

An Exploratory Analysis of Visitor Spending at a Cultural Event in Eswatini

Uwe P. Hermann*

*Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Department of Tourism Management, Tshwane University of
Technology, South Africa E-mail, hermannup@tut.ac.za*

Ndivhuwo N. Tshipala

*Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Department of Tourism Management, Tshwane University of
Technology, South Africa*

Neliswa N. Dlamini

*Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Department of Tourism Management, Tshwane University of
Technology, South Africa*

**Corresponding Author*

How to cite this article: Hermann, U. P., Tshipala, N.N. & Dlamini, N.N. (2020). An Exploratory Analysis of Visitor Spending at a Cultural Event in Eswatini. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 9(5):1193-1204. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720-77>

Abstract

Tourism is seen as a crucial part of the economy of eSwatini. eSwatini now focuses on marketing itself as a cultural tourism destination where tourists are able to experience ancient Swazi ceremonies such as the Umhlanga (Reed Dance) ceremony. Research into traditional rural, cultural events such as the Umhlanga ceremony has not received significant attention. This study presents an exploratory spending profile of visitors to the Umhlanga ceremony. A quantitative research method was utilised for the study. Data was analysed to determine general spending by event visitors on spending associated with the event. Lastly, data was analysed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparisons with Tukey's multiple comparisons and *t*-tests in order to determine if there were any significant associations between the demographic variables and the spending patterns. Findings indicated that place of residence, employment status, level of education, age, travel party size, local residential location, gender, transportation and number of visits had a significant influence on the average expenditure within the destination. This was the first study of its kind on a cultural event in eSwatini and it provides an insight into the complex nature of such events which may assist event stakeholders in enhancing the sustainability of these types of events in future.

Keywords: Spending patterns, cultural event, heritage, eSwatini (Swaziland), tourism

Introduction

Prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns, tourism was considered is the world's fourth largest export industry after fuels, chemicals and food and it thus serves as a significant economic sector in many developing countries restrictions (Balli, Curry & Balli, 2015). One such developing country is eSwatini (formerly known as Swaziland), where tourism contributes 6.9% of total gross domestic product (GDP), with an annual growth of 2.4% and contributes 2.7% of all employment in the country (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018:5). The country, although small in size, is a host to unique natural and heritage attractions, the latter intrinsically linked to the Swazi culture. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for tourism destination managers, such as those promoting cultural events, to understand tourist spending patterns during their travels in order to appropriately manage and benefit from the economic impact this may have on a host destination (Mihalic, 2002). As a

result, knowledge of tourist spending patterns is essential to destination marketers, especially in developing countries. Research on this topic may assist to ascertain the elements prompting consumption behaviour among different market segments and it may identify areas of spending growth and decline (Chen & Chiou-Wei, 2009). However, research into the sphere of the African traditional event visitor market (festival visitor spending) is limited and there is a gap in literature on this dynamic market to aid in the effective management decision-making process (Kruger & Metsi, 2017).

Although there was growth in tourism numbers (prior to the 2020 pandemic), there is negligible data available for event stakeholders and decision-makers regarding the African cultural festival market, especially regarding spending behaviour. In a country such as eSwatini, heritage and culture are core assets in the tourism product offering. Thus, this study is exploratory in nature aiming to develop a spending profile of visitors to a cultural event (Umhlanga Reed Dance) in eSwatini so as to provide a foundation for further discourse. To achieve this aim, the study strives to investigate visitor spending behaviour (including demographic and behavioural) of attendees at a cultural event. This may be beneficial to event stakeholders to target high market spenders as well as to improve visitor satisfaction, motivation and the likelihood of return visit.

Literature review

Cultural events

Heritage and culture form the basis of tourism in many countries (Leask, Fyall & Garrod, 2002) which is especially the case in the countries of southern Africa. In many instances, cultural heritage and often natural heritage, are used in combination to attract tourists to destinations (Snowball & Courtney, 2010). Heritage attractions vary in nature and some of these differences may lie in size (from small scale to large scale), in ownership (private, community driven and public) as well as funding and objectives (Leask et al., 2002). In some cases, heritage resources may exist for purposes unrelated to tourism and these dynamics make the management of such sites very challenging (Wanda-George, 2010).

