

The Tracking the Recognition and Association of a brand using sports events. A study of the Zulu Kingdom brand at the Midmar Mile.

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal Occasional Paper No. 93
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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 United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO: 2013) has stated that in 2012 more than 1 billion people travelled the world over. Tourism has become a major contribution to the world's economy with just over US\$ 1.03 trillion international receipts in 2011 (UNWTO:2012).

Tourism is also considered as a tool to assist in the economic development of developing countries (South Africa Govt 1996, 2012). The foreign exchange earned from tourism revenues is much sought after. Ndlovu (2009:21) cites George (2007:291) how indicates that tourism impacts the economy of a country in a number of ways. Virtually every activity that a tourist participates in has an impact directly or indirectly on the economy. The spend of a tourist is important especially for developing countries that need foreign currency.

Thus the competitiveness of a destination is of the utmost importance. One element of that competitiveness is the branding of a destination. At the domestic tourism level the development of a brand is also essential in order to differentiate between various destinations.

The Midmar Mile is an open water swimming event that is held annually at the Midmar Dam just outside Pietermaritzburg, which is the capital of KZN. The Midmar mile is approximately 1600m long depending on the water level. The race first took place 1974. The race attracts over 16 000 swimmers and is considered the largest open water swimming event in the world. 13 755 completed the race in 2011. The event is held over 2 days. The 1st day is for corporate and charities and the 2nd day is the main event. The race is divided in male and female the further divided in to age groups which is further divided into ability. This accommodates for managing the large number of swimmers.

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Occ Paper 93 The Tracking the Recognition and Association of a brand using sports events. A study of the Zulu Kingdom brand at the Midmar Mile.



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2. Background

Anholt says that the main challenge is about a balanced representation of the destination (UNWTO 2009:XIII). The brand must provide a realistic picture of the destination. What happens when a brand does not align with the perceptions that visitors have of the destination? From a domestic tourism perspective, where domestic tourists know the destination does the brand align with their perception of the destination?

This paper analyses the data collected from surveys conducted at the Midmar Mile from 2008 to 2012. TKZN has re-launched its brand twice in the last decade, in December 2003 and in May 2011. This paper tracks the recognition of the logo and slogan and the respondents' associations of logo. In later years the surveys also began to track respondents' associations with the province of KZN, its characteristics, and its unique attractions.

The results showed the recognition of the brand decline when a new brand was introduced. However, an interesting finding was when respondents gave their responses to the associations of the brand compared with what the characteristics, image and unique attributes of the province were, there was a clear divide. What TKZN is trying to achieve with the brand is not re-enforcing what respondents already know and expect of the province.

3. Literature Review

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) is the DMO for the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. KZN is South Africa's leading domestic tourism destination with a share of some 23% of the market of 26.4mn trips. (TKZN) was established in 1996 as a result of the KZN Tourism Act of 1995 amended in 2002.

In the travel and tourism sector a destination needs to sell itself to consumers and the trade. The reputation of a destination determines if this process of selling is easy or difficult. Anholt (UNWTO 2009:IX) says that a destination with a powerful and positive image needs to do less work and spend less money on promoting itself in the marketplace. Oirdache, Cebuc, Panoiu 2009:1 say that not only is the creation of a brand defining and expressing the personality of a destination or just the creation of a logo, but also the creation of a verbal and visual identity.

Oirdache, Cebuc, Panoiu 2009:2, indicated that the creation of a brand expresses the personality of a destination. A brand renders information about the destination it is a method by which the organisation communicates, organizes and differentiates itself towards its audience. Oirdache, Cebuc, Panoiu 2009:2

Brands play a critical role in the economic, social, political, and cultural progress of a country (UNWTO:2009:IX). The lack of any brand is considered an obstacle to any marketing activity (Oirdache, Cebuc, Panoiu 2009:1). Therefore it is important to have a brand in the market place amidst the plethora of competing brands.

Occ Paper 93 The Tracking the Recognition and Association of a brand using sports events. A study of the Zulu Kingdom brand at the Midmar Mile.



Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005:329) assert that David Aaker's (1991:7) definition of branding is widely accepted. The primary role of a brand he says is to "identify the goods and services of either one seller or groups of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors."

