

WHO IS THE SCUBA DIVER THAT VISITS SODWANA BAY AND WHY?

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ABSTRACT

In South Africa, scuba diving as a sport is growing significantly. One of the most sought after scuba diving destinations is Sodwana Bay, situated on the northern coast of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa). The market is rapidly expanding, thus creating competition among the different dive operations. Understanding the travel motives of scuba divers will benefit dive operations and destinations in developing the most appropriate product, improving the services offered and creating more effective promotional activities that will ultimately lead to a competitive advantage. The purpose of this research was to understand the profile and travel motives of scuba divers to Sodwana Bay. Four hundred and two questionnaires were handed out over a 10-day period at Sodwana Bay by six fieldworkers. Availability sampling (non-probability sampling) was implemented in the distribution of the self-administered questionnaire. The results indicated that the profile of scuba divers to Sodwana Bay tend to be younger adults (mean age=34 years) with more male than female participants. The factor analysis identified four motives for diving at Sodwana Bay: personal challenge; devotion; relaxation; and escape and exploration and discovery. The research contributes to current literature regarding travel motives, as well as the scuba diving market in the South African context.

Key words: Marine tourism; Travel motives; Sodwana Bay; Scuba diving; Factor analyses.

INTRODUCTION

Marine tourism is one of the tourism industry's fastest expanding markets across the world (Moskwa, 2012). According to Orams (1995:2), marine tourism can be defined as "those recreational activities that involve travelling away from one's place of residence and have as their host or focus the marine environment (where the marine environment is defined as those waters which are saline and tide-affected)". Over the years, marine tourism has evolved into a multi-dimensional market with a wide variety of activities to offer, such as surfing, snorkelling, kayaking, deep sea fishing and boating (Garrod & Wilson, 2003).

Marine tourism is also popular in South Africa, which offers a vast number of marine activities and products (Tinley, 1985). One marine activity that has expanded immensely over the last decade is scuba diving. Scuba (Self-contained underwater breathing apparatus) is one of the most popular marine activities enjoyed along the coastline of South Africa. In 2005, 48 398 new divers in South Africa obtained their qualifications as scuba divers (Skaare,

2013). Globally, there are more than 28 million active divers who participate in this activity (Garrod & Gössling, 2008).

South Africa's coastline is rich in coral reefs and has some of the most diverse and best diving sites around (Scuba diving in South Africa, 2013). What makes South Africa even more appealing is the fact that scuba diving can be practised year-round because of generally good weather and ocean conditions (Scuba diving in South Africa, 2013), as well as the variety of marine life ranging from the whale shark to nudibranchs.

Sodwana Bay is one of South Africa's most popular diving sites situated on the northern coast of KwaZulu-Natal in the Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park and Isimangaliso World Heritage Site. The town (Figure 1) is small and reliant on the income of tourists and scuba divers (SodwanaBay.com, 2013). The reef complex of approximately 50km in length is home to the southern most tropical coral reefs in the world, with 95 species of hard and soft coral and a fish population constituting more than 1 200 species, including the whale shark and manta ray (SodwanaBay.com, 2013). The map below (Figure 1) indicates the location of Sodwana Bay.



FIGURE 1: MAP OF SODWANA BAY, SOUTH AFRICA (Ray, 2013)

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Scuba divers flock to Sodwana Bay for various reasons. Saayman (2006) stated that as with all other tourism products and activities, scuba divers have certain motives or reasons for taking part in the activity and travel significant distances to practise scuba diving at a specific destination, such as Sodwana Bay. Even though travel motives have been well researched, these motives differ for various products and markets (Van der Merwe *et al.*, 2007). The identification of travel motives for scuba divers can be beneficial for scuba diving operations and marine tourism product developers. Establishing the travel motives of divers at Sodwana Bay specifically will help owners of dive operations to understand the behaviour of tourists visiting Sodwana Bay better and adapt the product according to their specific needs.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand who the scuba diver is that dives at Sodwana Bay and why.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing of a service (scuba diving in this case) cannot be effective without understanding the behaviour of consumers. Fodness (1994) states that behaviour can be viewed as a process of internal psychological factors, such as needs, desires and objectives, which can cause some tension. The natural outcome resulting from pent up tension is a need to release it through certain types of behavioural escapes. Lubbe (1998) states it differently by suggesting that an individual's motivation for travelling begins when that individual becomes aware of certain needs which specific destinations or activities are perceived to be able to fulfil. Iso-Ahola (1999), on the contrary, defines motives as understanding the underlying forces which arouse and direct behaviours. Swanson and Horridge (2006) take it further and define travel motives as a set of needs which can cause a tourist to take part in certain activities and make certain decisions. According to Kruger *et al.* (2011), motivations can induce the tourist to make certain decisions and display certain behavioural characteristics and it can, therefore, be deduced that motivations can give direction to behaviour, as well as strengthen and intensify behaviours. Travel motives, therefore, play an important role in understanding the target market.

