

Critical success factors of a business tourism destination: Supply side analysis



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Orientation: Globally, destinations offer various products and services to visitors featuring different attributes and characteristics, making each destination unique. The critical success factors (CSFs) of each of these destinations may differ, making the management process more complex.

Research purpose: The purpose of this research was to identify the CSFs for business tourism destinations in South Africa from a supply viewpoint.

Motivation for the study: Because of the importance of CSFs, many previous studies have attempted to identify such factors within the tourism industry, but few concentrated on business tourism, especially in South Africa, leaving a gap in terms of knowledge. By means of identifying and understanding what these factors are for South Africa, the country could further develop its tourism sector, which could result in its being more competitive as a destination.

Research design, approach and method: To achieve this goal, a qualitative research approach was followed by interviewing seven key business tourism coordinators in South Africa, to determine the key success factors of the business. The data gathered were transcribed and analysed using Creswell's six steps in data analysis and interpretation.

Main findings: Finances, human resources, product and customer-related aspects were identified as the CSFs for business tourism in South Africa.

Practical/managerial implications: Educating the market and marketing value add-ons were identified as important for enhancing and making business tourism in South Africa more competitive.

Contribution/value-add: The results could guide managers in the implementation of effective key success factors in an effort to mitigate management problems in a very competitive sector.

Introduction

Destinations are complex in nature (Howie 2003:1; Thomas, Shaw & Page 2011:969) and can be defined as geographical areas containing a variety or amalgam of tourism products, facilities and services, which attract tourists to visit the destination and satisfy their demand by offering an integrated experience (Buhalis 2000:97; Durasevic 2015:84; Gunn 1994:47; Kozak & Baloglu 2011:9; Leiper 1995:87).

South Africa is part of this competitive environment, offering different products and services. If these products and services are managed correctly, competitive advantage can be gained in this situation. In the year 2015, 15 051 826 foreign travellers entered South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2015:7), each for different purposes and with varying needs and motivations. The most important reasons for tourists traveling to South Africa in 2015 were for holiday purposes (93.8%), followed by business and work purposes (4.8%) (Statistics South Africa 2015:30). These tourists represent an essential source of income for South Africa and especially for the tourism industry, making it very important to keep tourists loyal to the destination and attract even more foreigners to the country.

South Africa's business tourism sector forms part of and contributes to the wider economy of business tourism in Africa and should be exploited to gain more benefits from its growth (Rogerson 2015a:188). Amongst other advantages, such tourists spend more money than other tourists (Dwyer 2002:25; Wan 2011:130), leading to an increased economic impact. This alone is reason enough to ensure the growth of business tourism in South Africa. More and more destinations realise the opportunity which business travel and tourism offer in terms of being competitive as a destination, so that this sector has become an important part of what destinations

have to offer (Gustafson 2012:276; Smith & Garnham 2006:3). Nearly 20 years ago, it was noted that 'one of the most important aspects of travel in Africa is related to business purposes' (Dieke 1998:39) and this is still the stance (Christie et al. 2013:55), yet this sector of tourism has not been researched to the same extent as other tourism sectors (Celuch & Davidson 2009; Rogerson 2015a:184; Stetic & Simicevic 2010:99). To capitalise on the growth of business tourism in South Africa, it is also important to focus research approaches towards this sector.

The purpose of this research is consequently to investigate the critical success factors (hereafter referred to as CSFs) for business tourism destinations in South Africa from a supply viewpoint. Through identifying and understanding what these CSFs are, more business tourists might be attracted to South Africa, which could impact on the competitiveness and sustainability of the business tourism sector of this country as a destination. Therefore, this article contributes to the existing literature on this sector by identifying the CSFs for business tourism destinations in South Africa from the supply side.

Literature review

Business tourism is described by researchers as a cross section of industries and businesses and an interaction between stakeholders to meet the needs and everyday requirements of business travellers (Coltman 1989:88; Cook, Yale & Marqua 2010:4, 14; Faulconbridge et al. 2009:296; Saayman 2009:2). Business tourism includes all trips related to a traveller's employment or business interests; frequently, the reason for business travel is to attend business events such as conferences and meetings, exhibitions and trade fairs, incentive travel and corporate hospitality events (BTP 2005, as cited by Haven-Tang, Jones & Webb 2007:109; Mair 2010:178). Many terms are used synonymously for business tourism and business events, including MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions) events, the meetings segment, MCE (meetings, convention, and exhibitions) and the convention or conference industry (Ismail, Yusoff & Rahman 2014:2; Locke 2010:210). There is also some ambiguity about the use of the word 'meetings', since it might refer to a type of business event but is sometimes used to represent the whole business tourism sector (e.g. meetings industry) (Craven & Golabowski 2001:5; Sperstad & Cecil 2011:315).

Growth in business tourism, both domestic and international, has been recorded over the last few decades to an extent where it accounts for 25% of all tourism in some destinations (Christie et al. 2013:55; Ladkin 2006:62). Although tourism of this type (including business and work purposes) only represented 4.8% of visits to South Africa in 2015, it has been identified as a growth area within the National Tourism Sector Strategy (Department of Tourism 2011:viii; Statistics South Africa 2015:30).

