

**EDUCATIONAL TOURS AS A LEARNING MECHANISM IN THE LEARNING
EXPERIENCE OF TOURISM STUDENTS: TOURISM MANAGEMENT WALTER
SISULU UNIVERSITY (IBIKA CAMPUS)**

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DECLARATION

I, Kowazo Cony Poponi, do hereby declare that this mini dissertation represents my own work and that as far as I know, no similar dissertation exists. I have indicated and acknowledged all the sources used accordingly.

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Date

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This study is dedicated to the memory of:

My late parents Zolile Victor Poponi and Tilza Poponi. Thank you for being my inspiration to undertake this and making me realise the value of life. You were not academics like myself but you valued education and you wanted the best for all your children. The value you added in my life and the love you have shown to us and others is the great legacy you left behind.

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ABSTRACT

Though research has been done on tourism education, very few research studies have been conducted that explore educational tours as a learning mechanism for tourism students. The study was undertaken to explore the value of educational tours as a learning mechanism in the learning experience of tourism students of Walter Sisulu University on the Ibika Campus. Literature reviewed identified various factors that affect learning including the value and benefits of educational tours, as well as indicating the challenges associated with the planning and making sure that these tours bring value and are in alignment with the objectives and learning outcomes of the tourism degree. The tourism curriculum embraces integration of both theory and practical at all levels of the tourism program.

The study made use of a qualitative approach, with individual interviews with lecturing staff and focus group interviews with the students. A purposive sampling method was employed to select three focus groups of students who were registered for second year in Tourism Management, chosen mainly because they had already experienced educational tours in their first year and second year of their studies. Two lecturers from Tourism Management were chosen for the study because they were involved in the planning of educational tours and they always accompany the students when travelling to different destinations.

The findings of this study, obtained through focus group interviews and individual interviews revealed that both students and lecturers perceive educational tours as a valuable learning mechanism to the student's professional development as aspiring tourism industry professionals. Benefits that come with these educational tours were identified as well as constraints that will need further investigation. This in turn was supported by the literature review that highlighted the value of educational tours and the significance of including these tours as part of the curriculum in university courses. These findings therefore will need further exploration due to the limited number of participants in this study.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND

According to Behrendt and Franklin (2014, p 236), "experiential learning through field trips increases student interest, knowledge and motivation". The relation between the educational excursions and the experiential learning that occurs there, and the classroom is that students can relate what they see and do to prior theoretical and practical learning (Lei, 2010). Providing different perspectives and learning opportunities, an educational experience outside the classroom can support and strengthen teamwork and encourage social interactions. Xie (2004) conducted a study on understanding students' perceptions and experiences of a tourism management field trip and the findings revealed that the students valued the social aspects of the experience. Students felt they were able to develop their social skills in interacting with staff, tour operators and other students. Even theories of learning such as those expressed by developmental psychologists like Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget, emphasise the importance of social interaction, interaction with the environment and discovery in the learning process (Xie, 2004). However, often authorities see such trips as simply 'nice to have', an excuse to have time out that contributes little to the actual learning. When time or money gets tight these tours are under direct threat of being cut, given no or few resources and not seen as important when assessing teachers and teaching time.

The Commission on Higher Education CHED (2012) defines educational tours as an extended educational activity involving the travel of students and supervising faculty outside the school campus which is relatively of longer duration, usually lasting for more than one day and relatively more places of destination than a field trip. Given the apparent passive nature of today's classrooms, many educators support the benefits of experiential or hands-on learning through educational tours and field trips. Some of the literature reviewed reveals that educational tours have enhanced student's learning and improved their practical knowledge in the absence of genuine

work experience. Faculty members, particularly younger tourism educators may also benefit from the tours, providing extremely important and much needed professional development experiences. Often lecturers go from their courses directly into a teaching career and do not have first-hand experience of the realities and practices of the workplace. Tours allow them to see some of those realities albeit in a limited fashion, for themselves and they have a similar experience to the students. Apart from the value of these educational tours to student learning, they are also considered to be of good value to the tourism industry as well. Ritchie and Coughlan (2004) state that little attention is being paid to the role of educational tours as an important source of visitors for attractions and destinations. According to Ritchie, Carr and Cooper (2004) tourism educational tours are a poorly understood segment of the tourism industry. They are of the view that through educational tours, although not a major economic force, they can encourage the students and their parents to visit in the future. Word of mouth can be powerful.

The tourism industry is a complex industry in which interpersonal, and analytical skills along with reflection are as important as the vocational skills and are what future employers will be looking for. "Researchers have criticized educational institutions for not adequately preparing people for employment in the tourism industry" (Ruhanen, 2005, p 34). Programmes need to ensure that they respond to the employment needs for this complex industry, keeping up with all the trends and technological changes.

According to Goh (2013) tourism and hospitality education has been evolving over the last 30 years from a strong vocational foundation to a more academic discipline. He emphasized that tourism and hospitality programs vary widely and show they are not as standardised as many traditional fields of study. Furthermore, Goh (2013) mentioned that tourism and hospitality education is unique due to diverse methods and philosophies that need practical skills and experience. He is of the view that this practical element sees the need for academics to conduct research and scholarship that contributes to industry relevance and their teaching and curriculum design. The practical component is recognised by many institutions of higher learning offering tourism and hospitality in South Africa. For example, Cape Peninsula University of

Technology and University of Johannesburg have fully operational restaurants that are being run by the students for practical purposes. Goh (2013, p 68) states that "Hong Kong Poly University developed a commercial five-star hotel on its campus as part of practical delivery for their students". This brings together the practical and the theoretical composition of tourism and hospitality programs.

Hornig and Lee (2005) explain that tourism training in higher education in the early sixties was divided into courses provided by academic higher education institutions including, universities and colleges, and those offered at technical or vocational institutes such as universities of technology and vocational colleges. The technical and vocational system put more importance on industry-oriented skills and training whilst the university system highlighted the management capabilities. According to Hornig and Lee (2005) there was a call to integrate the theoretical training with the practical training.

According to Pan and Jamnia (2014) tourism higher education requires operational training and facilities to provide technical skills and practical experiences. They argue that if the tourism institutions fail to understand the market trends and the industry requirements in training their students, student's future careers will be taken away. This therefore means that experiential learning opportunities are particularly useful and necessary in the tourism programs as tourism is a service industry. Alexander (2007) suggested that institutions of higher learning providing training in the professional practices could offer a more balanced curriculum for students to develop skills at both a practical and theoretical level. He argues that a practical course can add the value of know-how (practical) to the student's know-what (theory) creating a learning environment which provide students the opportunity of putting theory into practice.

In South Africa, Tourism qualification is offered in various universities like Durban University of Technology, Central University of Technology, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, University of Johannesburg, Tshwane University of Technology and Walter Sisulu University. All the above mentioned universities have hotel schools and

they place greater emphasis on the practical component of the tourism program, except for Walter Sisulu University which does not have a hotel school. According to Tribe (2002) universities offering tourism degrees are facing a lot of pressure to balance the theory with relevant practical skills required by the industry that will eventually employ the students. This is particularly pertinent to South Africa where offering tourism degrees can be so challenging in rural based institutions of higher learning because the students have no tourism background and may not have been exposed to the tourism industry.

With the pressure to eliminate educational tours by the university under study, and the industry need to balance theory and practice, this study wanted to explore the role of these tours as one possible way of providing the link between theory and practice as well as more familiarity with the workplace and work conditions.

1.2 LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in Walter Sisulu University (Ibika Campus). This institution was established as a comprehensive university by merging two technikons and a university which are Eastern Cape Technikon, Border Technikon and University of Transkei. It is located in the rural heart of the Eastern Cape which is arguably the province most in need of development in the country. The campus is situated in Butterworth, an area characterised by prevalent poverty in which illiteracy, unemployment and poor access to basic and social services are common. The majority of students enrolled are African and they come from a weak schooling background. They come from schools with very limited resources and as a result most of them are under prepared for higher education. This poses a huge challenge for teaching and learning. Students in this university require extra support to succeed in their studies.

In Walter Sisulu University educational tours have been used over the past years to address the above-mentioned challenges and also for promoting reflective thinking and critical analysis in students learning. Budget constraints pose a challenge to teaching and learning at WSU. The university needs sufficient funds for prescribed

textbooks, educational tours and academic development just to mention a few. Educational tours can be very expensive and resource intensive, but according to Pan and Jamnia (2014) they can be a useful activity when it comes to developing the students and preparing them for the real workplace. Xie (2004) advises that learning by doing strengthens classroom understanding by contextualising knowledge. In Tourism Management students do not have a background about the tourism industry. For the majority of the students, tourism is not something they are familiar with, for instance they do not normally stay in hotels or even eat at restaurants with their families. Educational tours were introduced for them to develop, and gain conceptions of what the industry entails and how to work as discipline practitioners. They need this experience as part of the enculturation and scaffolding processes to better their learning experience.

Walter Sisulu University (WSU) is currently facing financial challenges. With the tightened university budget, extra-curricular activities like educational tours are being viewed as just fun to have activities, and therefore eliminating them is one of the university's cost cutting strategies. Considering the needs of the tourism industry and students' exposure to experiential learning, this study seeks to understand the effects of educational tours on the learning experience of tourism students at Walter Sisulu University (Ibika Campus).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Faculty of Management Sciences in Walter Sisulu University (Ibika Campus), which is home for Tourism and Hospitality Management Department is of the view that educational tours are just a wasteful expenditure, see annexure 1 (minutes of the meeting). Due to limited funding in the university the faculty is of the view that educational tours must be discontinued as they are seen as extra-curricular and do not form part of the main stream curriculum and are therefore in competition for resources. The majority of students at Walter Sisulu University come from rural backgrounds with some of them having little or no idea of the different activities constituting the tourism industry. Considering the needs of the tourism industry and

student's exposure to experiential learning, this study seeks to understand the effects of educational tours on the learning experience of tourism students of Ibika Campus at Walter Sisulu University. The findings of this study will indicate what value educational tours might hold for students and the contribution they make to their learning.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1 Main Research Question

How do educational tours contribute to learning about tourism in one program in a rural South African university?

1.4.2 Sub Research Questions

- What do students perceive that educational tours contribute to their learning and learning experiences?
- How do lecturing staff perceive the contribution of educational tours?
- What are the challenges related to educational tours that affect the educational experience of the students?
- What relationship is there between how educational tours are experienced and perceived and the envisaged outcomes or achievements for the tours?

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to:

Investigate the effects and contribution of educational tours on the learning experience of tourism students.

1.5.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to:

- Ascertain the perceived value of educational tours in relation to the learning experience of tourism students at the Ibika Campus of Walter Sisulu University.

- Explore the tourism lecturer's perceptions regarding the contribution of educational tours on tourism students.
- Identify the challenges related to educational tours that affect the educational experience of the students.
- Identify the relationship between how tours are experienced and perceived and the envisaged outcomes or achievements for educational tours.

1.6 RATIONALE

According to Sanders and Armstrong (2008), educational tours as an experiential learning tool have received little research attention. Ritchie (2003) argues that very little attention or focus has been provided on school tourism and in particular school trips or excursions. Xie (2004) also argues that little has been written on the effects of tourism educational tours on students and that the possible lack of research has led to the view that tourism educational tours involve only visiting tourist destinations and there is a lingering suspicion that they are perceived as holidays without meaningful educational value. The findings of this study will seek to reveal whether educational tours are really as valuable as they are purported to be in most of the literature reviewed, and their potential role within the Tourism Management program. Findings will also be useful to all stakeholders on the vital skills needed by tourism students to fit into the tourism industry and possibly to contribute to curriculum discussions and decisions in relation to the tourism curriculum. This study will contribute to the limited attention given to tourism education research about educational tours.

