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Exploring the tourism potential of Mafikeng, South Africa

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Abstract

The majority of tourism-related studies are done with the consumer, namely the tourist, in mind. This paper, however, aims to explore the way in which the impact and potential of tourism is perceived by the local population in and around Mafikeng, the capital city of South Africa's North West Province. During this investigation, data was collected in two different ways. Firstly, focus group interviews were held with senior marketing students in order to identify relevant variables (activities) related to the impact and potential of tourism. These variables were then used to design a Likert scale (5-point attitude) question. This questionnaire was distributed to a sample drawn from a population that consisted of local inhabitants of the Mafikeng (also known as Mahikeng) area.

A quantitative analysis of the 128 responses was conducted in order to determine the perceptions of local residents. Various groupings of perceptions were identified through a cluster analysis. The study found that local residents generally had a positive perception of the impact and potential of tourism in the Mafikeng area. In addition, this research has also made a contribution to the development of a profile of the local residents regarding general perceptions of tourist activities in the Mafikeng area. The different perceptions identified during the cluster analysis have the potential to inform future research.

Keywords: Mafikeng, consumer, local residents, attitude, tourism



Source: http://static.flowsa.net/cache/ce_cache/made/5e33a8c371b0a73c/Mafikeng%20Town

Introduction

The tourism literature has assigned increasing importance to residents' support for fostering tourism development (Gursoy, Jurowski & Uysal, 2002; Fredline & Faulker, 2000; Ryan, Scotland & Montgomery, 1998). This suggests that there is an essential interaction component that contributes to the tourist's overall experience of a particular tourist destination. Since a tourism product is consumed at a particular destination, positive and negative influences can be transmitted to both the tourist and the resident population (Brida, Osti & Faccioli, 2011). Residents with an economic dependency on tourism will more likely have a strong positive attitude towards tourism, but they are also "quick to identify negatives associated with tourism" (Inbakaran & Jackson, 2006:61).

The aim of this paper is to determine to what extent local residents perceive their town to be an acceptable tourist destination and how adept it is at attracting and accommodating a potential tourism industry.

Literature review

Relevant concepts

The following literature review explores various concepts that place the study in context and allow a better understanding of its findings. Relevant definitions are presented, and tourism in the North West Province and Mafikeng's history and its influence on tourism are also discussed.

Tourism

Tourism is defined as the activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for no more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited (World Tourism, 2013). More than 20 years ago Mill and Morrisson, 1992 (cited in George, 2013:20)

defined tourism as "the term given to the activity that occurs when tourists travel. This encompasses everything from the planning of the trip, the travel to the place, the stay itself, the return and the reminiscences about it afterwards. It includes the activities the traveller undertakes as part of the trip, the purchases made, and the interactions that occur between host and guest. In sum, it is all of the activities and impacts that occur when a visitor travels." This definition still applies in the context of the current literature.

However, tourism in itself cannot create a favourable image or perception amongst all parties concerned, independently. The marketing of this specialised service should also not be seen as something that can only be undertaken by large tourism corporations or companies (including national and local relevant governmental departments). Thus, marketing should become a tourism business philosophy incorporated and integrated in the execution of this specialized service.

Tourism and Marketing

Marketing should be considered an investment rather than an expense (Groenewald, Prinsloo & Pelsler, 2014:525). Marketing as a separate entity has no contributory elements, it needs to be linked to a product or service (tourism in this case).

Tourism, as already mentioned, is a service which is defined by Dibb, Simkin, Pride & Ferrell (2012:12) as the application of human and mechanical efforts to people or objects in order to provide intangible benefits to customers. Although the definition seems simple, it needs to be understood and interpret in context with the specific tourism environment.

Although tourism (in general) is a service, each tourist service differs dramatically from each other. The differentiation is determined by market factors that are partially controllable by the tourist industry

marketers. These factors would include suppliers, intermediaries, and consumers, quantitative and qualitative aspects of the market, competitors and consumerism (Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff, Terblanche, Elliot & Klopper, 2011:41). Marketing's function is thus to communicate such an honest and realistic message to potential tourists and tourist recipients that would lead to positive attitudes and perceptions (positive perceptions create tangible realities).

