Desert tourists experiences in Namibia: A Netnographic Approach

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Desert tourists experiences in Namibia:
A Netnographic Approach

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Abstract

This paper employed a netnographic methodology to reconnoitre tourists' experiences with regard to their visit to the Namib Desert's Dune 7 in Walvis Bay, Namibia. Online generated content on TripAdvisor was examined for the purposes of classifying the factors influencing visitation, their positive and memorable experiences, challenges as well as the positive aspects of recommendation. The data that were used in this paper include 88 online reviews/narratives pertaining to their experiences with regard to visiting Dune 7. The findings revealed that, the key motivations for visiting the Namib Desert's Dune 7 include education and learning, escapism, purposeful motives, reminiscence and entertainment motivations. More so, the tourists used the following words to evaluate their desert experiences in the context of Dune 7: "amazing experience", "great experience with friendly and professional service", "superb experience", "fun", "authentic experience", "self-beneficial experience", "novel experience", "awesome", "sense of accomplishment", "felt happy", "worth climbing", "refreshing experience", "mesmerizing experience", "therapeutic experience", "country experience", "great food at restaurant", "rewarding experience" and a "safe place". A few of challenges were also identified that could affect the overall experiences of future tourists to the site. An understanding of the motivations and challenges is important for the development of sustainable tourism in desert environments in Namibia. Further research is however required for other destinations such as Sossusvlei as well as other desert attractions in the region. Data gathered in this study was extracted from TripAdvisor and future studies must also extract data using other platforms such Facebook.

Keywords: desert tourism, experiences, Namib Desert, netnography, TripAdvisor

Introduction

This study explores the desert tourists' experiences as represented in the tourists' online reviews on Trip Advisor of the world's oldest Desert, the Namib Desert. The tourism destination which forms the focus of this present study is Walvis Bay, the fourth biggest city in Namibia. Walvis Bay is not only Namibia's prime tourism destination but is also host to the country's largest port. The destination is greatly accessible, both by road and air. The destination has an interesting and unique geographic setting given its exciting and contrasting sceneries – on one side is the Namib Desert (which forms the thrust of this study) and on the other side of Walvis Bay is a gigantic lagoon and harbour flowing from the Atlantic Ocean. These landscapes provides visitors with uncommon sightseeing opportunities in Namibia. Other tourism activities that are on offer in Walvis Bay include various water-related activities such as shore angling, boat angling, shark

angling, boat cruises, sightseeing, photographic, sea kayaking and surfing. Land activities in Walvis Bay include sandwich harbour, sightseeing tours, desert sightseeing tours, 4X4 sand dune driving tours, quad biking tours, camel riding, dune hand gliding, dune boarding, dune skiing, guided educational tours, visits to the Topnaar people and living desert tours among others.

There is a substantial growth of desert tourism as a niche form of tourism (Atkinson, 2016:199). This suggest that, desert tourism destinations are becoming popular. Desert tourism is a niche form of tourism, where specific types of people, usually minority tourists enjoy visiting unusual kinds of places, which offer location specific attractions and activities. The tourism sector in Namibia is a major industry that has a total contribution of N$7.2 billion toward the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Namibia as a tourism destination receives slightly over a million tourists per annum. The Namib Desert, is considered a major tourist attraction, particularly among tourists from Germany, who constitute 17% of the total number of tourists to Namibia based on the 2012/2013 data (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 2016:6). 17% is by far the largest long-haul market of tourists to Namibia as a desert tourism destination (Atkinson, 2016). Other significant long-haul source markets for the Namib Desert as a tourism attraction include United Kingdom, Italy and France. The Desert's key African source markets include South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Desert tourism, principally in the last few epochs, has begun to be accepted as niche tourism attractions (Atkinson, 2016). Desert destinations such as Negev Bedouin, Dubai and Israel have managed to receive thousands of tourists in a calendar year. With regard to Israel as desert tourism destination, tourists have been attracted by the destination's unique archaeological sites, geological structures and landscapes (Atkinson, 2016). Uriely *et al.,* (2002) found that, tourists to Israel as desert destination tourism are engaged in extreme tourist activities that include long distance hiking, rock climbing and off-road driving. In Negev Bedouin, desert tourism has been long recognised as an important tourism asset and the desert forms Negev's key tourism (Dinero, 2002; Reichel *et al.,* 2008).