Aker and Joachimsthaler (2000) in their theory of brand equity say that the value of a brand comes from four main factors. These are, brand awareness, perceived quality of the brand, brand associations and brand loyalty. I would like to highlight the two factors of brand awareness and brand associations that TKZN has measured in their events studies.

Logos are an important element of the brand. Hankinson (2004:54) says that since brands serve as symbols around which relationships are built. Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005:329) says that it follows that logos are a key component of branding. They go on to say that logos often become the central image that represents the brand of services, products, and destinations. Therefore the recognition and awareness of the logo is important.

Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005:329) say that the promise of a brand is more important for a destination than for a service organisation because the brand extends a degree of comfort that the visitor has with the destination. However they say that the DMO is in a difficult situation because much of the comfort that the visitor derives from the brand comes from the experience of the visitor. These experiences are not all under the control of the DMO. They strongly support the idea that the brand must enhance the visitor experience. This study measures if the TKZN brand lives up to the visitor association with the province and the brand.

The definition of a brand that Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005:331) proposed in their article has three elements. The branding must initiate marketing activities that:

1. support the creation of a logo, symbol, work mark, graphic that both identifies and differentiates a destination.
2. conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination.
3. that serve to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience, all with the intent purpose of creating an image that influences consumers' decision to visit the destination as opposed to an alternative one.

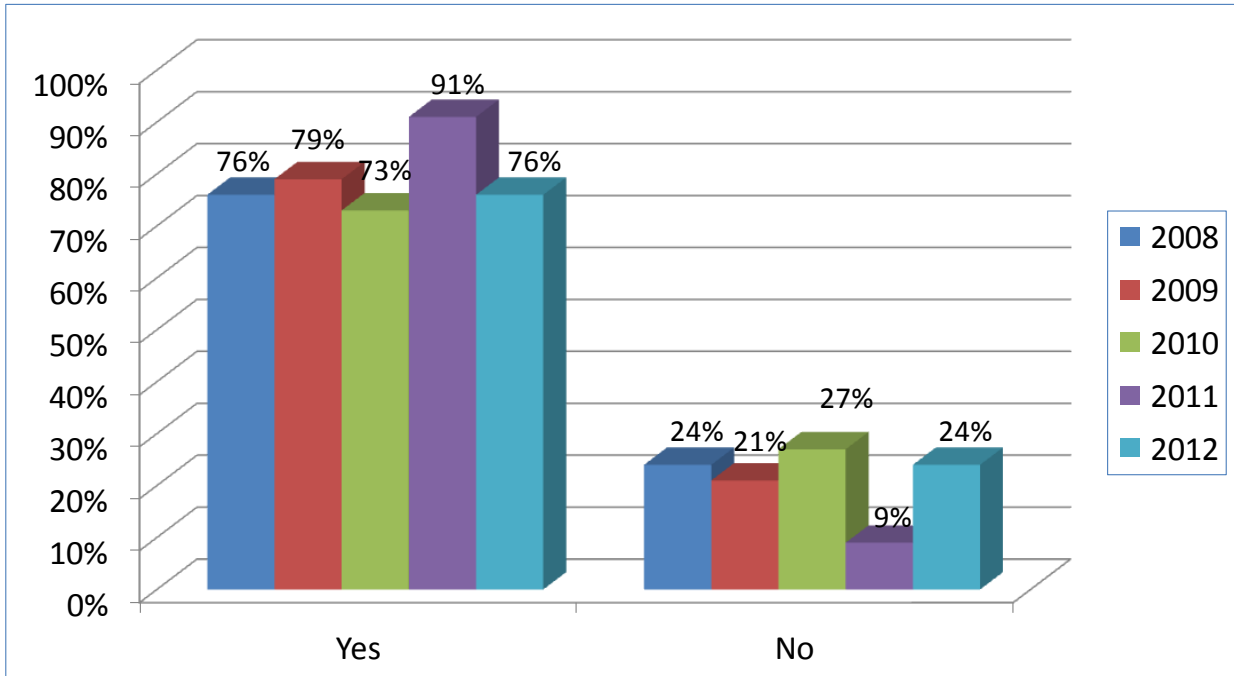
The logo in a brand is used to cut through the clutter of images to gain the attention of the consumer. It is part of the brand in that it establishes brand identity and equity. Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005:332) say that logos can facilitate DMO's marketing efforts by establishing brand image and identity. Logos can stimulate awareness and desired attributes of a destination.