Defining cultural heritage may also be problematic as heritage may refer to tangible objects (buildings, sites, locations) as well as intangible features such as traditions and customs (Throsby, 2007; Timothy, 2011). Peacock and Rizzo (2008) go as far as stating that the very nature of heritage may change over time as it is a social and cultural construct. One channel to present intangible traditions may be through traditional events such as festivals (Del Barrio, Devesa & Herrero, 2012). It is through these festivals that local communities are able to express their uniqueness in order to reflect the recognition of their identity or to convey the value of their traditions. These events provide a symbolic example of immaterial culture which Del Barrio et al. (2012) refer to as experience goods. These experience goods are perishable and are drawn from previous cultural upbringing which is perceived by hosts as accumulated cultural capital.

Visitor spending

Kim, Uysal and Sirgy (2013) propose that the perceived impact of visitor spending, influences a community's sense of well-being. This in turn has an influence on a community's life satisfaction. Therefore, a perceived positive impact of spending should result in a perceived positive improvement of a community's quality of life. Although it has been found that local residents may perceive the impacts of an event positively, this positive reception may change in the period after the event, if elements such as visitor spending at the event are not managed sustainably (Hermann, Du Plessis, Coetzee & Geldenhuys, 2013). It is, therefore, important to understand the nature of visitor spending.

The nature of spending may be influenced by socio-demographic characteristics such as visitor frequency, age, gender, place of residence and education as depicted by Saayman and Saayman (2012) and Saayman and Krugell (2010), as depicted in Table 1.

Different tourists visiting different attraction types may have different spending profiles each influencing their ability and tendency to spend. For instance, it is widely believed that repeat visitors are more desirable than first-time visitors, due to their increased tendency to spend (Byrd, Beedle & Cardenas, 2014). However, in their study Byrd et al. (2014) found that at the two events in their investigation, spending was lower amongst repeat visitors. Kruger, Botha and Saayman (2012) in their study at a sport event found no significant relationship between spending and repeat visitation. Kruger, Saayman and Hermann (2014) found that visitors to a national park who were first-time visitors tended to be younger and they spent less than repeat visitors. This demonstrates once again the complex nature of the different types of tourist attractions and the nature of visitor spending. Table 1 provides associated characteristics of visitor spending at different heritage tourist attractions and events.

Table 1: Characteristics of visitor spending

Characteristic	Variable	Nature of spending	Source
Socio-demographic characteristics	Income	High spenders earn higher incomes	Jang, Bai, Hong and O’Leary (2004); Botha, Slabbert, Rossouw and Viviers (2011)
	Income and age	Younger travellers spend less, older travellers spend more	Kruger et al. (2014); Botha et al. (2011); Brida, Disegna and Osti (2013)
	Gender	Males tend to spend more than females	Svensson, Moreno and Martin (2011)
	Marital status	Married people tend to spend more than single people	Hermann, Du Plessis and Tshipala (2017)
Travel behaviour	Repeat vs first time	Repeat visitors spend more	Kruger et al. (2014)
	Repeat vs first time	Repeat visitors spend less	Byrd et al. (2014)
	Repeat vs first tie	No differences between repeat and first-time travellers in terms of spending	Svensson et al. (2011)
	Group size	Larger groups spend more per person	Jang et al. (2004); Soteriades and Arvanitis (2006)
	Group size	Smaller groups spend more per person	Svensson et al. (2011)
	Distance	High spenders tend to travel further	Botha et al. (2011)
	Distance	Day visitors spend less than overnight visitors	Brida et al. (2013)

As can be seen in Table 1, there are a number of different socio-demographic and travel behaviour elements which may influence the spending behaviour of travellers. Findings have shown that there are common spending profiles amongst higher spending groups, this includes variables such as income level and distance travelled. In some cases, such as group size and repeat visitation, there are contradictory findings among different studies indicating that conceivably different festivals have different market profiles, and thus require unique marketing and management approaches. Brida et al. (2013) have indicated that it is important for event organisers to develop an improved knowledge of how these demographic and behavioural variables may influence an individual’s spending pattern. This should assist in the definition of the characteristics of different typologies of visitors in terms of spending, and can be used to improve the targeting of high market spenders as well as to improve visitor satisfaction, motivation and the likelihood of return visit.

The Umhlanga ceremony

The Umhlanga (Reed Dance) ceremony is an annual cultural festival that takes place in the Kingdom of eSwatini in the southern part of Africa at the end of August. It continues up to the beginning of September and is hosted at the Ludzidzini royal residence, located within the Lobomba constituency. Thousands of unmarried and childless virgin Swazi girls and women leave their chiefdoms and travel to the royal residence to take part in the festival which normally lasts for eight days. The Umhlanga ceremony was created in the 1940s in the country under the leadership of Sobhuza II. He developed the event from the ancient Umcwashi custom where young girls were grouped by age and in age regiments so as to ensure that they were not deflowered until they came of age. They served the Queen Mother through dances and feasts (Swaziland, 2017a). However, the purpose of the Reed Dance is to encourage young women and girls to preserve their chastity until marriage; to honour the Queen Mother; and to encourage unity and solidarity among women by working together. The girls gather at the Queen Mother's royal residence at Ludzidzini for eight days to cut reeds, which they bundle together and bring back to the Queen Mother. The reeds are used to repair the reed windshield around the royal village. Dances are then performed before the King, the Queen Mother, Swazi citizens, international dignitaries, the King's wives, international tourists and the media (Swaziland, 2017a; 2017b).

