforms and medicines. It is important to mention some of the ‘*one of a kind in the world*’ exhibits that are on display and to note that they lure many military enthusiasts from across the globe. These include, for example, the Messerschmitt 262 night fighter which was a very powerful piston-engined plane and a deadly aerial combat opponent of the Allies during World War II, and the Italian Armoured Vehicle *Autoblinda*. The Ditsong National Museum of Military History has roughly 50,000-60,000 visitors per year which includes local and international tourists, students, scholars and groups that are sent by the South African National Defence Force. In addition to playing an important role in the military history of South Africa, the Museum also caters for functions and presentations with a choice of conference rooms. There is also a museum shop for the purchase of memorabilia and a refreshment kiosk (<http://www.defenceweb.co.za>).

Why are military museums Important?

Traditionally, museums secure for us a living legacy of the past by holding in trust for society many important artefacts and their primary role is to advance and disseminate knowledge about the history of a nation. They generally gather documentation, interpret material evidence and preserve exhibits for the public benefit. Today, however, museums allow tourists and the general public to explore their many and varied collections for learning and enjoyment. They serve as vital sources of "living history" and provide visitors with insight into the upcoming fragile world we inhabit. Tourism is also a means to a better understanding of the dynamics of globalization and museums thus empower them in this regard. Military museums are especially important as they provide lessons from conflict around the globe which resonate with people from all walks of life. Decisions made in our history shaped how we view ourselves as a young nation today and many lessons may be learned in military museums. The Ditsong National Military History Museum has a huge opportunity to forge human identity as it allow visitors to access many and varied objects, sources of knowledge and invaluable information in very pleasant settings situated adjacent to the exceptional Johannesburg Zoological gardens.

The events they portray and memorialize are part and parcel of the global dialogue, promoted by the United Nations Organization, about justice and freedom for all. The museum can transform memory into action as it inspires and engages its visitors on the core lessons of war but has to an extent an unrealized potential. Gunn (1988) argues that attractions such as military museums exercise a magnetic "*pulling power*" over tourists since even classical times. This fascination consists of not only the interests and preferences of the tourist, but especially on the quality of the museum's design, its development, and the manner in which it operates. By learning about wars that have shaped the current world we are better able to provide for ourselves a clearer ethical and moral compass. Museums thus provide an ideal learning environment, for both formal and informal learning, active hands-on participation, or passive observation (Hein, 1998) and they raise the intellectual bar so to speak.

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). Museums have moved on from being merely storehouses of knowledge and many and varied objects and now have a multifaceted and indeed outward looking role as hosts who invite tourists inside to be amazed, encounter and learn (Schauble, Leinhardt & Martin, 1997). Museums are perpetual participants in the shaping of modernity, and their role is dynamic in a global context as they expand into the contemporary universal consciousness. Cities such as Johannesburg have a wide range of attractions such as Freedom Park, Gold Reef City and the Ditsong National Museum of Military History, the purpose of which is to promote tourism which has both a complex and multifaceted character. The support of local residents for these attractions is also critical for their sustainability, and also serves to boost the cultural liveliness of the city.

What does the term 'leisure' mean?

Museums are closely associated with the leisure sector, principally in a number of research studies linked to the marketing of museums (Burton & Scott, 2003; Packer & Ballantyne, 2002; Witcomb, 2003). The prime motivations for tourists to visit museums are for leisure and entertainment (Packer, 2004). In an Australian Museum study on visitors, it was found that 71% of adults visited museums in the main for the entertainment value (Kelly, 2001).

Moore, Cushman and Simmons (1995), state that free time appears to be fundamental to the notion of leisure and that those who engage in a leisure activity are aware that they have both free time and opportunity available to do something different which they generally perceive to be mentally stimulating and rewarding.