The economy of Namibia as a country is largely dominated by mining (Nyakunu and Rogerson, 2014; Atkinson, 2016). Nature-based tourism in Namibia is growing (Nyakunu and Rogerson, 2014). However, less academic attention has been put in exploring the experiences of desert visitors in the Namibian context. Studies on tourism experiences in an African context have been limited (Mkono, Markwell and Wilson, 2012), and have mostly been done in the context of food experience (see Mkono *et al.,* 2012; Mkono, 2012, 2013). Therefore, it is important to note that, the Namib Desert which forms the focus of this study is of specific importance, mainly because of a general lack of desert tourism experiences in an African setting. The attempt to explore desert visitors' experiences is timely and worthy with regard to the Namibian tourism literature. The findings of this study are therefore crucial in helping Namibia as a tourism destination to craft destination management strategies that are aimed at enhancing the tourists' desert experiences. The documentation of key memorable experiences of tourists to the Namib Desert is crucial for destination managers and marketers in Namibia as they will influence the destination's marketing messages.

Literature review

Quan and Wang's structural model of tourists' experience
According to Mkono (2013), the study by Quan and Wang conducted in 2004 was done at the backdrop of a dearth in research with regard to food in a tourism context. Since then, literature on tourism experiences with regard to food experiences has been progressively accumulating (Mkono, 2013). However, it appears there is a literature gap in terms of the documentation of the experiences of tourists in the context of arid tourism destinations. The Namib Desert as a tourism destination is largely unexplored in this context. The knowledge of the importance of tourism experiences is actually critical in a destination context.

Quan and Wang (2004:300) structural model shows that there are two dimensions of tourism experience. The two dimensions of the tourism experience include the peak touristic experience and the supporting consumer experiences. Dimension of peak tourism experience, according to Quan and Wang (2004:298) denotes a situation whereby tourists experiences something that is different from their daily lives. It is imperative to note that, depending on the circumstances of the tourist, different elements of the tourism experience can either be supporting or peak tourism experiences (Quan and Wang, 2004). These two dimensions therefore shows that the concept of tourism experience is relatively complex. The definition by Oh *et al.,* (2007) shows that there are a lot of elements that are involved to explain the ultimate outcome of the touristic experiences. The construction of the tourist experience hinges on a number of factors that include among others the social aspects, the peak experience and consumerist aspects (Quan and Wang, 2004).

Tourism experience

Tourism experiences are subjective mental state felt by tourists during a service encounter (Otto and Ritchie, 1996). Oh, Fiore and Jeoung, (2007) define the tourist experience as an experience that include everything that a tourist experiences at a tourism destination, including accommodation, the sense of local hospitality, other tourists, transport and the level of service provided to make travel to and with the destination easy to navigate and enjoyable, the range of attractions within the destination and the types of experiences that are associated with such activities and the availability of local food and drinks and culinary-gastronomic experiences. Kim, Ritchie and McCormick (2012) argue that, tourism experiences represents the novel yardstick that characterise the product offering of today's destination managers and tourism businesses.

With the rise in global competition among tourism destinations, tourism experiences are also becoming an imperative source of competitiveness as noted by Kim and Ritchie (2014). In addition, the experiences of a tourist are crucial in the sense that, they also influence tourists' decisions with regard to loyalty and repeat visitation (Sthapit and Coudounaris, 2017). Tourism experiences literature in the context of African tourism destinations is largely scarce (Mkono, 2013) and more so in the context of arid destinations like Namibia. It is therefore crucial for this study to document the memorable experiences that desert tourists have with regard to the Namib Desert as such information is crucial in predicting the travel behaviour of tourists in the future such as repeat visitation and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Hung, Lee and Huang, 2016). Therefore, it is clear that, tourism experiences are crucial in terms of future travel decisions.

Pine and Gilmore (1998) note that, there are four groupings of the tourism experience and these include entertainment, education, aesthetics and escapism. Loureiro (2013:3) notes that, crucial factors that explain a memorable tourism experience must be exciting, involving and build personal attachment to an experience. Loureiro (2014:3) acknowledges that, there is need for more research with regards to tourism research as a way of confirming the factors that explains the quality of experience that has been advanced by Pizam (2010). Considering this gap, the purpose of this study is to analyse the travel behaviour and experiences of tourists.

