

Market Segmentation of Nature-based Attractions: A Framework for Experience and Activity-oriented Segmentation

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ABSTRACT The outstanding natural resources and attractions of South Africa are considered to be the main assets of tourism industry in the highly competitive global tourism market. Typical examples of these attractions and businesses constitute those based on wildlife flora and fauna, including the National Parks, National Reserves and Game Reserves. These attractions are mainly public organisation and private enterprises offering a wildlife experience. One of the main issues and challenges that management of these organisations and businesses need to overcome is better understanding and knowledge of consumer behaviour. This study focuses on the marketing of nature-based attractions and more particularly explores the topic of market segmentation. Using as theoretical framework the strategic marketing, paper examines the main methods of market segmentation. The analysis of the nature-based attractions' offering is performed based on the concept of service experience and adopting two perspectives, that is, guest / visitors and business. The study's aim is to suggest an experience-activity oriented segmentation for wildlife visitor attractions, based on services marketing theory. It is estimated that such segmentation will contribute to improve guest experience and satisfaction, to render marketing communications more effective and, consequently, improve wildlife attractions performance in all fields (environmental, financial and social).