Stebbins (2001) differentiated between what he terms 'casual' and 'serious' types of leisure with most leisure, including museum visits being of the former type and being conducted by your average tourist. This type is generally a short-lived but pleasurable experience. Historians or military analysts for example, who visit a military

history museum do so due to as it conforms with their careers, knowledge and skills and challenges them, and these are the 'serious' type of leisure seekers, who comprise a much smaller group of visitors. Leiper (1990) on the other hand, maintains that tourists are not somehow "attracted" or "pulled" towards visiting a museum, but "are pushed ... by their own motivation towards the places and/or events where they expect their needs will be satisfied". Either way, museums want more visitors.

Challenges facing museums

There are numerous challenges facing museums today, including *inter-alia*, greater competition from a wider range of leisure options for tourists who are now more refined through the use of the internet (Lynch et al, 2000).

How museums maintain an ability to draw lessons of value to what is generally an extensive array of disciplinary interests for tourists is highly thought provoking. This is especially important as museums are now in global contention in the marketplace with many other leisure, learning and educational providers (Lynch et al., 2000). Museums clearly have limited resources and this requires them to operate with a greater commercial emphasis than was previously the case. Museums should not simply be suppliers of information but rather strive to provide utilizable knowledge and for tourists to investigate their own ideas and arrive at their own conclusions (Bradburne, 1998). Many museums are now of necessity seeking greater stakeholder collaboration in their operations and seek to gain the support of corporations (Garnett, 2002). Apart from their heritage factor importance, for museums to remain relevant in 21st century society, they must be receptive to burning social and environmental issues such as societal justice, population growth and sustainability (Goulding, 2000).

It is increasingly important for museums to adapt their role and provide greater access to tourists for accurate and authoritative information (Cameron, 2006). Tourists visiting museums detest artificial exhibits and settings and value authenticity above all else. This poses a significant test to museums since it is not only important to tourists but they have come to expect authenticity. If museums fail to satisfy the

needs and wants of their visitors, then they will simply visit other places in their leisure time. Most tourists and indeed the majority of all visitors to museums wish to know that any information they are given on exhibits is in fact based on careful research. They seek a true interpretation of the 'facts' that they are presented with. If tourists feel that what they are told or shown in a museum is in any way inaccurate, they will forever regard the museum as unauthentic. It is thus critical that tourists be imbued with a sense of trust by what is reflected in a museum as museums are the focal points of convergence for thinking, reflection, pleasure and knowledge (Arpin, 1992).

In the context of expansion of Johannesburg's portfolio of tourist attractions, it is imperative to attract miscellaneous, but nonetheless well-matched, markets and submarkets of visitors. As far as international tourists are concerned, the museum should be regarded as one of the essential sights to visit on a trip to Johannesburg. These are not the only important market however. The problem of accessibility and the relationship of conservation and heritage to the poor and marginalized constituencies of South Africa is an issue that the museum will have to try to address as a matter of urgency. Consequently this group is a potential market of importance and essentially comprises local visitors who have not yet visited the museum. Globally, there is an increasingly growing perception that admission to museums should be very cheap if not entirely free in order to encourage local visitors to attend (Rentschler *et al.* 2004). While this thinking should be encouraged, tourists from abroad could pay a higher foreign visitor fee as is the case in many countries. In addition there should be free admission for senior citizens, students and disabled people (Rentschler *et al.*, 2007). A important question to consider is the status of 'leisure' tourism to the Museum.

An Effective Marketing Plan for the Museum

Museum marketing is distinctive as the roles of Museums are to educate their visitors and become self-sustaining institutions by increasing their revenue through increased numbers of visitors. As a result of these roles careful

planning is required in merging the mission and vision with the available market. An effective marketing plan is imperative to success as it is via this plan that a museum can increase its visitor base and boost revenues which will enable it to realize its vision and mission. Planning is thus critical to a museum's marketing strategy. If a museum is marketed in a haphazard manner which is devoid of a considered plan, ideally based on a feasibility study, resources will simply be squandered. The annual marketing plan should target the primary tourist segments while it prioritizes its resources.