Methodology

A netnographic approach was followed in examining the reviews that tourists made with regard to their experiences about Dune 7 as a desert tourism attraction. The netnographic approach is relatively a new form of research methodology that gained prominence since the late 1990s (Kozinets, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2006; Kozinets *et al.,* 2008). Therefore, netnography is a comparatively an innovative qualitative method of research that was advanced precisely for the purposes of exploring the behaviour of consumers in virtual spaces (Mkono, 2013). The netnographic approach entails the examination of computer-generated text that is collected from relevant online sources (Mkono, 2013). This method of research is still in its infancy (Mkono,

2013) and is yet to be fully acclamatised to different areas of tourism research. The stream of netnographic studies that have been published in prominent tourism journals have been on the increase in recent years (*see*, Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2012; Dwivedi, 2009; Janta and Ladkin, 2009; Watson, 2008; Woodside *et al.,* 2007; Sthapit, 2017; Mkono, 2012, 2013). However, the majority focused on food experiences and well as memorable hotel experiences, leaving other aspects such as desert tourism experiences insufficiently explored.

A total of 88 online tourist reviews of Dune 7 in Walvis Bay, Namibia were used in this study. The reviews were downloaded from TripAdvisor.com. (https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g298358-d8066138-r279179575-Dune_7-Walvis_Bay_Erongo_Region.html). Being the first study on desert tourism experiences in a Namibian tourism context, the study was deemed exploratory. Based on this, the data that was employed in this study is expressive of the aspect being studied and cannot be deemed to be comprehensive. The study setting, that is, Dune 7 (Fig.1), was selected because of its proximity to the coast and the large number of online reviews that were posted on TripAdvisor. These large number of online reviews made the netnographic methodology to be appropriate. Dune 7 also attracts both local and international tourists. Based on this, reporting the tourists' experiences is there crucial in understanding the travel behaviour of tourists visiting the desert in Namibia.

The researchers followed the steps that were developed by Braun and Clarke (2013) in analysising the tourists' online reviews with regard to Dune 7 as a tourism attraction. The primary objective was to determine the tourists' experiences of Dune 7 as a desert tourism attraction in Namibia. We also tried to identify the underlying visitation factors as articulated in the tourists' narratives. As part of the methodology that was employed in this study, the researchers firstly read the data they extracted from TripAdvisor many times as a way of understanding the content of the reviews that tourists visiting Dune 7 made. This was followed by coding the data into segments that explained the experiences of tourists. Data were then marked as relevant and subjected to further analysis and modelling. The fourth step involved the classification of the data that was coded in the second step into major themes that explained the experiences and travel behaviour of the tourists. The last step followed in this methodology was concerned with the analysis of themes that were found to be dominant from the data. In the findings section, illustrative comments are presented in quotes for the various themes in order to gain a sense of how visitors viewed their experiences.

Figure.1 Dune 7.
Source: Picture taken by one of the researchers.

Findings

This section of the paper presents the memorable expriences that we found based on the tourists' online narritives of Dune 7 as a desert attraction that we reviewed. These experiences are illustrated by means of short quotations from the data we gathered from Trip Advisor (https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g298358-d8066138-r279179575-Dune_7-Walvis_Bay_Erongo_Region.html). We identified 4 major components (Fig. 2) regarding the travellers' desert experiences and these include:

- Reasons for visitation
- Key positive experiences
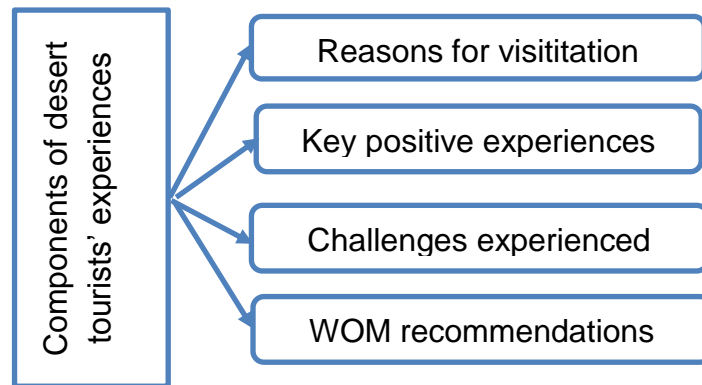- Challenges experienced
- WOM recommendations

