



VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS AT HERITAGE SITES, PERCEPTIONS AND
CHALLENGES:

A CASE STUDY OF THE NAMIBIAN NATIONAL HERITAGE SITES

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

BEVERLEY J VAN WYK

Student Number: 201613894

MAIN SUPERVISOR: M.E. KIMARO

CO-SUPERVISOR: J. HEITA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly I am grateful to the Almighty Heavenly Father for His guidance and strength to enable me to complete this research project. I am equally thankful to my family, friends and colleagues who motivated and supported me. I wish to acknowledge the contribution made by my interviewees to gain the valuable information that this study is comprised of. I express my warm thanks and appreciation to the National Heritage Council of Namibia (NHC) for funding my post-graduate studies. Finally I would like to express my sincere thanks to my main supervisor, Ms Ellen Kimaro, and co-supervisor, Mr Jona Heita, from the department of History, Geography and Environmental studies at the University of Namibia, for their continuous support, patience, motivation, immense knowledge and valuable guidance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.2 Problem statement

1.3 Research questions

1.4 Significance of the study

1.5 Limitations of the study

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The content of visitor feedback forms

2.2 The purpose of visitor feedback forms

2.3 Collection, storage and application of visitor feedback forms

2.4 Understanding of the purpose of visitor feedback forms

2.5 The challenges faced with visitor feedback forms

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Research design

3.3 Population

3.4 Sample

3.5 Sampling

3.6 Research instruments

3.7 Procedures

3.8 Data analysis

**CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND
DISCUSSION.....**

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Collection, application and storage of visitor data at Namibian heritage sites

4.2.1 Collection of Visitor Data

4.2.2 Application of Visitor Data

4.2.3 Storage of Visitor Data.....

4.3 Content, Understanding and Challenges of Visitor Data at Namibian Heritage Sites

4.3.1 Common Content of Visitor Feedback Forms

4.3.2 Understanding of Management and Staff about the purpose of Visitor Feedback
Forms

4.3.3 Challenges faced with the implementation of Visitor Feedback Forms
.....

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

5.2 Recommendations

REFERENCES

ANNEXURES

ABSTRACT

Namibia has a significant amount of heritage resources due to its diversity of cultures. The value of these heritage resources has been linked to the tourism sector in the form of cultural tourism. Tourism is one of Namibia's significant contributors to the Gross Domestic Product, providing job opportunities to communities within the surrounding areas of tourism destinations. Although in its infancy stage, the utilisation of heritage resources as a tourism product is gradually growing. Heritage institutions have an obligation to create a balance between the provision of recreation to visitors and preservation of a heritage site's historical significance. Effective planning, management and marketing of heritage sites and museums as tourism destinations requires an understanding of the type of visitors that visit heritage sites around the country and how the data collected is applied in management decision-making.

The study looks at how visitor feedback data is collected, stored and applied by the National Heritage Council for planning, management and marketing of the heritage sites under its direct management. The research method which was employed in the study is a qualitative method in the form of an interview questionnaire for site managers and frontline staff at the heritage sites, as well as Head Office staff of the National Heritage Council. Document analysis of the current feedback form implemented at the heritage sites was also conducted to determine the type of information requested.

Review of existing literature guided the research to identify which aspects to explore in aiming to solve the research problem, which was found to be insufficient visitor data to guide planning, management and marketing of heritage sites. Literature defined what the importance of systematic collection of visitor feedback data is, which challenges are faced by heritage managers and heritage site staff in collecting, analysing and storing data, and what they understand as being the purpose of implementing visitor feedback forms at heritage sites.

The study identified which information should be sought through an accurate visitor feedback form for implementation by heritage institutions that produces relevant data that should be utilised for planning, resource allocation, and performance reporting and marketing of heritage sites.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Heritage is that which is inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations (NHC, 2017). Heritage sites are often categorised into three types: cultural, natural, and mixed. Cultural heritage sites may include historic buildings and town sites, important archaeological sites, and works of monumental sculpture or painting. Natural heritage sites are restricted to those natural areas that (1) furnish outstanding examples of Earth's record of life or its geologic processes, (2) provide excellent examples of ongoing ecological and biological evolutionary processes, (3) contain natural phenomena that are rare, unique, superlative, or of outstanding beauty, or (4) furnish habitats for rare or endangered animals or plants or are sites of exceptional biodiversity. Mixed heritage sites contain elements of both natural and cultural significance (Boyd, 2000; Thorsell and Sigaty, 2001).

Namibia has 119 sites declared as National Heritage Sites, many of which are natural heritage sites, of these two are World Heritage Sites: The Namib Sand Sea and Twyfelfontein (Zijl, 2015). The number of tourists visiting heritage sites has shown a steady increase over the years, worldwide (Brida *et al.*, 2011) as well as in Namibia (Tourism, Tourist Statistical Report, 2015). Heritage tourism is one of the most notable and widespread types of tourism to these sites and is among the very oldest forms of travel (Timothy and Boyd, 2006). As history shows, even the ancient Egyptians and Romans, as well as the nobility of medieval times, travelled to experience historic places of cultural importance (Towner, 1996). Due to its potential for further growth, heritage tourism in Namibia has been earmarked as one of the areas of focus in Namibia's growth strategy (National Sustainable Tourism Growth & Development Strategy, 2016).

With an increase in these visits come several economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits. Heritage tourism is also commonly used to build patriotism at the domestic level. (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Heritage places and events are also commonly utilised as tools to build nationalism and patriotism among domestic tourists (McLean, 1998; Morales Cano, 2004). Battlefields, cemeteries, monuments to national heroes and other places important in the national psyche are central to this particular use of heritage (Chang, 1999; Chronis, 2005; Leong, 1989). It has led to the acknowledgement of marginalised people in society (Smith, 2003), the poor and indigenous people, as contributors to the development of nation states. There is a small but growing body of literature on the material culture of tourism (e.g. handicrafts and souvenirs), which is rich in ideas and information related to the meanings of tangible, consumable products made for tourists as representations of the cultural heritage of places visited (Timothy, 2005). The representation of culture through selling of handicrafts and other souvenirs (Gordon, 1986; Hitchcock, 2000; Richards, 2004) leads to economic benefits and the commodification of craftworks for tourist consumption (Graburn, 1984; Markwick, 2001; Moreno, 2001). Its significance is seen in its ability to attract visitors to attractions, every year. With these visitations come employment opportunities at heritage sites, community social cohesion where the heritage sites are found, as well as community cultural pride. These breed an interest and desire to preserve and conserve the tourism heritage. Despite it being regarded as a significant tool for economic development (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009; Development, 2009), relatively little attention has been paid to the content, collection and management of visitor feedback forms at heritage sites (Adie & Hall, 2016). An accurate visitor feedback form aids heritage managers to not only use these to profile their visitors but to determine visitor preferences. A visitor profile provides data on visitors based on demographic and behavioural characteristics, such as age, income, accommodation preferences, travel party size, season of travel, etc., as well as spending behaviour. Consequently, having a clear understanding of visitors' profiles and preferences at heritage sites aids managers to make informed marketing,

project funding, product development and revenue planning decisions.

By understanding visitor profiles and their preferences, for example, managers are able to decide on the target market they wish to attract to the heritage site based on demographics, preferences and travel patterns. In addition, managers can make strategic changes in marketing to target the desired audience as they segment visitors by age, gender, income, lifestyles, activities and/or interests. (Arizona Office of Tourism, n.d.) Therefore, from a heritage tourism marketing and management perspective it becomes necessary to understand the market segments of visitors to heritage sites to help provide both positive tourist experiences, and assist site conservation (Hall & McArthur, 1998). Visitor profiles and preferences, market segmentation and target marketing partly rely on information from visitor feedback forms collected at heritage sites. Managers and the staffs' perceptions of the collection of these visitor feedback forms can positively or negatively influence not only the kind of information gathered from visitors, but also the manner in which the forms are collected. This study investigated the relevance of the content of visitor feedback forms collected at heritage sites managed by the National Heritage Council. It further sought to analyse the managers and staff perceptions of visitor feedback forms, their collection, storage and its application for the planning, management and marketing of heritage sites and the challenges faced with the implementation of a visitor feedback system.

