

## Hospitality as a Tool for Tourism Development: Case of Limpopo Province

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**ABSTRACT:** *In an ideal situation, employees are expected to appreciate free offers from their companies like when they are offered free complementary bed nights where they are not expected to pay. While Limpopo Tourism Agency offers its employees such free complementary bed nights, they do not make use of them and instead they choose to visit those facilities they are expected to pay. This study adopted qualitative design to undertake a study to determine the most visited resorts in Limpopo Province; to determine the problems faced by Limpopo Wildlife Resorts employees which prevent them from utilizing free complementary and finally to propose a strategy for motivating employees to use complementary free bed nights. The study has shown that Nwanedi, Tambotie and D'Nyala are the top three most visited resorts. The study revealed problems in the resorts which demotivated employees from visiting them such as lack of cleaning the accommodation facilities which also affected tourists. The other finding is that the staff was unprofessional towards visitors. It was also revealed that the level of job satisfaction was low amongst the employees in the resorts. The study further revealed that employees had little knowledge about the management of resorts. The study recommended more investment on training of staff and management on handling hospitality facilities.*

**KEYWORDS:** *bed nights, compliments, job satisfaction, Limpopo Tourism Agency, Limpopo Wildlife Resorts,*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Scholars and scientists have reached consensus that motivation of employees by organisations has a positive impact on the attitudes of employees towards work. It has also been agreed that motivation of employees through rewards namely; pay and promotion translate into creation of job satisfaction to employees (Malik 2012:6) [1]. The study by Davis et al. (1985) [2] found that job satisfaction combines positive or negative feelings that employees have towards their work. The authors further found that job satisfaction represented the extent in which expectations were and matched the real awards since job satisfaction was connected to the behavior of the employees in the work place. There is a value-chain aspect of job satisfaction on the employees since it created motivation which impacts positively on the productivity which have a further improved performance of the organisation (Aziri 2011:76) [3]. Employees need to be treated as human beings and should not be regarded as merely the cog of the organisations. The human capital should be developed and nurtured through deliberate strategies by organisations and human element should not be separated from the organisations but intertwined (Tella et al. 2007) [4].

Job satisfaction should be aimed at all levels of the employees and more and more attention should be paid on the training and development of employees while those at the lower level should be a focus and there should be team work promoted which promotes commitment. Investment should focus on young employees than focusing on those employees who are about to exit the organisation. The spirit of cooperation should also be promoted since employees operate as linked units rather than operating on islands (Tella et al. 2007) [4]. Lack of promotion of employees lead to the brain drain of employees of many organisations because employees feel that organisations do not consider or respect their contribution. Promotion of employees is regarded as a determinant factor that assists organisations to retain their employees because they view their organisations as caring once (Mustapha and Zakaria 2013:20) [5]. Job satisfaction is not only exclusively ring-fenced within the public sector but also to institutions of higher learning as it is evidenced in the study conducted in Malaysia and in the study by Okpara et al., (2005) [6] cited in Mustapha and Zakaria (2013:21) [5]. Job satisfaction has the potential to transform employees into community members thus making them in making a positive contribution in the well-faire of the broader society beyond the work-place and is able to socialise with other community members and even fighting for the improvement of their communities and this was evident in the study by Naveed et al., (2011:301) [7]. Lack of opportunities for growth is a motivating factor for employees to leave organisations and join other because they do not see the value of being part of non-caring organisations (Shields and Ward (2001) [8]. Job satisfaction can also be improved by staff training so that staff can acquire knowledge about hospitality services (Ejikeme et al. 2016) [9] and training also ensures quality service (Brown et al. 2009) [10].

