



Identifying the key success factors for marketing tourism establishments: a case study of four regions in Lesotho

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Abstract

The marketing of tourism establishments is becoming increasingly important worldwide as the tourism industry continues to grow. The competitive nature of the tourism industry stresses the need for more effective marketing and a clear understanding of the key success factors (KSFs) for marketing. Therefore this study was carried out to identify the KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment in Lesotho. KSFs for marketing are defined as the capabilities that a tourism establishment needs in a sub-market to differentiate itself attractively from its rivals. This study provides tourism marketers and managers of tourism establishments with insights that will assist them to determine and implement the KSFs for marketing their establishments. A quantitative approach was employed by means of a self-administered questionnaire. The results revealed that the following KSFs are regarded as important for marketing tourism establishments in Lesotho: conduct thorough marketing planning, enhance the attractiveness of the tourism establishment, effectively advertise the establishment, ensure the accessibility of the tourism establishment, perform strategic marketing management to improve tourist satisfaction, conduct marketing research, manage service quality, effectively communicate with staff and tourists, promote the tourism establishment through different marketing mediums and achieve tourist loyalty. The findings of this study are of critical importance to effectively and successfully market tourism establishments in Lesotho and offer value for other SADC nations' tourism marketing initiatives. The study also contributes to the knowledge of tourism marketing and provides practical suggestions on the implementation of the KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment. The implications of the study are discussed as well as the limitations and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Tourism, marketing, key success factors, Lesotho, southern Africa.

Introduction

Tourism is regarded as one of the major means of achieving development in destination areas (Sharpley & Telfer, 2015:5). Muazir and Hsieh (2016:35), describe tourism as the processes, activities, and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions among visitors, suppliers, host government, host communities, and surrounding environment that are involved in the attracting and hosting the visitors. On the other hand, tourism is



defined by Mwinuka (2017:1), as the social phenomenon which includes the movement of people from and to and their temporary stay at places away from their usual residents. Moreover, tourism is regarded as an important economic force providing employment, foreign exchange, income and tax revenue for any country (Hudson, 2008:4). However, Ratten and Rodoula (2010:537), indicate that world tourism businesses are currently facing rapid changes due to market globalisation and intensified competition. Therefore, in order to remain competitive, it is suggested that tourism establishments in both public and private sectors should know their customers' needs and wants, be aware of their demands, make their potential customers aware of their products and services and convince them through effective tourism marketing strategies (Lamsoo, Niroomand & Rafsanjani, 2013:78). Marketing is defined as the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for consumers, clients, partners, and society at large (Kotler, 2011:132). In terms of tourism, marketing is the systematic and coordinated efforts exerted by the tourism establishments at international, national and local levels to optimise the satisfaction of tourists, groups and individuals, with a view to sustained tourism growth (Singh, 2008:5).

Additionally, Baker and Cameron (2008:79), state that in order for tourism destinations or establishments to compete effectively in the market, they need to identify the KSFs and ensure that they are implemented. KSFs are defined as those factors in which if addressed will improve competitive performance for a tourism establishment (Sisay, Verhees & van Trijp, 2017:550). One of the KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment in Lesotho might include building a brand identity. This can be achieved by assessing Lesotho's current situation, developing a brand promise, communicating the brand promise and evaluating the effectiveness of the brand identity (Hudson & Ritchie, 2009:219). Few studies (Cox & Wray 2011:526; Aaker & McLoughlin 2010:338) have been conducted on the KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment. However in Lesotho, a study on the KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment has not been done. Hence, this study identifies and contributes to the understanding of KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment in Lesotho.

Literature

The thorough literature review was conducted for the purpose of this study using academic articles and other pertinent sources of reliable data, and the following aspects are discussed: Lesotho, tourism, marketing and key success factors.

Lesotho

Lesotho is a small, mountainous country that is surrounded by South Africa on all borders with a population of two million residents (Braun & McLees, 2011:2). Lesotho is regarded as one of the developing countries in the Southern African region that benefit from its tourism, and as a result, the government of Lesotho has put tourism at the top of its development agenda. It has come up with a number of policy documents, including the Lesotho Tourism Policy and the Lesotho Tourism Master Plan (Manwa, 2012:6669). According to Rogerson and Letsie (2013:491), the national tourism development corporation (LTDC), also has the long-term objective of making the "tourism sector a major employer and key economic player in Lesotho".

