

**DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING STRATEGIES OF TOUR OPERATORS IN  
THE PROMOTION OF SMALL TOURISM ENTERPRISES IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

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**MARCH 2025**



**EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING STRATEGIES OF TOUR OPERATORS IN  
THE PROMOTION OF SMALL TOURISM ENTERPRISES IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

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## **DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP**

I, Sandile Henry Myeni, hereby declare that the thesis submitted for the Doctoral Degree in Hospitality and Tourism in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology is my original work. It has not been previously submitted to any institution. All sources and materials used for this study are appropriately cited and referred to in the bibliography list of Higher Education.

The thesis title is

**EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING STRATEGIES OF TOUR OPERATORS IN THE PROMOTION OF SMALL TOURISM ENTERPRISES IN KWAZULU NATAL**

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my beloved spouse, Nonsikelelo Myeni, and my daughters, Thingo Myeni and Nkanyezi Myeni. This one is truly for you.

Your love, strength, encouragement, patience, and unwavering support have been my guiding light, especially during the toughest moments. Without you, my world would have faltered. Your belief in me kept me going, and giving up was never an option.

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**Myeni, Sandile H.**

## ABSTRACT

**BACKGROUND AND AIM:** Marketing strategies play a crucial role in the performance of tour operators and the visibility of small tourism enterprises. Despite their potential to drive local economic development, job creation, and poverty alleviation, small tourism enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal face challenges stemming from ineffective promotional efforts. Guided by the marketing mix framework and the push and pull theory, this study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by tour operators to promote township tourism enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal.

**METHODOLOGY:** The spatial setting of this research was KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa. A descriptive research design was employed to achieve the objectives of the study. The target population comprised N=450 tour operators registered with Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN), and a sample size of n=212 was deemed appropriate for the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 28, as the primary data analysis tool.

**RESULTS:** The findings from the primary study reveal that the current promotional strategies are ineffective. There was a severe lack of digital platforms such as websites and other digital media for marketing, with telephones being the main tool used.

**CONCLUSION:** The study makes a significant contribution by highlighting the need for enhanced marketing intelligence and the adoption of innovative strategies in the tourism sector. It recommends fostering positive social change through strategies that focus on sustainability, long-term profitable growth, brand equity, and competitive advantage to strengthen the domestic tourism sector in South Africa.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Future research should explore the integration of emerging digital marketing technologies and examine collaborative strategies between tour operators and small tourism enterprises to enhance competitive positioning.

**KEYWORDS:** Tour Operators, Marketing Strategies, Small Tourism Enterprises, Performance, Marketing Mix

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>Full Words</b>
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>KZN</b>	KwaZulu-Natal
<b>KZNTA</b>	KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority
<b>OTA</b>	Online Travel Agency
<b>SANDP</b>	South African National Development Plan
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<b>SMMEs</b>	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
<b>SMETS</b>	Small Medium Enterprise Turnaround Strategy
<b>TKZN</b>	Tourism KwaZulu-Natal
<b>UNWTO</b>	United Nations World Tourism Organization

# CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

## 1.1 Introduction

Marketing strategy has a great influence on the performance of tour operators. According to Hikido (2018), the level of attractiveness of a township tourism site is dependent on the effectiveness and quality of marketing strategies associated with it. Alisa and Ridho (2020) view strategic marketing as a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organisation is, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. According to Deveraja and Deepak (2016), the design of township tourism products is changing due to factors such as the growing importance of the internet and the ability of tourists to be involved in the production of their own products/experiences.

Township tourism is currently a growing phenomenon and tour operators are significant stakeholders in the industry. However, there are many challenges which limit tour operators from contributing effectively to the mainstream economy in South Africa. Muldoon and Mair (2022) explain that tour operators have become the curators of townships as museums of cultural production. This view is supported by Leonard and Dladla (2020) who shows that tour operators play an essential role in the presentation and representation of townships.

The township tourism phenomenon is currently being considered as a component of slum tourism where the motives for tourists are to see where impoverished people live (Mukoroverwa & Chiutsi, 2018). According to Muldoon and Mair's (2022) study conducted in Cape Town, 80% of the interviewed tourists perceived their visit to the township as an experience of the 'real Africa' that they feel can only be experienced in the townships (Henama, 2021). Township tourism can be regarded as poverty tourism, whereby poverty is regarded as a tourist attraction (Chili, 2018).

In South Africa, the development of township tourism started before 1994 (the year of liberation from apartheid), but the tours to the townships were often unofficial and perceived as being controversial. Township tours are now formally offered in most cities and towns in South Africa (Mbane & Ezeuduji, 2021).

## 1.2 Background to the study

The tourism industry has experienced significant changes over the years, driven by evolving technologies, shifts in tourist behavior, and external disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. These fluctuations have made it increasingly important for tourism businesses, especially small tourism enterprises and tour operators, to adapt their marketing strategies to stay competitive. As highlighted by Picazo and Moreno-Gil (2018), promotion is central to this process, serving as the key mechanism for informing, persuading, and reminding customers about tourism products and services. Sofronov (2019) underscores that tourism, as a service-based industry, depends heavily on the effective use of the marketing mix, where promotion plays a pivotal role in enhancing visibility and attracting customers.

Tour operators, especially those operating within townships in South Africa, face a unique set of challenges in adapting their marketing strategies to suit both local and international tourist demands. Alegre and Sard (2017) argue that tour operators must prioritize price policies and marketing strategies tailored to new consumer preferences and the changing competitive landscape. The ability to design effective promotional strategies is crucial, particularly when operating in areas like townships where tourism is still evolving (Marin-Pantelescu et al., 2019).

Marketing, defined by Kotler and Keller (2016:45) as “identifying and meeting human and social needs profitably through building demand for products and services,” captures the comprehensive nature of the marketing process. This holistic view of marketing is critical for tour operators as they seek to position their services effectively in the competitive tourism market. As Matikiti, Mpinganjira, and Roberts-Lombard (2018) emphasize, successful marketing is the result of careful planning and the application of modern tools and techniques.

Since the modern travel industry emerged in the 1950s, it has been marked by fluctuating trends influenced by technological advancements, shifting tourist behavior, and global disruptions. This dynamic environment requires tourism stakeholders, including tour operators, to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of their marketing strategies. Myeni’s (2018) research identifies a gap in understanding the effectiveness of marketing strategies used by tour operators to promote township tourism. This study aims to fill that gap by examining how tour operators in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) use marketing mix strategies to enhance the performance of small tourism enterprises in the region.

Tour operators are vital for the success of tourism destinations, and in turn, destinations are crucial for tour operators. Without strong and competitive township tourism products, tour operators would face significant challenges in attracting tourists (Mykola et al., 2020). In South Africa, townships are home to vibrant small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) that form the backbone of local economies, providing employment and fostering entrepreneurial activity (Jili, Masuku, & Selepe, 2017). Township-based enterprises, such as spaza shops, hair salons, and shisanyamas, play an important role in the local economy and create unique tourism opportunities (Griffin & Muldoon, 2020; Urban & Ndou, 2019). As such, the role of marketing strategies in promoting small tourism enterprises within these communities is essential for both the growth of the tourism sector and the broader socio-economic development of townships in KZN.

### **1.2.1 Types of small tourism enterprises**

In South Africa, several types of tourism SMMEs are found in the townships (Bvuma & Marnewick, 2020; Mtshali et al., 2017). A positive tourism destination is influenced not only by elements of activities or products that are thought to have significant impacts but also by other factors such as lodging and transportation (Griffin & Muldoon, 2020; Auala, van Zyl & Ferreira, 2019). Hall and Williams (2019) state that South Africa's travel and tourism sector is organized into three sub-sectors, namely, “accommodation; hospitality and related services; and travel distribution services each of which offers entrepreneurs commercial potential”. The three sub-sectors are discussed below.

- **Accommodation (hotels, apartments, guesthouse)**

Accommodation is the central hub for hosting guests and visitors, where a guest can pay a charge in exchange for a certain level of housing and other services like food and beverages (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019). Services in this subsector include hotels, resort properties, timeshares, bed-and-breakfasts, game lodges, backpackers, and hostels (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019). Piggott-McKellar and McNamara (2017) state that when tourists reach their travel location, they need a place where they can rest and freshen up, therefore, the accommodation industry gives tourists a place to stay temporarily. From an economic viewpoint, accommodation is one of the largest industries in the tourism sector and plays an important role in the tourism industry (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019).

Over the last decade, the hospitality subsector has grown rapidly and is now one of South Africa's fastest-growing subsectors, including services such as eateries, conference venues,

professional catering, and attractions (Harilal and Nyikana, 2019; Piggott McKella and McNamara, 2017). The tremendous expansion of this industry can be attributed to the government of South Africa's promotion of tourism through the ministry of Tourism (Dube, 2020). Hospitality services also include the food and beverage sector, which includes a wide range of national cuisines and service styles (Bvuma & Marnewick, 2020; Harilal & Nyikana, 2019).

- **Travel distribution services (car rental, tour operators, informal buses, and taxi companies)**

The travel subsector facilitates and endorses tourists unrestricted and convenient movement within and between tourist attractions (Bruwer, 2020). One of the most critical aspects of any tourism development is transportation, as tourists need transportation to go to their destinations (Cant & Rabie, 2018). Services in this subsector include tour wholesalers, tour operators, travel agents, tourist guides, and car rental companies (Dube, 2020; Bruwer, 2020). These services represent the central link between tourists and tourism service providers and thus have the power to influence both the demand and supply sides of tourism (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019).

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Marketing strategies are fundamental to the success, competitiveness, and sustainability of small tourism enterprises (STEs), particularly in highly dynamic and competitive environments. According to Daniel (2018), the effective implementation of marketing strategies enables organizations to enhance their market presence and optimize business performance. Empirical studies (Weldegebriel, 2011) affirm that the strategic deployment of marketing initiatives directly influences the growth and sustainability of STEs. However, despite the established importance of marketing, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding the specific impact of these strategies on small tourism enterprises, particularly those operating in township economies within South Africa.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) contribute over 50% to South Africa's GDP and account for approximately 60% of employment (Ramasobana et al., 2017; Cant & Wiid, 2016). Within the tourism sector, marketing mix strategies encompassing product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence are crucial for fostering profitability and long-term sustainability (Dambo & Ishmael, 2023). However, STEs in South Africa, particularly those in township tourism, continue to face significant marketing challenges, leading to a concerning failure rate of 75% (Alisa & Ridho, 2022). This high attrition rate

severely undermines their potential contribution to local economic development and inclusive growth.

Existing research (Kotler et al., 2021; Morrison, 2013) has explored the challenges encountered by tourism enterprises in South Africa, particularly within KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). However, these studies fail to critically assess the effectiveness of marketing strategies specific to township-based small tourism enterprises. Furthermore, the role of niche markets, such as dark tourism, remains underexplored despite their potential to expand tourism offerings and attract specialized market segments.

The persistent lack of targeted marketing expertise, often attributed to limited training and education opportunities, further constrains the ability of small tourism enterprises to position township tourism as a competitive and sustainable sub-sector (Mahembe & Odhiambo, 2018). Addressing this gap, the present study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by STEs in KZN, to strengthen their competitiveness and enhance their contribution to local economic growth. Specifically, this study aims to examine the impact of marketing mix strategies on the business performance of tour operators in the KZN province.

## **1.4 Research aim**

This study aims to examine the effect of the marketing mix strategies on the business performance of tour operators in the KZN province.

### **1.4.1 Research objectives**

The objectives of this study were to:

- Examine the relationship between marketing strategies and tour operators' sales performance.
- Examine the effectiveness of tour operators' promotional strategies for township small tourism enterprises.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the current marketing strategies employed by tour operators for promoting township and small tourism enterprises.

### **1.4.2 Research questions for the study**

To achieve the above-listed objectives, the research questions were as follows:

- What is the relationship between the tour operators' marketing strategies and their sales performance?
- What is the effectiveness of the marketing strategies that tour operators use to promote township and small tourism enterprises?
- How effective are the current marketing strategies employed by tour operators in promoting township and small tourism enterprises?

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

According to Ferrell and Hartline (2011), the marketplace is always evolving, hence the need for management to identify the changes and formulate strategies to deal with the changes. Hooley, Piercy, and Nicouland (2014) have also indicated that marketing strategies should be a response to changes in product positioning. "It should therefore meet the needs of the target group. Moreover, success in the changing market is a result of utilization of proactive strategies therefore organizations should adopt these" (Hooley 2014). Promotional strategies are a key factor in how private companies operate as they seek to achieve efficient value chain systems with internationally standardised procurement processes in this globalised business world. The globalised business drive has put pressure on tour operators to align their marketing strategies with international standards to be competent and compliant with tourism demands. The tourism world is becoming complicated as trends, tastes, and process changes are experienced in all business areas. There is a belief that tour operators need not worry much about their marketing strategies, however, lack of marketing strategies has led to the high rate of failure of tour operators. Therefore, this study will benefit tour operators as a resource for them to refer to or adopt some or all the findings and recommendations raised through this study. Furthermore, this study contributes to the business and tourism sector's body of knowledge regarding tour operating in South Africa.

### **1.6 Scope and delimitation**

This study focused on the effectiveness of the marketing strategies of tour operators in the promotion of small tourism enterprises in KZN to establish the relationship between marketing strategies and tour operators' sales performance. A survey was conducted with tour operator

firms that provide their products and services to affluent tourists. The study excluded tour operators who are not registered on the Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) database.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic which affected the hospitality and tourism industry, some of tour operating firms closed offices or operations and could not be contacted and as a result, the researcher was forced to exclude them from the study.

## **1.7 Limitations**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the majority of tour operators allowed some of their employees to work from home. Under normal circumstances, the researcher would have preferred to physically administer the questionnaire to participants. In this case the researcher adopted the use of emails during recruitment and communication with participants.

## **1.8 Structure of the thesis**

Chapter 1 provides an introductory overview of the study. It also encompasses the definitions of the research theme, research problem, aim, and objectives as well as a summary of the methodology for the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the constructs of the study by providing a comprehensive look at past research studies conducted on the effectiveness of marketing strategies, particularly within the context of tour operators promoting small tourism enterprises.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on relevant theories and constructs in the field to build a theoretical foundation for the study.

Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology used to carry out this study, including the research design, population and sampling method for the study. It further entails data collection methods, data analysis, pretesting, limitations, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 5 presents and interprets results obtained during fieldwork. Results were discussed in the context of the literature review.

Chapter 6 covers conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the subject of the implementation of promotional strategies by tour operators in small townships in South Africa. The chapter discussed the background of the problem, the problem statement, the research objectives and the research questions that the

study intends to answer through the literature, methodology, data analysis, and the conclusions of the study. The following chapter presents a review of the relevant literature on the subject under study. The idea is to extract what other authors say about this subject and find out how the literature addresses the research objectives. To align the literature review with the current study, the researcher presents the material under the broad objectives of the study. This chapter starts by providing an overview of the tour operating business, different types of tour operators, and the functions of tour operators in the tourism industry.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Tour operators and small tourism enterprises play an important role in destination marketing and the development of economies in developing countries because of their contribution to local economic development. Small enterprises create jobs, therefore, reduce unemployment and help alleviate poverty. Small tourism enterprises are a significant component of the solution to South Africa's development issues. Since the birth of the modern travel industry in the 1950s, the sector has undergone many fluctuations throughout the years. New technologies, the COVID-19 pandemic, changing tourist behavior patterns, and the general dynamic nature of the tourism industry are the most significant reasons for these fluctuations. COVID-19 came and went, but left massive social and economic destruction and tour operators to this day are still struggling to recover from the effects of the pandemic. This is the context for the literature review chapter, which explores what authors are saying regarding marketing strategies that tour operators can implement to grow township tourism. Tour operators need to embrace marketing strategies to recover from and grow again the almost extinct township tourism sector in South Africa.

### 2.2 Overview of tour operators

A tour operator is a company that negotiates with hotels, transportation companies, and other suppliers, and combines these vacation components into a package tour. This package tour might be a combination of components of a vacation, such as accommodation, transportation, entertainment, sightseeing, adventure tour, and meals, which is then sold to the final consumer as a single product and at a single price (Azimovna, Ilkhomovna & Shokhrukhovich, 2022).

A tour operator is a person or a company that purchases the various items that make up an inclusive holiday in bulk, and combines them to produce package holidays, selling the final product to the public, either directly or through travel agencies (Toubes, Araújo Vila & Fraiz Brea, 2021).

Marin-Pantelescu et al. (2019) describe a tour operator as a manufacturer who buys the components of the package, the inclusive tour (transport, accommodation, etc.) from the suppliers of the individual tourist services and packages and brands them into a single entity.

Tour operators are businesses that combine two or more travel services, e.g., transport, accommodation, catering, and entertainment, and sell them through travel agencies or directly to final consumers as a single product called a package tour.

According to Picazo and Moreno-Gil (2018), a tour operator is an organization, firm, or company that buys individual travel components separately from their suppliers and combines them into a package tour, which is sold with their price tag to the public directly or through brokers. Tour operators are primarily responsible for delivering and performing the services specified in a given package tour. They can provide these services themselves as some have their cars and coaches, hotels, and other travel-related services, or can obtain these from other suppliers. That is why they are called manufacturers of tourism products.

The South African Tourism Services Association makes a distinction between tour operators and tour brokers. Tour operators own their vehicles, whereas tour brokers hire them as needed. Tour operators have direct contact with clients when they take them on tours; hence, a personal one-on-one relationship is established with clients. Furthermore, tour operators provide travel economy and convenience to a significant segment of tourists (Wang, Li & Xu 2019).

According to Valeri and Baggio (2021), a tour operator can package tours and then make use of other entrepreneurs to render a service such as transporting tourists. Therefore, the business of tour operators is the combination of two or more travel facilities, e.g., transportation, accommodation, catering, entertainment, or sightseeing, selling them through travel agencies or straight to final consumers as a single product called a tour package.

The components of a package tour may be pre-established or may result from an 'à la carte' procedure, where the visitor decides the combination of services he/she wishes to take advantage of (Matikiti et al., 2018). According to Picazo and Moreno-Gil (2018), a tour operator is an organization that strictly handles the operation of the tour and the tour wholesaler puts together the products of different suppliers into a tour package, which is sold to the customer through a travel agent.

According to Cooper (2020), the important function of a tour operating company is to bridge the elements of the services offered from the supply side of the business with the consumption side of the business. Thus, the tour operator performs the task of linking elements together and then selling the products in one piece and at a single price.

Valeri and Baggio (2022) note that tour operators play a significant role in a destination's economy and destinations are vital for tour operators. Without the tour operator, there would be no travel and tourism services.

The greater the township tourism demand, the more successful a tour operator's business is because prices escalate for products, and more products are sold to a larger number of tourists. The more successful the tour operator, the more resources he/she requires to promote and develop his/her business. According to Zapata, Hall, and Backlund (2018), this is a reinforcing process if one assumes that greater demand equals greater profit and that no quality is lost.

### **2.2.1 Types of tour operators**

According to Almeyda-Ibáñez and George (2017) and Pinto and Castro (2019), there are four types of tour operators, namely:

- I. **Inbound Tour Operators.** These are also known as incoming tour operators. Technically, the operators who receive guests, clients/tourists and handle arrangements in the host country are called inbound tour operators.
- II. **Outbound Tour Operators.** Tour operators who promote tours for foreign destinations, for either business tours or leisure, are called outbound tour operators.
- III. **Domestic Tour Operators.** Domestic tour operators are those who operate within the boundary of the home country and offer package tours to residents with domestic inclusive tours or independent tours.
- IV. **Ground Operators / Destination Management Companies.** These are commonly known as handling agencies and their main function is to organise tour arrangements for incoming tourists on behalf of overseas operators.

### **2.2.2 Functions of Tour Operators**

Tour operators function as intermediaries in the tourism distribution system linking producers and consumers to each other (Katsikari, Hatzithomas, Fotiadis, and Folinias, 2020).

Mubinovna (2020) states that tour operators play a significant role in linking tourists and their destinations. In this way, they control and accomplish the demand on behalf of a destination. Mubinovna (2020) further explained that the tour operator has a direct influence on the tourist's choice when it comes to decision-making and behavior by directing the flow of tourists.

Tour operators enhance and facilitate coordination, thus reducing the costs of broken coordination in a market exchange. They also facilitate the search for information for tourists,

regarding the characteristics of the several services that compose the package tour. Tour operators do so by avoiding duplication of search efforts by tourists and also by filtering information. This eliminates the possibility of a market failure due to quality uncertainty, and it does so at a lower transaction cost than the alternative organizational arrangements whereby the tourist deals directly with all sellers through the Internet about the goods and services they desire. Tour operators are a critical link in the tourism supply chain and for long-haul emerging destinations such as South Africa.

Tour operators based in source markets are the major drivers of business. The link between international tour operators and the ground handlers they use (domestic tour operators) is particularly pertinent for South Africa. This feature has put ownership of the tourism product very much in the hands of international tour operators because they have the resources to market effectively in source markets whereas local tour operator firms have the role of supplying marketable tourism product input to the international tour operators (Reda, Yemane & Gebreyesus, 2020).

The well-being of destinations and/or of the local communities can be influenced by the tour operator (Mubinovna, 2020). Tour operators function as intermediaries in the township tourism distribution system; their role is to introduce producers and consumers to each other. Tour operators handle all the particulars of foreign travel, for example, online ticket purchases, accommodation arrangements, transfers to and from the airport, and the program, letting the local tour operators facilitate tourists to truly experience the destination (Toubes et al., 2021).

The travel and tourism industry is a service sector offering several products, which are diverse and fragmented. Each link in the tourism supply chain (tour operators, travel agencies, carriers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, etc.) offers one component of the overall product. Playing a central role within this tourism chain, tour operators connect the supply side (service providers) and demand side (tourists) for tourism (Pinto & Castro, 2019).

The tourist experience is enhanced when tour operators can execute their promotional strategies to entice and arrange tourist guides to guide them through the country (Hall, 2015; Wang & Pizam, 2015; Jamal & Robinson, 2011). Tourist guides are trained to have a broad knowledge of the country and to give tourists in-depth information about its history, current situation, and noteworthy places to visit. The tour operators also know the safety precautions that must be taken. As everything is pre-arranged for the clients, it is a safer alternative compared to venturing into a country alone (Ashraf, Hou, Kim, Ahmad, & Ashraf, 2020).

Tour operators provide services to several different types of tourists, namely, business travelers and leisure travelers. They can accommodate the needs of various types of tourists by providing services to satisfy their needs in various ways (Hellmeister & Richins, 2019). For example, if business travelers visit an area for a conference, tour operators can transfer them to and from the conference venue, arrange their flights beforehand, and arrange a short tour (usually about two to three days) after the conference, tailor-made to suit their needs. When dealing with leisure tourists, operators are expected to take these visitors to all the places set out on the itinerary and see to it that all their needs are met (Hoogendoorn, Letsatsi, Malleka & Booyens, 2020). Tour operators play a key role in the tourism performance of any economy and the strategies they use to promote tourist zones are vital for the growth of local economies.

### **2.3 Overview of world tourism**

Statistics South Africa (2016) defines tourism as all the activities undertaken by individuals traveling to places away from their usual environment, and staying there for business, study, leisure, and other purposes. Camilleri (2018) defines tourism as a temporary movement of people outside their normal place of residence and work, together with the facilities provided to cater for those visits and the activities undertaken during the stay in those visited places.

Tourism is defined as:

the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited (World Trade Organization and International Labour Organization, 2014).

The tourism industry is considered one of the star industries in the 21st century as well as one of the most vital service industries in the world (Kumar & Hussain, 2014).

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries, estimated by the World Travel and Tourism Council to generate some 12% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021). With studies predicting its continued growth, tourism is an increasingly important factor in the growth and development of many cities of the world. The global tourism industry, once bruised by the pandemic, is bouncing back. While not quite at its pre-2019 peak, international arrivals soared 34% in 2023, reaching roughly 963 million tourists. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO] predicts a full recovery by 2027, fuelled by a projected 4-5% annual growth rate. Despite the decline in long-haul travel because of the cautious economic recovery,

UNWTO is optimistic that long-haul travel will grow faster at 5.4% per annum compared to the predicted 3.8% growth of inter-regional travel. However, intra-regional (short haul) will account for 75% of the total international arrivals in absolute terms (i.e., 1,2 billion). East Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, and Africa are forecast to grow at over 5% (i.e., at 6.5%, 6.7%, and 5.5% respectively), compared to the world average of 4.1%. According to Canovi and Pucciarelli (2019), data that reflects the accumulation performance of tour operators in most economies is not readily available. Tourism authorities around the world have been reluctant to create central databases that capture the performance data of tour operators to improve and enhance their promotional strategies toward local tourism.

## **2.4 Tourism Performance in South Africa**

According to Camilleri (2018), promotion is how organizations attempt to remind, persuade, and inform customers about destinations, brands, or products that they sell.

Statistics South Africa (2023) points out that South Africa is facing four main developmental problems: high levels of poverty, unemployment, the COVID-19 pandemic, and inequality. The tourism sector allows for a relatively easy entry into the local market for small businesses and entrepreneurs and has the potential to create jobs and subsequently, income. Tourism development can be utilized as a driver for economic growth and development.

Tourism is a vital contributor to the South African economy. With its extensive value chain and labor absorption capacity, it is acknowledged as a tool for economic development, playing a significant role in responding to the country's socio-economic challenges. Among these is the provision of employment to individuals of varying skill levels, the employment of women including in rural areas, and ensuring the geographic spread of tourism benefits. The sector is also a significant foreign exchange earner. It further impacts the wider economy through its significant forward and backward linkages with other economic sectors.

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced an unprecedented crisis to the global economy. Tourism was one of the first economic sectors to be deeply impacted by the pandemic because of the measures to contain its spread, including restrictions on movement. Operations were halted under various phases of lockdown and tourism revenues were severely diminished. The sector thus faced profound and simultaneous demand and supply shocks.

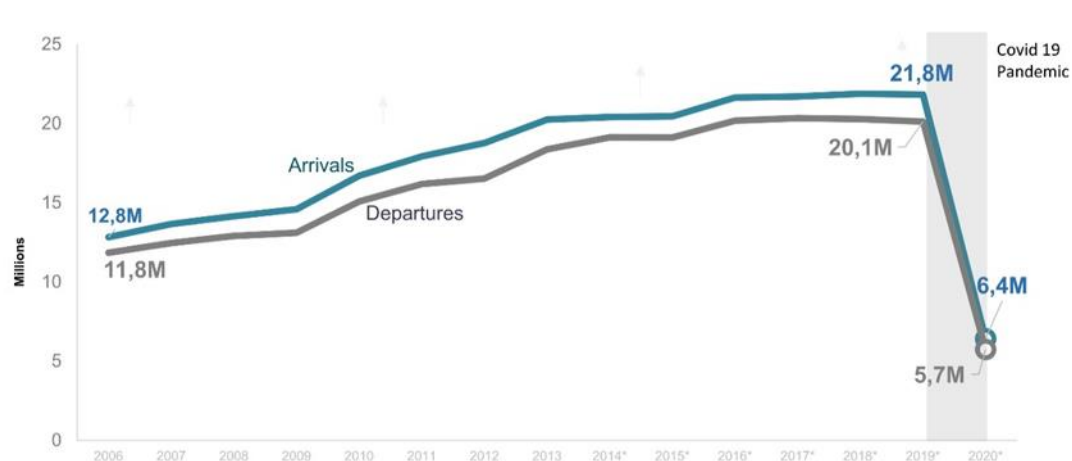
Historically, the tourism sector has demonstrated resilience through global financial meltdowns and health pandemics. However, the scale and depth of the disruption caused by the COVID-

19 health and economic crisis suggest that the road to tourism recovery will be long and highly uncertain.

### 2.4.1 Economic contribution of tourism

According to the Tourism 2020 report released by Statistics South Africa (2021), foreign arrivals dropped by 71% from just over 15, 8million in 2019 to less than 5 million in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the tourism industry quite hard around the world and in South Africa, mainly due to the lockdown and travel restrictions that were imposed.

According to Bhaskara and Filimonau (2021), the overall number of travelers (arrivals and departures) decreased by 71% between 2019 and 2020. The overall number of travelers decreased by 50.7% over 15 years from nearly 24,6 million recorded in 2006 to 12,1 million travelers recorded in 2020 (Figure 2.3).



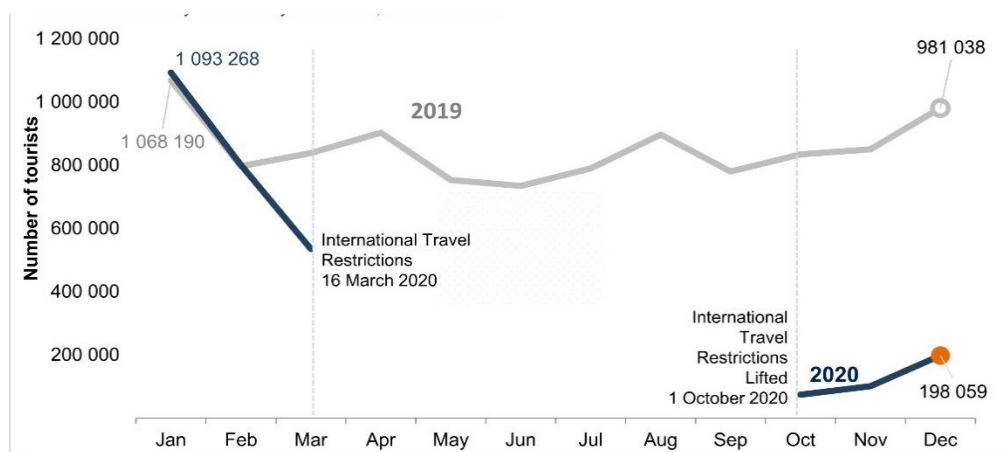
**Figure 2.1: Number of arrivals and departures of travelers 2006-2020**  
Source: Statistics South Africa (2020)

Figure 2.3 shows that the overall number of travelers (arrivals and departures) decreased by 50.7% over the 15 years from 24,6 million recorded in 2006 to 12,1 million travelers in 2020.

In South Africa, the direct contribution of the tourism sector to GDP was R130,1 billion in 2018 and constituted nearly 3% direct contribution to GDP (Statics South Africa, 2020). In 2018, the tourism sector contributed about 4,5% of total employment in South Africa. In 2020, the volume of tourists decreased by 72.6% from 10,2 million in 2019 to 2,8 million in 2020. The distribution of tourists by region of residence shows that 74.8% of the tourists who arrived in South Africa in 2020 were residents of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries and 1.5% were from ‘other’ African countries. These two sub-regions

constituted a total of 76.3% of tourists from Africa. Residents of overseas countries made up 23.6% of the tourists.

A total of 2,8 million tourists came to South Africa in 2020, showing a decrease of 72.6% from the 10,2 million tourists recorded in 2019. The highest number of tourist arrivals was recorded in January 2020 while the least number was recorded in October 2020 (Figure 2.4).



**Figure 2.2: Number of tourists by month and year of travel in 2019 and 2020**  
Source: Statistics South Africa (2020)

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the South African tourism industry. On the 16th of March 2020, President Ramaphosa announced measures to combat the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa (South African National Department of Health, 2020). These measures were in line with reducing and monitoring inward as well as departing travelers. In addition, a travel ban on selected foreign nationals from high-risk countries in South Africa was communicated on 18 March 2020 (Moonasar et al., 2021). Of the 53 land ports, 35 were shut down, as well as two of the eight seaports. The Level 5 (hard) lockdown introduced by President Ramaphosa on the 26th of March 2020 resulted in tourism numbers dropping drastically for both incoming and outgoing travelers (Pillay-van Wyk et al., 2020). In light of this, South Africa did not receive visitors for a period of six months from April to September 2020.

In 2020, tourists from the United Kingdom topped the overseas visitor list. When comparing the 2020 volumes with the 2019 volumes, the number of tourists decreased from all ten leading overseas countries. Australia had the largest percentage decrease in visitors to South Africa (81.4%). All ten leading SADC countries showed a decrease in the number of tourists from 2019 to 2020. Botswana had the largest percentage decrease of 80.6%. Zimbabwe remained

the leading SADC country in terms of tourist visits. Nigeria was the leading country for tourists from 'Other' African countries. A comparison between 2019 and 2020 volumes indicates that the number of tourists decreased in all 10 leading countries. Côte d'Ivoire had the largest percentage decrease of 77.4%.

Overall, holidays continued to be the main reason for visits to South Africa. A large majority (96.0%) of tourists came for holidays while businesspersons, students, and medical treatment constituted 3.1%, 0.9%, and 0.1% respectively of the 2020 tourists. In 2020, tourists from overseas and 'other' African countries spent, on average, seven and five days per month respectively in South Africa, compared to tourists from SADC who spent only two days.

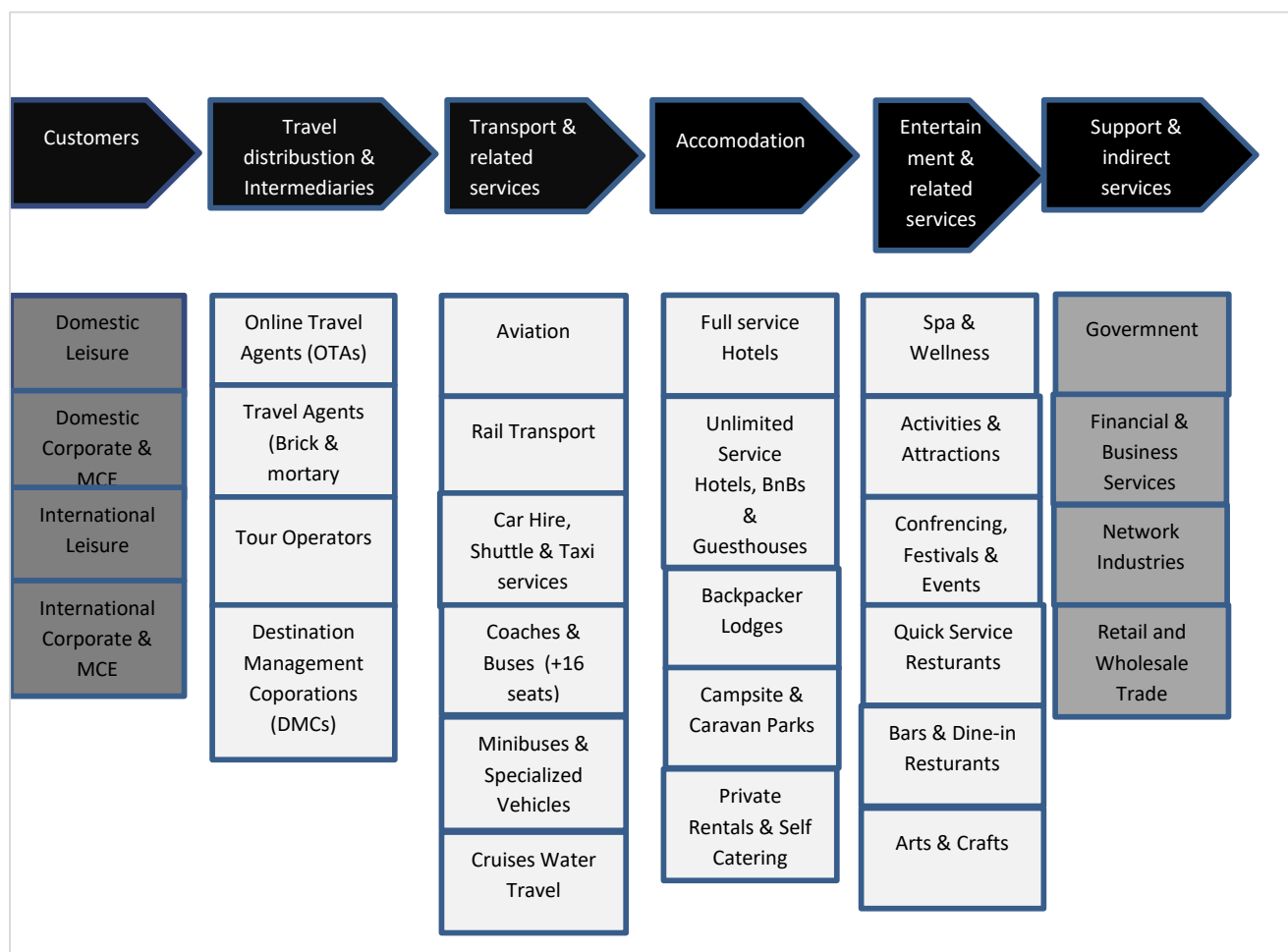
With the world of travel having changed drastically due to the pandemic, the year 2020 will always be remembered as the year that COVID-19 changed the world (Chen, Huang & Li, 2022). Therefore, all tourism stakeholders must come up with effective marketing strategies for their businesses to regain their customers.