4. Findings and Discussion

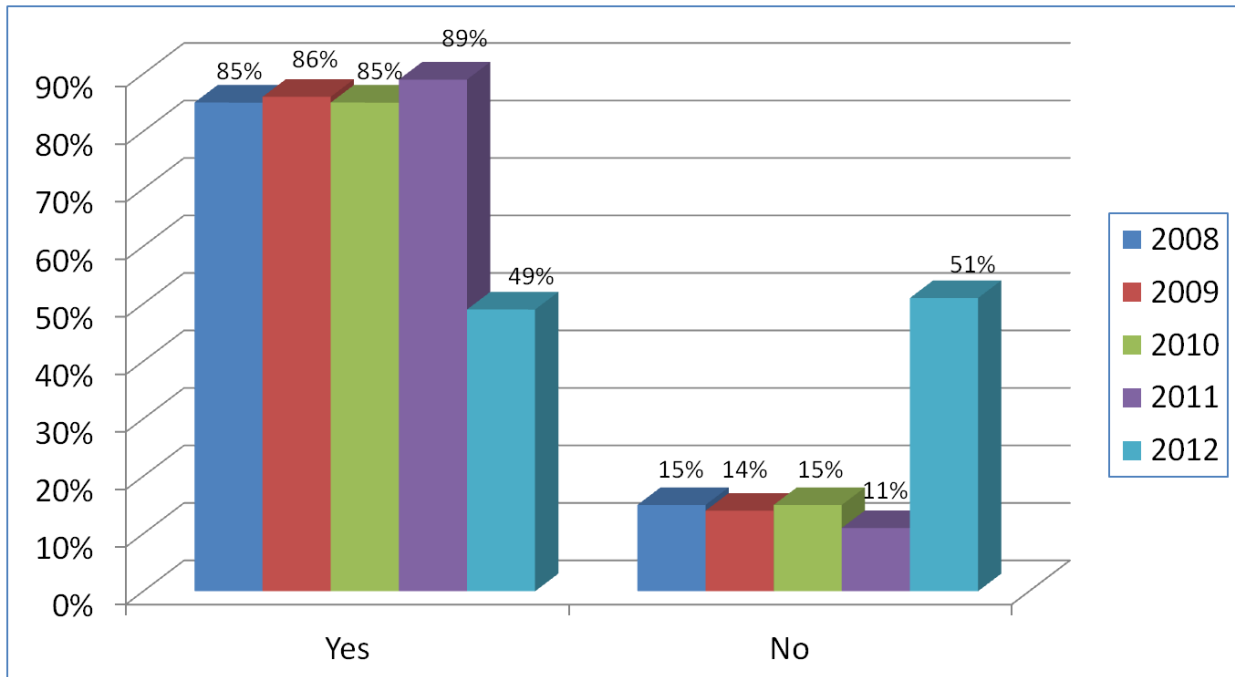
TKZN has, since its inception, recognised the value of branding. Its approach to this process has been to latch on to a critical unique feature of this area, namely 'The Zulu Kingdom', to stimulate awareness of its broad tourism offering. This is a concept that is widely recognised by tourism stakeholders in this province as being appropriate to market the tourism offerings

of this destination. In addition, it used the wide range of consumer research that it has at its disposal to develop a brand identity for the concept of the Zulu Kingdom (Seymour 2007).

Recognition of the slogan 2008 – 2012



Noting of the logo



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Figure 2



However we see because of the dramatic logo change from this



to this

a significant decline the recognition of the logo in 2012.