1.2 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

To achieve effective and sustainable management and marketing of heritage sites, an understanding and continuous monitoring of the profile and preferences of visitors is important. This requires the systematic gathering and analysis of relevant data from the visitors over time. There is a need to gather representative, systematic and accurate visitor data as well as store and apply it correctly if management and planning are to be effective (Pitts & Smith 1993 as

cited in Wardell and Moore (2004)). Visitor data can provide information that can then be used for management, planning, resource allocation, performance reporting, marketing and public accountability (Newsome, Moore & Dowling, 2002 as cited in Wardell and Moore (2004)). Visitor data collected through visitor feedback forms should also be accessible to all levels of management and staff and its purpose should be understood.

If visitor data gathered is not sufficient, representative, systematic and accurate then management, planning and marketing will not be effective. Visitor data collected will not provide information that can then be used for management, planning, resource allocation, performance reporting, marketing and public accountability. If visitor data are not accessible to management and staff, and they do not understand its purpose it is unlikely to be used to its greatest potential.

The need arose to evaluate the current visitor feedback form used to gather visitor data in order to investigate if its purpose is understood. The evaluation of the report was also necessary to determine if any challenges exist in systematic gathering and analysis of relevant data from the visitors, by management and staff at heritage sites managed by the National Heritage Council.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the common content of visitor feedback forms?
- What is the understanding of management and staff about the purpose of visitor feedback forms at heritage sites?
- What are the challenges if any, faced by management and staff with collection, storage and application of visitor data from visitor feedback forms?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study benefits managers and staff at heritage sites because the results of the study can be used to benchmark on the content that should be gathered from the visitor feedback form at heritage sites in Namibia. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on managers and staff perceptions on the purpose of visitor feedback forms, as well as suggests a best practice approach on the collection and use of visitor feedback forms to achieve effective and sustainable management and marketing of heritage sites.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Not all intended research subjects from Twyfelfontein could be interviewed because they were not available. The site is situated in a remote area in which the network services for telecommunications are limited and they could therefore not be contacted. However, most of the staff members were tourist guides who have been at the site for the same number of years, therefore their experience with visitor information was found to be very similar.

Some of the interviewees could not clearly understand what the questions aimed at obtaining from them and the researcher had to explain in simpler words, which was a challenge, because the researcher did not want to lead the interviewees. Leading the interviewees could result in being bias, affecting the results of the study and a true reflection of the operations on the ground.

With many visitors coming to the site a challenge was met in sufficient time allocation for the interviews. The researcher was informed that the specific period is peak season and that the staff often have to be assigned to the next immediate group.

It was found that no visitor feedback system is in place and not much information could be

provided with reference to determining the effectiveness of such a system for planning, management and marketing practices.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THE PURPOSE OF VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS

Visitor feedback forms may assist heritage institutions with the planning, management and marketing of heritage sites. This system, when set up correctly, can collect the comprehensive data about the demographic profile and preferences of heritage tourists, which include questions on their nationality, address, gender, income, what they buy, where they buy it, how they pay, etc. Other more in-depth questions may be included to find out for instance, the effectiveness of management and marketing strategies in place, how resources should be allocated and whether the site is performing according to the objectives set. It is a powerful insight into how to best sell visitors a heritage product. (Report: Tech Trends 2016, 2017)

An effective system allows heritage managers to make informed decisions that steer the heritage sites to becoming sustainable tourist destinations. Heritage institutions have an obligation to create a balance between conserving the heritage sites and providing recreational activities to visitors. Consequently a feedback system provides an indication of whether this balance is achieved, or whether there is a need to review their strategies to identify which aspects can be improved on, in order to ensure preservation of the site and to create a positive and memorable experience for the visitor (Wardell & Moore, 2004).

Khumalo, Sebatlelo and Van der Merwe (2014) indicate that meeting the expectations of a heritage tourist leads to the preservation of heritage and the experience the visitor will have at a heritage site. They note that what a heritage tourist expects or hopes to see at a heritage site, will strongly influence the success and sustainability of the heritage and heritage tourist's experience.

Van Der Merwe (2016) states that in order to develop a sustainable management plan for a heritage site, it is important to know who the heritage tourists are and why they visit the heritage

site, a perception shared by the study conducted by Khumalo, Sebatlelo and Van der Merwe (2014), however, their study took it further to determine motivations as well. In their study researchers identified the importance for a destination to measure the motivational factors that lead to the choice to visit the site, in order to inform an efficient management and marketing strategy and sustainable management plan. Understanding visitor motivational factors assists particularly with marketing strategies, in the form of knowing what should be communicated that would draw visitors to the heritage sites. Information on demographics assists to segment the target market, identifying which communication tools will be effective in promoting a heritage site. Furthermore, it assists in identifying which markets should be sensitised (Hermann, Van der Merwe, Coetzee & Saaymann, 2016). Therefore in order to develop effective management and marketing strategies for heritage sites, understanding the characteristics and expectations of visitors is crucial.

2.2 COLLECTION, STORAGE AND APPLICATION OF VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS

The development of an effective visitor feedback system should be guided by clear objectives on how the data will be collected, stored and applied. Wardell & Moore, (2004) have conducted research to guide the collection, storage and application of visitor data at protected areas in Australia. They indicate that visitor data is very valuable and has a significant impact on heritage sites. This same view is shared by Loomis, (2000) and Cessford & Douglas (2002). Visitors at heritage sites hold enormous economic, social and political value, and at the same time have significant ecological impacts on these areas. The use of natural and cultural resources at tourism destinations means that managers of heritage sites have a duty to ensure the conservation of the sites and at the same time provide satisfactory facilities and services to visitors. In order to achieve a balance between the two, an understanding of the resources they are trying to protect and of the visitors who come to the sites is very important. This gives rise

to the need for an effective collection, storage and application of visitor feedback forms. According to Newsome, Moore and Dowling (2002), as cited in Wardell and Moore (2004), the purpose of the visitor feedback system is visitor monitoring that can provide information that can be used for management, planning, resource allocation, performance reporting, marketing and public accountability.

When developing a strategy for the collection of visitor information, it should be clear to heritage managers why the information is needed and what it will be used for. Heritage managers use visitor data for integration into decision-making, so not only should there be an effective collection method applied, but also a simple and easily retrieval storage system. For the data to be valuable and used to its full potential, it should be systematically gathered, accurate and appropriate, and accessible to all levels of management. Where managers are unable to report on visitor numbers or provide poor or misleading information, there can be questions raised about the effectiveness of management, especially in an environment of increasing public accountability required by government agencies (Wardell & Moore, 2004).

Systematic data collection entails obtaining relevant visitor feedback during a consistent period of time. This allows heritage managers to identify any changes or shortcomings in order to timeously rectify these. Representative and accurate data is utilised in decision-making about how the heritage site will be developed; the type of visitors it wants to attract; which marketing tools to apply to which target market; and which management practices will best guide conservation measures for the historical significance of the site to be preserved. Hadwen, Hill, & Pickering, (2007) identify the importance of an effective visitor monitoring system which adequately collects, stores and analyses data, particularly for the sustainability of a heritage site.

Once data is appropriately stored, heritage managers should be able to easily retrieve the data

to draw comparisons in order to determine whether the current systems are achieving their objective and/or to identify areas of improvement. The key link between data collection and its application in planning, management and marketing is a proper storage system where data is entered into a central system which is accessible to all departments that use the information to guide their operations. According to a study done by Darcy, *et.al.* (2007), once data is collected, it is important that all errors are dealt with before entering the data into the storage system. Entry of the data should be done in such a way so as to provide the relevant information when it is retrieved since its use in management decision-making is determined by this. Training of staff is therefore required for effective storage (Hockings, Stollen & Dudley, 2000), particularly for the use of the data for assessing management and marketing effectiveness.