According to Rogerson and Rogerson (2020), South Africa is a leading tourist destination in Africa and one of the most visited destinations in the world as it has a wide array of attractions coupled with developed cities. Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has improved its tourism position in the world from the 52nd most visited destination to the 17th most visited tourism destination in 2005. Western Cape, KZN, and Gauteng are the most popular tourist destinations for international tourists. However, even though KZN is not as popular as the Western Cape, the former has more to offer and a great potential to grow (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020). According to Cooper (2020), tourism was at the forefront of the changes that took place in South Africa to create 'a new South Africa' in this post-apartheid period. Tourism has helped to boost the economy and create a sense of national pride. A significant change was the devolution of tourism powers from the central government to the nine South African provinces. Considerable planning activities are taking place at provincial levels as the provinces get to grips with their new tourism roles. One of the nine provinces is KZN, which is covered in this study. Provinces are responsible for tourism product or service development and marketing for both international and domestic markets. The Department of Tourism and Environmental Affairs centrally coordinates tourism and South African Tourism is its marketing agency (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Since provinces in South Africa are responsible for developing and marketing their tourism products and services, this study is confined to the province of KZN as an equal contributor to the promotion of tourism.

Tourism supports a vibrant and complex value chain and is a sector not characterized by significant market concentration or deep vertical integration like many other sectors in South Africa. Activity occurs across five sub-sectors:

- i. Travel distribution and intermediaries
- ii. Transport and related services
- iii. Accommodation
- iv. Entertainment and related services
- v. Support and indirect services

Within each sub-sector, several industries support a diverse range of visitor services and experiences. This taxonomy of industry structure has been applied throughout this plan and is shown in Figure 2.5. Table 1 shows the respective contributions to output and employment of each of the tourism sub-sectors.



**Figure 2.3: Tourism value chain**  
Source: Statistics South Africa (2019)

**Table 2.1: Contribution of each sub-sector to tourism output and employment in South Africa**

	Travel Distribution & Intermediaries	Transport & Related Services	Accommodation	Entertainment & Related Services	Support & Indirect Services
Contribution to Tourism Industry	3%	27%	16%	16%	37%
Contribution to Tourism Industry Employment	4%	34%	19%	20%	23%

Source: Statistics South Africa (2019)

South Africa has unique features, townships with diverse cultures, and a variety of ecosystems and natural environments that make it an attractive destination for different markets. According to Statistics South Africa (2016), the country's tourism performance in 2015 was relatively subdued with total revenue (from both international and domestic tourism) growing from R91.0 billion in 2014 to R91.8 billion in 2015, a mere + 0.8% increase. The report indicates that revenue from domestic tourism declined by 11.9% due to fewer domestic trips undertaken in the year under review. Revenue from international tourism grew by 6.2% driven by increased spend (in nominal terms) from African markets, the Americas, and Europe. The report further highlighted that domestic trips declined by -12.5% in 2015 despite a 3.3% increase in the number of tourists taking trips in 2015. The declines were driven by tourists taking fewer trips led by a decline in trips. On average, two trips were taken in 2015 compared to an average of 2.3 in 2014. Based on the report, South Africa lost a share of the international tourist arrivals market in 2015, compared to other sub-Saharan African markets (which remained stable) and compared to the rest of the world. Arrivals to South Africa decreased by 6.8% (contracted for the first time since 2009) while global arrivals increased by 4.4%. The decline in international tourist arrivals to South Africa was driven by a decline in the African market.

On the length of stay, Statistics South Africa (2016) indicated that both domestic and international tourists stayed longer in 2015; domestic tourists stayed from four nights in 2014 to 4.2 nights in 2015. However, with the 12.5% decline in the number of trips, total bed nights declined by 9.4%, while international tourists on average stayed 9.5 nights in 2015, about one night more than in 2014. Bed nights also increased, largely driven by strong growth from African markets. Provincial spread improved in 2015 with 13% of international tourists visiting more than one province compared to 2014. There was also an improvement in seasonality of international tourist arrivals. The seasonality index went from 1.6% in 2014 to 1.36% in 2016.

This was largely due to the declines in arrivals during peak periods recorded in the year compared to 2014. Therefore, there was a smaller variance in tourist arrivals month-to-month.

Tourism is perceived as an important job creator because it is labour-intensive, service-orientated, diversifies the economy of a country, and brings in foreign revenue. It is therefore well positioned to advance economic development in developing countries, like South Africa. According to Okpoko, Okonkwo, and Afamefuna (2016), tourism contributes to the creation of direct jobs. Hence, in line with the aspirations of the South African National Development Plan (SANDP) tourism in turn contributes positively to the economic growth of the country (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019). It directly impacts some sectors (such as the craft industry) and indirectly impacts many other sectors (supplier industries such as food, marketing, transportation, communication, and construction) that spread economic benefits and opportunities. Increasing the market share of tourism in the South can enhance the contribution that this sector makes to the country's economic development and further enable economic and social empowerment and advancement.

#### **2.4.2 In-depth overview of the status of tourism in KZN province**

The tourism sector in KZN is largely dominated by private organisations and a few publicly owned organisations (Gumede, 2019). The vision of Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) is to position the province as the continent's leading tourism destination. This can be achieved through the use of the right media and other promotional strategies (Madondo, Chiguvi, & Tadu, 2019). Mtapuri, Giampiccoli, and Mnguni (2019) state that the provincial government of KZN plays a critically important role in the development and promotion of tourism in the province. The private sector also provides a significant impetus towards the development and promotion of tourism within the province. The private sector bears the risks of investment and a large part of the responsibility for the successful development and marketing of tourism.

KwaZulu-Natal is one of the nine provinces of South Africa and the tourism statistics show that tourism makes a significant contribution to the KZN local economy and grew from an R9bn contribution to the provincial gross domestic product in 2014 to more than R10bn by 2018 (Mtapuri et al., 2019). In South Africa, the province of KZN is popular for its heritage and cultural experiences. The dominant local community members are Zulu, and they pride themselves in their heritage, most especially the isiZulu language, the Zulu culture, and the prevalence of the spirit of '*Ubuntu*'. *Ubuntu* is a very old African word that can be translated to mean 'humanity to others' (Aina & Ezeuduji, 2021). Most tourists that visit KZN are attracted or pulled by the warm weather, nature, culture, and beach experience, offered in both

its coastal and inland regions. Tourism in KZN thrives on tourist volumes and the quality of the tourists' experience.

According to Munien, Phungula, and Bob (2018), KZN is the country's domestic tourism leader, increasingly on the 'must-do, must-see' lists of prospective travelers, and highly popular among international visitors. The TKZN strategy (2014) indicates that the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority (KZNTA), operating as TKZN, is responsible for promoting tourism within the province. The major tourist destinations in the province are found in the city of Durban. The vision of TKZN is to position the province as the continent's leading tourism destination (Wyllie, 2017). The contribution of KZN tourism to the gross geographic product was R18 billion in 2010-2011 and this constituted approximately 10% of the provincial economy. The province attracted 11.6 million domestic tourism trips and 1.3 million foreign visits (TKZN Strategy, 2014).

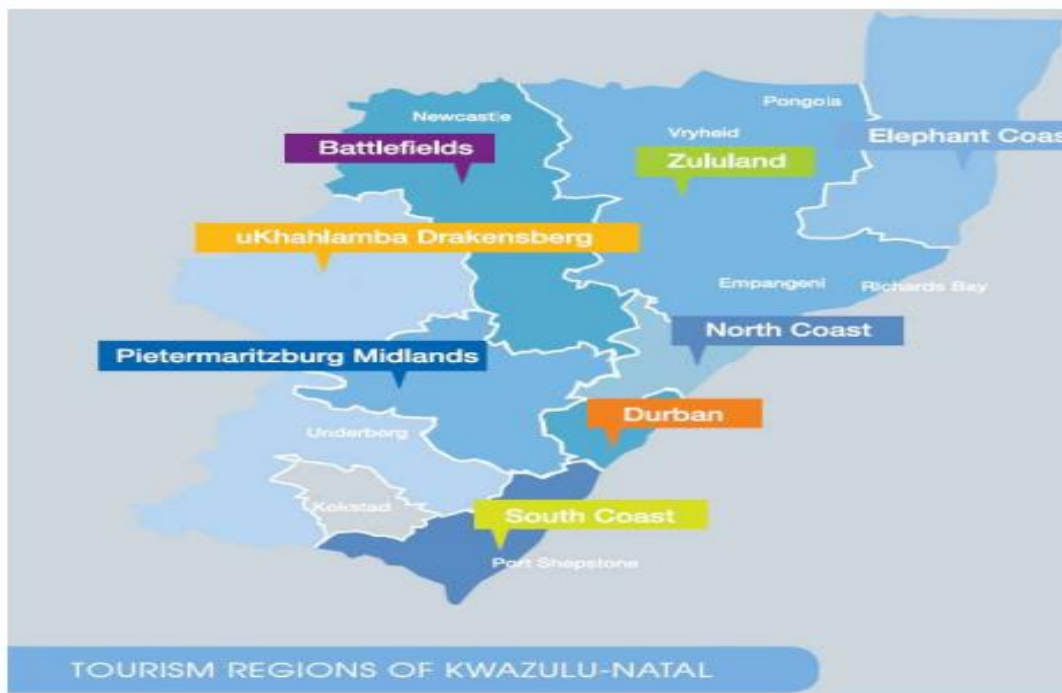
Wyllie (2017) states that KZN is known as the Zulu Kingdom, a place where a person learns about Zulu culture and where there is a variety of experiences to offer both domestic and international tourists. TKZN is the provincial tourism authority under the provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal. It has the same types of responsibilities as Durban Tourism, the distinction being that TKZN is responsible for planning, managing, developing, marketing, and promoting KwaZulu-Natal tourism (Nzama & Ezeuduji, 2020). KZN has nine 'blue flag' beaches, is home to the Drakensberg mountains, the iSmangaliso World Heritage Site, numerous private and public 'big five' game reserves, the Anglo-Boer War battlefields and Oribi Gorge. KZN is a unique destination where one can experience a traditional and modern lifestyle.

**Table 2.2: Number of tourists from worldwide visiting KZN**

Country	2014 Actual	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	Percentage Difference
eSwatini	297 591	279 894	293 511	292 038	297 163	-0,10%
UK	45 638	52 219	48 341	54 644	50 464	11%
Lesotho	48 822	31 534	44 543	48 922	44 796	-8,25%
Germany	39 267	44 755	48 835	50 636	48 385	23%
USA	35 667	43 914	45 095	45 602	44 181	24%
Zimbabwe	45 619	49 305	38 618	40 799	36 878	-19%
Netherlands	20 349	20 503	25 550	30 647	24 407	20%
France	24 196	20 504	22 159	36 683	33 210	37%
India	20 639	17 259	19 340	15 080	10 209	50,10%
Australia	18 017	14 885	15 364	15 113	16 594	-8%
Mozambique	11 457	27 182	11 598	6 696	8 041	-30%

Source: KZN Tourism Annual Report (2019).

Table 2.2 presents the KZN international visitor trends over the five years from 2014 to 2018, reflecting that eSwatini remains the biggest foreign tourism market, followed by the UK, which has seen an 11% growth over the period. Germany, the USA, the Netherlands, and France have all recorded significant growth in tourist numbers over the period, while the number of Indian visitors has reduced by 50% in the last five years. This is significant, considering the country’s focus on increasing the number of visitors from BRICS countries, particularly India and China. China does not even feature as a significant source of international tourists to KZN. The numbers reveal that, generally, there has been a reduction in the number of tourists from African countries visiting KZN (KZN Tourism Annual Report, 2019).



**Figure 2.4: Geographic map of KZN**  
Source: TKZN (2019: 16)

The province offers a relaxed lifestyle with access to virtually every major type of recreation, sporting, and cultural facility (Gumede, 2019). It has eight well-defined tourism destinations, sites, and nodes in which tourism-specific development projects have been successful and new ones are still encouraged. These are Zululand, South Coast, Durban, North Coast, Battlefields, Pietermaritzburg and Midlands, Elephant Coast, and Drakensberg (Figures 2.6 and 2.7).



Figure 2.5: Tourism nodes in KZN

## 2.5 Slum tourism and township tourism

The responsibility of the TKZN is to develop, promote, and market all the provincial tourism potential areas, inclusive of the slum and township tourism. It is in this context of township tourism that definitions of townships, slum tourism, and township tourism become relevant for this study.

### 2.5.1 Slum tourism

Slum tourism is one of the quickest-growing niche tourism segments in the world. A slum, as described by the United Nations, is a run-down area of a city characterized by substandard housing and squalor and lacking in tenure security (Rogerson, 2019). Slum tourism is the formation of organized tours by tour operators in these areas (Strydom, Mangope, & Henama, 2019). Slum tourism falls under the umbrella of poverty tourism where tourists travel to less developed areas to view people living in poverty. It is referred to as ‘favela tourism’ in Brazil, and ‘township tourism’ in Africa, and is simply known as ‘slum tourism’ in India (Muldoon & Mair, 2022).

Rogerson (2019) states that slum tourism tour operators help to fulfill tourists’ curiosity by providing a glimpse of lifestyles from the inside. Typically, small groups are taken on 1/2-day tours for a small price, led by local guides who allow travelers to walk through the homes and small enterprises in the slums. The developments leading to slum tourism are described by Elmanzlawi (2021) as a phenomenon that is catching on. Slum tourism is a guided journey

through the slums of Mexico and Africa (Elmanzlawi, 2021). The author further argues that this has spiraled from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro to the townships of Johannesburg to the garbage dumps of Mexico, with travelers forsaking, at least for a while, beaches and museums for crowded, dirty and in many ways, shocking slums. Capitalist development has experienced a lot of changes in the past years. The period known as Fordism (taking its title from Henry Ford's assembly lines manufacturing industrially produced cars) showed the importance of capitalist economies at some stage in the 20th century. The tourism industry, a very important component of the world capitalist order, has not been immune to these adjustments (Hassan, Ekiz, Dadwal & Lancaster, 2018).

Conti and Perelli (2005) created the term 'post-Fordism' and came up with a varied range of highly distinguished tourism products like ecotourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism, agro-tourism, and, in the mid-1990s, slum tourism. The emergence of slum tourism is a result of the globalisation of developing countries and, consequently, tourists have started visiting the most deprived parts of towns (Güzel, 2018).

Strydom et al. (2019) state that slum tourism is a new type of urban tourism and is an encounter between the global North and the global South. The dominant form of this new tourism type is the touristic valorization of poverty-stricken urban areas of the metropolises in so-called developing or emerging nations which are visited primarily by tourists from the Global North (Hassan et al., 2018). This type of tourism is grounded upon the product of the guided 'poverty' or 'slum tour' which started to be popular in the 1990s both in urban areas of Brazil as well as in post-apartheid South Africa.

According to Rogerson (2019), slum tourism is a very controversial matter. Firstly, tourism services are run by profit-making companies who do not make any contribution towards improving the communities from which they earn those profits. Secondly, Rogerson (2019) maintains that since the lives of slum residents are exposed, this can be embarrassing to them. Mariani and Guizzardi (2020) argue that slum tours could open these culturally fragile areas, clearing the way for potentially damaging mass tourism. Cultural practices of the locals of the slum areas, according to Kimbu and Tichaawa (2018), could be lost through cultural commercialisation, which may be brought about by the need to maximise profit gains associated with an influx of tourists. This may lead to the distortion of what the tourism industry truly represents.

A visit to Rio de Janeiro's largest favela or shanty town by tourists led by Marcelo Armstrong nineteen years ago saw the birth of slum tourism (Seeler, Luck & Schanzel, 2019). Since then,

Armstrong's company has grown, motivating other companies to follow in his footsteps. It is argued that today, on any given day in Rio, dozens of tourists hop into minivans or onto motorcycles and venture into places where even Brazil's police dare not set foot. Although it is argued that the tours themselves are safe, routine security checks are essential as these communities tend to be volatile (Güzel, 2018).

There is a lot of criticism surrounding the visits and virtual poverty in slum communities (Güzel, 2018). For instance, films depicting slum life such as *City of God* (Rio de Janeiro) and *Slumdog Millionaire* (Mumbai and District) have received a lot of criticism from international viewers. However, such publicity has opened doors for the documentation through film of the establishment of a positive link between media exposure and business growth in these areas by tourism researchers (Rogerson, 2019). From one perspective, slum tourism is considered enlightening as it brings to light the reality of poverty and, may thus be considered a precondition for change (Güzel, 2018). Advocates of slum tourism address the creation of opportunities for local entrepreneurs, empowerment, and local economic development (Seeler et al., 2019). For example, in South Africa, proponents highlight the grassroots potential for local development of township tourism. Additionally, advocates portray township tourism as a form of reconciliation through the political and personal narratives that are shared between residents, guides, and tourists (Gorbuntsova, Dobson & Palmer, 2018).

Considerable scholarly attention focuses on pragmatic issues of whether this form of tourism exerts pro-poor influences and therefore contributes to improving the poverty situation in slum areas (Seeler et al., 2019). Rogerson (2019) makes it clear that slum tourism promoters, tour operators, as well as tourists, claim that this form of tourism contributes to development in slums by creating a variety of potential sources of income and other non-material benefits. To explore this avenue, the benefits derived by tour operators at Inanda township were examined (Seeler et al., 2019).

Slum tourism is offered on a relatively large scale in South African cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town, Brazil's Rio de Janeiro, as well as in the Indian metropolises of Calcutta, Mumbai, and Delhi, to name some important examples. However, the lack of impactful strategies to promote tourism zones by tour operators in South Africa means that the country is in danger of losing out on billions of rand through slum and township tourism.

### 2.5.1.1 Township Tourism in South Africa

The term township tourism originated from South Africa and is related to the post-apartheid era (1948-1994) whereby tourists are educated about the racist apartheid policy by visiting townships (urban suburbs established by the apartheid regime) and interacting with residents (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021). However, the term is also used widely in Namibia (Chirisa et al., 2020) since this country was previously under South African control. Township tourism was previously classified as a component of ‘heritage tourism’, ‘ethno-tourism’, ‘justice tourism’, ‘thano tourism’, ‘atrocities tourism’, and ‘dark tourism’ (Rogerson & Baum, 2020). Township tourism has also been described further as slumming, poorism, and philanthropic tourism (Chirisa et al., 2020).

The township tourism phenomenon is currently being considered as a component of slum tourism (Chili, 2018), where the motives for tourists are to see where impoverished people live (Adamiak, 2022). According to a study conducted in Cape Town by Henama (2019), 80% of the interviewed tourists perceived their visit to a township as an experience of the ‘real Africa’ that they feel can only be experienced in the townships (Rogerson & Baum, 2020).

South Africa re-joined the international community after the dismantling of apartheid in 1994, and tourism again took its place in the national economy. Before the end of apartheid, the natural (and some cultural) attractions and the climate were the drivers of tourism to South Africa, sites such as the national parks, spectacular mountains, beaches, and wine-growing areas, but post the early 1990s tourism to the apartheid townships developed, firstly in Soweto outside Johannesburg, and later became a mass-phenomenon (Lemon and Rogerson, 2017).

Tourism to the townships is now a very important and profitable niche market, with an increasing demand for the product (Rodríguez-Antón & Alonso-Almeida, 2020). To understand township tourism, a definition of a township is necessary, outlining the underlying characteristics of a township.

Townships are located on the fringes of the cities and metropolitan areas of South Africa; they are symbolic of the inhuman planning approach that was based on racist classifications. A large part of South Africa’s urban population is still living under poor living conditions in the townships and the inhabitants of the townships still belong almost exclusively to ‘previously disadvantaged’ segments of the population (Adamiak, 2022).

The promotion and development of township tourism has created contradictory views amongst researchers with two different schools of thought emerging (Adamiak, 2022); Rogerson, 2019).

One school holds that township tourism exploits the poor and uses their living conditions as a tourist attraction, while the other suggests it is a tool to improve the local economy by combating poverty and encouraging understanding of how other people live (Yanes, Zielinski, Diaz & Kim, 2019).

Tourism and township tourism in South Africa were hampered by the previous political situation in the country and thus did not match the growing global tourism trend. With the growth of international tourism during the 1970s and 1980s, this country suffered neglect at the hands of international tourists because of the politics of apartheid (Dodds & Butler, 2019). During the apartheid era in South Africa, non-white people were taken from their homes in huge numbers and forced to live in poorly constructed townships throughout South Africa (Yanes et al., 2019). These townships were developed as dormitory towns, far from central businesses and ‘whites only’ areas; during this time urban tourism was strictly confined to white areas (Dodds & Butler, 2019). The apartheid laws restricted white people from going to black communities, and vice versa. White people were discouraged from going to the townships because of the perceived high level of crime and violence and to keep white eyes from seeing the conditions in black areas.

The first South African non-racial democratic elections took place in 1994, with Nelson Mandela becoming the first democratically elected president, and South Africa developed as an international tourism destination. In the late 1990s, with the general growth in domestic and international tourism, township tours emerged as a niche market. However, settlement patterns, particularly in urban areas, remained characterised by racial and class divisions. Despite a new democratic South Africa, housing in the country was still provided along racial lines: “wealthy, historically ‘whites only’ areas and poor, historically black townships” (Strydom et al., 2019).

However, the characteristics of the poor urban areas, mainly located on the urban fringes of South African cities, attracted interest from township tourists. The growing interest of tourists to visit South African black townships can be recognised by tours that are purported to offer the visitor an authentic and non-performative experience of the history and people, representing the ‘real South Africa’ (Rogerson, 2019). The tourism interest therefore lies in the ethnic diversity and rich cultural heritage as seen and experienced in the daily lives and practices of the residents.

Township tourism has had a positive impact on local communities, bringing economic benefits, and creating employment and income for the local communities in the township areas. People want to experience the unique local township culture by visiting, for example, “museums,

shebeens serving traditional beer, traditional healers, dance performances, and dining on African cuisine” (Mlambo & Ezeuduji, 2020: 1198). Further attractions on a township tour are stops at squatter settlements, new housing projects, soup kitchens, and recycling depots within these townships (Ezeuduji & Mhlongo, 2019; Erlangga, 2022; Almeyda-Ibáñez and George (2017). Township tours offer tourists a picture of the devastation caused during the apartheid system, and the poverty, which is the attraction to a township. The squatter camps, or informal settlements are home to an increasing number of unemployed people who use corrugated iron sheets, or any other material, to build shelters, and which do not have the basic commodities of water and electricity, being extremely hot in summer and cold in winter (Chirisa et al., 2020).

Township tours are a cultural revelation for tourists and for many local white people who were not aware of the apartheid living conditions. These tours differ in type and cannot be compared with tourism related to traditional South African attractions, being different in that they are often interactive, socially-minded, and potentially empowering for the communities involved. Township tourism has grown since the 1990s and is seen as a good generator of sustainable income for the residents and a resource for attracting tourism revenue. Small, medium, and micro-operations developed among black tourism operators, as they identified the opportunities for empowerment, and bolstered the self-esteem of people in these historically marginalised communities, Rogerson & Baum, (2020). Township tourism is commonly conducted by small and independent businesses owned by township residents, using minibuses to bring visitors to townships. These attractions tell the story of what happened during the apartheid years. According to Ezeuduji and Mhlongo (2019), township tours have emerged as popular tourist activities, as has ‘struggle tourism’, where tourists visit places associated with South Africa’s struggle for democracy and liberation from apartheid.

Township tours can be associated with education, cultural tourism, heritage tourism, justice-tourism, local development, pro-poor tourism, and dark tourism (Gumede, 2019). Township tours can be viewed as a pro-poor strategy and have the potential for township tours to contribute to economic development. Still, South African tourism is developed and managed along racial lines, with the lowest-paid, and seasonal jobs, primarily reserved for black employees. There is little training and support for black entrepreneurs from the townships. These people lack the business skills to start a business, and there is a lack of consultation with these entrepreneurs. These problems limit the establishment of businesses around township tours, which is compounded by the perceived high levels of crime in the townships. Thus, many tourists prefer not to visit the townships; only the most adventurous persons are prepared to go

into the townships, and stay in their vehicle rather than stepping out and interacting with community members.

### **2.5.1.2 Motivations for Township Tourism Visits**

Visitor motivations can be categorised into supply-side and demand-side motivations. According to Dewnarain, Ramkissoon, and Mavondo (2019), motivation is the reason for people's actions, desires, and needs. Motivation is also one's direction to behavior, or what causes a person to want to repeat a behavior. Stone and Nyaupane (2020) describe motivation as psychological/biological needs and wants, including integral forces that arouse, direct, and integrate a person's behavior and activity. These are the underlying reasons (or factors) influencing tourists to visit a tourism destination area in search of a unique experience or tourism product.

### **2.5.1.3 Visitor demand**

The demand for tourism is discussed variously, depending on the economic, psychological, geographic, and political views of the author. The geographic perspective defines tourism demand as the total number of persons who travel or wish to travel and use tourist facilities and services at places away from their places of work or residence (Kalvelage, Revilla Diez & Bollig, 2022: 764). Visitors seek an authentic experience when visiting an attraction or destination. A visit to a township should depict the true essence of the township as the inhabitants live, work, and socialise, and should preferably not be a staged event. If the visitor does not see the real landscape, then there is a loss of authenticity, and there is perhaps no relevance to the 'real world'.

## **2.6 Types of township tourism**

### **2.6.1 Dark tourism**

Dark tourism involves travel to places associated with death and suffering and has long been a feature of the tourist experience (Elbaz, Haddoud & Shehawy, 2018). Suyunovich and Erkin (2022) note that the term dark tourism was first coined in the 1990s, and write that dark tourism is an act of travel to sites of death, disaster, and the seemingly macabre. There are many examples of 'dark tourism sites', including museums or heritage sites that have become tourist attractions (Boniface, Cooper, & Cooper, 2020). In South Africa with its history of oppression and the forced movement of (Black) people to townships, a niche market for tourists has been created in township tourism. Robben Island and other sites associated with apartheid

oppression are also examples of dark tourism (Cheng & Edwards, 2019; Han, Kiatkawsin, Jung & Kim, 2018; Rogerson, 2015).

As tourism changed after the mid-20th century, so has the demand for and supply of dark tourism experiences. For example, sites associated with war are probably the largest single category of tourist attraction (Lin & Kuo, 2018: 69). Trips to anti-apartheid struggle sites in South Africa are considered dark tourism, being characterised by sightseeing associated with death and human suffering (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020: 9; Gumede, 2019: 11).

Tien, Viet, Duc, and Tam (2021) opine that people, as long as they can travel, are drawn to sites, attractions, or events that are linked to death, disaster, suffering, and violence. The attraction of death and disaster introduced the term dark tourism (Ulak, 2020: 113). Boniface et al. (2020) state that dark tourism focuses on the relationship between tourism and death but not necessarily sites of death, disaster, or suffering. Ulak (2020) observed that death, suffering, and tourism are related. These scenarios are also found in areas like District Six and the Bo-Kaap in Cape Town.

Dark tourism is categorised as a visit to places or events, or associated with death, disaster, and destruction (Cheng & Edwards, 2019). Portal, Abratt & Bendixen (2019) noted that a division exists between authentic history (continuing and dangerous), and a heritage (past, dead, and safe). Heritage attempts to hide any inequalities between the social environment and special dimensions and does not always reveal the impacts of commercialism and consumerism, and, in protecting the heritage of a community, could destroy architecture or artifacts that should be preserved.

Dark sites are consumed by tourists as a result of a variety of influences, such as a broader historical, political, or cultural element. Visiting sites that could be connected to death is a significant part of tourists' experiences in many societies, but little is known about the significance of these visits to the tourists (Lin & Kuo, 2018). On 6 April 1994, the small East African state of Rwanda witnessed the beginning of one of the most coldblooded attempts to annihilate a people in recent history (Kimbu & Tichaawa, 2018:786). Rwanda's camps of genocide represent those sites and places which have genocide, atrocity, and catastrophe as the main product theme and thus occupy the darkest edges of the dark tourism spectrum. The 'Dark Camps of Genocide' detail the horrible human suffering and infliction and consequently have a high degree of political ideology attached to them. Thus, these Dark Camps of Genocide are places that represent a concentration of death and atrocity, and a concentration of death is no

more apparent than that committed throughout the (Jewish) Holocaust (Dube & Nhamo, 2021: 133).

Dark tourism is a growing niche area of tourism and is becoming more diverse. Iliev (2021) states that dark tourism can often be related to heritage tourism since a great number of these attractions are considered part of the dark tourism phenomenon. They often have a considerable historical significance other than just being popular for a tragic event. Heritage tourism is also known as ‘roots’ tourism, which implies, as the name clearly states, that tourists look for their past, try to understand themselves and their history, and find a piece of their past life. There is growth in the number of these attractions and experiences, matching the number of tourists looking for such attractions (Martini & Buda, 2020).

### **2.6.2 Cultural and heritage tourism**

Richards (2018) emphasizes the importance of understanding culture in tourism, a sentiment echoed by Lak, Gheitasi, and Timothy (2020), who highlight cultural tourism as a significant and rapidly growing sector of global tourism. Indeed, culture plays a pivotal role in the economy of nations, with the European Union and other entities integrating cultural heritage into their development strategies (Zhang, Chen, Law & Zhang, 2020). Culture encompasses a spectrum of meanings, encompassing high art, societal norms, values, and behaviors (Richards, 2018; Cannas, Argiolas & Cabiddu, 2019).

Anthropologists view culture as an essential aspect of daily life, influencing economic and social activities through norms, knowledge, beliefs, and customs (Lak et al., 2029). It encompasses social relationships, material artifacts, and transmitted knowledge and values (Kim, Whitford & Arcodia, 2019). Furthermore, culture can serve as a commercial asset in the context of tourism (Richards, 2018).

Heritage, representing what is inherited from the past, including historical, cultural, and natural elements, holds particular significance in cultural and heritage tourism (Ebejer, 2019). These forms of tourism focus on attractions such as museums, performances, and archaeological sites, offering visitors diverse experiences (Bui, Jones, Weaver & Le, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

Cultural tourism involves visiting specific cultural attractions and participating in cultural activities outside of one's usual environment (Ebejer, 2019). Such activities can include attending festivals, exploring monuments, and engaging with local traditions (Richards, 2018).

Heritage tourism, on the other hand, is defined by visitors' perceptions of heritage sites and their motivations for visiting them (Domínguez-Quintero, González-Rodríguez & Paddison, 2020). This form of tourism can contribute to local economies and the preservation of cultural heritage (Rogerson, 2019; Esfehiani & Albrecht, 2018).

In the realm of marketing strategy, a comprehensive understanding of the internal and external business environment is crucial (Ortiz-Avram, Domnanovich, Kronenberg & Scholz, 2018). This involves analysing factors such as market dynamics and macro-environmental influences (Ali & Anwar, 2021). Marketing strategy aims to create value for customers and build lasting relationships (Karimi & Naghibi, 2015).

Effective marketing strategies consider elements like product, price, distribution, and promotion (Saura et al., 2019; Darma & Noviana, 2020). By aligning these components with consumer needs and preferences, businesses can achieve their objectives (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018). Ultimately, marketing strategy aims to deliver value to target customers while achieving business goals (Ortiz-Avram et al., 2018).

### **2.6.3 Elements of the marketing strategy**

A good marketing strategy considers and combines all four elements of the marketing program and offering rather than emphasising a single element (Lupo, 2018). This section covers market segmentation, targeting and positioning, target market, product, pricing, place, and marketing communication strategies. However, the current study focuses on two elements of the marketing strategy only, namely, marketing communication and product strategies.

There is a need for the tour operators to undertake appropriate marketing. Oji, Iwu, and Tengeh (2017) found that tour operators fail due to a lack of appropriate marketing communication strategies. Tour operators face challenges related to the ability to adapt to rapidly changing market demand, technological change, and capacity constraints relating to knowledge, innovation, and creativity, all of which can be changed through the implementation of product and marketing communication strategies (Morgan, Whitler, Feng & Chari, 2019). Marketing communication strategy as an element of the marketing strategy requires tour operators to know how to communicate with customers about their products and services (Makhitha, 2019).

#### **2.6.3.1 Marketing communications strategy**

Marketing communications strategy defines the entire range of activities engaged in to market products. This includes everything from paid marketing to media relations and public relations

(Makhitha 2019). According to Morgan et al. (2019), any integrated marketing communications strategy that tour operators may need to implement should consist of three guiding principles:

### **1) Brand alignment**

Tour operators should align their brand with their communication around the world to create a trusted brand (Alimova, Nasimov & Rakhmonov, 2020). Whatever marketing channel a tour operator chooses should have the same brand perception as the company itself. For example, if a tour operator is selling luxury accommodations, then the company should build relationships with channels and international magazines that air or write content on luxury accommodations rather than just anybody (Makhitha, 2019).

### **2) Customer Alignment**

According to Morgan et al. (2019), customer alignment requires companies to make sure their marketing creates a feeling that the services are aligned correctly. The company, the product, and the service should be easily accessible following the old marketing rule that says, 'Be where your customers already are'. Tour operators should pick channels (TV, social media, magazines, tourism journals) where the consumers are already active. If a tour operator is targeting younger millennials, then its adverts should be aired alongside popular soap operas and TV series, family shows (like Idols SA, America Has Got Talent, etc), and on social media platforms like Instagram, and Facebook (Makhitha, 2019).

### **3) Budget Alignment**

A company should invest in marketing as a starting point because many tour operating companies falter in the middle of their advertising campaigns with advertising budgets running out in the middle of the promotion, or failure to promote the advert on popular channels (Morgan et al., 2019).

Any large company's marketing plan will have several campaigns on multiple channels simultaneously. According to Ivanov, Webster, Stoilova, and Slobodskoy (2022), the combination of all these channels (social media, advertising on TV, print, radio, etc.) is called the marketing mix of the marketing communications strategy. Smaller businesses, however, usually stick to one or two marketing channels to reach their target customers, otherwise they risk diluting their budget and focus (Ivanov et al., 2022).

### **2.6.3.2 Product strategy**

Makhitha (2019) states that decisions about the business marketing strategy for products to be offered must take note of the specific target markets' needs and satisfaction. Azimovna, Ilkhomovna, and Shokhrukhovich (2022) define the product as any tangible or non-tangible objects or services offered by a tour operator for visitors in exchange for something of value. Product can be anything, either favorable or unfavorable for visitors to satisfy their needs or wants through an exchange process (Daniel & Faustin, 2019; Sánchez-Casado, Artal-Tur & Tomaseti-Solano, 2019). Product strategy embraces product mix, product lines, product branding, labeling and packaging, and guarantees and warranties (Azimovna et al., 2022). Product strategy should be a continuous process that steadily evaluates the existing products, makes necessary product modifications, gets rid of unwanted products, and introduces new products (Daniel & Faustin, 2019).