Figure 2: Conceptual framework of the desert tourists' experiences

Four (4) groupings emerged from the data on the experiences of tourists. These were, reasons for visitation, key positive experiences, challenges experienced and word-of-mouth recommendations . Before classifying these reviews of the tourists into groups, we also looked at how the tourists described Dune 7. There were several references to the difficulty of climbing the Dune as well as a good tourism resource that can also be used for health reasons. The description of the of the Dune as an environment for exercising and health workouts was a recurrent description of the site. The following narratives were therefore provides the description of Dune 7 as a tourism attraction.

> It is quite a hard climb to the top. It took us 15 minutes to get to the top of the dune. Definitely a challenging activity (Review 1)

> Best place to test your body fitness to climb up one of the highest dune in Namibia. (Review 11)

> Definitely a cardio workout to get to the top (Review 21).

> The climb is a workout but it's worth it. (Review 36)

Gilmore and Pine (2002) argue that escapism is an underlying element of the tourism experience. Tourists' online reviews showed that Dune 7's location gives them a new meaning. This description of the dune has a conceptual and practical relevance toward the development of meaningful desert tourism in Namibia in general and around the Walvis Bay.

> You don't have to climb to the top to get a sense of the size of this thing. Real sand and lots of it. And this desert is empty - scarcely a plant of any description to be seen. It gives new meaning to the term arid. (Review 28)

Other tourists described the Dune in terms of what it has to offer. These narratives demonstrated that desert tourists do have an eye for detail and it is generally expected that tourism attractions

should have basic facilities that include restrooms, picnic areas and other recreational facilities. This supports the 6As concepts that were proposed by Buhalis (2000) for competitive tourism destinations. Therefore, amenities are an important aspect that enhances the experiences of tourists visiting the Namib Desert, particularly the Dune 7.

> The destination has restrooms, picnic area, as well as offers the opportunity to have
> a little BBQ (Review 4)

> This dune is free to visit (Review 5)

> It is free, It is fun, It is awesome! (Review 33)

Reasons for visitation

The first component that is linked to tourists' desert experiences explored the reasons why tourists visited the dune. A number of reasons were identified in this study and they were classified under 5 major clusters (Fig. 3). 7% of the data that was reviewed showed that, tourists were motivated to visit Dune 7 as a tourism attraction because they wanted to increase their knowledge about Namibia as a tourism destination (educational purposes) (Fig.3). It was also found that, tourists were visiting Dune 7 because they wanted to fill up the day (escapism purposes) while others indicated that it was part of their excursion/ tour (purposeful visit). The other motivations that emerged from the analysis of data showed that tourists to Dune 7 were motivated by nostalgia (7%) and entertainment (19%).
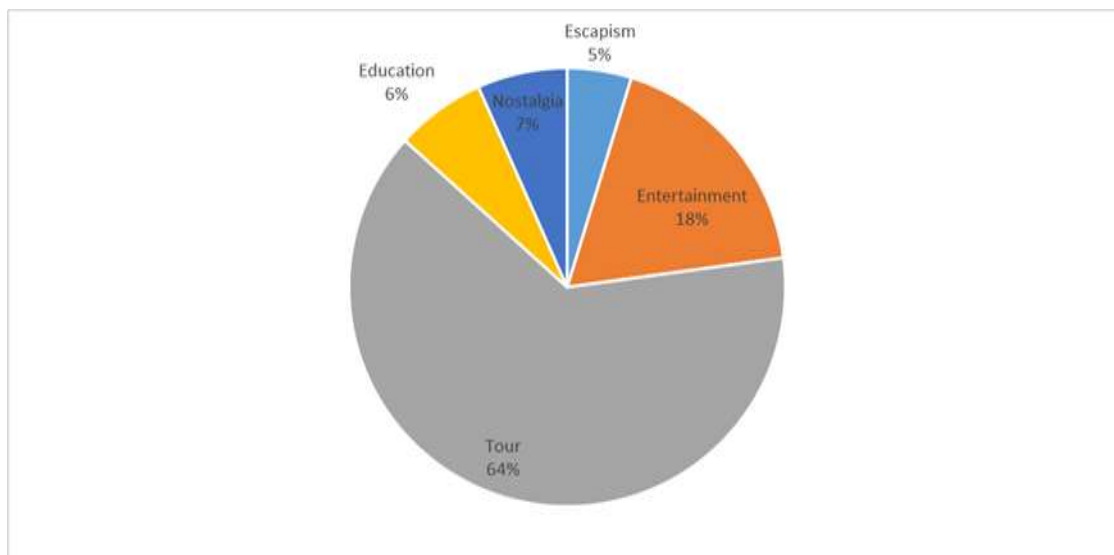