A primary concern of the marketing plan developers for the Ditsong National Museum of Military History, should be analyzing the type of experience the museum offers tourists. This should include a detailed description of the activities the tourists can enjoy while visiting the museum. There was a noticeable lack of any booklets, DVDs, and other vital marketing material at the front-desk of the museum. An effective marketing plan for the Ditsong (South African) National Military History Museum is lacking. Such a plan should encompass five main steps including:

1. A Situation Analysis the initial step in the strategic marketing plan. The context in which the museum finds itself in the marketplace is important to the future orientation.
2. Establishing Market Opportunities
3. Setting Marketing Objectives
4. Strategy and Programme Development
5. Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation of the Marketing Plan

If there is a marketing plan why is it apparently not operational or functional as it should be? Has the museum conducted any analysis that attempts to answer questions such as: Why do visitors come to this museum? Who makes the decision to come to the museum? Do visitors decide to visit the museum spontaneously or is it a planned carefully worked out visit? There also needs to be an analysis of how societal values influence visitor attendance. For example, do certain population groups not visit the museum as it is regarded as an apartheid era glorifying institution? Why do school groups not visit as much as they should? How does the museum

promote itself? Does funding or lack thereof hamper the growth of the museum? Is the state making enough tourism grants available to the museum which is part of the Ditsong museums? Although the museum welcomes all visitors and looks forward to an increase in numbers, the vital fact of having sufficient amenities and the requisite number of staff to provide the necessary security and cleanliness, must be considered before any meaningful marketing drive is undertaken. There is the question of working within capacity. The museum could do with far more funding which appears to be a major challenge and is does not reside under the appropriate 'umbrella' organisation as such.

Does the museum have any competition and which other attractions are targeting potential visitors? Is it possible to collaborate with other tourism draw-card institutions? Once the museum knows the answers to such questions, it will be in a position to make important marketing decisions and promote itself in a meaningful way. Technology and especially the internet now plays a vital role in increasing attendance to any museum. The Website of the museum is now under the Ditsong umbrella, but in order for it to be effective, it should be a stand-alone Website which will encourages thousands of 'hits' per week. These 'hits' can be translated into increasing real visitor numbers to the actual museum? Current marketing objectives clearly need to be analyzed. To what extent is the museum attempting to understand the motivations of its diverse visitors' and how does its marketing strategy reflect this? (Lepkowska-White & Powell, 2007).

Research study

As international tourists are an important market for the Museum, increasing the number of these visitors should be a strategic objective. Consequently, a study of tourist origins and viewpoints on the Museum was undertaken to provide market information that the Museum could use in its future marketing strategy. The primary objective is to increase the number of tourists visiting the Museum.

There are currently two scales that have been developed which help the tourism industry to

identify the motivational domains of the leisure tourist. These are the Leisure Motivation Scale (Beard & Ragheb, 1983) and the Subjective Leisure Scale (SLS) of Linger & Keman, (1983). The former includes four motivational domains that direct involvement in leisure. These include the intellectual domain, the social domain, the domain of challenge to achieve something and an escapism domain.

The Subjective Leisure Scale (SLS) on the other hand, comprises 26 items which differentiate between six main domains, namely, intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, arousal, mastery, involvement and spontaneity. In preceding studies the SLS has established outstanding levels of reliability and validity. In this research 30 questions were posed.

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency and a coefficient of reliability that was used in assessing how closely related the set of items (questions posed) were as a group. It is generally considered to be a conservative and safe estimate of the reliability of a test or survey. Cronbach's alpha may be written as a function of the number of test items and the average inter-correlation among the items used. However, it is important to remember that reliability is in itself not a characteristic inherent in the test, but it is rather an estimate of the consistency of the set of items which were administered to the international tourists at specific times under particular conditions for the specific purpose of this research. The Cronbach's alphas for the constructs of SLS as used in this research, ranged between .87 and .93. The average Cronbach alpha for a set of scores thus turned out to be .90, and may be interpreted as meaning that the test was 90% reliable, and by extension, that was only 10% unreliable.