Al-Surmi, Cao, and Duan (2020) assert that a good knowledge of the product leads to good product strategies, which is very important as this helps the business to become more prosperous and competitive. Azimovna et al. (2022) state that tactical decisions about products within Small and Medium Enterprise Turnaround Strategies (SMEs) comprise mainly the business owner and are commonly centered around the owner's sentiments. Therefore, developing product strategies when deciding which product to sell is important in every SMET as it adds to the success or failure factors of the entity. Megeirhi, Woosnam, Ribeiro, Ramkissoon, and Denley (2020) recommend that SMETs should strategically invest in the quality of their product rather than advertising or promoting too much, as this improves and sustains the firm's profitability. Also, SMETs must ensure that visitors are treated as kings, as good relations between the business and consumers increases their market share. The product includes all the features and attributes that are connected to it and which heighten the visitors' product experiences (Azimovna et al., 2022).

## **2.7 Product mix**

The product mix is a variety of related products that produce more sales income when promoted collectively than when marketed separately (Luscombe, Walby & Piche, 2018). Theoretically, the product mix is supplementary to a rise in a firm's production of established products for the market (Habes, Alghizzawi, Salloum & Ahmad, 2018). Product mix comprises all the product lines and items a firm sells, and every product item in the product mix may require a different marketing strategy. Nevertheless, product lines and even the entire firm's product mix share some marketing strategy elements (Daniel & Faustin, 2019).

Product line refers to a collection of products that are allied as a result of functioning in an analogous mode, are traded to similar customers, are marketed over the same types of channels, or are within certain price series (Azimovna et al., 2022). According to Sever, Sever, and Kuhzady (2015), a firm can make a product improvement through product line extension and product modification.

- **Product line extension**

This transpires once a firm's management decide to add products to their current product line to beat the competition (Sainaghi, Phillips & d'Angella, 2019). These products are similar to existing ones, but they are specifically designed to cater for somewhat different customer needs (Pham & Nguyen, 2019). The product is added to the product line with the aim of competing more broadly within the industry (Sainaghi et al. 2019).

- **Product modification**

This refers to the act of altering one or more features or characteristics of a product and differs from product line extension since the original product does not continue to be in the product line (Pham & Nguyen, 2019).

- **Product items**

This is a specific kind of product, that can be chosen separately from amongst the firm's products (Sainaghi et al. 2019). A product item symbolises a definite model, brand, or size of a product that a firm offers and is the single product that a specific customer may buy (Martínez, Herrero & Gómez, 2018). Therefore, each product item must be packaged appealingly.

- **Branding**

The success of any product offering or business depends largely on the target customer's ability to distinguish between products (Sainaghi et al. 2019). Branding helps to identify and differentiate the products or services of one business from the competing products of other businesses. Branding is important to businesses and their consumers because it makes shopping simple, facilitates information aligned with buying preferences, and provides assurance that the consumer's purchase was right. It further helps in ensuring quality and fulfills positive customer needs (Camilleri, 2018). Daniel and Faustin (2019) assert that the majority of consumers see the brand as an essential aspect of the product since it can augment the actual product. Therefore, SMETS should develop and have a vibrant brand.

Branding benefits tourists in various ways. It helps tourists recognise products that might express their values. Brands also emphasise product quality and dependability. Visitors who always purchase similar brands know that the same benefits, features, and quality will be found whenever they buy the product (De Pelsmacker, Van Tilburg & Holthof, 2018). Branding also offers some advantages to the seller. The brand name develops the base upon which a complete story concerning a product's distinctive features can be built (Al-Zyoud, 2018).

Theurer, Tumasjan, Welp, and Lievens (2018) found that some of the owners/managers within SMETs lead and influence branding and drive all the marketing activities in line with their own knowledge, business styles, personal networks, and competencies, which may influence the business positively.

## **2.8 Marketing and tour operating strategies in the European region**

Tour operators generally have diverse marketing strategies by region. Thus, their marketing strategies may end up with different results depending on the destination promoted (Alegre & Sard, 2017). Despite the indisputable relevance and dominance of tour operators in mass tourism destinations, the literature on their marketing strategies and how they affect the industry is scant. Hoogendoorn et al. (2020) confirm that large European tour operators manage their marketing strategies regionally. Azar and Lo (2016) found that tour operators divided the Turkish coast into tourist areas based on their own commercial and brand strategies regarding their source markets, with important differences in destinations within the same country. This suggested the need to conduct a detailed analysis of the tour operators' marketing strategies differentiated by destinations (S raphin, Zaman, Olver, Bourliataux-Lajoinie & Dosquet, 2019). Tour operators exert an oligopoly control in the market, which is reflected in their sales and marketing activities and the prices (Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019). Morgan et al. (2019) analysed the oligopoly behavior in the tour operating industry in the United Kingdom and found that they had higher long-term profitability. Tour operators use this oligopoly strategy to achieve competitive prices (Seraphin et al., 2019). Their size and their oligopoly situation in the source markets and destinations, result in an uncontested power advantage for tour operators in the European tourism market (Auala, van Zyl & Ferreira, 2019). Tour operators are in a privileged position in many destinations, managing the supply-demand gap according to their interests (Alegre & Sard 2017). Tour operators have strong control over the market by directing tourist flows (Auala et al., 2019), affecting the destination's visibility in its main source markets (Petrova, Dekhtyar, Klok & Loseva, 2018).

Tour operators also control a large part of the tourist experience given their volume, their influence in the image creation process, and their negotiation power with the different agents in the destinations (Weidenfeld, 2018). This has led to an increase in the problems of cooperation between hoteliers and tour operators in destinations in the Mediterranean and southern Europe (Tom Dieck, Fountoulaki & Jung, 2018). The traditional conflict in the distribution channel between hoteliers and tour operators is obvious (Ganski, Tsybouski, Kazlovski, & Weidi, 2020). This price conflict between tour operators and other stakeholders has been studied in some destinations such as Greece (Lu, Yang, and Yuksel 2015) and Spain (Ganski et al., 2020). However, online travel agents (OTAs) are playing a growing predominant role, changing the tourism distribution channels model. This situation makes it more necessary to analyse the impact of the market of the new marketing strategies developed by tour operators to face this new scenario (Tom Dieck & Jung, 2018). Tour operator marketing strategies (new brands, segmentation strategies, labels, etc.) and price management are deeply influenced by the OTAs and the new distribution ecosystem (S raphin & Yallop, 2019). Recent literature has paid more attention to the effect of OTAs on the pricing strategies of tour operators, where tour operators are struggling to keep their leadership strategy and trying to implement new marketing activities (Weidenfeld, 2018). It can be concluded that most of the previous research has focused on one single destination, not comparing multiple effects on countries and destinations (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018), and mainly analysing accommodation and destination variables. Therefore, the business relationship between tour operators and destinations and accommodation needs to be analysed in greater depth, particularly regarding how tour operators' marketing policies affect the price.

## **2.9 Marketing strategies used by tour operators to promote township and small tourism enterprises**

There are various marketing strategies used by tour operators for the promotion of township tourism and small enterprises to enhance sales performance and to promote small township tourism enterprises and their products and services. Marketing strategy is defined as the utilisation of the traditional mix of product branding and improvement, pricing, and price adjustments, placing or location, packaging, and promotion (Salvatore, Chiodo & Fantini, 2018).

Kwiatk-Soltys and Bajgier-Kowalska, (2019) view marketing strategy as the design and management of a marketing sub-system to inform and persuade present and potential customers

and clients. The promotional elements are organic, for example, advertising can be seen as the taking of the horse to the stream while personal selling is getting the horse to drink some water.

MacNeill and Wozniak (2018) state that marketing strategies are of substantial importance in the effectiveness of a company's marketing efforts. The authors further argue that marketing promotion elements play varying roles in relation to the achievement of corporate marketing goals and objectives.

Arasanmi and Krishna (2019) note that the overall marketing effort usually includes several individual promotion campaigns. The author defined a 'promotion campaign' as an interrelated series of promotion activities designed to accomplish a specific objective. The goal of promotion management according to Wijayanti and Damanik, (2019) is to ensure that all the individual elements of the promotion mix work to accomplish the organisation's overall promotion activities.

Saura, Palos-Sanchez, and Correia (2019) state that marketing strategy is the way a firm advertises to educate consumers on the products offered and thus stimulate demand. This includes various tools such as social media, media, leaflets, brochures, and more.

Marketing strategy is believed to be a critical success factor in the growth and ultimate survival of a firm and is therefore viewed as one of the most important aspects of a tour operator (Almeida & Silva, 2020). Marketing strategy can be defined as the process an organisation goes through in developing the concept of a product or service, implementing the idea, determining the right pricing model, selecting the promotion avenue, and deciding on the distribution channel (Ionescu, Firoiu, Pirvu & Vilag, 2019).

The goal is to get the tourists to consume the product, leading to sales, leading to performance and profitability (Alford & Jones, 2020). Marketing strategy has been an effective tool and strategy for increasing the sales of a product (Ionescu et al., 2019).

Marketing strategies are not one-time processes but varied and unique actions that are necessary to revise year by year to attain predetermined objectives (Almeida & Silva, 2020). Therefore, tour operators need to revise their current marketing strategies to assess if they are still effective for the promotion of township tourism and small tourism enterprises.

### **2.9.1 Product Development Strategies**

Product is the combination of tangible and intangible elements. In tourism, a product is a complex combination of elements and cannot be pointed out as a single element. Even though

the main component of the product is the destination, the travel process, such as hotels, air travel, means of transport to the destination site, local culture, history, the local gastronomy culinary experience, shopping of local unique cultural brands, souvenirs, and the overall experience from the tourist product. Each of these components has its significance in the product mix and the absence of even a single component, the product mix is incomplete (Simanjuntak, Sumarwan, & Situmorang, 2020).

Ganesha, Aithal, and Kirubadevi (2020) state that regardless of whether a product is an innovation, an update of a familiar product, or an imitation of a competitor product, it needs careful consideration and planning to make sure it suits the customers' needs and wants. It should have a significant competitive advantage and should be accepted in the marketplace. Cristobal-Fransi, Daries, Serra-Cantalops, Ramon-Cardona, and Zorzano (2018) state that innovation facilitates how small and medium businesses respond to market changes and maintain their competitive advantage. Tour operators identify customers' wants and develop products to satisfy them, or develop environmentally responsible products that have fewer effects than competitors. This increases the perceived quality of the firm's products, market share as well as customer satisfaction (Simanjuntak et al., 2020).

### **2.9.2 Pricing strategies**

An acceptable price change is determined by the buyer's willingness and ability to purchase a township tourism product, and the seller's cost of producing and distributing the product (Sekerin, Gorokhova, Dudin, Danko & Nikolaykin, 2018). Price discrimination is a common method used by organisations where products are of different prices depending on the quality; high-quality products are priced higher than other products, thus scooping the crème of the market and eventually more profit for the organisation. The organisation can show that a portion of the price goes to a worthy cause such as scholarships and donations to the needy in the society. Simanjuntak et al. (2020) state that the location of small and medium enterprises can influence costs. Therefore, the quality of the transportation system is a key factor, as the enterprises should be able to deliver the product as agreed.

The implications of transport costs increase the suppliers' final price, which makes it extremely difficult for medium enterprises to get business deals or contracts (Simanjuntak et al., 2020). However, pricing has become increasingly vital as the basis for competition within Kenyan medium enterprises. This means that businesses use pricing as a strategy for local medium enterprises. Therefore, this might have a negative impact or take the enterprises out of business. Organisations that have inadequate market orientation are much more likely to price their

commodity by checking the competition or marking up their costs to attain a set profit margin (Donthu, Kumar & Pandey, 2020). There are good odds that these businesses will hurt their customer value, market share, and profit margins.

### **2.9.3 Promotion strategies**

Tourist organisations bear the responsibility of informing, persuading, and sensing the potential tourists in the right fashion. According to Nekmahmud and Fekete-Farkas (2020), tourism promotion means stimulating sales through the dissemination of information. It means trying to encourage actual and potential customers to travel. Tourism marketers need to use the various components of promotion optimally so that they succeed in increasing the number of regular users. Promotion can maximise the duration of stay or frequency of visits by offering new tourist products in the same country to areas which have remained untapped or been only partially tapped (Donthu et al., 2020). The various dimensions of tourism promotion are as follows:

**Advertising:** International tourism advertising is tourism-related marketing on the part of a private or public entity directed towards audiences abroad, and might target potential travellers and non-travellers alike (Korenkova, Maros, Levicky & Fila, 2020). It is about creation of awareness targeting the larger audience about destinations and their attractions to influence consumers' decisions. The intangibility of tourism can be compensated for with the help of visual images of scenes and events (Donthu et al., 2020).

**Publicity:** This focuses attention on strengthening the public relations measures by developing a rapport with media people and getting their personalised support in publicising the business. It helps in projecting a positive image of tourist organisations since the public trusts the news media channels. The publicity program can include regular publicity stories and photographs in the newspapers, contact with travel editors, and advertising (Donthu et al., 2020).

**Sales promotions:** Sales promotion measures are short-term activities seeking to boost sales at peak demand periods to ensure that the firms obtain their market share. Promotions can also be used to help launch a new product or support an ailing or modified one. The tool of sales promotions is designed to appeal particularly to those customers who are price-sensitive. There are several techniques to promote sales, and the tourist professional needs to use them according to their requirements vis-a-vis the emerging trends in the business. Examples of promotions are a travel company offering giveaways to their clients, such as flight bags, wallets for tickets, foreign exchange, and covers for passports. Hotels offer several facilities like

shoeshine, laundry services, first aid and sewing kits, shower caps, and shampoo. VIP clients also get fruit and flowers in their rooms (Okeke-Uzodike, Okeke-Uzodike, & Ndinda, 2018).

**Word-of-mouth promotion:** Most communication about tourism takes place by word-of-mouth communication, which in a true sense is word-of-recommendation. In the tourism industry, it is found that word-of-mouth promoters play the role of a hidden sales force, which helps the process of selling. The effectiveness of this tool is due to the high credibility of the channel, especially in the eyes of potential tourists. The sensitivity of this tool makes it clear that tourist organisations need to concentrate on the quality of services they promise and offer.

Marketers or tourist organisations need to keep their eyes open, identify the vocal persons or the opinion leaders, and take special care of them so that they keep on moving in the process of stimulating and creating demand (Okeke-Uzodike et al., 2018).

**Personal selling:** Personal selling is based on the personal skill of an individual. The travel and hotel business depends considerably on personal selling. The development of travel and tourism has been possible due to well-educated and trained sales personnel. The development of the tourism business has been influenced by the services rendered by travel agents and travel guides since they work as information carriers. Personal selling is the personal presentation of a tangible product or intangible services or ideas to customers. The personnel who attend to tourists form an essential ingredient of the product, such as the sales personnel responsible for dealing with customers behind the counter, the resort representatives catering to the needs of tourists when they reach the destination, etc.; all of them play a vital role in ensuring that the tourism products satisfy the tourists. The phrase ‘the customer is always right’ applies particularly to the tourism industry. No reduction in price can compensate for an impolite and indecent travel guide, an insolent waiter, and a surly or haughty coach driver. These facts are testimony to the proposition that the travel business is linked with the performance and behavior of sales personnel or travel staff.

**Telemarketing:** This is a method of selling in which a professionally sound telemarketer markets the business. The quality of technology and the communicative ability of the telemarketers determine the magnitude of success of this component. In tourism, the travel agents, offices of airways, receptionists, and secretaries work inefficiently if the telephonic services are not up to the mark. Recruiting a sales person considered to be professionally sound, personally committed and having in-built creativity, innovation and imagination is very important.

**Exhibitions:** These can be organised domestically or internationally. There are major international trade and travel fairs such as Dubai Tourism and Mauritius Tourism, etc. The participants include state and national tourism promotion boards, travel agents and tour operators, airlines, car rental agencies, cruise liners, holiday financiers, technology providers, hotels and resorts, and education institutions in the field of hospitality and tourism

Rita, Priyanto, Andadari, and Haryanto (2018) believe that advertising can assist small and medium enterprises and differentiate them from the competition. Most small businesses do not have the funds to broadcast a marketing message to millions of potential clients. After developing a product, setting the best market price, and identifying an appropriate channel for distribution, an organisation must promote it to potential buyers (Soke & Wiid, 2016). It is important for tour operators to notify the potential buyers about the product's availability or to inform the consumer, using promotional media such as radio, print, or television. The tour operators must carefully examine each alternative medium and evaluate not only the costs but also the effectiveness of the medium in meeting the set objectives (Okeke-Uzodike et al., 2018).

According to Gilmore and Carson (2018), a common constraint facing many smaller firms is a lack of promotional activity to help them compete with larger organisations. One way of dealing with this challenge is forming an alliance with other organisations by forming business networks. If the organisations create a marketing programme, each customer or prospect will be able to directly tell other potential customers about the company's offering. The company can leverage eco-friendly promotion strategies through the use of the internet instead of print media. In addition, it is vital to be transparent to enable customers to easily find out whether the promoted information is correct (Okeke-Uzodike et al., 2018).

#### **2.9.4 Place Strategies**

There are multiple distribution strategies for tourism marketing. Tourism's main product destination is a fixed element with no mobility, therefore the target of distribution at a place is to extend the number of points of sales or access to places away from the location at which services are performed or delivered. This is where the tour operators come into the picture. Tour operators buy tourism products in bulk and make them available to travel agents who are retailers. The range of tourist products that are bought by the tour operators includes airline seats, hotel accommodations, buses for local sightseeing, etc., that are sold directly to customers. The latest mode of reaching tourists is through the Internet. By using the internet all the traditional distribution channels can be addressed online at low cost, reaching a greater

geographical area and increasing visibility (Strulak-Wójcikiewicz, Wagner, Lapko, & Hącia, 2020).

Market access and potential competitiveness are key challenges facing local small enterprises in townships. Small and medium enterprises aiming for international markets face difficult decisions regarding the choice of governance modes (Szromek, & Naramski, 2019). A major influence on the changing structure, performance, and location of retailing is the operational environment in which retail firms must function. This environment encompasses social, economic, technological, and political elements that generate a culture to which retailers respond with managerial decisions. The location of the firm about its target market will influence the performance of the firm because of the cost of delivering the goods and services to consumers (Camilleri, 2018). A medium enterprise must select a location that will cost-effectively serve the customers to reduce the overheads.

### **2.9.5 Process Strategies**

Process refers to the flow of activities or mechanisms that take place when there is an interaction between the customers and the businesses (Okeke-Uzodike et al., 2018). The operation process of the tourism firm depends on the size of the firm. The sequential steps involved in the delivery of the tourist products are:

**Provision of Travel Information:** In the tourism industry, the provision of travel information is crucial for potential tourists seeking clarification about their proposed tours (Cooper et al., 2018). Accessible and reliable information plays a pivotal role in influencing travel decisions and ensuring a positive tourist experience.

**Preparation of Itineraries:** The preparation of itineraries involves a series of operations essential for planning a tour (Pike, 2019). Itineraries serve as a roadmap for the entire travel experience, outlining activities, destinations, and timelines to optimize the tourist's time and enjoyment during the trip.

**Liaison with Providers of Services:** Establishing contracts with service providers, including transportation companies, hotels, and local sightseeing coaches, is a critical step before selling any travel package (Morrison, 2013). Effective liaison ensures the seamless delivery of services, contributing to overall customer satisfaction.

**Planning and Costing Tours:** After entering into contracts and arrangements with service providers, the next phase involves planning and costing the tour (Goeldner et al., 2014). This

process is dynamic and varies based on the selected tour package and individual requirements, considering factors such as accommodation, transportation, and activities.

**Ticketing:** The advent of computerized reservation systems has significantly transformed the ticketing process for hotels, railway services, and air travel (Sigala, 2017). These systems streamline booking procedures, enhancing efficiency and accuracy in managing reservations and tickets.

**Provision of Foreign Currency and Insurance:** For international travel, the final tasks involve providing foreign currency and facilitating insurance arrangements for travelers (Pizam & Mansfeld, 1999). Ensuring access to local currency and comprehensive insurance coverage contributes to the safety and financial well-being of tourists during their journeys

## **2.10 Effectiveness of strategies used by tour operators for marketing and promoting townships and small tourism enterprises**

According to Mohseni, Jayashree, Rezaei, Kasim, and Okumus (2018), the most effective ways that tour operators can market and promote township and small tourism enterprises and attract tourists in the tourism industry are storytelling on social media posts, use augmented reality to offer memorable experiences, create valuable content and optimise the company website for SEO, and manage reviews on rating sites like Trip Advisor.

Okeke-Uzodike et al. (2018) identified six marketing strategies for the effective marketing of tourism: buyer personas, goals, digital KPIs, website optimisation, paid marketing guidelines, and content creation calendar.

By far the most widely accepted marketing strategies were identified by Azimovna et al. (2022). Marketing a tour or activity business has never been easy in an ever-evolving industry. Having a business online can provide a head start over competitors, especially if the destination is up-and-coming.

Whether one is operating in a well-established destination or a developing one, marketing strategies are likely to change. With that in mind, what follows are six widely adopted marketing strategies to boost the marketing performance of tour operators to attract high-end clientele.

### **2.10.1 Partnership with other local businesses as a strategy**

Partnering with other businesses (accommodation providers or other tour and activity providers) in the target destination can be a great way to market one's product and the destination. When tourists visit that area, they will view the entire stay (activities, tours, and accommodation) as one entire experience. One can deliver a great overall experience to visitors by bundling related products. This also saves customers time instead of them having to do the research and compare different individual items that make up a whole trip.

According to Almeida-Santana and Moreno-Gil (2018), the tourism business environment is driven by SMEs who are not used to working with one another. They need to start working together, bundling their services together, and distributing them on one specific channel.

For example: a tourist who is planning to visit the KZN historical route of townships will face many challenges if tour operators have not bundled business services. He or she will have to check domestic flight airfares, juggle between which hotels to choose and which rate to consider acceptable, try to find out what resources to bring for the visit, and what mode of land transportation is available. Having to do this planning can be discouraging and put such a tourist off going on the visit.

If SMEs are not willing to bundle their complementary businesses, customers end up wasting much time trying to find information and compare products and prices. The process can also be incredibly intimidating. The solution must be to simplify this whole process, for instance, creating a beginner experience package where different businesses work together. They also need to be prepared to pay a commission to their distributors.

#### **2.10.1.1 Partnering with outbound tour operator agents**

**Outbound tour operators** take residents from one country to travel to another country. These tours take travelers all over the world and to every continent by partnering with inbound tour operators distributed globally in tourist destinations.

**Inbound tour operators** involve non-residents traveling in another country. Companies that provide local assistance for tours arriving in their country or town are called inbound or receptive tour operators.

For inbound tour operators, the action of forming partnerships with outbound tour operators in other countries creates a platform for channeling tourists to destinations in the same way that a

referral program works, but which creates a larger reach to every corner of the world for an SME business.

### **2.10.2 Digital Marketing Strategy**

One of the most effective digital marketing strategies is focusing on website content. Tour operators who have a website are advised to include a blog and make time for it. This is very effective and is great for SEO and can generate traffic to the website. It also demonstrates insider knowledge about the destination, building credibility among potential customers.

According to Hawkrige, Newton, and Hall (2018), tourism companies need four things to create good online content:

- i.** Extremely targeted content catered to a very specific group of readers.
- ii.** High-quality visuals like images, screenshots, infographics, or videos.
- iii.** Inspiration to trigger the wanderlust in readers.
- iv.** Clean and professional design of the website.

### **2.10.3 Offer a tour package with good value for money**

According to Gölgeci and Kuivalainen (2020), the best value for money is defined as the combination of cost, quality, and sustainability in the most advantageous way to meet customer requirements.

Although most affluent travelers have no issue with the amount spent, they still expect good value for the money spent (Itani, Kassar & Loureiro, 2019).

### **2.10.4 Get on directories and listings**

People often go to Google, the largest directory ever, when they start planning for an upcoming trip. From there, they move on to Trip Advisor, Bookings.com, and so on to book and pay for different travel products like accommodation, transport, tours, and activities. This means that tour operators need to be where prospective customers are searching for information. This includes claiming one's business on internet platforms like Google, Trip Advisor, and Booking.com. Creating pages on social media accounts like Facebook and Instagram and updating them regularly with photos has a great impact on creating visibility.

### **2.10.5 Promoting Destination Authenticity**

Authenticity is the most talked about trend in travel, but also the thing tourism marketers are most challenged to define. This is because what is authentic to one person may be different for another, and it is more about how a person feels rather than something that can be defined.

Joo, Miller and Fink (2019) define authentic as made or done in the traditional or original way, or in a way that faithfully resembles an original way.

Do ‘original and traditional’ really help us understand what is authentic? Perhaps not greatly. According to Audrezet, de Kerviler, and Moulard (2020), the authentic self is the soul made visible.

When we understand more about human psychology we learn about the ‘protected self’ – the barriers we create and use to hide our hopes, fears, and insecurities from others. The ‘unprotected self’ reveals the soul and is authentic. What can we learn from this in tourism? Do the places and people who reveal most of their souls, who act in an unprotected way, appear the most authentic? For example, the tourist destination that admits a difficult past and tells how this shapes the present and future feels more authentic than just another tourist trip glossing over anything that might tarnish impressions of ‘paradise’. A local person who invites you into their home (bed and breakfast, homestay in Cuba, or Airbnb) might be letting down their guard a little, and you might expect a more real or authentic experience with greater insights into local ways of life than staying in a chain hotel (Hampton, Jeyacheya & Long, 2018).

Authenticity in tourism is made up of multiple elements. The destination’s history, the cultural heritage of the society, the way of interaction of the local people, the local traditional gastronomy, shops that sell local brands and souvenirs, etc. are all components of destination authenticity.

According to a study by Wang, Chen, Su, and Morrison (2019), the gastronomic satisfaction or experience of tourists on their visit seems to increase much more than compared with the cultural dimension of tourism without gastronomy.

Further to this, according to Becker, Wiegand, & Reinartz (2019), most tourists feel that souvenirs are an important part of the holiday that reminds them of the authentic experience they had and prefer to purchase local brands and souvenirs that are authentic themselves.

### **2.10.6 The KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority**

The KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority (KZNTA), which previously operated under the name Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN), is responsible for the development, promotion, and marketing of tourism in and within the province. KZNTA's statement of intent and direction is drawn from the mandate vested in the organisation by the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Act, 1996 (as amended, including No. 2 of 2002) (Mlambo & Ezeuduji, 2020).

Prior to 1994, tourism marketing was a function of national government, but the establishment of a democratic national government allowed the redistribution of such responsibilities to the provinces. The provinces are now responsible for both domestic and international tourism product development and the subsequent marketing within their regions. At the national level, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism utilises South African Tourism as its marketing arm with its role being to market the country to international markets (Mlambo & Ezeuduji, 2020).

According to the TKZN Strategy (2014), it is the vision of TKZN to position the province of KZN as Africa's leading tourism destination, both nationally and internationally. The mission of this organisation is to initiate, facilitate, co-ordinate and implement strategic tourism marketing, and demand-driven tourism development programmes. This will help in growing the tourism sector and will serve to achieve the following: the transformation of the tourism sector within the province, with economic benefits to all stakeholders and the province.

#### **2.10.6.1 Application of the tourism marketing strategy in KZN**

Mlambo and Ezeuduji (2020) position KZN in the global and national tourism markets. The KZN Provincial Tourism Strategy sets out TKZN's approach in dealing with tourism development, marketing imperatives, and the related investment required in the province. The strategy was developed in the context of a growing tourism market, current significant investment in tourism, and other developments, such as King Shaka Airport and the Dube Trade Port (Aina & Ezeuduji, 2021).

Gauteng, the Western Cape, and KZN were identified as the most popular destinations for international tourists (Matikiti et al., 2018). KZN is not as popular as Cape Town but the former has more to offer and has the potential to grow (Matikiti et al., 2018).

Between 2010 and 2011, the KZN tourism sector contributed a total of about R18 billion to the gross geographic product, which constituted about 10% of the provincial economy. The KZN

province currently attracts about 1.3 million foreign visitors and 11.6 million domestic tourism trips on an annual basis compared with the more popular Cape Town (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019).

Tour operators benefit from the tourists that are visiting KZN province and they boost small businesses. TKZN's strategy stated that the province has wonderful natural tourism attractions and is thus well-positioned to take advantage of the continued growth in international and domestic tourism.

KZN, with its unique blend of sophistication and cultural diversity, is considered South Africa's domestic tourism leader (Matikiti et al., 2018). The wide range of its 'must-see, must-do' lists for discerning travellers makes it a highly popular tourist site for visitors from throughout the continent of Africa. The key role player in marketing South Africa as a tourist destination is Tourism South Africa; their efforts being supplemented by provincial tourism authorities (Statistics South Africa, 2016). In KZN, TKZN is the provincial destination management organisation charged with the responsibility of regional marketing under the brand Zulu Kingdom (Nzama & Ezeuduji, 2020).

## **2.11 Achievements of current marketing strategies used by tour operators**

According to Picazo and Moreno-Gil (2018), promoting is the art of reminding, persuading, and informing customers about a company's brands or products. Sofronov (2019) states that tourism is a form of services that relies on a promotion and marketing mix, with promotion being the essential key in this industry. Tour operators are to possess such promotional strategies especially when operating in townships in South Africa.

### **2.11.1 Township tourism and product promotion**

Product innovation is an essential element for long-term sustainability of tourism destinations. The critical importance of innovation as a whole for tourism development in South Africa has been demonstrated in several recent investigations (Rogerson & Baum, 2020). It is argued that one basis for expanding township tourism in South Africa is through maximising the potential for creativity and the development of new innovative creative tourism products.

The limited existing research on creative tourism in South Africa suggests that it is mainly concentrated outside of urban areas (Rogerson & Baum, 2020). However, there is a record of the cultural vibrancy of township life and its importance, especially for arts, music, and entertainment in South Africa (Madondo et al., 2019). In particular, South Africa's townships

have long embodied a creative consumption-focused economy within which a central role has been played by alcohol and drinking venues (shebeens) in a night time leisure economy (Kalnitska, 2018).

Culture has become an important component of local and regional development, and tourism policies, especially in urban areas (Glowka & Zehrer, 2019). The basis of creative tourism is culture, which is regarded as a resource in creative economy debates. It should be mentioned that cultural and creative policies are associated with neo-liberal urban changes which have intensified uneven economic development as also witnessed in the South African context (Rogerson, 2019). In addition, it is argued that slum formation is strongly linked to neo-liberal urban policies. However, there are alternatives to Fordist urban planning and a case can be made for the stimulation of economic opportunities through tourism as an avenue to address pressing socio-economic challenges (Kornilaki & Font, 2019). Cultural resources are significant for opening potential pathways for spreading the benefits of urban tourism, which has exhibited strong growth over the past three decades, to peripheral township areas in South Africa (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

The emphasis of creative tourism is on creative expressions of culture, which includes:

- i. Active learning experiences, based on culture, whereby tourists become active participants and co-creators of the experiences they consume;
- ii. Creative precincts linked to cultural and tourism consumption, place making and urban development; and
- iii. Creative spectacles and events centred on culture.

### **2.11.2 Small tourism enterprises**

Defining a small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) has changed over the years. Previously, the South African National Small Business (NSB) Act 102 of 1996 defined a small business as a separate entity that can be within any sector or sub-sector of the economy and which can be classified as a micro-enterprise, a very small enterprise, a small enterprise or a medium enterprise (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The NSB Amendment Acts of 2003 and 2004 further define an SMME as a distinct business entity managed by one or more persons, which must meet certain specified criteria.

SMMEs are regarded as a critical driving force for economic growth and development in South Africa (Rastrollo & Rivero, 2019). In South Africa, SMMEs operate in townships and cities.

However, there have been concerns about their failure rate and their inability to gain competitive advantage.

It is important to understand the meaning of SMMEs in the context of the tourism industry before deliberating on advantages and disadvantages. Rogerson (2019) provides a definition and examples that clarify the role of SMMEs both in the tourism economy and tourism industries. The author indicates that theoretically the definition of tourism SMME should include those SMME operations which fall within the scope of the travel and tourism economy, as well as those operating within the travel and tourism industries.

Rogerson (2019) categorises the SMMEs that operate within the scope of the tourism industries into three subsectors, namely, accommodation, hospitality and related services and travel distribution systems. Accommodation includes bed and breakfasts; guesthouses and backpacker hotels. Hospitality and related services include amongst other things, restaurants, catering, attractions and arts and crafts.

According to Acosta, Crespo and Agudo (2018), there are several factors which impact the success or failure of visitor attractions as tourism enterprises. Due to tourism being the driver of economic development globally, there is much competition because of high expectations. Attractions and tourism products should be improved from time to time. SMMEs should therefore be managed efficiently to keep up effective marketing strategies in line with visitor demands and visitor satisfaction.

Travel distribution systems include tour guides and tour operators. Tour operators also contribute towards visitor or customer satisfaction. Acosta et al. (2018) raise two main factors that underpin the need to ensure customer satisfaction. The first factor is that visitor satisfaction encourages regular and repeat visitation, which is more cost effective, and secondly, word of mouth recommendations work in favour of the operators since minimal marketing input is required to attract new visitors.

In other words, for the tourism business to be successful, SMMEs must ensure that visitors are satisfied. Customer satisfaction relies on efficient and effective management of the business (Rogerson, 2019). Effective and efficient business management also sustains the business for a longer period. The levels of efficiency and effectiveness of marketing strategy differ between the established and emerging SMMEs. The established SMMEs have higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness of marketing strategy as compared to their counterparts and so reap the benefits thereof (Acosta et al., 2018).

According to Rogerson (2019) established SMMEs in tourism enjoy a number of critical advantages over their emerging counterparts. The first advantage is that established SMMEs have greater access to capital than emerging SMMEs. Secondly, in addition to economic capital, these established entrepreneurs commonly enjoy high levels of social capital in terms of access to networks, sources of information and data to support their tourism business (Acosta et al., 2018).

Basically, these established SMMEs have more resources to strengthen their businesses. The levels of education are also a definite contributing factor. Rogerson (2019) attests to that when saying that the high levels of social capital are enhanced by these entrepreneurs' high levels of education, which result in high levels of managerial skill.

The final advantage of the established SMMEs is their cultural capital. This has to do with their language proficiency when dealing with various types of tourists, both domestically and internationally. According to Rogerson (2019), cultural capital is the general awareness of the tourism market (albeit not always acquired through formal training) and knowledge acquired regarding the 'tastes' and 'experiences' that are generally sought by large segments of the tourism market. These advantages define the success factor of the established SMMEs. Without these advantages, challenges in tourism business are bound to increase, which is likely to be the case with emerging tourism SMMEs.

Academic studies have shown that marketing plays a significant role in all enterprises. Small firm marketing has unique characteristics that differentiate it from that of large firm marketing (Bilgin, 2018). Small and medium entities cannot do conventional marketing in the same way that large ones do (Kim & Chao, 2019). This is one of the biggest problems owner-managers face in their business operations.

Several researchers have witnessed that nowadays small enterprises are also continuously adopting innovative marketing strategies to mark their presence in this competitive world. Much of this successful marketing is driven by innovation, however, to date, the prevalence of innovative marketing research has focused on firm-specific characteristics of innovation, and/or the effect of the external environment (Boisen, Terlouw, Groote & Couwenberg, 2018b).

Hikido (2018) states that promotion of small township businesses occurs when tour operators use effective promotional strategies to communicate with customers more effectively.

Therefore, tour operators in KZN will promote township tourism and small enterprises if they communicate effectively with their customers.