Literature relating to the history of this sector indicates that some of the initial limitations were politically related,

but that after South Africa's new democracy and re-integration into the international economy, tourist arrivals, particularly for business purposes, increased (Rogerson & Visser 2006:201). Another limitation was the lack of adequate resources and facilities (Burger & Saayman 2009:16). In earlier years, government did not recognise the contribution that business tourism could make to the country's economy and was therefore unwilling to invest in the development of related infrastructure (Rogers 2003:14). However, South Africa has become an important destination, particularly for regional business travellers (Rogerson 2014:394), so much so that in 2006 South Africa ranked as the eighteenth most popular meeting country in the world based on a forecast considering the number of events scheduled at that point to take place between 2005 and 2016 (Costa 2006:60). This flourishing in the industry can be credited to several factors, such as:

policy documents produced to support national government initiatives; improved accommodation; world-class infrastructure; improvements in air and land connectivity between South Africa and other destinations; the transformation of many South African companies into 'multinational' enterprises with operations in several African countries; Johannesburg's role as a linking global city hosting a cluster of headquarters offices or regional African offices for companies with operations spread across Africa; South Africa's infrastructure for hosting business events; enhanced telecommunication linkages and internet connectivity making travel bookings easier and accessibility of foreign exchange of other countries

which has proven to have a more positive impact than ever before (South African Tourism 2007, as cited by Rogerson 2015a:188). The business tourism sector in South Africa has developed to a point where it provides cost-competitive options and ample leisure, recreation and hospitality opportunities (Department of Tourism 2011:9). South Africa also boasts an excellent track record in hosting international events such as COP17, the 5th BRICS Summit and the World Economic Forum, to name but a few (South African National Convention Bureau [SANCB] 2016). Furthermore, studies indicate that the country's major metropolitan areas face growing competition to attract high-revenue-yielding tourists (Rogerson 2013, as cited in Rogerson 2015a:188).

The steady growth in South Africa's business tourism is beneficial to the country, considering that business tourists spend more money on average than leisure tourists – about twice as much per day as other tourists would spend (Dwyer 2002:25; Wan 2011:130; Swarbrooke & Horner 2001, as cited by Rogers 2013:30); they are not as bound to peak seasons as is the case with leisure tourists; business takes place throughout the year, so that business tourists can smooth out seasonality problems (Rogers 2003:23, 2013:76). These tourists firstly attend to business matters, as per the purpose of the trip, and secondly sometimes enjoy leisure time afterwards – thus acting as a catalyser for the short-break leisure market (Haven-Tang et al. 2007:109). Given that business tourists often travel together, this minimises congestion and pollution,

leading to business tourism being considered a lower impact tourism type (Locke 2010:211). According to the literature, benefits for the host community and destination can be summarised as follows (Dinovic 2010:17, 22; Fenich 2012:13; Haven-Tang et al. 2007:109; Ramgulam, Raghunandan-Mohammed & Raghunandan 2012:69; Sperstad & Cecil 2011:314; Wan 2011:130): decreased *seasonality* within a destination, increased *level of profitability* of a destination, more rational *distribution of income*, increased *creation of jobs* in destination, *spending by visitors* is beneficial to the destination, businesses within the destination can receive *earnings in foreign currency*, *stimulation of locals in the community* may lead to developed interest in international trends, *cultural heritage* could be strengthened and promoted by the community, creation of a *sense of pride* within the community, enhanced *destination image*, business events may *catalyse short-break leisure*, and *infrastructural and social development* is encouraged in the area.

Keeping all these benefits of business tourism in mind, it becomes apparent that it is important to undertake research in this sector in order to develop and manage this sector within the tourism industry. By doing so, South Africa as a destination has an opportunity to capitalise on all the related benefits.

Previous studies on business tourism have found that management is of importance for competitiveness and sustainability (Burger & Saayman 2009:16; Ramgulam et al. 2012:71). Furthermore, strategic management is about the management of the big picture, ensuring a more competitive fit between an organisation, or, in this case, a sector, and its changing environment (Cassidy & Kreitner 2011:264). Identifying CSFs has become an important concept in strategic management (Grunert & Ellegaard 1993:246, 249; Ketelhohn 1998:339; Nieh & Pong 2012:424). CSFs, key success factors (KSF), key result areas (KRA), strategic factors, limited factors, or strategic variables (Engelbrecht, Kruger & Saayman 2014:239; Nieh & Pong 2012:424), usually indicated by literature to comprise of three to 10 aspects (combinations of activities and processes) that must perform or be performed well in order to ensure success, attain the goals of management and ensure competitive performance (Avcikurt, Altay & Ilban 2011:153; Boynton & Zmud 1984:17; Brotherton 2004b:20; Brotherton & Shaw 1996:114; Bullen & Rockart 1986:385; Engelbrecht, et al. 2014:239; Geller 1985:77; Guynes & Vanecek 1996:202; Khandelwal 2001:17; Leidecker & Bruno 1987:333; Rockart 1979b:217; Saayman & Slabbert 2002:8; Van der Westhuizen 2003:14). These factors can be classified according to tangible physical elements or intangible service elements (Wang & Hung 2015:93) as: situation or context specific (Geller 1985:78); generic to a given combination of industrial or market or broader environmental conditions (Geller 1985:78; Rockart 1979b:86); short-term (monitoring) and longer-term (building) activities (Rockart 1979a:93); conjunctive or compensatory and perceived or actual CSFs (Grunert & Ellegaard 1993:258); industry or strategic and operational CSFs (Ketelhohn 1998:338, 340); viewpoints: organisation

perspective and user perspective (Lee 1989, as cited by Griffin 1995:327).

