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City Tourism Product Development and Marketing: The Case of the Provincial Capital city of Mahikeng

Abstract. This article explores the city tourism product composition of Mahikeng, the capital city of South Africa’s North West Province. Its goal is twofold: to capture the industry’s views on the city’s current urban tourism product offering and to identify the necessary marketing activities for tourism development in Mahikeng. The study used quantitative data from an online survey involving 62 tourism businesses operating in Mahikeng. The results highlight a limited level of tourism product offerings, ineffective marketing activities, and the need to develop a more diverse city tourism product mix to ensure the success of Mahikeng as a tourist city. The authors recommend the development of a varied product mix and, through this, the implementation of marketing activities more suited to cities with a provincial status.

Keywords: city tourism, city tourism product development, city tourism marketing, provincial capital city marketing, city tourism product mix, Mahikeng

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1. Introduction

City tourism is a fundamental driver of social and economic growth in all major cities worldwide (Ashworth & Page, 2011). Capital cities around the world are well known as catalysts of urban tourism development thanks to their diverse offerings and the fact of being vibrant centres of culture and commerce, which attract large numbers of business and leisure tourists every year (Petrova et al., 2018). For instance, business tourists are attracted to capital cities in search of various
business opportunities, including those involving government services and departments (Naydenov & Traykov, 2017). Leisure tourists tend to visit capital cities to do sightseeing and participate in various cultural or religious activities (Hakeem & Khan, 2018).

According to Rogerson (2012), South Africa has also started to embrace city tourism, even though it is a much younger form of tourism compared to wildlife tourism. Nonetheless, city tourism is among the least researched fields (Shoval, 2018), and even more so within the South African context. While there is some research on South African city tourism, authors in this field mainly focus on the development of urban tourism in metropolitan cities, large cities, and main towns, neglecting provincial capital cities, particularly those situated in more rural parts of the country (Rogerson & Visser, 2011; Rogerson, 2012; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014; Pandy & Rogerson, 2019). As a result, few studies have been undertaken to identify, develop, and market city tourism products in provincial capital cities in South Africa, such as Mahikeng.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold. Firstly, to identify current city tourism product offerings available in Mahikeng; and secondly, to identify effective marketing activities to promote city tourism development in Mahikeng.

This article is intended to fill the research gap regarding the development and marketing of urban tourism in provincial capitals. Practically, the findings of this study could be used as guidelines for provincial capitals in South Africa regarding the identification and development of unique city tourism products and more efficient marketing activities that are suited to this type of destinations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Mahikeng as a Tourism Destination

The North West province is one of South Africa’s nine provinces (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020) and consists of four district municipalities (Potgieter & Lithoko, 2016). The Ngaka Modiri Molema District municipality is the largest one and Mahikeng is its largest city (Drummond & Nel, 2021).

Until 1994 Mahikeng (then called Mafeking) was part of the Bantustan of Bo-phuthatswana, a homeland outside of the borders of South African. After the first democratic elections, this homeland was integrated into South Africa (Drummond & Drummond, 2021). The city has a rich history dating back to the nineteenth century, with many unique historical, cultural, and geographical tourist attractions
(Drummond & Drummond, 2021). These include the oldest town hall in the province, which was built in 1902 and is currently a museum commemorating the Siege of Mafikeng¹ and Sol Plaatjie, the Stadt School, which is one of the earliest schools constructed north of the Orange River and Mmabatho Sun Casino and Entertainment complex, which was one of the most visited casinos by South Africans prior to 1994, as gambling was illegal in South Africa (Prinsloo & Pelser, 2015).

According to Prinsloo and Pelser (2015), tourism opportunities in Mahikeng can be attributed not only to the city’s rich history but also to its location. Mahikeng is only 25 kilometres from the Ramatlabama border post, one of the busiest border crossings between South Africa and Botswana, which is used by domestic and international tourists (Prinsloo & Pelser, 2015). Mahikeng is also home to various international hotel brands, including the Protea hotel, which is part of the Marriott International Hotel Group, various car rental agencies, such as Hertz, Avis, and Bolt, as well as a number of domestic transport services, which can be easily accessed by tourists visiting the city (Wessels & Tseane-Gumbi, 2022).