Its current vision is for "successfully positioning Lesotho as a must visit Southern Africa's mountain, culture, adventure and ecotourism destination". Yiu, Saner and Lee (2015:2), point out that the tourism industry in Lesotho generates R2 124 000, which creates almost 7 percent of the country's economy. The Lesotho tourism industry hires approximately 34 000 Lesotho citizens, representing 6 percent of the workforce. According to Lesotho Review



(2015), in 2013 there were 43 200 international tourists travelled to Lesotho, of which 92 percent were South African citizens and over 58 percent were repeat tourists. Some of the frequently visited attractions in Lesotho include: Lesotho Highlands, Afriski Mountain Resort; Katse Dam and Maletsunyane Falls (Exploring Tourism Lesotho, 2019). Yiu *et al.* (2015:2), indicate that Lesotho's tourism industry is expected to grow by 4.4 percent in the year 2022.

Tourism

Tourism is an activity of people travelling to and staying in places outside their original homes for not more than one consecutive year for business, leisure and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited (Geetanjali, 2010:1). Tourism is primarily a service-based industry and the principal products provided by tourism businesses are experiences and hospitality (Dasgupta, 2011:2).

Tourism is one of the largest industries and contributes significantly to the economic development of countries (Almairani & Johari, 2017:73, World Tourism Organisation, 2019). In addition Chou (2013:226) points out that tourism contributes in initiatives such as the creation of income, employment, private sector growth and it additionally develops the infrastructure for numerous tourism destinations such as Lesotho. The competition in the tourism industry has increased between tourism destinations (Barbosa, de Oliveira & Rezende 2010:1067). Due to the competitive nature of the tourism industry, understanding the tourism marketing will assist tourism managers and marketers make decisions that lead to increased service effectiveness (George, 2014:22).

Marketing

Marketing is an activity, set of institutions and a process for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society (Cant, 2013:13). In terms of tourism, Pike and Page (2014:7), define marketing as a managerial process through which tourism establishments classify their selected tourists, actual and potential, communicate with them to discover and influence their wishes, needs, motivations, likes and dislikes, on local, regional, national and international levels and formulate and adapt their tourist products accordingly in view of achieving tourist satisfaction, thereby fulfilling their objectives. It is thus of utmost importance for tourism managers in Lesotho to ensure that the promises made in their marketing communication are conveyed to the tourists. This can be achieved by understanding tourists' needs and matching marketing communication with the needs and expectations of tourists (Terkan, 2014:242).

Moreover, Pratt, McCabe, Jimenez and Blake (2010:179), mention that carefully crafted tourism marketing strategies are the most powerful means of increasing the numbers of tourists to a destination and maintaining stays within a destination. Avraham and Ketter (2016:4), argue that tourism marketing does not only aim to increase the number of tourists traveling to a destination, but also aims at providing tools and strategies for altering the image of tourism establishments and attracting international tourists. Okumus, Okumus and McKercher (2007:254), adds that tourism marketing enables a tourism establishment to differentiate itself by stressing its unique tangible and intangible products and services.

Key success factors

KSFs are defined as the important factors without which any continuous improvement initiative stands little chance of success (Antony, Krishan, Cullen & Kumar, 2012:943) whereas Mamat and Roslan (2012:163) describe KSFs as the main factors or activities



needed to ensure the success of an establishment. Khodaveysi, Mobarakabadi and Slambolchi (2016:22), indicate that KSFs were first introduced by John F. Rockart and the MIT Sloan School of Management in 1979 as a way to help senior executives define their information needs for managing their organisations. Rockart traced his critical success factors (CSF) work to its conceptual antecedent, “success factors”, introduced by D. Ronald Daniel in 1961.

From a marketing point of view, KSFs are those characteristics of an organisation that enable it to pursue a competitive strategy in a product market (Sminia, 2014:9). In order to compete effectively and to attract more tourists, it is essential for Lesotho tourism establishments to review their KSFs for marketing and ensure these are well implemented (Baker & Cameron, 2008:79). As stated by Marais, Du Plessis and Saayman (2017:2), more tourists might be attracted to destinations such as Lesotho through identifying and understanding KSFs, which could influence the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism sector of Lesotho as a destination. Knab (2009:78), explains that the implementation of KSFs can allow tourism establishments to adapt more quickly to emerging markets and to tailor their products and services to meet the needs of tourists.

