



Just how much do the perceptions of crime and safety influence tourists' travelling to emerging countries?

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Abstract

South Africa with its diverse cultures and numerous tourist offerings, remains an attractive destination for travellers across the world. Tourism in South Africa contributes largely to the economic growth of the country, however, the country is internationally recognised as a country with a high crime rate. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of the perception of crime and safety on first- time and repeat tourists in the George and Wilderness areas of the Western Cape Province. This study was quantitative in nature and incorporated a descriptive design. The target population of the study included domestic and international tourists who visited the George and Wilderness areas during or prior to the study. A non-probability sampling was incorporated through the use of convenience sampling method and 152 respondents took part in the study. Descriptive statistics and Person's Chi-square tests were used to analyse the data. The research findings indicate that that media reporting on crime in South Africa influences the overall image of the country, yet do not deter first-time or repeat tourists from visiting the country. The results of the study, in addition, indicated that there is no relation between whether tourists or their friends and family have been affected by crime in the George and Wilderness areas and their repeat visits. These results confirm that tourists traveling to developing countries accept higher levels of crime. No clear relation exists between clear signage, including clear signposts and notifications of crime in the area and repeat visits of tourists.

Keywords: Crime, safety, perceptions, first-time visitors, repeat tourist visits.

Introduction

Tourists' risk perceptions regarding a specific destination can affect their decision making and the likelihood to travel (Chili, 2018; Karl, 2018; Morakabati & Kapuściński, 2016; Schroeder, & Pennington-Gray, 2015). Since the terror attacks of Sept 11, 2001, uncertainty in travel decision-making associated risk has become a prominent research area. Morakabati and Kapuściński (2016) state that in the context of risk, the perception of the situation is important, yet the perspective and likelihood of negative consequences of the event of choice are proven stronger factors of the destination of choice. How tourists perceive crime in specific areas often relate to their own experiences or experiences of others and could have an effect on their willingness to travel to these destinations (Cui, Liu, Chang, Duan & Li, 2016). Factors that can influence the willingness to travel also include the positive value and the attractiveness of a destination, monetary benefit based primarily on foreign exchange rate value, and information received by the tourist regarding the destination (Boniface, Cooper & Cooper 2016).

South Africa is known for its diverse tourism offerings which enable the country to compete in the international tourism markets. Tourism has been identified as one of



the key sectors that offer growth to provinces in terms of job creation and government investment (The Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT) (2015). Statistics South Africa (2018) claim that tourist arrivals in South Africa increased by 2.7% between the years 2017 to 2018 while the DEDT (2015) states in their annual report of 2014/2015 that the Western Cape's tourism sector contributes 9.8% to the provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Garden Route, with its diverse outdoor and indoor activities, has all the essential elements to become the leading tourism destination in South Africa (DEDT, 2015), and is seen as a key economic driver in the Western Cape area. The Garden Route District Municipality acknowledges this fact and plans to expand this industry in the future (DEDT, 2015).

South Africa, however, is perceived as a country with a high crime rate associated with high risk by most South Africans (Faull, 2018). This sentiment however is shared by the US tourism that placed South Africa on their list of countries to interact with caution. Reasons for the decision include the violent crimes, including armed robbery, rape, carjacking, mugging, and "smash-and-grab" attacks on vehicles (Travel.State.Gov, 2018). Conflicting views on the perception of risk associated with crime by international tourist in addition exist on TripAdvisor (2019). These perceptions regarding the country can have a negative influence on the tourism industry Ferreira and Perks (2017); Perry and Potgieter (2013) as well as, Moyo and Ziramba (2013) claim that an increase in crime rates lead to decline tourist arrivals. Certain levels of risk, however, seem to be acceptable for some tourists (George, 2017). Santana-Gallego, Rossello-Nada and Fourie (2016) offer an explanation for this statement by proclaiming that tourists traveling to developing countries accept high levels of crime and they often rely on the safety precautions initiated by developing countries to alleviate their fears.