Method of research

This research followed an exploratory quantitative research approach, more specifically, by means of a survey research design. For the purpose of data collection, a questionnaire which consisted of two sections was utilised. The first section captured information relating to the demographic and behavioural profiles of respondents, while the second section measured aspects related to visitor spending. The structured questionnaire was based on a previous studies undertaken by Saayman and Krugell (2010), Hermann et al (2017) and Jensen, Lindborg, English and Menard (2006). These studies dealt with visitor spending profile development at similar tourist attractions.

As the Umhlanga ceremony is a cultural ceremony, there is no formal ticketing process and as such formulating a precise population number is impossible. As this study was exploratory in nature a minimum of 156 (N) respondents was sought which is sufficient for an ANOVA as stated by Statistics Solutions (2015). The aforementioned was therefore targeted as a minimum sample size. This sample only included visitors to the event and did not include the participants (maidens). Data collection took place during the festival on 31 August 2015 (date of the main event) by means of non-probability sampling, or more specifically convenience sampling. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed, by trained fieldworkers, one person per group of visitors was targeted at open entry and exit areas and a total of 201 completed questionnaires were returned completed.

Data was captured utilising Microsoft Excel™, and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 23 was used for data analysis. The study consisted of four stages. In order to ensure the reliability of the responses a reliability test by means of a Cronbach's Alpha was undertaken on all variables. All variables which scored Cronbach Alpha scores of 0.8 and higher, which, according to Field (2009) denote reliable statistics, were included in the analysis. The second stage involved generating a profile of the respondents by utilising demographic information, primarily thorough descriptive statistics. Thirdly, data was analysed to determine general spending on spending items through means and standard deviations. Lastly, data was analysed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparisons with Tukey's multiple comparisons and *t*-tests in order to determine if there were any significant associations between the demographic and behavioural variables and the spending patterns.



Results

Demographic profile

The first part of the survey aimed at determining the demographic profile of respondents. The results of the demographic profile of respondents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic profile of respondents

Category	Profile	Percentage (Number = N)
Home Language	Swati	10 (20)
	Zulu	7 (14)
	Ndebele	3 (6)
	English	28 (56)
	Southern Sotho	7 (14)
Gender	Other	45 (91)
	Male	52 (104)
Age	Female	48 (97)
	16–20 years	8 (16)
	21–30 years	40 (80)
	31–40 years	29.5 (60)
Place of residence	41+ years	22.5 (45)
	Hhohho region	4.5 (9)
	Manzini region	12.5 (24)
	Lubombo region	3 (5)
	Shiselweni region	2 (4)
	South Africa	25 (50)
First time attending the Reed Dance festival	Other	53 (105)
	Yes	79 (159)
Education	No	21 (42)
	No schooling	4 (8)
	High school	8 (16)
	Certificate	12.5 (25)
	Diploma/ First degree	49.5 (100)
	Postgraduate	25.5 (51)
Transport used to attend the event	Other	0.5 (1)
	Personal car	48 (96)
	Minibus taxi	23 (45)
	Metered taxi	2 (4)
	Bus	22.5 (43)
	Walked on foot	3.5 (7)
	Truck	0.5 (1)
Level of employment	Other	0.5 (1)
	Yes	76 (153)
	No	15.5 (31)
Gross monthly income	Self-employed	8.5 (17)
	< R5000	26 (52)
	R5001–R10 000	17.5 (35)
	R10 001–R20 000	20.5 (41)
	R20 001–R30 000	8.5 (17)
	R30 001–R40 000	12 (24)
	R40 001–R50 000	6 (12)
> R50 001	9.5 (20)	
How far in advance did you begin planning to attend the Reed Dance?	The same day	8.5 (17)
	Less than 1 week	17 (34)
	1–2 weeks	20.5 (41)
	2 weeks to 1 month	17.5 (35)
	1–3 months	17 (34)
	Longer than 3 months ago	18.5 (37)
Age of first exposure to the Reed Dance		30.67
Number of people per group	Children	2.44
	Adults	7.55