For tourism to be effectively developed and marketed in countries such as Lesotho it is important to consider the involvement of local and national government agencies. The Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC) is an example of such an organisation. The LTDC is responsible for promoting responsible and sustainable economic development through tourism as well as promoting Lesotho as the preferred destination for tourists to visit. It is thus also of critical importance for the LTDC to understand the KSFs for marketing tourism establishments in Lesotho since tourism marketing and promotion are core functions of the LTDC.

Table 1.1 indicates a list of previous research studies that have been conducted to determine KSFs for managing and marketing in a tourism context.

Author/s	Year	Title	Identified key success factors	Application
Burger and Saayman	2009	Key success factors in managing a conference centre in South Africa.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Core operational aspects • Planning • Design and evaluation • Human resource management 	Conference centres in South Africa
Avcikurt, Altay and Ilban	2011	Critical success factors for small hotel businesses in Turkey: an exploratory study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service quality • Financial performance • Marketing • Providing customer satisfaction • Uniqueness of services relative to competitors • Promotion strategy • Employees' on-the-job training level 	Hotel
Jaafar	2011	Critical success factors (CSFs): a comparison between coastal and Island chalets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value for money • Ensuring a high level of cleanliness • Enhancing customer care • Ensuring high quality staff • Improving the 	Chalets



Author/s	Year	Title	Identified key success factors	Application
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">attractiveness of facilitiesStaff skills and training	
Engelbrecht, Kruger and Saayman	2014	An analysis of critical success factors in managing the tourist experience at Kruger national park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">PositioningMarketing and accessibilityEffective marketingAccessibilityQuality and customer satisfactionDeveloping of efficient public relationsAdvertisingProviding services and facilities guests needWell-trained employeesPersonal sellingclear directions	Kruger National Park
Marais	2016	Identifying the critical success factors for South Africa as a business tourism destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">BrandQualityMarketingMarketLocationInfrastructureAttractivenessFacilitiesInformation accessValueCommunicationAccessibility	Destination

Source: Contributed by the author

From Table 1.1 it is thus clear that numerous studies have been done in terms KSFs in the tourism industry. It can also be seen that from the Table 1.1 research has never been done on the KSFs for marketing tourism establishments in the context of Lesotho.

Methodology

Research design and sample

Quantitative approach using a survey was used for this study since it represents numbered data that can be analysed by means of statistical procedures and to examine the relationship between variables to generalise the findings to a broader population (Creswell, 2014:4). The sample size consisted of all 137 tourism establishments from Leribe, Maseru, Berea and Mafeteng in Lesotho. These establishments included airline, Transportation, Travel trade, Accommodation and Attraction sectors. A list of these establishments was obtained from the LTDC. The sampling consisted of two phases. During the first phase, convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method, was used to identify the regions, specifically Leribe, Maseru, Berea and Mafeteng in Lesotho that formed part of this study. According to Israel (1992:2), in the case of a small population, it is acceptable to use the entire population in order to achieve the desired level of precision. Furthermore, it eliminates errors and provides accurate results (Israel, 1992:2). Therefore, in accordance with Jennings (2011:137) this study used a saturation sample, which is used with small populations. This study used descriptive statistics to explain the biographic profile of tourism establishments in Lesotho



that participated in this study and to provide accurate descriptions for this study (Johnson & Christensen 2012:366). Exploratory research was also used to uncover the KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment in Lesotho by means of an exploratory factor analysis.

Data collection procedures

A survey questionnaire for this study was designed by the researcher and used as the data collection instrument (Bird: 1310). The pretested self-administered questionnaire was used to ensure the respondents' privacy (De Leeuw, Hox and Dillman, 2008:135). The questionnaire was drawn up in English by the researcher. Before the main survey, the questionnaire pre-testing was carried out with 15 marketers of different companies in Lesotho to detect the flaws that might be present before conducting the main survey. The questionnaire was adjusted after pre-testing. The questionnaire consisted of 53 questions regarding respondents' occupation, other general information, KSFs and the establishments' current marketing information. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they implement the KSFs for marketing and to rate how important they perceive the KSFs on a five-point Likert scale (1= to no extent at all and 5= to a very large extent) and (1= not important at all and 5= very important).