Another classification includes sectors: it has been found that the type and nature of the tourism operation influences the CSFs for effective management and that CSFs should be identified for each sector, since it may differ between sectors (Burger & Saayman 2009:26; De Witt 2006:4; Manners 2011:7). Figure 1 below shows that most of the studies have been conducted in the accommodation sector.

From the literature review, it is also interesting to note that these CSFs can be determined by focussing either on the demand or supply side depending on the focus of the research. From a methodology point of view, the CSFs can also be determined by means of a quantitative approach, qualitative approach or a combination thereof. Most of the studies as listed in Figure 1 were conducted by applying quantitative approach. The most frequently found CSFs identified in the literature review (Figure 1) from a supply were, in order of importance, human resources, effective financial management, customer-related approach, quality services, quality facilities, being effective, good marketing, effective systems and hygiene.

Thus, regardless of the ample studies already carried out on CSFs in the tourism industry, specific research should be performed in the business tourism sector (Burger & Saayman 2009:26; Coles & Mitchell 2009:3). After an attempt to discover previous studies on CSFs relating to business tourism, only two studies were found. Haven-Tang et al. (2007) undertook a study on CSFs for business tourism destinations; Burger and Saayman (2009) focused on the CSFs for managing a conference centre. Only the latter study focused on South Africa. The lack of available literature and studies on CSFs for business tourism emphasised the gap and the necessity for further investigation or study. Furthermore, the literature makes it clear that even though Northern business tourism [referring to that in Northern America, Pacific Asia and Europe (Celuch & Davidson 2009, as cited by Rogerson 2015a:187)] possesses some characteristics which are parallel to those in Southern business tourism, these two areas of tourism display differences too (Rogerson 2015b, as cited in Rogerson 2015a:187); therefore, research should be carried out specifically on Southern business tourism, including that in South Africa.

Amidst the increasing pressure, competition and growth, it is important to understand which CSFs management should focus on. Understanding these factors that can lead to the success of business tourism within South Africa can improve the industry, leading to the success of individual tourism ventures within the destination, and also boosting the development of South Africa as a business tourism destination. In addition, the growth of South Africa's business tourism can offer entrepreneurs new opportunities in terms of products and services, given the fact that the business tourism sector involves a variety of other sectors and industries (Coltman 1989:88).

Critical success factors of a business tourism destination

Year	Author	Title	Key success factors		
1985	Geller	Tracking the Critical Success Factors for Hotel Competencies	Employee attitude Guest satisfaction (service) Superior product (physical plant)	Cost control Increase market share Increase customer price-value perception	Superior location Maximise revenue Achieve market segmentation
1995	Griffin	A categorisation scheme for critical success factors of lodging yield management systems	System User-education	External environment Organisational support	User-traits
1996	Brotherton and Shaw	Towards an identification and classification of critical success factors in UK hotels plc	Front office Food and beverage service Food and beverage production	Back of house Sales and marketing Human resource management	Conference and banqueting Leisure operations Accounting and control Guest accommodation
1998	Choon-Chiang	City clubs in Singapore: competitor analysis and key success factors.	Clearly defined image and character Quality products – clubhouse, services and facilities	Member-oriented strategies Comfortable club area per member ratio Responsive to changing needs of members	Core group of loyal and dedicated staff Financial resources or revenues available
1998	Hansen and Eringa	Critical success factors in yield management: a development and analysis	Top management commitment Training of employees Experience of employees Recruitment	Organisation of the YM function Incentive and reward schemes Communication and interdepartmental cooperation	Feedback to employees Development of a yield culture Employee commitment
2003	Brotherton et al.	Critical success factors in UK and Dutch hotels	Front office Conference & banqueting Human resource management Guest accommodation	Leisure operations Marketing & sales Food & beverage (production)	Food & beverage (service) Back of house operations Accounting & control
2003	Getz	Bidding on events: identifying event selection criteria and critical success factors	Have strong partners in the bid process Make excellent presentations to the decision-makers Treat every bid as a unique process	Promote the track record of the community in hosting events Assist other organisations to make better bids.	
2003	Van der Westhuizen	Key success factors for developing and managing guesthouses: a case of a touristic town	The ability to establish and uphold a high standard of quality Show courtesy to guests The ability to give credit where credit is due The ability to be self-efficient	The ability to keep promises The ability to share positive information freely Services provided meet the needs of guests High levels of hygiene is ensured Facilities provided meet needs of guests	Guests welcomed in a personal manner upon arrival The guesthouse is located in the right surroundings It is determined whether rendered services and facilities meet the needs of guests
2004a	Brotherton	Critical success factors in UK corporate hotels	Functional critical success factors Accounting & control Human resource management Marketing & sales	Departmental critical success factors Food & Beverage (Service) Front office Back of house	Departmental critical success factors Conference and banqueting ^(cont) Guest accommodation Leisure options
2006	Getz and Brown	Critical success factors for wine tourism regions: a demand analysis	Core wine product Core destination appeal	Core cultural product Variety	Tourist-oriented
2004b	Brotherton	Critical success factors in UK budget hotel operations	Customer service Core product Strategic control	Hygiene and quality Consistency	Pricing Location
2006	Li et al.	The importance and performance of key success factors in international joint venture hotels in China	Financial support Marketing strategic planning	Information exchange Performance review	
2007	Haven-Tang et al.	Critical success factors for business tourism destinations	Leadership Networking Branding	Networking Skills Ambassadors	Infrastructure Bidding
2007	Pikkemaat and Schuckert	Success factors of theme parks – an exploratory study	Quality Safety and security	Multivarious range of emotions and attractions Emotions	Functionality and infrastructure Branding
2007	DiPietro et al.	Multi-unit management key success factors in the casual dining restaurant industry	Single unit operations Standard operating procedures Multi-unit strategic planning	Interpersonal and social responsibilities Travel and visiting units	Human relations Unit level finances
2008	Camillo, Connolly and Kim	Critical success factors for independent restaurants	Create and articulate a clear, well-crafted, and well-researched vision and business plan Stay focused Allocate resources appropriately and consistently to execute the vision and plan	Concepts must be viable and distinct in the marketplace Convenient location with sufficient demand generators Competent employees and management	Manage and control business Maintain an appropriate balance between food costs and labour costs Manage employee turnover Focus on food and service quality and consistency
2009	Burger and Saayman	Key success factors in managing a conference centre in South Africa	Activities and layout Marketing Core operational aspects	Planning Design and evaluation	Well trained employees (human resources)
2009	Hua, Chan and Mao	Critical success factors and customer expectation in budget hotel segment – a case study of China	From industry professional Guest safety and security, Guest bedroom comfort level, Hygiene and cleanliness, Convenient locations Speed of guest service	According to hotel investor Strong brand differentiation, Central sales/reservation system, Geographic coverage of hotel network, Value for money accommodation Guest bedroom comfort level	From government authority Strong brand differentiation, Guest safety and security, Value for money accommodation, Guest bedroom comfort level, Speed of guest service According to customer experience Service quality, Physical product, Promotion Location, Price