Research Design

A quantitative data collection method was integrated into the case study of the Ditsong National Museum of Military History. Yin (2002) has explained that this type of approach is appropriate when the research conducted focuses on current situations and does not need control over behavioural events, and especially

where the structure of the research question is based on how or why something occurs.

The research involved three threads of data collection techniques:

- Desk research to draw together existing information on tourism profiles to Gauteng, patterns of tourist behaviour and trends.
- An onsite exit survey/questionnaire of 580 visitors to the museum, of which 227 were international tourists visiting the Museum was conducted in order to gather information on visitor profiles, reasons for their visit, visitor experience and responses to what else they would have liked to have seen or experienced at the Museum.
- Discussion with three tour operators on their knowledge of the Museum and their marketing thereof.

This study reports on a number of areas of the questionnaire, namely:

- What are the trends in military history tourism?
- What is the profile of international tourists who visit the Museum?
- What motivates international tourists to visit the Museum?
- Which other sites were visited by them in Johannesburg?
- What visitor experiences do they seek?
- What are their sources of information?
- What trends are likely to occur in tourism to Gauteng Province over the next 5 years?

Additionally, three tour operators were asked:

- What levels of awareness of the Museum exist amongst them and their intermediaries?

The exit survey was conducted from November to December 2010 revealed that around 42% of all visitors' to the Ditsong National Museum of Military History were international tourists, with the following general characteristics:

- Country of residence:
 - 25% UK
 - 17% Germany

- 11 % France
- 4% Holland
- 4% Italy
- 8% other Europe
- 7% Asia
- 5% North America
- 21% other
- Visited due to proximity to hotel
- Visited due to proximity to the Johannesburg Zoological Gardens
- Visited as a result of tourist guidebook
- Visited due to interest in military history and heritage studies
- Visited due to local family/business partner driven initiative
- Visited due to tour guide recommendation
- Other sites visited by these tourists in or in close proximity to Johannesburg:
 - 29% Freedom Park and Soweto
 - 11% Johannesburg Art Gallery
 - 17% Walter Sisulu Botanical Garden
 - 34% Gold Reef City
 - 26% Johannesburg Zoological gardens
 - 5% The Constitutional Court
 - 4% The Sharpeville Museum in Vanderbijlpark
 - 23% The Lion Park
 - 14% The Crocodile Farm

Questionnaire Development

Data was collected using a questionnaire administered in face-to-face interviews over the period of two weeks during November and December 2010, as randomly selected tourists left the Museum. It had to be ascertained on contact, if they were local or international tourists. Once this was established, the questionnaire was administered. Respondents were given standardised instructions on how to complete the questionnaire and an explanation

was given on what was expected of them. The content validity of the questionnaire, or its appropriateness of questions, were tested for correctness, lucidity and relevance in a preliminary investigation. The 30 questions that were included were considered to be relevant to the research problem and the survey was quite simple in design. Clear instructions were provided and simple, clear and unambiguous language was used. A rationale was given for any item whose purpose was not immediately clear and there were consistency checks and some items were designed to assess the same or similar characteristics. The specific characteristics of the respondents was measured and not the individuals themselves.

Questions on the relevant areas as well as leisure motivations with regard to tourists visiting the Ditsong National Museum of Military History were included in the interview using the Subjective Leisure Scale of Unger and Kernan (1983).

The 30 questions included in the SLS were:

1. The main criterion for me visiting the museum is the intrinsic satisfaction I obtain when I learn something new.
2. I was invited to visit the museum by a local family member/friend.
3. I was taken to the museum by a business associate.
4. I visited due to my curiosity of how good an African museum could be.
5. I escape a mundane existence by experiencing something different.
6. I made a spontaneous decision to visit the museum.
7. I visited as I had nothing else planned for the day.
8. I have visited/will visit other tourist sites in and around Johannesburg.
9. I am a professional in whose field of work history/military studies/heritage plays a large part.