Total average spending per person*	During Reed Dance	R551
	Within Lobomba constituency	R1656
	Outside Lobomba constituency	R2542

*All amount in ZAR as 1ZAR = 1SZL (Swazi Lilangeni) or 0.08 USD

Where totals (N) do not add to 201, there were missing responses

From the results indicated in Table 2, it is evident that respondents were primarily foreigners, originating from South Africa and further afield, including the United States of America, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Respondents primarily spoke English, followed by isiZulu and Swati as home languages. Respondents hold high levels of education; they were mostly employed; they earned between R5000–R20 000 per month; they were visiting the event for the first time; and they mostly travelled in their own private vehicles. Respondents first experienced the Reed Dance at the average age of 30, and visited the event in groups of about 9–10 persons. In terms of spending, results indicate that visitors were more inclined to spend further away from the host area (Lobomba constituency) where the event was held, than at the event. After the results of spending is presented these aforementioned two sets of results are correlated with one another to test for significant relationships.

ANOVA and *t*-test results

ANOVA and *t*-tests were conducted to determine whether there were any significant relationships between the respondent profile (demographic and behavioural) and spending variables so as to validate previous findings as presented in Table 1. Results are presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: ANOVA results with Tukey's post hoc comparisons

Grouping Variable	Individual Variable	N	Mean	St Dev	St Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	F	Sig				
Restaurants at the Reed Dance	Single ^a	7	343	293.58	110.96	71.34	614.38	12.69	0.003				
	Married ^a	3	400	350.00	202.07	- 469.45	1269.45						
	Living together ^a	1	2000	0	0	0	0						
	Total ^a	11	509	566.93	170.93	128.22							
Total spending	Personal car ^a	96	3928	3472.13	354.37	3224.35	4631.39	5.81	0.001				
	Minibus taxi ^a	45	2166	2451.32	365.42	1430.00	2902.92						
	Metered taxi ^a	4	3896	2497.59	1248.79	-77.97	7870.47						
	Bus ^a	43	1704	2578.07	393.15	910.95	2497.78						
	Walked on foot ^a	7	1234	1374.95	519.68	-37.62	2505.62						
	Employed ^a	150	3034	3046.41	248.74	2542.05	3525.07			4.61	0.011		
	Unemployed ^{ab}	30	1638	1716.11	313.32	997.09	2278.71						
	Self-employed ^b	17	4396	4915.40	1192.15	1868.91	6923.44						
	Total spending at the event	Hhohho region ^a	9	1279	1634	544.72	23.09			2535.36	6.21	0.001	
		Manzini region ^a	24	452	693	141.42	159.49			744.60			
Lubombo region ^a		5	452	373	166.93	-38.47	888.47						
Shiselweni region ^b		4	5424	10386	5193.08	-11102.68	21950.6						
South Africa ^{ab}		50	3672	2211	312.62	3043.91	8						
Outside South Africa ^{ab}		105	3325	3215	313.75	2702.74	4300.36						
							3947010						
Total spending at the event	Personal car ^a	73	737	784.53	91.82	554.34	920.43	2.72	0.031				
	Minibus taxi ^a	43	457	654.81	99.86	255.18	658.22						
	Metered taxi ^a	4	398	374.20	187.10	-197.94	992.94						
	Bus ^a	37	305	552.78	90.88	121.02	489.63						
	Walked on foot ^a	7	531	692.30	261.67	-109.41	1171.13						
	Total spending at the event	Hhohho region ^a	9	274	342.00	114.00	11.35	537.09	3.05	0.012			
		Manzini region ^a	20	126	78.60	17.57	89.62	163.18					
		Lubombo region ^a	5	136	103.34	46.22	7.68	264.32					
		Shiselweni region ^a	3	174	199.95	115.44	-323.04	670.37					
		South Africa ^a	39	680	609.61	97.62	482.26	877.48					
		Outside South Africa ^a	89	654	822.12	87.14	480.59	826.96					
		Petrol outside Lobomba	Personal car ^a	31	1147	748.27	134.39	872.95			1421.89	5.69	0.001
			Minibus taxi ^a	16	490	518.47	129.62	213.73			766.27		
Metered taxi ^a	0												