Thanks to these products and services, tourism product development and the marketing of Mahikeng as a tourist destination is a key focus for the provincial and local government (Mahikeng Local Municipality, 2020). In 2010, the South African government launched the National Growth Path Policy (NGP), which identified 21 areas, including Mahikeng, in which the development of tourism infrastructure was declared a priority with a view to strengthening the country’s tourism industry (Rogerson & Nel, 2016). According to a study by Drummond et al. (2021), Mahikeng, in 2014, contributed 5.7% to the province’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

However, there has been a drastic decline in tourism activities and economic growth in Mahikeng, and the city’s contribution to the country’s GDP declined to 4.5% in 2018 (Drummond et al., 2021). This decline started before the COVID-19 pandemic, which weakened the tourism industry in the city even more. In addition to the negative impact of the pandemic, the development of city tourism in Mahikeng has been thwarted by the rising costs of living and new tourism product offerings in competing destinations; another disadvantage is Mahikeng’s peripheral location more than 200 km from the closest airport (Drummond et al., 2021).

### 2.2. City Tourism Products

The availability and the development of new and unique tourism products and activities are essential for a thriving city tourism destination (McKercher, 2016). As Benur and Bramwell (2015) note, tourism products are key pull factors for tour-

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¹ Mahikeng was besieged during the Second Boer War in 1899. The Siege lasted 217 days.
ists. According to Farmaki (2012) and Garanti (2022), tourism products on offer should be diverse enough to appeal to various types of tourists, thereby enhancing the destination’s attractiveness and ensuring that its tourism offering can more easily adapted to tourists’ changing expectations. The following categories of tourism products have been identified from literature as significant for city tourism and are therefore considered in the following study: business tourism, tangible cultural and heritage tourism products, leisure tourism, events, nature tourism, museums tours, and theatre and concerts.

Business tourism involves professionals travelling for purposes which are related to their work (Camilleri, 2018; Spencer & Bavuma, 2018). This is done in various forms including attending meetings, conferences, or exhibitions, while also engaging in leisure activities (Anas et al., 2020; Lekgau & Tichaawa, 2021). Tangible cultural and heritage tourism products are directly related to the history and traditions of local communities, including traditional clothing and food (Achille & Fiorillo, 2022; Goussos, 2022). These tangible offerings provide opportunities for tourists to engage with and learn more about different cultures and their ways of living (Shahzalal, 2016). Leisure tourism activities, such as golfing, swimming, and horse-riding, are a way for tourists to relax, benefitting their mental and physical health (Min et al., 2015; Acha-Anyi, 2020; Maki et al., 2023). According to Zlatanov (2015), Hahm et al. (2018), Van Eck (2018), Jin and Cheng (2020) and Wessels and Tseane-Gumbi (2023), events can be defined as planned one-off occasions, ranging from small private celebrations (weddings, anniversaries) to mega events, such as international sports events, which often serve as catalysts fostering infrastructural development, attracting media attention and in this way contributing to the positive image of the destination.

Intangible cultural and heritage tourism products include museum tours, workshops for tourists who want to learn artistic skills associated with local communities, while nature-based tourism activities such as walking tours in city parks. Such offerings have become some of the most preferred city tourism activities in recent years, and their availability has a considerable effect on tourists’ choice of destinations, which in turn affects destination development strategies (Araujo, 2017; Andre, Volman & Durksen, 2017; Franklin, 2018; Metin, 2019; Namazov, 2021; Utanova, 2021; Warr et al., 2021; Gu et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Another very popular category of city tourism products, which has become increasingly popular with international and domestic tourists, is classified as creative tourism, which includes interactive live theatre and concert productions (Song, 2015; Zieba, 2016; Amorim et al., 2020). Availability of all of these unique tourism products can facilitate the development of effective marketing of city destinations (Benur & Bramwell, 2015).
2.3. City Marketing

Nykiel and Jascolt (1998), Balencourt and Zafra (2012), Popescu and Mina-Raiu (2019) and Pike (2021) argue that cities should be marketed like other products while efforts should also be made to create their brand identity in consumers’ minds and build their competitive market position. Cities want to be competitive by differentiating themselves from other destinations and achieve a substantial market share in the tourism market by offering superior or unique tourism products (D’Hauteserre, 2000; Isoraite, 2018; Woyo & Slabbert, 2021; Dwyer, 2010; Abreu-Novais et al., 2016).