1.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter gave the background about educational tours and the tourism education in general. The role and the value of educational tours as a learning mechanism for tourism students is set out in the context and formulated in the problem statement. A research question together with sub research questions which guided the study were formulated. The next chapter will review literature behind educational tours, the nature of tourism education and the benefits of these tours in the learning experience

of tourism students. The theoretical framework underpinning the study will also be discussed in chapter two. Chapter three gives details of the methodology used to answer the research questions. This is followed by chapter four which presents the findings of the study, whilst chapter five presents respectively the limitations and recommendations for future research based on the limitations of the current study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on literature related to tourism education, most especially on educational tours as an extra-curricular activity in tourism management. Educational tours in Tourism Management are regarded as an extra curricula activity as they do not carry any credit value in the curriculum. The theoretical framework underpinning the study, which is Kolb's learning theory and a constructivist approach to learning is outlined, followed by application of these theories in tourism education.

2.2 TOURISM EDUCATION

Globally, there is a development in institutions of higher learning offering Tourism qualification for both undergraduate and post-graduate level as numbers are increasing. Tribe (2002) asserts that this development indicates that university graduates are essential for employment in the tourism industry. Tourism degree programmes can also be helpful given increasing leisure time and therefore the expansion of tourism, both local and international, in the modern world (Goh, 2011).

Literature reveals that tourism is a field of study that involves a variety of disciplinary practices (Jafari & Ritchie, 1981; Tribe, 1997). Tribe (2002, p 310) is of the view that "as much as tourism research relies on theories developed in other disciplines, teaching tourism involves great reliance on extra- disciplinary knowledge". Exposing students to disciplinary intersections is essential to creative thinking and innovation (Johansson, 2004).

According to Echtner and Jamal (1997) the evolution of tourism education may have an impact in understanding tourism related phenomena due to weak theories and uneven approaches that currently exist in the tourism education. Therefore, it is

essential to have experiences and reflective observations in order to learn (Dewey, 1938, Kolb, 1984), as educational tours have the ability to promote deep learning (Hill & Woodland, 2002).

Myers and Jones (2004) are also in support, arguing that educational tours permit students to enter directly into the experiential cycle as the students experience something that it is not possible to experience in the classroom. They are of the view that well planned educational tours enable students to experience class content first hand, learn from these trips and to use the experience practically. Educational tours were therefore introduced in higher education in general, and specifically in tourism, to afford students the opportunities for experiential learning (Xie, 2004).

While educators in the higher education sector accentuate the conceptualisation of theories and materials explicit to the discipline, employers are in search of practical and general transferable skills (Cooper & Shepherd, 1997). Cooper and Shepherd (1997) argue that in order to satisfy both the educational needs and those of the employer developing vocational skills through work experience in relevant industries has occurred through activities like internship and educational tours whilst at the same time combining with an academic program.

In a review of tourism degree programs in the United Kingdom higher education sector, Busby and Fiedel (2001) discovered in order to successfully work in a practical business context these such programs tend towards vocational training so that students will have both knowledge and skills. It can therefore be argued that all students in higher education need to obtain broad technical skills along-side professional skills or academic discipline, and to be appealing to employers a range of skills needed in the world of work. Ruhanen (2005) states that given that tourism and hospitality are new areas of study in universities, and are particularly applied disciplines, the challenge of balancing theory and practice is important. Moscardo and Norris (2003) accentuate the importance of formulating innovative techniques to advance teaching and learning in tourism and hospitality. Academics who are involved in tourism and hospitality programs need to explore new processes and materials

which will engage and inspire students to become active learners, resulting in better retention after assessment. This means therefore that there is a need to employ teaching and learning approaches that encourage and enable deeper learning in tourism management education, which can also provide students with the required skills to take with them to the workplace.

Apart from what is covered in the tourism curriculum, the university under study has in the past adopted the method of including educational tours as one of the extra-curricular activities in attempting to enhance learning and in an attempt to move students from a surface learning approach to a deep learning approach, for example, educational tours for tourism students are linked with two subjects (Tourism Development and Tourism Destinations) which are the major subjects in the tourism program. "A surface approach refers to activities of an inappropriately low cognitive level, which yields fragmented outcomes that do not convey the meaning of the encounter" (Biggs, 1999, p 60). With the surface approach, learning is reflexive and replicates what has been presented through-out the lecture sessions. Most of the present-day university students enrol for university courses not knowing what the course is about, more especially those coming from rural backgrounds. This group of students do not recognise learning as part of their individual development but purely as a quantitative increase in knowledge.

This outlook towards learning requires universities to be more creative in trying to change this view-point towards learning. There are many factors that may lead students to adopt a surface approach to learning. McKenna (2004) is of the view that lack of cultural capital and under preparedness for higher education can be some of the contributing factors. This might be due to social factors such as poor schooling with limited educational resources; and poor home environments. She also thinks that another factor would be that the students are unfamiliar with the discipline specific academic literacy. This is where experiential learning fits in, which will be discussed in more detail under theoretical framework. Using a variety of teaching and learning activities and methods can encourage students to move from surface approach to deep learning approach. Biggs (1999, p 62) describes the deep approach as "activities

that are appropriate to handling the tasks so that an appropriate outcome is achieved". With higher education confronted with culturally diverse students, this can be a real challenge but not one that can be side-lined. Biggs (1999) states that "Good teaching is getting students to use higher cognitive level processes that the more academic students use spontaneously. Good teaching narrows the gap." Institutions of higher learning need to identify the diversity that is often found in university classrooms, and attempt to recognise the favoured learning styles and activities that will advantage students from different backgrounds. Introducing educational tours as an extra curricula activity in Tourism Management Diploma in the university under study was one of the attempts in trying to bridge the gap. According to Biggs (1999) it is of significance to use learning activities that will inspire student engagement, and that will give students the opportunity to build their own knowledge by actively working with theories and concepts.

According to Nghia (2017), extra-curricular activities have the potential to aid in the development of generic skills. He argues that university leaders should acknowledge, support and involve extra-curricular activities in the institutional strategy for implementing generic skills policy, which will contribute to enhancing student's employment outcome. Educational tours are reported to be conducive to developing generic skills for students (Scarinci & Pearce, 2012). For example, Scarinci and Pearce (2012) studied 326 undergraduate business students at Northwood University (Florida, USA) and found that travelling helped students improve 18 generic skills moderately to greatly. The skills that improved the most were independence, being open-minded, and adaptability, feeling comfortable around all types of people, being understanding and overall awareness.

2.3 VALUE AND BENEFITS OF EDUCATIONAL TOURS

Educational tours or field trips, as they are sometimes referred to by some authors, should be central to the tourism curriculum. Aylem, Abebe, Guadie & Bires (2015) are of the view that educational tours can assist the students in developing alternative potential sites and tourism products. Students can also learn through doing and visual.

Field trips can help students to release their mental stress and also promote sharing of experiences. They further argue that through field trips students can be afforded the opportunity to give solution for the problems related to the sites, furthermore the students can be able to change theoretical knowledge into practical. Educational tours are essential to tourism students' experiences to better understand the tourism concepts. Educational tours can be seen as the stereotypic hands-on learning experience as destinations are regarded as the laboratory for tourism students (Shakil, Faizi & Hafeez, 2011). They are of the view that properly organised educational tours can offer concrete experiences which could advantage lecturers and students. Lecturers may be able to clarify concepts more proficiently for students to observe how theoretical knowledge is applied to practical knowledge. Krakowka (2012) argues that educational tours necessitate active learning, encourage interaction and help encourage students to read prior to lectures, it is maintained that these tours can institute deep learning as students learn better from experience.

Scarce (1997) is of the view that understanding student's key motives for participating in educational tours and their expectations of the experience is significant for those who teach tourism. He states that valuable guidance for designing such experiences can arise from recognising students' reasons for participating and from assessing their expectations with respect to the various possible positive outcomes. According to him educational tours are lived social events that become means of knowing, as they offer inspiring experiences that are central to successful education.

According to Wong and Wong (2009), countless benefits of educational tours have been defined by tourism academics and educators. They argue that tourism students are provided with opportunities to meet people from diverse cultures through travel experiences, and may thus come to understand and appreciate others better. This is important for today's students in the modern, complex, multifaceted and interdependent global society.

Educational tours offer chances for students to enrich interactions among themselves (Wong & Wong, 2009). Better interactions among students can enable teamwork and

support them as they collaborate on group projects. Wong and Wong (2009) are also of the view that these tours provide an atmosphere rather different from the classroom. There are diverse casual interactions that transpire between educators and students, such as during meal times, site visits and time on the coach. Importantly after the trip there is the opportunity for students to review, reflect and integrate what they have learnt both in the classroom and from the reliable experiences during the tour.

Xie (2004) reports that educational tours provide a different view-point for students to understand the density of tourism as the guest speakers during the tour also talk about their experiences within the industry rather than theories and concepts. Sanders and Armstrong (2008) organised a student tour to Braidwood in Australia. After the trip the majority of their students discovered positive learning attitudes toward the educational tour experience. The students confirmed that they had learnt more about the destination by visiting it than they did from the book and from the internet. The students also revealed that the tour helped them to understand the theoretical material they learn in class much better.

For the tourism industry educational tours can increase the profile of attractions to a group of potential tourists. Cooper and Latham (1989) argue that school stay overs are a good investment for the future if there is a positive word of mouth from students and also school groups help to boost off peak attendances at attractions. In situations where some students may have never had such experiences, they are influencing another potential but as yet untapped market. People who do not have a history of engaging with the tourism industry may now be enticed. School visits can also raise revenues from shops and catering outlets even when a promotional admission price is given.

2.4 EFFECTS OF EDUCATIONAL TOURS ON EPISODIC MEMORY

According to Shepherd (2012) our most influential kind of memory in terms of capacity is episodic memory. He describes episodic memory as a person's exclusive memory of a particular event. He argues that there are episodes in our lives that we can

remember no matter how long ago they may have happened. Shepherd (2012) states that episodic memory is generated through sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, locations and emotions. Educational tour events before, during and after the experience permit students to construct powerful memories that they can remember for the rest of their lives. For example, Scales (2012) reflects warmly on her fourth grade year educational tour as she advocates for the use of educational tours in the modern day educational settings. Scales (2012) also warns that educational tours are meaningful only if the students understand their value and these trips should not be regarded as a day away from learning. This can be effected through proper planning of the entire trip which according to Sanders and Armstrong (2008) involves the pre-trip phase where students can be given tutorial sessions through destination familiarisation tasks including review of appropriate websites.