	Bus ^a	4	575	150.00	75.00	336.32	813.68		
	Walked on foot ^a	1	250						
Total spending outside Lobamba	Personal car ^a	56	3736	3805.13	508.48	2717.33	4755.37	4.14	0.011
	Minibus taxi ^a	24	1104	1589.65	324.49	432.58	1775.08		
	Metered taxi ^a	4	2800	2336.66	1168.33	-918.15	6518.15		
	Bus ^a	16	423	551.98	138.00	128.62	716.88		
	Walked on foot ^a	2	1075	1166.73	825.00	-9407.62	11557.62		
	Hhohho region ^a	3	1650	1490.81	860.71	-2053.37	5353.37	3.49	0.006
	Manzini region ^a	9	302	491.80	163.93	-75.37	680.70		
	Lubombo region ^a	3	148	134.20	77.48	-185.26	481.69		
	Shiselweni region ^b	3	7058	12073.9	6970.88	-22934.93	37051.5		
	South Africa ^{ab}	27	3718	1	445.42	2802.41	9		
Outside South Africa ^{ab}	58	2279	2314.48	385.06	1507.59	4633.57			
			2932.50			3049.72			
Public transport outside Lobamba	Personal car ^a	41	1277	931	145.35	983.06	1570.60	3.38	0.023
	Minibus taxi ^a	13	891	913	253.09	339.34	1442.20		
	Metered taxi ^a	4	689	368	184.06	103.00	1274.50		
	Bus ^a	8	1394	1384	489.21	236.96	2550.54		
	Walked on foot ^a	2	811	166	11.00	671.23	950.77		
Accommodation outside Lobamba	Personal car ^a	32	2554	1978	349.74	1840.38	3266.98	3.32	0.028
	Minibus taxi ^a	11	902	1697	511.75	-238.430	2042.07		
	Metered taxi ^a	0							
	Bus ^a	5	632	332	148.27	220.340	1043.67		
	Walked on foot ^a	1	1000						
Food and beverages outside Lobamba	Personal car ^a	25	1090	829	165.75	747.86	1432.06	4.89	0.006
	Minibus taxi ^a	9	196	153	50.88	78.23	312.88		
	Metered taxi ^a	2	850	212	150.00	-1055.93	2755.93		
	Bus ^a	4	200	115	57.74	16.26	383.74		
	Walked on foot ^a	0							

Table 4: T-test results

Grouping Variables	Individual Variable	N	Mean	St Dev.	St Error	F	Sig	T	Df	R
Total spending in Lobomba	Male	103	3569	3535	348.33	18.32	0.001	3.32	134	0.37
	Female	94	2249	2503	258.17					
Total spending	First time visitor	185	3233	3316	266.3	4.50	0.035	2.55	195	0.42
	Repeat visitor	42	1853	135	329.5					
Spending on accommodation in Lobomba	Male	40	1407	1035	163.7	5.78	0.019	2.55	66	0.56
	Female	28	828	724	136.9					
Spending on food and beverages during festival	Male	66	355	489	60.1	4.99	0.027	2.20	127	0.33
	Female	63	192	334	42.0					
	First-time	97	295	466	97					
	Repeat	32	218	270	32	8.26	0.009	1.66	20	0.17
Spending on food and beverages in Lobomba	Male	43	557	641	97.8	8.72	0.004	1.89	76	0.36
	Female	35	325	372	62.8					
Spending on food and beverages before attending the event	Male	10	240	199	63.0	8.54	0.009	1.50	18	0.53
	Female	10	135	98	30.9					
Groceries during the event	Male	3	203	261	150.5	10.84	0.008	4.35	10	1.80
	Female	4	35	19	9.6					
Groceries in Lobomba	Male	5	340	152	67.8	15.88	0.012	1.33	5	1.80
	Female	7	67	61	23.1					
Restaurants at the event	Male	6	758	690	281.7	7.66	0.020	2.00	10	0.82
	Female	6	192	66	27.1					

Restaurants in Lobomba	Male Female	17 8	957 223	737 170	178.6 60.2	11.25	0.003	2.76	23	1.0
Souvenirs during the event	Male Female	31 28	251 536	317 1044	56.9 197.2	6.26	0.015	- 1.45	57	0.27
Souvenirs in Lobomba	Male Female	24 18	335 103	405 83	82.7 19.4	13.85	0.001	2.38	40	0.57
Total spending at the event	First-time Repeat	155 42	3233 1853	3316 2136	67.7 59.5	7.30	0.008	1.87	163	0.32
Petrol in Lobomba	First-time Repeat	40 11	1447 905	1181 846	186.6 254.9	5.86	0.019	1.42	49	0.46
Public transport in Lobomba	First-time Repeat	9 3	317 630	281 1014	93.7 585.1	18.06	0.002	- 0.91	10	0.31
Public transport outside Lobomba	First-time Repeat	16 6	1401 468	1345 478	336.2 194.9	6.67	0.018	1.64	20	0.69
Accommodation outside Lobomba	First-time Repeat	41 8	2168 861	2041 912	318.7 322.4	4.74	0.035	1.76	47	0.64
Food and beverages outside Lobomba	First-time Repeat	32 8	857 510	846 293	149.6 103.5	13.48	0.001	1.13	38	0.41