Application of visitor data reaches its greatest potential the more it is incorporated into decision-making at all levels of management. The usefulness of the data encourages an organised and regular method of accurate and relevant data collection. DOC (1992), McArthur and Gardener (1992) and Pitts and Smith (1993) (cited in Wardell & Moore, 2004) state that gathering relevant and accurate data ensures rational, fair and consistent decision-making, rather than planning and management decisions that are based on intuition. Application of the data entails using the information obtained to the advantage of the heritage site. Through the visitor feedback system which provides an indication of the number of visitors to the sites, the types, needs and expectations of visitors and visitor perception of the site managers and staff of heritage sites can determine what the impact is on the site; whether more effective conservation measures are needed; or which to improve on. The services and attributes of the sites are assessed to determine whether they meet the expectations of visitors and whether the site offers visitors a satisfactory experience. An overall picture is provided on whether the heritage institution meets its objectives to reach a level of sustainability.

According to Wardell and Moore (2004) visitor feedback data is applied in visitor management,

to determine the level of impact on the site, resource allocation, budgeting and funding, in order to identify areas which require additional resources and to justify applications for increased funding, recreation planning, management and marketing, resulting in informed decision-making. The guideline by Hornback and Eagles (1999) supports the use of on-site visitor surveys to gain valuable information about the dimensions of visitor use, which provides direction for decisions for planning, management and marketing. Prideaux and Crosswell (2006) as well as Moore et al (2009) support the use of visitor surveys, indicating that decisions based on assumptions lead to lost opportunities and inappropriate investments decisions.

2.3 COMMON CONTENT OF VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS

Successful management and marketing of heritage sites require an understanding of the profile and preferences that define a heritage tourist. This information indicates which types of visitors come to the site, their demographics, expectations and perceptions of the services and attributes offered. This is particularly relevant to the application of an effective management and marketing strategy that aims to reap greater economic benefits for the heritage sites. Increased visitation due to successful management and marketing brings in more income to the heritage sites. As visitors' needs are met, return visits and word of mouth advertising of the sites to others are more likely to increase (Khumalo, Sebatlelo, & Van der Merwe, 2014)

According to Moore, et al. (2009) the type of information required for effective management and marketing decision-making includes where visitors are going and what they are doing; who they are; and how satisfied they are with their visit. The information obtained can help assess the values of the site, its resources and its commercial activities, as well as contribute to a greater awareness of how visitors behave and their expectations of the sites. In order to develop a profile of visitors in their study, the surveys were based on gender, place of residence, age group, ethnic group and highest level of education completed. Visit characteristics were

identified as source of information about the site, frequency of visits, length of stay, type of travel group, number of members in a travel group, form of transport used, whether the trip was the primary destination, purpose of the visit, and the activities undertaken. The survey also sourced information about the importance of having certain attributes and facilities at the site and their satisfaction with these. Additionally the study sought to determine the visitors/tourists overall satisfaction and whether they would recommend the site to others. Khumalo, Sebatlelo and van der Merwe (2014) used visitor surveys to obtain information on the basic demographics and characteristics of visitors and open-ended questions to determine their perception of heritage and its importance for tourism. The study based the basic profile of heritage tourists on gender, age, race, nationality, household income and permanent residency. The aforementioned study concluded that before the economic benefits and potential of heritage tourism can be measured or further explored, policy-makers and heritage site managers need to understand who their heritage tourist is, so that correct and sustainable market and administration of heritage tourism can be achieved. The study done by Van Der Merwe et al., (2016) at the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site identified four motivational factors for visiting the heritage site, heritage and educational attributes, escape and relaxation, the nature experience and park attributes. The profile used in their questionnaire was based on age, place of residence, number of times the site was visited and the educational level of the visitor. In conclusion, based on existing literature, developing a visitor feedback form often includes common information such as age, place of residence and educational level to build a profile of visitors coming to the heritage sites. The value of this information is to identify market segments to which marketing strategies should be aligned. The type of information required for effective management and marketing may include where visitors are going and what they are doing; who they are; and how satisfied they are with their visit. The information obtained helps to assess the values of the site, its resources and its commercial activities, as well as contribute to a greater awareness of how visitors behave and their expectations of sites.

Hornback and Eagles (1999) also identified that measuring visitor satisfaction provides vital information about the impact that the site makes on its visitors. Regular collection of these indicators gives early warning of problematic areas so that the required measures can be implemented.

2.4 UNDERSTANDING OF MANAGEMENT AND STAFF ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS AT HERITAGE SITES

Success relies heavily on whether staff from heritage institutions understand the relevance of implementing visitor feedback forms. Heritage site management and staff should grasp the context within which visitor feedback forms are completed, what information is to be obtained through the forms, what the purpose of the information is and how the information will be integrated into the different management functions. It is therefore important that staff at all levels of the organisation are involved in the various phases of development of a visitor feedback system, from conception to implementation (Hornback & Eagles, 1999). Visitor feedback data informs heritage managers on whether management practices are effective in reaching the goals of creating a positive visitor experience and the conservation of the historical significance of the heritage sites. It also aids in marketing decisions. Analysis of the information obtained about the profile of visitors assists the marketing department of heritage institutions to identify and segment their target markets, directing the department on which marketing tools will deliver the most desirable results. Determining the perception visitors have of the heritage sites identifies whether visitors are positively engaged by what the sites have to offer and where improvements can be made to create a more pleasurable experience. Ideally the data should be recorded, reported and used systematically for the following purposes: developing more responsive visitor impact management systems; modifying visitor behaviour; more efficiently providing appropriate levels of park services and facilities; and better informing the marketing of protected areas to visitors (Griffin & Bushell, 2006).

Most heritage institutions are funded by Government, they therefore have to compete against other national priorities. Systematic collection of relevant data and thorough analysis thereof evaluate whether the objectives set by the institution are achieved, providing motivating factors for the allocation of government funds towards heritage preservation. Not only does the data provide justification for funding, but heritage managers will also be able to determine in which areas available resources will be optimally utilised, because one of the challenges faced is insufficient resources.

Performance reporting is the process whereby heritage institutions provide feedback on whether the objectives defined in the institutional site management plans have been achieved. Such information is required by those stakeholders and parties who have invested or made a contribution to site conservation and/or tourism development. Credibility of the report is based on the submission of accurate and relevant data that guides the management practices of the institution. Under-reporting gives a misleading impression in government, in the public and in business about the level of use of a park and of a park's system. This in turn can lead to lower levels of policy emphasis in government and to depressed budget allocation levels (Hornback & Eagles, 1999).

2.5 THE CHALLENGES FACED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS

Several researchers point out that a number of challenges are faced by heritage institutions in the collection, storage and application of visitor data (Cessford & Douglas, 2002; Darcy, Griffin, Craig, Moore, & Crilley, 2007; Hermann, Van der Merwe, Coetzee, & Saayman, 2016; Wardell & Moore, 2004; Loomis, 2000). One of the main challenges is resource availability, i.e. funding for the development of an efficient visitor monitoring system that requires effective equipment and knowledgeable staff for the successful implementation of the system. For

instance, the main limitation to developing a visitor counting system has often been the availability of staff and funding resources to operate a system (Cessford & Douglas, 2002).

Cessford and Douglas (2002) noted that the lack of clear objectives by management and staff, on the purpose of collection and use of visitor feedback forms leads to negligence in the administration of the forms. Without clear objectives, an abundance of data is collected of which some may not be relevant. The absence of clear objectives means that data is not systematically and regularly collected. Comparisons can then not be made to determine the changes in visitor profiles and preferences, nor whether management strategies are effective (Hockings, 2003; Hockings, Stolten, & Dudley, 2000). Regular visitor monitoring produces comparable data that is able to indicate changes in visitor used patterns, expectations and satisfaction over time. Since monitoring using visitor feedback forms is not an end in itself, managers and staff's regular evaluation of changes in visitor movements and continued opinion and their development of visitor management and marketing techniques that are responsive to these changes, are crucial (Wardell & Moore, 2004). The absence of clear objectives therefore, may be caused by their lack of understanding on how collection should be done, how forms should be stored and how the data should be applied in management and marketing decision-making (Cessford, & Douglas, 2002). Often this exercise is seen as a burden rather than a priority. It has been observed that, when management and staff do not understand the purpose of the visitor feedback form, they tend not to use it, regularly, effectively and efficiently (Hornback & Eagles, 1999). As a result planning, management, resource allocation and marketing decisions based on data retrieved from these feedback forms, are not reliable and valid. The existence of a visitor data policy coupled with a Data Protection Act ensures a clear explanation is made on what data is collected at heritage sites, and for what purpose.

