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Adventure tourists in Pretoria, South Africa: A demographic profile

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Abstract

Adventure activities and experiences constantly evolve because individuals, motives, behaviours, and experiences differ and change over time. In order to assist adventure tourism companies to promote and sell specific activities and experiences that will meet the specific needs and wants of their identified target markets, this paper focuses on the demographic profile of adventure tourists who used the products/services of adventure tourism companies within Pretoria, South Africa. The realised sample was 234, providing a 93.6% response rate. The research instrument used was a self-completing questionnaire. Based on the results, these adventure tourists were Afrikaans speaking individuals between the ages of twenty-eight and forty-nine years. Their households consisted of two to four people and there were generally two income earners per household. This study established that there is a need for further researching of comprehensive adventure tourist profiles.

Keywords: tourism; adventure tourism; market segmentation; demographic profile

INTRODUCTION

Understanding tourists and their motivations is not easy. For instance, Laws (2001) argues that however convenient it is to categorise tourists, not all individuals fall neatly into behavioural models or typological classifications. Moreover, it is not realistic to assume that accurate descriptions of tourists' reasons for travel gained at the time of purchase will remain constant throughout the travel experience. Despite such concerns, by identifying different types of tourists and classifying them into groups or market segments, tourism companies would be able to direct their products/services more effectively at

an identified target market. Since adventure tourism is not a well-defined segment in the discipline of tourism studies (Heyniger and Consulting, 2008), adventure tourism companies selling to consumer markets ought to recognise that they cannot appeal to all consumers in the same way. Yang, Wall and Smith (2008:753) indicate that consumers are too numerous, too widely scattered, and too varied in their needs and buying practices. Furthermore, different companies vary widely in terms of their ability to serve different segments of the market. As a result, Kurtz (2008:281) suggests that every company should

identify the parts of the market it can best serve, rather than trying to compete in an entire market.

Target marketing, according to Kotler and Armstrong (1996:235), can assist adventure tourism companies to discover marketing opportunities in the view of the fact that developing the right product/service for every target market and by adjusting prices, distribution channels, and advertising these companies will be able to reach their target markets more effectively. This will help adventure tourism companies to focus on consumers who have greater purchase interest rather than scattering their marketing efforts.

Against this background, the primary objective of this investigation is to develop a demographic profile of adventure tourists in Pretoria, South Africa, with a view to assist adventure tourism companies to promote and sell specific activities and experiences that will meet the specific needs and wants of their identified niche target markets.

This investigation starts with reviewing the literature applicable to market segmentation, followed by discussing the research methodology and data analysis techniques used. Thereafter, the findings of this study are presented. This investigation concludes with a discussion of the managerial implications, research limitations and recommended directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