Lack of training leads to the deterioration of services and many a tourists turn their back against the accommodations and hospitality products (Blanke and Chiesa 2009) [11]. Training should be focused on improving skills and attitudes, better communication skills, better understanding of workplace practices, increased morale, confidence, self-satisfaction, work satisfaction, increased participation, greater job advancement potential, greater interest in and willingness to participate in further training and more independence (Grey 2006) [12]. Limpopo Tourism Agency owns a number of Wildlife Resorts which are used to serve tourists who visit the province but who do not wish to stay in hotels. In order to promote job satisfaction the organisation allocates 20 free bed nights for each employees as a complimentary. These wildlife resorts are ten. Offering complementary free bed nights is part of recognising, acknowledgement, loving and trusting the employees is part of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The employees can take their family members when it is not busy or festive season. However, it has become evident that very few employees of the organisations make use of these free bed nights while the majority does not take these days or take their family members to enjoy. They choose to go to resorts which are paid while they fail to take free complementary free bed nights. Service is defined as a commodity that is intangible and includes the performance of certain work or effort, but it cannot be owned. Services are offered through the effort of people (Pride and Ferrell 2006) [13].

## **II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In an ideal situation, employees are expected to appreciate free offer from their companies when they are offered free complementary bed nights where they are not expected to pay. They should take their families as part of recognition or acknowledgement of offers by their organisations. While Limpopo Tourism Agency offered its employees such free complementary bed nights, they do not make use of them and instead they choose to visit those facilities they are expected to pay. This is contrary to literature which revealed the importance of motivating of employees as key to job satisfaction and also serving as retention variable.

## **III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study has three objectives namely to:

- determine the most visited resorts in Limpopo Province;
- determine the type of problems in the resorts; and
- proposing a strategy for motivating employees to use complementary free bed nights;

## **IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What are the most visited resorts in Limpopo Province?
- What is the type of problems existing in the resorts?
- What is the strategy that can motivate employees to make use of complementary free bed nights?

## **V. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Theoretical framework is nothing other than the conceptual framework (Holiday 2001: 52) [14] and conceptual framework positions the researcher within the research. There are biases in qualitative research which need to be guided by conceptual framework. Conceptual framework leads to an alignment of the key concepts of the study (Henning et al. 2004:26) [15]. The crucial role of theoretical framework is that it places the whole intended study within the literature review which implies that theoretical framework is not exclusive of literature review (Henning et al. 2004:26) [15]. In line with the definition of theoretical framework provided in this section the following two concepts are provided to guide this study.

### **Job satisfaction**

There are various definitions of job satisfaction by scholars and scientists. In his definition of job satisfaction, Vroom (1964) [16] looks at the role of employees in the organisational work place wherein his job satisfaction is defined as affective orientations of employees towards their work roles which they are occupy. However, it represents the positive and negative feelings of employees towards their work and job satisfaction need to be matched with the reward (Davis et al. 1985) [2]. Armstrong (2006) [17] is of the view that job satisfaction refers to the attitudes and feelings employees have towards their work. It is clear from attitudes that they are happy towards their job or not whilst positive attitudes denotes happiness and negative attitudes reflects dissatisfaction. This is consistent with Danish and Usman (2010) [18] who argue that recognising performance has the potential of creating a perception in employees that they are valued and appreciated thus boosting their morale. It is also important to understand that rewarding of employees is not limited to monetary value only but may include non-monetary value as this accommodates a diversity of employees (Ali and Ahmed, 2009) [19]. Job satisfaction to employees translates into customer satisfaction and high quality service since employees become more committed (Ejikeme 2016) [9]. The study by Adesina and Chinonso (2015) [20] revealed that service delivery and customer satisfaction lead to retention of loyal customers over a period of time. Of crucial

importance is the economic contribution and employment rates which improve with job satisfaction because more and more visitors and tourists will visit the tourist's products (Vishal 2016) [21].

### **Bed nights**

The Law Dictionary (2016) [22] defines bed night as the way in accommodations or establishments measure their occupancy. It is about the occupation of a bed per night by a visitor in a particular accommodation. In short it is one visitor per bed per night. It is also defined as nights that are spent in an establishment. The person who occupies the bed per night here is referred to as a visitor and this is a person who stays at least one night in the place that is visited (South African Tourism 2013:34-38) [23]. The mode of getting to these accommodations or establishments is called a trip which is a journey undertaken for at least one night away from home while the visitor does not get any remuneration for his visit but the visitor returns to his /her home after the visit (South African Tourism 2013:38-39) [23]. This then implies that the visitor is the one who takes responsibility for making payment for the accommodation described as bed night. It cannot be free for him because accommodations are running business by selling bed nights to visitors or tourists. Oxford University Press Dictionary (2016) [24] refers the night that is spent by a tourist in any of the paid accommodation as viewed and measured as occupancy in the tourist industry.