Two types of travel motives, which form the central defining elements of any leisure activity, can be identified in the literature (Meisel & Cotrell, 2003; Kruger *et al.*, 2011). Firstly, perceived freedom, or self-determination, is defined as the feeling gained from knowing that what is being done is done so by choice and because there is a desire for it (Neulinger, 1974). Secondly, intrinsic motives are based on innate psychological needs, for example to know, to accomplish and to be physically active (Kruger *et al.*, 2011). Research conducted by Oh *et al.* (1995) found that in order for any country or establishment to increase visitor numbers, an understanding of why people travel or choose a specific destination becomes vital. Understanding the travel motives of tourists encompasses the following advantages:

- A deeper understanding of travel motives leads to more effective marketing strategies and the creation of a sustainable management plan for destinations (Pan & Ryan, 2007).
- Ultimately, understanding the motives of tourists to visit a place (in this case Sodwana Bay, South Africa) assists in creating awareness through marketing campaigns which consequently lead to attracting more visitors by providing products that meet the needs of the customer (Fodness, 1994).
- It helps to identify the desires and needs of this niche market in the tourism industry (Beh & Bruyere, 2007). According to Lubbe (1998), tourists, specifically scuba divers, will travel to a destination and take part in activities which they feel will serve their needs. Burns and Holden (1995) justify this argument by suggesting that in order to correctly identify the needs of tourists, it is imperative to look at the destinations tourists choose to visit, as well as the activities in which they engage.
- Knowledge regarding the travel motives of scuba divers can improve marketing efforts and hence, certain critical factors in the industry can be taken into account when developing marketing strategies (Saayman, 2006).

- A competitive advantage would be gained with regard to the offerings of other scuba diving destinations, which is vital to this growing competitive market (Kruger & Saayman, 2009).
- Sufficient knowledge of the travel motives of scuba divers to Sodwana Bay will aid scuba diving establishments in Sodwana Bay in serving a specific market, rather than the total market (Saayman & Slabbert, 2004).
- Market efforts, which are focused on specific segments of an industry, establish the product or service more effectively; consequently product development takes place (Wu *et al.*, 2000).

Already in 1994, Fodness (1994) stated that a deeper insight into the travel motives of tourists can benefit tourism marketing in the areas of product development, service quality, image development and promotional activities. The motives of tourists travelling to certain destinations can also be translated into reasons for travelling.

Various reasons have been developed in order to understand travel motives. Maslow developed a theory based on five stages of basic human needs. The theory holds that human needs comprise different sets of goals, each of which must be satisfied in turn. These sets of needs include psychological needs, safety and security needs, social needs, self-esteem and self-actualisation (Tikkanen, 2007). Furthermore, Crompton (1977) established seven general reasons why people will travel: to escape from their everyday life; discovery and self-evaluation; relaxation and recreation; prestige; regression; strengthening of family ties; and the facilitation of social interaction. According to Crompton (1977), these can be regarded as the main reasons why people travel, which also result in the motivations being shaped for embarking on a trip.

Saayman (2006) maintains that while people cannot be motivated without a reason, they cannot have a reason without being motivated. In the early years, Gray (1980) developed the concepts of “Sunlust” and “Wanderlust” which form the basic reasons why people travel. Gray (1980) defines “Sunlust” as being dependent on the existence of better and different attractions than those to which the tourist is accustomed because it delivers another specific experience or service to that which is locally available to the tourist (Saayman, 2006). “Wanderlust”, on the other hand, is defined as the inner motivation human beings possess for leaving all that is known and familiar to them in order to explore new cultures and experiences that are out of the ordinary (Gray, 1980). While there is a fine and complex line drawn between these concepts, both play an important role in people’s reasons for travelling.

