



Tourism product as a measure to determine the key elements that influence tourists' decisions to visit Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

Washington Makuzva*

Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa

Department of Tourism and Events Management

Physical address: Corner of Keizersgracht and Tennant Street Zonnebloem

Postal address: PO Box 652 Cape Town 8000

Email: makuzvaw@gmail.com

Dr Ncedo Jonathan Ntloko

Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa

Department of Tourism and Events Management

Email: ntlokon@cput.ac.za

Corresponding author*

Abstract

A tourism product can be bundled together with a range of tourism elements such as accommodation, attractions, activities and tours, price, image, climate and many more elements to form a saleable tourism product. The town of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, hereafter referred to as Victoria Falls, has a number of tourism elements that build up the tourism product. It is along this idea that understanding the influence each element has on the tourists' decisions to travel can help in the sustainable development of the entire tourism product. This is because, if one element of the tourism product is underperforming or fails to satisfy the tourists, the whole tourism product may as a result be condemned and then not attract more tourists. This will in turn bring with it a plethora of negative socio-economic impacts for the destination. Therefore, it is fundamentally important to understand the performance of each main element of the tourism product from the tourists' perspectives, as they are after all, the end users of the tourism product. The main objective of this study was to determine the core elements that influence tourists' decision to visit Victoria Falls as there is limited research on this aspect. A total of 377 interviewer-administered survey questionnaires were conducted voluntarily, face-to-face, with the tourists using a systematic sampling approach. Key findings revealed that availability of attractions, price of the tourism product as well as accessibility of the destination play a paramount role in influencing the tourists to visit the destination. The results of this study may hopefully help the tourism planners for Victoria Falls in maintaining the elements that are performing well so that they keep influencing the tourists to visit the area while simultaneously addressing and upgrading the elements that are underperforming.

Keywords: tourist, tourism product, tourist decision, Victoria Falls, destination, Zimbabwe.

Introduction

The tourism industry has gained momentum over other industries due to its contribution towards the economic benefits of many nations and is viewed as one of the fastest continuously growing industries in the world (Ninemeier & Perdue, 2005; Cooper & Hall, 2008). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2015) also supports this view, in that over quite a long



period, tourism has maintained a continued growth and has in fact increased, thus broadening its spheres to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. The growth of the tourism industry has been reiterated by the UNWTO (2015) by its provision of the statistics of the tourist arrivals whereby it states that, "...despite occasional shocks, tourism has shown virtually uninterrupted growth. International tourist arrivals have increased from 25 million globally in 1950, to 278 million in 1980, 527 million in 1995, and 1133 million in 2014". From the travel statistics released by the UNWTO (2015), it is intrinsically clear that people are travelling across the globe possibly because they are being offered tourism products that suit their needs and wants. This is the main reason for this study in investigating the main elements of Victoria Falls tourism product that possibly influence tourists to visit the destination.

Literature review

A tourism product is the core feature that can distinguish between a good destination and a memorable destination (Candela & Figini, 2012). Zappiano (2005) underscores that a tourism product can be understood as the chief necessities behind the holiday motivation. This is mainly because a well-built tourism product can stimulate the passion of tourists to travel knowingly that their needs and wants are most likely to be met. Different scholars provide a number of definitions and characteristics of a tourism product. Gupta, Singh, Kirar and Bairwa (2015) define a tourism product as any product that is marketed by a country or an organisation to tourists, so as to attract them to visit the destination and enjoy the experience of the product. These scholars further elaborate that a tourism product consists of a combination of important elements which includes objects and attractions, transportation, accommodation and entertainment. However, each element is prepared by an individual or organisation and offered separately to tourists (consumers). The same aspect was defined by Grzinic and Zanketic (2008) as, "a sum of available resources, service and facilities that tourists can use in a specific place and at a specific time to satisfy their needs". On the same note, Arunmozhi and Panneerselva (2014) denote that a tourism product is "an object that attracts tourists and normally has the following elements: accommodation, transportation, dining and entertainment as well as attractions and tours". These elements are designed to give the tourist an all-round holiday experience of the tourism product.