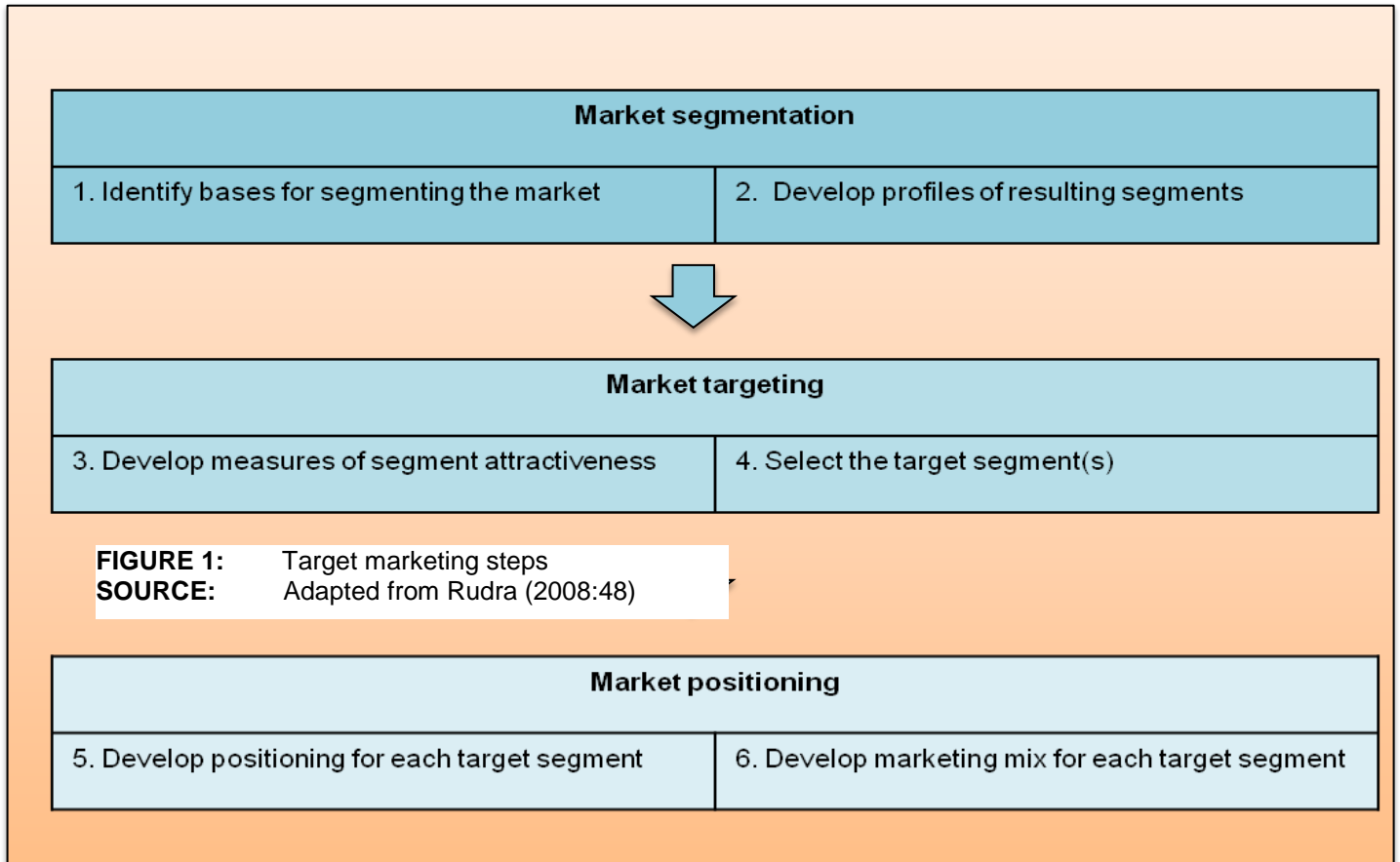
As tourism-related activities have grown and changed, many definitions and ways of classifying the industry have emerged. Kalbassi (2010:51) explains that although tourism is one of the world's largest industries, it is difficult to define its limits and decide what counts as tourism. However, according to Burkart and Medlink (1981:41), many definitions of tourism are lodged within a leisure and recreational context,

which indicates that tourism shares strong fundamental characteristics and theoretical foundations with the recreation and leisure field of study.

Consequently, adventure tourism forms part of the wider tourism phenomena; this is confirmed by Weber (2001:361) who asserts that it is necessary to refer to adventure recreation when assessing adventure tourism because the latter is at the heart of the former, as it is currently defined. However, not one definition of adventure tourism seems to stand out, making it difficult to examine the different motivations and segment differentiations in niche markets such as adventure tourism. In order to solve this problem, adventure tourism companies are encouraged to incorporate target marketing into their marketing strategies.

Due to the increasing fragmentation of mass markets into micro markets – each with different needs and lifestyles – target marketing is increasingly taking the form of micromarketing. According to Czinkota, Dickson, Dunne, Griffin, Hoffman, Hutt, Lindgren, Lusch, Ronkainen, Rosenbloom, Sheth, Shimp, Siguaw, Simpson, Speh and Urbany (2000:213), micromarketing would enable companies, such as adventure tourism companies, to modify their marketing programmes to match the needs and wants of closely defined geographic, demographic, psychographic and/or behaviour segments. The ultimate form of target marketing, according to Lai and Yang (2000:1), is customised marketing – when products/services and marketing are adapted according to the needs of a specific consumer or buying company.