They argue that during this phase students can design a programme of activities to perform during the trip. They also regard the post-trip phase as a very important phase of an educational tour as it gives the students an opportunity to reflect on the entire experience. The post trip phase provides an opportunity for students to recap, reflect and integrate what they have learnt both in the classroom and from the authentic experiences during the tour. To support this discussion Wong and Wong (2008) proposed a conceptual framework that describes the elements that enhance student learning through educational tours (Figure 1)

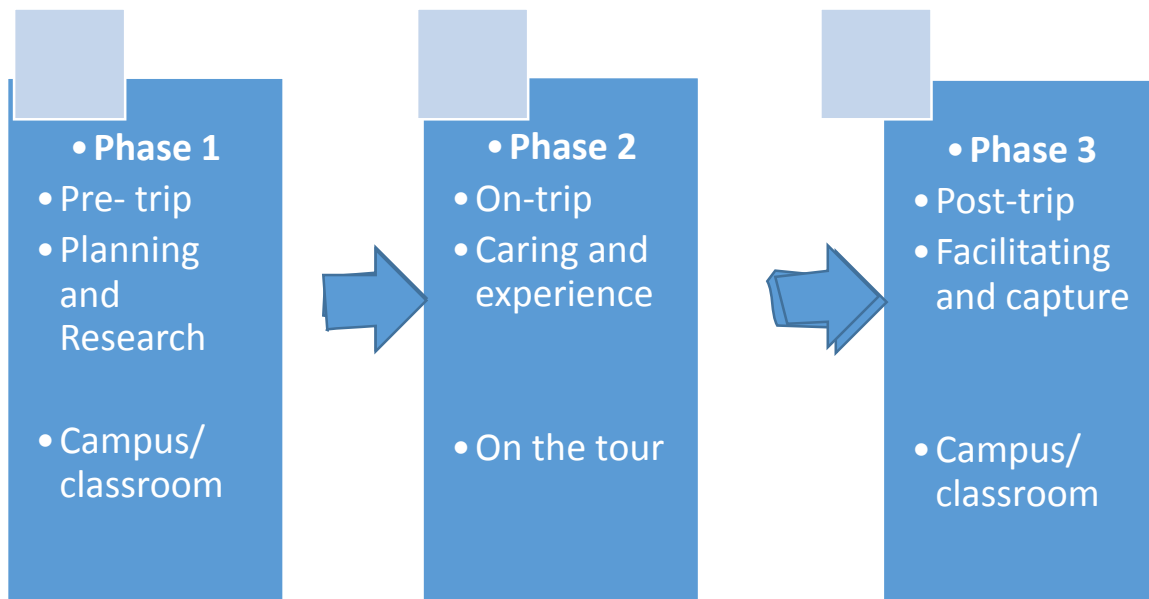


Figure 2.1 Important elements that enhance student learning through a field trip (Wong and Wong, 2009)

This can be done through class discussions and through field trip journals. These stages are very important as they will make students understand that the tour is not just a fun activity but a learning activity. The tourism educators need to make sure that students are told about the objectives and the main purpose for the tours and be given tasks or assessments related to the tour. Writing reflective journals about the entire experience and what the students have achieved can also be another way of ensuring that the tour was not just a fun activity. Scales (2012) remarks that she can still recall these alternative learning experiences because they stand out as stimulating school reminisces even decades later. Educational tours are a critical tool for creating episodic memory. The results from Kennedy's (2014) research suggest that educational tours can have an insightful effect on students as they can expose them to new environments, intensify their social skills and serve to enhance the information developed in the curriculum.

2.5 COMPARISON BETWEEN REAL TRIPS VERSUS VIRTUAL TRIPS

Bellan and Scheurman (1998) are of the view that no matter how sophisticated computers become, the concrete, olfactory, visual and dialogical experience of an authentic field trip cannot be simulated from hundreds of miles away. They argue that images from books, readings and computers cannot fuel a student's sense of touch, smell and sight to the plethora of stimuli to be encountered at the actual site. Stainfield, Fisher, Ford and Solem (2000) state that virtual field trips can aid as a pre-trip preparation tool and as a reflective project following the excursion. These authors also argue that virtual field trips cannot link the wonder of a spectacular landscape: the sight, sounds and smell of the city, or the shared experience of a trip to the actual destination. Virtual trips cannot give a sense of the relationship and interactions that occur in a destination including the hidden elements of culture, atmosphere etc, What the virtual trip can do is prepare students for the variety of stimuli that will be encountered at the actual destination and provide them with knowledge that will encourage thoughtful enquiry and conversation once they arrive at the site (Bellan & Scheurman, 1998).

Spicer and Stratford (2001) conducted a study on undergraduate perceptions regarding the use of virtual field trips as part of their university experience. Results of the study revealed that "nearly all the students indicated that a virtual field trip could not and should not replace a real field trip. The same students responded favourably to virtual field trips as a valuable learning tool but felt they were more appropriate as a complement to a real field trip" (Spicer & Stratford, 2001, p 260).

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.6.1 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND ACTIVE LEARNING

In most higher education institutions the main and traditional approach to teaching is through delivery based lectures. Goh (2011) argues that although educators feel lectures are effective in transferring information to students, lectures hardly encourage active learning or understanding. Lectures restrict students to taking notes and to listening. However, Light and Cox (2001) are of the view that traditional lectures are necessary as they serve as a platform for providing background information, basic

concepts and theories required by students before they embark on their independent learning journey and become active participants in discussions. Goh (2011) agrees with this statement but further argues that it is often essential to embrace other learning methods such as experiential learning to compensate for the restrictions of traditional lecture-based learning. To support the above statement, it is deemed necessary to incorporate active learning together with experiential learning in tourism studies.

Having engaged with literature on educational tours and field trips, the researcher realised that it is important to understand experiential learning. According to Dewey (1938), experiential learning is an interactive learning approach by doing, in which students learn through direct applied action or activity, and carry that specific experience in future experiences. Hays (2009) argues that experiential learning theory asserts that people learn through experience and that experience can enrich learning that might otherwise be abstract, theoretical, and devoid of context. It is thought that the richer and fuller the experience, the greater the learning. He is of the view that experience is doing, practice and application. Hays (2009) highlighted some characteristics of experiential learning and they will be summarised as follows:

- It provides practical learning experiences in a real-world context structured to exercise skills and knowledge acquired through formal study and to provide learning complimentary to that possible in the classroom.
- It provides active engagement in a variety of authentic problems and tasks relevant to the student's course of study and career aspirations.
- It provides clear integration and alignment of practical experience and curriculum objectives and assessments, together with explicit learning goals for the students.

In the light of what Hays (2009) is arguing, educational tours for tourism students from the university under study can be a very useful activity especially if they are well planned and designed in a manner that will enhance student learning. It is not merely the physical doing of something but a fuller experience and sensory engagement, including feelings. For the purpose of this study experiential learning for tourism

students refers to students experiencing the process of being tourists and the process of experiencing the environment. Experiential learning is aligned with active learning as the students are given structured activities before, during and after the tour as part of ensuring that the desired learning has been achieved. Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning is one of the most powerful where he recommended that an individual learning process of knowledge is generated through the transformation of experience. Both Dewey (1938) and Kolb (1984) agree that concrete experiences and reflective observations are crucial for learning. The cycle of experiential learning process is widely known as Kolb's four stage experiential learning model. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory supports the belief that learning is the process whereby knowledge is generated through the transformation of experience. He argues that using multiple learning stages in the experiential learning cycle has the ability to enhance student learning as well as student retention. Figure 2 will show the Kolb's experiential learning cycle as adapted from Healey and Jenkins (2000).

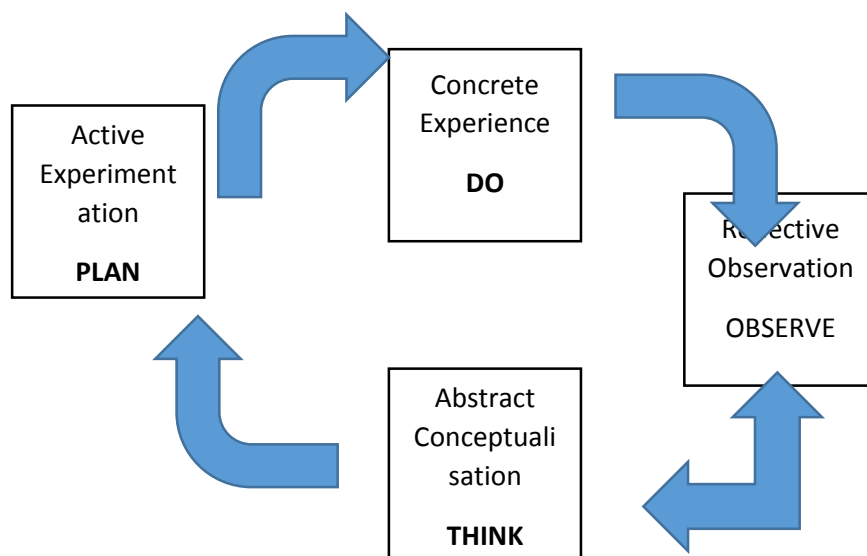


Figure 2.2 Kolb's experiential learning cycle

Stage one is concrete experience, which is where the learner engages in an active process. Stage two is reflective observation, where the learner is consciously thinks back over the activity or experience. Stage three is abstract conceptualisation, where

the learner is being presented with an explanation or theory of what is observed or to be observed. Stage four is when the learner thinks about how to take the activity or theory further through activity and plans further. (Kolb, 1984), and cycle continues back to stage one. In the case of tourism students, a way of learning by doing is through educational tours. However, the cycle does not have a specific start point, students might begin with the actual experience and the move to conceptualisation, or vice versa. Cooper and Latham (1989) consider this an important part of school life. They argue that experiential learning is widely used in tourism and hospitality studies due to its practical nature and the need to have practical experience. For example, in tourism studies it is not easy to simulate an environmental setting or carry out a beneficial experiment in a laboratory like in physical sciences, but educational tours can offer students realistic learning experiences in different tourism settings. Cooper and Latham (1989) opined that although technology may be able to create certain educational tour or field trip experiences through virtual reality, they will not be able to substitute the real trips.

Tomkins and Ulus (2016) state that the purpose of applying experiential learning is to make students more involved and thereby potentially increase the learning outcome as well as the student motivation. For the purpose of this study, the Kolb’s model of learning was adapted for educational tours using the sequence represented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Kolb’s learning Stages	Examples for educational tours
Active experimentation PLAN	Looking at destinations, researching the area and planning the route and the activities to engage on.
Concrete Experience DO	The actual tour experience
Reflective Observation OBSERVE	Reflecting on the tour and what was revealed.
Abstract Conceptualisation THINK	Using what was discovered in a tourism framework and relating what was experienced to learned theories.

For educational tours to be effective, aligning experiential learning with active learning is necessary. Bonwell and Einson (1991) define active learning as teaching approaches that engage students in the learning process, whereby students are required to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing. According to Haak, HilleRisLambers, Pitre and Freeman (2011), active learning approaches have proven to work best for economically disadvantaged students, who are underprepared for higher education and who are the first in their families to attend higher education. The description of students by Haak and his colleagues' best suited the types of students who are mostly enrolled in the university under study. In active learning students are allowed the opportunity to learn through activities or group discussions rather than passively listening to the lecturer (Freeman et al., 2014). Chickering and Gamson (1987) opined that students must do more than just listening and students must be given activities that promote higher-order thinking such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

For tourism students, active learning through educational tours can be incorporated by applying the important elements that enhance student learning, as discussed earlier in section 2.4., also refer to Figure 2.1. Students should research about the destination prior to the trip. They should be given thought provoking tasks to perform when they have reached the destination. Furthermore, on coming back to the classroom they must be given tasks to reflect on what they have learnt for the duration of the tour.