Permission to conduct the research study was obtained from LTDC and the Ethics Research Committee at the Vaal University of Technology. Verbal permission was obtained from the marketing managers and managers of tourism establishments that were targeted. A consent letter indicated the purpose of the study was attached to the questionnaire and required signing by respondents. Respondents were asked to voluntarily choose to complete the questionnaire. Thus, no incentives were presented. The questionnaires were personally distributed by the researcher between June and July 2017 to marketing managers and managers of the selected tourism establishments in Lesotho. All the questionnaires were completed and collected. Anonymity and confidentiality were observed during the data collection process. Respondents who wished to receive a research report informed the researcher to provide results. Respondents would have access to the results if they so wished via an article publication on the study.

Data analysis

Statistical techniques were used to analyse the data obtained from the participants for this study. The Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used as the tool for statistical analyses. SPSS was used to conduct an exploratory factor analysis in order to identify the KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment in Lesotho.

Research Results

Biographic profile of the respondents

The biographic profile of the respondents is presented in the Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Biographic information of the respondents Source: Contributed by the author

Biographic information of the respondents		Percentage
Position of the respondents	Majority of the respondents participated in the survey were managers	47%
Origin markets of visitors to the establishments	Majority of the visitors to the establishment are from internationally and nationally	59%
The main target market of tourism establishments		



	Majority of the respondents target business travellers	33%
District in which the establishments are located	Most of the tourism establishments are located in the Maseru district	67%
Type of establishment	Accommodation establishments accounted for a large part of the tourism industry in Lesotho	75%
Marketing department	Most tourism establishments in Lesotho are marketed by managers due to the lack of a marketing department	65%
Advertising methods	Most of the establishments frequently use website for advertising.	26%
	Word of mouth is also considered as an advertising tool	21%
Length of existence	The majority of the tourism establishments have been in existence for more than 10 years	51%
Marketing cycle	The majority of establishments market themselves during both peak seasons and off peak seasons	90%
Marketing at tourism-related events	Most of the respondents market at the tourism related events once a year	29%
Conducting marketing research	The majority of the respondents never conduct marketing research	32%
Challenges faced by tourism establishments	The majority of the respondents have insufficient marketing budget	23%
Establishments differentiation aspects	Majority of establishments differ from others by offering quality service	32%
Keeping in touch with customers	Most respondents keep in touch with their customers using direct mail or telephone calls	60%
Methods for keeping track of competitors	Most of the respondents keep track of their competitors at the conferences	34%

Table 1.2 shows that the majority of respondents who participated in this study were managers 47%. With reference to the markets, a large segment of the market to the establishments included in this study originate from both nationally and abroad (59%). With respect to the main target, most tourism establishments target business travellers (33%). With regard to the district in which the establishments are located, it is evident that more establishments from Maseru participated in this study (67%), maybe it is because Maseru is a capital city.

Concerning the type of the establishment accommodation establishments accounted for a large part of the tourism industry in Lesotho (75%). With marketing department, most tourism establishments in Lesotho are marketed by managers due to the lack of a marketing department (65%). Also, regarding the marketing methods, website (26%) is considered the most frequently advertising tool for tourism establishments in Lesotho. Moreover, the results indicate that most tourism establishments have been in business for more than 10 years, therefore it can be anticipated that respondents perform the necessary functions needed to succeed and grow their businesses.

With regard to the marketing cycle, many tourism establishments market their products and services during both peak seasons and off peak seasons, it can be anticipated that seasonal marketers are able to expand their businesses. It is further indicated in the results, 29% of the respondents market at the tourism related events once a year. Furthermore, it can be seen from the results that tourism establishments in Lesotho hardly ever conduct marketing research (32%). With reference to the challenges facing the establishments in Lesotho, the findings indicate that the biggest difficulty is lack of enough funds for marketing (23%). Although some of the establishments have insufficient marketing



budget, majority of the establishments (32%) indicated that they differ from their rivals by providing quality services to their customers. As shown by these results, many establishments (60%), regard direct mail or telephone calls as strategic tools for communicating with their customers. Last but not least, these findings reveal that various respondents follow their competitors at the business conferences (34%).