In order to implement an effective target marketing strategy, companies should follow the three major steps of target marketing. These steps are: (1) market segmentation; (2) market targeting; and (3) market positioning, as illustrated in Figure 1.



Target marketing, as set out by Kotler (2000:256) coincides with the model of Rudra (2008:48). The first step, market segmentation, involves: (1) dividing a market into distinct groups of consumers with different needs, characteristics, or behaviours who might require separate products/services or marketing mixes (segmentation bases), as well as identifying different bases to segment the market, and (2) developing profiles of the resulting market segments. The second step, market targeting, involves: (3) developing measures for every market segment's attractiveness and (4) selecting one or more of the market segments to enter. The third step, market positioning, involves: (5) developing the competitive positioning for the product/service and (6) developing a detailed marketing mix for every segment.

As developing a profile requires the implementation of the identified segmentation base, the following section will explore how these elements contribute to developing a demographic profile of adventure tourists.

Bases Of Market Segmentation

It is a natural instinct for companies, to want to target as many people and groups as possible (MaGee, 2008). However, Kurtz (2008:281) suggests that every company should attempt to identify the factors that affect consumers' purchase decisions; group consumers according to the presence or absence of these factors; and then adjust their marketing strategies in order to meet the needs of every selected group(s) of consumers. According to Rudra (2008), this is the first step of market segmentation,

which will allow adventure tourism companies to develop a highly focused marketing campaign to address the needs and desires of a specific group of consumers.

Lee, Morrison and O'Leary (2006:577) indicate that researchers make extensive use of various segmentation bases, both a priori segmentation approach (such as geographic and demographic segmentation), and a posteriori segmentation approach (including the psychographic and behavioural segmentation). As this study aims to develop a demographic profile of adventure tourists in Pretoria, South Africa; this study implemented a priori segmentation approach focusing on demographic segmentation.

Demographic segmentation entails dividing the market into groups based on population descriptors such as gender, age, income, occupation, education, sexual orientation, household size, and family life-cycle stage. This approach, according to Kurtz (2008:287), is also known as socio-economic segmentation, seeing that vast quantities of available socio-economic data are required to complete a plan for demographic segmentation.

Demographic segmentation is a popular way of segmenting the market because consumer preferences and user rates often vary closely with demographic variables and demographic variables are easy to measure. Even when market segments are first defined using other bases (such as personality or behaviour), demographic characteristics should be known to assess the size of the market and to reach it effectively (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2006:263).

It is important to keep in mind that demographic segmentation as a basis can be helpful, but it can also lead to stereotyping, as indicated by Kurtz

(2008:287). Furthermore, it can estrange a potential market or cause adventure tourism companies to miss a potential market altogether. The idea is not to use demographic segmentation as an only alternative.

The discussion on demographic segmentation addressed the first step of the market segmentation process; the next section will elaborate on how to develop a profile of the resulting market segment.

Developing A Profile Of The Resulting Market Segments

Profiling is the second and last step of the market segmentation process, and the second step of the overall target-marketing process. Before a marketing programme aimed at a specific market segment can be developed, adventure tourism companies should understand the typical consumer in that market.

According to Czinkota, Dickson, Dunne, Griffin, Hoffman, Hutt, Lindgren, Lusch, Ronkainen, Rosenbloom, Sheth, Shimp, Siguaw, Simpson, Speh and Urbany (2000:225), a detailed picture of a market segment is called a *profile*. A profile, according to Hanson, Rauniyar and Herrmann (1994:303), should paint a clear picture of the typical consumer by using the applicable segmentation variable (demographic descriptor) discussed previously. Although a profile is a generalised average of the typical consumer in the segment (Mostafa, 2009:11034), consumer profiling is very important because the usefulness of market segmentation is predicated upon accurate profiling.