Analyses of literature regarding travel motives yielded numerous studies that have been conducted on the travel motives of different market segments in the tourism industry (Kozak, 2002; Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Meisel & Cottrell, 2003; Bansal & Eislet, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Molera & Albaladejo, 2007; Kruger & Saayman, 2009; Saayman *et al.*, 2009; Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011). Segments such as the leisure tourism market, the adventure tourism market, and the beach tourism market, as well as the scuba diving market in particular, have been researched across the world and travel motives for each of these markets have been established (Table 1).

TABLE 1: TRAVEL MOTIVES ACROSS SECTORS OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Authors of studies	Leisure tourism market	
Crompton (1977) Loker & Perdue (1992) Oh <i>et al.</i> (1995) Bansal & Eislet (2004) Jang & Wu (2006)	Escape everyday life Self-discovery Recreation & travelling Status Regression Friends & family	Adrenaline-seeking Excitement Knowledge-seeking Relaxation Self-esteem Social interaction
	Beach tourism market	
Yoon & Uysal (2005) Molera & Albaladejo (2007) Saayman <i>et al.</i> (2009)	Relaxation Excitement Adventure Education	Escape Fun Family togetherness
	Adventure tourism market	
Sung <i>et al.</i> (2000) Meyer <i>et al.</i> (2002) Meisel & Cottrill (2003)	Stature Learning Escaping Personal challenge Family togetherness	Risk involvement Exploration & discovery Perceived freedom Social interaction
	Scuba diving market	
Ditton <i>et al.</i> (2002) Meyer <i>et al.</i> (2002) Todd <i>et al.</i> (2002)	Experience adventure Excitement Relaxation Learning	Social interaction Personal challenge Escape

It can be deduced from Table 1 that the motives which are evident in all these markets are to escape and relax. It is thus important for tourists to escape from everyday life and enjoy the relaxation offered by such a trip. It is also clear that the travel motives, as established by Crompton (1977), are relevant to most tourism markets: social interaction; escaping; rest and relaxation; family togetherness; prestige and stature; self-discovery; and regression.

Very few research studies pertaining to the travel motives of scuba divers were found. Those that were found are mentioned below. Travel motives for scuba divers visiting north central Florida were determined by Meyer *et al.* (2002) as the desire to seek a personal challenge, learning and escape. On the other hand, Meisel and Cottrell (2003) found perceived freedom to be very important for scuba divers visiting the Florida Keys. Todd *et al.* (2002) also conducted research on scuba divers across New York's Great Lakes Region. They identified six motives that are important to divers namely, adventure, learning, escape, social interaction, stature and personal challenge. Tschapka and Kern (2012) conducted a study regarding the motivations of scuba divers in Australia. Tschapka and Kern (2012:9) found seven motives to be of importance to scuba divers, namely personal challenge, adventure,

relaxation, novelty, stature, learn and hunt. From these motives it was found that scuba divers participate in the activity primarily for personal challenge. It can thus be derived from the studies above that the primary motives for scuba divers are to seek personal challenge and escape.

However, drawing from the analyses of the travel motives of the different tourism markets, it is clear that tourists have different motives when visiting different places or taking part in different activities (Saayman *et al.*, 2009). It is thus important to conduct continuous research on travel motives and keep abreast of the new trends and behaviour of tourists, such as scuba divers. Once the travel motives of tourists have been established, it is less complex to serve the needs of that specific market.

MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The market for scuba diving across South Africa is expanding while competition is also growing. As Sodwana Bay is not the only dive site in South Africa, it is in competition with other well-known sites, such as Cape Town, Gansbaai, Mossel Bay and Umkomaas/Aliwal Shoal in Durban, with the largest concentration of operators in KwaZulu-Natal (Dive Advisor, 2013). Therefore, there are two reasons for conducting travel motive research at Sodwana Bay. Firstly, owing to strong competition in this market, dive operations need to understand their clients who will in return assist in providing better scuba diving products in order to gain an advantage over their competitors. The determination of a profile and travel motives of divers will assist in this regard. Secondly, no research has been conducted regarding the travel motives of scuba divers in South Africa; one cannot assume that it would be similar to the other foreign dive destinations where research has been conducted. This research can, therefore, aid Sodwana Bay in becoming a leading scuba diving destination in South Africa, thereby rising above the competition and attracting more divers from across South Africa and the world.

METHODOLOGY

Ethical clearance

An application was submitted to the ethical clearance committee of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the North-West University, Potchefstroom campus, who approved the study. The North-West University is subject to the National Health Research Ethic Council (NHREC).