Attitudes and perceptions

One of the first studies to recognise that the economic effects of tourism alone do not give a comprehensive vision of the tourism phenomenon was by Pizam (1978). He examined the negative impacts of tourism on the social sphere. Thus one aspect of the social impact which is often investigated is the effect of tourism on the host community. To measure the impacts of tourism on the local population, their reactions should be investigated, and an analysis of their attitudes and perceptions should accordingly be involved.

According to Eagle and Chaiken (1993) "... attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degrees of favour or disfavour [...] evaluating refers to all classes of evaluative responding, whether overt or covert, cognitive, affective or behavioural." When tourism is being considered this definition tends to change its focus somewhat. Attitudes towards travel and tourism are subsets of wider views about people (whether they are tourists or destination residents), desired quality of life and how to achieve it (Middleton, Fyall, Morgan & Ranchod, 2009:65). This, however, varies according to different national cultures and the places people live, which are reflected and stimulated by the media.

Perception is simply the way we see things. Various reports in the literature seem to have similar explanations. According to

Berg and Theron (2006:116), "... perception is a selective process which shapes one's awareness of one's reality." It is also important to note that consumers' (and residents') perceptions can cause them to attach their own interpretation to a message, which may not be quite what the marketer intended (Du Toit, Erasmus & Strydom, 2010). Probably the most pertinent explanation (to this study) is given by George (2013:193), who states that "perception is a function of motivation, learning and attitudes, and especially related to previous experience." This refers to the way in which residents interpret their environment via their senses. The following section will focus on the "environment", or destination, as it is presented in the wider tourism literature.

Destination

A destination, or more specifically, a tourist destination, cannot exist commercially without the influence or impact of a specialised marketing effort. According to George (2013:474), marketing of destinations brings all aspects of tourism together. These aspects include, among others, marketing, transport, attractions, accommodation and hospitality services – as well as the host community. Buhalis (2000:75) attempted to define a destination as follows: "... a destination represents an amalgam of tourism products, offerings and integrated experience to consumers." George (2013:475) refers to the "amalgam of tourism products" as the destination mix of simply the 6 As, which are attractions, amenities, accessibility, ambience, available packages and ancillary services.

Sharpley and Stone (2011:11) expand on the idea of a destination by referring to a "destination image". This image refers to how the destination attracts, holds and establishes the criteria against which visitors can evaluate their experience. Beerli and Martin (2004) and Ryan and Gu (2008) support the point of view by Sharpley and Stone by referring to destinations as packages of opportunity to fulfil perceived

wants – destinations are therefore not simply physical spaces but are also places of constructed meaning. Such meanings may be culturally determined as the visitor interacts with the place as experienced, the place as described by the tourist destination marketing organisation, and possibly the place as a place of everyday residence.

Raza (2005:37) approaches destinations as products and brands, thus limiting their lifecycle by referring to them as “destination fashions”. One year a specific destination may be the “product” of choice, while in the next year “it” could be forgotten. What, therefore, can a destination do to combat this fashion tendency described by Raza? Raza (2005:38) refers to “keeping its product up to date”. The question is, how do you keep your destination “up to date”? A simplistic marketing approach could be to analyse your destination as well as the determined target audience in order to create an appropriate positioning strategy.

Tourism in North West Province

South Africa's North West Province extends from Gauteng to the Molopo River, which marks the border between South Africa and Botswana. The Magaliesberg mountains and the Kalahari Desert are situated on either side of the province's borders. The region is characterised by a contrasting landscape that varies from lush forest to typical African bushveld. Gold, platinum and diamond mining, together with various agricultural activities, contribute significantly to the South African economy (North West Tourism Destinations, 2013).

There are a number of tourist attractions in North West Province, which include Pilansberg National Park, Sun City Resort, Madikwe Game Reserve, De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Trust, Lesedi Cultural Village, Cradle of Humankind, Taung Heritage Site, Barberspan Bird Sanctuary and Royal Bafokeng Stadium.