This study was grounded on the constructivist approach to learning. This is a learner centred methodology that gives emphasis to the importance of individuals actively constructing their knowledge and understanding with guidance from the teacher. Constructivist learning arose from Piagetian and Vygotskian viewpoints that individuals construct their own knowledge during the course of interacting with the environment (Eby, Herrell & Jordan, 2006). They are all of the view that thinking is an active process whereby people organise their perceptions of the world, and therefore the environment does not shape the individual (Palincsar, 1998). Rather than continuing to do presentations using lecture techniques supplemented by some direct instruction methods, educational tours can be used to familiarise students with the idea of

constructivism. Students should be encouraged to discover their world, discover knowledge and reflect and think critically with careful monitoring and meaningful supervision from the teacher (Eby, Herrell & Jordan, 2006). Palincsar (1998) describes constructivism as a learning theory which states that individuals actively and continually construct knowledge based on previous experiences and knowledge. Educational tours permit tourism students to be actively involved individually and socially with various sources, the lecturers and each other in the learning process, which are some of other important applications of constructivist beliefs (Bruner, 1996; and Vygotsky, 1978) cited in Palincsar (1998). Henson (2004) argues that according to a constructivist, children for a long time have been required to sit still, be inactive learners and rote memorize inappropriate as well as appropriate information, which I can relate to. But nowadays there is emphasis on collaboration by constructivists which is children working with one another in their efforts to know and understand (Bodrova & Leong, 2007).

Tourism Management is a natural and real-world program which is trained both in the classroom and in the real-world setting. When tourism educators take out students on educational tours with the intention of teaching the students, it affords students the opportunity to implicitly construct knowledge and understand the material while supervising their learning. As students see, feel, touch and hear, they better integrate, understand and relate the new information to that which they previously know (Henson, 2004). Students consequently actively construct knowledge and understanding with guidance from teachers during educational tours, and by so doing the student's knowledge broadens and expands as they continue to construct new links between new information and experiences and their current knowledge base.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided literature on tourism education in general. It also looked at the value and benefits of educational tours for tourism students. Difference between real trips and virtual trips were also discussed. Kolb's Experiential Learning theory which assisted the study in responding to the research questions was discussed. This theory

laid a firm foundation onto which the study is built. The following chapter will outline the research methodology and justification of the choices made in selecting the chosen methodologies for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

It is of utmost importance to understand the fundamental ontological and epistemological assumptions behind each piece of research that one undertakes as a researcher. It is also important to be able to identify how these assumptions relate to the researcher's preferred methodologies and methods, and how these assumptions link to the findings of the study.

Chapter two provided a review of related literature, and the theoretical framework for the study. This chapter discusses the methodology that this study uses to answer the research questions, including the research approach, research design, research methods which incorporate data collection procedures, and methods of data collection. The chapter also details the target population, together with sampling procedures used in this study. Ethical considerations as they are necessary in such a study, were followed by the researcher and are also highlighted. This includes the rights of the participants, confidentiality, anonymity and harm to respondents as well as respondent's privacy.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study will take a qualitative approach. Creswell (1998) describes qualitative research as a means for discovering and understanding the connotation individuals or groups assign to a social or human problem. Bricki and Green,(2000) are of the view that qualitative research transmits to understanding phases of social life, and its methods, which in general produces words rather than numbers as data for analysis. According to Veal (2006) qualitative techniques stand in disparity to quantitative techniques in that quantitative approaches consist of numbers whereas the qualitative approach does not. Qualitative research is realistic, it tries to study the everyday life

of different groups of people and communities in their natural sceneries, and it is mainly useful to study educational settings and processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) further argue that qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter, it attempts to make sense of, or interpret, and phenomena in terms of the connotation people convey to them. A qualitative approach was the most appropriate to address the research questions for this study as it seeks to discover and understand the meaning students make of the educational tours they experience as part of their curriculum. Respondents were allowed to respond elaborately to questions. They had an open-ended way of giving their views.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is the overall strategy that researchers use to investigate different components of a study in a coherent and logical way. Research design can consequently be thought of as the reasoning or master plan of a research project that throws light on how the study is going to be conducted. Before researchers can design the research process for a project, they should understand the nature of research needed and how this determines the whole research process. This includes framing research questions, deciding on the nature of data to collect, ways to analyse data and finally how to report it. A research design therefore outlines how the whole investigation is carried out. Mouton (1996) argues that research design serves to plan, structure and accomplish the research to maximise validity of the findings.

The research design for this study is an interpretive paradigm that is analysed through qualitative methods. An interpretive paradigm is characterised by a mutual concern for the individual. The central endeavor in the context of interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To retain the integrity of the phenomena being explored, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that Interpretivists hold a realist, anti-foundational ontology. They state that relativism is the view that reality differs from one person to another. According to

Crotty (1998) interpretive researchers view reality as being socially constructed and that there are multiple realities.

3.4 METHODS

3.4.1 POPULATION

A population is usually a large pool of individuals that is the main focus of a scientific study. Pilot and Hungler (1999, p. 37) refer to the population as “an aggregate or totality of all objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications”. Banerjee and Chaudhary (2010, p. 63) define a population as “an entire group about which some information is required to be ascertained”.

The population for this study was Tourism Management students currently registered in the institution who had already experienced the tours, and two lecturers lecturing in the department.

The main reason for choosing this particular group of students is that they have already attended an educational tour during their first year of study and therefore they are in a better position to provide more meaningful information concerning the effects of educational tours in their learning experiences. The two lecturers were chosen because they are the ones who plan the trips and accompany the students when they travel to the destinations. Data gathering is vital in research, as the data is intended to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework. It then becomes imperative that selecting the method of attaining data from whom the data will be acquired be done with sound judgment (Creswell, 1998).

3.4.2 SAMPLING

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.3), “sampling is needed so as to obtain data from a smaller group or subset of the total population, in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study”. “Sampling

is thus the selection of individuals from the population with a view to their participating in a particular investigation" (Bulmer & Warwick, 2000, p. 190). However, in order to be able to generalize findings to the population, it is important to choose a sample that represents the population. Therefore, "it is necessary for the choice of an appropriate sampling technique to ensure choosing a good sample for the study" (Barreiro & Albandoz, 2001, p. 2). There are many sampling techniques that are more appropriate for educational research. There are those that fall under probability or random sampling, and those leading to non-probability sampling. A probability sampling according to Doherty (1994, p. 22) "is any method of sampling that uses some form of random selection of respondents". He is of the view that in probability-based sampling, the first step is to decide on the population of interest, which is the population we want the results about.

Non-probability sampling techniques refer to samples that are carefully chosen based on the subjective judgment of the researcher (Mugo, 2002). He points out that a judgment sample is obtained according to the relevant characteristics of the population. However, one must be cautious because as Burns and Grove (2001) highlight, when non-probability sampling, such as convenience, accidental, quota, purposive and network sampling procedures are used, the researcher may miss some elements of the population. Nevertheless, Burns and Grove (2001) aver that non-probability sampling suggests that not every element of the population has an opportunity for being included in the sample, such as convenience, quota, purposive or judgmental sampling technique.

The sample for this study was Tourism Management students currently enrolled for second year in the institution. For the purpose of the study, a purposive sampling method was employed to select focus groups from the seventy seven students registered for the second year in Tourism Management. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sample where by the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The purposive sampling technique was chosen in order to focus on the characteristic population that was of interest in order to answer the research questions

concerning the contribution of educational tours to the learning experience of tourism students. The most common motive for using non-probability sampling is that it is cheaper than probability sampling and can often be applied more quickly. In this way, the researcher builds up a sample that is acceptable to their specific needs. For the purpose of this study, the whole population met to discuss and explain the intentions of the study. Out of seventy seven students, three focus groups were set, consisting of ten students per group. The requirements and procedures were carefully explained to the students. All seventy seven students were invited to volunteer and the thirty students were selected by drawing names from the hat containing all the names of those that volunteered until the required number is reached. All those who volunteered were thanked. Interviews were arranged during work hours to accommodate the schedules of the participants and the researcher. Each interview session took approximately thirty minutes and the location was determined by the availability of campus meeting space.

A focus group is a planned discussion intended to achieve perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Creswell, 1998). Focus groups were a good idea for this study in that participants had the opportunity to stimulate each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion. Participants also had the opportunity to support or differ with one another and therefore created more energy and more data. Focus groups can get at perceptions, attitudes and experiences more than a quantitative survey (Creswell, 1998). There are however some challenges associated with conducting focus group interviews. Creswell (1998) discuss these challenges as follows:

- Open- ended structured interview format must be used.
- Groups are more difficult to manage than one individual.
- Shy persons may be intimidated by more assertive persons.
- Data may be more difficult to analyse.
- The environment can have an impact on the responses.

To overcome such challenges, as a moderator of the focus group it is of utmost importance to include participants with similar experiences when doing a selection,

which is the case for the participants in this study. To ensure that all participants arrive with the same expectations, all participants received an information letter detailing what is expected of them and why the research was important, and also noting that the discussion will be recorded and assuring confidentiality. Location and environment was considered as the most convenient and comfortable for all participants to promote a smooth discussion amongst the group members and also to make the use of the tape recorder more efficient. An interview schedule was written to guarantee that there was uniformity across the various groups in the way that they were treated. Noting the time intended to be spent on each question in the interview schedule is also necessary as the discussions can get stimulating and out of hand, therefore the participants were given eight minutes to engage on each question. Breen (2006) is of the view that any formal analysis of focus group data should include a summary of:

- The most important themes.
- The most noteworthy quotes.
- Any unexpected findings.

Breen (2006, p 468) also mentions that "good indicators of the reliability of a focus group data are the extent to which participants agreed/ disagreed on issues, and the frequency of participant opinion shift during the discussion".

3.4.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather information from the lecturers and the students' focus groups representatives. According to Veal, (2006), interviews are similar to everyday conversations, although they are focused to a greater or lesser extent on the researcher's needs for data. They vary from everyday conversation because we are concerned to conduct them in the most rigorous way we can in order to ensure reliability and validity. Creswell (1998) argues that validity does not carry the same meaning in qualitative research as it does in quantitative research, nor is it a companion of reliability and generalizability. In a qualitative research, validity means that the researcher checks for the truthfulness of the findings by employing certain procedures, while reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent

across different researchers and different projects. In qualitative approach, terms that are used to address validity are credibility, transferability and dependability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). From an interpretive perspective, understanding is co-created and there is no objective truth or reality to which the results of the study can be linked. Therefore, gaining feedback on the data, interpretations and conclusions from the participants is one method of increasing credibility. Semi-structured interviews are conducted on the basis of loose structure made up of open-ended questions outlining the area to be investigated (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006). Interviews were appropriate to the goals of this study as they require participants who will be reflective, collaborative and who will feel at ease in an interview setting with the researcher.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Nigatu (2009) data analysis is the variety of processes and techniques whereby researchers move from raw data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding and interpretation of situations under investigation. "Data analysis is the most complex and mysterious of all the phases of a research project, and one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in the literature" (Thorne, 2006, p. 68). Rabiee (2004) highlighted that the process of data analysis begins during the data collection phase, for example, by skillful facilitation of discussion during an interview, rich data may be generated. Similarly, Thorne (2006) points out that in order to produce findings that convert raw data into new knowledge, a researcher must engage in active and demanding analytic process throughout all phases of research. He is of the view that understanding these processes is therefore an important feature, not only of research, but also of reading, understanding and interpreting it.