QM, quality management; SME, small and medium enterprise; NGO, non-governmental organization; YM, Yield management.

Source: Marais 2016

FIGURE 1: Previous published studies on critical success factors.

Critical success factors of a business tourism destination

Year	Author	Title	Key success factors		
2010	Alhroot and Al-Alak	An evaluation of the main critical success factors of tourist destination marketing	Product Quality Accessibility	People Price	Promotion Physical
2010	Hughes and Carlsen	The business of cultural heritage tourism: critical success factors	Agreed objects and concepts Financial planning	Marketing Market research	Human resource management Business planning
2011	Marais and Saayman	Key success factors for managing the Robertson Wine Festival	Quality and good management Wine farm attributes Effective marketing	Route development Festival attractiveness Entertainment activities	Accessibility, including comfortable wine farm facilities, clear directions to farms and well managed farms
2011	Avcikurt et al.	Critical success factors for small hotel businesses in Turkey: an exploratory study	Use of internet Service quality	Financial performance Marketing	
2011	Jaafar	Critical success factors (CSFs): A comparison between coastal and island chalets in Malaysia	Island chalets: Front office Warmth of guest welcome Efficiency of guest service Operational flexibility and responsiveness	Island chalets ^(cont) : Guest accommodation Food and beverages Back of the house Accounting and control Leisure operation	Coastal chalets Guest accommodation Back of the house Food and beverages Front office Accounting and control
2011	Wang, Hung and Li	A study on the critical success factors of ISO 22000 implementation in the hotel industry	The top management ambition and all personnel centripetal forces in the early stage of implementation	The integrity of organisational programming and execution of staff	The competitive advantage Comprehensive of infrastructure and external consultant
2011	Ortigueira and Gomez-Selemeneva	Critical success factors of a tourist destination in the Caribbean	Systematic promotion of cultural events Advance knowledge of agents and tour operators Tourist motivation Quality leisure and recreation Receptivity of the residents	Richness of culture Richness of history Protection of the heritage Traditions Political, social and economic stability Communication	Conservation of cultural values Protection of biodiversity Landscape, nature and climate Cost of air travel Security
2011	Er et al.	Ecotourism: precepts and critical success factors	Care for the protected area Participation of local communities in ecotourism ventures	Adequate support of government agencies Domestic and international marketing linkages	Stakeholders' awareness of the paramount importance of environmental conservation
2012	Erasmus, Kruger and Saayman	Finding the key to success: a visitors' perspective at a national arts festival	Safety and personnel Marketing and accessibility Venues	Accommodation and ablutions Activities and community	Parking and restaurants Quality shows and stalls
2012	Hamzah and Mohamad	Critical success factors of community based ecotourism: case study of Miso Walaihomestay, Kinabatangan, Sabah	Role of outsider as project leader Weaning and gestation period Crucial role of local champions Strengthening local organisation Reversing outflow of local youths	Dynamic partnerships Partnership with Sabah Forestry Partnership with tour operators Partnership with NGO's Commercial viability	Environmental conservation not limited to Tokenism Systematic planning, implementation and monitoring Moving up the value chain or mainstream
2012	Lin and Fu	Uncovering critical success factors for business-to-customer electronic commerce in travel agencies	Enhance the marketing mix Create added value for customers	Facilitate the growth of customer benefits	
2012	Maymand, Farsijani and Moosavi	Investigation of the key success factors in virtual tourism	Service and systematic readiness Infrastructural readiness	Organisational readiness Virtual tourism collaborative networks	Virtual tourism
2012	Nieh and Pong	Key success factors in catering industry management	Location selection in catering Complete work manual of retail sales	High quality human resources Image of chain system	
2012	Schnitzer and Strickdorn	Key success factors for fan zones (public viewings) covering mega sport events – the case of UEFA EURO 2008TM in Austria	Comfort in fan zones Pre-match entertainment	Atmosphere in the fan zones Feeling safe	
2012	Tung	Key success factors in Implementing marketing strategies in tourism industry	Market definition Environmental analysis	Marketing mix strategy Internal marketing	
2012	Yeh and Lin	Identifying key success factors of e-learning in travel agents	Curriculum System	Instruction Interaction	
2013	Williams and Saayman	Key success factors of visitors at a Jazz Festival	Hospitality factors Quality venues	Information dissemination Marketing and sales	Value and quality
2013	Habibah et al.	City-city tourism collaboration in the Straits of Malacca development region: Key success factors	Governance level Leadership commitment Managerial talents	Community's regional entity Inclusiveness of the community Spatial development areas Optimising the consumers, resources, and physical proximity	Business entities Sharing of the possibilities in creating tourism businesses
2013	Lucchetti and Font	Community based tourism: Critical success factors	Implementation Community's will to engage Planning Partnership	Implementation ^(cont) Consideration of profitability Monitoring and evaluation process	Commercial viability CSF's Proximity to the tourism market Links with the private sector Attractive and competitive products
2013	Yang	Key success factors in medical tourism marketing	Marketing promotion Journey service	Medical resource Horizontal cooperation	
2013	Ho and Chang	Key success factor in service innovation of hotel enterprises in Taiwan	Market oriented Service	Organisation Procedure	