Studies regarding risk perceptions of tourists have mainly focused on risk perception and its manifestations during the stage of the destination choice process (Jonas and Mansfeld, 2017; Tan & Tang, 2013; Choi, Lehto, Morrison, & Jang, 2012). Little research exists relating to the effects of crime on tourists perceptions in South Africa (Perry & Potgieter, 2013; Zatori, 2013; George & Swart (2012), George, 2010). George (2010) urged for more research in South Africa to gain insight into the effects of perceived crime and risk on visitation and visitor behaviour.

No research has been conducted on the perceptions of crime and safety of first time and repeat tourists to the Garden Route area. This article, therefore, aims to fill the gap in the literature and focuses the perceptions of crime and safety on first time and repeat tourists in the George and Wilderness areas that are located in the Western Cape, South Africa. The Garden Route District Municipality comprises of Bitou, George, Hessequa, Kannaland, Knysna, Mosselbay and Oudtshoorn Municipalities.

Literature review

This section provides an overview of the choice of tourist's destination, perceptions of risk associated with crime and safety and information sources and perceived risk.

Choice of tourist' destination

Tourists' destination decisions are influenced by multiple internal and external factors. Internal factors include the tourist's perceptions and expectations regarding a destination that have an important psychological impact on consumer decisions (Seyidov & Adomaitiene, 2016). External factors that influence decision making regarding a destination include geographical proximity, affordability, nature experiences, availability of activities, relaxation, availability of cultural and entertainment attractions and perceptions regarding personal safety (Karl, 2018).



Maroofi and Dehghan (2012) as well as, Zhang, Fu, Liping and Lin (2014) claim that positive experiences, while in a country, will create loyalty to the destination and result in repeat visits. A positive experience at a destination in addition influences tourists to share their experiences with others through word of mouth and positive reviews about a country on social media which positively influence tourism growth (Maroofi & Dehghan, 2012).

At peak tourism periods in South Africa (October to March) compared to winter months (April to September) a substantial amount of revenue is derived from increased tourist traffic into the George and Wilderness areas (EDM, 2015). Outdoor activities such as beaches, nature reserves, social events, forests, hiking and mountain biking trails are popular for adventure seekers visiting the George and Wilderness areas especially in the summer months. The areas, in addition, are also known for indoor activities, namely, arts and culture, wine farms and well-established restaurants (EDM, 2017).

International tourists predominantly travel to the Garden Route in South Africa for leisure, while domestic tourists travel for both business and leisure (EDM, 2015). Cape Town and Western Cape Research (WESGRO) (2016) state that 49.2% of total tourists to the Garden Route travel in pairs whilst 16.2% travel alone. Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom are the leading international target markets of tourism in the Western Cape region (Tourism news, 2019; EDM, 2015). There is an inextricable relation between tourism demand and safety and security perceptions of tourists.

Perceptions of risk associated with crime and safety

Studies on risk (perceptions) and destination of choice agree that risk influences destinations of choice but do not agree on the strength or manner of influence (Karl, 2018; Brown, 2015; George & Booyens, 2014).

Five major risks are associated with tourism. These risks are: war and political instability, terrorism; cultural and language difficulties; health risks and crime. For each of these risks, there is a perceived (subjective) and an absolute (real) risk (Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2015). The protection motivation theory (Rogers, 1975) suggests that the evaluation of risks are influenced by information received regarding a destination which in return can influence risk perceptions. Tourists with high-risk perceptions may engage in protection motivation behaviours to reduce risks such as a mitigation of the risk or extensive information search.

As a result, tourist-related risk perceptions have become important to the tourism industry as they sell mostly intangible products and experiences and therefore need to dismiss all possible perceived risks (Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2015). Tourists, on the other hand, are eager to reduce their exposure to risk in order to maximise their traveling experiences.