The purpose of data analysis for this study was to interpret and draw conclusions from the data that had been collected, according to the tools described in the previous section (3.2.4), the focus group interviews by the students and the individual interviews by the lecturers.

As the entire interviews were audio recorded, the texts were then transcribed word for word, so as to create a precise written record. Some students responded in Xhosa, and those texts were translated in English with the skills of the translators, given their familiarity with the topic and the participants. Transcripts were typed, showing respondent's quotes as they were responding to questions asked. This stage was followed by familiarization with the data, which was attained by listening to the tapes, reading the transcripts in their entirety several times. Transcript data is fundamental for qualitative research, as recommended by Rabiee (2004). In this study each transcript was considered with the aim of identifying key issues. Themes, which are a pattern of answers developing consistently and more often to highlight common issues, were created, and then categorized into headings and supported by *verbatim* quotations from participants and they were given pseudonyms.

Findings could thus be presented in simple ways, using lay terminology supported by quotations from the participants (Rabiee, 2004). The presentation and analysis of the above data took the form of detailed descriptions with respondent's quotations and pseudonyms to capture their own words. Like the face-to-face interviews with lecturers, and the data from the students' focus group interviews.

3.6 ETHICS CONSIDERATIONS

Gardner (2011), is of the view that in planning of, conducting or reporting findings from research, researchers have to achieve several obligations in order to meet ethical standards. In their planning, researchers must take the required steps to warrant that all participants in the research understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is desired, how it will be utilised and how and to whom it will be reported.

Howe and Moses (2009, p. 24) note the widespread agreement that "whatever the ultimate justification regarding the treatment of research participants might be, certain ethical principles should inform the way researchers treat research participants in meeting the goals of advancing knowledge". Consequently, ethical principles that

deserve to be observed in any research undertaking amount to protection of respondents and include their voluntary participation and informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy.

“The principle of informed consent arises from the subject’s right to freedom and self-determination” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 52). This study observed all the above principles (see Appendices). Accordingly, before any research activity commences, the researcher applied for ethical clearance (see Appendix 1) from the institution where she is registered. The clearance certificate paved the way for the researcher to request permission and consent from the sampled Higher Education Institution and the relevant participants respectively (Appendices).

With permission, the researcher conducted focus group interviews with the students as well as one-on-one interviews with the lecturers. “By such planning and foresight, both the researcher and the higher education institution would have a good idea of the demands likely to be made on the participants” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 57).

Interviews were scheduled to avoid interfering with the respondent’s Tourism Management timetable routine (both students and lecturers).

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the research methodology used in this study. Population and sampling methods used were discussed. Methods and procedures, namely, focus groups and individual interviews used for data collection were discussed in details. Ethical considerations that were followed to perform the study were also presented. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study has sought to investigate educational tours as a learning mechanism in the learning experience of tourism students from the Tourism Management programme of Walter Sisulu University in Ibika Campus, according to the following main research question:

How do educational tours contribute to learning about tourism in one program in a South African rural university?

Chapter three outlined the research design and methodologies used to gather data in order to respond to answer the research question. This chapter presents the analysis of data, with discussion of their implications. The data were gathered through student focus group interviews, with Tourism Management 2nd year students, and individual interviews with lecturers from the department. Data from these research instruments are presented, analysed and discussed in accordance with themes that had emerged from the data.

4.2 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The study used semi structured interview in the form of focus group interviews with students. The interviews were first transcribed and then recurring themes extracted. Each transcription was considered with the aim of identifying key issues. Descriptions were then formulated from the key issues identified as relevant to the study, and these were coded.

Themes, which are a pattern of answers emerging consistently, and more often and so as highlight a common issue, were created and then categorised into headings and constructively narrated with the support of *verbatim* quotes. The themes together with sub-themes that emerged will be discussed in the following session. Student focus

group interviews were conducted to respond to research questions one and two, and individual interviews with lecturers were conducted to respond to research questions three and four. For the purpose of the study, the first discussion will be for the focus groups, followed by a discussion from the lecturers.

4.2.1 LEARNING EXPERIENCES OBTAINED DURING EDUCATIONAL TOURS

4.2.1.1 Theme 1: The nature of experience and contribution to learning

Since this was a key focus for the research, indicators were sought for either positive or negative experiences that educational tours might have on students learning as well as the contribution of these tours to students' learning. All students confirmed the importance of having educational tours as an extra-curricular activity in the tourism program. A number of sub-themes emerged from this theme and will be discussed as follows:

4.2.1.1.1 Sub theme 2: Understanding different cultures

A majority of students identified understanding different cultures as one of the highlights when they engaged on the two trips they already had. One student (Luxolo) said, *"When we visited Mossel Bay we got the opportunity to interact with coloured people and through that we got to understand how they live and their ways of doing things, which I found much different from our way of living as Xhosas"*. The other student (Unathi) said *"I always see Zulu Traditional Dance on TV, but when we visited Phenduka Cultural Village in KwaZulu Natal I got the opportunity to Zulus performing their dances live and it was so spectacular. We even tasted some of their traditional dishes and umqombothi (traditional beer)"*. A lot of students mentioned their excitement about tasting different food items prepared by different cultures. This one student (Zipho) said, *"I was so excited to eat seafood for the first time in my life, on one of the restaurants in Plettenburg Bay we were served seafood platters. I always looks at prawns and tell myself I will never eat this crap, but guess what, they tasted*

so yummy and I even consider seafood as one of my favourite dishes". This point reflects findings in the literature, for example Wong and Wong (2009) argue that travel is valuable as it provides tourism students the opportunity to encounter people from different cultures, and through such interactions and exchanges people will come to better understand one another. This is very essential for this generation of students as they are facing a complex, diverse and interdependent global society.

4.2.1.1.2 Sub-theme 3: The feel and experience of being a tourist

Students from both groups were very excited when discussing the feeling of being tourists themselves. Some of them mentioned that it was a dream come true as they never thought they would afford to get the experience because of their financial backgrounds. This one student (Sesethu) said, *"We got to experience how it feels being a tourist as we are always told in class. I was so excited to eat in a buffet, eating as much as you want was on point for me, I wish I could repeat that experience"*. The other student (Lunathi) said, *"Being a tourist myself I got an opportunity to see and experience how tourists and hotel guests are treated, and that gave me an idea of what is expected of me when I am done with my studies, in fact I was already imagining myself in the workplace looking beautiful in my uniform"*. This one (Luxolo) said *"These tours give us chances to see and experience other places as we also get to feel the life of being a tourist. Our parents do not afford to take us to these places but through the university we get the chance like others"*. It can therefore be concluded that educational tours can be such an enriching experience for tourism students. This confirms the contention by Scarce (1997) who argues that educational tours are lived social events that become a way of knowing, as they offer enriching experiences that are central to successful education.

4.2.1.1.3 Sub theme 4: Networking and future careers

According to Tribe (2002), higher education institutions offering tourism degrees are facing a lot of pressure to balance the theory base that necessitates a university degree program and the practical skills needed by the industry that will ultimately

employ the students. Offering a tourism degree in a rural institution of higher learning like the university under study can be as challenging as the majority of students may not have the tourism background and may not have been exposed to the tourism industry. Having educational tours at WSU have proven to have benefited the tourism students in overcoming some of the challenges concerned with lack of background about the tourism industry. This student (Zuko) said, *“Going on educational tours gave me an idea for me that one day I will be a travel agent, and now I will have an idea of which places to recommend around South Africa to my clients.* Another student (Inga) said *“Learning about South Africa and having been to some of the attractions around the country I can now see my dream of becoming a travel agent coming through. I have learnt that I would never have been able to organise client tours without me knowing the places, but since I have seen and experiences some of the attractions, I now even recommend some places to clients and people in general.*

The majority of the students mentioned that through going on educational tours they also got an opportunity to network with different stakeholders within the industry. One student (Zuko) said, *“You get to speak face-to-face with employees in these places. We get to network and sometimes secure places for our in-service training. We get to socialise with these people and get more information on what is expected from the students when they finally become workers in the tourism industry”.*

4.2.1.1.4 Sub theme 5: Exposure to tourism destinations and taking families on vacation

The rural background of the university under study is mentioned in chapter one of the document and cannot be neglected. The majority of students that the university attracts are those students who come from poor schooling backgrounds with very limited resources. During the interviews a majority of students mentioned that going on educational tours was a huge benefit for them even for those that have studied tourism as one of the subjects in high school. This particular student (Mbali) said, *“Because of these tours I went to so many destinations and I took a decision that one day I will travel to these places with my family as they are very interesting places”.* Another student (Unathi) said, *“Even during the trip, before you even reach the*

destination we got to see so many interesting places that we have seen on television, like the Tsitsikama Bridge, I usually see that bridge on the shot left advert and I never thought in my life I would see it with my own two eyes". This student (Vuyo) here said, "I always thought Gautrain was for rich people, but I was there sitting with those rich people being a student, what an experience, thanks WSU".

Cooper and Latham (1989) support what the students are saying as they are also opined that educational tours can increase the profile of attractions to a group of potential visitors and their parents. They argue that such tours are a good investment for the future if there is a favourable word of mouth from the students.

4.2.2 Influence of educational tours with courses within the tourism degree

Students were asked if there are ways in which going on educational tours have had any influence on any of their courses within the tourism degree.

4.2.2.1 Theme: Link between theory and practice

Almost all students confirmed that educational tours do have an influence on many of their courses in Tourism Management. Some typical responses are given below. Student (Olwethu) said, *"Going on educational tour is a great experience and this is helping us as we take these tours as our practical learning"*. Another student (Viwe) said, *"These tours help us to refer back as we are sometimes asked questions saying we must use our own knowledge, now we take what we saw on tour and apply it when answering such questions"*. A Student (Abonga) from the other focus group said, *"Almost all courses are influenced because all our courses are interrelated. For example in Hospitality we learn about food and accommodation, we get to feel how it is like sleeping in a hotel, we also get to experience different foods from different cultures. In Tourism Destinations we get to know and experience more destinations from different provinces"*. Student (Inga) said, *"Tourism Development deals with environmental impacts, tribes, cultures and developmental components such as accommodation, transportation, attractions and infrastructure. We have seen and*

experienced all these through going on these tours for instance the visits to different Cultural Villages, travelling by a Gautrain and lot more". Lunga from another group said, "When we visited Eyadini in KwaZulu Natal I saw a lot coming up on Events Management. We experienced how events are organised and we even critique how they organise their events using the information we learnt in class on how to organise events". To support the above views by those students, numerous research studies have recognised important increases in student true-life knowledge and conceptual understanding after participation in a well-planned educational tour.

Aylem, Abebe, Guadie and Bires (2015) mentioned that students can learn through participating and visually. They further argue that through educational tours students can be afforded the opportunity to give solutions for the problems related to the sites, furthermore the students can change theoretical knowledge into practical. Myers and Jones (2004) are also in support, arguing that educational tours permit students to have direct experience that can be the beginning of the experiential cycle as the students experience something that would not be possible inside the four walls of the classroom. They are of the view that well planned educational tours provide an opportunity for students to experience class content first hand, learn from their experience on the trip and apply what they have learnt. Hill and Woodland (2002) argue that educational tours have the ability to promote deep learning.