In order to market itself like a product, a city must first identify its unique offerings and create a recognisable image so that tourists are inclined to choose it over other cities (Liouris & Deffner, 2005). Image is a sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions a person has about an object, agency, business programme, its facilities, and programmes (Kotler, 1982; Crompton & Lamp, 1986). In 1995, Saayman introduced eight components of a positive destination image, which include: efficacy of a destination, client orientation, magic of a destination, history of a destination, branding, sensory effect of the destination, virtue of a destination, and the atmosphere of a destination. The goal of city marketing is to convince visitors, investors, and businesses that a given city is the essential element of the reality of a given area.

According to Selby (2004), city marketing catalyses tourism development, stimulates transportation systems, improves health service delivery, and strengthens industrial infrastructure within the city. However, as Spirou (2010) points out, city marketing is challenging as it often requires considerable and sustainable investment in marketing campaigns and infrastructure as well as constant efforts to win the privilege of organising major events to strengthen its visibility. Therefore, cities need to develop a strategy with specific objectives to position themselves (Popescu & Mina-Raiu, 2019).

3. Methodology

This explorative study is based on quantitative data collected using an online survey. The target population consisted of all active tourism businesses operating in Mahikeng, representing the main industry sectors, namely accommodation (guest-houses, hotels, and bed-and-breakfasts), transport (car rental companies), entertainment (casinos), and food and beverage (restaurants). The survey frame was
derived from a database provided by the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DECECT), a key provincial government department responsible for tourism development and marketing in the North West Province. A total of 70 active tourism businesses were identified in the database. The survey was conducted online because of COVID-19 restrictions.

The survey questionnaire was developed using the QuestionPro software on the basis of Khusnutdinova et al. (2019), Maxim (2019), Postma et al. (2017), Rogerson (2012), Rogerson and Rogerson (2020), and Rogerson and Visser (2011). It was distributed by email to all businesses in the target population, and reminder emails were sent after every ten days during the data collection period (from August 5 to October 1, 2021). 62 completed questionnaires were returned, which represents the response rate of 88%. The findings of the survey are presented in the following section.

4. Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product category</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business tourism products</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible cultural and heritage tourism products</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure tourism products</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural tourism products</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping opportunities</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum tours</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre and concert products</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors

Respondents were asked to identify tourism-related products they were aware of in Mahikeng. Because many tourism products in the city are not well advertised, providers of tourism services are not aware of their existence; consequently, the range of products they can offer to their guests is necessarily limited. As can be seen in Table 1, the highest level of awareness (76%) exists with regard to natural tourism products, followed by tangible cultural and heritage tourism products (70%). Only 28% of respondents were aware of theatre and concert productions available in the city.
Table 2. The importance of tourism products for the development of Mahikeng as a city tourism destination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products</th>
<th>Not important at all</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely important</th>
<th>Mean value</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business tourism products</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>0.884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible cultural and heritage tourism products</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>0.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure tourism products</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature tourism products</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>0.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping opportunities</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>0.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum tours</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>1.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre and concert products</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>1.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Likert Scale (1: Not important at all — 5: Extremely important)
Source: Authors

Table 2 shows results regarding the relative importance of tourism product offerings critical for the development of urban tourism in Mahikeng. According to the respondents, the four tourism product offerings critical for tourism development in Mahikeng include events (\(\bar{x}=4.45\)) as the most critical, followed by shopping opportunities (\(\bar{x}=4.36\)), tangible cultural and heritage tourism products (\(\bar{x}=4.32\)) and nature tourism products (\(\bar{x}=4.31\)).