South Africa as a travel destination, is perceived to be a violent society with high crime rates where tourists are vulnerable to criminal activities. ISS (2018) reports that there is a higher risk of violent crime in the central business districts of major cities after dark. In the most recent financial year (2017/18) murder overall increased by 6.9% in the country. The number of women murdered increased by 11%, the number of boys by 20%, and girls by 10% from the year before with the greatest proportion of violence against women being domestic violence. Perry and Potgieter (2013) as well as, Ferreira and Perks (2016) claim that tourists are often exposed to the outdoor environment in South Africa and can become vulnerable as they are in an unfamiliar environment and are victimised at these areas. Perry and Potgieter (2013) stipulate



that perceptions of crime of an area, are less influenced by statistical evidence but more by personal experiences, the perception of how the government manages safety and the opinions of friends and family.

It therefore, becomes important for tourists traveling to unknown or less-known destinations to feel safe and that unacceptable behaviour will be punished. This is especially true when the cultural distance to the tourist-generating country and destination is high (Jensen & Svendsen, 2016). Tourists want to trust that the response to crime and safety needs will be similar or the same to what they are used to in their home countries. South Africa is a democratic country which assures the dignity of all its residents and the Constitution upholds this dignity by applying the Bill of Rights in the protection of all people on South African soil (Constitutional Assembly, 1996). Perry and Potgieter (2013) proclaim that fear for personal safety and security represents a negative perception regarding the safety of South Africa to tourism markets. The Western Cape Government Provincial Treasurer (2015) acknowledges this fact and states that the safety of tourists needs to be properly managed and observed, as it can be to the detriment of economic development to local communities if it is not the case.

Within the South African context, George (2010) investigated tourists' perceptions of crime and safety whilst visiting Table Mountain National Park in Cape Town. The results of the study indicated that there was a negative association between feeling unsafe or having been a victim of crime and the likelihood of returning to the destination. This negative association between perceptions of crime and safety and return visits was amplified by the findings of the study of George and Booyens (2014) regarding tourists' perceptions of safety and security of township tours in Cape Town, South Africa.

The findings indicated that tourists perceived township tours to be unsafe, yet none of the tourists felt that their lives were endangered during the visit. These results are in contrast to the reports of Ferreira and Parks (2016) and Lorde and Jackman (2013) which state that tourists who are victimised or have felt unsafe or threatened at a destination, are less likely to return to or recommend that destination to individuals around the world.

Brown (2015) adds to the discussion by claiming that there is a negative correlation between risk perception and the preference of travel behaviour. Brown's (2015) belief is that first-time visitors mostly pay attention to the perceptions regarding psychosocial risk, human risk, weather risk, and food safety whilst repeat tourists are more concerned with the quality of service, actual accidents, natural disasters and the risk of finances. Brown (2015) thus acknowledges that the perception of human risk is important to first-time visitors but that does not become a deciding factor for repeat visitors to a destination. Information sources regarding the perceptions of various risks for the tourist hence become an important tool to alleviate fears and gain insights into destinations.

Information sources and perceived risk

In an increasingly media-saturated society, the tourist's first impression of a destination is likely to come from the media. Tourists need to engage in active or passive information-gathering efforts as it is difficult to efficiently assess the risks and value of the offering before the journey.

Social media platforms, in addition, play a significant role in many issues of tourism, especially consumer behaviour (information search and decision-making), marketing and communication/interaction (Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2015). In modern day



society, most tourists use the internet and other online information services to gain access to information regarding destinations and to read reviews regarding these places. All the above features determine the information's ability in shaping the product's perceived image and the consequent risk perception of the tourist (Jonas & Mansfeld, 2017; Liu et al, 2015).

Zhang et al (2014) concur with Perry and Potgieter (2013) that a positive media reflection regarding the destination can be beneficial to a destination as it encourages tourists to visit the area. Brown (2015) in addition, argue that negative media reporting or coverage and negative word-of-mouth contribute towards the perception of safety and security by tourists and can greatly distort the facts which ignite fear in the minds of potential tourists.