According to Hockings (2003) an inefficient data storage and retrieval system within the organisation hampers the use of such data in resource allocation and marketing decision

making. This is exacerbated by management and staffs' lack of knowledge of the purpose and importance of proper data storage management. A data storage and retrieval system may be manual and/or computer-based, this is often dependent on a heritage site's ability to afford one or the other. Ideally, data storage should be supported with software that can gather and manage the required input data, analyse the data, and present the results in user-customised form for further decision-making.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research adopted a case study research design approach on the heritage sites under the jurisdiction of the National Heritage Council of Namibia. A case study allows explorations and understanding of complex issues and the use of qualitative data to explain the process and outcome of an event or program. A descriptive non-experimental qualitative research design was used. Qualitative data was collected through the administration of an interview guide in the form of a questionnaire. The qualitative research method collected information on what the content of a visitor feedback system is, what management and staff think the purpose of these forms are and what challenges are faced when collecting, storing and applying visitor data.

The qualitative research method approach is also used in the content analysis approach of the visitor feedback form currently being implemented at heritage sites. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic.

Document analysis was conducted to identify what information is being obtained from the visitor feedback form currently used. This is a form of qualitative research that entails the study of an existing document to interpret its contents. (Assessment Toolkit, n.d.) In the case of this study it is the visitor recording form completed by visitors to the heritage sites under the direct management of the National Heritage Council of Namibia.

A questionnaire was also conducted with Head Office staff, site managers and frontline staff from the National Heritage Council of Namibia to gain insight into what they understand as being the purpose of using visitor feedback forms. Staff from the Head Office included the Director, Head of Heritage Management, the Regional Heritage Officer and the Marketing Officer. An understanding of the importance of visitor feedback forms and how the data

collection is integrated into decision-making for effective management of the heritage sites was explored.

Primary sources in the form of officials from the National Heritage Council of Namibia provided information on whether visitor feedback forms are used for heritage management and marketing. Moreover, information is obtained on whether the study makes a contribution by providing a more effective approach in the form of a visitor feedback form that can be used by all heritage institutions.

Secondary sources such as academic literature and the current system used to obtain visitor information, provided an understanding of the focus of the study based on the important concepts. A review of the literature provided guidance on the relevance of the study, which methods have been applied by other heritage institutions and which have been effective to develop the framework of the study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was a combination of qualitative research and document analysis to answer the research questions. The latter aimed at ultimately providing guidance in the development of a visitor feedback form that determines what the demographics and the overall perceptions of visitors of the national heritage sites under the direct management of the National Heritage Council of Namibia are. Another aim was how this information guides the management and marketing of these sites.

3.3 POPULATION

The population to which the study is generalised are those institutions responsible for any type of heritage, whether it be cultural, natural, and historical or even mixed heritage. The common institutions are the National Heritage Council of Namibia, the Museums Association of

Namibia and the museums in the regions and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. However, the study specifically focused on the National Heritage Council of Namibia, a state-owned enterprise, that reports its operations and performance through the Directorate of National Heritage and Culture Programmes to the Minister of Education, Arts and Culture.

3.4 SAMPLE

The study sample was the eleven (11) heritage sites directly managed by the National Heritage Council of Namibia, these are Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site, Ziebenplatten, Brandberg, Petrified Forest, Burnt Mountain, Organ Pipes, Otjikoto Lake, Hoba Meteorite, Heroes Acre, Omugulu-Gwoombashe and Eenhana Shrine National Heritage Sites because the results of the study apply to all sites. Only three heritage sites were selected for the study, Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site, Hoba Meteorite and Heroes Acre National Heritage Sites. These represent the types of heritage, namely cultural, natural and historical heritage. The selection of these sites was based on their representation of the types of heritage sites visited and their spread across the regions as they are found in the Kunene, Otjozondjupa and Khomas regions, respectively. The sites managed by the National Heritage Council of Namibia are distributed as follows throughout Namibia:

HERITAGE SITE	REGION	TYPE OF HERITAGE REPRESENTED
Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site	Kunene	Cultural
Petrified Forest National Heritage Site	Kunene	Natural
Ziebenplatten National Heritage Site	Kunene	Cultural
Brandberg National Heritage Site	Erongo	Mixed (Cultural & Natural)
Organ Pipes National Heritage Site	Kunene	Natural
Burnt Mountain National Heritage Site	Kunene	Natural
Otjikoto Lake National Heritage Site	Oshikoto	Natural
Hoba Meteorite National Heritage Site	Otjozondjupa	Natural
Eenhana Shrine National Heritage Site	Ohangwena	Liberation Heritage
Omugulugwoombashe National Heritage Site	Omusati	Liberation Heritage
Heroes Acre National Heritage Site	Khomas	Liberation Heritage

Table 1: National Heritage Sites directly managed by the National Heritage Council (National Heritage Council of Namibia)

3.5 SAMPLING

The convenience sampling method was used to select a sample of three (3) sites of the eleven (11) national heritage sites directly managed by the National Heritage Council of Namibia, i.e. Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site, Hoba Meteorite and Heroes Acre National Heritage Sites. The selection is based on Twyfelfontein being the first proclaimed World Heritage Site for Namibia, Hoba Meteorite as the site most recently placed under the direct management of the National Heritage Council of Namibia and Heroes Acre as one of the longest directly managed sites from which management and marketing practices can be benchmarked for the other two liberation heritage sites, Omugulu-Gwoombashe and Eenhana Shrine National Heritage Sites. These sites were also selected due to their regional representation. Kunene Region is one of the most frequently visited regions where a wealth of cultural and natural heritage is found, examples which include the Etosha Pan and Ovahimba Cultural Groups which are of the top tourism activities undertaken by both international and domestic visitors (Safaris, 2017). Major roads going to the north and north-east of the country run through the Otjozondjupa Region. As for the Khomas Region, this is the first point of entry for international visitors, with the Hosea Kutako International Airport found approximately 40 km from Namibia's capital city, Windhoek.

The selection of interviewees included the Director, the Head of Heritage Management, Regional Heritage Officer and the Marketing Officer from the Head Office of the National Heritage Council of Namibia and staff at the heritage sites, the site manager, and six (6) tourist guides at Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site, the two (2) cashiers, the two (2) cleaners, of which one also serves as a tourist guide at times at Hoba Meteorite and one (1) institutional worker, and the site manager, who is also the tourist guide, and one (1) cashier at Heroes Acre. The selection of site staff was based on the fact that upon arrival at the heritage sites the first point of contact for visitors are the cashiers and tourist guides. The selection of site managers

is based on their responsibility to conduct the compilation of the visitor data for submission to the National Heritage Council Head Office. The sample consisted of three (3) heritage sites as research locations and eighteen (18) research subjects.

HERITAGE SITE/INSTITUTION	INTERVIEWEE'S POSITION	TOTAL NUMBER
Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site	site manager	1
	tourist guides	8
Hoba Meteorite National Heritage Site	cashiers	2
	cleaners	2
	institutional worker	1
Heroes Acre National Heritage Site	site manager (and tourist guide)	1
	cashiers	1
National Heritage Council Head Office	Director	1
	Head: Heritage Management	1
	Regional Heritage Officer	1
	Marketing Officer	1

Table 2: List of Interviewees

3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The instrument used during the field data collection included questionnaires for qualitative data. These were targeted at the management of the National Heritage Council of Namibia and the site management and frontline staff at the three heritage sites. The study looked at the visitor statistics form currently implemented at the heritage sites for content analysis. Other tools included a voice recorder for the interviews with management and staff and a notebook to record the responses from the interviews.