It is highlighted in chapter two on the theoretical framework that experiential learning encourages deep understanding by advancement through the four stages in the learning cycle which are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Kolb's 1984 model for experiential learning as a guide, from what the participants in the study are saying, it can be argued that educational tour activities go through at least four iterations of the learning model. The first step actually begins in the classroom, and then moves to concrete experiences that take place during the tour to achieve learning objectives. The following iterations of the cycle move from applying the concepts to more focused learning, having the students to eventually learning how to solve the problems and thus becoming experts in the tourism field. This one student (Olwethu) said, "*Theory*

was learnt in class but we could not relate, after the tour, class discussions became more vibrant and we became active students in terms of our contribution in class discussions". The other one (Unathi) said, *"For me it is not easy to forget what I have seen, I did even much better in my assessments as I always apply what I have learnt from both tours when doing my assessments".* Myers and Jones (2004) are in agreement with this, arguing that educational tours can act as an inverted curriculum experience for students, to engage them and promote learning within a professional content. Some of the statements mentioned above by the students also take into account the issue of episodic memory. For example, Scales (2012) argues that there are episodes in our lives that we can recall no matter how long they may have occurred. He further states that educational tour activities before, during and after the experience enable students to create powerful memories that they can recall for the rest of their lives.

4.3 FOLLOW-UP QUESTION

As a follow-up and also to get an insight from the student's perspective, the students were asked how they would feel if educational tours would be discontinued as an extra-curricular activity in Tourism Management. The majority of the students were against the discontinuation of these tours stating some various points in support of their statements.

One student's response was, *" We do understand the financial impact of these tours from university's side, however what I don't understand is that we are charged to go on these tours, so why would the university state that the tours are expensive when we actually pay for the tours".*

This one said, *" Because I have seen the value of these tours and I have experienced the positive input they brought in my studies and in my understanding of the theory we learn in the classroom, I would like for the other students who wish to enrol for tourism to experience what I have experienced, otherwise it would mean that those new students would miss the opportunity and the benefit that comes with going for an educational tour".*

Another student said, *"It would be sad as going on these tours had opened our minds and besides it would mean that the new students would rely entirely on the theory learnt from the textbooks and miss out on the practical side and the real life understanding of what tourism is about"*.

One student said, *"When we go on these tours the university receives free marketing and it is put on the map, we also get more opportunities to network with industry people and that makes it easier for us when we are looking for placements for our in-service training. We network and we exchange numbers with managers, we interact with the staff and we better understand the duties of the different personnel in our industry. These tours also prepare us for the job market, so it would be a very bad move if the university will one day decide to eliminate the tours for the tourism program. As the name suggests 'TOURISM', it wouldn't make sense to be a tourism student"*.

There are programs that are intended to bridge the perceived gap between theory and practice. Hays (2009) listed some examples of these programs as follows: co-operative education, work-based learning, field trips, industry placements and service learning. He states that these programs are sometimes referred to as the theory-practice divide between academic studies and the work students will be called upon to do when they graduate. He is of the view that these programs and pedagogies are structured to blend theory and practice to optimise student learning. According to him these programs complement the formal studies, providing experiences and learning that are unlikely in the university classroom. Hays (2009) highlighted some characteristics of experiential learning and they will be summarised as follows:

- It provides practical learning experiences in a real-world context structured to exercise skills and knowledge acquired through formal study and to provide learning complimentary to that possible in the classroom.
- It provides active engagement in a variety of authentic problems and tasks relevant to the student's course of study and career aspirations.
- It provides clear integration and alignment of practical experience and curriculum objectives and assessments, together with explicit learning goals for the students.

In the light of what Hays (2009) is arguing, educational tours for tourism students from the university under study can be a very useful activity especially if they are well planned and designed in a manner that will enhance student learning. In support of Hay's argument, Solnet, Robinson and Cooper (2007) argue that tourism is an applied subject area and the tourism related courses should combine education with practical activities. They opined that tourism education has to provide hands-on activities for the students to enhance their skills and experiences for their careers. The classroom along with the textbooks may not establish the concept of specific generic skills as much as a practical course. Educational tours in the context of Walter Sisulu University tourism program provide for a professionally-oriented curricula that is meant to prepare students for their future career by providing an appropriate level of qualification.

4.4 NEW INFORMATION

As the focus groups interviews with the students were conducted, some new and exciting information was picked from both groups. The students mentioned the contribution of educational tours in community development.

In this light, according to Spenceley (2008) community tourism is tourism which is owned and managed by communities with the aim of generating wider community benefit. He argues that the main aim of community tourism should be to improve resident's quality of life by maximising local economic benefits, protecting the natural and built heritage and providing a high-quality experience for the visitors. Cooper and Latham (1989) indicate that the core elements of tourism arise out of the movement of people to and their stay at various destinations out of their usual environments and places of work. This in turn fuels the demand for various facilities and services designed to provide for and ease the transition and temporary residence of visitors in the host communities. The supply services such as transport, accommodation, catering, souvenirs and other shopping to tourists should help stimulate the local economy, job creation and also bring additional income and improve the quality of life of the community members.

Cooper and Latham (1989) state that the school visits into a destination can also increase revenues from shops and catering outlets even when a discounted price is given. Educational tours on the university under study are often undertaken during the off-peak seasons. Students are booked in hotels, they have their meals, engage in activities and do their shopping in that particular destination, and this is a huge economic boost for that community. This is what one of the students said, "*The community benefits a lot from us, when I was in Plettenburg Bay I bought some stuff from the street vendors for my siblings back home because I wanted them to see that I went to Plett*". The other one said, "*When we visited Soweto Vilakazi Street, the street vendors were very excited when they saw our bus, some of them started selling their stuff to us even before we could find a parking space*". This clearly shows the effect that the tourists have on the host's lives, and it means that tourists in a destination have a lot of control over the economy especially in communities where poor people depend on the money they make from tourism to help support their families.

4.5 INTERVIEW RESULTS WITH LECTURERS

Individual interviews with lecturers were conducted with the intention to test the benefits of having educational tours, the link with the program outcomes and objectives, as well as the challenges that come with the planning and the entire experience of educational tours. Lecturers were interviewed to find out whether they shared the same views and opinions as that of the students when it comes to the impact and effects of educational tours for the tourism students as well as the tourism program respectively. A request to participate was sent out to two lecturers from the tourism department but only one lecturer responded positively. The second lecturer was not available to participate due to time constraints and some other work-related engagements, therefore only one lecturer was available to participate in the study.

The following section reports on the lecturer's responses:

4.5.1 Experiential learning versus classroom learning

This question was designed to establish what educational tours have to offer that cannot be offered in a traditional classroom setting. On this point this is what the lecturer had to say:

"Given the location of our university and the type of students that we have, unlike the universities in the cities, we have students who have never seen what a restaurant looks like. We have students who aspire to work in the tourism industry but they have never seen a hotel, an airport, or any attraction for that matter. The majority of our students come from deep rural areas, what we teach them in class needs to be connected with the tourism industry and its experiences. We cannot expect students to serve tourists when they have never been tourists, just like we cannot expect students to serve in the tourism industry when they know nothing about the tourism industry except for what they know from the textbook. As lecturers we give students examples in class and those examples are real life experiences, so how do we expect students from rural areas to make connections to those examples. I believe that experience is the best teacher. We might not be giving the students the whole experience because of financial constraints and time limitations, but at least they go out to industry with a bit of knowledge of what is happening out there. Having been tourists themselves allows them that kind of feeling that says now that I have seen how it happens, let me also bring what I have been taught in class and what I have experienced on tour to better become the practitioner that I am trained to be".

This response is supported by Copper & Shepherd's (1997) findings who argue that the development of vocational skills through industry experience in combination with an academic program is a standard way of meeting the needs of both the educational institutions and the employer. Ruhanen (2005) is also of the view that academic programs are shifting towards a vocational foundation to equip students with the knowledge and skills to get ahead in the business world. Based on the above response it can therefore be argued that students in tourism higher education need to acquire extensive technical skills along with an academic discipline, as well as the skills required for the world of work and to be attractive to employers. Moscardo and Norris (2003) also identified the need for academics in tourism programs to develop teaching

strategies that will stimulate and inspire students, resulting in better student retention and better throughput rate.

4.5.2 Benefits and constraints of educational tours with regards to student's learning experiences

Here the researcher wanted to find out the benefits and constraints of the tours as the lecturer is more experienced with the planning and has been travelling with the tours with the students since the tours were introduced in the tourism department. This is how he responded:

"Let me start with the benefits. There is nothing more fulfilling than seeing students experiencing certain things for the first time. Not only is it a benefit for students because of the nice time that comes with being on tour, but the classroom comes to life, you'll find students asking, and so this is how it is? You walk into an exam, you pick up the scripts and start marking. You will see the examples that they give, those are the things they learnt from the tour. Coming back into class from the tour, the interactions become vibrant. We will start discussing some of the things that happened from the tour. The tours bring worth, the learning becomes more fruitful and richer than before. When it comes to constraints, my major challenge is behaviour. Student's behaviour becomes a problem to an extent that sometimes it diminishes the ability to learn.

As lecturers we have seen, and we have tried to keep alcohol away from the students, but students will always be students. With this we tend to lose a lot of time that is meant for learning. One example is that of a student who died from drowning in a swimming pool. The instruction was there that they should not drink alcohol, let alone going to swim when they are drunk, but all that was lost because that particular student might have not heard the instruction because maybe he was already drunk. The second challenge I have is time. Sometimes we plan the tours to clamp all these activities in a short period of time. Remember we still need to come back to the classroom, we have other duties other than the tours, not to mention the budget that is allocated to the tours".

The above response stating the value and benefits as well as challenges that come with educational tours is supported by a number of researchers from the literature. These tours are viewed as one of the most effective methods to get tourism students to experience and at best understand the tourism concepts. Krakowka (2012) in his findings argues that educational tours are considered an important way of encouraging deep learning as students get so much of seeing and experiencing things for themselves.

The findings of his study also reveal that embedding lectures in the real world increases the relevance of what students are learning. He made an example that discussing different cultural groups in the classroom will not be as beneficial as using the real world to teach students this concept. Wong and Wong (2009) support this finding arguing that travelling provides tourism students' opportunities to encounter people from different cultures, and through such interactions and exchanges people will better understand each other. It can therefore be argued that educational tours can enhance the curriculum and offer a first-hand experience to students which then makes learning more meaningful and memorable. From this response it can be concluded that educational tours can establish the significance of what is being learnt in the classroom.

As much as educational tours can have so much value and many benefits, they can be so challenging at times. To support what this participant is stating, Ritchie and Coughlan (2004) opined that in a classroom environment, the teacher has the authority and can maintain the structure. However, this all disappears on the tour despite the teacher's effort and the tour might result in little to no educational impact. They argue that discipline becomes an issue as some students behave badly or sit on their phones throughout the trip. The issue of bad behaviour is highlighted by this participant mentioning the issue of alcohol abuse as one major barrier to learning and one that also put the lives of students in so much danger. Ritchie and Coughlan (2004) also mentioned the issue of time, stating that time constraints might discourage teachers from planning educational tours as there is not enough time to accommodate

the tours in the school time-table. They also mentioned the issue of financial support stating that a lack of monetary support from the schools can put a damper on the thought of educational tours. They argue that medical risks and the issues of safety are also a concern for both teachers and parents as students could get injured during the trip or get motion sickness on the bus. One example is mentioned by this participant, the incident of the student who drowned in the swimming pool because he was drunk.