All findings presented in Table 3 (ANOVA) and Table 4 (*t*-tests) include only results which demonstrated a high level of significance ($P < 0.05$). In terms of ANOVA results, the following main findings were encountered:

In terms of the relationship profile of respondents, only people living together in a relationship spent more than the other demographic groups ($p = 0.03$, $F = 12.69$), however, the Tukey's post hoc test revealed that this difference was not noteworthy between groups. It can, therefore, be said that generally relationship status did not influence visitor spending at restaurants at the event this therefore differs from the findings of Hermann et al. (2017). This may be due to the cultural nature of the event where visitors rely on traditional cuisine obtained through self-catering means.

In terms of transportation and its influence on spending, respondents using their own personal cars and metered taxis, spent more than people using other means of transport, while respondents who walked on foot spent the least. Respondents who travelled in their own personal vehicles, as expected, spent more on petrol, accommodation, food and beverages outside Lobomba, as well as total spending outside Lobomba. Respondents travelling by bus only spent more than other groups in terms of public transport outside Lobomba. However, as is the case with the finding on relationship status, the mode of transport did not influence total spending, nor total spending during the event, the purchase of petrol outside Lobomba, total spending outside Lobomba, public transport outside Lobomba, accommodation outside Lobomba or food and beverages outside Lobomba.

To test the findings of Jang et al. (2004) and Botha et al. (2011) relating to higher spenders earning higher incomes, spending behaviours were tested in relation to employment status. It was found that employment status did, influence spending ($p = 0.011$, $F = 4.614$). Tukey's post hoc test revealed that there was a significant difference in spending between employed respondents and self-employed respondents. Self-employed respondents spent more than employed respondents.

In terms of place of residence, findings revealed a significant difference in spending between domestic and international travellers. Respondents from the Hhohho, Manzini and

Lobamba regions generally had the same spending profile in terms of total spending and spending outside Lobamba. This may be due to lower travelling costs for these visitors who reside within eSwatini. The Shiselwini region, however, stood out from other Swazi regions as having a distinct profile. Respondents from this region spent significantly more than other domestic regions ($p=0.01$, $F=6.21$) on total spending and spending outside Lobamba. Respondents from South Africa and other international respondents had a similar spending profile. Thus this supports the findings of Botha et al. (2011) who found that higher spenders tend to be travellers who travel further to the event.

In addition to the ANOVA results, the *t*-test results revealed bivariate differences in spending between demographic groups. Males for example spent more than females on items such as total spending at the event, spending on accommodation in Lobamba, spending on food and beverages in general, groceries, restaurants and souvenirs in Lobamba, this supports previous findings by Svensson et al. (2011). Females only spent more on souvenirs during the event.

Svensson et al. (2011) proposes that there is no significant difference in spending between first-time and repeat visitors. Our findings however revealed that this was not totally applicable at this event as, first-time respondents spent more on items such as total spending, total spending at the event, petrol in Lobamba, public transport outside Lobamba, accommodation outside Lobamba and food and beverages outside Lobamba. Repeat visitors only spent more on public transport in Lobamba. This supports previous findings by Byrd et al. (2014) who found that repeat visitors tend to spend less than first-time visitors.

Conclusions and implications

The Umhlanga Reed Dance ceremony is a significant event on the cultural calendar of eSwatini, which has for decades drawn, predominantly people closely associated with the Swati culture. This event, is believed to be increasing its appeal as a cultural attraction to markets further afield. Studies into the field of indigenous cultural events in both eSwatini and southern African are rare and as such there is a very poor understanding of the consumer market in this regard in areas such as demographic, behavioural and expenditure profiling. Research in other geographic areas focussing on cultural attractions, events and their associated visitor profiling are known. This information provides the stakeholders of these events and attractions with valuable information on developing and delivering their services in order to ensure not only satisfied customers but financial sustainability. For traditional cultural events in Africa, there is a gap in the literature in this regard. As a result of the aforementioned, this study examined the influence of several crucial variables such as place of residence, employment status, level of education, age, travel party size, local residential location, gender, transportation and number of visits, on the spending patterns made by visitors to a cultural event in eSwatini. A demographic profile was created and ANOVA and *t*-tests were conducted so as to determine whether there were any differences between demographic groups and spending. The major contributions of this exploratory study are as follows; the study has developed a foundational spending profile of event visitors. This provides event marketers and local stakeholders with information which may assist in event planning and promotion purposes. Secondly, this study developed a spending profile of visitors which both supported and contradicted previous findings at cultural events outside of the country. The findings indicate that demographic variables such as employment status, gender, first-time/repeat visitation, relationship status and distance travelled had an influence on visitor spending.