Various media platforms, including online media, websites and social media platforms, are used to market and provide adequate information regarding the Garden Route as a tourist destination (EDM annual report, 2017). Another form of information that tourists use whilst traveling to and from a destination, is outdoor signage.

Outdoor signage has become more influential globally as it provides visual displays in order to guide individuals to make more informed decisions when they travel (Weiler, Zeppel, Saunders & Scherrer, 2015; Mustafah, Sukrano & Olgun, 2014).

Both domestic and international tourists rely on signage, essentially due to cultural and language differences, as these signs provide warnings of possible threats and danger in areas. Signage thus plays an important role in the safety of visitors at tourist attractions. Ferreira and Perks (2016) suggest clear signage and visible policing in and around tourist attractions and activities would alleviate tourists' fears.

Research design and methodology

The research design and methodology assisted in addressing the objectives of the study namely to investigate the relation between the perceptions of crime and safety of first time and repeat tourist in the George and Wilderness areas. This study made use of a quantitative research design by means of the descriptive method and incorporated surveys as a data collection method. A web-based self-administered survey was designed via the NMU external survey site. Both printed questionnaires and web-based self-administered surveys were used to gather data. A cover letter was attached to both questionnaires and web-based computer self-administered surveys, explaining to respondents that their participation was voluntarily and anonymous and could be stopped at any time during the completion thereof. The only requirements to take part in this study were that the respondent had to have visited the Garden Route or Wilderness areas at least once, and be older than 18 years.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A included the demographic information of each respondent. Section B consisted of items regarding perceptions of safety, crime, tourists preferred activities in the George and Wilderness areas and the visibility of clear signage at tourist attractions. Likert-scale questions were based on a 5-point scale, strongly agree = 1 and strongly disagree = 5. In order to pre-test the questionnaire, 20 tourists in the Wilderness and George areas were asked to complete the questionnaires.

The comments from the pilot study indicated above, were examined and changes regarding wording of the questions were made to the questionnaire to ensure that bias answers were prevented. The final questionnaire was distributed to local and international tourists visiting the George and wilderness areas during the period of June and July 2018. This study made use of non-probability convenience sampling



as the respondents chosen were not known beforehand. A total of 152 usable questionnaires were used for statistical purposes. The response rate was 100% as all the questionnaires were completed and deemed useful for statistical analysis.

STATISTICA 13 was used to analyse the data. Pearson's Chi-Square tests were performed to evaluate tests of independence in using a cross tabulation, presenting the distributions of two variables simultaneously.

Research findings and discussion

The descriptive statistics of the respondents are indicated in Table 1 and discussed thereafter.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the respondents

| Item description | Value (N) | Mean | Median | Standard Deviation | Skewness | Min | Max |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|--------|--------------------|----------|-----|-----|
| 1 What is your perception of safety when participating in indoor activities in this area? | 152 | 3.3 | 3 | 1.3 | 0.4 | 1 | 5 |
| 2 What is your perception of safety when participating in outdoor activities in this area? | 152 | 2.8 | 2 | 1.7 | 0.2 | 1 | 5 |
| 3 Has anyone you know been affected by crime while on holiday in the George and Wilderness areas? | 152 | 1.5 | 2 | 0.5 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 4 Have you been affected by crime while on holiday in the George and Wilderness areas? | 152 | 1.9 | 2 | 0.3 | -2.3 | 1 | 2 |
| 5 What is your preferred environment when you visit this area? (Indoors or Outdoors) | 152 | 1.5 | 2 | 0.6 | -0.6 | 1 | 2 |
| 6 What was the main purpose of travel? | 152 | 1.6 | 1 | 1 | 1.5 | 1 | 5 |
| 7 Did you witness clear access and exit points at destinations in this area? | 152 | 1.3 | 1 | 0.4 | 1.1 | 1 | 2 |
| 8 Did you notice any emergency contact numbers at the sites? | 152 | 1.5 | 2 | 0.5 | -0.1 | 1 | 2 |
| 9 Did you see any notifications to warn out of any danger in the area? | 152 | 1.5 | 1 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 1 | 2 |
| 10 Did you see any notifications to be aware of criminal activities at the site? | 152 | 1.8 | 2 | 0.4 | -1.2 | 1 | 2 |
| 11 Did you see any notifications regarding safety tips at the site? | 152 | 1.6 | 2 | 0.5 | -0.4 | 1 | 2 |
| 12 Has reports on crime incidents influenced your perception regarding the George and Wilderness areas? | 152 | 1.6 | 2 | 0.5 | -0.4 | 1 | 2 |