10. I visit museums for the thrill of the experience.
11. I visited the museum to see how different cultures articulate their understanding of global events.
12. I visited due to what I have read about the museum in a travel guide/guidebook.
13. I visited due to the tour operator's/tour guide recommendations or advice.
14. I visited due to the proximity of my hotel to the museum.
15. I visited due to the proximity of the museum to the Johannesburg Zoological Gardens
16. I visited due to my interest in military history and heritage studies
17. I visited due to local family/business partner driven initiative
18. I visited the museum because of specific rare exhibits such as the Messerschmitt 262 or the one-man German submarine.
19. I visited the museum because other museums/art galleries were inaccessible at the time.
20. I investigated what the museum had to offer on the internet before I arrived in South Africa?
21. I investigated what the museum had to offer after I arrived in South Africa?
22. I would say the museum has a good marketing strategy in place.
23. I would say that the museum has a welcoming atmosphere.
24. I would say the food stall is adequate for refreshments.
25. The staff including guides seemed to be well trained, friendly and knowledgeable.
26. My visit to the museum was an authentic experience that had an emotional impact on me as I 'relived' important moments in history.
27. What I have read about crime in South Africa made me wary about visiting the museum.
28. Would you visit the museum again?
29. Would you recommend the museum to others in your country of origin?
30. I have visited or will visit other attractions in Johannesburg and surrounds? (they were asked to list which attractions alongside on the rating scale)

A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the extent to which respondents disagreed/agreed with the SLS statements (Unger & Kernan, 1983). This statements included in the rating scale were used so as to simplify and more easily quantify the attitudes and behaviour of the international tourists surveyed. Statements included 'strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree'. A value of 1 represented 'strongly disagree' and 5 represented 'strongly agree'. Since the respondents each selected an appropriate response on the scale of 1 to 5 points, the scores were added up for each individual based on their reaction and assessed and their attitude on the issues could thus be determined as stated by Huysamen (1994).

Generally, studies which used the SLS displayed high levels of validity and reliability and it was expected that the same instrument would be able to produce the same data at a later stage under similar conditions such as for example by means of a test-retest procedure. Respondents could also write comments alongside each point on the rating scale if they so wished.

Based on Aizen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (1985) and Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned

Action (1980), it was considered suitable to use behavioural intentions as a 'ballpark' figure of visitation to the museum. Ajzen stated that all intentions are merely indicators of how hard people are willing to try, and of how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform a certain behaviour' (Ajzen & Driver, 1992). In leisure activities such as visits to museums, intentions are strongly correlated with reported behaviour. Consequently, ones attitude towards leisure activities can be differentiated on the basis of whether they are emotional, or descriptive or instrumental (Ajzen & Driver, 1992). In this study then, behavioural intentions were used to measure respondents' likelihood of visiting the museum again.

Sample

A convenience sampling (accidental sampling) methodology was operationalized through a sampling approach from tourists who had just visited the museum. The data was collected between November and December 2010. The resulting sample size of people approached was 580 of which only 227 were international tourists, which was considered to be appropriate given the aim of the study. This sampling typology is suitable for less demanding research problems as it provides the researcher with the information needed for the purpose of the study.

Data Analysis

The sample (n = 227) was initially segmented, based on respondents' behavioural intentions in relation to their visit to the museum. Such a sample size is considered to be representative of the population, and the results achieved give a true reflection of the characteristics of the international tourist population. Data filtering took place in which only the data critical to the research remained. The role of the data towards the elucidation of the research problem as well as the relationship of the data towards the research topic, were carefully considered. The target population was only international tourists visiting the museum. Filtering of data continued until only critical data remained which was analysed in depth. During this process, the interpretation and integration of viewpoints of the respondents came to the fore and thus new knowledge was created by the researcher.

Results

This research provides insights for the Ditsong National Museum of Military History with regard to what international tourists are seeking when they visit local tourist attractions and what motivates them to visit. The information can thus be used to develop more constructive experiences for international tourists for this important sector of the tourism market. Like other destinations such as Durban and Cape Town, Johannesburg is gradually experiencing some cumulative effects of increased levels of global tourism since the successful hosting of the FIFA 2010 World Cup. The Museum has a great deal of competition in Johannesburg and surrounds. International visitors who are interested in history and military heritage sites visited the Museum. The majority of international tourists visiting the Museum were either business or short-stay tourists. Most of them also visited other venues of interest with nature and wild-life related sites absorbing most of their attention.