Elephant-back game viewing, mountain biking, extreme cave diving, hot air

ballooning and game hunting are some of the adventure-oriented tourist activities that can be found in this region. Although these attractions and activities are to be found in the entire region, this paper focuses on the town of Mafikeng. The following section will explore Mafikeng and its tourism potential.

History of Mafikeng

The town of Mafikeng was founded in 1880 by British mercenaries who exchanged their services for land grants, and the region initially served as the headquarters of the Barolong Boo Ratshidi tribe. Sir Charles Warren formally laid out the town close to the mercenaries' farms, and it then became the region's administrative centre and the headquarters of the Bechuanaland Border Police.

The town gained international fame in 1899 when 5 000 men under the command of the Boer leader, Piet Cronje, laid siege to it. A total of 2 000 British troops were stationed there under the command of Colonel Baden-Powell. The siege lasted seven months and was eventually lifted on 26 May 1899.

The name “Mafikeng” is a Setswana word meaning “places of stones”. In Setswana, “fika” is the word for stone, “mafika” is the plural, and the “eng” ending denotes “place of”. The British colonists spelt the name “Mafeking”, a spelling which was commonly used by the British scouts. The correct spelling, however, is “Mafikeng” (Muller, 1993).

Tourism activities in Mafikeng

Mafikeng offers a variety of attractions, activities and experiences to the visitor.

Attractions include the Mafikeng museum, located in the old town hall which was built in 1902, and officially opened in 1903. The Dr Molema (1819 – 1965) Surgery is another well-known landmark – it was the official surgery of the first qualified black African medical doctor in South Africa. The

Kgotla is a semi-circular meeting place and seat of the Chieftom and Royal House of the Barolong Boo Ratshidi. The Stadt School is believed to be the earliest school north of the Orange River, and was established in 1878 by Silas Molema. Just outside Mafikeng, two popular dams, the Letlomoreng and Disaneng dams, are still being used for functions and water sports (Mmabatho Palms, 2013:1).

The Botsolano and Mafikeng Game Reserves are popular tourist destinations for their white rhino breeding, bird viewing and variety of plains for game viewing. Another popular game reserve is the Lotmamoreng Game Reserve, which boasts a demarcated waterfowl sanctuary, a designated recreational area and a cultural village site. Cooks Lake and Ponds is a bird sanctuary on the outskirts of town which will appeal to the less adventurous (Mmabatho Palms, 2013:2).

Among the historical sites that are considered tourist attractions are Bethels Rock, the Cecil John Rhodes Monument, Boer War concentration camp cemeteries, Kanonkopje and the Moshoeshoe graves (Tourism North West, 2013:2).

An appreciation of some of the features that give the Mafikeng area tourism potential is important to an understanding of the findings presented in this paper. The following section focuses on how residents' perceptions can contribute to the possible development of the tourism industry.

Resident's attitudes towards and perception of tourism

A great deal of research seems to have been conducted into the attitudes of residents towards tourism. This has allowed researchers to expand their focus and has led to an exploration of how these perceptions are counterbalanced by the economic benefits of tourism.

Harril and Potts (2003) note that gender might influence perceptions regarding the

benefits of tourism. Their study revealed that women perceived tourism development more negatively than did men. Urbanisation, crime and decreasing security were cited by women as problems associated with tourism. Sharma and Dyer (2009) also indicate that there are a number of factors that influence residents' attitudes towards tourism. Some of these involve the proximity of residents' homes to popular tourist destinations, the type of tourism, the length of residents' stay in the community and residents' demographic characteristics. Generally, a positive attitude towards tourism is associated with gender (female), employment, level of income, level of education, and the place where people live (urban or rural) (Allen, Hafer, Long & Perdue, 1993; Inbakaran & Jackson, 2006).