QM, quality management; SME, small and medium enterprise; NGO, non-governmental organization; YM, Yield management.

Source: Marais 2016

FIGURE 1 (Continues...): Previous published studies on critical success factors.

Critical success factors of a business tourism destination

Year	Author	Title	Key success factors		
2013	Hung	The key success factors on the customer relationship management system in travel agencies	Organisational	Technology	Function
2014	Manners, Saayman and Kruger	Managing a live music performance: A supply-side analysis	Artist Audience expectation and satisfaction	Marketing and media Technical aspects	
2014	Engelbrecht et al.	An analysis of critical success factors for managing the tourist experience at Kruger National Park	General management Wildlife experience Facilities	Green management Leisure and hospitality facilities Interpretation	Variety activities Accommodation facilities Luxuries
2014	Du Plessis et al.	Key success factors in managing a visitors' experience at a South African international airport	Physical comfort Amenities	Visitor facilities Passenger services	Accessibility
2014	Campiranon and Scott	Critical success factors for crisis recovery management: a case study of Phuket hotels	Crisis management plan Market segmentation	Marketing promotion Collaboration	Personnel management
2014	Freeman and Thomlinson	Mountain bike tourism and community development in British Columbia: critical success factors for the future	Contingent factors Community champions or stakeholders or political will Legislation or regulatory or frameworks Physical geography or terrain or trails Funding sources (Public or private or in-kind)	Non-contingent factors Mountain bike clubs or schools or camps or program Destination marketing or management Infrastructure or amenities or supporting services Mountain bike culture or lifestyle or events	
2014	Campos et al.	Critical success factors for total quality culture: A structural model	Leadership Empowerment	Info/Communication Total quality culture	
2014	De Witt, Van der Merwe and Saayman	Critical ecotourism factors applicable to national parks: a visitor perspective	Product development Local community involvement	Environmentally friendly practices Food and activities	Ethical behaviour Policies
2015	Jones et al.	Determining the critical success factors of the wine tourism region of Napa from a supply perspective	Product Lifestyle	Embracing tourism Branding Land protection	Entrepreneurs/individual Partnerships Community involvement and support
2015	Mardani et al.	A combined hybrid fuzzy multiple criteria decision-making approach to evaluating of QM critical success factors in SME's hotels firms	Main factors Human Organisational factors	Technological factors Leadership Employee empowerment	Teamwork
2015	Ferreira and Fernandes	Identification of critical success factors that maximise customers' satisfaction: multivariate analysis	Pricing strategy and free services Loyalty Image	Supply and stock Information Logistics	Virtual channels
2015	Wang and Hung	Customer perceptions of critical success factors for guest houses	Home atmosphere Room facilities	Location Cleanliness	Value for money
2015	Mohamed	Exploring the critical success factors (CSF) and limitations of enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems: The case of Egyptian hotels	Appropriate ERP consultants Avoidance of software of changes	Training & educating employees Confirmation of finalised solutions	Teamwork for the ERP project

QM, quality management; SME, small and medium enterprise; NGO, non-governmental organization; YM, Yield management.

Source: Marais 2016

FIGURE 1 (Continues...): Previous published studies on critical success factors.

Method of research

In order to identify the CSFs for South Africa as a business tourism destination, a qualitative survey comprising seven interviews was conducted between January and March 2016. In order to obtain inputs from all areas of the said sector, interviews were conducted with business tourism coordinators from different kinds of organisations including ICC (international convention centre), hotels with conference centres, PCOs (professional conference organisers) and event organising companies. Respondents also represented a variety of destinations across South Africa. The seven respondents were selected by contacting organisations who are listed as conference venues or conference organisers in the Meetings Guide 2014 of South Africa and were thereafter selected based on their willingness to participate. An attempt was made to schedule interviews with prospective respondents by sending e-mails. However, no responses

were received. A second attempt included direct telephonic communication. Six interviews took place telephonically. A seventh interview was performed one-on-one with a representative from an organisation close enough to access. Data saturation was reached at this point, after similar answers were received from multiple respondents.