4.5.3 Alignment of educational tours with learning outcomes of the tourism program

This question was asked to check whether the objectives of going on educational tours do match the objectives and outcomes of the tourism management program. The lecturer confirmed that there is indeed an alignment and responded referring to the course Tourism Development which is the course he is teaching in the department. The following is the lecturer's response:

"On this one I will refer to my course which is Tourism Development. The beauty about Tourism Development is that we look into a general development of not only tourism. We look at social impacts, environmental impacts, and economic impacts. Beyond that we look into tourism planning, policies and so forth. The beauty when we get to those tours is that students get to see everything we talk about in class. We want them to be conversant with the development of tourism, the protection of the societies, conservation and maintaining integrity of the environment. Them being on tour means that they get the opportunity to such things in real life situation. The students start looking at surrounding communities and when we get back to class they will start engaging and have discussions around what happened when they were on tour. Everything we put in our outcomes and what we intend to achieve is better understood by the students, even the reading material begin to make more sense. It moves from being me who comes up with examples, and they start linking what we are teaching with real life situations from what they learnt from the tours. For example, one time we were discussing social impacts, the students came up with Mzoli's

tshisanyama in Cape Town, they discussed positive impacts like the business opportunities in houses around that place, influenced by the number of people that visit the place from around South Africa and internationally. On the discussion some of them mentioned the noise that is affecting some neighbours who do not benefit economically, from there they started discussing air pollution, mentioning the smell around that area, apparently one student saw a guy urinating against the wall of one yards closer to Mzoli's place. That is how vibrant our class discussions become, we will be discussing a certain issue and the students will start interrogating that raising other concerning issues, resulting in a very rich and fruitful debate, which then makes our interactions very interesting".

These findings reveal that when students get to a destination, they do not only have the opportunity to appreciate the splendour of the local sights, but they are also exposed to the various negative impacts of tourism such as environmental degradation, pollution and they also better understand the course content and link what they learn in class with reality. Myers and Jones (2004) are in agreement with this, arguing that educational tours can act as an inverted curriculum experience for students, to engage them and promote learning within a professional content. They opined that experiential learning activities are employed in university classrooms to enrich and deepen learning.

4.5.4 Impact of discontinuation of educational tours on the tourism program

It was deemed necessary to find out the views of the tourism department about the impact that discontinuing the tours would have on the tourism program, and this is what the participant had to say:

"That is an external factor from the department. The university management will take that decision and as the department we will have to follow. For the department it will be a very disappointing decision, one thing you need to remember, unlike other universities that are in the cities, universities that have these places at their disposal,

like CPUT, UJ, DUT etc, where they can always take students to these places with little or at no cost all together, our university is located in rural surroundings and travelling is necessary for us to visit these places. Some of the universities I am talking about even have fully operational restaurants that are run by the department around campus, we do not even have a tuck shop. This means that we will be sending students blindly to the industry and that will affect student's employability. This will also affect the in-service training module because that will mean it would be their first time interacting with the industry. Remember we not doing this for ourselves, we are doing this for the industry. This will strain the relationships we have with industry people. The relationship with industry is already under threat because industry does not respect universities anymore. The university will be taking away the only thing that is exposing the university to the industry. So I would say, let us not make any miss of the industry that would be catastrophic".

These findings confirm the value and benefits of educational tours as discussed by the various researchers in the literature review in chapter two. The benefits range from the positive impact these tours bring academically as well as the benefits with the tourism industry. Krakowka (2012) argues that educational tours serve as the hands-on learning experience while destinations are regarded as the laboratory for tourism students. He further states that lecturers can teach subjects more efficiently and students can witness how theoretical knowledge is applied to practical knowledge.

Scarce (1997) is also in support of the participant's response on the discontinuation of educational tours as an extra-curriculum activity from the university under study, stating that educational tours are lived social events that become ways of knowing, as they offer enriching experiences that are central to successful education. With all these arguments supporting the value of educational tours for tourism students, it would indeed devalue the program to remove such activities from this university, more especially when you consider the geographic location and the type of students that enrol in this university. The university's background is discussed in detail in chapter one.

4.6 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

From the focus group interviews the researcher wanted to find out from the student's perspective the values and benefits of educational tours. The researcher wanted to know the influence and the contribution of these tours in the student's learning experiences, together with the connection of these tours with the courses that the students are doing in the tourism degree. The findings revealed that the students value and appreciate having the educational tours as part of their learning experience, stating different factors on how they benefit from these tours and how they would feel if the tours can be discontinued. The students' arguments ranged from the benefits they receive academically to the opportunity of engaging with the tourism industry. This is a very powerful statement, considering Echtner & Jamal's argument that within tourism education there is a huge risk of weak theories and uneven approaches used in teaching that inhibit the students to better understand tourism related concepts (Echtner & Jamal, 1997) The students also mentioned that the educational tours had helped them to understand tourism concepts better that they did before they went on the tours. This realisation clearly supports the above view by Echtner & Jamal.

The students highlighted the confidence that comes with these tours in preparing them for the workplace. The findings from the lecturer's interviews reveal that for the tourism department in the university under study, there is a great value that comes with having educational tours as an extra-curriculum activity. This view is also supported by the students from their focus group interviews. The issue of the university being located in rural areas was raised as a major issue for the tourism program with majority of the students coming from rural backgrounds. This statement proves that including educational tours as one of the experiential and active learning approaches in the tourism department was the best decision. This is supported by Haak, HilleRisLambers, Pitre and Freeman (2011) when they argued that active learning activities work best for underprepared students who come from poor backgrounds.

The lecturer mentioned the great benefit that comes with the tours, stating that class interactions became more fruitful and rich after the students came back from their first tour. He also mentioned some serious constraints that come with the planning and financing the tours. Bad behaviour by the students was mentioned as the major challenge that even put student's lives in danger and can sometimes inhibit the desired learning. Time was also mentioned as another barrier, stating that a lot of activities have to be squeezed in a short period of time. The lecturer mentioned the disappointment that would come with the discontinuation of educational tours for the tourism department, mentioning that these tours are the only link they have with the tourism industry and he mentioned the importance of having a relationship with tourism industry as the tourism department.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter laid down the findings of the study. This was done by presenting results from the focus groups, followed by results from individual interviews. Each of the results were discussed in a form of a summary. The results indicated that educational tours are indeed a useful and needed learning mechanism and are very useful in the learning experience of tourism students for the sampled university. The next chapter discusses the limitations of the study. Recommendations are also discussed based on the limitations highlighted, followed by the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

This study was conducted with the aim of exploring educational tours as a learning mechanism in the learning experience of tourism students. Data was gathered from both the students and the lecturers in the Tourism Management department from the sampled institution of higher learning. Some important aspects emerged out of the data collected and will be summarised as follows:

The students and the lecturers were asked about their perceptions pertaining to the contribution of educational tours to the students' learning in general as well as the students' learning experiences. The main objective here was to ascertain the value of educational tours in relation to the learning experiences of tourism students at the university under study. Both the students and the lecturers perceived educational tours as a valuable learning mechanism to the professional development of the students. Various benefits of educational tours were identified, such as educational tours bringing theory and practice together and therefore promoting active or deep learning.

The study seeks to also find the relationship that is there between educational tours and the perceived outcomes or achievements for the tour. The students identified that embarking on educational tours has a huge impact in assisting them to understand the tourism concepts better. They also mentioned the networking opportunities that come with these tours and therefore creating better chances for them to find job opportunities. All participants argued that these tours are the only link they have with the tourism industry and therefore excluding them as an extra-curriculum activity will devalue the tourism program in this rural university. Furthermore, a question about the challenges related to educational tours that can affect the educational experience of the students was asked with an objective of identifying those challenges.

Constraints and barriers to educational tours including student behaviour and limited funding that may inhibit learning were also highlighted.

5.2 LIMITATIONS

This study confined itself to Tourism Management students and lecturers of only one institution of higher learning from the number of universities that offer Tourism Management in South Africa.

In Walter Sisulu University Tourism Management is offered in the Ibika Campus and Buffalo City Campus but only the Ibika Campus was included for the purpose of the current study. Due to constraints such as time, budget and the need for co-operation from participants, the study could only limit itself to the second year students and two lecturers from Tourism Management and could not include the first and the third year students. Had both campuses been included as well as all the levels of the tourism degree, maybe the views and experiences will be different and the feedback would be richer.

The study only considered the practical component of the tourism degree and excluded the theoretical component. Students involved in the study were presently enrolled for the degree during the actual study even though those students who were graduated would have some enriching and more fruitful contributions for the study.

After the sample was chosen, the study was supposed to have three focus group interviews and two individual interviews with the lecturers. Only two focus groups and one lecturer were available for participation due to different reasons that were discussed with the researcher.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were formulated as a result of the limitations of this study, the literature reviewed and the findings.

Further research can be conducted when the group of students who participated in this study enter their profession as tourism industry professionals to check whether educational tours actually brought the perceived value to their learning experiences. Further research can also be conducted for students from the other campus, Buffalo City Campus. It will also be unique to conduct this kind of research from other faculties around this university who also do educational tours to see if these tours have the same impact they have for tourism students.

Considering the value and benefits that come with these educational tours, it would also be recommended that even the other institutions of higher learning who offer tourism degrees to consider using these tours as part of their active learning strategies. These tours can be very expensive and time consuming, however this can be managed by trying to infuse the costs on the students' fees and perhaps even consider doing the tours during academic recess. It would also be another option to consult with higher education ministry and the tourism industry to see how they can be of assistance in terms of financing the educational tours in higher education.

It would also be very interesting to further explore the barriers and constraints of educational tours and how they can be addressed, as the findings revealed that student behaviour can pose danger to the students' lives and can also inhibit the desired learning on the tour.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This study explored educational tours as a learning mechanism in the learning experience of tourism students. This was a very interesting study and it brought so much insight about the educational tours. One of the highlights was the conceptual framework proposed by Wong and Wong (2008) that described the elements that enhance student learning through educational tours. One has been involved in organising the tours but it has never occurred to take into account the importance of bringing value to the exercise and thereby insuring that the best learning takes place. The researcher had underestimated the value and the impact of these tours to the

students, but during the focus group interviews and seeing the way the students were so passionate when presenting themselves it became clear that indeed educational tours are very necessary especially for students coming rural environments. All the research questions for the purpose of the study were addressed together with the objectives for the study. From both the students' and the lecturers' perspectives, these tours proved to be a valuable learning mechanism to the student's professional development as aspiring tourism industry professionals as they are a way of linking theory with practical, which in turn makes the students to better understand the tourism concepts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



06 October 2017

Ms Kowazo Cony Poponi (Z15081616)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Poponi,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1749/017M

Project title: Educational Tours as the learning experience of Tourism students: Tourism Management Walter Sisulu University

Approval Notification – Expedited Approval

In response to your application received on 18 September 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Ruth Searle
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
Cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4605 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX B

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 17 August 2017

Dear Participants

My name is Kowazo Cony Poconi from Walter Sisulu University, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Ibika Campus. My contact details are: Cell-0824494319, Office: 0474016135 and Email: kpoponi@wsu.ac.za. I am currently studying Masters in Higher Education with the University of KwaZulu Natal.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on Educational tours as a learning mechanism in the learning experience of tourism students: Tourism Management Walter Sisulu University. The aim and purpose of this research is to investigate the contribution of educational tours to the learning experience of tourism students. The study is expected to involve thirty second year students in Tourism Management and two lecturers from the department in Ibika Campus, Butterworth. It will involve the following procedures: three focus groups of ten students per group and individual interviews for the lecturers. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be thirty minutes for both focus group interviews and individual interviews.