Peters and Weiermair (2000) state that, due to the increase in the number of tourists travelling around the world and the evolution of new destinations across the globe, it is of paramount importance for a destination to develop and adjust its tourism product so as to attract more tourists and withstand the growing competition. The UNWTO (2015) support the notion that a lot of fresh places of interests to visit have developed on top of the old and well-known Europe and North America. According to the UNWTO (2011) tourism products are the backbone of a destination's tourism sector operation and they must be good enough to meet or exceed what the tourists want so that the destination can enjoy the benefits at full potential. This is because if the tourism products are not attractive, the tourist will not visit the destination which results in the diminishing of needed forex revenue from the tourists. This shows that the tourism product is the driving force for a tourist destination to be recognised as a better destination, when viewed in comparison to other tourist destinations, and this further motivates the objective of this study to understand the main elements that influence tourists to visit a destination. In the same vein, the UNWTO (2011) openly states that little is done in developing the attractiveness of the tourism product in most of the destinations. However, only a handful of destinations place adequate emphasis on the development and delivery of the various attractions and activities that comprise the tourism product.

A destination that offers better tourism products tends to attract more tourists and enjoys the benefits of offering a good tourism product (UNWTO, 2011). These benefits include longer periods



of staying as well as engaging in variety of activities. However, not only developing an attractive tourism product guarantees the increase in visitor's numbers to the tourist destination, but it is equally important to understand which elements of the tourism product influence the tourist's decision to visit a destination. By doing so, the destination will be in a position to develop or improve the tourism product based on the tourists perspectives on the main elements that influenced them to visit Victoria Falls.

Victoria Falls is a small resort town and the major tourist hub located in the Matebeleland North Province on the western side of Zimbabwe. The town is situated 713km from the capital city Harare and is just a kilometer from the mighty and breathtaking Victoria Falls waterfall. Victoria Falls is surrounded by unequivocally fascinating adrenaline producing activities and attractions that include Victoria Falls National Park, the famous bridge across the Zambezi River which is the border between Zambia (Livingstone) and Zimbabwe, the waterfall – Victoria Falls which is a world wonder and a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) heritage site, offering unsurpassed holiday experiences. In terms of the activities, the town is regarded as the adventure capital of Africa and tourists can embark on activities like bungee jumping, bridge swing, bridge slide, zip-lining, diving, white water rafting, game viewing, walking with lions, sunset cruising and canoeing on the mighty Zambezi River, just to mention a few. Victoria Falls offers a diversity of accommodation facilities ranging from two to five-star hotels, resorts, guesthouses, lodges, backpackers, safari camping tents and self-catering apartments. The infrastructure of the town is superbly maintained and has been reinforced by the development of the new Victoria Falls International Airport which allows for the landing of large aircraft (Kawadza, 2016). It is against such developments that there is a need to measure the main elements of Victoria Falls tourism product in influencing tourists decisions to visit the town and the surrounding area.

Commercii (2001) and Verma (2016) identify five main elements that should be present for a destination to have a better tourism product which are: attractions, accessibility, destination facilities/amenities, image and price. Commercii (2001) reiterates that a place's citizens are also a component of a tourism product as they interact with the tourists and cultural tourism results from the interaction between the tourists and the locals as they share their diverse cultures. Commercii (2001) vividly stresses that the place's citizens form an integral part of the destination product as they can help the tourists by giving them the information they want, however, they can also be dangerous for the tourists. In addition to the above-mentioned elements of a tourism product, other elements such as infrastructure, accommodation, climate, travel agencies, tour operators and activities, also constitute tourism products (Becken, 2010). For the purpose of this research, accommodation, activities, accessibility, attractions, facilities, image, price and tours elements of the tourism product have been specifically selected.

Social Exchange Theory

The theory applied in this research is the Social Exchange Theory (SET). SET dates back to centuries ago and has been an influential theory which helps in understanding the perceptions between the buyer and the seller. Homans (1958) postulated that SET has been discussed on the literature platforms for sociology and social psychology and is alluded to as one amongst the oldest theories of social behavior. In the same vein, Emerson (1976) underscores that SET involves two persons, whereby each provides some benefits to the other and the exchange interaction can happen when one is perceived to be benefiting the most from the interaction. Emerson (1981) further reiterates that SET is a frame of reference from which many theories, whether small or big, can be derived. With this view in mind, Ap (1992) describes SET as "a general sociological theory concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between



individuals and groups in an interaction situation". Brida, Disegna and Osti (2014) argue that peoples happiness with the exchange interaction is attained by assessing the results of the exchange which can be social or economic benefits, or the interaction itself. On a broader understanding, the theory precisely articulates that humans mainly participate in the things that yield positive results and they try to avoid things that brings unnecessary costs or negative results (Holthausen, 2013).