Exploratory factor analysis

Before exploratory factor analysis was performed, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin 0.801 (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were computed to determine the data set suitable for all variables. The principal component analysis with oblimin rotation was performed to determine the KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment in Lesotho. Ten factors were identified from 45 aspects and were labelled according to their similar characteristics. All 10 factors accounted for 71 percent of the total variance, which is acceptable (Nardone, Matassino & Gibon, 2006:104).

These factors included conduct thorough marketing planning, enhance the attractiveness of the tourism establishment, effectively advertise the establishment, ensure the accessibility of the tourism establishment, perform strategic marketing management to improve tourist satisfaction, conduct marketing research, manage service quality, effectively communicate with staff and tourists, promote the tourism establishment through different marketing mediums and achieve tourist loyalty. In order to label the factors, the pattern matrix was used. The reliability was measured using Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Reliability coefficients ranged between 0.677 (the lowest) and 0.880 (the highest), which are deemed acceptable.

Table. 1.3: KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment in Lesotho

Factors that are perceived important by tourism establishments in Lesotho (SCALE B)	Factor loadings	Mean value	Cronbach's alpha	Inter-item Correlation
Factor 1: Conduct thorough marketing planning		4.62	0.880	0.524
Review marketing activities against objectives	0.645			
Determining whether marketing objectives have been met	0.527			
Have clear marketing strategies for achieving marketing objectives	0.506			
Monitoring segmentation strategies overtime	0.504			
Conducting market research	0.499			
Establish a public relations mechanism through which publicity is managed and controlled	0.472			
Review the marketing plan regularly	0.375			
Factor 2: Enhance the attractiveness of the tourism establishment		4.75	0.681	0.529
Be a visually attractive establishment	-0.755			
Identify the distribution needs of suppliers	-0.741			
Factor 3: Effectively advertise the tourism establishment		4.67	0.820	0.433



Providing a product as advertised	-0.799			
Develop a competitive pricing strategy	-0.545			
Identify and keep track of competitors	-0.526			
Choose the most effective distribution channels	-0.496			
Effective market targeting	-0.459			
Advertise the establishment	-0.383			
Factor 4: Ensure accessibility of the tourism establishment		4.84	0.722	0.472
Establish a positive organisational image	0.303			
Be easily accessible in terms of transport , roads and signage	0.873			
Ensure that customers have easy access to information about the services offered by the establishment	0.760			
Factor 5: Perform strategic marketing management to improve tourist satisfaction		4.72	0.864	0.479
Ensure that the establishment's facilities are in a good working conditions	0.292			
Measure and manage customer expectations	0.800			
Use direct marketing(e.g. mail, telephone, e-mail)	0.705			
Generate feedback from customers about service delivery	0.636			
Monitor business environments regularly	0.516			
Align marketing activities with organisation's objectives	0.435			
Developing a marketing strategy	0.396			
Factor 6: Conduct marketing research		4.68	0.677	0.515
Collecting information about competitors and customers	0.896			
Allocate a marketing budget for marketing activities	0.482			
Factor 7: Manage service quality		4.79	0.764	0.457
Hire and train the right people to deliver quality service to customers	0.320			
Build long term relationships with tourists	0.770			
Have a company website	0.752			
Continuously improve service delivery	0.579			



Factor 8: Effectively communicate with staff and tourists		4.81	0.794	0.445
Communicate any new service developments to self	0.381			
Deliver service promptly	0.353			
Communicating with guests on a regular basis	0.741			
Determining and satisfying customer needs	0.631			
Effectively deals with customers complaints	0.413			
Factor 9: Promote the tourism establishment through different marketing mediums		4.53	0.745	0.375
Rely on " word of mouth " for marketing the establishment	0.657			
Promote the establishment	0.594			
Predict market trends	0.541			
Do personal selling	0.440			
Attend tourism shows and exhibitions	0.364			
Factor 10: Achieve tourist loyalty		4.70	0.759	0.506
Create and sustain loyal customers	-0.824			
Set marketing objectives	-0.509			
Compiling a marketing plan	-0.509			
Total Variance	71%			

Source: Contributed by the author

Factor 1: Conduct thorough marketing planning

Marketing plan is defined as a written document that outlines how managers perceive their own position in their markets relative to their competitors, what objectives they want to achieve, how they intend to achieve them, what resources are required and with what results (Meldrum & McDonald, 2007:252).