| Item description | Value (N) | Mean | Median | Standard Deviation | Skewness | Min | Max |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|--------|--------------------|----------|-----|-----|
| 13 Are you a first time visitor to the George and Wilderness areas? | 152 | 1.7 | 2 | 0.5 | -0.8 | 1 | 2 |
| 14 How frequently do you visits the George and Wilderness areas? | 152 | 2 | 1 | 1.2 | 0.7 | 1 | 4 |

A total of 152 respondents completed the questionnaire. The standard deviation of all the questions ranged between 0.3 and 1.7 and the skewness from -2.3 to 1.5.

Gender did not appear to be a significant demographic factor affecting visitors' perceptions of crime and safety in the George and Wilderness areas. This finding is consistent with the work of George (2010) who did not find gender to be a factor affecting visitors' perceptions of safety in Cape Town.

The respondents to this study were 44% South African and 56% international tourist. Of the international respondents, 17% were from Germany, 13% from the United Kingdom, 7% from the United States, and 5% were from the Netherlands. This finding confirms the EDM (2015) and Tourist news (2018) reports that Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom are the leading international target markets of tourism in the Western Cape region.

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents were repeat visitors to the George and Wilderness areas and only 42% were first-time visitors. The high percentage of repeat tourist confirm the findings of Moroofti and Deghan(2012) as well as Zhang et al (2014) that positive experiences in a country result in repeat visits and positive word of mouth.

Reasons for traveling were, 64% for leisure, 17% for business, 14% for adventure and 5% for other reasons such as sport. This finding concurs with EDM (2015) that international tourists travel mostly for leisure purposes and domestic tourists for both business and leisure while traveling to the George and Wilderness areas. This finding does not agree with the observation of George (2010) that respondents who were traveling on holiday and visiting friends and relatives were less likely to return than were business tourists.

More than half of the respondents (52%) perceived participating in outdoor activities to be safe% compared to 40% of respondents who perceived participation in indoor activities to be completely safe. Although tourists perceived indoor and outdoor activities to be relatively equal in safety, 68% acknowledged that they largely participate in outdoor activities. George and Wilderness are specifically known for its spectacular beaches, hang gliding, hiking and mountain bike trails which may afford an explanation as to why tourists perceive outdoor activities to be safe.

Although 49% of respondents had family or friends who had been affected by crime while on holiday in the George and Wilderness areas, only 12% of the respondents have been personally affected by crime. This finding highlights the finding of Santana-Gallego et al (2016) that tourists traveling to developing countries accepts high levels of crime.

The findings of the study indicate that 74% of respondents witnessed clear access and exit points, 48% noticed emergency phone number and 53% saw notifications to warn them of danger at outdoor activities they participated in. The finding highlights



the importance that signage contributes to the perception of safety for tourists at attractions (Weiler et al, 2015) and concurs with the finding of Mustafah et al (2014) that outdoor signage has grown in prominence globally and mainly aim to alert tourists of possible threats.