Table 3 shows results regarding the relative importance of marketing activities that the respondents considered to be critical for the development of urban tourism in Mahikeng. Taking into account the mean values of responses, ensuring effective signage for tourists (\(\bar{x}=4.47\)) was seen as a measure of relatively the greatest importance, followed by promoting the city’s cleanliness (\(\bar{x}=4.44\)) and its unique ambience (\(\bar{x}=4.39\)).

Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which the city’s status as a provincial capital helps to attract greater media attention and more marketing opportunities, such as events, activities, and programmes, whose direct goal is not necessarily to market the city but which can increase the city’s popularity. These include local cultural festivals such as Mahika Mahikeng, provincial government parliamentary sittings, and many more. The results are presented in Table 4.
Table 3. The importance of marketing activities for the development of urban tourism in Mahikeng

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Not important at all</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely important</th>
<th>Mean value (x)</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting the city’s positive image</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.36**</td>
<td>0.870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting effective service delivery</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.34**</td>
<td>0.788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the city’s brand as a tourism destination</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.35**</td>
<td>0.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting the city’s cleanliness</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.44*</td>
<td>0.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting the city’s transport accessibility</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.35**</td>
<td>0.851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting the city’s unique ambience</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.39*</td>
<td>0.894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring effective signage for tourists visiting the city</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.47*</td>
<td>0.824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Likert scale (1: Not important at all — 5: Extremely important); — No responses; *Most important; **Least important
Source: Authors

Table 4. The impact of Mahikeng’s status as a provincial capital on publicity and marketing opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>To a lesser extent</th>
<th>To a moderate extent</th>
<th>To a greater extent</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media exposure</td>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Likert scale (1: Not at all — 5: Definitely)
Source: Authors

The relationship between the tourism products and the marketing activities was measured using the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient (Table 5), which is appropriate for small samples (Podhorodecka, 2018). The correlations were interpreted according to Cohen’s guidelines (1988, p. 79), where the $r_s$ value of 0.1 denotes a small correlation, 0.3 — a medium correlation, 0.5 or higher — a large correlation.
Table 5. Spearman’s rank order correlations ($r_s$) between marketing activities and tourism product offerings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Business tourism</th>
<th>Tangible cultural and heritage tourism products</th>
<th>Leisure tourism</th>
<th>Natural tourism</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Shopping opportunities</th>
<th>Museum tours</th>
<th>Theatre and concerts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting the city’s positive image</strong></td>
<td>$r_s$</td>
<td>0.302**</td>
<td>.419**</td>
<td>.316***</td>
<td>.478**</td>
<td>.448**</td>
<td>.356**</td>
<td>.380**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting service delivery</strong></td>
<td>$r_s$</td>
<td>.345**</td>
<td>.557***</td>
<td>.357**</td>
<td>.415**</td>
<td>.556***</td>
<td>.527***</td>
<td>.623***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Managing the city's brand as a tourism destination</strong></td>
<td>$r_s$</td>
<td>.267*</td>
<td>.270*</td>
<td>.362**</td>
<td>.388**</td>
<td>.420**</td>
<td>.313**</td>
<td>.338**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting the city's cleanliness</strong></td>
<td>$r_s$</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>.397**</td>
<td>.239</td>
<td>.456**</td>
<td>.518***</td>
<td>.292*</td>
<td>.375**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.093</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting the city's transport accessibility</strong></td>
<td>$r_s$</td>
<td>.401**</td>
<td>.429**</td>
<td>.398**</td>
<td>.406**</td>
<td>.483**</td>
<td>.415**</td>
<td>.467**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting the unique ambience of Mahikeng</strong></td>
<td>$r_s$</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>.375**</td>
<td>.300**</td>
<td>.292*</td>
<td>.359**</td>
<td>.353**</td>
<td>.433**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ensuring effective signage for tourists visiting Mahikeng</strong></td>
<td>$r_s$</td>
<td>.329**</td>
<td>.420**</td>
<td>.442**</td>
<td>.450**</td>
<td>.488**</td>
<td>.422**</td>
<td>.371**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$p \leq 0.05; r_s$ *small=0.1, **medium=0.3, ***large=0.5 (Cohen, 1988, p. 79)