The highest spenders at this event is associated with attendees who travelled further to get to the destination such as the Shiselwini region and international travellers, particularly those travelling in pairs. Those travelling to the event using their own vehicles spend the most,

however a major portion of this spending is done outside the host region. This therefore results in a minimised economic impact within the host region and a failure to achieve a potential positive multiplier effect of this spending. Thus initiatives should be investigated to enhance the spending of these visitors in the local area, through the provision and marketing of enhanced tourism facilities such as accommodation, food and beverage and tours. Local visitors and (including people who walked on foot to the event) tend to spend less than visitors from further afield. This finding may be associated with the large number of local attendees at the event who reside nearby, however in order to enhance the economic contribution of the event, attendees from further afield with larger spending power would need to be attracted. Perhaps event organisers may implement a ticketing system (requesting a financial contribution/donation/fee) for foreign visitors and those travelling by their own personal vehicles. In addition first-time visitors were seen as higher spenders at this event. Although these attendees may be sought after by event organisers for their spending appeal, repeat visitors should be deemed loyal visitors and thus they contribute to a more long term sustainable market.

The revenue generated from these higher and loyal spenders may be used to further enhance the event through the provision of services such as hygiene, safety and security or infrastructure. In addition, event organisers could attempt to encourage visitors who own their own companies or are entrepreneurs (as they are higher spenders) to sponsor components of the event in order to facilitate the hosting of the event and to ease the financial burden for local people who tend to have challenges with their spending power. Local event organisers and tourism service providers such as tour operators, hospitality providers and ancillary services may benefit from these findings. Although this was an exploratory study and further investigation is required, these stakeholders now have a basis from which they could develop and implement marketing plans. The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the tourism industry, primarily on the restriction of movement of international travellers. The global pandemic has also affected the disposable income of people which may also influence the ability of potential travellers having disposable income to travel. However we do envisage that domestic tourism will become more important to tourism product owners to provide much needed revenue both in the short-term to bridge the gap of foreign travellers, but also as a more stable future travel market should unplanned events of this nature potentially occur again in future. It is imperative for a country such as eSwatini, which attracts predominantly domestic travellers to cultural events, to understand the dynamics of its domestic market in order to ensure that it is appropriately catered for and developed.

The authors acknowledge the limitations associated with obtaining a limited number of responses, due to the nature of the event, and that the findings may only be applicable to the event under investigation and not generalisable. This study provides an exploratory investigation in to the nature of traditional events in eSwatini and southern Africa, a sphere of tourism events which is often overlooked in research. This study greatly contributes to policy and marketing implications for tourism planners and destination marketers in the kingdom of eSwatini. This was the first time that such a study was undertaken in the country, or at an indigenous cultural heritage festival in the region. Since this research only focussed on an individual event in eSwatini with a small exploratory sample, it would be beneficial to conduct further investigation and discourse of this topic at other cultural events in eSwatini and to conduct a comparative analysis between these events in this country and elsewhere.

References

- Balli, F., Curry, J. & Balli, H.O. (2015). Inter-regional spill over effects in New Zealand international tourism demand. *Tourism Geographies*, 17 (2), 262–278.