The SET is therefore a very useful theory for a study of this nature, as the study is aimed at understanding the main elements of the tourism product that influence the tourists to visit Victoria Falls. Nunkoo (2016) places emphasis on the notion that SET has actors who are dependent on each other based on the results they value. This means the actors, which in this case are the tourists and the tourism product supplier (Victoria Falls), engage on a cost and benefit analysis and weigh the benefits to be attained after the exchange. If the benefits are more than the costs the exchange can go ahead in favour of the actor who perceives that he or she has positive benefits (Nunkoo, 2016).

Research design and methodology

This study was quantitative in nature as it was aimed at finding statistical information on assessing the main elements of Victoria Falls tourism product that influence the tourists to visit. George (2011) concurs with Shields and Twycross (2003), Sukamolson (2007), A Tewksbury (2009) and Hoy (2010) that a quantitative research approach collects numerical data and factual information which is analysed using mathematically based methods to explain a social and cultural phenomenon. In achieving the desired objectives of this study, both primary and secondary sources were used. The objective of this study was to determine the main elements that influence tourists' decision to visit Victoria Falls.

A structured survey questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. According to Nykiel (2007) there are mainly four types of quantitative research which are descriptive designs, these are experimental designs, quasi-experimental design, correlational designs and causal-comparative design. This study followed a descriptive design as it is aimed at describing a phenomenon that will hopefully help in understanding the research question which is in this case "what are main elements that influence tourists' decision to visit Victoria Falls?". In order to determine the sample for the study, the population had to be identified. Kothari (2004) cited that a research population is the larger group from which individuals are selected to participate in a study. A sample is defined as a subsection of the population that is used as a representation of the population (Levy & Lameshow, 2013).

The population for this study was both domestic and international tourists who visited Victoria Falls in 2015 and the total number of the population was also determined by the statistics showing numbers of tourists who visited Victoria Falls that year. The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA, 2016) noted that 257043 tourists arrived in Victoria Falls during the period January to December 2015 and on average 21420 per month. For this study, the population ($N = 21420$) based on 2015 average per month tourists' arrival statistics. From the population, the sample was $n = 377$. This was drawn in line with recommendations suggested by Isaac and Micheal (1981) in order to achieve 95% confidence level.

Due to the mere fact that all the tourists who visit Victoria Falls will also visit the Falls, data was collected on the entrance/ exit to the Falls using a systematic sampling approach where every fifth person exiting the Rainforest of Victoria Falls was asked to complete the questionnaire. If the fifth person refused to complete the questionnaire, the next person was asked. In doing so,



interviewer-administered survey questionnaires were conducted voluntarily face-to-face with the tourists. This is because face to face interviewer-administered survey questionnaires are easy for the respondent to understand the question since the interviewer can assist in articulating the essence of questions where necessary. The whole process was done in accordance with the ethical considerations of the study which included an ethical clearance certificate from Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) Research Committee, and a permission letter from the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA). In addition, the participants had to sign a consent form prior to taking part in the study and they remained anonymous throughout.

Results and analysis

The IBM24 Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was used as an instrument to analyse all the data collected from the field work, and to produce understandable findings in relation to the research questions and objectives. The use of tables and descriptive summaries was used to aid the explanation of the results.

Tourism product elements influencing tourists' decision to visit Victoria Falls

In assessing the main elements that influenced the tourists to visit Victoria Falls, the study assessed how important the elements were in influencing their decision when choosing a destination to visit. A traditional 5-point Likert scale was used with the following options and responses: CU = Completely Unimportant; U = Unimportant; N = Neutral; I = Important; and VI = Very Important. Due to the close relationship between CU and U, as well as I and VI, the results were grouped together for greater clarity.

Table 1: Importance of tourism elements in influencing the decision to visit ($n = 377$ in %)

Statements	Level of agreement in percentage				
	CU	U	N	I	VI
How important was accommodation when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	26	15.1	9.3	12.5	37.1
How important was activities and tours when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0.5	2.7	8.5	30.6	57.7
How important was accessibility when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0.3	1.1	8.2	33.4	57
How important was attractions when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0	0	4	28.9	67.1
How important was facilities when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0.8	4.3	21.5	25.3	48.1
How important was image when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0.5	1.6	15.9	34.7	47.3
How important was price when you selected to visit Victoria Falls	0	1.6	7.7	20.4	70.3