Structured interviews were utilised to collect the data for this study. Such interviews, within the qualitative research method, are usually employed in multiple case studies to ensure structure and also to make sure that the questions are detailed and developed in advance as, for example, in survey research (Nieuwenhuis 2008:87). The first four questions were designed to obtain a general but basic profile of each respondent, followed by questions designed to establish the respondents' opinions on South Africa's business tourism sector as well as the related CSFs. Based on the responses, follow-up questions were formulated respectively.

Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed and subsequently further studied by the researcher.

Results from an in-depth literature review as indicated in Figure 1 (Marais & Saayman 2011:149; Nieh & Pong 2012:424; Witbooi, Cupido & Ukpere 2011:1937) were utilised to compile the interview guideline. This consisted of three sections:

Section A comprised the demographic profile, which focused mainly on the respondent and his/her organisation. This was to determine the respondent's job title, location of the organisation, type of organisation and the average size of a typical event planned by the relevant organisation.

Section B was structured to obtain the respondent's opinion on South Africa as a business tourism destination. Questions referred to enhancing South Africa as such a destination and making the industry more competitive and sustainable.

Section C focused on CSFs and determining the respondents' opinions on those CSFs applicable for their organisation.

Collected data were transcribed into text and presented in narrative form, after which the material was analysed using Creswell's six steps in data analysis and interpretation (Creswell 2009:185–189):

- *Organise and prepare the data.*
- *Read through all the data.*
- *Begin a detailed analysis with a coding process:* The data with regard to South Africa's business tourism sector as well as the CSFs identified were coded in order to identify the important aspects. Thereafter, a recoding process was followed by the consulting academics familiar with research on CSFs in order to ensure trustworthiness. The results were then compared with one another in order to derive an overall perspective.
- *Use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis:* The various codes were then divided into categories, whereafter themes were allocated to each category. The allocated themes appear as one of the major findings in the results.
- *Represent the data (description and themes) in the research report.*
- *A final step in data analysis involves arriving at an interpretation, or meaning of, the data.*

Trustworthiness is an indication of methodological soundness and adequacy (Holloway & Wheeler 2002:254). For this research, trustworthiness was accomplished by means of coding and recoding the data.

Results

Based on the survey, the following results were found.

Demographic profiles

Section A focused on the demographic profile of the respondent and his or her organisation. Four questions were asked to obtain this profile. The findings of Section A are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 lists the different job titles of each respondent; even though their titles differ, all of them are involved in the coordinating of business tourism. All respondents have been employed within the organisation for a significant period of time (more than 5 years) which indicates a degree of experience and knowledgeable about the industry. Businesses were predominantly located in the Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape and Eastern Cape. Respondents are employed at different kinds of organisations such as hotels, conference centre and spas, hotel and conference centres, events management companies, PCOs and convention centres. The sizes of the events that the respondents are associated with vary from as few as 50 attendees to as many as 1200.

Enhancing the competitiveness of South Africa as a business tourism destination

Respondents were asked what could be done to enhance business tourism and make South Africa more competitive as a destination. Two aspects were frequently mentioned. One of the activities most respondents (B, C, D, F) referred to was educating the market and providing sufficient information that could aid in decision-making when choosing a business destination product. This was motivated by Respondent C who said that one should 'provide more information so that potential clients and visitors have sufficient information. This will help them make decisions on where to go and what to do'. A second aspect that was frequently mentioned was offering value add-on products and services (A, B, D). Respondent B explained it in this way, '...if they're going to be coming all this way for a conference, then they're going to be doing add-ons as well...'. From the interviews, aspects such as the flights being more numerous and more competitive (E, F, G), security or safety or corruption issues (C, E, G), sorting out of visa matters (G), offering good rates to

TABLE 1: Demographic profiles of respondents and their organisations.

Variable	Respondent A	Respondent B	Respondent C	Respondent D	Respondent E	Respondent F	Respondent G
Job title	Food & beverage manager	Corporate sales & marketing manager	Director of the company	Destinations management consultant	Event coordinator	Sales & marketing manager	Owner of the company
Location of organisation	Free State	Gauteng	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Western Cape	KwaZulu-Natal	Eastern Cape
Type of organisation	Hotel, Conference Centre and Spa	Hotel & Conference Centre	Events management company (government & corporate)	Professional conference organiser (PCO)	Professional conference organiser (PCO)	Convention centre	Conference management company
Average attendees at a typical event	60–80	50–100	200–800	Up to 1 000	200–1000	1600	250–1200

tourists (B) and improving client service (A) emerged. Respondent A sounded very positive in stating that:

'...we will have to focus on what we have, expand on that and make it the best we can...we have to focus on what we can add to that experience and the total package.'

From this, it could be deduced that the respondents feel strongly about educating the market about the uniqueness of South Africa as well as all of the add-ons available here that could enhance business tourism in this country.

Critical success factors for business tourism in South Africa

Respondents were asked what they would list as CSFs relevant for their organisations; this was posed as an open question. After this, a list of the top 10 factors found in the literature review was read, and respondents were asked to indicate what, according to their perception, the five most important ones are. These two questions were aimed to identify which CSFs they regarded as important for business tourism in South Africa.