As the primary research purpose of this study is to compile a demographic profile of adventure tourists, step one of the overall target marketing process forms the basis of this study, as the resulting information gained through implementing this step

addresses the study's research problem. However, in order for adventure tourism companies to fully benefit from the resulting information in the future, market targeting (step 2) and market positioning (step 3) of the overall target marketing process should be successfully implemented. A detailed discussion of these strategies falls outside the scope of this investigation but could form part of future research.

METHODOLOGY

In order to attain the stated research objectives, this study is based on applied research. Furthermore, a descriptive research approach is applied due to the study's specific information requirements and a quantitative methodology is used because the methodology of this study is grounded on the positivist social sciences paradigm.

The target population included all adventure tourists at adventure tourism companies within Pretoria, South Africa. Non-probability sampling in the form of quota and convenience sampling was used to select the sample members. The sample consisted of 250 adventure tourists (50% male and 50% female) who participated in at least one adventure tourism activity (land, water and/or air-based).

A sample frame of adventure tourism companies presenting adventure tourism activities (land, water and/or air-based) at their premises within Pretoria, South Africa, was compiled and information was obtained from the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA), the GSA (industry magazine), the Indaba traders' catalogue, the Internet, and personal interviews. The sample frame contained the names of 35 adventure tourism companies; however, due to a lack of cooperation by some of these companies, only 20 adventure tourism companies participated in this study.

Thereafter, the sample size was divided into the number of adventure tourism companies to ensure that an equal number of responses were obtained from all adventure tourism companies included. However, due to incomplete questionnaires that could affect the outcome of this study, the realised sample was 234, providing a 93.6% response rate. A pilot study was undertaken amongst adventure tourism students. The questionnaire was refined and distributed among the adventure tourists.

The questionnaire was specifically designed for the purpose of this study and the reliability of the questions in the questionnaire posted to the sample was tested by using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. The first section of the questionnaire consisted of checklists and three open-ended questions to recognise the respondents' socio-economic descriptors. The second section of the questionnaire included checklists and two ranking scales according to which respondents indicated their personality, motives, and lifestyle values. The last section of the questionnaire included checklists to identify benefits sought, user status, usage rate, and loyalty status of the respondents.

The responses obtained were turned into numerical representations and was captured in Microsoft Access before being imported into the SAS (Statistical Analysis Software) for statistical analysis. A descriptive univariate analysis (analysis of one variable at one time) and a bivariate analysis (cross-tabulation and the Pearson correlation coefficient) was conducted to determine whether any relationship(s) and/or difference(s) existed between two variables.

A few limitations that should be noted are: firstly, due to incomplete questionnaires that could affect the outcome of this paper, the sample that realised was smaller than the original sample size anticipated; secondly,

due to a lack of cooperation from some adventure tourism companies, all the adventure tourism companies based in Pretoria, South Africa, could not be included in this paper; and lastly, non-probability sampling was used. It should thus be noted that the results of this study cannot be generalised. Nevertheless, the target population of this study was not the general public and comprised of adventure tourists who provided an indication of the demographic profile of adventure tourists in Pretoria, South Africa.

FINDINGS

The primary objective of this paper is to obtain a demographic profile of adventure tourists in Pretoria, South Africa. In order to achieve this, pre-determined demographic descriptors applicable to adventure tourists within this area were identified. Univariate and bivariate analysis was performed on all variables; displaying means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages, cumulative frequencies and cumulative percentages. The univariate and bivariate statistics for the demographic variables in the questionnaire obtained the demographic profile of adventure tourists in Pretoria.

Demographic Descriptors

A typical adventure tourist in Pretoria, South Africa, resides permanently in an urban area in Gauteng. These adventure tourists are generally Afrikaans speaking (local indigenous language) individuals (51.7%) between the ages of 28 and 49 years (born between 1960 and 1981), who form part of the Generation X age group. These individuals are part of a family, seeing that a large percentage (49.6%) is married with no children (38.0%) and those who have children, have two children (35.0%) above the age of twelve years. Adventure tourists in Pretoria, South Africa, have a post school education (67.1%) and they are technicians and associate professionals, or legislators, senior officials and managers whose gross

individual income ranges between R10 001 and R29 999 per month. The respondents' households tend to consist of two or four people, and there are generally two income earners per household.