The results from the tourists as shown on Table 1, showed that, just below half (49.6%) considered accommodation in Victoria Falls as being important to being a completely important tourism product element. However, just above forty percent (41.1%) of the respondents rated that it was unimportant to completely unimportant to consider accommodation in this town as they were aware that they could stay on relatively cheaper accommodations options in Zambia or Botswana and could still visit the Falls on a day trip. Few respondents (9.3%) were neutral on the importance of this tourism element. Generally, the results on accommodation indicated the importance of accommodation when tourists make a decision to visit a destination. Despite some of the tourist opting not to overnight in this resort town, it is interesting to note 90.7% of the respondents indicated that they would need accommodation during their trip (see Table 1). This



shows that accommodation element of the tourism product plays a fundamental role of influencing the tourists to visit a particular destination. However, it is also vital to note that tourists do not necessarily need to stay at accommodation that is in very close proximity to the attractions, but they also consider accommodation that suits their demands and perhaps their budgets. This analogy matches with Stearman (2010) submission that, no matter what type of accommodation they will stay in, the tourists (whether travelling for business or for leisure) need accommodation.

In terms of activities and tours there was an overwhelming response from the majority of the respondents (88.3%) cited that it was important to very important to consider activities and tours. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) and also Anuar, Ahmad, Jusoh and Hussain (2012) have noted that activities and tours are crucial elements and a destination that does not offer competitive activities and tours, would end up attracting few tourists since tourists are now seeking to visit tourism products that allows them to partake in some form of exercising. Some respondents (8.5%) were neutral on the importance of activities and tours and only 3.2% viewed this element as unimportant to completely unimportant. As illustrated in Table 1, the results showed that the majority of the respondents chose to visit Victoria Falls because of the activities and tours it offers. Emanating from these results, it cannot be disputed that the tourists will first search for the destinations they want to visit, taking into cognisance the activities and tours the destination has on offer. It is quite clear that, very careful scrutiny can unravel in principle the credentials of Victoria Falls as a destination that has the element of activities and tours in its tourism product offering. This is because the respondents highlighted that they considered this element before travelling and after they were convinced that this tourism product had activities and tours to embark on, they then visited the town.

Therefore, having noted that the availability of activities and tours at the destination plays a fundamental role in influencing the tourists to visit a tourist destination, Victoria Falls will need to deliver good quality service in all activities and tours it has on offer. At the same time it will need to have a lot of activities so that it can attract tourists from all over the world. These results would also mean that Victoria Falls would need to market its tourism product based on the unique activities and tours one can embark on while in Victoria Falls, which can also help in neutralizing the strong competition that each destination around the world is currently facing from other destinations.

Accessibility is also one of the important tourism elements of a tourism product as noted by Zhou (2005). Just like other elements of the tourism product discussed earlier, accessibility plays a paramount role as it is the one that makes the tourists decide which destination to visit based on the costs incurred to access to the destination. The tourism product must not be difficult to access as tourists will look for alternative destinations to visit if the destination is inaccessible (Gupta et al., 2015). Furthermore, the accessibility of the destination is determined by the location where the tourism product is found. This means that if the tourism product is located in an inaccessible destination and far from the tourist generating region the value of the destination will deteriorate, as it will receive fewer tourists due to the greater costs that will be incurred to reach the destination (Gupta et al., 2015).

With reference to this study, Table 1 shows that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (90.4%) cited that it was important to very important, to consider this tourism element of the tourism product before visiting this destination. This aligns with the available literature that the destination must be easily accessible for it to receive tourists. There were some respondents who were neutral (8.2%) with only 1.4% considering accessibility as unimportant to completely unimportant. The respondents who were neutral and who did not at all consider this element of the tourism product could be those tourists who are more adventurous and who are not



necessarily bothered by how they get to the destinations. This type of tourist was defined by Van Egmond and Van Egmond (2007) as the hard core tourist.

From the above discussion, it is important for the Victoria Falls tourism product to make sure that the destination is easily accessible as this is one of the critical factors that can enhance or deter tourists from visiting a destination. In addition, Victoria Falls tourism product can also make sure that the destination is not only physically accessible, but should also be accessible through telecommunications and internet. as tourists use technology to gather information about the destination they want to visit. However, if the destination is technologically inaccessible, it may create a negative outcome for the tourism product, hence, the accessibility of the destination is very crucial as it influences the tourists on the destination to visit Victoria Falls.