According to Kukanja, Planinc and Sikosek (2020), promotion is a means of advertising and involves reminding, persuading and informing customers about brands or products that they sell. In the tourism industry, promotion is the most visible factor of the '4' Ps in the marketing mix with the other three Ps being product, place, and price. Ganski et al. (2020) add that township tourism is a type of service to which the marketing mix can be applied and promotion is an essential key element in this industry. It also aims to achieve a favourable modification of a tourist's habits and mentality towards tourist destinations and township tourism products. Boisen et al. (2018) suggest that information from sources outside the destination domain can exert a significant influence on the intention to visit that destination.

According to Kukanja et al. (2020), there are several benefits associated with township tourism, including: enhancement of the local economy; promotion of the township; generation of new jobs; support of the local communities (i.e. education and health projects); and implementation of education schemes.

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) state that companies can either run the same advertising and promotion campaigns used in the home market or change them for each local market, a process called communication adaptation. If companies adapt both product and communication, they engage in dual adaptation.

The company can use one message everywhere, varying only the language, name, and colours. Thus, TKZN promotes township tourism by using dual adaptation whereby trade service providers are obtaining the information available to them (de Souza, Mendes-Filho & Buhalis, 2020).

### **2.11.3 The historical overview of township SMMES**

The history of township SMMES in South Africa dates back to the apartheid era – the period during which black people were prohibited from owning businesses and faced prosecution for engaging in any business activity (DTI, 2018; Mtshali et al., 2017). Townships experienced segregation in terms of housing, education, health and libraries, amongst others (Boisen, Groote, Terlouw & Couwenberg, 2018a). Townships, often referred to as urban residential areas, were formed for the black population, usually beyond city limits. By contrast, the white population resided in suburbs or cities. Generally, every city had at least one, and often several, township(s) associated with it. The historical background of townships has a significant impact

on how SMMEs operate their businesses daily in contemporary business environments. Even after becoming a democratic country, South Africa still has structured geographical inequalities and challenges hindering the growth of township SMMEs.

Small business owners in townships were regarded as self-employed during the apartheid era and most operated illegally (Murithi, 2017). In contrast, white small business owners in cities were encouraged during this period, through legislation and other local authority ordinances, to participate freely in any form of small business activity without facing prosecution. The range of SMMEs currently operating in townships includes various sectors (Kukanja et al., 2020), and may be similar to the SMMEs operating in the cities. The township SMMEs are very diverse, and because of socio-economic issues they have different needs and challenges compared with SMMEs in the cities. According to Daniel and Faustin (2019), some SMME owners or managers and their employees have limited or lack business skills while others are experienced, complex and dynamic. SMMEs operating in townships have unique attributes, such as the location where they operate.

#### **2.11.4 Roles of township SMMEs in contributing towards the economy**

Township SMMEs can play a vital role in addressing the challenges that South Africa is currently facing such as unemployment, poverty and inequality. The SANDP emphasises the importance of creating about 11 million jobs by the year 2025. The SANDP further recognised the role of SMMEs in achieving the set targets and the capability of SMMEs to act as the backbone of economic growth and development (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019). Township SMMEs are part of the South African economy, and they too play a vital role in the growth of the economy. In Gauteng, SMMEs have created about 150 000 jobs in a single year, and this was a result of government's support for SMMEs (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Therefore, township SMMEs must receive necessary interventions and support to address many of the challenges faced by the country (Styvén & Wallstrom, 2019).

##### **2.11.4.1 Factors necessary for successful township tourism enterprises**

The greater the township tourism demand, the more successful a tour operator's business can be because prices escalate for products and more products are sold to a larger number of tourists. The more successful the tour operator, the more resources he/she require to promote and develop his/her business. According to Muldoon and Mair (2022), this is a reinforcing process if one assumes that greater demand equals greater profit and that no quality is lost.

Hikido (2018) further explained that the more years in the business of tour operating, the more knowledge of the business and better exposure to tourists. Auala, van Zyl and Ferreira (2019) addressed more than 100 entrepreneurs at the Eastern Cape's Business Connect conference in November 2019, and emphasised that if the number of small businesses in South Africa increases, the country's economy will be saved in the future.

According to Leonard and Dladla (2020), the success of developing township tourism may be measured by optimising the number of tourist enterprises per capita or the sales performance of the tour operators.

## **2.12 Relationship between marketing strategies and tour operators' sales performance**

Blythe and Martin (2019) noted that product is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption, hence satisfying customers' wants or needs. Kim and Chao (2019) assert that product is a marketing mix strategy in which organisations offer consumers symbolic and experiential features to differentiate products from competitors. Rust (2020) researched the impact of marketing strategy on business performance in a study of selected small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Oluyole local government, Ibadan, Nigeria. The researchers found that there was a significant influence between product and business performance. Henama (2021) researched the impact of marketing mix elements on consumer loyalty and found that product influences customer loyalty, hence an increase in performance.

### **2.12.1 Product strategy and sales performance**

According to Chili (2018), product is a marketing mix strategy in which organisations offer consumers symbolic and experiential elements that differentiate their products from competitors. Picazo and Moreno-Gil (2018) researched the role of marketing strategy on business performance in a study of SMEs in Obuasi local government, Ghana, and found that there was a significant influence between product and sales performance. Simanjuntak et al. (2020) also researched the impact of marketing mix elements on consumer loyalty revealing that product influences customer loyalty and hence an increase in performance. Furthermore, Sekerin et al. (2018) conducted a study of the relationship between customer-based casino brand equity and sales performance and found that customer-based tour operations brand equity had an impact on sales performance. However, a study conducted by Cristobal-Fransi et al. (2018) on marketing strategies by tour operators in India found that these had no significant effect on firms' performance.

### **2.12.2 Price strategy and sales performance**

According to Chili (2018), price is the cost of producing, delivering, and promoting the product charged for. Simanjuntak et al. (2020) state that pricing is the process whereby an organisation determines what it will receive in exchange for its product after factoring in manufacturing costs, marketplace, competition, market condition, and quality of product. Cristobal-Fransi et al. (2018) state that tour operators use pricing strategies such as premium pricing, value pricing, penetration pricing, cost plus pricing, competitive pricing, price skimming, going-rate pricing, geographical pricing, segmented pricing, product mix pricing, psychological pricing and discriminatory pricing. Mohammadi, Kashefi and Abolhasani (2019) researched the effect of pricing as a competitive strategy on sales performance of selected tour operators and found that pricing strategy and decision have a significant effect on sales performance. Komari, Indrasari, Tripariyanto and Rahayuningsih (2020) found that there was a positive relationship between pricing strategy and firm performance.

### **2.12.3 Place strategy and sales performance**

‘Distribution channel’ is defined as a set of interdependent organisations involved in the process of making a product or service available for consumption or use. Distribution channel can also include physical movement, warehousing, ownership of a product, presale transactions, post-sale activities; order processing, credit, and collections; and other types of support activities (Mbane & Ezeuduji, 2021). Distribution is the process of making a product or service available for use or consumption by a consumer or business user, using direct means, or using indirect means, with intermediaries (Bassano, Barile, Piciocchi, Spohrer, Iandolo, & Fisk, 2019). Findings from Mbane and Ezeuduji (2021) are that marketing distribution strategies increased sales and market share. According to Komari et al. (2020), geographic location has a significant influence on a firm’s profit margin and success. This might be due to the availability and proximity of raw materials and labour, proximity to customers and competitors, infrastructure, and transportation costs.

### **2.12.4 Promotion strategy and sales performance**

Promotion strategy is the use of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, and direct marketing to promote organisational products (Jarek and Mazurek, 2019). Mohd Satar, Dastane and Ma’arif (2019) assert that promotion is all activities undertaken to communicate and promote products or services to the target market. Mbane and Ezeuduji (2021) researched the effectiveness of promotion strategy on sales among tour operators in

Kenya. The findings revealed that marketing managers should determine what combination of promotion strategies makes effective promotion programmes and increases sales.

### **2.13 Challenges faced by tour operators and SMMEs in South Africa**

In South Africa SMMEs operate in different environments such as cities and townships and are experiencing unique contextual challenges. Township SMMEs are faced with challenges when promoting township products and small tourism enterprises (Murithi, 2017). Because of the barriers that township SMMEs face, they do not have effective marketing strategies to communicate their message with their customers, and when they advertise, their products are not appealing to customers.

Township SMMEs are not very competitive as they have income below the poverty level and relatively high attrition rates (Kukanja et al., 2020; Rastrollo & Rivero, 2019). According to Daniel and Faustin (2019) and Acosta et al. (2018), South African township SMMEs seem to be lagging in terms of effective marketing strategies and they show no progress, as most are still confined to their traditional way of operating without incorporating new advertising platforms such as social media.

Although globally and locally SMMEs are playing a role in supporting economic growth and creating job opportunities, the sector faces numerous challenges. Some businesses survive and others falter. Based on international studies, some of the challenges faced by SMMEs relate to lack of financing, low productivity, lack of managerial capabilities, poor access to management and technology, and heavy regulatory burdens, among others (Mukoroverwa & Chiutsi, 2018).

Rust (2020) states that, in South Africa, an unacceptable and disappointingly high number of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) fail during their early years of operation. They face a myriad of challenges. According to Acosta et al. (2018), the largest percentage of small businesses fail during the first two years of their existence owing to cash flow problems that arise because they could not manage growth.

- **Lack of finances**

According to Amoros and Bosma (2014), lack of access to finance and poor profitability are among the chief reasons for business failure in South Africa. The 2014 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report also pointed to the fact that poor profitability, as a reason for failure, was rising sharply. Typical hindrances towards small businesses obtaining finance include: inadequate collateral on the part of the entrepreneur, a lack of credit history (Financial

Services Regulatory Task Group, 2017), the inability to produce an acceptable business plan according to financial institutions, poor market research, the absence of a viable business idea, and lack of access to vibrant markets (Amoros & Bosma, 2014).

- **Poor infrastructure**

There is lack of infrastructural facilities that support tourism i.e., roads, electricity, water and accommodations, information and communication technology etc. (Salunke, Weerawardena & McColl-Kennedy, 2019). The lack of access to physical infrastructure is a key impediment to business growth and adds significantly to the cost of doing business. Acosta et al. (2018) point out that infrastructure is one of the key enablers for SMME development. Ease of access to communication infrastructure, utilities, and transport, land or space at affordable prices is instrumental in supporting new businesses. The 2014 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report extends the concept of infrastructure to commercial and professional infrastructure, which relates to the presence of commercial, accounting, and other legal services and institutions (Keller & Swaminathan, 2019).

- **Access to markets**

One of the major challenges facing tour operators and SMMEs is the lack of sustainable markets for their products and services (Canovi & Pucciarelli, 2019). SMMEs tend to produce and offer services that do not have a ready market.

The inability for SMMEs to access markets has been noted as one of the major factors threatening their longevity. Access to markets is one of the fundamental requirements (by credit providers) to accessing funding and mentorship at early stages. However, small businesses located in rural areas are at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts (Ngoepe-Ntsoane, 2021). The authors find that their small size and remote location hinder them from forming collectives through which they could enhance their bargaining power. Consequently, they find it difficult to lobby government institutions to better serve their needs.

The practice of forming spatial clusters is encouraged by Niculescu, Dumitriu, Purdescu, & Popescu (2019). However, forming clusters is encouraged mostly for SMMEs which have passed their start-up phase.

- **Low levels of research and development**

Building research and development capacity is important for small businesses, as it can help determine the feasibility of transforming ideas into actual businesses. Investing in this aspect

of business also allows businesses to access innovative solutions through the process of discovery. According to Murithi (2017), innovating firms are likely to grow faster than traditional start-up businesses. They found South African SMMEs to be less innovative compared to those in developed countries. Timoshenko and Hauser (2019) suggest that innovation in South Africa is stifled by the failure of small businesses to form strong upward linkages with larger firms. This failure denies them opportunities for technology diffusion. The 2014 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report proposes that government should provide incentives for research and development (Amoros & Bosma, 2014). The incentives would foster innovation and attract and strengthen lasting linkages among domestic and foreign knowledge (Canovi & Pucciarelli, 2019).

- **Access to appropriate technology**

Thabit and Raewf (2018) stated that another constraint facing tour operators and SMMEs is lack of technology. The use of appropriate technology is one of the most important factors giving a tour operator or SMME competitive advantage (e.g., computer with internet).

- **Access to human resources**

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) indicated that the other disadvantage or challenges facing tour operators is how they deal with people-related issues. Human resources are widely acknowledged as being the most precious asset of a business. The issues involved in human resources include addressing the skills, attitudes, and expectations of employees and the entrepreneurs themselves. Morgan et al. (2019) further asserted that entrepreneurs might have excellent ideas but they often do not know how to manage these ideas or the people within their businesses. This contributes to the fact that not all managers are good leaders or entrepreneurs, and that not all entrepreneurs are good managers or leaders; however, entrepreneurs must have both managerial and leadership skills (Ngoepe-Ntsoane, 2021).

## **2.14 The measures which are suggested to mitigate the challenges faced by tour operators**

Muldoon and Mair (2022) state that the following measures can help to eradicate the challenges faced by tour operators:

- **Reduce bureaucracy**

The administrative hierarchy in the tourism industry has some unnecessary protocols which act as obstacles in dealing with issues of tour operators which require immediate solutions (Hikido, 2018). Also, the government should establish incentive programmes to assist tour operators in their business operations.

- **Tax reform**

The way that income taxes are charged should be reformed to support the establishment and survival of new companies. This can be done by actions such as the reduction of tax charges for newly established companies.

- **Invest in educational**

The government should invest in the tourism industry by the establishment of more educational institutions offering tourism education. Also, the government should develop policies to attract the private educational sector to conduct training of tour operators.

- **Improve infrastructure**

The government should involve itself more in large projects such as infrastructural developments in the country e.g. ICT, and transportation on land, water and air so as to make tourism sites easily accessible.

- **Destination branding**

Tour operators should work towards the promotion of the country and the services offered by market targeting and segmentation to explore business potentials in the areas which provide low numbers of tourists. This also involves the creation of business connections with other international tourism service providers.

- **Regulation of the legal framework**

The legal framework in the tourism industry should be regulated to make it easier for tour operators to adapt and implement their business operations. The policies governing the tourism industry should be improved to encourage efficiency in the sector.

- **Eradication of unfair competition**

Unfair competition practices and corruption in the industry should be dealt with by increasing the authority invested in the authorities to work for the creation of healthy business competition. Unfair competition should be eradicated in order to pave the way for fair and controlled competition which is based on the development of the tourism industry.

- **Increase safety and security**

The authorities dealing with safety and security should maintain it to the required levels of satisfaction. This is because the low levels of safety in destinations affect the efficient delivery of services to tourists. A well-established and functioning safety plan is required to be applied in delivering rescuing services

## **2.15 Conclusion**

The literature shows that tour operators are significant stakeholders in the industry. However, the current marketing strategies they are using are not effective to promote their business and small township tourism enterprises. Monitoring the effective functioning of tour operators in the tourism industry involves a multifaceted process, encompassing the provision of comprehensive travel information, meticulous preparation of itineraries, efficient liaison with service providers, strategic planning, seamless ticketing processes, and the facilitation of foreign currency and insurance services. These components collectively contribute to creating positive and well-organized travel experiences for tourists. Literature shows that tour operators in small towns are not ignorant of marketing strategies that promote tourism, but are not confident with the implementation of those strategies that can effectively result in the growth of tourism in the small township. The assumption among tour operators is that marketing of a tourist area is the responsibility of the municipal authorities and the parent Department of Tourism. The narrative is drawn from the fact that tour operators pay exorbitant license fees to operate in the municipal area but recoup little from their businesses, which always face well-established international tour operating companies.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical underpinnings that guide the examination of the effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by tour operators in promoting small tourism enterprises in KZN.

## CHAPTER 3: THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 Introduction

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), a theoretical framework provides a researcher with a conceptual foundation from which the study emerges and sets the stage for the presentation of the proposed research questions that are in line with the study aim and objectives that drive the investigation being reported. Against this definition, this study was guided by the marketing mix and push and pull theory. These theories are explained in detail below along with how they all fit into and are relevant to the current study.

### 3.2 Theoretical foundation

This section examines the various theories that informed the study regarding the effectiveness and efficacy of marketing strategies used by tour operators for the promotion of township tourism and small tourism enterprises.

The term marketing mix became popularised after Neil H. Borden published an article on the concept of 'marketing mix' in 1964 (Isoraite, 2016). Borden began using the term in his teaching in the late 1940s after James Culliton had described the marketing manager as a mixer of ingredients. The ingredients in Borden's marketing mix included product planning, pricing, branding, distribution channels, personal selling, advertising, promotions, packaging, display, servicing, physical handling, and fact finding and analysis (Thabit & Raewf, 2018). E. Jerome McCarthy later grouped these ingredients into the four categories that today are known as the price, product, promotion, and place (4Ps) of marketing (Pomering, 2017). These 4Ps are the parameters that the marketing manager can control, subject to the internal and external constraints of the marketing environment. The goal is to make decisions that centre the 4Ps on the customers in the target market to create perceived value and generate a positive response.

The marketing mix framework was particularly useful in the early days of the marketing concept when physical products represented a larger portion of the economy. Today, with marketing more integrated into organisations and with a wider variety of products and markets, some authors have attempted to extend its usefulness by proposing a further Ps, such as packaging, people and process (Datta, Ailawadi, & Van Heerde, 2017). Today, however, the marketing mix most commonly remains based on the 7Ps. Despite its limitations and perhaps

because of its simplicity, the use of this framework remains strong and many marketing textbooks have been organised around it.

### **3.3 The theoretical framework**

#### **3.3.1 Product innovation and tour operators' performance**

Chili (2018) defines a product as anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. The author further defines a consumer product as the product bought by the final consumer for personal consumption. Consumers usually buy products with careful planning, and by comparing brands based on price, quality, and style. Mohammadi et al. (2019) point out that the physical appearance of the product, packaging, and labelling play an important role. This can influence whether consumers notice a product in-store, examine it, and purchase it. Past researchers have suggested that product influences have a significant impact on business performance (Hikido, 2018, Muldoon & Mair, 2022).

Customer performance is when a firm can consistently meet and exceed customer preferences and value expectations (Mbane & Ezeuduji, 2021). Customer performance is achieved by the firm regardless of the approach of marketing regarding standardisation or adaptation. However, some scholars argue that pursuing a product adaptation strategy in the global market leads to sales growth performance (Reichstein & Harting, 2018).

An empirical study conducted by Kornilaki, Thomas, and Font (2019) states that product adaptation is not only linked to sales growth but also to the financial performance of companies, such as profitability and return on investment. Mbane and Ezeuduji (2021) further add that product adaptation as a global marketing strategy positively affects overall business performance. For a company to securely adapt to varying international markets, the marketing strategy should take into consideration what the internal and external business environmental factors are that can enhance their performance (de Souza, Mendes & Buhalis, 2020).

The influence of a marketing strategy-product focus on various dimensions including actual and augmented product factors on performance in international markets has received attention from numerous researchers (Morgan et al., 2019; Camilleri, 2018). A study conducted by Camilleri (2018), which employed composite export performance measures, focused on product design in the marketing mix and found this approach assisted companies to pursue global marketing through product adaptation as a means of differentiation from rivals' products and influence overseas customer attitudes regarding a firm's products.

Morgan et al. (2019) found product design and style to have a significant positive effect on firm performance. Hadi and Supardi (2020) researched the relationship between product quality and firm performance in international markets and found there to be a positive relationship. The provision of high-quality products to customers has been postulated to augment the value associated with customer performance. Prior studies reveal two observations regarding the quality of products in line with marketing strategy: firstly, the positive influence of product quality on sales performance was stressed more in studies conducted in Europe. Secondly, the empirical data indicates a strong association between product quality and customer performance (Camilleri, 2018). The linkage between product quality and customer performance can offset the reservations that foreign customers have regarding product marketing strategy performance and minimise their risk perceptions about the purchase of such goods, therefore affecting sales and financial performance (Morgan et al., 2019). Thus, the element of product adaptation is particularly important when a firm enters a new overseas market or targets geographically distant markets.

Wall-Reinius, Ioannides and Zampoukos (2019) posit that increased sales performance can be achieved by serving more customer segments and spreading marketing, administrative, and other exporting costs over several products, which is known as product adaptation. The export product marketing mix for companies is usually of a narrower range than that offered domestically, because of financial constraints and operational difficulties associated with global marketing activities (Ko, Liu, Ngugi & Chapleo, 2018). The meta-analysis results of the study by Mardani, Nikoosokhan, Moradi and Doustar (2018) revealed a significant positive relationship between product offering and overall firm performance in export markets. The relation between product adaptation and firm performance in international markets is the most widely researched issue in the extant literature, and most of the prior studies we reviewed examined this relationship.

Product adaptation is the degree to which a firm's actual and augmented product elements are adapted for international markets to be able to accommodate differences because of new environmental forces, different consumer behaviour, use purpose patterns, and competitive situations of international markets. Three benefits can be derived from a product adaptation strategy: Firstly, it significantly reflects a customer-orientated posture because the firm engaging in global marketing systematically evaluates consumer and buyer behaviour and host market characteristics that improve the firm's total performance (Serrano-Bedia, López & Garcia, 2018).

Secondly, a product adaptation strategy can lead to improved financial performance such as profitability, as a quality product-market match can result in greater customer satisfaction, thus improving customer performance, which consequently allows for greater pricing freedom for the firm. Thirdly, pressures associated with meeting specific market requirements at an international level often demand creative and innovative marketing strategies, which may bring about innovation and additional products for a firm's domestic and international markets (Muñoz-Bullón, Sanchez-Bueno, & De Massis, 2020). Thus, product adaptation is significantly correlated with superior firm performance and is especially highly associated with sales performance (Serrano-Bedia et al., 2018).

A firm's product offering and strategy constitute its lifeline to the marketplace. Therefore, product strategy is the way a firm competes in the market and improves its total performance (Liu et al., 2018). According to Mardani et al. (2018), product strategy is the single most important component of a product marketing strategy and is regarded as a blueprint for allocating resources toward realising the objectives of the firm, which is sales, financial and customer performance (Camilleri, 2018). To keep performance consistent, firms regularly adjust their marketing strategies to conform to changes in the export markets to be responsive to their operating marketplace (Liu et al., 2018). Thus, product adaptation is a suitable strategy toward market responsiveness as it offers the development of new products that meet the needs of a changing marketplace.

Innovation is a new way of doing something or new stuff that is made useful (Buhalis & Leung, 2018: 44). It may refer to incremental and emergent or radical and revolutionary changes in thinking, products, processes, or organisations. Following Dolnicar (2020), contributors to the scholarly literature on innovation typically distinguish between invention, an idea made manifest, and innovation, ideas applied successfully in practice. In many fields, something new must be substantially different to be innovative, not an insignificant change, e.g., in the arts, economics, business, and government policy. In economics, the change must increase value, customer value, or producer value. The goal of innovation is positive change, to make someone or something better. Innovation leading to increased productivity is the fundamental source of increasing wealth in an economy.

Innovation is an important topic in the study of economics, business, design, technology, sociology, and engineering. Colloquially, the word 'innovation' is often synonymous with the output of the process. However, economists tend to focus on the process itself, from the origination of an idea to its transformation into something useful, to its implementation; and

on the system within which the process of innovation unfolds. Since innovation is also considered a major driver of the economy, especially when it leads to increasing productivity, the factors that lead to innovation are considered to be critical to policy makers. In particular, followers of innovation economics stress using public policy to spur innovation and growth.

Although personal characteristics have been identified as significant predictors of consumers' adoption of an innovation, several researchers have shown that it is the perceived attributes of the innovation itself rather than the characteristics of the innovators that are stronger predictors of the adoption decision (Eckhardt et al., 2019).

### **3.3.2 Pricing and tour operators' performance**

Mohammadi et al. (2019) define price as the cost of producing, delivering, and promoting the product charged by the organisation. Furthermore, Ko et al. (2018) are of the view that monetary cost is one of the factors that influence consumers' perception of a product's value. Price can be stated as the actual or rated value of a valuable product which is up for exchange or the amount of money paid for a product (Mardani et al., 2018). Studies by Wang et al. (2019) have established that there is a significant relationship between price and business performance. The price set for a product or service plays a large role in its marketability. Camilleri (2018) points out that pricing for products or services that are commonly available in the market is elastic, meaning that unit sales go up or down in response to price changes.

The impact of pricing strategy on tour operators' performance has been validated in prior studies as expounded by Mohammadi et al. (2019), whose empirical results confirmed the relationship between pricing strategy and firm performance, showing a strong positive link between pricing strategy and overall performance. Pricing strategy may vary from market to market because of the many reasons associated with PESTEL i.e. political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal forces. These forces have effects on the pricing component of marketing strategy by virtue of their effects on marketing, distribution, and transportation costs. Market structures and demand; tariffs, taxes, and other financial trade barriers; competitors' pricing practices; and costs and margins of distribution channels all have a significant impact on pricing strategy. For these reasons, price adaptation is necessary for firms to survive and remain competitive and ultimately achieve the desired firm performance in host markets. One can posit that price standardisation does not apply in international marketing strategy unless the firm operates in block regions where taxes and tariffs are removed through bilateral agreements.

A study conducted by Lupo (2018) found six pricing related decisions with influence on a firm's export performance, namely: pricing method, pricing strategy, sales terms, credit policy, currency strategy, and price adaptation. According to the same study, pricing method was restrained to the marketing pricing strategy, in which the firm exercises its power in setting up the prices in different international markets based on market demand and competitive practices. This is in line with price adaptation to ensure responsiveness to changes in overseas market circumstances, competitiveness, and other environmental forces which affect export performance (Katsikari et al., 2020). The argument is valid to the extent that pricing strategy success is measured in terms of export proportion of sales, profit level, and customer satisfaction.

Consumers use price as an important extrinsic cue and indicator of product quality or benefits. Customers often perceive high priced brands to be of higher quality and less vulnerable to competitive price cuts than low priced brands (Bilgin, 2018). Dolnicar (2020) argues that companies doing business within the base segment of the pyramid should think about developing products that can be afforded by those consumers. What the author means is that tour operators should develop products and services that are based on what consumers can pay for.

### **3.3.3 Promotion and tour operators' performance**

Pinto and Castro (2019) describe promotion as part of a specific effort to encourage customers to tell others about their services. According to Toubes et al. (2021), promotion is the key to the market exchange process that communicates with present and potential stakeholders, and the general public. Every tour operator or tourism enterprise must cast itself into the role of communicator and promoter. Camilleri (2018) reports that promotion is about how to create an optimal mix of marketing communication tools to get a product's message and brand from the producer to the consumer. Gibson and O'Rawe (2018) define promotion as sales promotion, advertising, personal selling, public relations, and direct marketing.

Erlangga (2022) states that promotions have become a critical factor in the product marketing mix, which is the specific blend of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing tools that a company uses to pursue its advertising and marketing objective. Previous research (Madondo et al., 2019; Boisen et al., 2018) has established a significant relationship between promotion and business performance.

Many researchers have emphasised the importance of a promotional mix to export markets as a valuable tool for achieving performance. Sales, financial and customer performance is achieved through a promotional mix through gaining experience in the opportunities and problems arising in specific export markets, boosting communication, personalising relationships, cultivating a team spirit with customers abroad, and providing timely response and immediate support to the export venture's needs (Boisen et al., 2018). The study by Toubes et al. (2021) examined six promotion-related variables, namely, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, trade fairs, personal visits, and promotion adaptation, for their effects on export performance. Most of the promotional related variables were found to be positively linked to tour operators' performance.

A review of the literature shows that the use of trade fairs to promote exports has been examined in several studies (Pinto & Castro, 2019; Boisen et al., 2018). Some empirical studies have linked trade fairs to export performance. Most of the studies find that trade fair participation has an impact on export proportion of sales and other measures of export performance (Han et al., 2018). Notably, advertising was the most widely researched variable of the promotional mix, based on the notion that with sound advertising procedures a firm can communicate information, constantly remind, and persuade foreign customers to buy the products and, therefore, generate more sales. The study results from Ivanov et al. (2022) verified that advertising positively influences export sales performance and other performance.

Erlangga (2022) noted that the objectives of promotions are to attract new customers, to make existing customers loyal, reward loyal customers and increase the market size by stimulating the use of an entire product category, and to reinforce other communication tools. The further the product progresses through its life cycle, the more managers tend to allocate more budgets to sales promotion. It is the same case for lower priced brands; moreover, retailers have high influence on the final price and use of promotion. Nearly all companies need to use promotions as either offensive and/or defensive tools in the battle for market share. As a consequence, the consumers' brand choice is influenced by sales promotion campaigns. Before making a decision, the typical consumer will take into account whether or not a promotion exists. They may also buy something they had not planned, or buy something in a greater quantity because there is a promotion. Sales promotion can create an impulse purchase, when the need has been created or revealed in-store.

Madondo et al. (2019) noted that sales promotion covers a wide range of marketing activity from trade, to sales force and consumer programmes. Specifically, sales promotion

encompasses such activities as discounts, incentive plans, coupons, sweepstakes and value-added promotions. These programmes have been studied in great detail in terms of their impact upon brand loyalty. Marketing managers are becoming more concerned about the productive use of promotional funds and controlling spending on trade promotion. As a result, trade-offs among advertising, consumer promotion and trade promotion are an important, though perplexing, aspect of the budgeting process. The importance of sales promotion has increased dramatically, but it has remained little understood beyond the objective of delivering short-term results and successfully introducing new products into the consumer market.

Boisen et al. (2018) observed that sales promotion is exclusively concerned with a prize or gift given to consumers. This is consistent with a number of sales promotion activities for brands. When the type of sales promotion is a prize, the relationship between influence to choose a brand and sales promotion becomes clearer. A premium or prize can serve as an unconditional stimulus, which elicits excitement or emotion. When the type of sales promotion is a prize or a gift, there is a relationship with effect. Relationships have demonstrated that individuals, in whom positive perception of a brand has been evoked through receiving a gift, are more likely to take a risk when the probability of benefiting from the purchase of a brand is high, but be risk-averse when the probability of benefiting is low. Such research is essential in developing an understanding of how advertising and promotional strategies can be used to influence consumers' brand perception and selection behaviour.

Toubes et al. (2021) observed that organisations should concern themselves with sales promotion campaigns because of factors such as competitive pressures from their counterparts, leading to the need for differentiation of their products and services. Buyers have become expectant in that consumers are now promotion-oriented and are demanding more deals. There is also a need for organisations to increase customer loyalty, therefore adding value to a product or service is important. Organisations have an urge for short-term results and the application of sales promotions produces quicker and more measurable results (Camilleri, 2018).

Over the years, there has been a need to increase sales volume, especially in the short term, thus more use of sales promotions compared to the other tools of promotion. According to Kotler (2020), decades ago the advertising to sales volume ratio was about 60:40. Today in many consumer packaged goods companies, sales promotions account for 65% to 75% of the combined budget (Dam, 2020). Sales promotion expenditures have been increasing as a percentage of budget expenditure annually for the last two decades, and the fast growth rate is expected to continue. Sales promotion is now more accepted by top management as an effective

sales tool and product managers are widely using it to increase their current sales. Some of the companies are concerned with increasing sales in the short term; therefore, sales promotion is often the avenue chosen. Companies use sales promotions to create a stronger and quicker response, and to dramatise product offers and boost sagging sales (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

According to Kim and Ko (2012), sales promotions are often confused with advertising. For instance, a television advertisement mentioning a contest awarding a winner with a free trip to a Caribbean island may give the contest the appearance of advertising. While the delivery of the marketer's message through television media is certainly labelled as advertising, what is contained in the message, namely the contest, is considered a sales promotion. The factors that distinguish between the two promotional approaches are: whether the promotion involves a short-term value proposition, for example, the contest is only offered for a limited period, and the customer must perform some activity to be eligible to receive the value proposition. For example, the customer must enter a contest. The inclusion of a timing constraint and an activity requirement are hallmarks of sales promotions.

An organisation's sales promotion and brand strategy must be very compelling, attractive, and unique among competitive offerings. The proposition must also be consistently reinforced throughout all phases of an organisation. Kotler and Armstrong (2016) stated that an effective sales promotion campaign enables a business organisation to successfully out-brand its competitors in the ongoing battle for market share and the hearts and minds of the customers.

Ren and Huang (2020) noted that social commitment by a company can be determined in three ways: it uses social media sites as an avenue for communication with its subscribers; the company must be about 65% active on the site and be able to attend to questions posted by its followers; companies must respond to their customers' concerns appropriately (Little, Bec, Moyle & Patterson, 2020). Ren and Huang (2020) argue for the need to shift from promotion towards awareness. The author states that consumers need to be aware of new products and services that are being made available to them.

### **3.3.4 Distribution channels and tour operators' performance**

The distribution channel is an important component of the marketing strategy mix as it enables the provision to, and the availability of, products to various export markets. These structures make sure that products manufactured in one country cross borders to tap into global markets, in the process achieving sales performance. The findings of the meta-analysis conducted by Stone, Hartmann, Seaton, Sharpley and White (2018) indicate that this argument is valid to the

extent that distribution strategy positively impacts firm performance in terms of export proportion of sales and profit level. The study adds that the relationship between export channel intermediary type and overall export performance is significantly linked. Regarding the distribution strategy, taking the adaptation or standardisation approach does not have much effect on total firm performance, although there is slight support for the adaptation strategy. The function of distribution channels is to make sure that products are accessible in the targeted markets. This study model takes into consideration the appropriateness of a particular channel of distribution which depends mainly on the conditions of the foreign market, such as economic situation, the structure of distribution, and competitive practices.

Distribution strategy carries a critical role in dealing with delivery time which influences the export performance of the firm. The effectiveness and efficiency of delivery time of the exported products constitutes a key to total firm performance in overseas markets, as it affects the firm's operations in terms of competitiveness and success in the market (Hoogendoorn et al., 2020). Goldberg, Birtles, Marshall, Curnock, Case, and Beeden (2018) found a positive correlation between distribution channel and sales performance. In addition, significant findings on delivery time which is a result of distribution structures, were also observed to be related to sales volume, export proportion of sales, and certain composite performance measures. Many studies are in support of distribution adaptation toward achieving and improving firm performance, which calls for the adjustment of the exporting firm's channels of distribution in export markets. The occurrence of such adjustments is necessary in response to the variations in business environments, such as economic situation, legislation, and physical conditions. Finally, there are differences in distribution structures such as the number of intermediaries, types of outlets, and channel functions (Hoogendoorn et al., 2020).

### **3.3.5 Push and pull theory**

The push and pull theory of customer service comprises two theories, the push theory and the pull theory. The 'push-pull' theory is a framework often applied in marketing to understand and influence consumer behaviour. This theory examines the factors that drive consumers to make decisions and the forces that organisations can apply to influence those decisions. Push or pull is defined by whether the customer or the business initiates the activity. According to Zmud (1984) businesses adopted ideas from Fredrick Winslow Taylor's push and pull theory to help them focus on becoming more efficient than their competition. This involve determinising the needs of the potential customer and pushing the solutions out to those customers. In today's market, pushing solutions are sometimes seen by the customer as

intrusive or overlooked by the customer so the solution gets lost due to information overload. Many companies are moving away from the push theory to a pull theory. That is, they are providing the information and solutions in a generally accessible format and allowing the customer to determine what best suits their needs.

One of the base assumptions about pushing solutions (products, information, etc.) to customers is that the business or organisation can anticipate the needs of the customer in advance of the need and prepare the solution ahead of time (Iglesias-Sánchez et al., 2020). Organisations that emphasise the push theories often do so to increase efficiency. They believe that, for instance, they can create the penultimate user manual that covers all the questions the customer might have and thereby limit the amount of contact the customer needs to make to the organisation. In addition, by using a push model, the organisation can limit those areas for which service is provided, which again might provide efficiency in the training of support personnel. This model has become more difficult to implement as organisations believe they may be sacrificing effectiveness for efficiency.