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this paper is to obtain a demographic description of adventure tourists in Pretoria, South Africa, for market targeting and focused integrated marketing decision-making.

Adventure tourism companies should recognise that not all adventure tourism companies can appeal to all consumers in the market and they all cannot effectively approach all consumers in a similar way. It is thus advised that adventure tourism companies should identify the market segments they can serve best. This approach will ensure that adventure tourism companies recognise pertinent market opportunities and develop products/services that are relevant to the selected market segments.

In order to implement the above strategy, adventure tourism companies ought to implement the three steps of target marketing. The first step of target marketing, namely market segmentation is a tool that will assist adventure tourism companies to be knowledgeable about their potential consumers and ultimately satisfy their needs with the appropriate products and services. However, adventure tourism companies need to remember that segmentation is best used in a flexible manner, for example by combining segmentation techniques or dovetailing certain segments (Kurtz, 2008:299). They should therefore try numerous approaches, and even amalgamations of these, in order to establish which will yield the best opportunities.

Based on the study's findings, adventure tourism companies in Pretoria, South Africa,

should consider providing their products/services close to urban Gauteng areas. Secondly, they should consider developing products/services that partners and/or all family members can partake in, and/or offer products/services for children whilst the respondents partake in adventure tourism activities. Thirdly, adventure tourism companies need to keep the rates of their products/services as low as possible seeing that the respondents are typically not eligible to receive children discounts and their gross individual income is not very high. Lastly, adventure tourism companies ought to market their products/services in urban areas where Afrikaans, Generation X individuals typically spend most of their time, for example fitness establishments, shopping malls, social clubs and/or restaurants. This is very important as the core values of individuals residing in urban areas, and their age groups, shape consumer preferences and behaviours that could influence adventure tourism companies' marketing approaches.

After implementing the first step of target marketing, the last two steps of the target marketing process (market targeting and positioning) should be implemented, as the steps of this process are dependent on the success of each other. In other words, every step needs to be put into practice successfully in order to proceed and effectively complete the systematic process.

To conclude, numerous adventure tourism companies should view marketing as a major tool to reach their target markets who in return needs to understand the nature and benefits of the adventure tourism companies' products and/or services. Adventure tourism companies should also use different marketing methods and techniques to meet the varying levels of understanding tourists. Moreover, they should further consistently analyse, plan, develop, deliver, evaluate, and update their marketing campaigns to meet their

marketing objectives whilst meeting the demand of their target markets.

Limitations And Directions For Future Research

The limitations of this study include that the exact size of the adventure tourism market in Pretoria, South Africa is still debateable due to the non-existence of a standard definition of adventure tourism. The phenomenon of adventure tourism is both new and complex and the majority of research on adventure tourism is not made available in the public domain as it is conducted for and at the expense of individual adventure tourism companies. Evidently, there is limited research statistics and/or information available to adventure tourism researchers, which make it difficult to conduct comparative studies. Moreover, government and industry awareness of adventure tourism is not equally developed worldwide and available data on adventure tourism is difficult to use because of the problem of comparability. Due to time and monetary constraints, this paper could not be expanded to include more or all provinces in South Africa, nor a bigger sample

Future research could include more research in terms of adventure tourism marketing because the full effect of this type of marketing will be beneficial to the entire adventure tourism industry; more behavioural components and/or psychographics such as needs, motivations, or benefits in the analysis to provide reliable and useful information about adventure tourists' consumer behaviour that is specific to their particular adventure travel participation; and, more extensive research to gain further insight into profiling adventure tourists.

CONCLUSION

The growth in adventure tourism has precipitated a corresponding need for growth in adventure tourism information. As

a result, it is imperative to use a suitable research methodology to retrieve accurate and useful information, as research has become an important instrument for the adventure tourism industry to collect data on a variety of aspects. This study aimed towards contributing to a better understanding of adventure tourists by developing a demographic profile of such tourists. This information could aid adventure tourism companies to identify and develop effectual marketing strategies to attract or enter the adventure tourism niche market.

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