In terms of attractions, this was the main highlight in terms of importance of what the respondents considered when selected to visit Victoria Falls. Ninety-six percent (96%) agreed that it was important to very important, to consider attractions before buying the tourism product of Victoria Falls. This shows that a tourism product must have tourist attractions as this element of the tourism product is taken seriously by the tourists before choosing the tourism product. Smith (1994) in his model, "the generic tourism product model", describes the attractions as the nucleus of the tourism product and this is what drives or pulls the tourists to a destination. Morachat (2003) referred to attractions that are valuable and have the ability to pull the tourists as the primary resources. It is interesting from the results to note that tourists do not just visit the destinations, but they first ask themselves, what is there to see at the destination. It is only the destination that proves to have the relevant attractions that the tourists will choose to visit. In this case, Victoria Falls seemed to have qualified to have the necessary attractions that the tourists were longing for and as a result they chose to visit this resort town over other destinations in the world. Very few respondents (4%) were neutral on the importance of considering attractions before buying the Victoria Falls tourism product. These results concur with the sentiments of Bhatia (2006), Lubbe (2013), Patel and Nayab (2014) and Gupta et al. (2015), that attractions are the principal component of the tourism element and have the tenacity to influence a tourist to travel to a tourist destination.

As noted by Kozak (2004) facilities at a tourist destination play a crucial role in marking the holiday experience to be a memorable one. The majority of the respondents (73.4%) agreed that it was important to very important, to consider the facilities when they made the decision to visit Victoria Falls. A considerable number of respondents were neutral (21.5%) and unimportant to completely unimportant (5.1%). Bhatia (2006) noted that facilities are the elements that are an aid to the main attractions and they are crucial for a destination. However, while other tourists may not strongly agree on the fact that this aspect of the tourism element plays a pivotal role, the majority valued this aspect as it can cause a huge displeasure to the holiday experience if it is indeed not present. In the same vein, Kozak (2004) argues that the facilities at the destination are crucial for creating return business and the tourism product should have attractive and maintained facilities for the destination to remain competitive.

On a research conducted in Turkey and Mallorca, Kozak (2004) underscores that repeat tourists have identified some significant changes in the airport facilities, roads and traffic as well as in cleanliness of both destinations. This is very important and needs to be monitored in the elements of a tourism product as it can determine whether the tourists return to the destination or not. Zimbabwe has recently refurbished the Victoria Falls International Airport in order to enhance the facilities in this resort town. However, the country is currently on the brink of cash shortages where banks and Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) run dry of money, and this can have negative effect on the tourists' perspectives and experiences. The facilities element of the tourism product



is very broad as it encompass a lots of elements in itself, but this element must be running smoothly, as the majority of the respondents reviewed stated that they consider the facilities at a destination before selecting to visit it.

The respondents were asked if the image of the destination influenced them before making the decision to visit Victoria Falls. The majority of the respondents (82%) concur with Sun, Chi and Xu (2013) that they considered the element of image as important to very important before visiting Victoria Falls. A good image of the destination has the ability to influence a tourist's decision to visit a destination whereas a bad image can drive the tourist away from a destination (Sun et al. 2013). There were some respondents who were neutral (15.9%) in terms of importance of considering the image of the destination before visiting and only (2.1%) indicated that it was not important to completely unimportant. The perceptions of tourists towards a destination can create either positive or negative impacts. For example, tourists who have a positive perception of a certain destination would do their best to visit that destination so as to satisfy their desire, whereas if they have a negative perception they will completely avoid such a destination. Hence, the views or what the tourists perceive on the image of a destination could result in the tourists losing interest in visiting the destination or it creates an anxiety about travelling to the destination. These results show that this tourism destination has a good image and this has enabled the tourists to make a decision to visit Victoria Falls. However, it is also worth noting that some of the respondents were not influenced by this element of the tourism product and hence, their decision to visit the resort town could have been attributed to the other main elements discussed in this article such as for example, affordability and access.