Source: Authors

As can be seen in Table 5, a number of relationships between marketing activities and tourism product offerings are statistically significant. Firstly, a large positive relationship exists between promoting the city’s positive image and theatre and concerts ($r_s = .508; p \leq 0.000$). Shopping opportunities ($r_s = .527; p \leq 0.000$), museum tours ($r_s = .623; p \leq 0.000$), tangible cultural and heritage tourism products ($r_s = .557; p \leq 0.000$) and events ($r_s = .556; p \leq 0.000$) were found to be positively correlated with the promotion of service delivery. Events ($r_s = .518; p \leq 0.000$) were also found to be
strongly correlated with promoting the city’s cleanliness. No statistically significant correlation was found between promoting the city’s cleanliness ($p > 0.05$) or its unique ambience ($p > 0.05$) and business tourism products, which can be taken to mean that such measures have no effect on the development of this category of products.

5. Discussion

The purpose of the study was to identify tourism products that constitute Mahikeng’s urban tourism offering as well as marketing activities regarded as desirable for the development of urban tourism. The results in Table 1 revealed that respondents are the most aware of nature-based tourism products currently available in Mahikeng. This is consistent with Rogerson’s observation (2012) stating that while South Africa has embraced various forms of tourism, traditional wildlife tourism offerings still takes priority and is the best developed, best marketed and a most encouraged tourist activity by tourism product providers. However, as the findings show, Mahikeng’s urban tourism product portfolio is not marketed in full as Farmaki (2012) and Garanti (2022) recommend an attractive destination should. Currently, the city’s offerings of events, theatre productions, and concerts are not well known among tourism product providers and the offering of such is also very limited. As stated by Kruger and Saayman (2015), art-related tourism products such as these, while in most cases not available as part of a permanent offering, have the potential of attracting large crowds of tourists and media coverage and should be encouraged to ensure destination development. This, in turn, allows other primary tourism sectors, including the accommodation and transport sectors, to also thrive, thus creating business opportunities for other sectors of the destination’s local economy (Saayman & Saayman, 2019). This is also confirmed by the ratings in Table 2, which show that events are regarded as important for the development of urban tourism in Mahikeng. This finding is very significant, especially for festival organisers, because despite the existence of various cultural groups in the city, their traditions and history are not represented in the form of festivals. Also, given the rich history of Mahikeng as well the presence of indigenous cultures, they could be featured in concert productions created to commemorate historically significant tribal leaders and happenings of the Setswana communities, a very prominent culture among local communities in this city.

The results also reveal the importance of shopping opportunities as another element of urban tourism product offering, which has been identified mostly in studies done in places such as Hong Kong, Hungary, and Italy (Choi et al., 2018;
Michalko et al., 2014; Rabbiosi, 2011). Research conducted on this topic in South Africa is limited and shopping opportunities as a tourist attraction has been observed mainly within metropolitan cities such as Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town (Rogerson, 2011; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2017). Results from previous studies could not be generalised to Mahikeng because of its remote location in the rural part of the country and its size. A study done by Saayman and Saayman (2012) did indicate that shopping tourists in South Africa mostly come from neighbouring countries, including Botswana, with Mahikeng being situated only 10 kilometres from its border. It is therefore recommended that more international brands should be encouraged to provide unique shopping products as well as shopping experiences to shopping tourists in Mahikeng. The local government should also try to attract international investors to support a new shopping centre development in the city.

One finding that should be reason for concern is the fact that business tourism products were regarded as relatively less important for the development of city tourism. As Lekgau and Tichaawa (2021) point out, business tourism, particularly in a post-COVID-19 environment, can drive the development of an city tourism destination. It is, therefore, crucial that those responsible for tourism policy, especially at provincial and municipal government levels, should recognise the importance and potential contribution that business tourism can make to the development of city tourism. The importance of business tourism activities can be increased by upgrading the existing convention centre in Mahikeng, which has, even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, not been utilised to its full potential.

