

# Exploring Destination Image: A Comparison of Sport and Non-Sport Visitor Perceptions

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal Occasional Paper No. 90  
February 2012

## 1. Introduction

The management of Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) have decided to issue occasional papers to the tourism trade on the core findings of its research and other projects. The purpose of these papers is to stimulate more debate regarding the findings or progress of such projects, as well as to ensure wider awareness of key research findings.

The branding of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) has taken considerable effort and finance. KZN is South Africa's most popular domestic tourist destination in South Africa (SA). South Africa Tourism (SAT) indicated that KZN received as much as 8.3mn trips in 2010. This was approximately 28% of the total number of domestic trips taken in SA. This paper will determine if there is a difference in the perceptions of a destination with regards to a sporting event or a music/cultural event.

You can download an electronic version of this paper at <http://www.kzn.org.za/invest/architecture.pdf> or as an MS Word document at <http://www.kzn.org.za/invest/architecture.doc>. Please note that you will need an Adobe Acrobat reader to download .pdf files. These readers can be downloaded free of charge at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

## 2. Background

The perception that visitors have of a destination has a very important impact on their decision to return to the destination. Perception is influenced by experience. The experience of the visitor at the destination has an impact on their perception of the destination.

Perception can also be expressed in other ways. Respondents have been asked if they would recommend KZN as a tourist destination to family and friends, list the characteristics or images of KZN and what mood was experienced in KZN. These are important indicators of the perceptions that visitors have of the destination. TKZN measures these perceptions through their event impact assessment questionnaires. This study will focus on two events as case studies. The Midmar Mile and the Splashy Fen Music Festival will be used in this study.

## 3. Case Studies

The Midmar Mile is an open water swimming event that is considered the largest of its kind in the world. The event takes place in February annually. Approximately 50% of the respondents at this event are from outside province of KZN. The event attracted approximately 16 000 participants and 14 000 spectators over a two day period.

Table 1: Midmar Mile 2011 and 2012

Images/Characteristics	2011	2012
Beach/sea	35%	36.3%
Mountains	12%	15.7%
Good/warm weather/sunshine	14%	7.6%
Green hills/landscape/scenery	3%	5.7%
Other	0%	5.1%
Drakensberg	0%	3.6%
Wildlife/animals	5%	3.6%
Friendly people/friendliness	1%	3.0%
Fun/Funsunzi	5%	3.0%
Nature	2%	3.0%

Splashy Fen Music Festival is an event that takes place in the Southern Drakensberg area over 4 days. This event attracted approximately 8 500 festival goers.

Table 2: Splashy Fen 2010 and 2011

Description	2010 %	2011 %
Beach/Ocean/Sea	34.6	36.1
Mountains/Drakensberg	21.4	24.4
Zulu Culture	11.2	3.4
Animals/Wild life/Game Reserves/Nature Reserves	10.1	9.5
Country side/Scenery	6.7	0.7
Sunshine/Good weather	6.2	10.7
Culture	3.6	3.4
Amazing people/Friendly	3.4	3.7
Sports	1.8	-
Durban	1	0,2

**Table 3: Splashy Fen 2011 top ten**

<b>Description</b>	<b>2011 %</b>
Beach/ocean/sea	36.1
Mountain/Drakensberg	24.4
Good weather/sun	10.7
Animals/wildlife/game reserves/nature reserves	9.5
Green hills/environment	8.3
Friendly people	3.7
Zulu culture	3.4
Shaka Zulu	2.0
Zulu people	2.0
	100

**References**

The Independent (online)

<http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/egypt-tourist-arrivals-down-a-third-in-q2-2353835.html>

Accessed on the 09 February 2012.

SAT Annual Report 2010

-o0o-

*Please forward any comments regarding this paper to:*

**Wayne Tifflin**

**Researcher**

[wayne@zulu.org.za](mailto:wayne@zulu.org.za)