In terms of price as an element of the tourism product, the results from this study (Table 1) show that 90.7% of the respondents correspond with George (2011) and Mutori (2016) that it was important to very important to consider price as one of the tourism element when they made a decision to visit Victoria Falls. Price, just like image, can influence the decision of the tourist when selecting a tourism product to buy in and visit. There were some respondents who were neutral (7.7%) about the importance of this tourism element and very few (1.6%) considered the price as unimportant. Destinations may have good accommodation, a variety of activities and tours, attractions, facilities, good image and can be easily accessible, however, the price to visit the destination is the factor one that can hugely influence the tourists' decision to visit. This means destinations should price their tourism product in such a way that it does not chase away tourists. According to Murphy, Armstrong, Bainbridge and Firestone (2010) and also Mutori (2016), Victoria Falls is perceived to be expensive to visit, hence, this could be the attributing factor as to why the majority considered the price element of the tourism product before visiting this resort town. Tourists opt to visit destinations that offer value for money and they are mostly very sensitive to fluctuations in price.

Implications

The results discussed in Table 1 show that all the seven elements that were under investigation perform a crucial role in influencing the tourists' decision to visit Victoria Falls. It is also very important to note that these elements that influence the tourists to visit Victoria Falls do not work in isolation, but there is rather a mutual coordination of these elements in order for them to have a huge influence in the tourists' decision-making as to which destination to visit. Therefore, the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority as the main marketing board should make sure that these main elements of the tourism product that influence tourists' decision-making are positioned properly in the minds of the target markets so that when the tourists are considering the destination to visit they will consider Victoria Falls as it will be well positioned in their minds. Additionally, the Victoria Falls tourism product should not only be well positioned but should also deliver good quality



services so that these main elements will continue to influence tourists' decision to visit this unique resort town. The reason being that if this destination does not deliver the good service the tourists perceive it has, it will completely fail to attract new or repeat customers. Additionally, unsatisfied customers can share the bad service experience they received which will result in the collapsing of the Victoria Falls tourism product. Therefore, the performance of all the above mentioned elements of the tourism product should be closely monitored at especially the destination level, so that service delivery will not be jeopardised.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study investigated the main elements of the tourism product that influence tourists' decisions to visit Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. While attractions, activities and tours as well as accessibility performs better than the rest of the tourism elements investigated, facilities and price elements need special attention since they were not convincing enough from the tourists perspectives. Moreover, the results of the study pointed out the importance of mutual amalgamation of tourism services to produce a seamless tourism product which is sustainable. The outcome of the study also flagged that tourists are interested in the Victoria Falls tourism product, however, the need to note that their decision-making to visit one destination over others is not centered on looking at only one element of the tourism product, but through considering a number of elements which need to operate in tandem. Such an approach assists tourists in developing a holistic understanding of the destination prior to a visit. Tourism services by nature cannot be recognized by the tourists before purchasing their holiday, hence the tourists have to make the decision based on what they read or may have heard from their network of friends and relatives, as well as the advice obtained from travel agents and tour operators. These are the main reasons why they need to scrutinize the main elements of the tourism product before visiting a destination, so that they will not later come to regret their decision to have visited one destination over other options which they may have had.

Lastly, it has been noted that it is of great significance for each of the seven elements of the tourism products discussed in this study, to perform outstandingly as they play a paramount role in influencing the decision of tourists to visit the destination. Therefore, for a good tourism product to prevail, each of the seven elements discussed in this study should be bundled together and combine as reinforcements of each other so as to develop a competitive tourism product. The elements thus need to in unison and not in isolation.

References

- Anuar, A.N.A., Ahmad, H., Jusoh, H. & Hussain, M.Y. (2012). The essential elements underlying formation of tourist friendly destination concept: analysis in micro level. *Asian Social Science*, 8(13): 59-70.
- Ap, J. (1992). Resident's perception on tourism impacts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 19(4): 665-690.
- Arunmozhi, T. & Panneerselvam, A. (2014). Tourism marketing and its importance. *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(1): 32-34.
- Becken, S. (2010). *The importance of climate and weather for tourism*. <http://www.lincoln.ac.nz/PageFiles/6750/WeatherLitReview.pdf> [Retrieved 18 February 2018].



Bhatia, A.K. (2006). *The business of tourism: concepts and strategies*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.

Brida, J.G., Disegna, M. & Osti, L. (2014). Residents' perceptions of tourism impacts and attitudes towards tourism policies. *Tourismos: An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism*, 9(1): 37-71.

Candela, G. & Figini, P. (2012). *The economics of tourism destinations*. Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media.

Commerci, D. (2001). The component tourism product with special reference to the game lodge product. Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of Johannesburg: Johannesburg.

Cooper, C. & Hall, M. (2008). *Contemporary tourism: an international approach*. London: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Emerson, R.M. (1976). Social exchange theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2:335-362.