The study also revealed the importance of promoting the city’s cleanliness and its unique ambience as well as the use of effective signage as critical elements of marketing Mahikeng as a city tourism destination. The city is obviously lacking in these areas and is generally believed not to have a positive image as a tourist destination (Wessels & Tseane-Gumbi, 2022). As already mentioned, cities should be marketed like other products to create their brand identity and strengthen their competitive market position. It is therefore important for the city to make improvements in these areas, which are critical if the city is to be successfully marketed as a competitive tourism product with a unique identity. One could also expect that Mahikeng’s status as a provincial capital city should attract media attention and marketing opportunities. Surprisingly, respondents in the survey were rather sceptical as regards to the positive impact of the city’s status on exposure and marketing opportunities (see Table 4). Petrova et al. (2018) argue that capital cities drive tourism by providing more opportunities for commercial activities, thus attracting more media exposure. One can therefore ask the obvious question: Why does this particular provincial capital not get more media exposure? This authors
believes that this situation can be attributed to the unavailability of large-scale events, which the media could cover; it should therefore become a priority for Mahikeng to attract such events.

Spearman rank order correlations shown in Table 5 can be used as a guidance for alternative service delivery practices and marketing activities in Mahikeng. Activities regarded as very important are currently those the city is grappling with. The local government should therefore mandate that all these services, including those responsible for cleaning and effective signage, should be prioritised in the municipal operational and maintenance budget. Only after all these services have been delivered, should they be included in all marketing campaigns relating to city tourism product development. The promotion of service delivery will not only help the development of urban tourism products such as events, theatre productions and concerts, and shopping opportunities, but it will also encourage the continuing development of tangible cultural and heritage tourism products, which will strengthen the city’s a competitive advantage.

6. Conclusion

The article makes valuable theoretical and practical contributions. For one thing, it stimulates debate and fills the gap in the literature on product development and marketing of provincial capital cities as urban destinations in South Africa. Furthermore, the study offers useful insights for destination managers, marketers, policymakers as well as tourism product developers in the private sector regarding the city’s tourism potential, which they can use to foster a thriving and sustainable tourism industry.

The study has its limitations. Firstly, since it was conducted during the pandemic, many of the respondents were neutral in their responses, possibly because they were unsure if the tourism industry would ever recover after the pandemic. Secondly, the results for Mahikeng can hardly be generalised to other provincial capital cities in South Africa. Each province and each provincial capital city in South Africa have a different and unique tourism product offering. Each is different in terms of its geographical location and infrastructure. Thirdly, the study only presents opinions of individual tourism enterprises, which are often a reflection of their own business interests (hence the relatively low assessment of the importance of city marketing management). More interesting insights could be gained by comparing these answers with the views of the city’s authorities, which should have a broader view of destination marketing.
References


Rozwój i marketing oferty produktów turystyki miejskiej w Mahikeng w RPA

**Streszczenie.** Artykuł przedstawia badanie dotyczące oferty turystyki miejskiej w Mahikeng, stolicy Prowincji Północno-Zachodniej w RPA. Celem badania było zebranie opinii przedstawicieli branży na temat aktualnej oferty produktów turystyki miejskiej i działań marketingowych, które, ich zdaniem, mogą pomóc w rozwoju turystyki w Mahikeng. Autorzy prezentują dane ilościowe zebrane za pomocą ankiety internetowej, na którą odpowiedziały 62 firmy z branży turystycznej, które działają w mieście. Wyniki świadczą o tym, że obecna oferta produktów turystycznych jest dość ograniczona, a działania marketingowe są mało skuteczne. Istnieje zatem potrzeba opracowania bardziej zróżni-
cowanego asortymentu produktów, aby Mahikeng mogło z powodzeniem odgrywać rolę ośrodka recepcji turystyki miejskiej. Konieczne jest również wdrożenie działań marketingowych, które w lepszym stopniu odpowiadają potrzebom miasta będącego stolicą prowincji.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka miejska, rozwój produktów turystyki miejskiej, marketing turystyki miejskiej, marketing stolicy prowincji, gama produktów turystyki miejskiej, Mahikeng