In the open question, several different factors were named. From the data gathered, four themes were identified that represented the CSFs. Supporting literature is mentioned following each theme or factor. The four themes or factors (not presented in order of importance) are *finances* (Avcikurt et al. 2011; Brotherton 2004a; Brotherton et al. 2003; Brotherton & Shaw 1996; DiPietro et al. 2007; Geller 1985; Hughes & Carlsen 2010; Jaafar 2011), *human resources* (Brotherton et al. 2003; Brotherton & Shaw 1996; Burger & Saayman 2009; Campiranon & Scott 2014; Choon-Chiang 1998; Geller 1985; Hughes & Carlsen 2010; Nieh & Pong 2012), *product* (Alhroot & Alalak 2010; Brotherton & Shaw 1996; Geller 1985; Getz & Brown 2006; Jones, Singh & Hsiung 2015; Lin & Fu 2012; Lucchetti & Font 2013) and *customer-related aspects* (Brotherton 2004a, 2004b; Brotherton et al. 2003; Brotherton & Shaw 1996; Du Plessis, Saayman & Potgieter 2014; Geller 1985; Jaafar 2011; Lin & Fu 2012; Van der Westhuizen & Saayman 2007).

Theme 1: Finances

The first theme or factor related to finances and included constructs such as sound financial management, maintaining costs and prices, and absorbing increased costs. Respondent G described sound financial management as crucial. Furthermore, Respondent G explained that when planning a business event, large amounts of money are involved and mistakes cannot be made. Respondent B indicated that costs have to be maintained in order to make a profit and that in the case of an increase in them, they have to be absorbed. Respondent C added that with the unstable Rand, it is important to be able to hold a quoted price. Many researchers have found that finances, or an aspect of finances, are a vital CSF. The issue of finance may differ from one case to the next [accurate financial reporting (Brotherton et al. 2003; Jaafar 2011), achieving accurate costing (Brotherton et al. 2003), charging competitive prices (Brotherton & Shaw 1996),

consideration of profit (Lucchetti & Font 2013), cost control (Geller 1985), cost of air travel (Ortigueira & Gomez-Selemeneva 2011), effective bad debt control procedures and effective revenue or yield management procedures (Brotherton et al. 2003), financial performance (Avcikurt et al. 2011), financial planning (Hughes & Carlsen 2010), financial support (Li, Wong & Luk 2006), payment models (Lin & Fu 2012), pricing (Brotherton 2004a)]. The results from this study differ in identifying different financial aspects such as not altering a quotation, absorbing costs and making a profit amidst an unstable currency. The response of Respondent G, however, includes almost all of the aforementioned aspects within finance as indicated in the literature. Business tourism coordinators should be aware of and understand finances and financial management. It is also important to comprehend the market and the economy and how it functions, how to absorb costs and how to manage large amounts of money as these can all contribute to making a profit.

Theme 2: Human resources

This theme includes all aspects relating to staff, managing staff, satisfaction of staff, staff knowledge, teamwork, working together, relying on each other, well trained staff and being able to handle an event's attendees. Respondent B stated that it is important to manage one's staff well and ensure their happiness. Furthermore, the staff members must be knowledgeable about the product. This is supported by previous studies on CSFs (Brotherton 2004b; Campiranon & Scott 2014; Hughes & Carlsen 2010). Respondent F added that the event's success is reliant on the staff and that these staff members should be well trained and able to handle attendees, which concurs with Mohamed's (2015) and Burger and Saayman's (2009) findings. Respondent E focussed more on teamwork and indicated that working together, relying on each other and working towards a common goal are important. In addition to those already mentioned, there are many other literature sources that indicate human resources as a significant CSF (Brotherton et al. 2003; Brotherton & Shaw 1996; Choon-Chiang 1998; Geller 1985; Nieh & Pong 2012) and point out that staff have to be well managed, well informed and able to work together. The importance of this theme was also evident in Section B. Firstly, role-players should strive to work together as a team in order to ensure success. Respondents agree that staff should be knowledgeable about the product, keep up with current trends and come forth with innovative ideas. Although there is considerable negativity associated with labour in South Africa, the country's situation is unique and staff should notice the opportunities provided by this growing sector.

Theme 3: Product

Most of the responses provided by the respondents relate back to the product itself. The literature indicates that product is an important CSF (Alhroot & Alalak 2010; Brotherton & Shaw 1996; Geller 1985; Getz & Brown 2006; Jones et al. 2015; Lin & Fu 2012; Lucchetti & Font 2013). This theme includes constructs such as ensuring that

arrangements are in place, attention to detail, the different phases of the event, set-ups according to plan and the availability of the product. Respondents A and B indicated that the product and its availability are vital. Respondent E noted that attention to the detail of the event or product is key and that this is important to ensure satisfaction. Brotherton et al. (2003) and Brotherton and Shaw (1996) also identified this specific construct in their respective studies. Respondent F mentioned various constructs, including being ready for the different phases of the event or product, set-ups being carried out according to plan, food according to expected standards and equipment that is working. Respondent G contributed to this theme by stating that it is important to ensure that timelines are sound and that all aspects are in place as they should be. From this study, it is evident that the product, in this case the business events, must be available, well-planned, attention given to details and that all aspects are in place.

Theme 4: Customer-related aspects

The literature reports that customer-related aspects are important (Brotherton 2004a; Brotherton et al. 2003; Van der Westhuizen & Saayman 2007). Respondent C stated, 'Good customer service is important', while Respondent A added that it is essential to keep to what has been offered and to be ready for the customers. Respondent F was more specific, declaring that delegates should have an easy experience finding their way around the event. Respondent E added a new term related to customer-related aspects: transparency. Respondent E stated,

'...you have to be open with them in terms of not being able to make a deadline, getting something wrong, or if a venue is not able to provide the facilities that they wanted. It is better to be transparent with them than trying to hide it and fixing it yourself and then something goes wrong.'