This factor included seven items: effective market targeting, determining whether marketing objectives have been met, have clear marketing strategies for achieving marketing objectives, monitoring segmentation strategies overtime, conducting market research, establish a public relations mechanism through which publicity is managed and controlled and reviewing the marketing plan regularly. This factor had the mean value of 4.62, the average inter-item correlation 0.524 and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.880.

Factor 2: Enhance the attractiveness of the tourism establishment

Tourism establishment's attractiveness is defined as the sum of feelings and perceptions a tourist develops towards the attributes of a specific establishment and has the power to influence the tourist's perception of quality, satisfaction and willingness to return or recommend the establishment (Pallavicini, 2017:17). From the given definition, it can be concluded that an establishment's attractiveness plays a major role in the choice of the



establishment and the ability to use it can enhance the competitiveness of the establishment's facilities.

This factor comprises two items, namely identifying the distribution needs of suppliers and be a visually attractive establishment and had the mean value of 4.75, the average inter-item correlation was 0.529 and Cronbach's alpha was 0.681.

Factor 3: Effectively advertise the establishment

Meldrum and McDonald (2007:252), define advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation in measured media by an identifiable sponsor. Jolibert, Muhlbacher, Flores and Dubois (2012:244), found that the purpose of advertising is to create value in the consumer's minds. This factor consists of six items, namely providing a product as advertised, develop a competitive pricing strategy, identify and keep track of competitors, choose the most effective distribution channels, effective market targeting and advertise the establishment. This factor had the mean value of 4.67, the average inter-item correlation 0.433 and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.820.

Factor 4: Ensure the accessibility of the tourism establishment

This factor contains three items: establish a positive organisational image, be easily accessible in terms of transport, roads and signage and ensure that customers have easy access to information about the services offered by the establishment.

Shonk and Chelladurai (2008:592), define accessibility as the ease with which a tourist can reach the geographic location where the tourism services and products are provided. Therefore, Khadaroo and Seetanah (2008:832), claim that a destination should be easy to get to and around because if the ability of tourists to travel to preferred destinations is not easy, the likelihood that they will seek alternative destinations may increase. This factor had the mean value of 4.84, the average inter-item correlation was 0.472 and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.722.

Factor 5: Perform strategic marketing management to improve tourist satisfaction

This factor entails seven items, namely ensure that the establishment's facilities are in a good working condition, measure and manage customer expectations, use direct marketing (e.g mail, telephone, e-mail), generate feedback from customers about service delivery, monitor business environments regularly, align marketing activities with organisation's objectives and developing a marketing strategy.

Marketing strategy is a plan for pursuing the establishment's objective or how the establishment is going to obtain its marketing goals within a specific market segment (Moghaddam & Foroughi, 2012:20). A Marketing strategy is a roadmap of how an establishment assigns its resource and relates to its environment and achieves a corporate objective in order to generate economic value and keep the establishment ahead of its competitors (Moghaddam & Foroughi, 2012:20). This factor had the mean value of 4.72, the average inter-item correlation 0.479 and the Cronbach's alpha 0.864.

Factor 6: Conduct marketing research

Marketing research is considered a function that links the consumer to the marketer through information, which is used to identify and define marketing problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance and improve understanding of marketing as a process (Churchill, Brown, & Suter, 2010:5).



This factor contains two items, namely collecting information about competitors and customers and allocating a marketing budget for marketing activities. This factor had the mean value of 4.68, Cronbach's alpha was 0.677 and the average inter-item correlation was 0.515.

Factor 7: Manage service quality

This factor contains four items: hire and train the right people to deliver quality services to customers, build long-term relationships with tourists, have a company website and continuously improve service delivery.

Shonk and Chelladurai (2008:592), indicate that Service quality is customer's long-term evaluation of a tourism establishment's service delivery. Tourism is a service industry that is influenced by the quality of services provided to customers and other stakeholders. Therefore, it is necessary for tourism establishments to deliver and maintain their services (Narayan, Rajendran & Sai, 2008:470). This factor had the mean value of 4.79, the average inter-item correlation 0.457 and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.764.