Various factors that influence residents' perceptions of tourism have been identified by Brida et al. (2011:361). These are:

- **Community attachment or length of residence** – the longer an individual has resided in a community, the more negative will be the attitude towards tourism development.
- **Knowledge about tourism, contact with tourists and concentration of visitors** – Anderson (cited in Brida et al., 2011) discovered that the greater the knowledge about tourism possessed by the residents and the more intense their contact with tourists, the more positive will be their perceptions of the benefits of tourism.
- **Proximity to the tourism centre** – the closer the resident lives in proximity to the tourism centre or attraction, the more negative will be his attitude towards tourism.
- **Personal reliance on tourism** – the attitude of residents whose

livelihoods depend on tourism is more favourable.

- **Level of participation in recreational activities** – attitudes will be positive if residents perceive tourism as a factor that improves their recreational facilities, and negative if they believe that tourism may result in their being denied their traditional leisure pursuits.
- **Demographic variables** – the effects of some of these variables such as age, language, sex and marital status have been mentioned in the literature study.
- **Seasonality** – Rothman (1978) found that communities with long experience of seasonality are able to adapt to inconveniences and therefore do not have a negative attitude.
- **Tourism taxes and perceived future of the community** – special tourism taxes are negatively correlated to support for tourism development, and support for tourism restrictions is positively correlated to perceived negative impacts of tourism and the perceived future of the community.
- **Development stage of a destination** – Dietrich and Garcia-Buades (2008) demonstrated that when levels of development are still low, residents tend to show positive attitudes towards tourism, since the potential benefits are considerable, and only after a certain threshold point do attitudes begin to become more negative, because of the prevailing costs related to tourism.

In conclusion, it would be logical to accept the proposition that residents evaluate tourism in terms of social exchange, that is, they evaluate tourism in terms of the expected benefits or costs that they obtain

in return for the services that they supply. It is thus assumed that host resident individuals seek tourism development for their community in order to satisfy their economic, social and psychological needs and to improve the community's wellbeing.

Problem statement

Although Mafikeng is the capital of South Africa's North West Province, which offers a wide variety of tourist attractions and activities, there seems to be an ambivalent view of Mafikeng as a holiday or tourist destination option.

It is thus important to understand the perceptions of the local residents regarding the impact and potential of tourism in order to gain insight into the nature and extent of the differing points of view and how they may affect the tourism potential of the area.

Research methodology

This paper adopted both qualitative and quantitative research approaches (the mixed-method approach) and was explorative in nature.

“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world, consisting of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible by using interviews, conversations, photographs and recordings”, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3).

“Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world and is used to describe variables, to examine relationships among variables and to determine cause and effect interactions between variables”, according to Burns and Grove (2005:23).

A mixed-method approach is advantageous as it enables the researcher to simultaneously answer confirmatory and exploratory questions, thereby verifying and generating theory in the same study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003:15). Qualitative

and quantitative data were therefore collected from a focus group discussion. Exploratory research is designed to explore ideas and gain insights in order to obtain a proper definition of the problems at hand and is therefore appropriate to any problem about which very little is known (Creswell, 2009:18).

Population and sample

Sampling is the selection of a fraction of the total number of units of interest for the ultimate purpose of being able to draw general conclusions about the entire body of units (Parasuraman, Grewal & Krishnan 2007:356).

Samples are used because it is not possible to work with the entire population. The statistics computed from the sample will accurately estimate the corresponding parameters, at least on average. A sample that does this is said to be representative (Sharpe, De Veaux & Velleman, 2011:33).

According to Collis and Hussey (2003:155-160), a sample is made up of some of the members of a "population" (the target population), which refers to a body of people or to any collection of items under consideration for the purpose of the research. A "sampling frame" in turn refers to a list or any other record of the population from which all the sampling units are drawn.

For the purpose of this research the population consisted of residents living within the geographical borders of the town of Mafikeng. The sample consisted of respondents who were asked to complete the prepared questionnaires at their convenience.

Measuring instrument

Focus group interviews were held using senior BCom (Tourism Marketing) students from the Mafikeng campus of North-West University as participants. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed. The transcriptions were used to determine

relevant tourism-related variables. The researcher scheduled and conducted two focus group interviews over a period of one week. Although the interviews were recorded, the researcher made personal notes of all the answers and certain key points during the interviews.