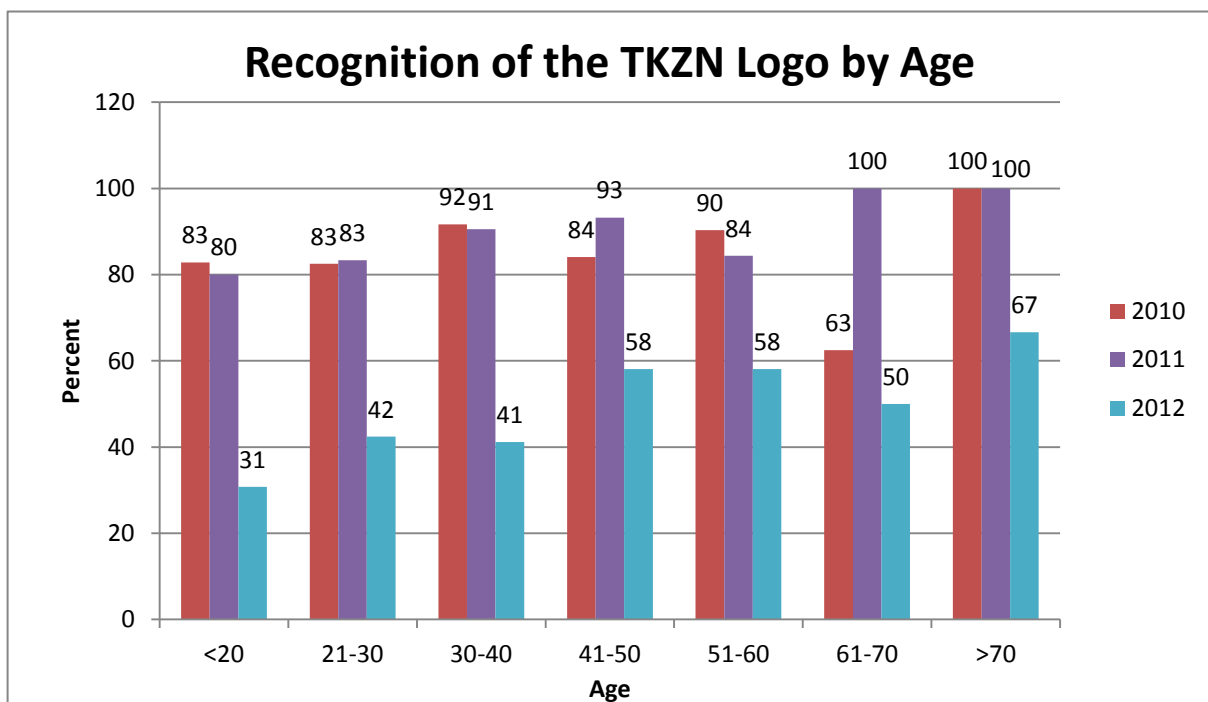


Figure 3

In 2010 the age categories changed so 2008 and 2009 were not included.