Pull solutions have always been part of most organisations. A customer would visit the organisation and ask questions, and someone would answer them. In the case of pull, the customer initiates the request for a solution rather than merely choosing a solution from the solutions offered by the organisation (Zmud 1984). This is being used more often as consumers have begun to distrust the solutions provided directly by organisations and wish to do the research themselves. This model requires the business or organisation to provide as much material as possible in as many formats as possible, and hope that the customer discovers the solution. This is not an efficient model from the customers' or the organisation's point of view, but it is effective in many cases.

### **3.3.5.1 The relationship between theoretical framework vs township tourism**

According to the push theory tour operators are expected to implement marketing strategies that influence potential tourists into deciding towards township tourism. The strategy should instil a hunger in potential tourists to travel to these townships as their first destination, while the pull theory is in support of the concept of township tourism attractiveness by way of exclusive packaging of the services, areas of attraction and safety. The marketing mix is inclined in how tour operators package their product bearing in mind to consider the 7Ps which theoretically forms the foundation of marketing strategy implementation.

### 3.4 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a basic structure that consists of certain abstract blocks, which represent the observational, the experiential, and the analytical aspect of a process or system being conceived (Hossain, 2015: 24). The interconnection of these blocks completes the framework for certain expected outcomes. The framework is used in research to outline possible courses of action or to present a preferred approach to an idea or thought. The conceptual framework for this study is shown in Figure 3.1.

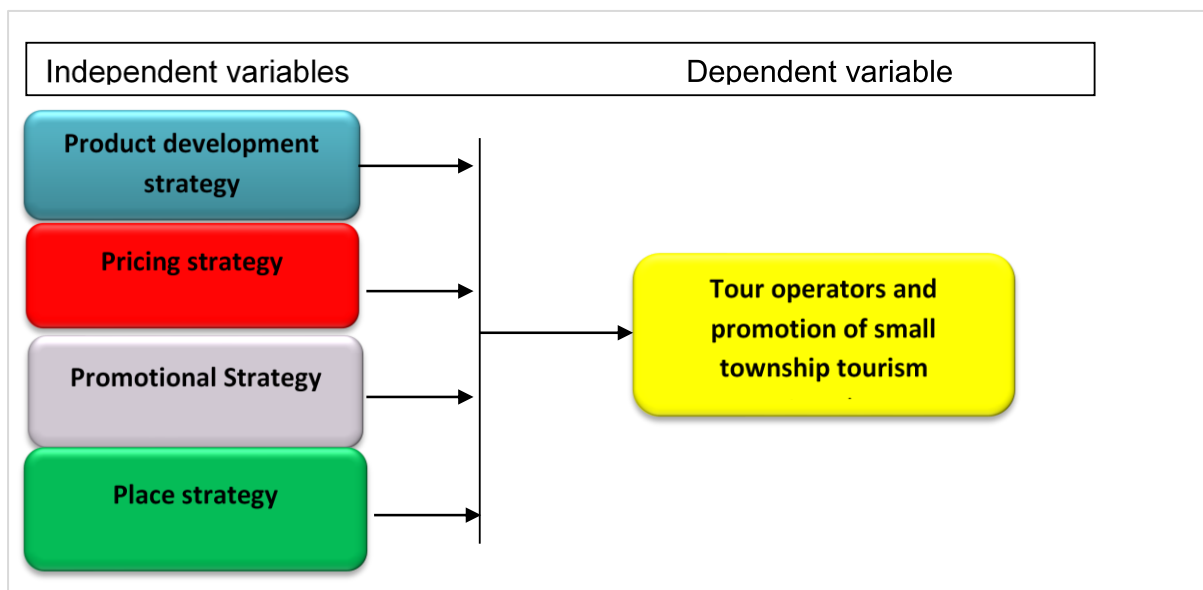


Figure 3.1: Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatical presentation of variables in a study. The framework in Figure 3.1 illustrates the interrelationship between dependent and independent variables. The independent variables include product development strategies, promotional marketing strategies, pricing marketing strategies, and place marketing strategies while dependent variables are tour operators and small tourism enterprises in KZN.

### 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed discussion on the theoretical foundation which anchors the study and on which the conceptual framework is developed. The conceptual framework provided a platform to argue the analysed data against the hypothesis which tests the variables in the study. The theoretical framework guided the study by provoking the marketing strategies

which tour operators can utilise in promoting and marketing townships and small tourism enterprises in KZN. The following chapter presents the research methodology.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

Having thoroughly reviewed the literature on small tourism enterprises, tour operators, and general township tourism, this chapter delves into the research methodology. This critical section provides a scientific framework for the study, outlining the methods employed to derive proven facts. The research methodology serves as a clear roadmap, detailing the sequences involved in conducting the study and offering a rationale for the study's findings. This chapter also explores key pillars of research methodology, including research design, research strategy, sampling, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

#### 4.1.1 Study area

KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), with a land area of approximately 94,361 km<sup>2</sup>, is South Africa's third smallest province by land area but ranks as the second most populous province, housing an estimated 11.3 million people. This demographic is diverse, comprising various ethnic groups and communities that contribute to the province's rich cultural heritage. KZN is also a vital economic hub, accounting for 16.2% of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as of 2018, making it the second-largest contributor to the national economy (Mtapuri et al., 2019).

Geographically, KZN is positioned on the eastern coast of South Africa, with a diverse landscape that includes lush coastal regions, mountainous terrain, and rural hinterlands. Its strategic location, offering both natural beauty and cultural heritage, makes KZN a significant player in South Africa's tourism sector. The province is renowned for its historical landmarks, world-class beaches, vibrant wildlife, and cultural festivals. KZN is home to iconic tourist destinations such as the Drakensberg Mountains, the iSimangaliso Wetland Park (a UNESCO World Heritage site), and the coastal city of Durban, which is a major port and gateway to both local and international tourism (Mtapuri et al., 2019; Munhuweyi & Chikodzi, 2020).

Tourism is a major contributor to the province's economy, with various forms of tourism, including cultural tourism, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, and township tourism, being prominent. In particular, township tourism, which involves showcasing the rich heritage and daily life of local communities, has been growing in significance as it presents unique opportunities for economic empowerment and job creation. However, despite its potential, the

tourism sector in KZN faces numerous challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure, marketing difficulties, and underrepresentation in global tourism circuits (Tshiwula, 2020; Kotler et al., 2021).

Given these dynamics, KZN is an essential area for examining the impact of marketing strategies on small tourism enterprises. The province's potential for tourism growth, combined with its unique socio-economic challenges, makes it an ideal context for this study to explore how small tourism businesses in townships can enhance their market presence and contribute to local economic development (Sitharam & Hoque, 2016; Alisa & Ridho, 2022).

## **4.2 Research approach**

Asenahabi (2019) defines quantitative research as a type of research whose findings are arrived at through statistical procedures or any other ways of quantifying or calculation. Quantitative research aims to test the analytical, cause-and-effect hypotheses regarding social reality; it incorporates surveys to draw descriptive and explanatory resolutions. Jongbo (2014) describes qualitative approach as research that involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data to comprehend concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. A qualitative approach is associated with meanings, while the quantitative approach derives its findings from analysis of numbers (Sharma, 2017). Etikan and Bala (2017) concluded that the advantage of implementing a qualitative approach is that it allows formulation and reformulation of the work by the researcher who can disregard perspectives/views that might have been wrongly conceptualised from the beginning of the study, and can adjust concepts while collecting and analysing the data. The quantitative approach supplements the process by counting and measuring the research study variables (Creswell, 2014).

The quantitative approach is regarded as more objective, and is related to positivist perspective. In contrast, the qualitative approach is inclined to understand distinctiveness driven from the interpretative perspective (Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora, 2015). For this research study, a quantitative methodology was adopted as it is generally assumed that the methodology allows empirical analysis and evidence justification through calculative methods like chi-square and measures of central tendencies (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019).

### **4.3 Research philosophy**

Research philosophy is how data is viewed in a case or situation. Epistemology is related to the known facts, while axiology is related to believed facts; these comprise several research paradigms (Rovai, Baker & Ponton, 2014).

#### **4.3.1 Positivist**

According to Ganesha and Aithal (2022), the positivist research paradigm (quantitative) is driven by natural sciences where there is a need to test hypotheses from a standing theory, by measuring evident social realities.

#### **4.3.2 Interpretivist**

Ragab and Arisha (2018) pointed out that interpretivist is parallel to the positivist research paradigm, while Andrade (2019) is of the view that it is post-positivist due to the assumption that there is a difference between the subject matter of natural and social sciences. However, Sileyew (2019) pointed out that in interpretivism there are numerous realities given that knowledge is in relation to the knower. Therefore, interpretivism draws meanings through the researcher's experiences.

The researcher utilised the positivist (quantitative) research paradigm to provide answers to the research questions. The positivist paradigm was selected because it allowed the researcher to test assumptions through empirical analysis and justify evidence by calculations using such methods as the chi-square and measures of central tendencies (Ragab & Arisha, 2018).

### **4.4 Research strategy**

This study made use of a survey as a research strategy. According to Silverman (2018), a quantitative survey is a set of structured questions which a researcher poses to the participants to provide answers. The survey helps the researcher to explain characteristics and discuss the features of the selected sample. The survey allows the researcher to provide a piece of in-depth detailed knowledge about the population. A survey questionnaire provides freedom for the participants to answer and provide their views to the study with more time and space without supervision from the researcher. The researcher must also create an environment where participants can ask for clarification on questions they don't understand (Silverman, 2018).

## **4.5 Research design**

Baldwin (2018) explains that a research design is a detailed outline of the procedures to be followed in a research effort in order to achieve the set aim and objectives. It relates to specified research methods that are followed in the collection and analysis of data. According to Dawadi, Shrestha and Giri (2021), a research design refers to a framework for implementing a research project and provides the procedures that must be followed in obtaining the necessary information to achieve the research objectives. It is a blueprint to be used by the researcher in executing a research project and it reflects a way of gathering the data. Its main purpose is to propose a study that provides information for decision making as well as answering the research questions. Research designs can be exploratory, descriptive or causal (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

This study followed a descriptive research design in order to achieve the set aim in examining the effectiveness and efficacy of marketing strategies tour operators use for promotion of township and small tourism enterprises in KZN. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017) descriptive research identifies the relationship between variables or the frequency within which something occurs, which supports the objectives of the study. The research approach may either be quantitative or qualitative in nature and this differentiates both procedures of data collection and data analysis (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill & Bristow, 2015).

## **4.6 Target population**

A population refers to the whole group of topics, people, or events of interest to the researcher which the researcher wishes to investigate (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Asenahabi (2019) similarly defines a population as a collection of units to be investigated by the research effort. For this study, the population consisted of all 450 tour operators in KZN.

## **4.7 Sampling**

Creswell and Poth, (2018) state that a sample is a portion of a population that the researcher selects intending to involve them in the study. Sampling is a technique or procedure used to choose a unit from a given population (Sim, Saunders, Waterfield & Kingstone, 2018). The sample results are used to reach certain conclusions and then generalize these to the population.

### **4.7.1 Non-probability sampling techniques**

Non-probability sampling methods are often employed in research contexts where resources are limited or when population characteristics are challenging to ascertain. However, these

methods may introduce biases into the sample, potentially affecting the generalizability of findings. One common non-probability sampling method is convenience sampling, where researchers select participants based on their accessibility and proximity to the researcher or research site (Creswell, 2014). This method is frequently used in exploratory studies or when time and budget constraints prevent the use of more rigorous sampling techniques.

Another non-probability sampling method is purposive sampling, where participants are deliberately chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling allows researchers to target individuals who possess characteristics or experiences that are of interest to the study, thereby enhancing the depth of understanding within the selected sample. However, the subjective nature of participant selection in purposive sampling can potentially lead to sampling bias if the criteria are not carefully defined and applied.

Snowball sampling is yet another non-probability method, particularly useful for studying hard-to-reach populations or sensitive topics (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). In snowball sampling, initial participants are recruited, and then they refer additional participants, who in turn refer more participants, creating a chain or ‘snowball’ effect. While this method can be effective in accessing hidden populations or individuals who may be hesitant to participate, it can also lead to sample homogeneity and bias if the initial participants share similar characteristics or perspectives.

#### **4.7.2 Probability sampling**

Probability sampling methods offer a more systematic approach to sample selection, ensuring that every member of the population has a known chance of being included in the sample, thus enhancing generalizability. Simple random sampling, for example, involves selecting participants randomly from the population, with everyone having an equal probability of selection (Trochim, 2016). This method is straightforward and eliminates researcher bias in participant selection, making it ideal for studies where population characteristics are homogeneous.

Systematic sampling is another probability sampling method that involves selecting every *n*th participant from a list of the population, providing a structured approach while maintaining randomness (Levy & Lemeshow, 2013). This method is particularly useful when the population is large and organized, as it allows for efficient sampling without sacrificing representativeness.

Stratified sampling, on the other hand, divides the population into subgroups based on relevant characteristics, then selects samples from each subgroup proportionately (Babbie, 2016). By ensuring representation from diverse subgroups, this method allows for more precise estimation of population parameters and can increase the accuracy of study findings.

Cluster sampling involves dividing the population into clusters, randomly selecting clusters, and then sampling all members within selected clusters (Kish, 1965). This method is practical when it is difficult or impractical to compile a comprehensive list of the population, as it reduces the logistical challenges associated with sampling large or dispersed populations.

In this current study, simple random sampling was employed to ensure that every individual within the population of tour operators had an equal chance of being selected. The population for the sampling frame was obtained from the email list of registered tour operators provided by Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN). This list served as the comprehensive source for the selection of participants, ensuring that it covered all tour operators in the province.

The selection process involved the following steps:

1. **Defining the Population:** The population consisted of all registered tour operators in KwaZulu-Natal, as provided by TKZN, representing a diverse group of businesses operating within various sectors of tourism, including township tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, and adventure tourism.
2. **Creating the Sampling Frame:** The available email list was used as the sampling frame, ensuring it was accurate and up-to-date. This list contained the names and contact details of all registered tour operators in KwaZulu-Natal, ensuring comprehensive representation across the province.
3. **Random Selection:** Using a random number generator, participants were randomly selected from the sampling frame. The random selection process ensured that each tour operator had an equal chance of being chosen, thus eliminating any researcher bias in the sampling process.
4. **Sample Size Determination:** Based on the total number of tour operators in the sampling frame, a predetermined sample size was calculated using statistical methods to ensure that the sample would be large enough to provide reliable results while considering resource constraints.

5. Contacting the Participants: Once the sample was selected, the chosen tour operators were contacted via email, explaining the purpose of the study, outlining their potential participation, and requesting their consent to participate in the survey.

### 4.7.3 Sample Size

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) define a sample as a subset of the research population. Furthermore, they add that a greater sample size implies more reliability of the findings from the study. Bless, Higson-Smith and and Smith (2008) argue that it is more advantageous to study the whole population because data from the whole population is more reliable than data from a sample. The sample size for this study was 212 tour operators who, at the time were all involved in the township tourism business in KZN. Using Sekaran and Bougie (2016)'s sample size table (Table 4.1), the determined sample size was 212.

**Table 4.1: Sampling size table**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
10000	370
15000	375
20000	377
30000	379
40000	380
50000	381
100000	383
>100000	<b>384</b>

Source: Sekaran and Bougie (2016)

## 4.8 Research instruments

The main objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness of marketing strategies tour operators use for promotion of township and small tourism enterprises in KZN province. According to Saunders et al. (2015) the research instruments that can be used for primary data collection are: interviews, observations, questionnaires, standardised tests, archival records, and documentations. For this study, the research instrument that was developed to obtain primary data was a questionnaire. Kim and Wang (2019) support the use of self-administered survey questionnaires in studies such as this one.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a questionnaire is made up of questions that are closed-ended and prompt participants to select predefined responses they think align with the question.

The questionnaire should be objective rather than subjective, avoiding sensitive subjects (Mohamad, Sulaiman, Sern & Salleh, 2015).

Arafat, Chowdhury, Qusar and Hafez (2016) state that a questionnaire has certain advantages over an interview; a questionnaire is less costly, less time-consuming, and participants tend to be less biased due to self-administration.

#### **4.8.1 Structure of the questionnaire**

The following sections were used to design the questionnaire in line with the study objectives:

**Section A:** Demographics (gender, level of education, age range of respondents etc.).

**Section B:** Identifying marketing strategies used by tour operators.

**Section C:** Evaluating the efficiency of promotional strategies.

**Section D:** Assessing the achievements of current marketing strategies by tour operators

#### **4.9 Pilot study**

The questionnaire, divided into sections aligning with the study's objectives, covered basic personal information and aspects related to the study topic. Pre-tested among ten organisations to remove ambiguity, the closed-ended questions were adapted from questionnaires used in similar studies. Questions were a mix of dichotomous, multiple-choice, and Likert scale questions.

According to Mohammadbeigi et al. (2015), a pilot study is a small-scale study that is carried out before the main study. A pilot study was carried out to test the instrument's reliability and its validity. After the pilot study, there was revision on the sentences that contained word and question ambiguity. A total of 20 participants from the KZN tourism database were selected randomly for the pilot study, but were not included in the final study sample. The reason why the researcher confined the study to KZN was due to COVID-19 as the pandemic limited movements. The pilot study was also conducted by sending the questionnaires by e mail.

#### **4.10 Reliability and validity / trustworthiness**

Reliability and validity are key factors in evaluating quantitative research (Chan & Lay, 2018).

##### **4.10.1 Validity.**

Validity is a measure of whether the data is measuring what it is meant to measure (Creswell, 2014). The researcher ensured that this was attained by making sure the research objectives were clear and practical. A statistician was used to evaluate the instrument through statistical

means to improve the face validity of the questionnaire (Buriro, Awan & Lanjwani, 2017). In this study, statistical validity was emphasized, employing a pre-test or pilot study to identify and rectify any flaws within the quantitative questionnaire. The statistical validity assessment focused on ensuring that the instrument covered all inferential statistics relevant to specific variables of interest.

- External validity

This is the extent to which the results of the study can be applied beyond the study, to the broader population (Zhu, Baesens, Backiel & Vanden, 2018). In this case, KZN province was the boundary of the research, therefore the conclusions of this study can be generalised beyond KZN province.

- Internal validity

Bonds et al. (2012) explained that it is concerned with whether the study conclusions that include an underlying relationship that may be existing between two or more variables stand.

#### **4.10.2 Reliability**

Reliability is a measure of the consistency of the questions and whether the same results can be produced by repeatedly asking the same question to different participants (Ryen, 2016). A pilot study was used to promote test-retest reliability (Rahman et al., 2022). A Cronbach's alpha score of 0.829 was recorded on all the statements/questions of the questionnaire. This highlights a good level (82.9%) of internal consistency in the questionnaire regarding all the items of the questionnaire.

#### **4.11 Data analysis**

The SPSS 28 version was used as a key data analysis tool, and the results are presented in the form of frequency tables, bar charts, histograms, and pie charts to improve their comprehension. Because the questions were closed ended, it contained binary and Likert scale scores of 5 points, reliability and certainty were measured by the Cronbach's alpha method. A variety of relevant mathematical tools, including correlation matrix, linear regression, and chi-square test, were used to analyse and interpret data collected from participants to identify important patterns and relationships in a bid to answer the research objectives and questions. Results from the study were pictorially presented through graphs, tables, and charts.

**Descriptive statistics:** Where applicable, the descriptive statistics of numerical measurements are summarised as the minimum, maximum, quartiles, interquartile range, means, standard deviation and the coefficient of variation. A gauge is used to display the overall score. On the other hand, the categorical variables are described as counts and percentage frequencies where pie, simple bar charts are used to visually display the categorical variables.

**Multidimensional:** Multidimensional categorical variables are presented as Likert plots.

**Two independent groups:** Depending on the distribution of the numerical variables between two independent groups, mean or median differences are assessed using either t-test or Wilcoxon respectively.

**Test for independence:** To determine the association between categorical variables, a Chi-Square Test was used and when the distribution of the cross tabulations contained an expected value of less than five, a Fisher's exact test was applied. In the case of significant difference between the Chi-Square or Fisher exact test, a row wise paired z-test was used as a post hoc analysis following the omnibus tests (Chi-Square or Fisher exact test).

**Reliability analysis:** The internal consistency of a set of items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and the item-rest correlation. To improve the Cronbach's alpha, items with opposite scale direction were reversed and those suppressing the Cronbach's alpha were dropped.

**Regression:** Regression analysis technique was used and binary logistic for a dependent variable with two categories was applied. This included model tuning for improving accuracy in prediction with variable reduction by checking for multi-collinearity using a generalised variance inflation factor approach and the removal of influential observations using the Cook's distance. A backward stepwise regression analysis was applied based on Akaike Information Criterion to identify the most important explanatory variables. The regression results were tabulated and including univariate (unadjusted), multiple (fully adjusted) odds ratios. Further, the most important explanatory variables only from the stepwise regression were also presented as adjusted odds ratios.

**Significance level:** All the inferential statistical analysis tests will be conducted at 5% levels of significance.

#### **4.11.1 Descriptive statistics**

The researcher utilised SPSS software to carry out the descriptive analysis (Pallant, 2020). Descriptive analysis involves a summary of statistically analysed sets of data. Some of the

operations during data analysis include calculations of the median, mean, or dispersion. According to Wang, Chiou and Müller, 2016), an average is calculated as the mean in a population and the middle value can be calculated as the median in logically sorted data. A measure of dispersion is how values are spaced from the centre. Variance is the mark of dispersion from the mean. When the scores in a set of data look identical, the variance of the data will be 0. When scores are more spread out / away from each other, the variance will be greater too. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to calculate measures of dispersion and they are more accurate than graphs (Pallant, 2020).

#### **4.11.2 Inferential statistics**

While descriptive statistics facilitate initial data analysis, inferential statistics allow the drawing of inferences about the population from the sample (Wang et al., 2016). The objective of inferential statistics is to enable the researcher to determine whether a difference between two treatment conditions occurred by ‘chance’ or is a ‘true difference’ (Silverman, 2018). ANOVA tests were used to analyse data further. Bonds et al. (2017) state that a researcher can use variance if a computable variable is divided into three or more separate groups using a descriptive variable. When there is a mean for each group of data, ANOVA can analyse the variations. These variations are then the F ratio. A large F ratio shows a significant difference between the means of the groups with a probability of less than 0.05. The t-test determines whether an observed difference in the means of two groups is sufficiently large due to a change in some variable or if it is merely due to chance (Pallant, 2020). However, the study did not utilise inferential statistics.

#### **4.12 Data storage and protection**

The raw data will be stored on a flash drive and archived for five years. The stored files will be encrypted and password protected and only accessed by those authorised individuals. All those who participated in the study will have access to the finalised study results upon request.

#### **4.13 Delimitations of the study**

The study was limited to the KZN tour operators for data collection and inference. The population was limited to tour operators because they are directly involved in the tourism business in the region.

#### **4.13.1 Elimination of bias**

Recruitment of participants in the study was voluntary with no consideration of race, language, or gender. The researcher was available to participants upon request to explain any areas that were not clear to the participants and where language translation was required. The pilot study helped the researcher to eliminate any language or words that could denigrate gender by using words such as participants/respondents which collectively referred to those involved with the study. The research instrument was free from language that reinforced stereotypes or made assumptions of various age groups.

#### **4.14 Research ethics: key considerations**

A research study has ethical dimensions. Ethical issues have become a critical domain of research. As such, permission should be sought and granted before a study can be conducted, especially when it involves participants revealing their personal information. Neuman (2011) intimates that ethical considerations require the researcher to maintain ethical and professional responsibilities that are to be guided by integrity, even when the participants are uninformed of the moral code. This explains Flick's (2009) position that ethical considerations are concerned with how to protect the interests of those who showed interest in participating in the research. Additionally, it ensures that certainly no injury comes to the respondents as a result of what the research entails (Rubin and Rubin 2012). The authors maintain that a researcher needs to seek the consent and willingness of the respondents. In this regard, the researcher is responsible for ethical behaviors and makes sure that no deceit or pressure is involved with the participants.

Given the tenets of ethical considerations, institutions of higher learning have sought to monitor ethical issues by constituting a committee to guide this particular aspect of research. The committee is thus concerned with issues related to informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, anonymity, benefits and risks of the research, and the right to withdraw. Study permission from the Durban University of Technology was sought and acquired from the Faculty Research Committee and the Institutional Research Ethics Committee. The researcher was also required to get official permission from the study area, which was equally acquired. Issues relating to informed consent were dealt with.

Informed consent ensures that the required respondents understand the nature of the research (Rubin and Rubin 2012). Informed consent was ensured in this research as the sample of the letter of information and informed consent were examined and approved by the research

committee. The letter of information and informed consent were subsequently acknowledged and signed by the respondents. They were aware of the risks and benefits involved and were not coerced to partake in the research, which implies that they have the right to voluntary participation and withdrawal. Regarding privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, the personal bio-data of respondents were not required. As such, Anonymity of the participants was ensured and all information retrieved were treated with confidentiality and kept safely.

Tour operators who were involved in the research were provided with an information letter prior to the study. Some of the ethical issues that were taken into consideration are discussed below.

#### **4.14.1 Ensuring confidentiality/anonymity**

Anonymity involves making sure the participants' identity is withheld from people while confidentiality is making sure participants' responses are not shared with unofficial people (Kara, 2018). Anonymity was maintained by avoiding asking or capturing participants' names when they were completing the questionnaire. In support of that, the letter of information contained detailed participants' rights. Further harm was avoided by making sure that the completed questionnaires will be disposed of after archiving for five years.

#### **4.14.2 Ensuring participants have given informed consent**

All the participants were provided with an informed consent form which gave them the chance to choose to participate or not. Participation in the study was voluntary and a participant could withdraw anytime that they chose to. The consent form outlined the research aims and objectives and also the information which had to do with the privacy and anonymity of the respondents' details.

#### **4.14.3 Ensuring no harm comes to participants**

Dooly, Moore and Vallejo (2017) note that no known or foreseen harm should affect participants during and after the study. To achieve this, the researcher structured the questions in such a way that no personal details were solicited from the participants. Participants were given adequate time to complete the questionnaire in their spare time.

#### **4.14.4 Voluntary participation**

Participation was voluntary and participants could withdraw from the study at any given time. The information letter and consent form had all the information regarding the rights of participation.

#### **4.15 Conclusion**

The methodology has been discussed regarding how the data was collected, analysed and presented. The chapter also discussed the research philosophy that guided the study. The chapter provided the target population and the sample size that was involved in the study. The data collection instrument and the ethical considerations for the study were discussed.

## CHAPTER 5: RESULTS PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces analysis and discussion of the research results. The previous chapter discussed the design and research methodology to ensure data collection performance. The chapter also paved the way for how data was to be analysed using various measures. Using the data collected, this section answered the research objectives and the ideas considered in the first chapter.

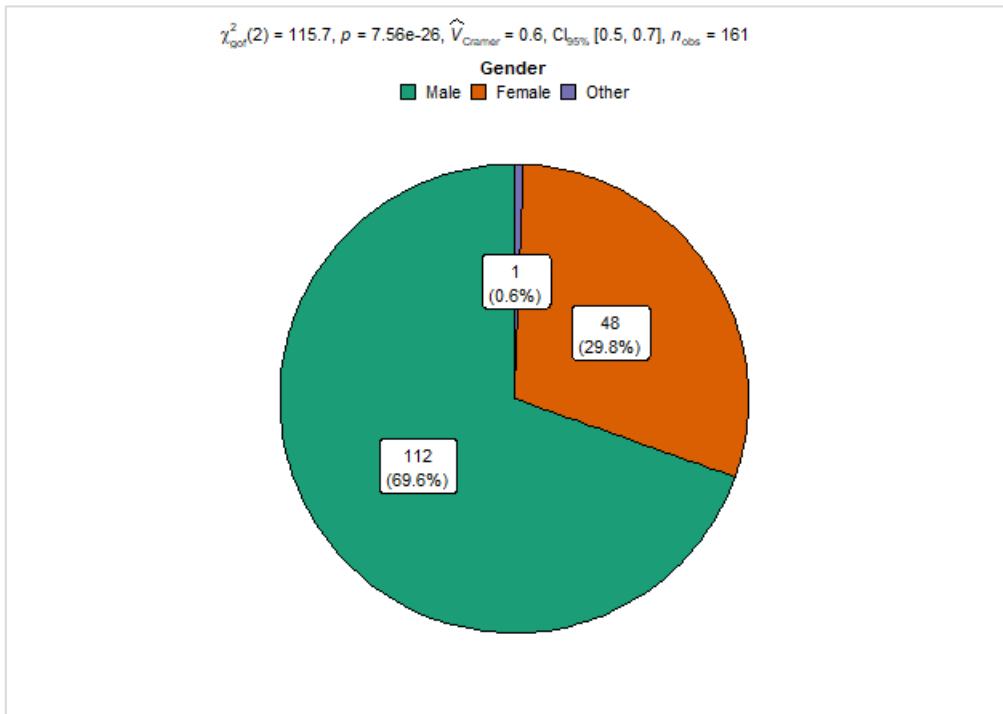
The SPSS 28 version was used as a key data analysis tool, and the results are presented in the form of frequency tables, bar charts, histograms and pie charts to improve their comprehension. Because the questions were closed ended, it contained binary and Likert scale scores of 5 points, reliability and certainty were measured using Cronbach's alpha. A variety of relevant mathematical tools, including correlation matrix, linear regression and chi-square test, were used to analyse and interpret data collected from participants to identify important patterns and relationships in a bid to answer the research objectives and questions.

### 5.2 Response rate

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher individually, considering the recommendations of Sekaran and Bougie (2010) that personally administered questions should be given a period of weeks, and this may lead to a response rate close to 100%. A high response rate of 77.08% (1195 completed questionnaires) was achieved. The findings of empirical research are presented, analysed and discussed below in the order of the questions as they appear in the research tool.

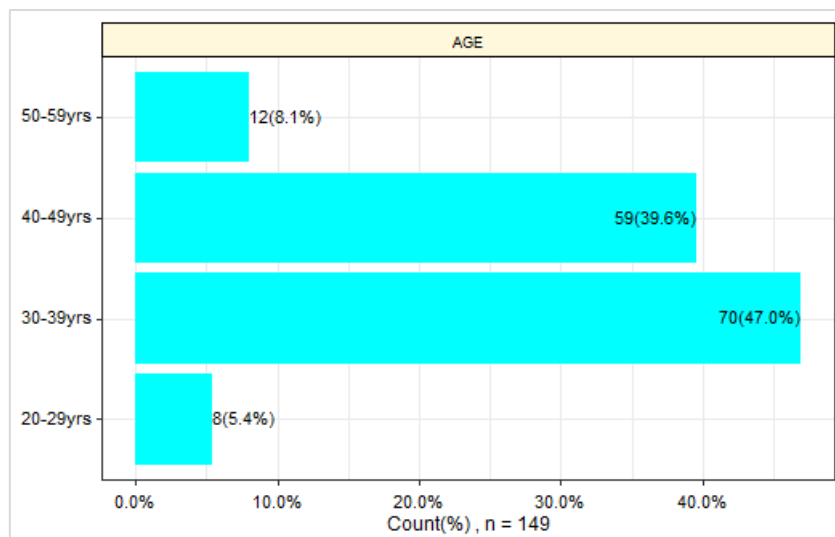
#### 5.1 Demographics

The demographics section helps the reader with an overview of the characteristics of the participants. The gender demographics in Figure 5.1 reveal that the sample was male-dominated with males constituting 69.6% (112/161) of the participants.



**Figure 5.1: Gender**

The age distribution of the participants is shown in Figure 5.2. The bar chart shows a visual display of the age categories. The results show that most of the participants were aged between 30-49 years with the 30-39 years and 40-49 years age groups having similar proportions which were not significantly different ( $p = 0.371$ , Table 5.1). The least number of participants were observed in the 20-29 years (5.4%) and the 50-59 years (8.1%), of which these two proportions were not statistically and significantly different ( $p = 0.371$ , Table 5.1).



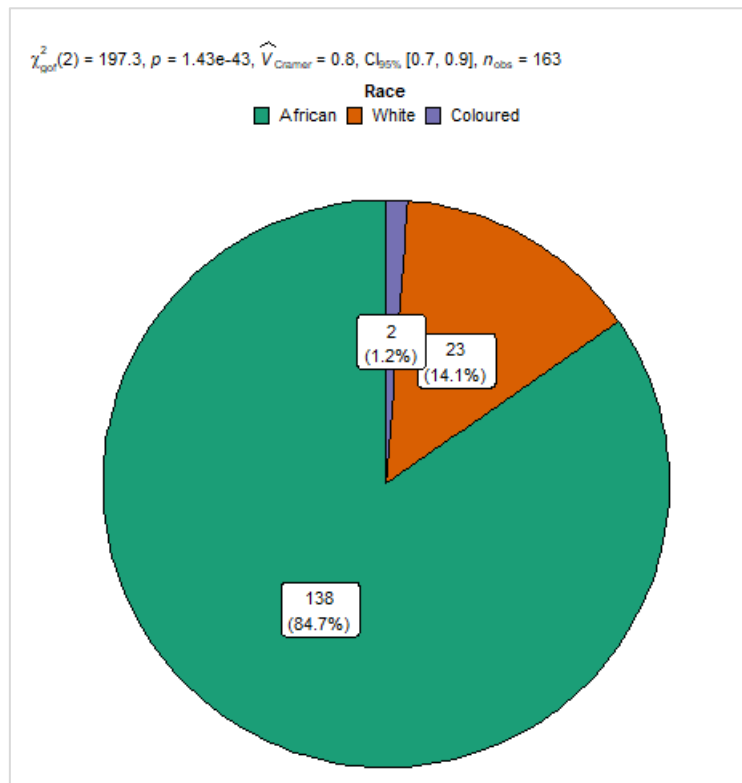
**Figure 5.2: Age**

**Table 5.1: Age: Frequency p-values**

Age: Frequency p-values	8	12	59
12	0.371	-	-
59	<0.001	<0.001	-
70	<0.001	<0.001	0.371

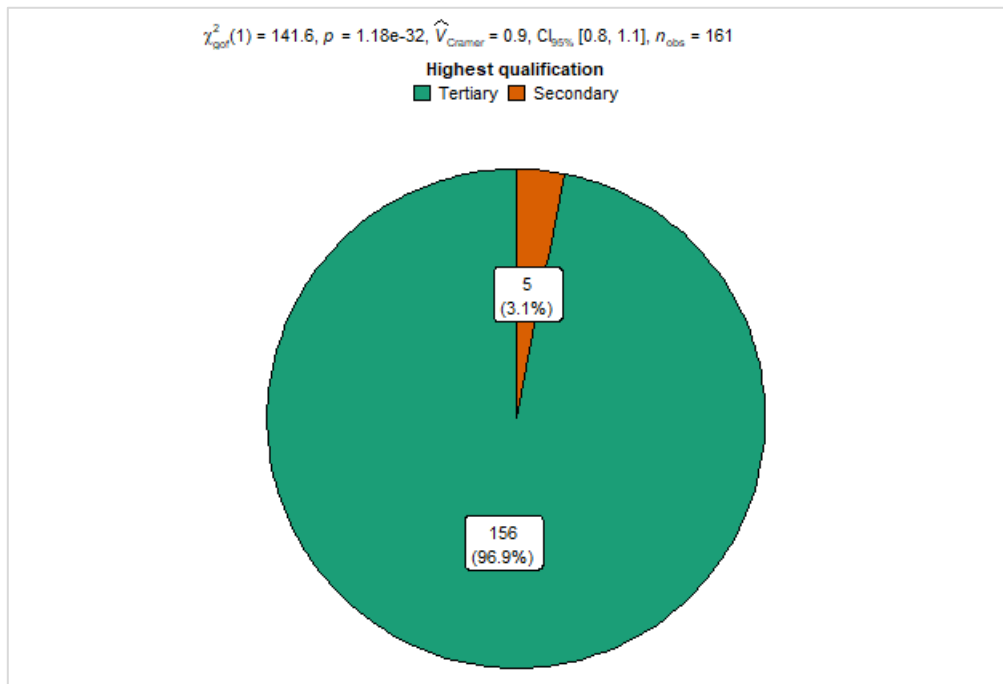
In the context of the study, the demographic distribution of participants is a crucial aspect that provides insights into the representation of different ethnic groups (Figure 5.3). The data indicates that the majority of participants, specifically 84.7%, identified as Africans. This dominance in representation suggests a potentially significant impact on the study's findings, as the perspectives and experiences of this group could heavily influence the overall results.