A Likert-scale question was developed using a 5 point scale, ranging from poor, fair, average, good, to very good. Participants were asked to rate their preferences regarding 11 different tourism activities – based on literature and focus group interviews.

For this study, the technique comprised a process where respondents had to evaluate the importance of each of the activities relative to the remainder of the attributes

The mentioned activities include the following: attractions, entertainment, adventure, shopping, infrastructure, people behaviour, historic value, prestige as town, tourism destination, overnight facilities and tourist safety.

When the questionnaire for this research was developed, great care was taken to ensure that the wording of the questionnaire was clear, simple and easy to comprehend without compromising the objective of the study. The questions followed the natural direction in which conversation would flow, from simple questions to more complex questions towards the end.

Demographic variables were adapted to fit the South African context by using a validated South African demographic questionnaire from Hardy (2008) and included age, gender, education level, employment status, marital status, home language, race and Living Standard Measure (LSM).

LSM is the most widely used marketing research tool in South Africa. It involves a classification of the population into ten LSM groups, 10 being the highest. Respondents

therefore had to indicate the household's monthly income as listed.

The demographics questions were used to tentatively determine a profile of the respondents and collect data that could be used for further analysis. The demographics included age, gender, income, race, marital status, employee status and level of education.

A pilot test was undertaken before the data collection process started. A pilot study is done to conduct research on a small scale, in similar circumstances and with similar participants to those who will be used in the full-scale study. The pilot study serves as a guide for the larger-scale study, to ensure that the selected procedures will work and to prevent the risk of the actual study being flawed (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:62).

The pilot study was intended to increase the effectiveness of the instruments and provide an opportunity to make modifications and corrections. The pilot test was conducted in May 2012 on a total of 19 typical residents to validate the study instruments. No significant amendments were considered necessary after completion of the pilot study, which made it possible to include the respondents involved in the pilot study in the sample of the main study.

Data analysis

The analysis of data requires a number of closely related operations, such as the establishment of categories, the application of these categories to raw data through coding, tabulation and then the drawing of statistical inferences. The data should be condensed into a few manageable groups and tables for further analysis (Kothari, 2006:18).

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Incorporated (SPSS Inc) (2013),

IBM SPSS Statistics version 21, release 21.0, was used to statistically analyse the data collected in the survey.

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means and standard deviations) were used to analyse the data. A cluster analysis as well as t-tests were performed. SPSS was chosen for its superior analysis capabilities while at the same time being able to handle the multiple forms of data collected in the survey.

SPSS was therefore used to calculate all frequency and descriptive statistics as well as most graphical presentations.

Findings

The findings are first presented with demographic data in table format (Table 1), followed by a dendrogram (resulting from a cluster analysis) and then the result of the independent t-test.

Demographic results

Demographic data collected during this study indicated that the respondents mainly consisted of Setswana-speaking females with a relatively low income. Although female respondents were in the majority, their male counterparts comprised 42% of the gender distribution.

A relatively large percentage of the respondents were single and between the ages of eighteen and thirty, with a 49% probability of being graduates. Unexpectedly, 30% of the respondents were employed within the government sector, 26% were unemployed and 25% were employed in the private sector.

In summary, the respondents from the Mafikeng area were characterised as being relatively young, educated and single, all of which makes future growth possible.