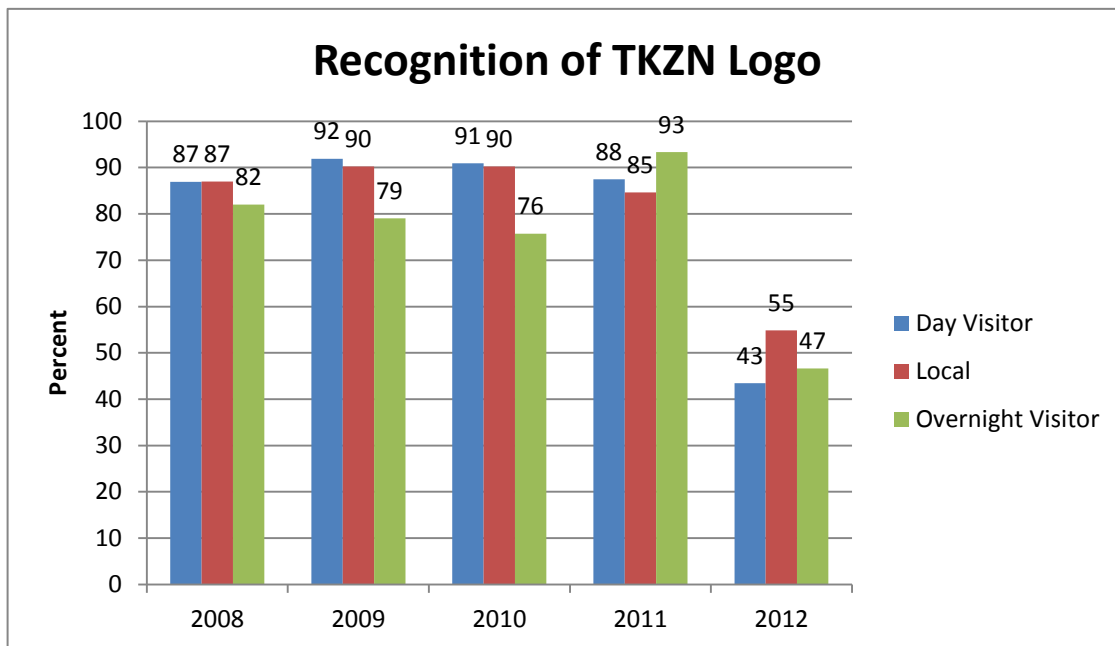


Figure 4

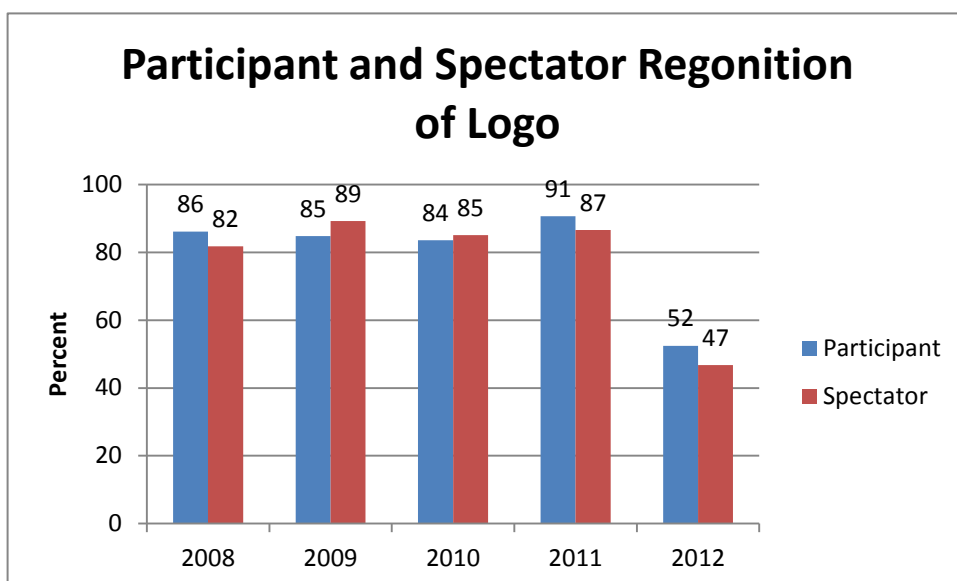
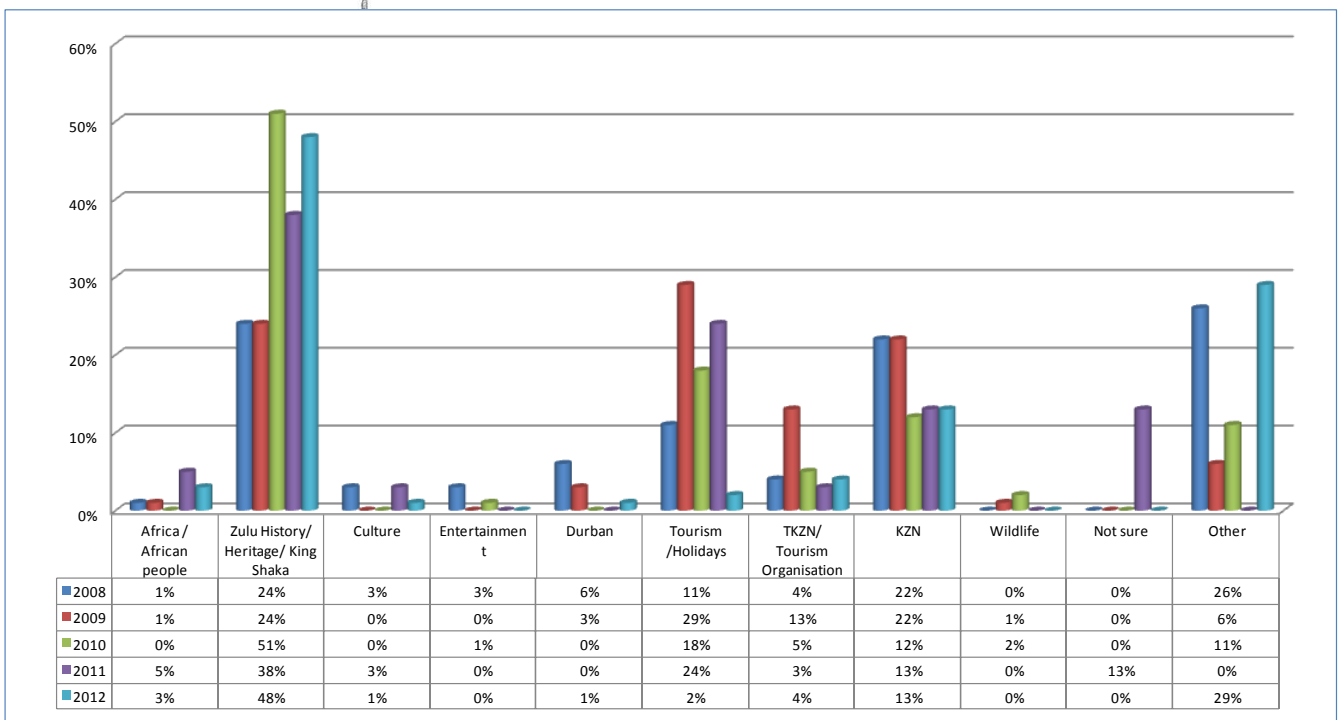