Figure 3: Key motivations for visiting Dune 7 as a desert attraction

The following narratives support the above key motivations for visiting Dune 7 as a a tourism attraction (NB: to avoid the possibility of distorting meanings, the reviews have not been edited for typographical or grammatical errors):

> We left for Walvis Bay with the mission of exploring and know much better about
> Namibia's finest places. (Review 62).

> Really nice place to visit when you need to fill a day or just as an attraction. (Review
> 72).

> It was part of an excursion from QM2 - we stopped off here because it is the highest
> dune in the Walvis Bay area. (Review 12)

> We visited on a tour bus from the cruise port as part of a larger tour. (Review 16)

Just popped by to reminisce, and yes it's still there in all its glory. (Review 24)

As I was born in Walvisbaai and returning after 37 years I had to climb out Dune 7. Lots of nostalgia for me. (Review 32)

We went to Dune 7 to celebrate a friend's birthday. (Review 73)

We climbed to the top of Dune 7 late afternoon of 31 December 2014. We were initially put off by the rowdy parties in the picnic area, but that comes with choosing to see out the year in an area open to the public for picnic and braai- actually it was quite festive in a way. (Review 80)

These motivations confirms the realms of tourism experiences that were conceptualised by Pine and Gilmore (1998, 2002). The motivations are crucial for conceptual and practical relevance toward the development of meaningful desert tourism around Walvis Bay. More so, the key motivations can also be used in the development of marketing messages for the attraction. An understanding of these motivations by the destination managers in Walvis Bay is crucial in enhancing the experiences of tourists.

Key positive experiences

The online reviews that were also extracted from TripAdvisor showed how tourists' reviews attempted to evaluate the "Namibianness" of the desert experience. According to Reisinger and Steiner (2006), the Namibianess of an experience is in itself a socio-culturally contigent perception, that is based on some kind of constructivist line of thinking. What qualifies Dune 7 to be called a great Namibian experience is the construction of individual tourists' perception in interaction with the desert environment (Hollinshead, 2006; Iwashita 2003, Ryan and Gu, 2010; Varlander, 2006). The tourists used the following words to evaluate their desert experiences in the context of Dune 7: "amazing experience","great experience with friendly and professional service", "superb experience", "fun", "authentic experience", "self-beneficial experience", "novel experience", "awesome", "sense of accomplishment", "felt happy", "worth climbing", "refreshing experience", "mesmerizing experience", "therapeutic experience", "country experience", "great food at restaurant", "rewarding experience" and a "safe place"(see Table 1).

Table 1: Positive experiences

Experience description	Frequency(%)
Amazing experience	6(16)
Great experience with friendly and professional service	4(11)
Fun	8(22)
Authentic experience	2(5)
Self-beneficial experience	2(5)
Novel experience	1(3)
Awesome	3(8)
Sense of accomplishment	2(5)
Felt happy	1(3)
Worth climbing	3(8)
Refreshing experience	2(5)
Mesmerising experience	1(3)
Therapeutic	1(3)
Country experience	1(3)
Great food restaurant	1(3)
Rewarding experience	2(5)
Safe place	1(3)
Superb experience	1(3)

The following narratives support some of the above positive experiences with regard to Dune 7 as a tourism attraction:

An amazing 360 degree view of the desert and surrounding land.