Table 1: Demographic profile of sampled residents in Mafikeng

GENDER (n=125)		INCOME BRACKET (n=93)	
Male	42%	R3 000 – R8 000	40%
Female	58%	R8 001 – R13 000	22%
LANGUAGE (n= 125)		R13 001 – R18 000	13%
Setswana	75%	R18 001 – R23 000	12%
Other	25%	R23 001 – R28 000	3%
RACE (n=127)		R28 001 – R33 000	3%
Black	90%	R33 001 – R38 000	1%
White	5%	R38 001 – R43 000	3%
Coloured	6%	R43 001 – R48 000	1%
MARITAL STATUS (n=128)		R53 001 – above	2%
Single	63%	ACADEMIC QUAL. (n=122)	
Married	22%	Primary School	1%
Divorced	3%	Some secondary school (Grade 7 – 11)	11%
Widowed	2%	Matric (Std 10/Grade 12)	31%
Living w/Partner	10%	Some tertiary education (no qualification)	6%
INDUSTRY (n=122)		Completed a technical trade programme	2%
Private Sector	25%	Tertiary qualification, BA, Bcom, etc.	34%
Government Sector	30%	Post-grad qualification	15%
Unemployed	26%	AGE GROUP (n=121)	
Self Employed	11%	18 – 25	50%
Other	7%	26 – 30	22%
Self Employed	11%	31 – 35	6%
		36 – 40	9%
		41 – 45	3%
		46 and above	10%

Cluster Analysis

A Cluster Analysis consists of a set of techniques used to put items into groups. These groups contain items that, within a group, are similar – but one group will differ

from another (Bradley, 2010:322). Thus the cluster analysis in this case using Ward's method of Euclidean distances yielded two main clusters. These clusters are based on a dendrogram (Figure 1) for 120 cases.