Figure 5

What associations did the respondents make in response to the logo? As mentioned in the literature review, is that brand associations is one factor that adds value. Below is a graph that shows over 5 years what the brand associations of the TKZN slogan are.



In 2011 we added further questions with regards to KZN. These were:
 What are the images or characteristics that you associate with KZN?

Images/Characteristics	Count	%
Beach/sea	120	36.3%
Mountains	52	15.7%
Good/warm weather/sunshine	25	7.6%
Green hills/landscape/scenery	19	5.7%
Other	17	5.1%
Drakensberg	12	3.6%
Wildlife/animals	12	3.6%

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Friendly people/friendliness	10	3.0%
Fun/Funsunzi	10	3.0%
Nature	10	3.0%
Sport	7	2.1%
Relaxation/tranquillity	5	1.5%
Countryside/farms	4	1.2%
Zulu people/history	4	1.2%

What atmosphere or mood do you associate with KZN?

Atmosphere/Mood	Count	%
Friendly mood	68	32%
Calm/peaceful/relaxed/laid back	55	26%
Happy/joyful	22	10%
Holiday mood	22	10%
Fun	14	7%
Exciting/energetic	10	5%
Vibrant	8	4%
Welcoming	7	3%
Festive	5	2%
Total	211	100%

What distinctive attractions are you familiar with in KZN?

Attraction	Count	%
uShaka Marine World	51	24.1%
Beach/sea	48	22.6%

Drakensberg	47	22.2%
Moses Mabhida Stadium	12	5.7%
Midlands Meander/Midlands	10	4.7%
Valley of 1000 Hills	6	2.8%
Ithala Game Reserve	5	2.4%
Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park	4	1.9%
Midmar Dam	4	1.9%
Howick Falls	3	1.4%
Oribi Gorge	3	1.4%
Gateway	2	0.9%

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

These responses show that when respondents are asked about their associations with the province there are differences with their associations of the brand. This is a significant finding as these results have been found to be similar in a paper by James Seymour (2008), whose paper examined the noting of the brand from an Omnibus study for the years 2005-2007, also found that the associations with the Zulu Kingdom was strongly in favour of Zulu Traditions and Culture.

Association	2005 %	2006 %	2007 %
Natal/ KwaZulu-Natal/ Durban	16	8.5	11
Shaka Zulu	5.6	4.4	8
Zulu tradition/ traditional way of doing things/ traditional dress/Zulu culture/ Zulu history	34.6	44.9	55
Zulu Kingdom/Zulu King	7.3	8.6	9
Logo for Zulu/ logo for KwaZulu-Natal		1.9	
Tourism advert		0.5	0.4
Kingdom of Buthelezi/ Buthelezi/ IFP	1.5	0.9	1.2
The scenery/ landscape of KZN			1.6
Other	2.2	4.7	6.6
Don't know	23.5	17.1	12.5

Seymour 2008:16

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This indicates that the adoption of the Zulu Kingdom brand may provide a strong, clear and recognisable symbol for the international market, but for the domestic market there is a clear disjuncture in the message that TKZN is trying to get across and the associations that visitors have of the province.

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Please forward any comments regarding this paper to:

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