Only 40% of respondents indicated that media reporting on crime incidents influenced their perception of the George and Wilderness areas, whilst 60% of respondents indicated that media reporting on crime incidents have not influenced their perception to travel to the area. This finding disagrees with the study of Zhang et al (2014) as well as Perry and Potgieter (2013) that stipulate that tourists are encouraged to visit a destination if it has a positive media image. The finding again highlights the work of Santana-Gallego et al (2016) that tourists traveling to developing countries accept high levels of crime.

Hypotheses testing

In order to test the hypotheses of this study Pearson's Chi-square hypothesis tests (χ^2) were conducted.

The hypotheses for this study were:

- *H1: There is a positive relation between first-time visitors and the tourist perception of safety indoors.*

The results for the Chi-square test relating to H1 were as follows: $\chi^2 = 10.949$; $df = 4$; $p = 0.027$. The p-value is smaller than 0.05 indicating that there is a statistical significant relationship between first-time visitors and the tourist perception of safety indoors. Tourist will thus travel to areas if they perceive the indoor environment to be safe. H1 is therefore accepted

- *H2: There is a positive relation between first-time visitors and tourist perceptions of safety outdoors.*

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between first-time visitors and their perception of safety outdoors indoors. The relation between these variables was not significant, $\chi^2 = 3.792$; $df = 4$; $p = 0.434$. The results do not indicate that tourists perceptions of outdoor safety influences their first visit. H2 is rejected.

This finding agrees with the finding of George (2017) that respondents' attitudes towards risk do not appear to influence the link between crime-safety and their intentions to revisit or recommend a destination. This finding supports the work George, (2017); Santana-Gallego, Rossello-Nada and Fourie (2016) that tourists traveling to developing countries accept high levels of crime and they often rely on the safety precautions initiated by developing countries to alleviate their fears.

- *H3: There is a positive relation between repeat visitors to the areas and tourist perception of safety indoors.*

The chi-square test result of this relation was not significant, $\chi^2 = 11.482$; $df = 12$; $p = 0.488$. This result indicates that whether tourists perceive indoor activities to be safe or not, they will continue to come back to the Wilderness and George areas. H3 is rejected.

- *H4: There is a positive relation between repeat visitors and the tourists' perceptions of tourist of safety outdoors.*



There is no significant relationship according to the Chi-square analysis results, $\chi^2=10.996$; $df=12$; $p=0.529$. Whether repeat visitors perceive outdoor activities to be safe or not will not influence their decision to return to the Wilderness and George areas. H4 is rejected.

The result of H4 corresponds with the findings of Maroofi and Dehghan (2012) as well as, Zhang et al (2014) that positive experiences, while in a country, will create loyalty to the destination and result in repeat visits.

The results of the Chi-square test of H2 and H3 again highlight that certain levels of risk, however, seem to be acceptable for some tourists (George, 2017) and that tourists traveling to developing countries accept high levels of crime (Santana-Gallego, Rossello-Nada and Fourie, 2016)

- *H5: There is a positive relation between first-time tourists' willingness to travel to the area and reports of crime in the media. H5 is rejected.*

There is no significant relationship between first-time visitors and tourist willingness to travel to the area, $\chi^2=11.432$; $df=12$; $p=0.562$. First-time travelers will travel to the Wilderness and George areas irrespective of reports of crime in the media.

The results of H5 compliments the work of Brown (2015) that there is a negative correlation between risk perception and the preference of travel behaviour.

- *H6: There is a positive relation between repeat visitors and tourist' willingness to travel to the area after reports of crime in the media.*

The results of the Chi-square test indicate a statistical significant relation between repeat visitors and tourist's willingness to travel after reports of crime in the area, $\chi^2=8.024$; $df=3$; $p=0.045$. Although the p-value of this question is smaller than the p-value of H6, it would seem as if repeat visitors might take more notice of reports of crime after their first visit, however, it still does not influence their decision to travel to this specific destination. H6 is rejected.