By drawing conclusions from the collection of data, the researcher was able to extrapolate about tourist motivations and expectations. The Subjective Leisure Scale (SLS) was used to explore whether there were any differences across the age groups in terms of their leisure motivations. It was clear that intrinsic satisfaction was the main motivator for tourism visits but the marketing of the museum was very poor. Local government needs to support the future development of the museum. In this study, it is argued that international tourists are a very important market to pursue for the museum and so marketing initiatives must be revamped as a matter of urgency if the museum is to attract more visitors from abroad. Service quality excellence is non-negotiable and word of mouth is important in developing goodwill and business for the museum (White & Schneider, 2000). To take full advantage of this market, it is important to understand why international tourists visit the museum. By gathering information on this theme, it is likely that new marketing and management strategies for the museum will be developed to better accommodate the needs of international tourists.

British, German and French international tourists were the main visitors from abroad. They represented 53% of the sample, and 38% of these were most likely to revisit the museum in the future. Only 17% of those surveyed had been advised to visit the museum by tour operators or guides. Approximately 89% of the sample indicated that had no prior knowledge of the museum before arriving in Johannesburg. The sample indicated that they would or had already visited other attractions including mainly Gold Reef City, Freedom Park and Soweto, the Zoological Gardens and the Lion Park. Results indicated a higher propensity to visit some heritage sites (34% Gold Reef City), while other heritage sites had minimal intended or actual visits (5% The Constitutional Court and a paltry 4%, the Sharpeville Museum in Vanderbijlpark-the latter is in critical need of extensive marketing given that it is a very historic site in the history of South Africa). Nature based attractions', in particular the Johannesburg Zoological Gardens (26%), the Lion Park (23%), the Walter Sisulu Botanical Garden (17%) and the Crocodile Farm (14%) also attracted international tourists. The Johannesburg Art Gallery attracted on 11% of the respondents in the sample. The survey indicated a strong propensity of international tourists to visit at least 2 sites in Johannesburg and surrounds. Most visitors in the sample visited due to spontaneity and interest in heritage studies/history. 98% of the respondents indicated that they had enjoyed their experience which was immersive and authentic. 95% found staff to be friendly and guides to be knowledgeable. 87 % of respondents found the food stall to be inadequate for a museum of such standing and one respondent wrote the word 'pathetic' alongside the relevant item on the rating scale (number 24).

Surprisingly, given its central position in Johannesburg, the results indicated that the museum appears to be a rather difficult attraction to access. Approximately 90% the respondents wanted to experience the unique South Africa, and were seeking mainly satisfying experiences from which they could learn. Only 12% had read any general descriptions on the museum in tourist guide books and 7% had the museum recommended to them by friends and family, or 'heard it was interesting' and should visit by businesses associates. Certain exhibits, amongst

which was the ME 262 World War II, aircraft developed by Germany, was advanced as the main reason for 4% of the visits.

Three tour operators' perspectives

Face to face open-ended semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of three Johannesburg tourism operators in order to get clarification on their knowledge of the museum and their promotion thereof if any at all. Two expressed the opinion that although they are aware of the museum and what it offers, South Africa is not the first country most tourists have visited. Consequently, the museum is essentially competing with many similar overseas attractions, especially in North America and Europe, for example the Smithsonian in the United States and the Imperial war Museum in England. Knowledgeable tourists thus believe they have 'seen it all'.