It is an amazing experience among other activities that you can book in the area. Great place for families with kids (Review 8).

Absolutely rewarding (Review 17).

It was a huge accomplishment for me to reach the top. Views are amazing. (Review 45).

When I am on the top I have a sense of satisfaction. (Review 22)

First time in this kind of scenery (Desert all around) and it was really fun going up and down the dunes also kind of competing with my friends. (Review 26)

Well organised, friendly and professional service made for a great experience. (Review 39)

Awesome climb up the face and a great challenge for all. So happy I did it. (Review 52).

The chicken fillet and salad at the restaurant was great (Review 34).

Lots of locals having fun and drinking at the bottom but it was totally safe. (Review 47).

Sea sand and salt - Dune 7 is awesome. (Review 29)

Great Namibian experience. (Review 87)

Negative tourism experiences

Research shows that tourism experiences can be either positive or negative (Locher, Yoels, Maurer and van Ells, 2005; Pine and Gilmore, 1998). Tourists, however, remember more of the positive aspects of their tourism experiences than they do with the negative aspects (Wirtz, Kruger, Scollon, and Diener, 2003; Larsen and Jenssen, 2004). Volo (2010), argues that, most tourism studies have only described positive tourism experiences that are conveyed via online reviews. Although there were some positive experiences that were extracted from the online generated content, tourists experienced some challenges with regard to their visit to Dune 7. These challenges contributed towards the negative tourism experience for the visitors. The most dominant challenges that we found from the reviews include aspects such as untidy area, limited and out of order toilet facilities, crowded, noisy, small souvenir shops and controlling guides (Fig. 4).

The tourists' negative experiences with regard to their visit to Dune 7 was stimulated by litter while at the site. This is highlighted by 4 online narratives that are presented below:

Down at the parking lot you find a lot of rubbish. If you go to Sossusvlei skip this dune. (Review 3)

The only thing that leaves a sad aftertaste is the abundance of litter everywhere. There should be dustbins and signs that make visitors aware of their responsibility to keep this amazing place clean for future guests. (Review 6)

I was slightly disappointed with the litter. Glass bottles and empty crisp packets. (Review 37).

The picnic area itself isn't great - a lot of litter, broken glass and in a general state of sorry disrepair. Review 17)

It is clear from the narratives that, litter appears to be a dominant concern for travellers that are visiting Dune 7 as a tourism attraction, suggesting that, even desert tourists are concerned with the environmental sustainability of the resource. Therefore, environmental protection and biodiversity conservation at Dune 7 is critical for a sustainable desert environment that will remain attractive for future generations and visitors.

Further reviews showed that negative experiences were also evoked by limited facilities, unprofessional tour guides and small souvenir shops as highlighted by the following narratives:

> The park has only two bathrooms. (Review 16)

> Unfortunately the guide was very controlling and didn't allow us to really enjoy the experience (Review 2).

> The souvenir shop was small but had a lot of interesting items to bring home. (Review 26)