- *H7: There is a positive relation between whether tourists have personally been affected by crime and repeat visits to the area.*

The results of the chi-square analysis for this hypothesis does not show a significant relation between repeat visitors and whether they have been affected by crime, $\chi^2=11.739$; $df=3$; $p=0.714$. No relationship exists between tourists' repeat visits and whether they were affected by crime in the area. H7 is rejected.

These results are in contrast to the reports of Ferreira and Parks (2016), Lorde and Jackman (2013) and Perry and Potgieter (2013) which state that tourists who are victimised or have felt unsafe or threatened at a destination, are less likely to go back to or recommend that destination to individuals around the world. The results, however, support the work of George (2010) that there is a negative association between having been a victim of crime and the likelihood to return to the destination.

- *H8: There is a positive relationship between repeat visitors and whether friends or family have been affected by crime.*

There is no positive relation between repeat visitors and whether friends or family have been affected by crime, $\chi^2=11.522$; $df=3$; $p=0.613$. Tourist will return to the Wilderness and George area even if their family and friends were affected by crime in the area. H8 is rejected.



The result of H8 supports the work of George, (2017); Santana-Gallego, Rossello-Nada and Fourie (2016) offer an explanation for this statement by proclaiming that tourists traveling to developing countries accept high levels of crime and they often rely on the safety precautions initiated by developing countries to alleviate their fears. The results of H7 and H8 opposes the work of Cui, et al (2016) which state that how tourists perceive crime in specific areas often relate to their own experiences or experiences of others and could have an effect on their willingness to travel to these destinations.

- *H9: There is a positive relation between repeat visitors and tourists witnessing clear signposts.*

The results of the chi-square analysis for this hypothesis does not show a significant relation between repeat visitors and tourist witnessing clear signposts, $\chi^2=4.453$; $df=3$; $p=0.216$. Whether visitors noticed clear signposts at tourism attractions have no direct influence on their decision to travel to the area again. H9 is rejected.

Although the suggestion of Ferreira and Perks (2016) that clear signage and visible policing in and around tourist attractions and activities would alleviate tourists' fears, is a positive precautionary step, the finding of this study does not endorse the comment.

- *H10: There is a positive relation between repeat visits and tourist witnessing notifications of danger at destinations. The results of the chi-square indicated the following: $\chi^2=1.270$; $df=3$; $p=0.736$. No relationship exists whether tourists witnessed notification of danger and their return visits to the area. H10 is rejected.*

Conclusion

Tourism is a key economic driver in South Africa; however, the perception of crime and safety can potentially influence the first time and repeat tourist's decision-making process, which can have an adverse effect on tourism growth.

Local and international tourist perceive indoor and outdoor activities to be safe, however, participate in more outside activities in the George and Wilderness areas. This can mainly be because of the types of activities that this specific area and the Garden Route is known for. No evidence could be found that repeat visitors to the George and Wilderness areas perceive safety indoors and outdoors differently than first-time visitors. There is no relation between the willingness of tourists to travel for a first or second time to the Wilderness and George areas after reports of crime in the media. These results confirm that tourists traveling to developing countries accept higher levels of crime.

The results of the study, in addition, indicated that there is no relation between whether tourists or their friends and family have been affected by crime in the George and Wilderness areas and their repeat visits. No clear relation exists between clear signage, including clear signposts and notifications of crime in the area and repeat visits of tourists. The conclusion can, therefore, be made that media reporting on crime does not influence tourists from visiting the country, but rather the overall image tourists have of the country. Even though the results of this study could not find any relation between the perceptions of crime and security and first time and repeat visitors to the Wilderness and George areas in South Africa, the author wishes to stress that results may differ depending on the location of the tourism offering in South Africa.



It is therefore suggested that future research should focus on a comparative study of first time and repeat local and international tourists' perceptions of crime and safety in other tourism destinations of South Africa.

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