3.7 PROCEDURES

Questionnaires were circulated to head office staff and heritage site management and frontline staff to determine what their understanding is of the purpose of implementing visitor feedback forms at the heritage sites. The questionnaire also aimed to identify which challenges are faced with the collection of data by site staff and storage and application by head office officials and site staff. Questionnaires with officials at the National Heritage Council Head Office sought to determine what the common content of visitor feedback forms should be that assists officials in guiding heritage management and marketing strategies. Recommendations were made at the end of the research for a more effective visitor feedback form to be designed, based on the responses from the interviewees.

Due to the research areas being located in different regions of the country, some of the questionnaires had to be sent to the heritage sites and telephonic explanations had to be done to indicate the nature of the information sought. The researcher administered the questionnaires with the Windhoek-based research subjects and those from Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site and Heroes Acre National Heritage Site.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Content analysis was conducted on the current visitor statistics form to identify the information it obtains from visitors to the three heritage sites. Data collected through the questionnaires pointed out what type of information is relevant to improve service delivery and staff performance as well as how this information can be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of management and marketing strategies. Interview responses indicated that no visitor feedback system is implemented at any of the three heritage sites, as well as any of those managed by the National Heritage Council of Namibia.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Research was conducted to determine whether a visitor feedback system is implemented at three national heritage sites, Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site, Hoba Meteorite and Heroes Acre National Heritage Sites. The study focused on what type of information is relevant to the accuracy of such a visitor feedback form, how visitor information is collected, how it is stored and how the information is applied by the management of the National Heritage Council Head Office in planning, management and marketing of the heritage sites. The study also looked at how management and staff perceive a visitor feedback system and what challenges are faced with implementation.

The research identified what type of information is required to assist in the development of an effective and accurate visitor feedback form for heritage institutions such as the National Heritage Council of Namibia. The data collection process was undertaken at the National Heritage Council of Namibia Head Office with the Director, Head of Heritage Management, Regional Heritage Officer and Education and Outreach Officer, the site manager and one cashier at Heroes Acre National Heritage Site and the site manager, and six tourist guides at Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site. The two cashiers, two cleaners and one caretaker administered the questionnaire at Hoba Meteorite National Heritage Site themselves. Although the interview was not conducted by the researcher and it was self-administered, an indication was telephonically made for explanations to be sought where the questions were not clear to staff. The provision of an explanation on what information is required was offered by the researcher to each interviewee before commencement of the interviews, so as to gain as much information as possible. Windhoek-based research subjects from the Head Office and Heroes Acre National Heritage Site were individually met and interviewed and the interviews were

recorded. The available staff members at the Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site were also met and interviewed in person. The staff at Hoba Meteorite were provided with the questionnaire via courier to complete and send back to the researcher.

A research instrument in the form of an open-ended questionnaire was developed to obtain information pertaining to whether a visitor feedback system is being implemented at the research locations, and if so, what type of information is required from visitors. Methods on how the information is collected, stored and applied in planning, management and marketing of the heritage sites were also explored. Interviewees were allowed to indicate whether they require training and in which areas specifically, with the focus on obtaining and utilising visitor information. They also indicated which challenges they face and which practices could be applied to operate an effective system.

Research indicated that a visitor feedback system is not implemented at the heritage sites, but that visitor statistics are recorded by the site staff and submitted to management at the National Heritage Council's Head Office.

4.2 COLLECTION, APPLICATION AND STORAGE OF VISITOR DATA AT NAMIBIAN HERITAGE SITES

4.2.1 COLLECTION OF VISITOR DATA

Visitor data should be relevant, accurate and systematically collected in order to guide decision-making about the planning, management and marketing of heritage sites. The research found that information about visitors is completed on a set form and compiled as visitor statistics which are submitted to the head office. The form indicates during which month visitors were at the site and which country they are from. The statistics are currently recorded on a daily basis by frontline staff at all three national heritage sites.

The tourist guides at Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site all indicated in their interviews that they are not involved in obtaining visitor information, and that this is only done by the cashiers upon payment by the visitor to enter the site.

Management and staff from the Heritage Management Department are of the opinion that visitor feedback should not be collected on a daily basis, but rather during intervals to avoid staff feeling overwhelmed by paperwork. Observation during fieldwork identified that the majority of visitors travel as a group. The Regional Heritage Officer therefore indicated that it is not necessary to distribute feedback forms to each visitor in the group. During the development of a visitor feedback system intervals should be identified for relevant and systematic data collection. Consistency provides management with a given time within which to identify the shortcomings and rectify these in a timeous manner. This is directly related to monitoring and evaluation of performance of institutions, e.g. the National Heritage Council of Namibia, that are accountable to Government on how resources are allocated.

As guided by existing literature, visitor data collection should be relevant, accurate and systematically done. Given that it is the task of the site staff to collect visitor information, they should be involved in the development of a visitor feedback system to understand the type of information to be obtained and what the purpose is of such a system. Understanding the importance of the system provides effective execution of duties.

4.2.2 APPLICATION OF VISITOR DATA

The data collected from visitors when they visit the heritage sites should be sufficient to assist the various departments in meeting their objectives. Visitor information helps the Marketing Department develop a profile of the type of visitors coming to the site and which target segments to attract. The Heritage Management Department is able to see how many visitors the site receives during a certain period, to put in place measures that preserve the site and

protect it from human impact. The institution as a whole will be able to monitor any changes in visitor numbers, as well as types and areas for development or improvement. Visitor statistics currently directs the National Heritage Council of Namibia to determine during which months the sites receive more visitors. Subsequently, this requires additional resources to be allocated to maintain a positive experience for visitors and also to aid the conservation measures implemented.

The National Heritage Council of Namibia is a state-owned enterprise accountable to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture on its performance and utilisation of funds. Visitor statistics are used to motivate the request for additional funds that will allow for improvements to the service delivery and infrastructure of the sites. According to existing literature it is very important that heritage preservation initiatives are based on accurate and reliable information in order to set realistic and measureable goals and objectives. This will ensure that the heritage sites reach the balance between visitor recreation and heritage conservation.

4.2.3 STORAGE OF VISITOR DATA

Once visitor data is collected it should be properly stored before and after it is applied in decision-making. Proper storage will allow documents to be easily retrieved when needed to inform planning, management and marketing activities of heritage sites. Not only should departments have easy access, but the information should be compiled in a way that will enable management to interpret the information for application in setting objectives, or addressing a particular need within the institution or at the heritage site.

At site level visitor statistics are compiled and filed for submission when reporting is required. At Hoba Meteorite National Heritage Site the frontline staff do not have access to computer equipment for entering the information digitally and oftentimes compile and submit hand-written records of the statistics. At Heroes Acre National Heritage Site a computer is allocated

to the reception but it is defective. However, the visitor information is submitted to the site manager who compiles a report and submits it to head office. Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site also does not have computer equipment on site, but the site manager has access and can submit digital records of visitor statistics.

The research indicated that storage of data is not only about compiling and filing reports but for the system to be effective, therefore staff need to be provided with the necessary equipment and skills, although only one out of the three cashiers interviewed specified the need to be trained in computer proficiency.

4.3 CONTENT, UNDERSTANDING AND CHALLENGES OF VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS AT NAMIBIAN HERITAGE SITES

4.3.1 COMMON CONTENT OF VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS

Common content for visitor statistic forms at the heritage sites was identified as name and country of origin, but during the interviews it was indicated that information such as contact details, where the visitors came from, where they will be to going next and their nationality are recorded. When questioned on whether visitor feedback is important, the interviewees' responses guided information such as the quality of service delivery, maintenance of the infrastructure, knowledge and conduct of staff and overall perception of the visitor about the sites to be sourced. These particulars assist in identifying efficiency and effectiveness of the operations of the site and areas that need improvement. From the marketing perspective visitor information identifies the different market segments to cater for and the opportunity to attract others. The amount of visitors will direct management on the capacity the heritage site can allow, so as not to compromise the significance thereof.