However, this is not supported by the literature as it has not been mentioned in previous studies.

After this, respondents were asked to identify their top five CSFs after the following factors were read aloud to them: *human resources, finances, customer-related aspects, quality, facilities, effectivity, marketing, systems, hygiene and product*. These are the top 10 factors identified through previous studies (Figure 1).

The factors most frequently identified from answers to this question are as follows:

- Human resources (identified by Respondents B, C, D, E and G)
- Customer-related aspects (identified by Respondents A, D, E, F and G)
- Finances (identified by Respondents B, C, D, E and G)
- Product (identified by Respondents A, C, D, E and F)
- Marketing (identified by Respondents A, C, E and F).

Four of the five factors confirm the results found in the previous open question. Upon considering these two

questions collectively, it is evident that human resources, customer-related aspects, finances and product are CSFs for business tourism.

Ensuring sustainable growth for South Africa as a business tourism destination

When the respondents were asked their opinion of what could be done to ensure sustainable growth for South Africa as a business tourism destination, their answers varied. Once again some respondents focused on external aspects: Respondent G said,

'Everything comes down to making something affordable and accessible and safe. If these three things continue to improve, they will continue to give people the confidence to come to South Africa.'

Respondent C stated that affordable accommodation is important, whereas Respondent D averred that government could provide more education about the industry and make available more opportunities and jobs, which is what Respondent A suggested too. Looking at internal factors, Respondent B said, 'We have to keep on being competitive and come up with innovative ideas and have that hook that will hook people to come here'. Respondent E remarked that they themselves need to keep up with the current trends and 'if we keep ensuring that we do well in every conference we do, people are more likely to keep on returning'. Respondent F suggested that tourism coordinators try and attract recurring events such as African regional events which could rotate every 4 years.

Literature evidences that growth can take place organically by investing resources to develop new competencies and capabilities and opening up new market opportunities (Thompson & Martin 2005:505). By managing the main CSFs, namely *finances, human resources, product and customer-related aspects*, success can be achieved. The answers provided by Respondents B, E and F, coming up with innovative ideas, keeping up with current trends and focusing on recurring events such as African regional events, respectively, are all steps towards developing new competencies and opening up new market opportunities. It is also clear that all the mentioned role-players should be working together to achieve goals and develop this industry.

Findings and implications

The first finding confirms literature in terms of CSFs for the tourism industry as *finances* (Brotherton et al. 2003; Geller 1985; Jaafar 2011; Lucchetti & Font 2013; Ortigueira & Gomez-Selemeneva 2011), *human resources* (Brotherton et al. 2003), *product* (Jones et al. 2015) and *customer-related aspects* (Du Plessis et al. 2014). Although the study did not indicate the order of importance of these factors, managers could use this as a guideline and successfully apply these CSFs within their organisations. In the future, these CSFs can also be further analysed within a business tourism context to identify specific constructs in order to make the industry

even more competitive, because a construct in South Africa might differ from those in other destinations.

Secondly, this study confirms the importance of human resources as a CSF within the tourism industry (Brotherton et al. 2003). Constructs such as teamwork, training and skills and working with attendees remain important as staff members within this industry constantly interact with the tourists and attendees. It is recommended that managers should ensure that their staff members are well trained and informed and that they understand what leads to customer satisfaction and to success.

Although the literature considered marketing an aspect over which businesses have control, for example, their internal environment (Saayman 2009:127), finding three contradicts the general view since it seems as though managers consider marketing an external factor because they cannot manage its success. Money is spent on marketing, but managers do not have direct control over its effectiveness and how the efforts will be received. As a result of this, managers consider marketing, as a CSF, to be less important than those aspects that they exercise direct control over. The implication of this finding is that marketing does have an impact on success, as per the definition of CSFs, and that managers should still focus on marketing as a CSF even although they cannot control its results.

The fourth finding highlights that the emphasis on value add-ons in South Africa is greater than it appears in the literature and that organisations to an extent rely on value add-ons to sell their product. The implication is thus that conference organisers should inform potential clients of the value add-on options available and can even include these as part of the product – as though offering a menu of tourism products for tourists to choose from. These might include trips to nature reserves (such as national parks), coastal resorts, museums, Soweto, mountain ranges, leading golf courses and other exciting options. By doing so, the uniqueness and attractiveness of South Africa should become more evident, which could enhance the motivation to travel here and contribute to the competitiveness of the country as a business tourism destination.

Conclusions

The goal of this study was to determine the CSFs for business tourism in South Africa. This sector is flourishing in South Africa, so that by identifying the related CSFs, the growth might be made sustainable along with the destination being more competitive. Firstly, from the data collected through the interviews, it was evident that *finances, human resources, product and customer-related aspects* are important for business tourism in South Africa. Secondly, human resources are important within this industry and sector where contact with tourists is essential. Thirdly, the interviews also found that in order to enhance and make South Africa's business tourism more competitive, focus should be placed on educating the

market and on marketing the uniqueness of the country along with value add-on options available in South Africa. These could include any attraction and entertainment in South Africa such as national parks, cultural experiences and coastal resorts. Lastly, in addition to the findings, this study also contributed by providing a basis for literature on business tourism in South Africa and could be used in the future to further investigate the gaps and similarities. However, from the respondents who participated, findings were reached which can be used as a starting point for research on CSFs for business tourism in South Africa.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Author's contributions

This research formed part of a master study conducted by M.M. which was supervised by E.d.P. and M.S.

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