There are no unforeseen risks and/ or discomforts identified in your involvement in the study and the study will provide no direct benefits to participants. The study will contribute to the understanding of the value of educational tours as part of the curriculum.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number_____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 0824494318 or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and Research Supervisor, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Research Supervisor

Dr Ruth Searle

School of Education

Howard College

Email: mwsearle@mweb.co.za

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in these interviews will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about thirty minutes per session.
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.

- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

CONSENT (Edit as required)

I _____ (Name) have been informed about the study that involves research on Educational tours as a learning mechanism in the learning experience of tourism students: Tourism Management Walter Sisulu University conducted by Ms Kowazo Poponi.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study (add these again if appropriate).

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at email: kpoponi@wsu.ac.za.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private

Bag

X

54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

_____	_____
Signature of Participant	Date

_____	_____
Signature of Witness	Date
(Where applicable)	

_____	_____
Signature of Translator	Date

APPENDIX C

For:

Prepared by:
Mr T Setokoe Tourism Department
Ibika Campus



MANAGEMENT REPORT- TOURS 2015

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform _____ about the tours for the Department of Tourism Management to be undertaken in the year 2015 at the back of the unrests that happened on campus.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

Tourism has become a fiercely competitive business. For tourism destinations the world over, as indeed for South Africa, competitive advantage is no longer natural, but increasingly man-made - driven by science, technology, information and innovation. As such, it is not simply the stock of natural resources of South Africa that will determine her competitiveness in tourism, but rather, how these resources are managed and to what extent they are complemented with man-made innovations.

Tourism has been identified by government as a priority sector in its New Growth Plan program. This is mainly due to its significant contributions to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product and the economy. The 1996 Tourism White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa, classified tourism as a "missed opportunity". However, post-apartheid South Africa has witness a significant development in the tourism sector. The country is increasingly seen as a preferred destination with international visitor numbers rising to over 10 million following the successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup in 2010.

Inadequate tourism education, training and awareness was outlined as one of the key constraints or factor that limited the effectiveness of the tourism industry to play a more meaningful role in the national economy. Although several steps have been taken to address this constraint such as universities and other institutions of higher learning offering tourism as a syllabus, much of the offering is theoretical in nature. The aim of this visit is to enable students to apply their theoretical knowledge of major tourism offerings such as Tourism development, management, marketing, and destinations in practical terms. The Western Cape has been chosen because of its popularity with tourists as well as the variety of attractions that it possesses.

Given the above background of the purpose of the tours, an unrest took place following the cancellation of these activities with the institution citing the unavailability of funds to undertake these.

3. CONCLUSION

Attached are initial costs and core activities set aside for the new tour which will be contacted for renewed quotes to suit the current situation. Further information on the actual list of students approved is attached as well.

4. STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

None identified.

5. INTERACTION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The Rectorate

The Faculty

Student Affairs

SRC

Tourism Students

6. RESOURCES AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Human Resources Implications

Falls within the duties of the Department's staff.

6.2 Facilities Implications

Not applicable

6.3 ICT Implications

Not applicable

6.4 Legal Implications

Not applicable

6.5 Labour Relations

Not applicable

6.6 Student Relations

Not applicable

6.7 Communication Implications

Not applicable

6.8 Financial Implications

- 3RD years students should be allowed to go on tour because they will be funded by NSFAS
- The tour fee should be reversed for Hospitality Level I students and should make contributions and fund raise.
- The tour fee should be reversed for Tourism Level I and II and a fundraising exercise should be undertaken.

7. Recommendations

The purpose of the report is to present to the stakeholders the position of the Department and the Campus with regard to the situation on Tourism Educational

and a way forward to resolving the impulse. Given the cancellation of the tour, the Department resolved to reduce the number of days for the tours and also embark on making new reservations indicative of the resolutions which are as follows:

- Third years- 7 days to 5 days
- Second years- 4 days to 2 days
- First years- 2 days to 1 day.

This Report was compiled by:

Mr T Setokoe, HOD – Tourism Department,



FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

*MINUTES OF SPECIAL TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 21 MAY 2015 AT APLIED BOARDROOM AT 14:20 AM*

1. OPENING AND WELCOMING

Mr Cengimbo opened and welcomed everyone and apologised for calling the meeting at such a short notice. The meeting has been prompted by the message coming from the Dean that said please circulate the departmental minutes that you had with the SRC and Tourism student delegation.

1.1 IN ATTENDANCE

Chairperson: Mr V Cengimbo (HOD)

Recording Secretary: Mr N Sigumede

Lecturers: Mr P Fadana, Mr M Mboyi, Mr T Setokoe, Mrs N Mtayisi, Ms T Majiki-Mabandla, Mr V Mlanjana, Ms M Mokoena, Mr L Ndukwana

Tourism & Hospitality Students: Miss S Ngwentle, Miss Z Susela, Mr KS Gxabhu, Miss Z Tunzi

SRC: Miss N Ganyile, Mr M Nkelebisa, Miss KN Gwanya, Mr Jaza

2 LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Ms M Dlamini

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA

Agenda was confirmed

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

None

4.1 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None



FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

*MINUTES OF SPECIAL TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 21 MAY 2015 AT APLIED BOARDROOM AT 14:20 AM*

Ms Mokoena presented the budget as follow:

Third Years

- The budget for 2015 tour is not yet ready because the tour is going to take place after the third years are finished writing their June examination. **For noting**
- The budget that you see in front of you is the tour cost for last year when hospitality was merged with the Zamukulungisa. **For noting**
- All the hospitality students are funded by NSFAS and that they need to be allowed to go on tour. **For noting**

First Years

- The first years will have a day tour trip to East London
- The activities for the first years are free, the only thing that is done is to make appointment with the Hotels and the Hospitals. **For noting**
- Catering in previous years for the day tours was done by students by preparing snacks for the day and are supposed to have their pocket money. **For noting**

Mr Cengimbo said that finance is indicating that the university does not have money and the department according to the system does not have money. He also mentioned the fact that for the 2nd year tour there was money deposited to Forever Resort last year that can be used for accommodation for students. **For noting**

Mr Jaza asked that in the presentation by Mr Setokoe what are they going to do about surplus, secondly are the coded withdrawals going to be done, three is the funding going to finance each and every student going on tour. **For noting**

Mr Setokoe said that according to the meeting with CMC which clearly stated that there will be no cross subsidation of the tours, each level will solely use its budget and clearly what will be left in the budget will stay in the coffers of the university. About the reversal of the tour component, it is the responsibility of finance and they are going to see how they deal with that. **For noting**



FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

*MINUTES OF SPECIAL TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 21 MAY 2015 AT APLIED BOARDROOM AT 14:20 AM*

Mr Gxabhu asked whether the 106 000 is it going to be raised by students alone, if that is the case that was not agreed in the meeting with the Campus Rector. **For noting**

The SRC and student delegation requested a caucus and that was granted by the meeting.

RESOLUTIONS

Mr Jaza said that they are happy with the development that came up in this meeting and that in their caucus they agreed that:

- For level one Tourism & Hospitality the tours component be reversed
- Students agreed to fundraise for 60 000 for accommodation in the 1st years tour for Tourism
- Request that the University fundraise for 31 800 in the 1st year tour for Tourism

Ms Ganyile supported the SRC and student delegation in that:

- They propose that the presentation for the Actual budget for Tourism tours for 3rd years and 2nd years be used for tours.
- Hospital 3rd and 1st years be allowed to go on tour

Mr Cengimbo to inform the Facex and CMC about on all these resolutions and the amount in Forever Resorts.
Date of the next meeting
To be advised

Action: Mr Cengimbo

6. CLOSURE

Mr Cengimbo declared the meeting closed at 16:00 pm

MINUTES APPROVED AND SIGNED ON ___THIS DAY OF _____2015

CHAIRPERSON

SECRETARY



FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

*MINUTES OF SPECIAL TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 21 MAY 2015 AT APLIED BOARDROOM AT 14:20 AM*

Second Years

Actual

- Actual budget figures prepared before Management said there is no money for tours.
- On that budget students approved by NSFAS are 33 and each student is charged R4 000 in fees which amounts to the total of R132 000. **For noting**
- The Catering, accommodation and Activities total to R16 600 and that is deducted from R132 000 and there will be a deficit of R36 600 **For noting**

Revised

- Revised budget figures when students fundraised for tours.
- Proposed that 85 students will contribute R1 000 towards the tour which will amount to the total of R85 000. **For noting**
- The Catering, accommodation and Activities total to R114 306 and that is deducted from R85 000 and there will be a deficit of R29 306 **For noting**

First Years

Actual

- Since the tour for the level ones is not funded by NSFAS according to the information at hand, the situation forces that they should raise funds for the tour. **For noting**
- Budget figures when students fundraised for tours.
- Proposed that 106 students will contribute R1000 towards the tour which amounts to the total of R106 000. **For noting**
- The Catering, accommodation and Activities total to R91 800 and that is deducted from R106 000 and there will be a remaining surplus of R14 200 **For noting**

All these presentation are the proposal by the department



FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

*MINUTES OF SPECIAL TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 21 MAY 2015 AT APLIED BOARDROOM AT 14:20 AM*

5. NEW MATTERS

5.8 TOURS

Mr Cengimbo said there were meetings that were held in between the strike to attend to the impasse; these included the SRC, Student affairs, the Deans of the faculties, Campus Management committee and the department as a whole. It happened that the representation during that time be Tourism, in fact Hospitality was supposed to sit and be represented in those meetings.

Mr Setokoe presented the budget for Tourism as follow:

Third Years

Actual

- Actual budget figures prepared before Management said there is no money for tours.
- On that budget students approved by NSFAS are 38 and each student is charged R6 500 in fees which amounts to the total of R247 000. **For noting**
- The Catering, accommodation and Activities total to R207 854 and that is deducted from R247 000 and there will be a remaining surplus of R39 146 **For noting**

Revised

- Revised budget figures prepared after Management said there is no money for tours.
- On that budget students approved by NSFAS are 38 and each student is charged R6 500 in fees which amounts to the total of R247 000. **For noting**
- The Catering, accommodation and Activities total to R112 676 and that is deducted from R247 000 and there will be a remaining surplus of R134 324 **For noting**

APPENDIX D



RECTOR: BUTTERWORTH CAMPUS

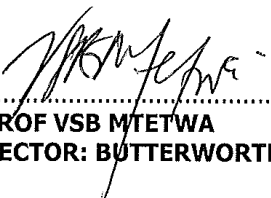
Private Bag X 3182, Butterworth
Tel: (047) 401 6205/6333
e-mail: vsbmtetwa@wsu.ac.za

Memorandum

TO : Miss Kowazo Poponi
FROM : Rector: Butterworth Campus
DATE : 20 October 2016
Subject: **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE CAMPUS**

This serves to confirm that you have been given permission to conduct research in the Campus.

Yours sincerely



.....
PROF VSB MTETWA
RECTOR: BUTTERWORTH CAMPUS