Insufficient information affects the overall planning, management and marketing of heritage

sites because a proper basis for the identification of measurable goals is lacking. The heritage institution must know who the visitors are that can be expected to visit the heritage site, what mechanisms should be put in place to reach a balance between meeting visitor expectations and conserving the heritage resources. This is only achieved through obtaining sufficient and relevant visitor data.

4.3.2 UNDERSTANDING OF MANAGEMENT AND STAFF ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS AT HERITAGE SITES

For effective management of heritage sites it is imperative that all staff from each level of the organisation understands what a visitor feedback system is, and why it is important for the successful operation of heritage sites. Visitors to the sites make a significant contribution to the preservation of heritage, because it is through this channel that funds are generated for development and conservation of heritage sites. Visitor feedback gives an objective view to how the site is managed, as visitors might see a need for change that is not easily visible to those who daily conduct the operations at the site. For achieving objectives and goals set, the implementers must know how the system works and how it contributes to optimal performance.

During the interviews all management and staff members indicated that they do understand why collecting visitor data is important and what type of information obtained through it can direct effective and efficient management of the heritage sites and operations of the institution. The visitor feedback system is perceived as a tool to be used to identify those areas which require improvement and how staff conduct can be improved to portray a positive and professional image as brand ambassadors for the conservation of Namibian heritage.

It was found that at two of the three heritage sites, Heroes Acre National Heritage Site and Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site, a visitor comments book was implemented, but the practice was stopped, for reasons unknown. In the case of Heroes Acre National Heritage Site it was

found that when the new director was appointed the comments book was no longer used, it is not known whether this is what also happened at Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site.

From 2005 to 2009 a visitor comments book was implemented at Heroes Acre National Heritage Site. When the system was introduced site staff did not know what the purpose of the comments book was and most saw it as being a way in which visitors complained to management about the staff. This resulted in the comments book being hidden from the visitors, because staff did not want anything negative, to be written about them that could put them at a disadvantage. During data collection it was found that dishonesty of staff was directly linked to a misconception of the actual purpose of a visitor feedback system. Self-observation of the comments by visitors guided the understanding of the importance of having a visitor feedback system in place.

Visitor feedback provides a view of the focus areas when developing management and marketing strategies. It also motivates self-assessment of the institution and its staff once these strategies have been implemented. For determining whether management practises are effective, information such as the level of satisfaction with the service delivery and infrastructure, visitor perception of the site and what visitors expect to find at the site is important. For undertaking cost effective marketing activities the department should develop a profile of the visitors coming to the site and which tools are best for communicating with them. Demographics such as age, nationality, how they obtain information about the site and level of education will assist in the identification of the target markets. Knowing where the visitors originate from tells the institution which markets are generating the most income for the site, and which different or new markets should be explored. The best communication tool to apply for sharing information and creating awareness is determined through how visitors get information on what is offered at the heritage site. The level of education identifies how the site interpretation should be formulated and how it should be carried over to the visitor. For

staff conduct and knowledge, open and free flowing feedback on the visitors' experience of the tour helps staff improve their performance and helps the Head Office identify which training needs should be addressed.

The majority of the staff, approximately 80% of the staff interviewed have not had any experience with visitor feedback forms, but all know what visitor feedback is and how important it is for efficiency in the work they do. The institution should therefore capitalise on this on the fact that staff do understand what visitor feedback means for the overall success of the institution. Without consultation or involvement of staff in the development of strategies on how to improve the image and service delivery of a heritage site, the success of fulfilling the objectives set in these strategies is affected.

4.3.3 CHALLENGES FACED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS

Management and staff should realise the importance of visitor feedback, effectively implement the system and timeously resolve any challenges that are faced regarding the utilisation of the system. If this is not done unrealistic goals and objectives will be set; inaccurate information will be provided when reporting on performance; management will be ineffective; marketing activities will unnecessarily be costly; and visitors will become dissatisfied in the service delivery. The consequences will be a decrease in visitor numbers and ultimately in income generation from the sites.

Although the institution does not apply a visitor feedback system but records visitor statistics, challenges are identified that could just as easily affect the effectiveness of a visitor feedback system as it does the compilation of visitor numbers. Of the challenges identified by management and Head Office staff include inconsistency in the distribution of feedback forms; lack of proper coordination of the system; lack of dedication and commitment to the

implementation of the system; no coordination between the different departments; and delays in the submission of visitor numbers.

On site manager level the lack of a system itself was identified as a challenge, and at Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site the lack of a proper filing system was also indicated. At Hoba Meteorite National Heritage Site visitors complain about the amount of paperwork to be completed before access into the site. At a site such as Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site it was identified that especially during peak season, visitors do not have time to complete a questionnaire and it is during these times that additional resources are required to meet the needs of visitors and staff. The receipts issued upon payment for entry to the site then serve the purpose of indicating the amount of visitors during a certain period. However, this information is not sufficient when looking at the type of information required for effective management and marketing of the heritage sites.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 DISCUSSION

The research discovered that a visitor feedback system is not implemented at any of the national heritage sites directly managed by the National Heritage Council of Namibia. A visitor comments book is also not available for visitors to rate or provide feedback on their experience and satisfaction with the site and its staff. Currently only visitor statistics are recorded with the name, place of origin, contact details, where the visitor is coming from and what their next destination is, as the only information being sourced from visitors who come to the sites. The visitor statistics therefore currently serve as the main tool through which the National Heritage Council of Namibia sources visitor information utilised for resource allocation, whether human, financial or other, performance reporting, management and marketing effectiveness and public accountability.

In the absence of a visitor feedback system the implementation of the visitor statistics form was further explored and analysed to identify the type of information obtained through this form. Respondents were also requested to provide their views on whether visitor feedback forms are important, and if so, what type of information would assist the effective planning, management and marketing of heritage sites.

From visitor statistical data the Heritage Management Department can determine during which months the peak and off-peak seasons are, when more staff are required and how to allocate resources such as cleaning material and stationery. It is unfortunate to note that there is a lack of coordination between departments and that vital information that should guide the strategies of other departments is not shared by the department that receives the statistics. The ideal situation is for the Heritage Management and Marketing Departments to collaborate on the development and facilitation of a visitor feedback system, because the information obtained is

equally important to both departments. Coordination is absolutely essential to fulfil the mandate of the institution to preserve natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

A visitor feedback system should be deliberated to develop an effective system that produces relevant and accurate visitor information that will strategically guide the planning, management and marketing of heritage sites. Consultation with site staff is important because they are the point of contact for visitors and can best advise on what the expectations and perceptions of visitors are. They also receive the first indication of whether the institution responsible for the management of the site is performing in order to ensure that all facilities are well maintained; that there is sufficient staff to accommodate an increased number of visitors during peak season; and that good quality service delivery is maintained.

The application of the data gathered through visitor feedback should be recorded and compiled in a format that can easily be applied in decision-making and timeous execution of programmes and projects. The number of visitors to a heritage site indicates whether there is a need to improve on capacity, or apply conservation measures for the heritage significance of the site not to be jeopardised. It also determines whether additional resources - human or financial, or maintenance, are required for the increase in visitors. The visitors' places of origin identify the target markets that visit the sites, the heritage institution can then determine whether it is feasible to allocate more resources to the marketing and development of the sites for the market that generates the most money, or redirect the funds towards exploring and attracting new market segments. Information on the age and tools visitors use to gain information about the sites assists in the use of communication tools that speak to the relevant audience. Overall visitor feedback is an indication of the level of effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery, staff conduct, infrastructure and maintenance which either draws more visitors, or reflects a negative image of the sites and ultimately the institution.