On the other hand, the 14.1% representation of white participants highlights a smaller but still notable portion of the sample. Exploring the responses and viewpoints of this subgroup could offer valuable perspectives on the effectiveness of marketing strategies by tour operators in promoting small tourism enterprises in KZN. Understanding the diversity within the participant pool becomes essential for drawing comprehensive conclusions from the study.



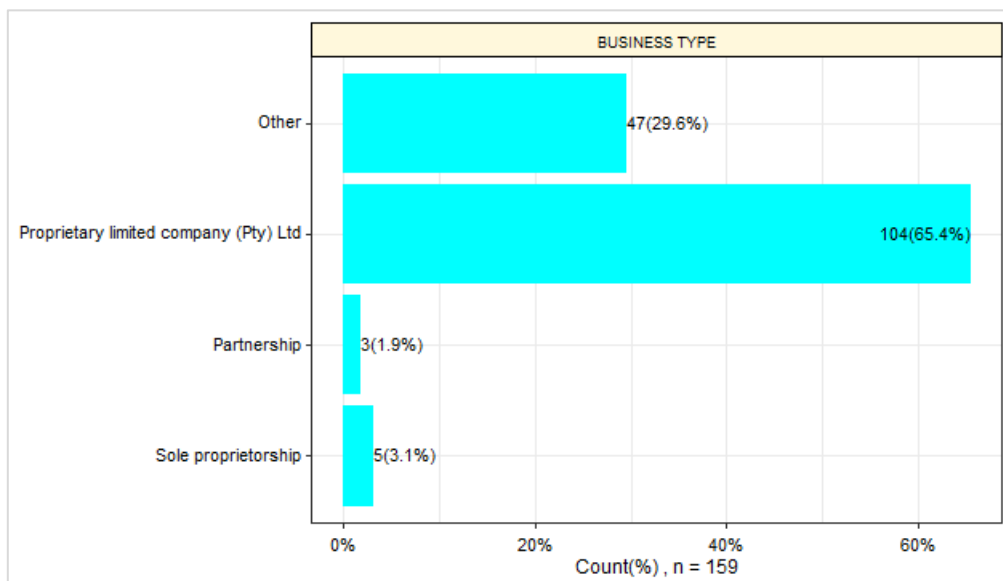
**Figure 5.3: Race**

It was also quite interesting to note that almost all (Figure 5.4), that is, 96.9% (156/161), of the participants had a tertiary level as their highest educational qualification and the rest had a secondary educational level.



**Figure 5.4: Highest qualification**

Figure 5.5 shows that 65.4% (104/159) of the tour guides had their businesses registered as proprietary limited companies (Pty) Ltd which was a significantly ( $p < 0.001$ , Table 5.2) larger proportion when compared to the second largest group with some other type of business registration constituting 29.6% (47/159).

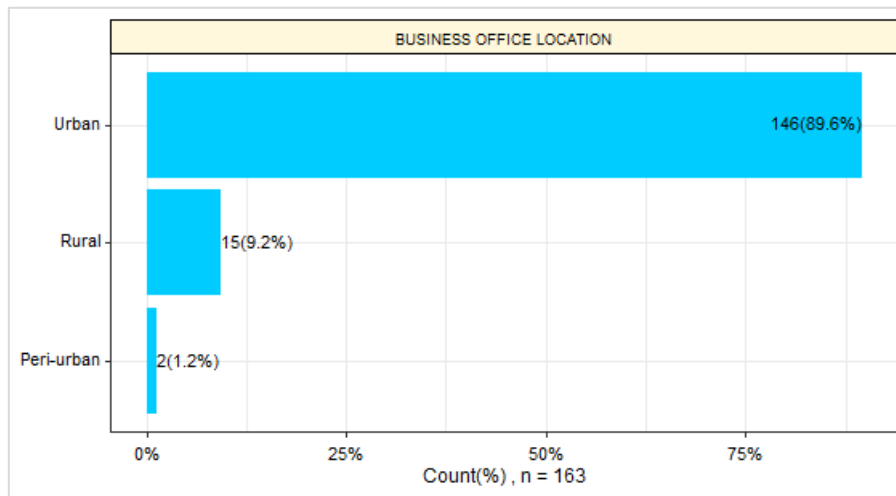


**Figure 5.5: Business type**

**Table 5.2: Business type: Frequency p-values**

Business type: Frequency p-values	3	5	47
5	0.480	-	-
47	<0.001	<0.001	-
104	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

The majority, 89.6% (146/163), were operating in the urban areas (Figure 5.6) and this proportion was significantly ( $p < 0.001$ , Table 5.3) higher than those operating in either rural, 9.2% (15/163) or peri-urban, 1.2% (2/163), areas.

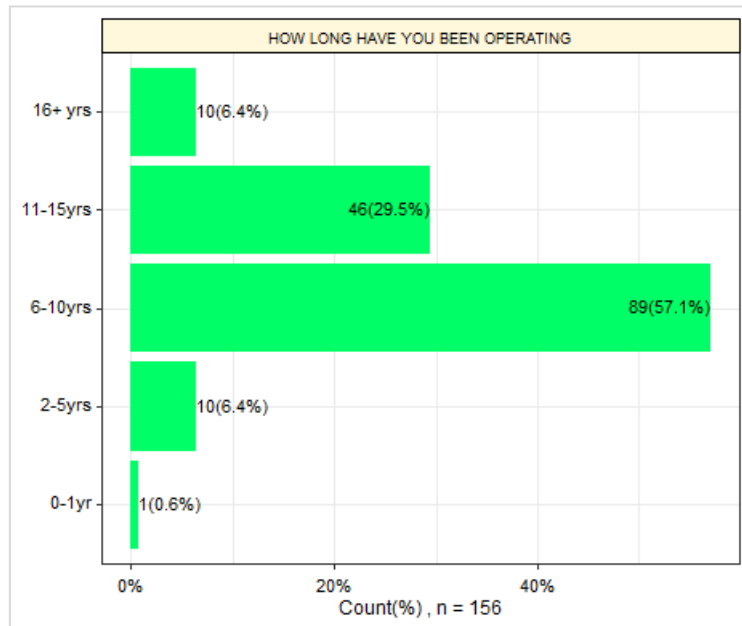


**Figure 5.6: Business office location**

**Table 5.3: Business office location: Frequency p-values**

Business office location: Frequency p-values	2	15
15	0.002	-
146	<0.001	<0.001

The results further showed that the participants were quite experienced with at least 95% of them having been in the industry for at least 6 years (Figure 5.7). Those with 6-10 years of experience and constituting 57.1% (89/156) had a significantly ( $p < 0.001$ , Table 5.4) higher proportion of participants when compared to any other group. The second largest group constituted almost a third, 29.5% (46/156), and was even more experienced with 11-15 years of experience.



**Figure 5.7: How long have you been operating?**

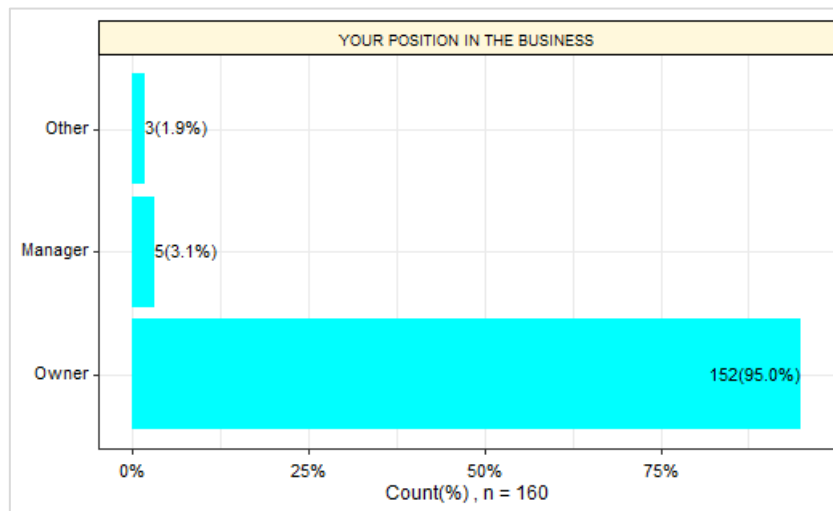
**Table 5.4: How long have you been operating: Frequency p-values**

How long have you been operating: Frequency p-values	1	10	46
10	0.007	-	-
46	<0.001	<0.001	-
89	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

Figure 5.8 reveals a noteworthy pattern, with a significant majority (95%, or 152 out of 160) of the businesses being owner-operated. This prevalence, as indicated in Table 5.5 with a p-value of less than 0.001, stood out compared to other positions held by the participants. This finding underscores the prominent role of owner-operated businesses in the small tourism enterprises of KZN. Understanding the organizational structure, particularly the high prevalence of owner-operated establishments, is pivotal in assessing the effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by tour operators in promoting these enterprises.

In the broader context, previous studies have delved into the intricate landscape of tourism marketing strategies. A comprehensive review by Smith and Johnson (2019) explored various approaches within the tourism industry, shedding light on their effectiveness and the challenges faced by tour operators in promoting smaller tourism enterprises. Additionally, Brown and Williams (2020) contributed insights through a case study analysis, focusing specifically on the impact of owner-operated businesses in the tourism sector. The findings from these studies offer valuable context and comparative perspectives that enrich the understanding of the

effectiveness of marketing strategies, particularly in the context of owner-operated small tourism enterprises in KZN.



**Figure 5.8: Your position in business**

**Table 5.5: Your position in the business: Frequency p-values**

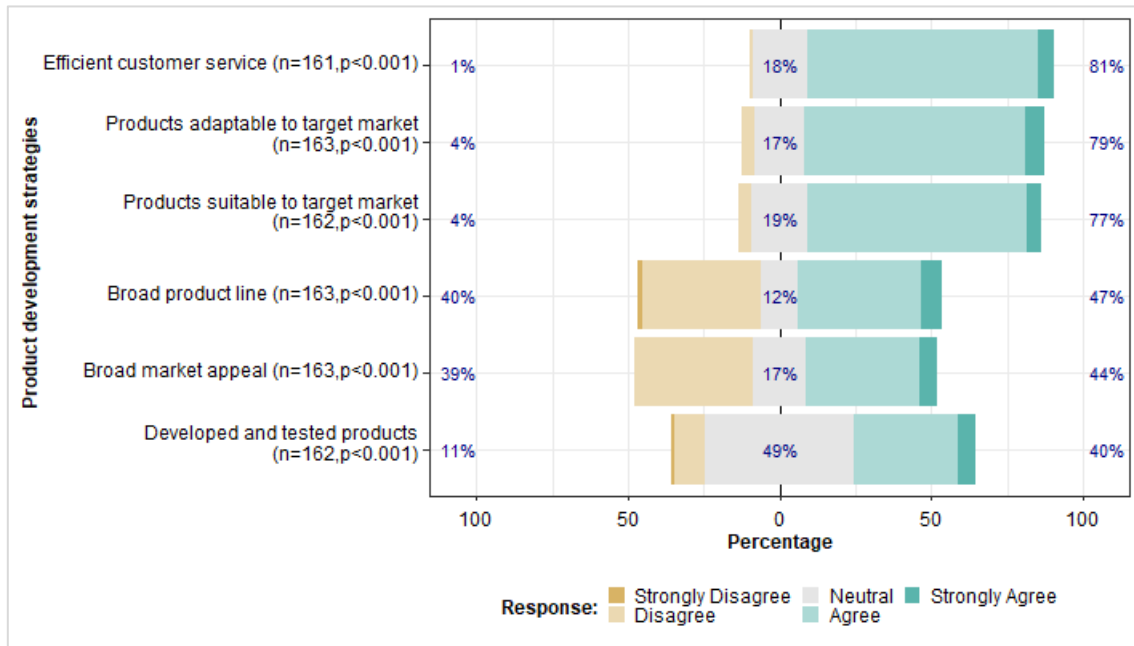
Your position in the business: Frequency p-values	3	5
5	0.480	-
152	<0.001	<0.001

## 5.2 Reliability analysis

Different sets of questions were used as indicators of a particular topic. This section provides an overview of the response distribution per question as well as the suitability of the set of items representing a particular topic.

### 5.2.1 Product development strategies

According to Figure 5.9, the most outstanding product development strategies used were efficient customer service (81%), having products adaptable to the market (79%), and products that are suitable to the target market (77%).



**Figure 5.9: Likert plot of items for product development strategies**

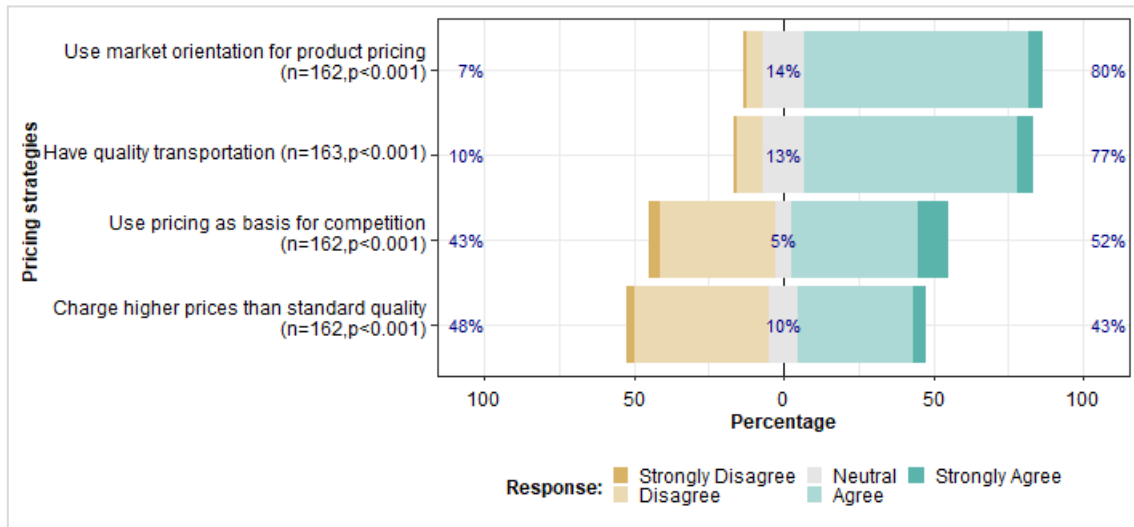
All the six items (questions) that were used to assess the product development strategies had an overall Cronbach's alpha score of 0.819 (Table 5.6) which was above 0.7, the acceptable level. This provides a good reliability in the understanding of the product development strategies. This was also further echoed by the inter-item correlations of at least 0.4, which is acceptable.

**Table 5.6: Reliability analysis of items for product development strategies**

Items	Mean	Item-rest correlation	Alpha-if-deleted
Broad product line	3.113	0.690	0.772
Broad market appeal	2.088	0.688	0.769
Efficient customer service	2.862	0.446	0.819
Developed and tested products	3.358	0.775	0.750
Products adaptable to target market	2.818	0.521	0.805
Products suitable to target market	2.780	0.494	0.809
Overall	2.836	-	0.819

## 5.2.2 Pricing strategies

As for pricing (Figure 5.10), two outstanding strategies emerged: using market orientation for product pricing (80%) and having quality transportation (77%).



**Figure 5.10: Likert plot of items for pricing strategies**

Despite the idea of market orientation and quality transportation being considered as the most ideal, these two items were dropped (Table 5.7) to improve the Cronbach's alpha score to 0.805. That is, they were found to be indicators of another dimension or topic that is not necessarily about pricing strategies. The responses for using pricing as the basis for competition as well as charging higher prices than standard quality was highly correlated, and proved to be very reliable indicators of pricing strategies.

**Table 5.7: Reliability analysis of the of items for pricing strategies**

Items	Mean	Item-rest correlation	Alpha-if-deleted
Use pricing as basis for competition	3.174	0.676	0.737
Charge higher prices than standard quality	2.963	0.676	0.621
Overall	3.068	-	0.805

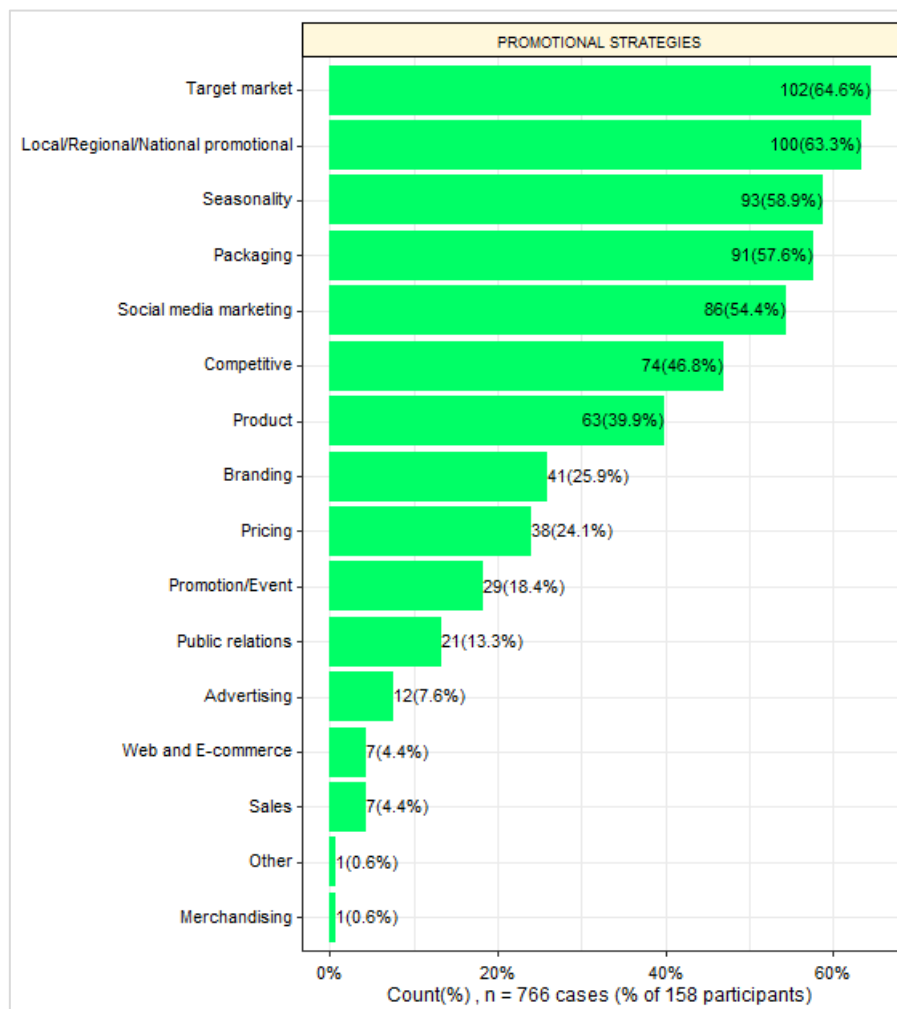
ITEMS DROPPED	Improvement	ItemsMaxAlpha	OverallAlpha
Have quality transportation	1	0.6059	0.5737
Use market orientation for product pricing	2	0.8039	0.6059

### 5.2.3 Promotional strategies

Under this section, it is important to note that the data collection tool is not necessarily meant to have a uniform scale. For this reason, the statistician advised the researcher to bear in mind the graph in Figure 5.11.

Of the n = 158 participants that shared their promotional strategies, the top five promotional strategies used by participants for their marketing and promotion of township and small tourism

enterprise were target market (64.6%), local/regional/national promotional (63.3%), seasonality (58.9%), packaging (57.6%), and social media marketing (54.4%).



**Figure 5.11: Promotional strategies**

### 5.2.3.1 Tour operators

In general, the participants were very positive about the promotional strategies applied by their businesses, with at least 70% of them being happy (Figure 5.12). The most outstanding strategies with at least 90% were the advertisement of products through various media (94%), having some form of promotional strategy (93%), and focusing on customer needs (90%).

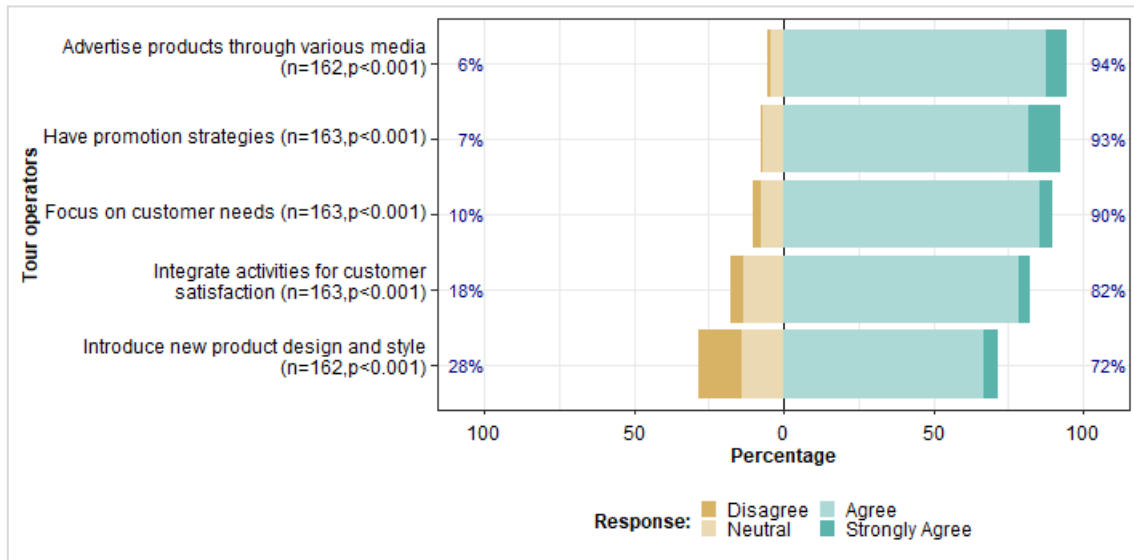


Figure 5.12: Likert plot of promotional strategy items

All five questions used to understand the promotional strategies were consistently measuring the same topic as depicted by the overall Cronbach's alpha score of 0.750 (Table 5.8), which was above the acceptable 0.7.

Table 5.8: Reliability analysis of the promotional strategy items

Items	Mean	Item-rest correlation	Alpha-if-deleted
Have promotion strategies	3.031	0.441	0.732
Advertise products through various media	3.000	0.500	0.719
Focus on customer needs	2.913	0.607	0.679
Integrate activities for customer satisfaction	2.826	0.625	0.665
Introduce new product design and style	2.634	0.525	0.736
Overall	2.881	-	0.750

### 5.2.3.2 Promotional strategies to elicit interest

The results shown in Figure 5.13 indicate that the participants' top two promotional strategies aimed at eliciting interest (40%) and attention (38%). The majority of them were not sure of whether their promotional strategies would elicit action (54%) or desire (56%).

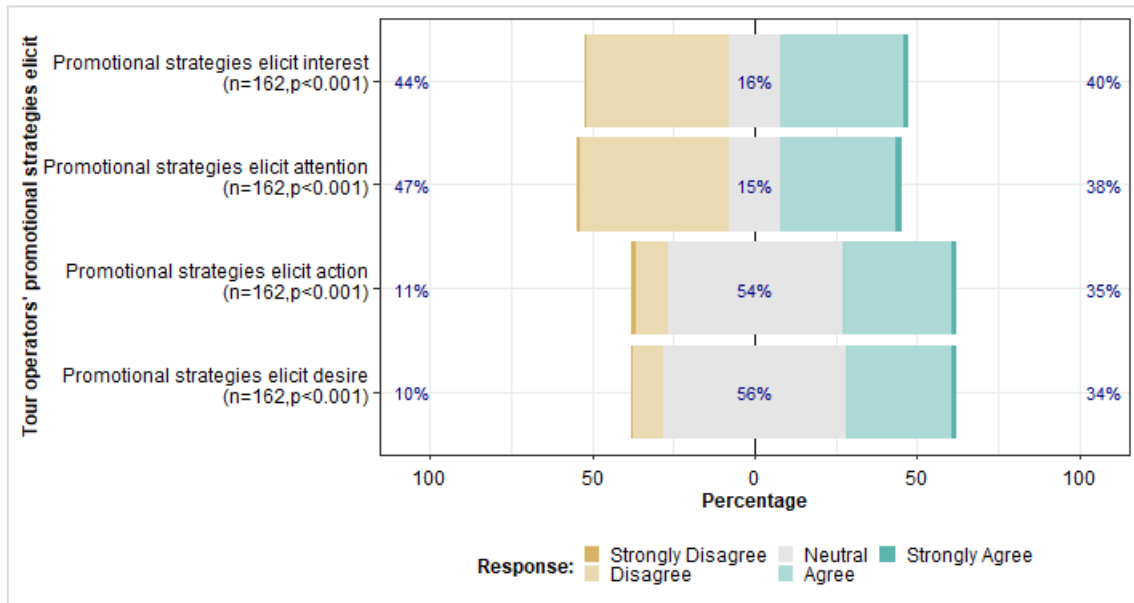


Figure 5.13: Likert plot of the items for promotional strategies to elicit interest

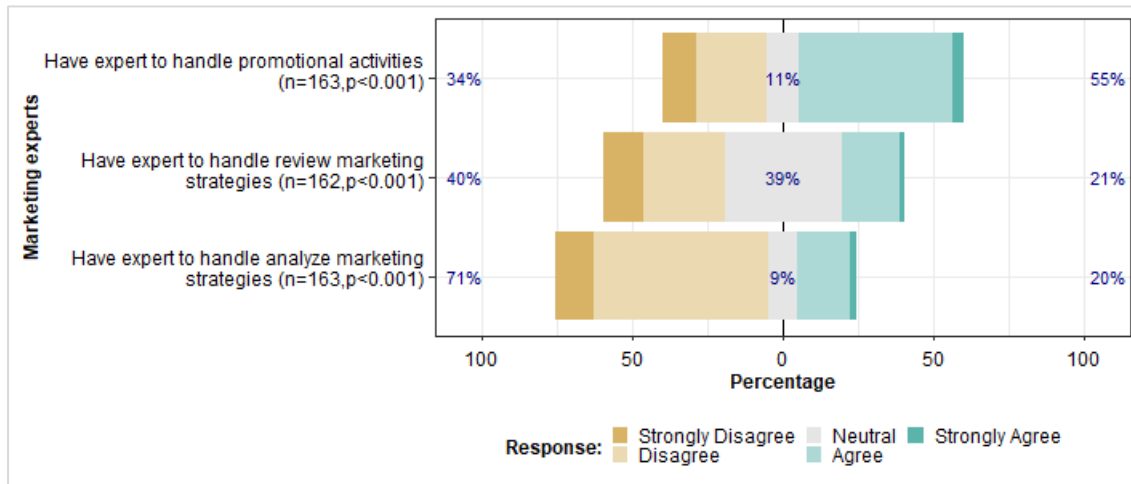
The items used for assessing the operators' aims were in very strong agreement as depicted by an excellent overall Cronbach's alpha score of 0.941 (Table 5.9), as well as inter-item correlations of at least 0.8, suggesting that the responses were almost repetitive.

Table 5.9: reliability analysis of items for promotional strategies to elicit interest

Items	Mean	Item-rest correlation	Alpha-if-deleted
Promotional strategies elicit attention	2.920	0.912	0.909
Promotional strategies elicit interest	2.963	0.898	0.914
Promotional strategies elicit desire	3.247	0.856	0.932
Promotional strategies elicit action	3.241	0.852	0.930
Overall	3.093	-	0.941

### 5.2.3.3 Marketing experts

On the questions related to making use of marketing experts (Figure 5.14), the majority (55%) of the participants indicated that they used an expert to handle the promotional activities as appropriate. They were however, not of the view that it was necessary to have expert reviewers or analysts for marketing strategies. Despite the mixed feelings on this topic, all the responses from the three items were highly consistent as depicted by the acceptable overall Cronbach's alpha score of 0.877 and the strong inter-item correlation of at least 0.6 (Table 5.10).



**Figure 5.14: Likert plot of the items regarding marketing experts**

**Table 5.10: Reliability analysis of the items regarding marketing experts**

Items	Mean	Item-rest correlation	Alpha-if-deleted
Have expert to handle promotional activities	3.123	0.677	0.920
Have expert to handle review marketing strategies	2.698	0.914	0.695
Have expert to handle analyse marketing strategies	2.364	0.728	0.859
Overall	2.728	-	0.877

## 5.2.4 Place strategies

### 5.2.4.1 Operating area and market share

The market share related questions with regards to location were well received by at least 85% of the participants (Figure 5.15) with the exception for one which was on a bad note. That is, 93% of the participants indicated that their performances were affected by the location in which they were operating. Whichever way the participants responded, all the sets of items provided an excellent measure of the place strategies with an overall Cronbach's alpha score of at least 0.9 as well as an inter-item correlation of least 0.6 (Table 5.11).

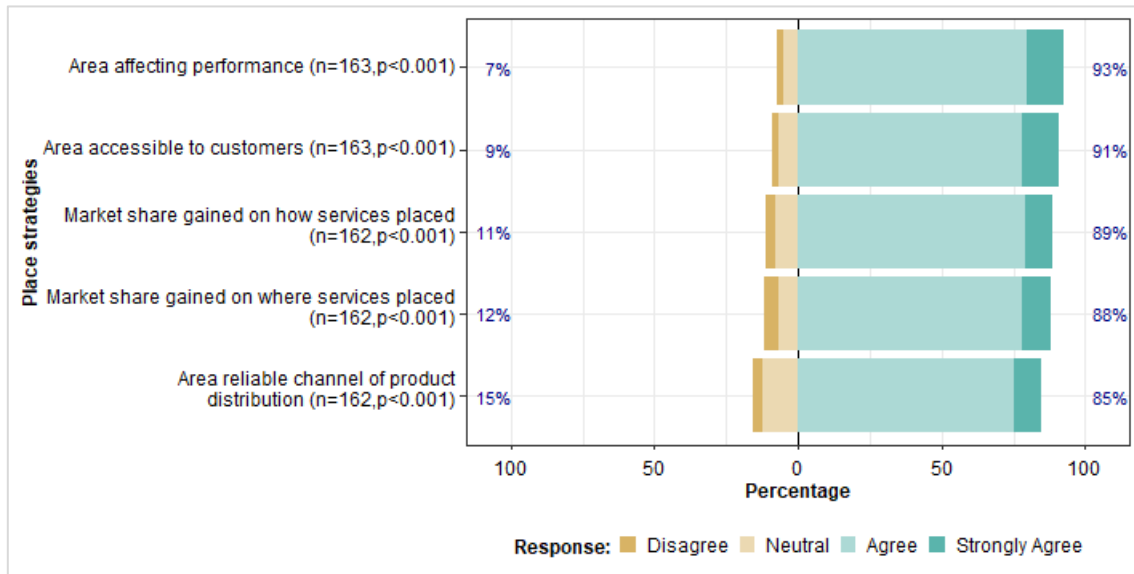


Figure 5.15: Likert plot of the items for place strategies

Table 5.11: Reliability analysis of the items for place strategies

Items	Mean	Item-rest correlation	Alpha-if-deleted
Area accessible to customers	3.019	0.697	0.914
Area reliable channel of product distribution	2.913	0.771	0.900
Area affecting performance	3.031	0.795	0.896
Market share gained on where services placed	2.938	0.859	0.881
Market share gained on how services placed	2.957	0.808	0.892
Overall	2.971	-	0.916

### 5.2.5 Performance

Of the four items used to assess overall performance (Figure 5.16), only 42% indicated that their businesses were growing in market share. In general, the performance was not that good as shown by the low proportion of 9% whose businesses had grown in net profit, 7% in sales volume, and 7% in the number of employees. All the four items proved to have been consistently measuring the performance topic about performance as shown by the overall Cronbach's alpha score of at least 0.7 (Table 5.12). In order to understand the overall performance, a score for each participant was calculated as a percentage of the total Likert scale points. The results (Figure 5.17) showed that the overall business performance in the business was 62.9% of the maximum or possible performance.

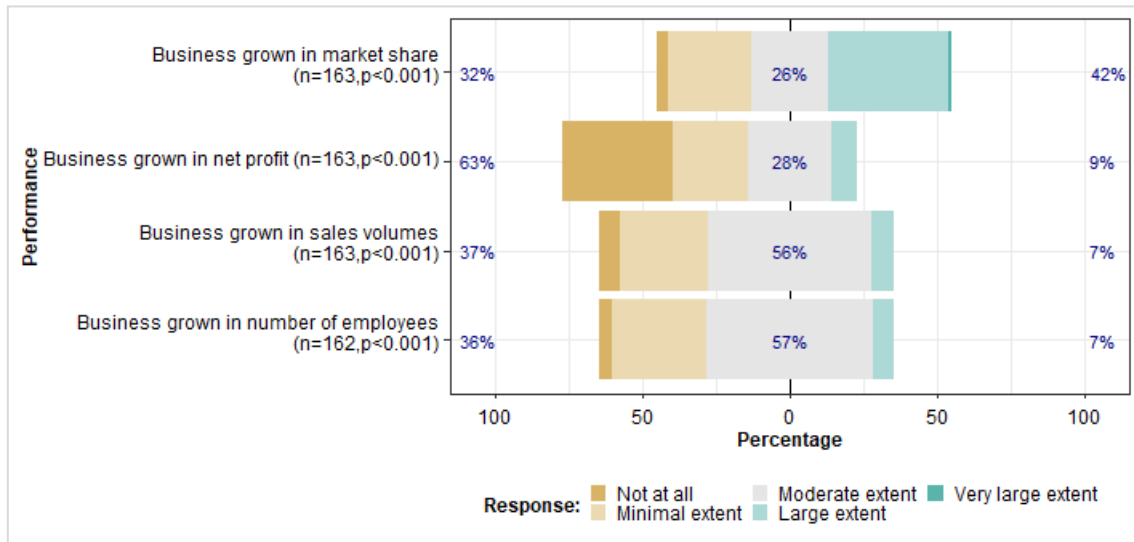


Figure 5.16: Likert plot of the items for performance

Table 5.12: Reliability analysis of the items for performance

Items	Mean	Item-rest correlation	Alpha-if-deleted
Business growth in terms of net profit	2.086	0.290	0.889
Business growth in terms of number of employees	2.660	0.804	0.627
Business growth in terms of sales volumes	2.642	0.895	0.567
Business growth in terms of market share	3.062	0.510	0.757
Overall	2.613	-	0.772

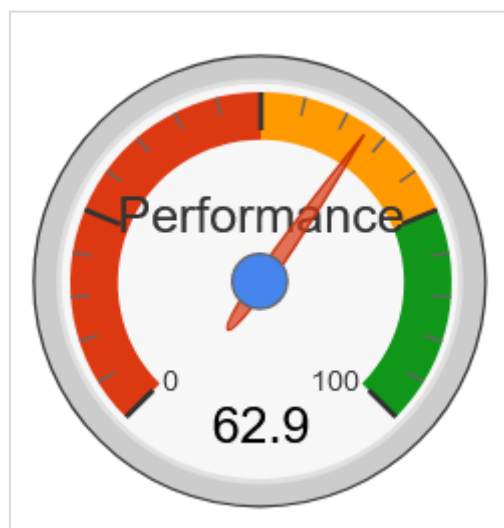


Figure 5.17: Overall performance score

### 5.3 Associations with performance

This section presents the results of the driving factors behind the participants' performance on the four pillars namely: (a) net profit (b) number of employees (c) sales volume and (d) market

share. To better understand the results, the presentation of the results is structured in two parts. The first part shows the frequency distribution of the strategies within the groups that had either poor or good performances, i.e., associations or evidence of patterns that exist between the strategies and performance. The second part shows the magnitude and direction of the relationships in terms of odds ratios. It is important to note that the regression results looked at the relations from three different angles, (i) unadjusted – individual performance in relation to what is given in the frequency table (ii) adjusted – the relationship of a factor to performance but in the presence of or taking into consideration the joint effect of the other items and (iii) stepwise – which aims to sift the most important of the items in question. Throughout this section emphasis was given to the results of the most important factors under the stepwise column because they are likely to provide a true reflection of what was driving the performance pillars in the tourism industry under study.