Most tourists do not plan in advance what they will see at there destination and thus rely on information they receive for example at the airport or referrals from friends and business associates. Most visitors to South Africa Tourism also want to spend limited time seeing nature-linked tourism sites. Tourists are also increasingly looking for authentic experiences that impact on them emotionally and so they prefer live safari-type encounters, but this does not necessarily mean that heritage sites are less important to them. The tourists also rely on tour guide advice. Tour operators admitted that they could do more to promote the museum and one stated that he would be happy to support initiatives to encourage more international tourist visits if only they (the museum) approach him to discuss such an initiative. Most tourists seek a unique nature visit and so visit the Lion Park etc to fulfill this desire. Many also seek an opportunity to visit cultural sites although these are limited in number in Gauteng. For most international tourists on a travel itinerary, Johannesburg is seen as a transit point or a shopping destination rather than as place with meaningful tourism sites. Generally, the tourism operators interviewed had relatively low knowledge of what was on offer at the Ditsong National Museum of Military History. It was not surprising therefore that international tourist visits were when low compared to similar museums abroad.

Limitations of the study

The descriptions of the attitudes and opinions of the respondents (international tourists) visiting the museum were constructed on the spot and they did not have enough time to carefully consider the questions posed. In addition, some of them may have intentionally misrepresented the facts so as not to 'offend' the researcher. The researcher thus could have obtained limited and possibly distorted information (Dowson & McInerney, 2001).

Recommendations for further research

Given the case study nature of this research, the results are only applicable to the Ditsong National Museum of Military History with its excellent range of exhibits. The results are useful for the museum and the marketers of tourist destinations and attractions in Johannesburg to consider when developing their strategies which are generally aimed at meeting the needs of international travellers with regard to their leisure motivations.

Research with a greater quantitative focus to ascertain diverse market segments' preferences for certain amenities as well as a drive to further determine the reaction of international tourists to dissimilar fundamentals of the marketing strategy is also advocated for future studies. Further research could also be conducted on how competing attractions may choose to market their 'type' of attraction collaboratively. The nature-based attractions could intensify collaboration with the museum for a multi-venue pass for international tourists sold by tour operators in their country of origin or at the airports in Gauteng. From a marketing perspective, however, it is evident that the museum considers expanding its marketing initiatives. Research could also be conducted in this area.

Recommendations for enhanced experiences and increased visits

Although the exhibits and related information are presented to visitors, it should be done in a more imaginative way. The museum should consider installing interactive video gallery which will allow visitors to search databases and learn about the many sacrifices of all nations affected by war. Chronological timelines for wards could be

placed on wall charts to assist visitors to contextualize the exhibits they are seeing. Although there are a few television screens showing DVDs of various military campaigns from World War I onwards, these should be made viewer friendly with some simple benches placed at strategic positions to make viewing easier.

The museum should essentially become more of a learning laboratory where visitors both local and international, students and researchers can use the exhibits to assess the role of South Africa in global conflict. Museums must build relationships and strive to become 'communities of practice' (Kelly *et al*, 2006)

The average visitor spends approximately two hours at the museum. What should be encouraged is that the museum should present questionnaires to visitors which encourage them to consider the consequences of war and its many negative impacts on our fragile planet. The museum could also, where possible, hire veterans from armed conflict to serve as guides as this will allow visitors to become au fait with experiences of war from those who were actually involved. Guest lecturers on military themes could be held once a month and vigorously advertised in the local press. Globally, museums with a military history slant favour marketing strategies involving dedicated websites (Schuler & Janell, 2002). They also utilize newspapers, magazines as well as a number of community activities to increase attendance. Coach operators could be handed freely available leaflets to promote visits by international tourists and tour operators could help a great deal in this regard. Tourists who book their holidays through a tour operators are far more likely than independent travellers to make the decision to the museum before leaving home and so tour brochures would be important for those on package tours. Tour buses could also, for example, be met by Zulu dancers in traditional *impi* (warrior) garb. This in itself would set a warm and inviting tone for the rest of the visit.