A proper filing system should be developed based on the storage facilities at a given site. As with Hoba Meteorite National Heritage Site and Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site, which are situated in rural areas, the favourable facilities are always lacking as would be found at a site like Heroes Acre National Heritage Site that is just outside a major city. Efficiency and effectiveness are therefore of utmost importance for collection and storage of visitor data at the heritage sites. An effective storage system is more crucial for the Head Office because it is where decisions are taken on the management functions of the heritage sites. As indicated by the Head of Heritage Management the institution is moving with the times in the use of technology, and should make use of the resources available to ensure that the visitor feedback is systematically collected, accurately compiled and a storage method used that is simple and easily retrievable. In monitoring and evaluation of management and marketing practices it might become necessary for data from past times to be drawn to determine whether the applied methods are effective or to identify a need to review these. The social, political, economic, environmental and technological environments are constantly changing and a heritage institution should keep abreast of these changes, and apply the required improvements to meet the objective of providing a positive experience for the visitor, and at the same time fulfilling its mandate of preserving and conserving natural or cultural heritage.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes with the following recommendations to provide direction for the development and effective implementation of a visitor feedback system.

RECOMMENDATION	APPLICABILITY TO HERITAGE SITE PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING
Involvement of management and staff at all levels in the development of a visitor feedback system	Effective and efficient implementation of the visitor feedback system
<p>Consultation with all staff on the type of information to be sourced by the visitor feedback form, which includes:</p> <p>Demographics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age - Level of education - Place of origin - Gender <p>Level of satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service delivery - Infrastructure - Maintenance & hygiene - Staff conduct and knowledge of site history <p>Suggestion box/segment of visitor feedback form</p> <p>Rating of service delivery by site staff</p>	<p>Application of appropriate marketing communication tools</p> <p>Format of display of site interpretation</p> <p>Identification of market segments</p> <p>Development of a heritage site visitor profile</p> <p>Identification of areas for improvement</p> <p>Identification of upgrade of the site structure</p> <p>Identification of need for additional resources/specialised services</p> <p>Need for improvement of skills/capacity building</p> <p>Provision for visitors to openly indicate their perceptions and expectations or experiences of the site and its staff</p> <p>Development of a reward system to motivate optimal performance in a given position/portfolio</p>

<p>Systematic collection of visitor feedback forms</p>	<p>Appointment of staff to facilitate the collection of feedback for efficient submission of the data to Head Office for any identified changes to be timeously made</p> <p>Training of all staff on the purpose, implementation and compilation of visitor feedback</p>
<p>Acquisition of relevant and accurate visitor feedback</p>	<p>Application of collected information to guide identification of objectives, decision-making and operations of heritage institutions in managing and marketing of heritage sites</p>
<p>Simple, easily retrievable storage of visitor feedback forms/reports</p>	<p>Visitor feedback is used by all departments in the development of goals and objectives to achieve effective and efficient management and marketing of sites</p> <p>Digitally stored visitor feedback should be in a format which is easily interpreted by all staff level for application in decision-making and execution of operations</p>
<p>Coordination and cooperation between the different departments</p>	<p>The efficiency of a visitor feedback system is reliant upon cooperation from all divisions of the institution</p> <p>Visitor feedback reports received by the Heritage Management Department is used to identify the need for improved conservation measures, additional staff and resources, which is the responsibility of the Human Resource and Administration Department, identification of the need to increase visitor numbers and ways to generate funds for effective management of</p>

	<p>the site, allocated to the marketing department for facilitation of marketing and fundraising activities</p> <p>All departments are in need of the visitor feedback report to develop departmental strategies and activities</p>
<p>Regular consultation with staff on recommendations made through the visitor feedback system</p>	<p>Monitoring and evaluation should be conducted on a regular basis to identify needs for change and apply these as they arise and to ensure effective management and marketing practices</p>

REFERENCES

- Adie, B. A., & Hall, C. M. (2016). Who visits World Heritage? A comparative analysis of three cultural sites. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 67-80.
- Arizona Office of Tourism. (n.d.). Retrieved from Arizona Office of Tourism:
https://tourism.az.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/How%20to%20Create%20A%20Visitor%20Survey_0.pdf
- Assessment Toolkit. (n.d.). Retrieved from UC San Diego: Student Affairs:
http://vcsa.ucsd.edu/_files/assessment/toolkit/Assessment-Methods.pdf
- Boyd, S. B. (2000). *Tourism and National Parks: The Origin of the Concept*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Brida, J. M. (2011). Understanding museum visitors' experience: a comparative study. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, 47-71.
- Cessford, G., S, C., & Douglas, M. (2002). Developing New Visitor Counters and their Applications for management. Unpublished paper presented at Conference: Monitoring and Management of Visitor Flows in Recreational and Protected Areas.
- Chang, T. (1999). Local Uniqueness in the Global Village: Heritage Tourism in Singapore. *Professional Geographer*, 91-103.
- Chronis, A. (2005). Constructing Heritage at the Gettysburg Storyscape. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 386-406.
- Darcy, S., Griffin, T., Craig, M., Moore, S., & Crilley, G. (2007). Protected Area Visitor Data Collection and Management: Emerging Issues and Gaps in current Australian practices . Cauthe 2007 Conference: Tourism: Past Achievements, Future Challenges.
- Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (2009). *The Impact of Culture on Tourism*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Gordon, B. (1986). The Souvenir. Messenger of the Extraordinary. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 135-146.
- Graburn, N. (1984). The Evolution of Tourist Arts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 393-419.
- Griffin, T., & Bushell, R. (2006). Monitoring visitor experiences in protected areas. *The International Journal for Protected Area Managers*, 25-33.
- Hadwen, W. L., Hill, W., & Pickering, C. M. (2007). Icons under threat: Why monitoring visitors and their ecological impacts in protected areas matters. *Ecological Management & Restoration*, 177-181.
- Hall, C. M., & McArthur, S. (1998). *Intergrated Heritage Management: Principles and Practice*. London: Stationery Office.

- Hermann, U., Van der Merwe, P., Coetzee, W., & Saayman, M. (2016). A visitor motivational typology at Mapungubwe National Park and World Heritage Site. *Acta Commercii - Independent Research Journal in Management Sciences* 16(1), 1-7.
- Hitchcock, M. A. (2000). *Souvenirs: The Material Culture of Tourism*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Hockings, M. (2003). Systems for Assessing the Effectiveness of Management in Protected Areas. *BioScience*, 823-832.
- Hockings, M., Stolten, S., & Dudley, N. (2000). *Evaluating Effectiveness: A Framework for Assessing the Management of Protected Areas*. Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK: IUCN - The World Conservation Union.
- Hornback, K., & Eagles, P. (1999). *Guidelines for Public Use Measurement and Reporting at Parks and Protected Areas*. Gland: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.
- Khumalo, T., Sebatlelo, P., & Van der Merwe, C. (2014). Who is a heritage tourist? *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* Vol 3(1), 1-13.
- Leong, W. (1989). Culture and the State: Manufacturing Traditions for Tourism. . *Critical Studies in Mass Communications*, 355-375.
- Loomis, J. B. (2000). Counting on Recreation Use Data: A Call for Long-Term Monitoring. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 93-96.
- Markwick, M. (2001). Tourism and the Development of Handicraft Production in the Maltese Islands. *Tourism Geographies*, 29-51.
- McLean, F. (1998). Museums and the Construction of Identity: A Review. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 244-252.
- Moore, S., Crilley, G., Darcy, S., Griffen, T., Taplin, R., Tonge, J., . . . Smith, A. (2009). *Designing and Testing a Park-based Visitor Survey*. Queensland: Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre.
- Morales Cano, L. A. (2004). Cultural Tourism, the State and the Day of the Dead. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 879-898.
- Moreno, J. A. (2001). Negotiating Tradition. Tourism Retailers in Guatemala. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 659-685.
- National Heritage Council of Namibia. (2017, 08 09). NHC. Retrieved from <http://www.nhc-nam.org>: <http://www.nhc-nam.org/about/natural-heritage>
- National Heritage Council of Namibia. National Heritage Register. Namibia.
- Prideaux, B., & Crosswell, M. (2006). The value of visitor surveys: The case of Norfolk Island *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 12(4), 359-370.