> The toilets right at bottom of dune were not useable though. (Review 34).
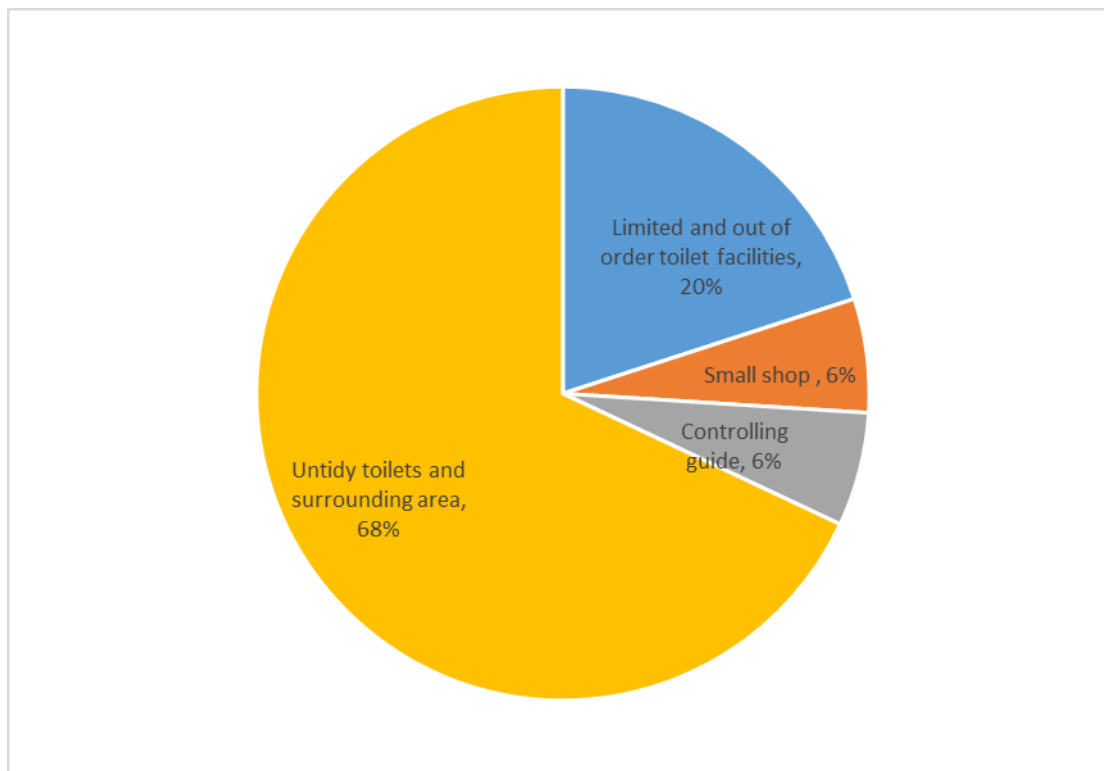

Figure 4: Challenges faced by desert tourists at Dune 7.

WOM recommendations

Hernández-Méndez, Muñoz-Leiva, and Sánchez-Fernández (2013) argue that, tourists's travel arrangements are influenced by friends' and relatives' opinions. The main motivation for tourists to rely more on positive word of mouth recommendations has been necessitated by a decline in terms of consumer trust with regard to both organisations and advertising (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012). WOM offers a way of obtaining significant competitive advantage, hence it is an important aspect within the tourism and hospitality industry (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012). Desert experiences are deemed in this study as intangible tourism products and are therefore difficult to evaluate prior to consumption. Therefore, it was critical for this study to determine whether tourists would recommend other tourists to visit the Dune 7. About 89% suggested that they would recommend to other tourists (see Figure 5).
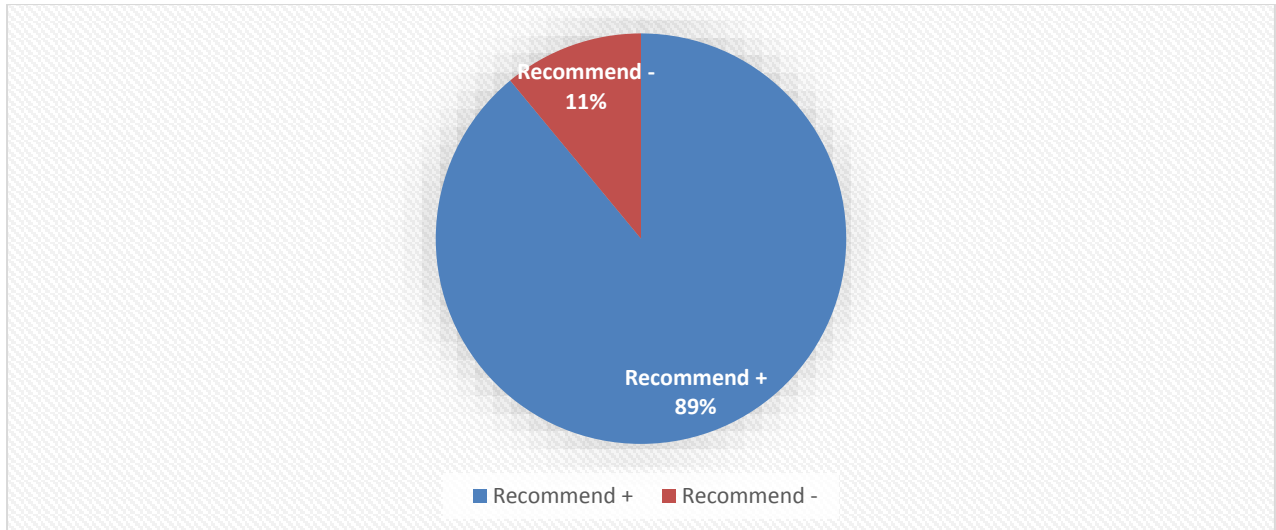
The following narratives support Figure 5:

> This is a great experience. Go for it if you have a chance. (Review 27)

> Go there, you won't regret it. (Review 33)

> Wow, the experience of my life. You need to climb Dune 7 should you go to Walvisbay…. I ask my wife to marry me on top of Dune 7. (Review 25)

> Must do when in Namibia. (Review 44)

> Down at the parking lot you find a lot of rubbish. If you go to Sossusvlei skip this dune (Review 3).

> One of the "must do" items when visiting the coast. (Review 40).

Discussion and implications

The objective of the paper was to examine the expriences of the travellers who visited the Namib Dersert's Dune 7 as represented in the tourists' online reviews that were extracted by the researchers on TripAdvisor. Our findings therefore have both theoretical and practical relevance for other deserts as well as the coastal area of Walvis Bay. Existing studies have explored the experiences of tourists with regard to food (Quan and Wang, 2004; Mkono, 2012, 2013; Mkono *et al.,* 2012) and hotel experiences (Sthapit, 2017). This is despite the fact that there are numerous social media technologies that allows travellers to share their vacation experiences online (Volo, 2010). Theoretically, this study is probably one of the first to have analysed data that is generated from online reviews with regard to the experiences of travellers visiting desert attractions. Therefore, the study filled the gap with regard to vacation experiences of tourists that visits desert attractions. We employed a netnographic approach in examining the vacation experiences of travellers using 88 online reviews extracted from TripAdvisor.

The main components of the tourism experience for travellers visiting the dune as a tourism attraction include the reasons for visitation, key positive experiences, challenges as well as the WOM aspects. Key tourists motivations were identified and these motivations are crucial in the development of key marketing messages. More so, the identified motivations can also be used to enhance destination planning and management aspects of Dune 7 as an arid tourism resource. Therefore, the findings are important as they may asssist and guide destination managers in the designing of products and services that elucidate the best desert tourism experiences Namibia could offer to travellers from the domestic and global market.

Results in this paper largely confirms the research discussed in the literature. When Hasegawa (2010) analysed tourists' satisfaction using multivariate ordered probit approach, his or her results revealed that the satisfaction derived from scenery and meals has the largest influence on the overall satisfaction of tourists. In this study, because 89% of tourists recommended other tourists to visit the dune. It is clear that many tourists enjoyed the experience of visiting Dune 7 as they mentioned the great food served at the restaurant and the beautiful natural scenery.

The fact that the majority of tourists visit on tour means that they are travelling for pleasure and want the best experience they can possibly obtain. The challenges experienced by tourists in this paper need therefore to be addressed by providing clean facilities and a clean site environment. This can be done by providing dustbins or even recruiting people responsible for cleaning. This will in a way provide jobs and income to otherwise jobless people. The study by Buhalis and Amaranggana (2014) argues that understanding the needs, wishes and desires of travellers becomes increasingly critical for the competitiveness of destinations.

The knowledge that there are four realms of tourism experiences may be useful for planners and developers around the coastal area of Walvis Bay and Swakopmund to the immediate north. Current offerings can be analyzed using the parameters of the four realms to determine gaps in the offerings and to identify the underlying themes in a tourism destination. The knowledge is also useful for tour operators who can use the basic premise of the realms of tourism experiences to match available resources with one or more realms of experiences. The parameters of, say, an esthetic experience can be useful in the design of a new offering. Resort operators that seek to add activities for their guests can use the components of the realms of tourism to create new tourism experiences to satisfy guests. However, further exploration of the realms is necessary for the development of travel packages and marketing strategies.

Further research is required for other destinations such as Sossusvlei as well as other desert attractions in the region. Data gathered in this study was extracted from TripAdvisor and future studies must also extracted data using other platforms such as Facebook.

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