Research plan

To identify the travel motives of scuba divers, a destination-based visitor survey was undertaken at Sodwana Bay in KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa) from 29 March to 8^h April 2012.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire used was developed by TREES (Tourism Research in Economic Environs and Society) at the North-West University and was previously used to determine the travel

motives and profile of visitors to National Parks in South Africa (Kruger & Saayman, 2009; Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011), as well as marine destinations in South Africa (Tiedt, 2011; Van der Merwe *et al.*, 2011). Section A captured geographic and socio-demographic details, such as gender, age, home language, country of origin and province, as well as marital status, level of education and income category. Closed-ended questions were used in this section. Section B determined the motivations or reasons for visiting Sodwana Bay. Examples of the statements included: 'To get away from my routine'; 'To explore new destinations'; 'To acquire new skills'; and 'So that I can learn more about marine life'. Respondents were required to rate the reasons on a 6-point Likert scale where: 1= Not at all important; 5= Extremely important; and 6= Not applicable. Literature used for developing this section of the questionnaire included the works carried out by Ditton *et al.* (2002), Meyer *et al.* (2002), Saayman *et al.* (2009) and Van der Merwe *et al.* (2011).

Sampling method and procedure

Sodwana Bay received on average 1 635 divers per month in 2011, which translates to 20 000 divers per year. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) state that for general research activities with a population (N) of 100 000, the recommended sample size (S) is 384 respondents. By using availability sampling, divers were asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire. On average, 40 questionnaires (10 days) were distributed each day by the 5 trained field workers who surveyed the divers after they completed their dive. This method of distribution resulted in 402 completed questionnaires.

Statistical analysis

The data of this research were captured using Microsoft® Excel® and was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 2 (SPSS, 2013). In order to determine the travel motives of the scuba divers at Sodwana Bay, a factor analysis was performed. The factor analysis was conducted by means of Principal Axis Factoring extraction with the Oblimin rotation method with Kaiser Normalisation. The Cronbach's Alpha, as well as the mean value for each factor was determined. The pattern matrix of the principal axis factor analysis revealed 4 travel motives for diving at Sodwana Bay. These factors were labelled according to similar characteristics found within the specific category. The most important factor was determined by the higher mean value.

RESULTS

The results obtained from this study are twofold, namely the profile of the scuba divers and the travel motives for visiting Sodwana Bay.

Scuba divers to Sodwana Bay were mostly male (64%), with an average age of 34 years, thus indicating that scuba diving at Sodwana Bay is mainly preferred by males. The largest percentage of divers were English-speaking (50%) followed by Afrikaans-speaking (45%) divers who originated from Gauteng Province (56%) and KwaZulu-Natal (17%). The highest percentage of scuba divers were unmarried (46%) and held a diploma or degree (32%) and a matric certificate (31%), whilst 37% earned more than R500 000 annually. These scuba divers to Sodwana Bay were mostly South Africans (96%) followed by divers from Germany (1%). Respondents also enjoyed snorkelling (60%) and walking on the beach (51%). They

travelled in groups of 3 (56%) and spent an average of 4 nights in Sodwana Bay (54%). The majority (80%) of scuba divers indicated that they visited shops in the vicinity and 72% said they had visited Sodwana Bay previously (this is an indication of loyalty towards Sodwana Bay), between 1 and 10 times. These divers had already completed on average 298 dives, therefore, one can assume that they are experienced divers.

TABLE 2: PROFILE OF SCUBA DIVERS AT SODWANA BAY

Variable	Scuba divers
Gender	Male= 62%; Female= 38%
Age	Mean age= 34 years
Home language	English followed by Afrikaans
Province of residence	Gauteng followed by KwaZulu-Natal & North-West Prov.
Marital status	Unmarried= 46%; Married= 39%
Level of education	Diploma/degree= 32%; Matric= 31%
Income	R500 000= 37%; R50 000 or less= 17%
Other activities	Snorkelling followed by beach walks
Group payment	Groups of 1 to 3 people
Times visited Sodwana Bay	Between 1-3 times at an average of 3.9 nights
Country of origin	South Africa= 94%; Germany= 1%
Nights spent	Average of 5 nights
Number of dives completed	Average of 298 dives

Travel motives of scuba divers

In order to measure the consistency and validity of the constructs with the underlying factor, Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the performance of each construct. Cronbach's Alpha is given as a single number between 1 and 0.00. Variables derived from the factor analysis are declared as reliable when they provide stable and reliable responses during the administration of the test (Santos, 1999). A Cronbach's Alpha of between 0.6 and 0.8 is regarded as satisfactory with higher values being regarded as excellent (Santos, 1999).