George, R. (2011). *Marketing tourism in South Africa*. 4th ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Grzanic, J. & Zanketic, P. (2008). Tourist attractions as products of a tourist destination. Unpublished Master Thesis. University Juraj Dobrila: Croatia.

Gupta, R., Singh, N., Kirar, I. & Bairwa, M.K. (2015). *Hospitality and tourism management*. Noida: Vikas Publishing House.

Holthausen, J. (2013). Scientific review of social exchange theory and its contribution to solving purchasers' decision-making. *1st IBA Bachelor Thesis Conference*, Enschede, 1-11 June 2003.

Homans, G.C. (1958). Social behavior as exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63, 597-606.

Hoy, W. K. (2010). *Quantitative research in education: a primer*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Isaac, S. & Micheal, W.B. (1981). *Handbook in research and evaluation*. San Diego: Edits Publishers.

Kawadza, S. (2014). Adjust or fall away: the story of Victoria Falls. *The Herald*: 1, May 14.

Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: methods and techniques*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: New Age International.

Kozak, M. (2004). *Destination benchmarking: concepts, practices and operations*. Oxon: CABI Publishing.

Levy, P.S. & Lemeshow, S. (2013). *Sampling of populations: methods and applications*. 4th ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.



- Lubbe, B.A. (2003). *Tourism management in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Pearson Education and Prentice Hall.
- Morachat, C. (2003). A study of destination attractiveness through tourists' perspectives: a focus on Chiang Mai, Thailand. Unpublished Doctorate and Master's Thesis. Edith Cowan University, Joondalup WA, Australia.
- Murphy, A., Armstrong, K., Bainbridge, J. & Firestone, M.D. (2010). *Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Lonely Planet Publishers.
- Mutori, D. (2016). Are strong US\$ "Benjamins" spooking tourists away from Zimbabwe? *New Zimbabwe*: 1, Nov 5.
- Ninemeier, J. D. & Perdue, J. (2005). *Discovering hospitality and tourism: the world's greatest industry*. 2nd ed. New Jersey, Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Nunkoo, R. (2016). Toward a more comprehensive use of social exchange theory to study residents' attitudes to tourism. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 39:588-596.
- Nykiel, R.A. (2007). *Handbook of marketing research methodologies for hospitality and tourism*. Binghamton: The Haworth Press.
- Patel, I.S. & Nayab, Z.A. (2014). *Geography of transport, tourism & management*. Solapur: Lulu.com.
- Peters, M. & Weiermair, K. (2000). Tourist attractions and attracted tourists: how to satisfy today's 'fickle' tourist clientele? *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, 11(1): 22-29.
- Ritchie, J.R.B. & Crouch, G.I. (2003). *The competitive destination: a sustainable tourism perspective*. London: CABI Publishing.
- Shields, L. & Twycross, A. (2003). The difference between quantitative and qualitative research. *Paediatric Nursing*, 15(9): 24.
- Smith, S.L.J. (1994). The tourism product. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21(3):582-595.
- Stearman, K. (2010). *Travel and tourism*. London: Evans Brothers.
- Sukamolson, S. (2007). *Fundamentals of research*. <http://www.culi.chula.ac.th/Research/e-Journal/bod/Suphat%20Sukamolson.pdf> [Retrieved 31 December 2017].
- Sun, X., Chi, C.G. & Xu, H. (2013). Developing destination loyalty: the case of Hainan island. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 43: 547-577.
- Tewksbury, R. (2009). Qualitative versus quantitative methods: understanding why qualitative methods are superior for criminology and criminal justice. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Criminology*, 1(1): 38-58.



United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). (2011). *Handbook on tourism product development*. <http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/abs/10.18111/9789284413959> [Retrieved 03 April 2016].

United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). (2015). *Tourism highlights 2015 edition*. <http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284416899> [Retrieved 07 April 2016].

Van Egmond, T. & Van Egmond, A.N.F. (2007). *Understanding western tourists in developing countries*. Washington, D.C: CABI Publishing.

Verma, D. (2016). *5 main components of a better tourism product*. <http://www.shareyouressays.com/93564/5-main-components-of-a-better-tourism-product> [Retrieved 05 April 2016].

Zappiano, V. (2005). Caribbean Tourism and development: an overview. *Discussion paper No.65*. Cosenza: European Centre for Development Policy Management.

Zhou, L. (2005). Destination attributes that attract international tourists to Cape Town. Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of the Western Cape, South Africa.