### 5.3.1 Product development strategies

Table 5.13 showed that the net profit performance had no bearing on efficient customer service, or with product adaptability to target market, or its suitability to the target market. However, there was enough statistical evidence to suggest that a broad line of products ( $p < 0.001$ ), broad market appeal ( $p = 0.010$ ) and whether products are developed and tested ( $p < 0.001$ ) were affecting the net profit performance. All the above indicated relationships were based on the individual associations between the items and net profit. Regression analysis results (Table 5.14) of how factors interact with the net profit outcome, revealed a different angle. Results showed that the most important determining factors were efficient customer service ( $p = 0.006$ ) and having developed and tested products ( $p < 0.001$ ). Of the two it turned out that those that agreed on efficient customer service were 76% less likely to have good net profit while those that believed in developed and tested products were 6-times more likely to have a good net profit performance.

**Table 5.13 The influence of product development strategies on business growth in terms of net profit performance**

Business growth in net profit performance	Poor (N=103)	Good (N=60)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Broad product line</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	65 (63.1%)	21 (35.0%)		86 (52.8%)
Agree	38 (36.9%)	39 (65.0%)		77 (47.2%)
<b>Broad market appeal</b>			0.010	
Disagree	66 (64.1%)	26 (43.3%)		92 (56.4%)
Agree	37 (35.9%)	34 (56.7%)		71 (43.6%)
<b>Efficient customer service</b>			0.673	

Business growth in net profit performance	Poor (N=103)	Good (N=60)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
Disagree	18 (17.6%)	12 (20.3%)		30 (18.6%)
Agree	84 (82.4%)	47 (79.7%)		131 (81.4%)
<b>Developed and tested products</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	72 (69.9%)	25 (42.4%)		97 (59.9%)
Agree	31 (30.1%)	34 (57.6%)		65 (40.1%)
<b>Products adaptable to target market</b>			0.846	
Disagree	21 (20.4%)	13 (21.7%)		34 (20.9%)
Agree	82 (79.6%)	47 (78.3%)		129 (79.1%)
<b>Products suitable to target market</b>			0.909	
Disagree	23 (22.5%)	14 (23.3%)		37 (22.8%)
Agree	79 (77.5%)	46 (76.7%)		125 (77.2%)

**Table 5.14: Regression results – The influence of product development strategies on business growth in terms of net profit performance**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)		OR(CI,p-value)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Stepwise
Broad product line	3.56 (1.79-7.27, p<0.001)	1.83 (0.62-5.28, p=0.261)	-
Efficient customer service	0.63 (0.26-1.56, p=0.312)	0.30 (0.09-0.97, p=0.044)	0.24 (0.08-0.66, p=0.006)
Developed and tested products	3.78 (1.89-7.71, p<0.001)	4.18 (1.35-13.70, p=0.015)	6.11 (2.75-14.43, p<0.001)
Products adaptable to target market	0.81 (0.35-1.94, p=0.628)	0.68 (0.11-3.95, p=0.669)	-
Products suitable to target market	0.86 (0.39-1.94, p=0.713)	0.89 (0.17-5.28, p=0.895)	-

In terms of individual product development strategies, Table 5.15 showed that efficient customer service ( $p = 0.082$ ) and product suitability to target market ( $p = 0.232$ ) were not associated with growth in the number of employees. The regression results showed that the evidence of the growth in employee numbers was being influenced by efficient customer service ( $p = 0.004$ ) and developed and tested products ( $p < 0.001$ ). The results indicate that the participants who prioritized efficient customer service were 4.5-times more likely to have growth in employee numbers (Table 5.16). On the other hand, those who were investing in developed and tested products were 81% less likely to have an increase in the number of employees.

**Table 5.15: The influence of product development strategies on business growth in terms of number of employees performance**

Business growth in number of employees performance	Poor (N=59)	Good (N=103)	p-value	Overall (N=162)
<b>Broad product line</b>			0.009	
Disagree	23 (39.0%)	62 (60.2%)		85 (52.5%)
Agree	36 (61.0%)	41 (39.8%)		77 (47.5%)
<b>Broad market appeal</b>			0.007	
Disagree	25 (42.4%)	66 (64.1%)		91 (56.2%)
Agree	34 (57.6%)	37 (35.9%)		71 (43.8%)
<b>Efficient customer service</b>			0.082	
Disagree	15 (25.9%)	15 (14.7%)		30 (18.8%)
Agree	43 (74.1%)	87 (85.3%)		130 (81.3%)
<b>Developed and tested products</b>			0.011	
Disagree	27 (46.6%)	69 (67.0%)		96 (59.6%)
Agree	31 (53.4%)	34 (33.0%)		65 (40.4%)
<b>Products adaptable to target market</b>			0.015	
Disagree	18 (30.5%)	15 (14.6%)		33 (20.4%)
Agree	41 (69.5%)	88 (85.4%)		129 (79.6%)
<b>Products suitable to target market</b>			0.232	
Disagree	16 (27.6%)	20 (19.4%)		36 (22.4%)
Agree	42 (72.4%)	83 (80.6%)		125 (77.6%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.16: Regression results – The influence of product development strategies on business growth in terms of number of employees performance**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)		OR(CI,p-value)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Stepwise
Broad market appeal	0.52 (0.26-1.03, p=0.062)	1.40 (0.43-5.03, p=0.584)	-
Efficient customer service	2.11 (0.88-5.09, p=0.093)	3.42 (1.10-11.13, p=0.036)	4.50 (1.65-12.86, p=0.004)
Developed and tested products	0.30 (0.15-0.61, p=0.001)	0.14 (0.04-0.46, p=0.002)	0.19 (0.08-0.43, p<0.001)
Products suitable to target market	1.35 (0.58-3.03, p=0.477)	1.60 (0.54-4.66, p=0.385)	-

By looking at each individual item of product development in relation to sales volume (Table 5.17), the results showed that all of them had an influence on the sales volume ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, further scrutiny revealed that only the factors efficiency in customer service and products suitable to target market had a positive impact on sales whereas those that had the idea of developed and tested products struggled with sales volumes. That is, according to stepwise results (Table 5.18), efficiency in customer service was associated with 2.7-times more chance of good sales while products suitable to target market were 3.5-times more likely

to produce a rise in sales. On the other hand, those participants who believed in developed and tested products were 81% less likely to have good sales.

**Table 5.17: The influence of product development strategies on business growth in terms of sales volumes performance**

Business growth in sales volumes performance	Poor (N=60)	Good (N=103)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Broad product line</b>			0.030	
Disagree	25 (41.7%)	61 (59.2%)		86 (52.8%)
Agree	35 (58.3%)	42 (40.8%)		77 (47.2%)
<b>Broad market appeal</b>			0.010	
Disagree	26 (43.3%)	66 (64.1%)		92 (56.4%)
Agree	34 (56.7%)	37 (35.9%)		71 (43.6%)
<b>Efficient customer service</b>			0.035	
Disagree	16 (27.1%)	14 (13.7%)		30 (18.6%)
Agree	43 (72.9%)	88 (86.3%)		131 (81.4%)
<b>Developed and tested products</b>			0.022	
Disagree	29 (48.3%)	68 (66.7%)		97 (59.9%)
Agree	31 (51.7%)	34 (33.3%)		65 (40.1%)
<b>Products adaptable to target market</b>			0.028	
Disagree	18 (30.0%)	16 (15.5%)		34 (20.9%)
Agree	42 (70.0%)	87 (84.5%)		129 (79.1%)
<b>Products suitable to target market</b>			0.032	
Disagree	19 (32.2%)	18 (17.5%)		37 (22.8%)
Agree	40 (67.8%)	85 (82.5%)		125 (77.2%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.18: Regression results – The influence of product development strategies on business growth in terms of sales volumes performance**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Stepwise
Broad product line	0.50 (0.25-0.98, p=0.044)	0.93 (0.34-2.69, p=0.890)	-
Efficient customer service	2.37 (1.02-5.59, p=0.045)	3.13 (1.04-9.62, p=0.042)	2.71 (0.98-7.60, p=0.055)
Developed and tested products	0.40 (0.20-0.78, p=0.008)	0.19 (0.06-0.57, p=0.004)	0.19 (0.08-0.43, p<0.001)
Products adaptable to target market	2.05 (0.91-4.59, p=0.080)	0.59 (0.10-2.97, p=0.527)	-
Products suitable to target market	2.24 (1.01-5.00, p=0.046)	5.19 (1.08-27.72, p=0.042)	3.53 (1.29-10.00, p=0.015)

Similarly, if looked at from an individual perspective (Table 5.19), all the product development strategies showed some effect on market share performance ( $p < 0.05$ ). This simply means that the distribution of the participant responses on the market share performance depended on product development strategies. The understanding of the regression analysis results was not similar to the previous results due to some product development strategies having to be dropped

from the analysis because of statistical issues that required this decision for the best output. On a good note, those factors that remained were also retained in the stepwise regression. As we have noticed thus far, efficiency in customer service and products adaptable to the target market were instrumental factors. Added to the mix for the first time was broad market appeal, but negatively. That is, the participants who wanted broad market appeal were 83% less likely to grow market share (Table 5.20). On the other hand, having either efficiency in customer service or having products adaptable to target market were associated with a 4-fold increase in market share growth.

**Table 5.19: The influence of product development strategies on business growth in terms of market share performance**

Business growth in market share performance	Poor (N=52)	Good (N=111)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Broad product line</b>			0.012	
Disagree	20 (38.5%)	66 (59.5%)		86 (52.8%)
Agree	32 (61.5%)	45 (40.5%)		77 (47.2%)
<b>Broad market appeal</b>			0.005	
Disagree	21 (40.4%)	71 (64.0%)		92 (56.4%)
Agree	31 (59.6%)	40 (36.0%)		71 (43.6%)
<b>Efficient customer service</b>			0.005	
Disagree	16 (31.4%)	14 (12.7%)		30 (18.6%)
Agree	35 (68.6%)	96 (87.3%)		131 (81.4%)
<b>Developed and tested products</b>			0.003	
Disagree	22 (43.1%)	75 (67.6%)		97 (59.9%)
Agree	29 (56.9%)	36 (32.4%)		65 (40.1%)
<b>Products adaptable to target market</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	19 (36.5%)	15 (13.5%)		34 (20.9%)
Agree	33 (63.5%)	96 (86.5%)		129 (79.1%)
<b>Products suitable to target market</b>			0.010	
Disagree	18 (35.3%)	19 (17.1%)		37 (22.8%)
Agree	33 (64.7%)	92 (82.9%)		125 (77.2%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.20: Regression results – The influence of product development strategies on business growth in terms of market share performance**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Stepwise
Broad market appeal	0.43 (0.20-0.88, p=0.023)	0.17 (0.06-0.43, p<0.001)	0.17 (0.06-0.43, p<0.001)
Efficient customer service	3.60 (1.48-8.90, p=0.005)	4.06 (1.19-14.35, p=0.026)	4.06 (1.19-14.35, p=0.026)
Products adaptable to target market	4.47 (1.88-10.93, p=0.001)	4.48 (1.47-14.43, p=0.009)	4.48 (1.47-14.43, p=0.009)

Regarding Table 5.20, as a disclaimer, the other items were dropped due to multicollinearity tests. They underwent rigorous scrutiny for suitability and could only be included if they passed the test.

### 5.3.2 Pricing strategies

Of the four items used as indicators for the pricing strategies, only quality transportation was not associated ( $p = 0.251$ ) with net profit performance (Table 5.21). This was also consistent with the findings from the regression analysis (Table 5.22), where quality transportation was found to have no bearing on growth in net profit even after taking the other factors into consideration. The results show that charging higher prices than the standard quality had a detrimental effect on net profit as this resulted in 57% less chance of good performance. Positive findings were revealed in the use of pricing as a basis for competition for this increased the chances of good net profit by almost 12-fold. It was even more profitable to use market orientation for product pricing as this increased the chances of net profit 25-fold.

**Table 5.21: The influence of pricing strategies on business growth in terms of net profit performance**

Business growth in net profit performance	Poor (N=103)	Good (N=60)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Use pricing as basis for competition</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	60 (58.8%)	17 (28.3%)		77 (47.5%)
Agree	42 (41.2%)	43 (71.7%)		85 (52.5%)
<b>Have quality transportation</b>			0.251	
Disagree	27 (26.2%)	11 (18.3%)		38 (23.3%)
Agree	76 (73.8%)	49 (81.7%)		125 (76.7%)
<b>Charge higher prices than standard quality</b>			0.034	
Disagree	65 (63.7%)	28 (46.7%)		93 (57.4%)
Agree	37 (36.3%)	32 (53.3%)		69 (42.6%)
<b>Use market orientation for product pricing</b>			0.035	
Disagree	26 (25.5%)	7 (11.7%)		33 (20.4%)
Agree	76 (74.5%)	53 (88.3%)		129 (79.6%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.22: Regression results – The influence of pricing strategies on business growth in terms of net profit performance**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Stepwise
Use pricing as basis for competition	5.27 (2.50-11.88, p<0.001)	11.74 (3.45-47.28, p<0.001)	11.67 (3.75-42.58, p<0.001)
Have quality transportation	1.87 (0.81-4.76, p=0.160)	1.02 (0.23-4.12, p=0.980)	-
Charge higher prices than standard quality	2.32 (1.18-4.62, p=0.015)	0.42 (0.12-1.32, p=0.157)	0.43 (0.12-1.26, p=0.140)
Use market orientation for product pricing	16.42 (3.31-298.10, p=0.007)	25.10 (3.54-536.39, p=0.006)	25.41 (4.66-480.63, p=0.003)

In any research study the assumptions and hypotheses are put in place before the actual data collection. It is only analysis that then reveals the relationships among the variables. That is, the researcher cannot tell ahead of time that an item is or is not related, even if previous studies have suggested certain outcomes. Findings may be different because of the geographical setting, waves in technology, etc. This is the reason why the statistician applied regression to help in understanding such relationships. Hence, Table 5.23 shows that if each pricing strategy is assessed individually this played a role in the participant's company's employee base ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, according to the stepwise regression results, the most determining positive factor was having quality transportation ( $p < 0.001$ ) and a negative factor was charging higher prices ( $p < 0.001$ ). That is, the participants that were charging higher prices were 83% less likely to increase the number of employees compared to those that focused on quality transportation who found themselves having 10-times more chance of having more employees (Table 5.24).

**Table 5.23: The influence of pricing strategies on business growth in terms of number of employees performance**

Business growth in number of employees performance	Poor (N=59)	Good (N=103)	p-value	Overall (N=162)
<b>Use pricing as basis for competition</b>			0.002	
Disagree	18 (31.0%)	58 (56.3%)		76 (47.2%)
Agree	40 (69.0%)	45 (43.7%)		85 (52.8%)
<b>Have quality transportation</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	23 (39.0%)	15 (14.6%)		38 (23.5%)
Agree	36 (61.0%)	88 (85.4%)		124 (76.5%)
<b>Charge higher prices than standard quality</b>			0.002	
Disagree	24 (41.4%)	68 (66.0%)		92 (57.1%)
Agree	34 (58.6%)	35 (34.0%)		69 (42.9%)
<b>Use market orientation for product pricing</b>			0.001	
Disagree	20 (33.9%)	13 (12.7%)		33 (20.5%)
Agree	39 (66.1%)	89 (87.3%)		128 (79.5%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.24: Regression results – The influence of pricing strategies on business growth in terms of number of employees**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Stepwise
Use pricing as basis for competition	0.27 (0.13-0.56, p<0.001)	0.71 (0.22-2.33, p=0.560)	-
Have quality transportation	4.92 (2.18-11.66, p<0.001)	7.19 (1.61-37.83, p=0.013)	9.44 (3.67-26.75, p<0.001)
Charge higher prices than standard quality	0.31 (0.15-0.62, p=0.001)	0.22 (0.06-0.72, p=0.016)	0.17 (0.07-0.38, p<0.001)
Use market orientation for product pricing	3.95 (1.68-9.74, p=0.002)	1.29 (0.26-5.84, p=0.741)	-

Assessment of the individual pricing strategies found that each had an impact on sales performance (Table 5.25). That is, the findings showed that the use of pricing as a basis for competition ( $p = 0.008$ ) and the charging of higher prices ( $p = 0.005$ ) negatively impacted sales volumes by at least 60% (Table 5.26). It was not only the charging of higher prices that showed a negative impact on sales volumes, but also charging higher fees – these participants were 83% less likely to have good sales volumes. However, using market orientation for product pricing consistently showed positive results with those using it having almost 26-times more chances of getting good sales.

**Table 5.25: The influence of pricing strategies on business growth in terms of sales volumes performance**

Business growth in sales volumes performance	Poor (N=60)	Good (N=103)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Use pricing as basis for competition</b>			0.009	
Disagree	20 (33.9%)	57 (55.3%)		77 (47.5%)
Agree	39 (66.1%)	46 (44.7%)		85 (52.5%)
<b>Have quality transportation</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	25 (41.7%)	13 (12.6%)		38 (23.3%)
Agree	35 (58.3%)	90 (87.4%)		125 (76.7%)
<b>Charge higher prices than standard quality</b>			0.009	
Disagree	26 (44.1%)	67 (65.0%)		93 (57.4%)
Agree	33 (55.9%)	36 (35.0%)		69 (42.6%)
<b>Use market orientation for product pricing</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	24 (40.0%)	9 (8.8%)		33 (20.4%)
Agree	36 (60.0%)	93 (91.2%)		129 (79.6%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.26: Regression results – The influence of pricing strategies on business growth in terms of sales volumes performance**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Stepwise
Use pricing as basis for competition	0.39 (0.19-0.77, p=0.008)	0.72 (0.19-2.66, p=0.612)	-
Have quality transportation	5.44 (2.42-12.86, p<0.001)	1.29 (0.30-5.00, p=0.719)	-
Charge higher prices than standard quality	0.38 (0.19-0.74, p=0.005)	0.22 (0.06-0.75, p=0.020)	0.17 (0.07-0.40, p<0.001)
Use market orientation for product pricing	12.79 (4.79-40.76, p<0.001)	21.22 (4.74-119.07, p<0.001)	25.97 (8.47-96.20, p<0.001)

Table 5.27 shows that individually each of the pricing strategies had an influence on market share. When these items were jointly considered for their effects on market share, market orientation was excluded from the analysis based on statistical principles for the purpose of improving the statistical output. Of the remaining items, having quality transportation was consistently associated with good market share to as high as 16-fold (Table 5.28). On the other hand, charging higher prices was associated with an 88% less chance of growth in market share performance.

**Table 5.27: The influence of pricing strategies on business growth in terms of market share performance**

Business growth in market share performance	Poor (N=52)	Good (N=111)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Use pricing as basis for competition</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	13 (25.5%)	64 (57.7%)		77 (47.5%)
Agree	38 (74.5%)	47 (42.3%)		85 (52.5%)
<b>Have quality transportation</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	25 (48.1%)	13 (11.7%)		38 (23.3%)
Agree	27 (51.9%)	98 (88.3%)		125 (76.7%)
<b>Charge higher prices than standard quality</b>			0.005	
Disagree	21 (41.2%)	72 (64.9%)		93 (57.4%)
Agree	30 (58.8%)	39 (35.1%)		69 (42.6%)
<b>Use market orientation for product pricing</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	25 (48.1%)	8 (7.3%)		33 (20.4%)
Agree	27 (51.9%)	102 (92.7%)		129 (79.6%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.28: Regression results – The influence of pricing strategies on business growth in terms of market share performance**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Stepwise
Use pricing as basis for competition	0.24 (0.10-0.51, p<0.001)	0.74 (0.21-2.60, p=0.643)	-
Have quality transportation	7.89 (3.41-19.23, p<0.001)	16.00 (5.50-55.70, p<0.001)	16.97 (5.97-57.81, p<0.001)
Charge higher prices than standard quality	0.28 (0.13-0.57, p=0.001)	0.16 (0.04-0.60, p=0.009)	0.12 (0.04-0.32, p<0.001)

### 5.3.3 Promotion strategies

When there are several factors that are assumed to be affecting an output, each has a certain relationship with the output, but consideration should be given to the whole picture which is that all the potential factors involved are at play at the same time. However, only a few of the many factors may eventually prove to be the most important in addressing the problem at hand. Of the promotional strategies shown in Table 5.29, some of the strategies were dropped from the regression analysis due to data issues while those that remained were only dropped from the stepwise analysis due to their least importance in the understanding of the net profit performance. As such this section presented the frequency distributions for ease of reference but the most important factors shown in the stepwise column were given more attention.

Table 5.29 shows that questions related to what the participants wanted to elicit and also those to do with the need for an expert were found to have an influence on the net profit (p-values < 0.05). Of the 12 promotional factors investigated in this section, five of them were found to be the most important determinants of net profit performance, according to the stepwise regression (Table 5.30). Two of the five negatively impacted net profit while the other three positively impacted net profit. Those integrating activities for customer satisfaction were 85% (p = 0.021) less likely to be associated with making a good net profit and, similarly, having an expert to handle promotional activities was associated with a 69% (p = 0.016) less chance of making a good net profit. On a positive note, bringing in an expert to analyse the marketing strategies was 43-times more likely to improve net profit growth (p < 0.001). This was followed by having some promotional strategies that were found to be 14-times more likely to improve net profit (p = 0.031). Though not found to be significantly associated with the net profit (p = 0.065), adding new product design and style into the mix increased the statistical quality of the results.

**Table 5.29: The influence of promotion strategies on business growth in terms of net profit performance**

Business growth in net profit performance	Poor (N=103)	Good (N=60)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Have promotion strategies</b>			0.538	
Disagree	9 (8.7%)	3 (5.0%)		12 (7.4%)
Agree	94 (91.3%)	57 (95.0%)		151 (92.6%)
<b>Advertise products through various media</b>			1.000	
Disagree	6 (5.9%)	3 (5.0%)		9 (5.6%)
Agree	96 (94.1%)	57 (95.0%)		153 (94.4%)
<b>Focus on customer needs</b>			0.504	
Disagree	12 (11.7%)	5 (8.3%)		17 (10.4%)
Agree	91 (88.3%)	55 (91.7%)		146 (89.6%)
<b>Integrate activities for customer satisfaction</b>			0.574	
Disagree	17 (16.5%)	12 (20.0%)		29 (17.8%)
Agree	86 (83.5%)	48 (80.0%)		134 (82.2%)
<b>Introduce new product design and style</b>			0.273	
Disagree	32 (31.4%)	14 (23.3%)		46 (28.4%)
Agree	70 (68.6%)	46 (76.7%)		116 (71.6%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit attention</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	76 (74.5%)	25 (41.7%)		101 (62.3%)
Agree	26 (25.5%)	35 (58.3%)		61 (37.7%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit interest</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	73 (71.6%)	25 (41.7%)		98 (60.5%)
Agree	29 (28.4%)	35 (58.3%)		64 (39.5%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit desire</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	80 (78.4%)	27 (45.0%)		107 (66.0%)
Agree	22 (21.6%)	33 (55.0%)		55 (34.0%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit action</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	79 (77.5%)	26 (43.3%)		105 (64.8%)
Agree	23 (22.5%)	34 (56.7%)		57 (35.2%)
<b>Have expert to handle promotional activities</b>			0.686	
Disagree	48 (46.6%)	26 (43.3%)		74 (45.4%)
Agree	55 (53.4%)	34 (56.7%)		89 (54.6%)
<b>Have expert to handle review marketing strategies</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	93 (90.3%)	35 (59.3%)		128 (79.0%)
Agree	10 (9.7%)	24 (40.7%)		34 (21.0%)
<b>Have expert to handle analyse marketing strategies</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	97 (94.2%)	34 (56.7%)		131 (80.4%)
Agree	6 (5.8%)	26 (43.3%)		32 (19.6%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.30: Regression results – The influence of promotion strategies on business growth in terms of net profit performance**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Stepwise
Have promotion strategies	4.53 (0.80-85.31, p=0.160)	13.72 (1.57-313.28, p=0.035)	14.19 (1.76-321.03, p=0.031)
Focus on customer needs	1.86 (0.54-8.57, p=0.364)	1.14 (0.17-9.71, p=0.896)	-
Integrate activities for customer satisfaction	0.62 (0.26-1.51, p=0.285)	0.14 (0.02-0.63, p=0.020)	0.15 (0.02-0.66, p=0.021)
Introduce new product design and style	1.77 (0.80-4.14, p=0.172)	4.49 (1.09-28.94, p=0.063)	4.22 (1.07-25.60, p=0.065)
Promotional strategies elicit interest	3.15 (1.57-6.43, p=0.001)	0.68 (0.23-1.86, p=0.461)	-
Have expert to handle promotional activities	1.07 (0.54-2.12, p=0.843)	0.25 (0.08-0.74, p=0.013)	0.31 (0.11-0.78, p=0.016)
Have expert to handle analyse marketing strategies	18.64 (6.55-67.56, p<0.001)	57.87 (12.64-362.22, p<0.001)	42.99 (11.79-216.94, p<0.001)

Integrating activities for customer satisfaction ( $p = 0.012$ ), the introduction of new product design and style ( $p < 0.001$ ), as well as involving experts, were found to be significantly associated ( $p < 0.05$ ) with growth in the number of employees (Table 5.31). A closer inspection of these factors revealed that only three were significant. That is, promotional strategy and introducing a new product design were not significantly associated with the number of employees but proved to be important in the investigation process (Table 5.32). It turns out that the only important and significant factor was having an expert to handle the promotional activities – it was associated with almost 10 times more chances of growth in the number of employees ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 5.31: The influence promotion strategies on business growth in terms of the number of employees performance**

Business growth in number of employees performance	Poor (N=59)	Good (N=103)	p-value	Overall (N=162)
<b>Have promotion strategies</b>			1.000	
Disagree	4 (6.8%)	8 (7.8%)		12 (7.4%)
Agree	55 (93.2%)	95 (92.2%)		150 (92.6%)
<b>Advertise products through various media</b>			0.489	
Disagree	2 (3.4%)	7 (6.8%)		9 (5.6%)
Agree	57 (96.6%)	96 (93.2%)		153 (94.4%)
<b>Focus on customer needs</b>			0.521	
Disagree	7 (11.9%)	9 (8.7%)		16 (9.9%)
Agree	52 (88.1%)	94 (91.3%)		146 (90.1%)
<b>Integrate activities for customer satisfaction</b>			0.012	
Disagree	16 (27.1%)	12 (11.7%)		28 (17.3%)
Agree	43 (72.9%)	91 (88.3%)		134 (82.7%)

Business growth in number of employees performance	Poor (N=59)	Good (N=103)	p-value	Overall (N=162)
<b>Introduce new product design and style</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	26 (44.1%)	19 (18.6%)		45 (28.0%)
Agree	33 (55.9%)	83 (81.4%)		116 (72.0%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit attention</b>			0.348	
Disagree	34 (57.6%)	67 (65.0%)		101 (62.3%)
Agree	25 (42.4%)	36 (35.0%)		61 (37.7%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit interest</b>			0.057	
Disagree	30 (50.8%)	68 (66.0%)		98 (60.5%)
Agree	29 (49.2%)	35 (34.0%)		64 (39.5%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit desire</b>			0.738	
Disagree	38 (64.4%)	69 (67.0%)		107 (66.0%)
Agree	21 (35.6%)	34 (33.0%)		55 (34.0%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit action</b>			0.671	
Disagree	37 (62.7%)	68 (66.0%)		105 (64.8%)
Agree	22 (37.3%)	35 (34.0%)		57 (35.2%)
<b>Have expert to handle promotional activities</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	45 (76.3%)	28 (27.2%)		73 (45.1%)
Agree	14 (23.7%)	75 (72.8%)		89 (54.9%)
<b>Have expert to handle review marketing strategies</b>			0.029	
Disagree	52 (88.1%)	75 (73.5%)		127 (78.9%)
Agree	7 (11.9%)	27 (26.5%)		34 (21.1%)
<b>Have expert to handle analyse marketing strategies</b>			0.020	
Disagree	53 (89.8%)	77 (74.8%)		130 (80.2%)
Agree	6 (10.2%)	26 (25.2%)		32 (19.8%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.32: Regression results – The influences of promotion strategies on business growth in terms of the number of employees**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)	OR(CI,p-value)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Stepwise
Have promotion strategies	0.56 (0.08-2.53, p=0.487)	0.29 (0.03-2.08, p=0.241)	0.19 (0.02-1.15, p=0.084)
Focus on customer needs	1.16 (0.29-4.26, p=0.821)	0.37 (0.05-2.62, p=0.321)	-
Integrate activities for customer satisfaction	2.63 (1.07-6.64, p=0.036)	1.05 (0.24-4.69, p=0.949)	-
Introduce new product design and style	3.55 (1.68-7.70, p=0.001)	2.63 (0.83-8.75, p=0.104)	2.24 (0.88-5.82, p=0.094)
Promotional strategies elicit attention	0.67 (0.34-1.34, p=0.260)	0.68 (0.08-4.06, p=0.683)	-
Promotional strategies elicit desire	0.92 (0.46-1.87, p=0.811)	1.86 (0.31-15.41, p=0.513)	-
Have expert to handle promotional activities	11.20 (5.17-26.02, p<0.001)	11.11 (4.25-32.05, p<0.001)	9.87 (4.39-23.72, p<0.001)
Have expert to handle analyse marketing strategies	3.19 (1.22-10.01, p=0.027)	0.69 (0.17-2.90, p=0.604)	-

The same pattern was observed in the relationships with the growth in sales volume (Table 5.33). That is, the integration of activities for customer satisfaction ( $p = 0.007$ ), the introduction of new product design and style ( $p < 0.001$ ), as well as the involvement of related experts, were found to be significantly associated ( $p < 0.05$ ) with growth in sales volume (Table 5.33). In addition, sales volume was also found to be linked to focusing on customer needs ( $p = 0.047$ ). However, the stepwise regression analysis revealed that only the introduction of new product design and style ( $p = 0.022$ ) and hiring an expert to handle the promotional activities ( $p < 0.001$ ), were the important factors for understanding sales volumes. That is, those involved in the introduction of new product design were 3-times more likely to realise growth in their sales volumes. The chances of growth were 14 times more likely for those businesses that had an expert handle the promotional activities.

**Table 5.33: The influences of promotion strategies on business growth in terms of sales volumes performance**

Business growth in sales volumes performance	Poor (N=60)	Good (N=103)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Have promotion strategies</b>			0.127	
Disagree	7 (11.7%)	5 (4.8%)		12 (7.4%)
Agree	53 (88.3%)	98 (95.1%)		151 (92.6%)
<b>Advertise products through various media</b>			0.288	
Disagree	5 (8.5%)	4 (3.9%)		9 (5.6%)
Agree	54 (91.5%)	99 (96.1%)		153 (94.4%)
<b>Focus on customer needs</b>			0.047	
Disagree	10 (16.7%)	7 (6.8%)		17 (10.4%)
Agree	50 (83.3%)	96 (93.2%)		146 (89.6%)
<b>Integrate activities for customer satisfaction</b>			0.007	
Disagree	17 (28.3%)	12 (11.7%)		29 (17.8%)
Agree	43 (71.7%)	91 (88.3%)		134 (82.2%)
<b>Introduce new product design and style</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	31 (51.7%)	15 (14.7%)		46 (28.4%)
Agree	29 (48.3%)	87 (85.3%)		116 (71.6%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit attention</b>			0.792	
Disagree	36 (61.0%)	65 (63.1%)		101 (62.3%)
Agree	23 (39.0%)	38 (36.9%)		61 (37.7%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit interest</b>			0.369	
Disagree	33 (55.9%)	65 (63.1%)		98 (60.5%)
Agree	26 (44.1%)	38 (36.9%)		64 (39.5%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit desire</b>			0.992	
Disagree	39 (66.1%)	68 (66.0%)		107 (66.0%)
Agree	20 (33.9%)	35 (34.0%)		55 (34.0%)
<b>Promotional strategies elicit action</b>			0.795	
Disagree	39 (66.1%)	66 (64.1%)		105 (64.8%)
Agree	20 (33.9%)	37 (35.9%)		57 (35.2%)

Business growth in sales volumes performance	Poor (N=60)	Good (N=103)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Have expert to handle promotional activities</b>			<0.001	
Disagree	49 (81.7%)	25 (24.3%)		74 (45.4%)
Agree	11 (18.3%)	78 (75.7%)		89 (54.6%)
<b>Have expert to handle review marketing strategies</b>			0.025	
Disagree	53 (88.3%)	75 (73.5%)		128 (79.0%)
Agree	7 (11.7%)	27 (26.5%)		34 (21.0%)
<b>Have expert to handle analyse marketing strategies</b>			0.006	
Disagree	55 (91.7%)	76 (73.8%)		131 (80.4%)
Agree	5 (8.3%)	27 (26.2%)		32 (19.6%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.34: regression results – The influence of promotion strategies on business growth in terms of sales volumes performance**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)		OR(CI,p-value)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Stepwise
Have promotion strategies	3.16 (0.75-15.94, p=0.125)	2.80 (0.14-46.14, p=0.477)	-
Advertise products through various media	5.59 (0.70-114.56, p=0.141)	4.68 (0.09-436.56, p=0.461)	-
Focus on customer needs	1.53 (0.42-5.33, p=0.500)	0.22 (0.02-1.59, p=0.153)	-
Integrate activities for customer Satisfaction	2.45 (1.01-6.04, p=0.047)	0.30 (0.05-1.54, p=0.153)	-
Introduce new product design and style	6.03 (2.74-13.93, p<0.001)	7.21 (1.84-35.20, p=0.008)	3.05 (1.19-8.06, p=0.022)
Promotional strategies elicit attention	0.80 (0.40-1.59, p=0.518)	0.94 (0.19-4.72, p=0.937)	-
Promotional strategies elicit desire	0.91 (0.45-1.87, p=0.793)	1.40 (0.26-7.55, p=0.687)	-
Have expert to handle promotional activities	18.25 (7.89-47.03, p<0.001)	16.34 (5.88-51.05, p<0.001)	14.17 (5.96-37.17, p<0.001)
Have expert to handle analyse marketing strategies	4.40 (1.59-15.64, p=0.009)	0.93 (0.21-4.51, p=0.923)	-

### 5.3.4 Place Strategies

Five items were used in this section to investigate the effect of the place strategies on the performance of the tourism businesses. Only three items (Area accessible to customers; Area reliable channel of product distribution and Area affecting performance) were eligible for model building in the regression analysis stage, due to data issues. Table 5.35 shows that none of these factors had a bearing on the growth in net profit ( $p > 0.05$ ). A further investigation into

the joint effect still did not show any association with net profit performance. Notable patterns were that at least 80% of the participants (with poor or good net profit) agreed with each of the place strategies assessed.