The museum receives welcome additional income from its Conference and Function Centres and these centres supply in excess of R500 000 to the income portion of the annual

budget, and also serve as an excellent tool for marketing the museum to individuals who visit the museum for work - related functions or seminars and are able to take time to tour the premises. However more advertising in the media of such premises and their availability would be advisable as not many people are aware of these facilities in really special surrounds. Additionally, special events such as the launching of a new exhibit, which may be advertised in the media, may draw those who may not otherwise visit. Special offers could also be made for cheaper entry at specific times. The media should be fed with press releases on all issues of interest. This is the most cost effective element in marketing the museum. It is after all free media coverage and in this regard the museum should pursue the building up of good relationships with news editors, feature editors, journalists, photographers and cameramen employed by the local media including those who are employed on a freelance basis. The website of the museum should be a unique one, while still maintaining a separate Ditsong website. This is probably the most important marketing tool to employ.

The reception area of any museum sets the tone for the rest of the museum and generally is an indication of things to come, so to speak. At the museum, the front desk is stark and uninviting. Apart from charging admission fees it should be selling guide books and providing useful information on the museum for tourists. In terms of food and drink provision, the current set-up is sub standard and it would be worthwhile to tender for reputable coffee shops or restaurant chains to establish an operation on the museum site at reasonable rentals. The same applies to reputable bookshops that could offer and sell a wide range of militaria and historically oriented publications. The existing shop is a good initiative but this concept must be expanded.

The Offerings on entry could also be improved by the provision and sale of a carefully compiled tourist guidebook which elaborates on the major exhibits on view. Vigorous marketing initiatives using tour operators and even airline companies publications, are critical to increased international tourist visits. If a museum is not marketable it cannot survive (Colton, 2000). It is recommended

that far more work be undertaken in this regard as there is a market just waiting to be informed of what is on offer.

Many museums abroad find that television advertising is very effective, but a very expensive way of reaching a large target market. Piggybacking with multinational corporations that appreciate the value of corporate social responsibility and such initiatives, such as MTN for example, could alleviate such a deficiency. There may also be local radio stations with an international audience such as 702 that could be useful in raising awareness and who would also be seen to be 'leading South Africa'.

Conclusion

Historically, Museums have been and continue to be, leisure and tourist destinations but the contemporary challenge is for them to remain relevant and be regarded as a must-view tourist destination in an environment in which there are many competing tourism sites (Scott & Burton, 2000). There is no doubt that international tourists value museums' as places for active personal learning through the observation of interesting and educational exhibits and also as outlets for physical relaxation and escapism (Slater, 2007).

Museums despite the fact that they are needed in society (Carr, 1999), are recognizing that they are competing for the international tourists share of leisure time and entertainment with many other tourism related operations and new avenues must be sought to make them more interesting (Freedman, 2000). The challenge for the Ditsong National Museum of Military History is to connect with potential visitors from abroad. To do this it should realize that a profitable future lies in its urgent implementation of effective marketing and vigorous public relations efforts, which begin with ascertaining what visitors want. This should be followed by promoting what the museum has to offer and exhibiting its many and unique attractions in new and exciting ways so as to satisfy international tourist needs and wants for meaningful leisure experiences.

The findings of this research have a number of practical implications for those involved in the management and marketing of the Ditsong

National Museum of Military History. The international tourists visiting the museum, who responded to the survey, were not only guided by the potential attractiveness of the museum, but while looking to spend their valued leisure time in a free environment, simultaneously challenged the operators of the museum through what were generally sincere and useful responses which should hopefully benefit the museum and all its stakeholders and enhance the offering so as to be world-class.

As stated earlier, the museum resides under the umbrella of an organisation called – Ditsong: Museums of South Africa. This organisation is under the 'ownership' and control of the Department of Arts and Culture – and there is no doubt that this is indeed a strange place for a military museum to reside. The museum consequently competes continually with other cultural museums for funding. There has been a drastic cut in core function personnel over the last ten years and, as a result, many of the curators are of necessity multi – tasked. Advertising the museum is in a sense, thus unwise, if there is insufficient staff to handle the current workload. It is recommended that the museum not reside under the current umbrella organisation, but rather under another, and that additional funding and staff be made available as soon as possible.

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