- Report: Tech Trends 2016*. (2017). Retrieved from Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung:
<http://insights.gfk.com/report-tech-trends-2016?hsCtaTracking=e35364e3-01bc-4640-a046-c82ad3cc95b6%7C72d63d0a-855c-42cc-ac0f-09eff8a4d6b2>
- Richards, G. (2004). Textile Tourists in the European Periphery : New Markets for Disadvantaged Areas? *Tourism Review International*, 323-338.
- Namibia Tours & Safaris (2017, 10 29). *Best places to visit in Namibia*. Retrieved from Namibia Tours & Safaris: <https://www.namibia-tours-safaris.com/destinations/namibia/best-places-to-visit-in-namibia.htm>
- Smith, M. (2003). *Issues in Cultural Tourism Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Thorsell, J. & Sigaty, T (2001). Human Use in World Heritage Natural Sites : A Global Inventory. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 85-101.
- Timothy, D. (2005). *Shopping Tourism, Retail and Leisure*. Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Timothy, D. J. & Nyaupane, G. P. (2009). *Cultural Heritage Tourism in the Developing World: A Regional Perspective*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Timothy, D.J. & Boyd, S.W. (2006). Heritage Tourism in the 21st Century: Valued Traditions and New Perspectives. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 1-16.
- Ministry of Environment and Tourism (2015). *Tourist Statistical Report*. Windhoek: MET.
- Ministry of Environment and Tourism (2016). *National Sustainable Tourism Growth & Development Strategy*. Windhoek: MET.
- Towner, J. (1996). *An Historical Geography of Recreation and Tourism in the Western World: 1540-1940*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Van Der Merwe, P. S. (2016). *A marketing analysis of overnight visitors to Mapungubwe National Park*. Potchefstroom: Unpublished research report for the Institute for Tourism and Leisure Studies, North West University.
- VisitScotland. (2010-2016). *Business Support*. Retrieved from VisitScotland.org:
<http://www.visitscotland.org/pdf/Visitor%20Survey%20Toolkit.pdf>
- Wardell, M., & Moore, S. (2004). *Collection, Storage and Application of visitor use data in protected areas*. Queensland: Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre.
- Zijl, S. V. (2015). *Travel News Namibia: Namibia's Heritage Sites*. Windhoek: Venture Publications.

ANNEXURES

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NATIONAL HERITAGE COUNCIL HEAD OFFICE STAFF



INTERVIEW GUIDE ON VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS:

A CASE STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES: AT NATIONAL HERITAGE SITES

DATE OF INTERVIEW:.....

SITE NAME:.....

No:.....

This questionnaire is a tool for collecting data primarily for educational purposes. Please commit a few minutes of your time to complete the survey questionnaire. The information that is gathered will be handled confidentially.

Please tick or fill in the dotted lines where required.

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your gender? [1] Male [2] Female

2. What is your age group?

[1] below 25 [2] 26-36 [3] 37-47 [4] 48- 58 [5] 59 + above

3. How many years have you worked for the National Heritage Council?

.....

4. What is the name of the position of your job?

.....

5. What do you do at the National Heritage Council?

.....

6. What do you do with visitor feedback forms?

.....

7. Have you ever worked with visitor feedback forms from heritage sites? [1] Yes [2] No

8. What type of information is usually found on your visitor feedback form?

.....

.....

9. Do you think that it is important for visitor feedback forms to be filled in by visitors to the site?

[1] Yes [2] No

10. If yes, what do you think is the reason why visitors to the heritage sites need to fill in visitor feedback forms?

Please explain

.....

.....

11. If no, why do you think it is not important for visitors to fill in visitor feedback forms?

.....

.....

12. Where do most of your visitors come from?

.....

13. Why do they come to your heritage sites?

.....

.....

14. How do visitors get information about what you have to offer at the heritage sites?

[1] Our brochures [2] Our website [3] Our Facebook page [4] Social Media [5] Other

Please explain other.....

15. Do you think the staff always gives visitor feedback forms to every visitor who comes?

[1] Yes [2] No

16. Do any other staff members always give visitor feedback forms to every visitor who comes?

[1] Yes [2] No

17. If no, why do you think they do not give to each and every visitor who comes?

.....
.....

18. Where do you keep the visitor feedback forms after the site staff have submitted them to the National Heritage Council Head Office?

[1] Data is captured on the computer [2] We file them [3] In the store room [4] Other

Please explain other

.....

19. After the visitor feedback forms are collected what do you use it for?

[1] planning [2] marketing [3] identifying and dealing with customer complaints [4] other

Please explain other.....

20. Did the staff at the heritage sites receive training on what to do with visitor feedback forms?

[1] Yes [2] No

21. What kind of training do you think they need?

.....

22. Do you think the reason why visitor feedback forms are used is clear to the staff? [1] Yes [2] No

23. What would you say are the challenges you face with using visitor feedback forms?

.....
.....

24. What do you think should be done to assist you and the staff to use the visitor feedback forms better?

.....
.....

25. What is your level of education?

No formal education [] Primary school [] High School [] NTA certificate level 3 []

Vocational education [] Diploma level 5 [] University [] Other

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NATIONAL HERITAGE COUNCIL HEAD
OFFICE STAFF**



**INTERVIEW GUIDE ON VISITOR FEEDBACK FORMS:
A CASE STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES: AT NATIONAL
HERITAGE SITES**

DATE OF INTERVIEW:.....

SITE NAME:.....

No:.....

This questionnaire is a tool for collecting data primarily for educational purposes. Please commit 10 minutes of your time to complete the survey questionnaire. The information that is gathered will be handled confidentially.

Please tick or fill in the dotted lines where required.

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your gender? [1] Male [2] Female

2. What is your age group?

[1] below 25 [2] 26-36 [3] 37-47 [4] 48- 58 [5] 59 + above

3. How many years have you worked for this heritage site?

.....

4. What is the name of the position of your job?

.....

5. What do you do at this heritage site?

.....

6. Have you ever handed out visitor feedback forms to visitors? [1] Yes [2] No

7. What type of information is usually found on your visitor feedback form?

.....

.....

8. Do you think that it is important for visitor feedback forms to be filled in by visitors to the site?

[1] Yes [2] No

9. If yes, what do you think is the reason why visitors to the heritage site need to fill in visitor feedback forms?

Please explain

.....
.....
10. If no, why do you think it is not important for visitors to fill in visitor feedback forms?
.....
.....

11. Where do most of your visitors come from?
.....
.....

12. Why do they come to your heritage site?
.....
.....

13. How do visitors get information about what you have to offer at this heritage site?

[1] Our brochures [2] Our website [3] Our Facebook page [4] on social media [5] other

Please explain other.....

14. Do you always give visitor feedback forms to every visitor who comes?

[1] Yes [2] No

15. Do any other staff members always give visitor feedback forms to every visitor who comes?

[1] Yes [2] No

16. If no, why do you not give to each and every visitor who comes?
.....
.....
.....

17. Where do you keep the visitor feedback forms after the visitor has filled them in?

[1] Data is captured on the computer [2] We file them [3] In the store room [4] Other

Please explain other.....

18. After the visitor feedback forms are collected what do you use it for?

[1] planning [2] marketing [3] identifying and dealing with customer complaints [4] other

Please explain other.....

19. Did you receive training on what to do with visitor feedback forms? [1] Yes [2] No

20. What kind of training do you think you need?
.....
.....

21. Do you think the reason why you should use visitor feedback forms is clear to you? [1] Yes [2] No

22. What would you say are the challenges you face with using visitor feedback forms?

.....
.....

23. What do you think should be done to assist you to use the visitor feedback forms better?

.....
.....

24. What is your level of education?

No formal education [] Primary school [] High School [] NTA certificate level 3 []

Vocational education [] Diploma level 5 [] University [] Other

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

VISITOR STATISTICS FORM IMPLEMENTED AT NAMIBIAN HERITAGE SITES

NATIONAL HERITAGE SITES



.....**NATIONAL HERITAGE SITE**

VISITOR STATISTICS

MONTH:

DATE	NAMIBIANS	RSA	OTHER AFRICA	GERMANS	UK	OTHER EUROPE	NORTH AMERICA	SOUTH AMERICA	ASIA	OTHERS	TOTAL