- Botha, K., Slabbert, E., Rossouw, R. & Viviers, P. (2011). Expenditure-based segmentation of visitors to Aardklop National Arts Festival. *South African Theatre Journal*, 25(2), 142-166.
- Brida, J.G., Disegna, M. & Osti, L. (2013). Visitors' expenditure behaviour at cultural events: the case of Christmas markets. *Tourism Economics*, 19(5), 1173-1196.
- Byrd, R.T., Beedle, J. & Cordenas, D.A. (2014). Repeat visitation and visitor spending at events: Hogs and Muscle Cars. *Event Management*, 18(2), 101-110.
- Chen, C.F. & Chiou-Wei, S.Z. (2009). Tourism expansion, tourism uncertainty and economic growth: New evidence from Taiwan and Korea. *Tourism Management*, 30(6), 812–818.
- Del Barrio, M.J., Devesa, M. & Herrero, L.C. (2012). Evaluating intangible cultural heritage: The case of cultural festivals. *City, Culture and Society*, 3(4), 235-244.
- Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. 3rd Ed. Sage: London. pp 679.
- Jang, S., Bai, B., Hong, G. & O'Leary, J.T. (2004). Understanding travel expenditure patterns: A study of Japanese pleasure travellers to the United States by income level. *Tourism Management*, 25(30),331-341.
- Jensen, K., Lindborg, C., English, B. & Menard, J. (2006). *Visitors to Tennessee Agri-Tourism Attractions: Demographics, Preferences, Expenditures, and Projected Economic Impacts*. Tennessee Department of Agriculture. Available at <https://web.utk.edu/~aimag/pubs/research%20report%20visitors%20surveys3.pdf> [Retrieved 16 May 2015].
- Hermann, U.P., Du Plessis, L., Coetzee, W.J.L. & Geldenhuys, S. (2013). Local residents' perceptions of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™. *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*, 35(1), 25-37.
- Hermann, U.P, Du Plessis, L. & Tshipala, N.N. (2017). Profiling visitor spending at an urban visitor attraction in South Africa. *Proceedings of the 2017 CAUTHE Conference*, Dunedin, New Zealand, 7-10 February 2017. pp 539-547.
- Leask, A., Fyall, A. & Garrod, B. (2002). Heritage visitor attractions: managing revenue in the new millennium. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 8(3), 247-265.
- Kim, K., Uysal, M. & Sirgy, M.J. (2013). How does tourism in a community impact the quality of life of community residents? *Tourism Management*, 36(2013), 527-540.
- Kingdom of Swaziland. (2017a). *Umhlanga, The Reed Dance*. Available at <http://www.thekingdomofswaziland.com/pages/content/index.asp?PageID=54> [Retrieved 05 June 2017].
- Kingdom of Swaziland. (2017b). *Attractions: Lobamba*. Available at http://www.thekingdomofswaziland.com/pages/attractions/the_attraction.asp?AttractionsID=19 [Retrieved 05 June 2017].
- Kruger, M., Botha, K. & Saayman, M. (2012). The relationship between visitor spending and repeat visits: An analysis of spectators at the Old Mutual two oceans marathon. *Acta Commercii*, 12(1),108-122.
- Kruger, M., Saayman, M. & Hermann, U.P. (2014). First-time versus repeat visitors at the Kruger National park. *Acta Commercii*, 14(1), 1-9.
- Kruger, M. & Metsi, P.I. (2017). Diamonds in the rough – Managing higher spenders at a music festival in South Africa. *Journal of Contemporary Management*, 14(1), 84-118.
- Mihalic, T. (2002). Tourism and economic development issues In: R. Sharpley, & D. J. Telfer (Eds.), *Tourism and development: Concepts and issues* (pp. 81–111). London: Chanel View Publications.

- Peacock, A. & Rizzo, I. (2008). *The heritage game: Economics, policy and practice*. Oxford University Press: Oxford. pp 117.
- Saayman, M. & Krugell, W. (2010). Determinants of visitor spending to the Wacky Wine Festival. *Journal of Economic and Financial Sciences*, 3(2), 153–170.
- Saayman, M. & Saayman, A. (2012). Determinants of Spending: an Evaluation of Three Major Sporting Events. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 14(1), 124–138.
- Snowball, J.D. & Courtney, S. (2010). Cultural heritage routes in South Africa: Effective tools for heritage conservation and local economic development. *Development Southern Africa*, 27(4), 563-576.
- Soteriades, M.D. & Arvanitis, S, E. (2006). Expenditure patterns by travel party size: British and German tourists on Crete, Greece. *Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 17(2), 169-187.
- Statistical Solutions. (2015). *Sample Size Calculation for One-Way ANOVAs in Dissertations and Theses*. Available at <http://www.statisticssolutions.com/sample-size-calculation-for-one-way-anovas-in-dissertations-and-theses/> [Retrieved 16 May 2015].
- Svensson, B., Moreno, P. & Martin, D. (2011). Understanding travel expenditure by means of market segmentation. *The Service Industries Journal*, 31(1), 1683-1698.
- Timothy, D.J. (2011). *Cultural heritage and tourism*. Channel View Publications: Bristol.
- Throsby, D. (2007). Regional aspects of heritage economics: Analytical and policy issues. Australasian. *Journal of Regional Studies*, 13(1), 21–30.
- Wanda-George, E. (2010). Intangible cultural heritage, ownership, copyrights, and tourism. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 4(4), 376-388.
- World Travel and Tourism Council. (2028). *Economic Impact*. Available at <https://www.wttc.org/economic-impact/> [Retrieved 20 October 2018].