Factor 8: Effectively communicate with staff and tourists

According to McCabe (2012:2), delivering the correct information to the right people is one of the most important factors in determining the success of the tourism industry. Therefore, communication is defined as the means by which human beings coordinate actions, create relationships and maintain organisations (Putnam & Nicotera, 2009:1).

This factor comprises of five items, namely communicate any new service developments to staff, deliver services promptly, communicate with guests on a regular basis, determining and satisfying customer needs and effectively dealing with customer complaints. This factor had the mean value of 4.81, the average inter-item correlation 0.445 and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.794.

Factor 9: Promote the tourism establishment through different marketing mediums

As mentioned by Liao, Shen and Chu (2009:279), tourism promotion encourages actual and potential tourists to travel to a destination through the spreading of information and the main purpose of promotion is to have an immediate impact on tourists' purchase behaviour. This factor encompasses five items, namely rely on word of mouth for marketing the establishment, promote the establishment, predict market trends, do personal selling and attend tourism shows and exhibitions. Pereira and Almeida (2014:93), suggest that promotion should define a set of actions for internal and external communication that can be put into practice by allowing tourism establishment's diversified messages with the aim of showing and raising awareness of the establishment, its products and services with ultimate goal of causing tourists' consumer desire.

This factor had the mean value of 4.53, the average inter-item correlation was 0.745 and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.375.

Factor 10: Achieve tourist loyalty

Tourist loyalty is defined as the tendency of a tourist to be a repeat visitor to a particular destination and to recommend this destination to others (Frangos, Karapistolis, Stalidis, Constantinos, Sotiropoulos & Manolopoulos, 2015:33). As it can be seen from the definition, a loyal tourist repurchases from the same establishment whenever possible and continues to recommend or maintain a positive attitude towards the establishment. This factor consisted of three items: create and sustain loyal customers, set marketing objectives and compile a



marketing plan. This factor had the mean value of 4.70, the average inter-item correlation 0.506 and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.759.

From the above it is clear that the following factors are important in ensuring the success of marketing a tourism establishment in Lesotho: conduct thorough marketing planning, enhance the attractiveness of the tourism establishment, effectively advertise the establishment, ensure the accessibility of the tourism establishment, perform strategic marketing management to improve tourist satisfaction, conduct marketing research, manage service quality, effectively communicate with staff and tourists, promote the tourism establishment through different marketing mediums and achieve tourist loyalty. Therefore, it is essential for marketers and managers of tourism establishments to have an in-depth knowledge of these KSFs and to try to improve them continuously (Belak & Duh, 2012:17).

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to determine the KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment in Lesotho. The literature indicated that the KSFs are important and that the KSFs can differ from establishment to establishment, therefore the identified KSFs for marketing a tourism establishment in Lesotho include the following: conducting thorough marketing planning, enhancing customer relationship through effective communication, advertising the establishment, managing customer satisfaction and managing customer loyalty. It is recommended that the tourism establishments in Lesotho conduct thorough marketing planning in order to describe who their customers are, where they get information and how they expect to reach them. These can be done by understanding the target market, identifying the competitors, stating the brand position for the target market, figuring out how they target using different marketing approaches as well as having a marketing budget.

Tourism establishments should also conduct marketing research to gain an improved understanding of visitor needs and expectations. In order to conduct marketing research, tourism establishments need to establish clear goals for the market research activity that will be undertaken, develop a strategy and select techniques that will be used to gather data. Achieving tourist loyalty should also be a priority and to do this, tourism establishments should build tourists' relationship by sharing their values, provide excellent customer services, keep promises and invest in customer survey to make improvements. Highlighting these KSFs, the results confirms the importance of the KSFs. Tourism marketers and managers in Lesotho further need to ensure that they implement these KSFs in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors such as South Africa and Namibia., to effectively and successfully market the tourism establishments in Lesotho. Continuous implementation of these KSFs could also help the tourism establishments in Lesotho to attract more tourists from abroad as well as increasing their profitability.

Limitations and future research implications

This study limited itself to only four regions in Lesotho out of the ten regions in existence. Therefore, a future study needs to extend to other six regions so that a more comprehensive and reliable and valid data set can emerge. Future researchers could also use bigger sample size of the respondents to enhance the research value.

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