The mean value, on the other hand, is the sum of the set of scores of all the constructs making up a single factor divided by the number of constructs. It constitutes the average score for each of the factors (Salkind, 2009) and gives an indication of the importance of each factor in relation to the others. The total variance explained for the 4 factors was 57%, which is acceptable. Four factors were identified by means of the factor analysis that summarised the main reasons for participating in scuba diving at Sodwana Bay.

Factor 1: Personal challenge

This factor consists of the following constructs, namely to overcome a fear, to be part of an expedition, it is an annual activity, for the feeling of success, to gain new experiences, and to photograph marine life. This factor has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.809, which is highly acceptable, with a mean value of 3.67, which ranks it as the least important of the 4 factors.

Meyer *et al.* (2002) confirm this as a travel motive for scuba divers in north central Florida, but not as their most important travel motive. Tschapka and Kern (2012), however, found personal challenge to be the most important motive to participate in scuba diving in Australia.

TABLE 3: TRAVEL MOTIVES OF SCUBA DIVERS

Travel motives	Factor 1 Personal challenge	Factor 2 Devotion	Factor 3 Relaxation & escape	Factor 4 Exploration & discovery
Overcome fear	0.839			
Be part of expedition	0.770			
Scuba diving Sodwana Bay annual activity	0.612			
Feeling of success after activity	0.458			
Gain new experiences	0.429			
Photograph marine life	0.405			
Fun to scuba dive		0.609		
Crazy about scuba diving		0.570		
Sodwana Bay world class diving spot		0.522		
Always come to dive here		0.391		
Relax			0.719	
Get away from my routine			0.650	
Spend time with friends			0.321	
Learn about marine life				-0.753
Acquire new skills				-0.566
Search for specific species				-0.481
Other members of party share challenge & adventure				-0.480
Explore new destinations				-0.381
Cronbach's Alpha	0.809	0.673	0.679	0.751
Mean value	3.67	4.29	4.19	3.72

Factor 2: Devotion

Devotion was identified as the most important factor, obtaining the highest mean value of 4.29 and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.673. This factor includes aspects such as diving being fun, divers being crazy about scuba diving, Sodwana Bay being a world-class diving spot, and the continuous support of divers to this diving site. According to a study conducted by Meisel and Cotrell (2003), one of the most important factors found for diving in the Florida Keys was 'for fun', which correlates with the findings of this study.

Factor 3: Relaxation and escape

This factor relates to the constructs of relaxation, getting away from a routine lifestyle and spending time with friends. Factor 3 had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.679 and a mean value of 4.19, ranking it as the second most important travel motive. According to Beh and Bruyere (2007), 'escape and relaxation' is a travel motive that is generally found in adventure tourism. In previous literature, researchers also reported that relaxation and escape is an important factor for scuba divers (Ditton *et al.*, 2002; Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Todd *et al.*, 2002; Tschapka & Kern, 2012).

Factor 4: Exploration and discovery

The last factor relates to constructs, such as learning about marine life, acquiring new skills, for the variety of species found at Sodwana Bay, so that others can share in the challenge and explore new destinations. This factor obtained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.751 and a mean value of 3.72, thus ranking it as the third most important factor. Meyer *et al.* (2002) also reported 'to explore new things' to be one of the most important factors for divers visiting north central Florida. Although familiar with the diving site, divers still seek opportunities to explore and discover this destination. The respondents in this study were highly familiar with the diving site, which might explain the lower (but still high) mean value of this factor.

From the above-mentioned it can be concluded that the travel motives of scuba divers to Sodwana Bay relate well to research regarding the travel motives of scuba divers to other diving destinations in the world and that devotion played a very important role in the travel motives of the respondents in this study. This finding holds significant and specific development, planning and management implications.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this study was to determine who the scuba diver to Sodwana Bay is and why they travel. This could assist in improving dive operations at Sodwana Bay and in developing better products, giving operators a competitive advantage by understanding their diving client better. The following findings can be drawn from this research.