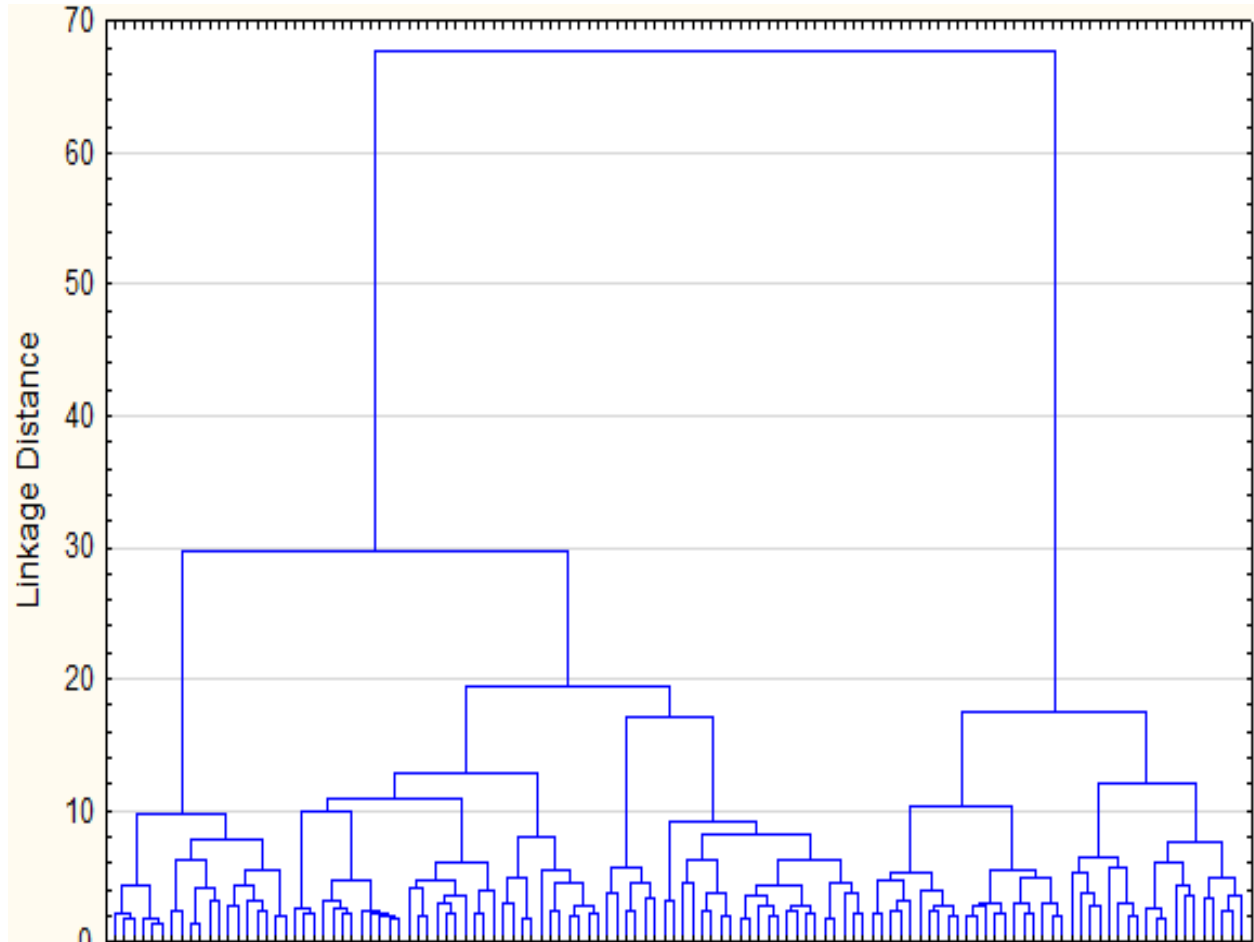


Figure 1: Dendrogram

The dendrogram presented in Figure 1 shows that two distinct groups emerged from the statistical data analysis. However, the two groups that emerged from the cluster analysis indicate a highly positive (Group 1) and a neutral group (Group 2) (Table 2).

The highly positive group is indicative of Mafikeng (region) to be highly capable and

receptive to accommodate tourists on different levels (activities).

The neutral group, although neutral in their responses, reflected a level of uncertainty. It must be noted that the neutral group represented a small percentage of the total sample.

Table 2: Group statistics

Ward Method		Mean	Std. Deviation
Attraction	1	2.963	1.0119
	2	1.775	.8619
Entertainment	1	2.913	1.1713
	2	2.175	.9306
Adventure	1	2.825	1.0998
	2	1.475	.5986
Shopping	1	3.163	1.0726
	2	2.050	.7828
Infrastructure	1	2.600	1.1429
	2	1.700	1.1368
Behaviour	1	3.563	.9917
	2	2.325	1.0952
Historic value	1	3.725	.9805
	2	2.950	.9044
Prestige	1	2.963	.9736
	2	2.050	.8149
Destination	1	3.050	1.0051
	2	1.950	.6775
Overnight	1	3.163	.9202
	2	2.825	1.1959
Safety	1	3.450	.9924
	2	2.150	1.0513

Independent t-tests

The independent t-test compares the means between two unrelated groups (positive and

neutral) on the same continues dependent variable (Table 3).

Table 3: Group statistics

Ward Method	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value*	Effect size
Q3Age Positive	76	30.000	10.1338	0.04	0.48
Neutral	37	25.135	7.1963		

* If a random sample is used then it can be assumed that the age variable is statistically significant

The analysis results in Table 3 indicate practical significant differences between the mean as well as the effect size. According to

Ellis and Steyn (2003), p value results for significant levels are as follows:

≈ 0.2 small: no practically significant difference

≈ 0.5 medium: practically visible difference.

≈ 0.8 large: practically significant difference.

A p value of 0.04 indicates medium practical differences between the neutral and positive group. There is a practical visible difference between the ages of the positive and neutral groups – the positive group is on average 30 years old and the neutral group 25.14 years old.

The results also indicate significant differences between the two groups and race. However, it is to be noted that 90% of the respondents belong to the black demographic. Different t-tests as well as cross-tabulations regarding the clusters and the demographics resulted in no significant differences.

Recommendation and conclusion

The majority of tourism-related studies are done with the consumer, in other words, the tourist, in mind. This paper, however, explored the way in which the impact and potential of tourism is perceived by the local population in and around Mafikeng, the capital city of South Africa's North West Province.

The study found that local residents generally had a positive perception of the impact and potential of tourism in the Mafikeng area. In addition, this research has also made a contribution to the development of a profile of the local residents regarding general perceptions of tourist activities in the Mafikeng area. The different perceptions identified during the cluster analysis have the potential to inform future research.

Further investigation of a future tourism development marketing strategy for this region should be considered, developed and implemented. Finally, it is recommended that local government should be involved in

a supportive capacity and as a potential partner.

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