**Table 5.35: The influence of place strategies on business growth in terms of net profit performance**

Business growth in net profit performance	Poor (N=103)	Good (N=60)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Area accessible to customers</b>			0.406	
Disagree	8 (7.8%)	7 (11.7%)		15 (9.2%)
Agree	95 (92.2%)	53 (88.3%)		148 (90.8%)
<b>Area reliable channel of product distribution</b>			0.217	
Disagree	13 (12.7%)	12 (20.0%)		25 (15.4%)
Agree	89 (87.3%)	48 (80.0%)		137 (84.6%)
<b>Area affecting performance</b>			0.761	
Disagree	7 (6.8%)	5 (8.3%)		12 (7.4%)
Agree	96 (93.2%)	55 (91.7%)		151 (92.6%)
<b>Market share gained on where services placed</b>			0.291	
Disagree	10 (9.7%)	9 (15.3%)		19 (11.7%)
Agree	93 (90.3%)	50 (84.7%)		143 (88.3%)
<b>Market share gained on how services placed</b>			0.453	
Disagree	10 (9.7%)	8 (13.6%)		18 (11.1%)
Agree	93 (90.3%)	51 (86.4%)		144 (88.9%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

Again, the place strategies did not show any significant association with the growth in the number of employees (Table 5.36). However, despite the tour guides being happy with the accessibility of the place to the customers, that accessibility was associated with a 97% less chance of the growth in the number of employees ( $p = 0.010$ , Table 5.37).

**Table 5.36: The influence of place strategies on business growth in terms of the number of employees performance**

Business growth in number of employees performance	Poor (N=59)	Good (N=103)	p-value	Overall (N=162)
<b>Area accessible to customers</b>			0.410	
Disagree	4 (6.8%)	11 (10.7%)		15 (9.3%)
Agree	55 (93.2%)	92 (89.3%)		147 (90.7%)
<b>Area reliable channel of product distribution</b>			0.200	
Disagree	12 (20.3%)	13 (12.7%)		25 (15.5%)
Agree	47 (79.7%)	89 (87.3%)		136 (84.5%)
<b>Area affecting performance</b>			0.538	
Disagree	3 (5.1%)	9 (8.7%)		12 (7.4%)
Agree	56 (94.9%)	94 (91.3%)		150 (92.6%)
<b>Market share gained on where services placed</b>			0.302	
Disagree	9 (15.3%)	10 (9.8%)		19 (11.8%)
Agree	50 (84.7%)	92 (90.2%)		142 (88.2%)
<b>Market share gained on how services placed</b>			0.212	
Disagree	9 (15.3%)	9 (8.8%)		18 (11.2%)
Agree	50 (84.7%)	93 (91.2%)		143 (88.8%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.37: Regression results – The influence of place strategies on business growth in terms of the number of employees performance**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)Unadjusted	OR(CI,p-value)Adjusted
Area accessible to customers	0.55 (0.12-1.94, p=0.387)	0.03 (0.00-0.30, p=0.010)
Area reliable channel of product distribution	2.11 (0.86-5.22, p=0.101)	3.90 (0.98-19.16, p=0.063)
Market share gained on how services placed	2.11 (0.76-5.96, p=0.148)	7.10 (1.06-140.31, p=0.082)

Unfortunately, the place strategies did not show any significant association with sales volume (all p-values > 0.05, Table 5.38).

**Table 5.38: The influence of place strategies on business growth in terms of sales volumes performance**

Business growth in sales volumes performance	Poor (N=60)	Good (N=103)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Area accessible to customers</b>			0.406	
Disagree	7 (11.7%)	8 (7.8%)		15 (9.2%)
Agree	53 (88.3%)	95 (92.2%)		148 (90.8%)
<b>Area reliable channel of product distribution</b>			0.191	
Disagree	12 (20.3%)	13 (12.6%)		25 (15.4%)
Agree	47 (79.7%)	90 (87.4%)		137 (84.6%)
<b>Area affecting performance</b>			0.361	
Disagree	6 (10.0%)	6 (5.8%)		12 (7.4%)
Agree	54 (90.0%)	97 (94.2%)		151 (92.6%)
<b>Market share gained on where services placed</b>			0.321	

Business growth in sales volumes performance	Poor (N=60)	Good (N=103)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
Disagree	9 (15.0%)	10 (9.8%)		19 (11.7%)
Agree	51 (85.0%)	92 (90.2%)		143 (88.3%)
<b>Market share gained on how services placed</b>			0.227	
Disagree	9 (15.0%)	9 (8.8%)		18 (11.1%)
Agree	51 (85.0%)	93 (91.2%)		144 (88.9%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

The results in Table 5.39 show that market share performance was found to depend on some of the place strategies such as the reliability of the channel for product distribution ( $p = 0.016$ ), where the services are placed ( $p = 0.010$ ), and how the services are placed. Of all these place strategies, the most important one was where the services are placed as it was associated with a 5-fold possibility of growing the market share performance (Table 5.40).

**Table 5.39: The influence of place strategies on business growth in terms of market share performance**

Business growth in market share performance	Poor (N=52)	Good (N=111)	p-value	Overall (N=163)
<b>Area accessible to customers</b>			0.081	
Disagree	8 (15.4%)	7 (6.3%)		15 (9.2%)
Agree	44 (84.6%)	104 (93.7%)		148 (90.8%)
<b>Area reliable channel of product distribution</b>			0.016	
Disagree	13 (25.5%)	12 (10.8%)		25 (15.4%)
Agree	38 (74.5%)	99 (89.2%)		137 (84.6%)
<b>Area affecting performance</b>			0.055	
Disagree	7 (13.5%)	5 (4.5%)		12 (7.4%)
Agree	45 (86.5%)	106 (95.5%)		151 (92.6%)
<b>Market share gained on where services placed</b>			0.010	
Disagree	11 (21.2%)	8 (7.3%)		19 (11.7%)
Agree	41 (78.8%)	102 (92.7%)		143 (88.3%)
<b>Market share gained on how services placed</b>			0.005	
Disagree	11 (21.2%)	7 (6.4%)		18 (11.1%)
Agree	41 (78.8%)	103 (93.6%)		144 (88.9%)

| % and p-values based on non-missing cases | \* parametric p-value

**Table 5.40: Regression results – The influence of place strategies on business growth in terms of market share performance**

Explanatory[Agree]	OR(CI,p-value)Unadjusted	OR(CI,p-value)Adjusted	OR(CI,p-value)Stepwise
Area accessible to customers	3.39 (1.03-12.00, p=0.047)	0.72 (0.10-4.25, p=0.724)	-
Area reliable channel of product distribution	3.48 (1.41-8.82, p=0.007)	1.98 (0.51-7.26, p=0.301)	-
Market share gained on how services placed	4.84 (1.72-14.90, p=0.004)	3.52 (0.75-19.32, p=0.116)	4.84 (1.72-14.90, p=0.004)

## 5.4 Conclusion

The data analysis presented in this study aimed to investigate the impact of place strategies on the performance of tourism businesses, with a focus on net profit growth and employee numbers. The findings, in relation to the study's objectives, were compared to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, which highlighted the significance of place strategies in the broader context of marketing in tourism. Although the literature emphasized the importance of place in driving business success, the study's results revealed that there were no significant associations between place strategies and either net profit growth or the number of employees. This outcome aligns with some of the challenges identified in the literature regarding the complexities of place-related strategies in the tourism sector (Morrison, 2013; Kotler et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the methodology discussed in Chapter 3, which utilized simple random sampling for data collection, contributed to the representativeness of the sample. However, the unexpected results indicate that factors such as location accessibility, infrastructure, and competition may play a more intricate role in influencing business outcomes than initially anticipated. This underscores the limitations of the methodology and suggests the need for further exploration using other sampling techniques and a broader range of variables.

In terms of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 4, the application of place theory helped to guide the investigation of place-related strategies. However, the lack of significant findings suggests that additional theoretical lenses, such as resource-based theory or network theory, may provide further insights into the dynamics between place strategies and tourism business performance.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of place strategies in the tourism industry, offering a nuanced view of their impact on business performance. The findings challenge some existing assumptions and highlight areas for future research. Further studies could explore other factors influencing performance, refine methodological approaches, and

apply alternative theoretical frameworks to deepen the understanding of place strategies' role in tourism business success. Recommendations for improving place strategies and their application in tourism enterprises are presented in the final chapter, where practical suggestions are made for overcoming the challenges identified in this study.

## CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the study based on both the empirical findings and the literature review. It also provides recommendations for key stakeholders, including academics, managers, government bodies, and others involved in the tourism sector. The chapter is structured as follows:

First, it evaluates whether the research objectives were achieved.

Second, conclusions are drawn by comparing the empirical findings to the research objectives.

Third, the study's contributions and recommendations are presented based on the findings.

Lastly, limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

In the next section, a summary of the major findings from the literature review (Chapters 2 and 3) is provided.

### 6.2 Summary of the study

The literature review underscored the vital role that tour operators play in the tourism industry. Tour operators serve as intermediaries, bringing together various elements to offer comprehensive tour packages. According to South African Tourism, tour operators are integral to driving the destination's economy, as destinations rely heavily on their services. These operators bundle different travel components—such as transportation, accommodation, catering, and sightseeing into tour packages that are then marketed either directly to consumers or using travel agencies. While international tour operators generally own tourism products due to their better resources for effective marketing in source markets, local operators play a key role by providing marketable tourism products.

Tour operators are responsible for managing foreign travel logistics, such as online ticket purchases, accommodation, and transfers. Despite the convenience of this approach, it sometimes leads to a less immersive experience for tourists, as they are exposed to destinations without engaging deeply with local cultures.

The tourism sector has been resilient despite challenges like global financial crises and health pandemics. It continues to provide valuable employment opportunities, including for women in rural areas, contributing significantly to the economic development of such communities.

### **6.3 Summary of the major findings regarding the research objectives**

In the realm of marketing strategies, product adaptation emerges as a critical factor influencing a firm's export performance. Scholars emphasize the importance of product strategy, asserting that it is the most important component of marketing strategy and acts as a blueprint for marketing resource allocation. Promotions have become a critical factor in the product marketing mix, influencing export performance through variables such as advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, trade fairs, personal visits, and promotion adaptation. Studies validate the positive correlation between product adaptation and superior firm performance, especially in terms of sales growth and financial performance, including profitability and return on investment. Distribution adaptation also plays a significant role in impacting firm performance as well as influencing the export proportion of sales and profit levels. Summary of the major findings regarding the research objectives.

A number of objectives were formulated in order to address the research problem. A quantitative study was undertaken to achieve the set objectives. The following is a summary of the findings in relation to the objectives of this study. The objectives of the study were multifaceted, aiming to delve into the intricate relationship between marketing strategies and the sales performance of tour operators, particularly within the realm of township small tourism enterprises. Through a meticulous examination of various marketing strategies, the study sought to uncover their effectiveness and provide actionable recommendations for enhancing tour operators' performance in this sector.

#### **Objective 1: Relationship Between Marketing Strategies and Tour Operators' Sales Performance**

One of the primary focuses of the study was to establish the correlation between marketing strategies and tour operators' sales performance. This encompassed an in-depth analysis of diverse marketing tactics, including product development, pricing strategies, promotion strategies, and place strategies. The findings shed light on the nuanced impact of each strategy on different aspects of sales performance.

For instance, the study revealed that product development strategies, such as efficient customer service and the development and testing of products, significantly influenced net profit performance and growth in the number of employees. Conversely, certain pricing strategies, like market orientation, positively impacted net profit and sales performance, whereas charging higher prices had adverse effects on sales volume and market share.

Moreover, promotion strategies played a crucial role in driving sales performance. Integrating activities for customer satisfaction and involving experts in promotional activities emerged as key factors contributing to net profit growth. Similarly, focusing on customer satisfaction and introducing new product designs were associated with growth in the number of employees and sales volume.

Lastly, the study underscored the significance of place strategies in shaping market share performance. Factors such as the reliability of product distribution channels and strategic placement of services were found to significantly influence market share growth.

### **Objective 2: Effectiveness of Promotional Strategies for Township Small Tourism Enterprises**

In evaluating the effectiveness of promotional strategies for township small tourism enterprises, the study delved into the specific challenges and opportunities faced by tour operators in this sector. Through a comprehensive analysis of various promotional tactics, the study aimed to identify strategies that could effectively enhance tour operators' performance and visibility within the township tourism landscape.

The findings revealed that integrating activities for customer satisfaction and involving experts in promotional activities were instrumental in driving net profit growth for tour operators. Moreover, a focus on customer satisfaction and the introduction of new product designs were associated with tangible improvements in the number of employees and sales volume. These insights provide valuable guidance for tour operators seeking to optimize their promotional efforts and expand their reach within the township tourism sector.

### **Objective 3: Evaluation of Current Marketing Strategies Employed by Tour Operators**

Building upon the preceding objectives, the study critically evaluated the current marketing strategies employed by tour operators to promote township small tourism enterprises. By examining the effectiveness of these strategies in achieving desired sales outcomes, the study

offered valuable insights into areas of strength and opportunities for improvement within the marketing landscape of the township tourism sector.

The analysis highlighted the importance of aligning marketing strategies with tour operators' sales performance objectives. Strategies that prioritized customer satisfaction, product development, and market orientation for pricing were found to be particularly effective in driving positive sales outcomes. However, there were also areas where tour operators could enhance their marketing efforts, such as optimizing product distribution channels and refining promotional tactics to better resonate with target audiences.

#### **Objective 4: Strategies for Effective Marketing and Promotional Strategies**

Drawing upon the findings of the study, actionable recommendations were proposed to guide tour operators in developing effective marketing and promotional strategies for township small tourism enterprises. These recommendations encompassed a range of areas, including enhancing customer satisfaction initiatives, investing in product development and testing, adopting market-oriented pricing strategies, and leveraging expert insights to inform promotional activities. Additionally, tour operators were advised to focus on optimizing product distribution channels and strategically placing services to maximize market share performance.

This finding is supported by the studies of Wang et al. (2019) who state that it is necessary for entrepreneurs to have both managerial and leadership skills. Furthermore, the authors found that the people related issues involved in human resources include addressing the skills, attitudes and expectations of employees and entrepreneurs.

The findings from the primary study reveal that the current promotional strategies are ineffective. There was a severe lack of digital platforms such as websites and other digital media for marketing, with telephones being the main tool used. This needs to change drastically for marketing to become more effective. It is clear that the tourism sector has shifted towards digital platforms as preferred marketing promotional strategies as it is cost-effective, user friendly, and has a higher target reach.

## 6.4 Recommendations

Based on the summary of empirical findings presented in the study, several recommendations can be formulated to enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by tour operators in promoting township small tourism enterprises.

- ✓ **Diversify Product Development Strategies:** Given the significant impact of product development strategies on sales performance, tour operators should focus on enhancing customer service efficiency and investing in the development and testing of products. This may involve conducting market research to identify customer needs and preferences, thereby ensuring that products are tailored to meet the demands of target markets. Additionally, tour operators should explore opportunities to offer a broad line of products with broad market appeal, catering to diverse customer segments.
- ✓ **Optimize Pricing Strategies:** Tour operators should carefully consider their pricing strategies to maximize profitability while maintaining competitiveness in the market. While market orientation for pricing has shown positive effects on net profit and sales performance, charging higher prices may negatively impact sales volume and market share. Therefore, tour operators should strike a balance between pricing strategies that reflect the value of their offerings and appeal to target customers' willingness to pay.
- ✓ **Enhance Promotion Strategies:** Integrating activities for customer satisfaction and involving experts in promotional activities have been identified as key drivers of net profit growth. Tour operators should prioritize initiatives that focus on enhancing customer satisfaction throughout the tourism experience, from pre-booking inquiries to post-trip feedback. Additionally, leveraging expert insights and innovative promotional tactics can help tour operators differentiate themselves in the competitive market landscape and attract a wider customer base.
- ✓ **Refine Place Strategies:** The strategic placement of services and the reliability of product distribution channels have been found to significantly influence market share growth. Tour operators should assess their current distribution channels and evaluate opportunities to optimize service placement to reach target markets effectively. This may involve forging partnerships with local businesses and leveraging digital platforms to expand their reach and accessibility to potential customers.
- ✓ **Continuous Evaluation and Adaptation:** It is essential for tour operators to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of their marketing strategies and adapt them in response to changing market dynamics and consumer preferences. Regular monitoring of key

performance indicators, such as net profit, sales volume, and market share, can provide valuable insights into the efficacy of marketing initiatives. Tour operators should remain agile and responsive to emerging trends and opportunities, ensuring that their marketing strategies remain relevant and impactful in the dynamic tourism industry landscape.

There should be more support for tour operators by governmental/departmental tourism boards. Government should look at these tour operators as small but strategic assets who contribute to the tourism industry which is part of South Africa as a whole. Resources should be provided such as funding, technology and infrastructure, and even office/business space to ensure that tour operators can grow their business. Training and development must also be provided to tour operators as a means of continuous learning and adaptation by the industry. This can be done via SETAs or FETs (with funding from the government). The local tour operators should also look at forming a unified local body which can then speak in one voice. Local tour operators should be given incentives/opportunities to allow them to grow their business with proper resources, training and funding.

By implementing these recommendations, tour operators can enhance their competitiveness, drive sustainable growth, and contribute to the overall development of township small tourism enterprises in KZN. These strategies aim to align marketing efforts with sales performance objectives, optimize resource allocation, and enhance customer satisfaction, ultimately leading to improved business outcomes and long-term success in the tourism sector.

## **6.5 Recommendations for future research**

- This research study examines effectiveness and efficacy of marketing strategies tour operators use for promotion of township tourism small enterprises in KZN province. The study findings show that a similar study could be conducted among tour operators in the metro municipalities of South Africa.
- Conduct a longitudinal study to investigate the long-term effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by tour operators in promoting township small tourism enterprises. By tracking key performance indicators over an extended period, such as net profit, sales volume, and market share, researchers can gain insights into the sustained impact of different marketing tactics on business outcomes. This longitudinal approach would provide valuable data on the evolution of marketing strategies over time and their implications for the long-term success and sustainability of tour operators in the tourism industry.

- Undertake qualitative research to explore customer perceptions and preferences regarding marketing strategies implemented by tour operators in township tourism small enterprises. By conducting in-depth interviews or focus groups with tourists, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing tourist decision-making processes, including the effectiveness of marketing messages, the perceived value of tourism products, and the impact of cultural immersion experiences. This qualitative exploration would provide valuable insights into the nuances of tourist behaviour and preferences, informing the development of more targeted and resonant marketing strategies for tour operators.
- Conduct a comparative analysis across different geographic regions to examine variations in marketing strategies and their effectiveness in promoting township small tourism enterprises. By comparing marketing practices and outcomes in diverse contexts, such as urban versus rural settings or developed versus developing regions, researchers can identify contextual factors that influence the success of marketing initiatives. This comparative approach would help elucidate the role of local context, cultural dynamics, and market conditions in shaping marketing strategy effectiveness, providing valuable insights for tour operators operating in diverse geographical contexts.

## **6.6 Concluding Remarks and Conclusion**

Firstly, the literature review emphasized the indispensable role of tour operators as intermediaries that bundle various travel facilities into comprehensive tour packages. This bundling of services not only offers convenience to tourists but also plays a crucial role in driving the destination's economy. South African Tourism acknowledges the significant contribution of tour operators in providing travel and tourism services, underscoring their importance in the tourism value chain. However, the dominance of international tour operators in the ownership of tourism products poses a challenge for local operators, necessitating the enhancement of their marketing strategies to compete effectively in the market.

While tour operators excel in facilitating foreign travel by managing tasks such as online ticket purchases, accommodation arrangements, and transfers, there is a growing concern that this approach may result in a superficial tourist experience, devoid of authentic cultural immersion. This raises questions about the sustainability and authenticity of tourism experiences offered by tour operators, urging a shift towards more immersive and culturally enriching experiences. Despite this challenge, the tourism sector in KZN continues to thrive, offering employment opportunities across various skill levels and contributing significantly to the economic development of rural areas.

Tour operators play a crucial role in driving tourism growth and economic development in KZN, but there is a need for continuous innovation and adaptation in marketing strategies to meet the evolving needs and preferences of tourists. Enhancing cultural immersion, promoting sustainable tourism practices, and fostering partnerships with local communities and small tourism enterprises are key strategies for ensuring the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of tour operators in the region.

Tourism businesses need to constantly evaluate and re-evaluate their promotional strategies to ensure that once a thorough diagnostic has been conducted, their new digital strategies are aligned to the overall corporate mission and vision. There are amazing benefits of tactical trade promotions, being members of consortiums, and having a strong brand as a holding company. Tour operators should revisit their stance and embrace synergies and collaborations with larger brands that provide economies of scale. The significance of the study shows that businesses that did not use digital marketing tools, such as social media marketing, faced many challenges compared to businesses that adopted digital marketing and social media marketing tools. Therefore, it is important for upcoming businesses within the tourism sector to ensure that they adopt and implement digital marketing in their operations.

The findings revealed that tour operators do not use marketing strategies like social media. These findings do not concur with the views of Seeler et al. (2019) who illustrate that social media is useful for managing customer relations with its unique ability to attract customers through focused, in-depth, and member generated content, retaining the customers through building relationships with other members, and engaging customers through social attractions.

The study showed the evidence of the growth in employee numbers as being influenced by efficient customer service and developed and tested products. Participants that were prioritising efficient customer service were 4.5-times more likely to have growth in employee numbers. The efficiency in customer service and products suitable to the target market were the factors that showed a positive impact on sales whereas those that had the idea of developed and tested products struggled with sales volumes. Moreover, the study revealed that charging higher prices than the standard quality had detrimental effects on the net profit as this resulted in 57% less chance of good performance.

The implementation of planned and defined goals, whether it is a tourist destination or tourism bidder offer, is achieved by combining the elements of the marketing mix. Specified elements of the marketing mix have a very complex content which is relevant to both business and tourism policy. The leading element in this mixture is certainly the tourism product, which,

considering that it is related to a service, is very specific and demanding. It is essential to define and emphasise those elements of the product, which should lead to the desired reaction of consumers in the tourism market.

Such a defined product must be determined with the appropriate price. In the process of defining it the relationship between supply and demand must be taken into account, the lower and upper bound rates, as well as the quality of tourist product and its price. The task of the promotional mix is to ensure recognition of a concrete tourism product and its positioning in the tourism market. Based on the characteristics of the tourism product, the need for creativity and innovation in addressing tour operator is of particular importance. How the tourist product reaches its consumers, with what defined price and advertising work carried out depends on the selected mode and distribution channels, which should be a symbiosis and final step in offering tourism products with defined elements of the marketing mix.

The key to success is finding the optimal combination of these elements, with marketing decisions that optimally allocate production resources in order to realise a consistent and complementary combination of marketing mix elements. This objective can be achieved on the basis of functional and overall alignment between tourist organisations' orientation towards achieving the maximum business results on one hand, and meeting the needs of consumers on the other.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Ethical clearance letter



### Institutional Research Ethics Committee

Research and Postgraduate Support  
Directorate 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Berwyn Court Gate 1,  
Steve Biko Campus Durban University of  
Technology

P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001

Tel: 031 373 2375

Email: [lavishad@dut.ac.za](mailto:lavishad@dut.ac.za)

[http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional\\_research\\_ethics](http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics)

[www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)

31 January 2022

Mr S H Myeni  
P.O. Box 5410  
Hluhluwe  
3960

Dear Mr Myeni

**The effectiveness of marketing strategies of tour operators in the promotion of small tourism enterprises in KwaZulu- Natal.**  
**Ethical Clearance number IREC 264/21**

The Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your notification regarding the piloting of your data collection tool.

Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letters.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the IREC according to the IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the IREC as outlined in the IREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely

Professor J K Adam  
Chairperson: IREC

## Appendix 2: Letter of information



### LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the Research Study:** Effectiveness of marketing strategies of tour operators in the promotion of small tourism enterprises in KwaZulu- Natal.

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:** Sandile Henry Myeni; DP Management Sciences (Hospitality and Tourism)

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** Dr Nsizwazikhona Simon Chili: PhD Qualification

**Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:** This study is examining the effectiveness of marketing strategies of tour operators in the promotion of small tourism enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal.

The purpose of the study is:

- To establish a relationship between marketing strategies and tour operators' sales performance.
- To examine the effectiveness of promotional strategies tour operators use for marketing and promotion of township small tourism enterprises.
- To assess achievement of current marketing strategies tour operators, use for marketing and promotion of township small and tourism enterprises.

**Greeting:** Good Day, How are you

**Introduce yourself to the participant** My name is Sandile Myeni I am a PhD student at DUT registered with the Faculty of Management Science. I have to complete a dissertation as part of my studies to qualify for PhD (doctorate).

**Invitation to the potential participant** I would like to invite you to participate in the research I am conducting titled: The effectiveness of marketing strategies of tour operators in the promotion of small tourism enterprises in KwaZulu- Natal.

**Outline of the Procedures:** The aim of the study is to examine the effectiveness of marketing strategies tour operators use for promotion of township and small tourism enterprises in Kwa-Zulu Natal province. The research will utilize a survey as a research strategy and the questionnaire will take you only 30mins to complete. You can complete the questionnaire in your free time in an environment of your choice. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without reason.

**Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:** There are no foreseeable risks to you as a participant.

**Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may be withdraw from the Study:** You can withdraw from the study at any time without adverse consequences if you feel uncomfortable to continue.

**Benefits:** You will benefit from the study through the research findings which after the study the researcher can share with the you upon request. The researcher shall benefit from the study through publications and conference presentations on the same study.

**Remuneration:** There are no financial benefits to you by participating in the study

**Costs of the Study:** There are no costs to be paid by you in the study.

**Confidentiality:** All the responses will be kept confidential and you are not allowed to put your personal details as part of the answers.

**Results:** The results will be shared with you upon request. The final theses will be available at the DUT website however protected and will be available upon request and will be accessed by those authorized. If any significant new findings developed during the course of the research the researcher will notify the supervisor immediately of all the correspondences and the letter of information will be updated and sent to you as a participant.

**Research-related Injury:** There are no incidences in the study that cause injury.

**Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings** The data will be stored on a flash disk and archived for a minimum of 5 years. The stored files will be encrypted and password protected and only accessed by those authorized individuals. After 5 years the flash disk will be erased completely and formatted.

**Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:** Please contact the researcher 073 6392195, my supervisor 072 995 2586, or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate Support Dr. L Linganiso on 031 373 2577 or [researchdirector@dut.ac.za](mailto:researchdirector@dut.ac.za).

### Appendix 3: Consent form



#### CONSENT

##### Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: \_\_\_\_\_,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Full Name of Participant    Date                      Time                      Signature / Right Thumbprint**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Full Name of Researcher                                      Date                                      Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Full Name of Witness (If applicable)                      Date                                      Signature**

---

**Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date**

**Signature**

***Please note the following:***

Research details must be provided in a clear, simple, and culturally appropriate manner and prospective participants should be helped to arrive at an informed decision by use of appropriate language (grade 10 level - use Flesch Reading Ease Scores on Microsoft Word), selecting of a non-threatening environment for interaction and the availability of peer counselling (Department of Health, 2004)

If the potential participant is unable to read/illiterate, then a right thumb print is required and an impartial witness, who is literate and knows the participant e.g., parent, sibling, friend, pastor, etc. should verify in writing, duly signed that informed verbal consent was obtained (Department of Health, 2004).

If anyone makes a mistake completing this document e.g., wrong date or spelling mistake a new document must be completed. The incomplete original document must be kept in the participant file and not thrown away and copies thereof must be issued to the participant.

**References:**

Department of Health: 2004. *Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Structures and Processes* <http://www.doh.gov.za/docs/factsheets/guidelines/ethnics/>

Department of Health. 2006. *South African Good Clinical Practice Guidelines*. 2nd Ed. Available at: [http://www.nhrec.org.za/?page\\_id=14](http://www.nhrec.org.za/?page_id=14)

## Appendix 4: Questionnaire

I am a student at Durban University of Technology gathering data for a Ph.D. dissertation; I am conducting research on “*Effectiveness of marketing strategies of tour operators in the promotion of small tourism enterprises in KwaZulu - Natal*”. This research is academic in nature and any information provided will be treated with utmost confidence and will be used for academic purposes only.

Your views and experiences will help us understand the current situation on the ground. Your views are taken with anonymity. The survey will take no more than 45 minutes to complete.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** *Please attempt to answer all questions as honestly as possible by putting an X*

### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

A01	Business/Office location	Urban [1]	Rural [2]	Peri-urban [3]
-----	--------------------------	-----------	-----------	----------------

A02	Gender ( <i>Do not read</i> )	Male [1]	Female [2]	Other [3]
-----	-------------------------------	----------	------------	-----------

A03	Business type	Sole proprietorship [1]	Partnership [2]	Proprietary limited company (Pty) Ltd [3]	Other [4]
-----	---------------	-------------------------	-----------------	---	-----------

A04	Highest qualification	No schooling [0]	Primary [1]	Secondary [2]	Tertiary [3]
-----	-----------------------	------------------	-------------	---------------	--------------

A05	Race	African [1]	White [2]	Indian [3]	Coloured [4]	Chinese [5]	Other [6]
-----	------	-------------	-----------	------------	--------------	-------------	-----------

A06	How long have you been operating?	<1 yr [1]	2-5 yrs [2]	6-10 yrs [3]	11-15 yrs [4]	16+ yrs [5]
-----	-----------------------------------	-----------	-------------	--------------	---------------	-------------

A07	Your position in the business	Owner [1]	Manager [2]	Other [3]
-----	-------------------------------	-----------	-------------	-----------

A08	Age	<20 yrs[1]	20-29 yrs[2]	30-39 yrs[3]	40-49 yrs[4]	50-59 yrs[5]	60-69 yrs[6]	70-79 yrs[7]	80+ yrs [8]
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### SECTION B: PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

*This section aims at establishing the product development strategies adopted by tour operators when promoting township tourism products and small tourism enterprises.*

	Tour operators offer...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
B01	Broad product line	1	2	3	4	5
B02	Broad market appeal	1	2	3	4	5
B03	Efficient customer service	1	2	3	4	5

	<b>Tour operators offer...</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
B04	Developed and tested products	1	2	3	4	5
B05	Products adaptable to target market	1	2	3	4	5
B06	Products suitable to target market	1	2	3	4	5

### SECTION C: PRICING STRATEGIES

	<b>Tour operators...</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
C01	Use pricing as basis for competition	1	2	3	4	5
C02	Have quality transportation	1	2	3	4	5
C03	Charge higher prices than standard quality	1	2	3	4	5
C04	Use market orientation for product pricing	1	2	3	4	5

### SECTION D: PROMOTION STRATEGIES

	<b>Tour operators...</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
D01	Have promotion strategies	1	2	3	4	5
D02	Advertise products through various media	1	2	3	4	5
D03	Focus on customer needs	1	2	3	4	5
D04	Integrate organizational activities for customer satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5
D05	Introduce new product design and style	1	2	3	4	5

	<b>Tour operators 'promotional strategies elicit ...</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
D06	Attention	1	2	3	4	5
D07	Interest	1	2	3	4	5
D08	Desire	1	2	3	4	5
D09	Action	1	2	3	4	5

	<b>Tour operators have marketing expert to handle all...</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
D010	Promotional activities	1	2	3	4	5
D011	Review marketing strategies	1	2	3	4	5
D012	Analyze marketing strategies	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate below the promotional strategies the tour operator use for marketing and promotion of township and small tourism enterprises.

<b>D013</b>	<b>Promotional Strategies (Tick all applicable)</b>	
	Local, Regional, or National Promotional	<b>1</b>
	Seasonality Strategies	<b>2</b>
	Product Strategies	<b>3</b>
	Target Market Strategies	<b>4</b>

	Competitive Strategies	5
	Branding Strategies	6
	Pricing Strategies	7
	Packaging Strategies	8
	Promotion or Event Strategies	9
	Public Relations Strategies	10
	Social Media Marketing Strategies	11
	Advertising Strategies	12
	Sales Strategies	13
	Merchandising Strategies	14
	Web and E-commerce Strategies	15
	Other	16

## SECTION E: PLACE STRATEGIES

	Tour operators are in area that is...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
E01	Accessible to customers	1	2	3	4	5
E02	Reliable channel of distribution for their products	1	2	3	4	5
E03	Affecting performance	1	2	3	4	5

	To gain market share, place strategy for tour operators outlines...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
E04	<u>How</u> they place their services	1	2	3	4	5
E05	<u>Where</u> they place their services	1	2	3	4	5

## SECTION F: PERFORMANCE

*Please indicate the extent to which your business performance has grown in the following areas due to marketing strategies*

	Business performance has grown in...	Not at all	Minimal extent	Moderate extent	Large Extent	Very large extent
F01	Net Profit	1	2	3	4	5
F02	Number of employees	1	2	3	4	5
F03	Sales volumes	1	2	3	4	5
F04	Market share	1	2	3	4	5

**Thank you for Your Cooperation!**

## Appendix 5: Gatekeepers letter

### INK Tourism CTO

Address: OhlangeInstitute, off M25  
Tel: 031 510 7020  
Emails: [info@inktourism.co.za](mailto:info@inktourism.co.za)



---

## Letter of Consent

15 May 2020

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT TO STUDENT S. MYENI, STUDENT NUMBER 20601294 -  
GRANTING PERMISSION TO USE TOUR OPERATORS IN KWAZULU -NATAL.

### To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Bongani Mellangton Ntombela together with Mr. Thokozani Masango (Head of Tour operating & guiding portfolio in KZN) in partnership with Tourism KwaZulu Natal (TKZN) give permission to Sandile Myeni, to conduct Ph.D. research on titled "***The effectiveness of marketing strategies of tour operators in the promotion of small tourism enterprises in KwaZulu- Natal***".

This is in condition that the findings of his research will be shared with INK Tourism CTO, and TKZN, data collection will be conducted ethically.

For clarity on the contents of the letter, do not hesitate to contact our offices.

We wish you all the best in your studies.

Yours Sincerely

Bongani Mel. Ntombela  
Chairperson: INK Tourism

## Appendix 6: Turnitin report

Sandile Myeni

### ORIGINALITY REPORT

**7**%

SIMILARITY INDEX

**6**%

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Name of Candidate: Sandile Myeni (signature) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 19/01/2023

Supervisor: Dr Nsizwazikhona Chili (signature) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 7: Editor's Certificate

### **DR RICHARD STEELE**

BA HDE MTech(Hom)

#### **HOMEOPATH**

Registration No. A07309 HM

Practice No. 0807524

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**Associate member: Professional Editors'**

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Morgan Bay

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### **EDITING CERTIFICATE**

Re: **SANDILE MYENI**

DUT doctoral thesis: **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING STRATEGIES OF TOUR OPERATORS IN THE PROMOTION OF SMALL TOURISM ENTERPRISES IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

I confirm that I have edited this thesis and the references for clarity and language. I returned the document to the author with track changes so correct implementation of the changes and clarifications requested in the text and references is the responsibility of the author. I am a freelance editor specialising in proofreading and editing academic documents. My original tertiary degree which I obtained at the University of Cape Town was a B.A. with English as a major and I went on to complete an H.D.E. (P.G.) Sec. with English as my teaching subject. I was a part-time lecturer in the Department of Homoeopathy at the Durban University of Technology for 13 years and supervised many master's degree dissertations during that period.

Dr Richard Steele

**26 November 2022**

*per email*