Firstly, and significant to this research, *devotion* was revealed as being the most important reason for scuba divers to travel to Sodwana Bay for diving purposes. Therefore, there is a strong commitment among scuba divers to dive at Sodwana Bay. This holds positive implications for Sodwana Bay because this market will return again. Therefore, it would be useful to create a loyalty programme for scuba divers who visit Sodwana Bay on a regular basis. This programme could implement loyalty points and provide incentives, such as discounts on dives according to the number of points earned. Dive operators at Sodwana Bay could also consider hosting a dive festival, which could attract divers not just from Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal but the rest of South Africa, as well as from abroad. This type of event can have an enormous positive impact (socially, as well as economically) on this area and community, which is dependent on divers and visitors. It is also recommended that the event should be hosted in the off-season (February to March), as it will extend the tourist season.

Secondly, as in other studies, this study also found that *relaxation and escape* is of great importance. Again, confirming the importance of tourism activities (diving) as vehicle for

people that can be used to break away from their normal routines and everyday life. Dive operators should thus focus on creating an atmosphere for divers where they can relax, where the equipment is in order, the dives are well organised and the divers have sufficient time to enjoy each dive. Dive operators could provide snacks and drinks while divers are on the beach waiting to dive, clean their diving equipment after completion of dives and provide leisure activities, such as quad biking, horseback riding and some evening entertainment. Dive operators could further establish a marketing campaign based on the idea of 'Escape to your second home away from home', so that Sodwana Bay could attract both loyal and new visitors, especially through social media sites.

Thirdly, it is important to include *exploration* opportunities in dives, since each dive is different and new things can constantly be discovered on a familiar reef. Diving instructors need to focus on special sightings during dives and also the small interesting sea life that is not seen every day. If special marine life is spotted, such as dolphins, sea turtles and whales, divers must have the opportunity to explore these sightings, but without harming or disturbing nature.

Fourthly, *personal challenge* also emerged as an important motive for scuba divers, even though it was the least important factor. The market consists of beginners and advanced divers for which both should be catered. Where beginner divers might consider aspects such as depth and rare sightings to be of importance, advanced divers feel differently. This market is an experienced market with an average of 298 completed dives; therefore, dive operators must find products with new challenges that will attract such divers. Reefs such as the Five Mile and the Nine Mile (which are the deepest and furthest reefs in Sodwana Bay), can provide advanced divers with experiences that are more challenging than the others. Different divers should, therefore, be challenged in different ways by developing challenges linked with rare sightings, new skills and first time experiences.

While studies have been conducted on the travel motives of scuba divers at destinations across the world, the research carried out for this study is the first of its kind to be conducted in a South African context. It will thus assist the dive industry of South Africa to promote and market the activity in a more effective way. Targeting the correct market will have a positive impact on product development. This might also attract the attention of more international divers.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to determine who the scuba diver to Sodwana Bay is and why they dive. In the process of doing so, new knowledge was developed and current literature supported.

Scuba diving is an important activity in the marine environment across the world. It is important for dive destinations to stay competitive in this ever expanding market. More and more dive operators are being established which offers the diver a greater choice. Thus, to be the first choice as a destination or dive operator, the establishment in question needs to place itself above the rest through constant and intensive marketing. Active promotion of scuba diving in South Africa will lead to more people becoming interested in taking up scuba diving

as recreation or a hobby, which will justify the number of dive operators in South Africa. Furthermore, marketing efforts should be focused on social networks which would involve young people. This study indicated that young people represent the greatest market for scuba diving in South Africa. This knowledge leads to various development opportunities.

The information obtained from this study is useful in many ways. The scuba diving industry can use this information to improve its services and products in relation to that which the market wants and that which it expects. The research findings are informative because previously the profile and travel motives of scuba divers in South Africa were not known. Marketers can attract divers by focusing on devotion, relaxation, exploration and personal challenge in marketing campaigns. Dive operators should pay attention to the loyal visitors and how to retain their patronage, as well as how to attract their friends and families.

Given the limited number of studies available on scuba divers in South Africa, various research questions, such as whether there are differences in the travel motives of less experienced divers, still need to be answered. Conducting further research on scuba diving in South Africa will not only improve knowledge on the subject, but will also aid in developing the product and establishing a strong niche market in the tourism industry. It would be useful to determine the international profile of scuba divers to Sodwana Bay, as well as the latest trends in this industry. This will aid in keeping the service offered fresh and linked to the desires and needs of the market. Furthermore, similar research to this study can be conducted at other scuba diving destinations in South Africa in order to allow for comparative studies.

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