Research conducted by Center for the Study of Social Research Policy (2007:8) [25] found that timeliness, personal attention, reliability and dependability, employee competence and professionalism, empathy, responsiveness and the appearance of the personnel are crucial for attracting tourists and visitors to accommodation otherwise they will be hesitant to go.

## **VI. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY AREA**

This study is positioned within the resorts that are owned by Limpopo Wildlife of the Limpopo Tourism Agency in South Africa. They are scattered in all the five regions of Limpopo Province namely Vhembe; Mopani; Capricorn; Sekhukhune and Waterberg. They offer accommodation for visitors and tourists who visit the regions for various tourist offerings. The aim of the study is merely to investigate the extent to which they are visited by employees of Limpopo Tourism Agency who are offered free bed nights as a token of appreciation by their employer. The aim is to enhance job satisfaction as a way of motivating them to perform more and more. These resorts are ten in number.



**FIGURE 1: Ten Limpopo Wildlife Resorts**

Fig 1 above shows the ten Limpopo Wildlife Resorts which are the discussion of this study.

## **VII. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Research design is defined as a roadmap for collecting and analyzing evidence that enables researchers to answer the research questions (Flick, 2011: 65) [26]. In experimental research, the research questions or problems are expressed through hypothesis which is to be tested through research (Crowther and Lancaster 2009:128) [27]. A research design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions will the data be obtained (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:20) [28]. Bogdan

and Bikien (1998:4) [29] defined research design as the reflection of the researcher's plan of how he/she is going to proceed with the research. Babbie and Mouton (2001:207) [30] present the following research design: experiments, survey, qualitative research, participatory action research, evaluation and unobtrusive research. The design used in this study is both qualitative and descriptive.

### **Research methods for data collection**

This is a qualitative and descriptive study based on literature review. It is based on secondary data where journals, books, and government records about the visit of internal employees to the government-owned resorts were thoroughly analysed.

### **Population of the study**

The population of the study is the Limpopo Wildlife Resorts on Limpopo Province. They are 10 in number namely Lekgalameetse; Mphephu; Singo;Nylsvley;Mokolo Dam;D'nyala;Tambotie; Nwanedi;Doorndraai;and Rust de Winter.

### **Sampling and sample type**

Sampling is the sub-set of the population that the researcher is interested in the study. Its focus is to answer the research question of the study as it relates to the total study population as opposed to the sample (Kumar 2014:229-230) [31]. The sampling type used for this study is judgmental or purposive of the non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's ability to select difficult-to-reach population (Neuman 2006:222) [32]. Judgmental or purposive sampling is mostly suitable for selecting unique cases that are specifically knowledge on the subject that answers and address purpose of the study (Neuman 2006:222) [32]. It is about target of the population that can provide the best information that can assist in achieving the objectives of the study. The target refers to those respondents who provide the necessary information and also willing to participate and this type of sampling is more suitable for qualitative study (Kumar 2014:244) [31].

The sample size for this study comprises five resorts that belong to Limpopo Wildlife of the Limpopo Tourism Agency in the Limpopo Province. The resorts were selected as they are the ones with traceable information of statistics of visitors.

- Lekgalameetse;
- Tambotie;
- Nwanedi;
- D'Nyala; and
- Nylsvley;

### **Data analysis**

Data were collected from literature and website reports. They were captured in the spreadsheets and tables were produced and report findings were determined from the data collected and analysed.

## **VIII. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The aim of this section was to determine the tariffs payable to each of the resorts when visited by tourists and visitors. In addition to the tariffs payable by the tourists or visitors, the vehicles are also expected to be paid for separately by the drivers. There are chalets, guest houses, and camps that are used for accommodation by the visitors or tourist.

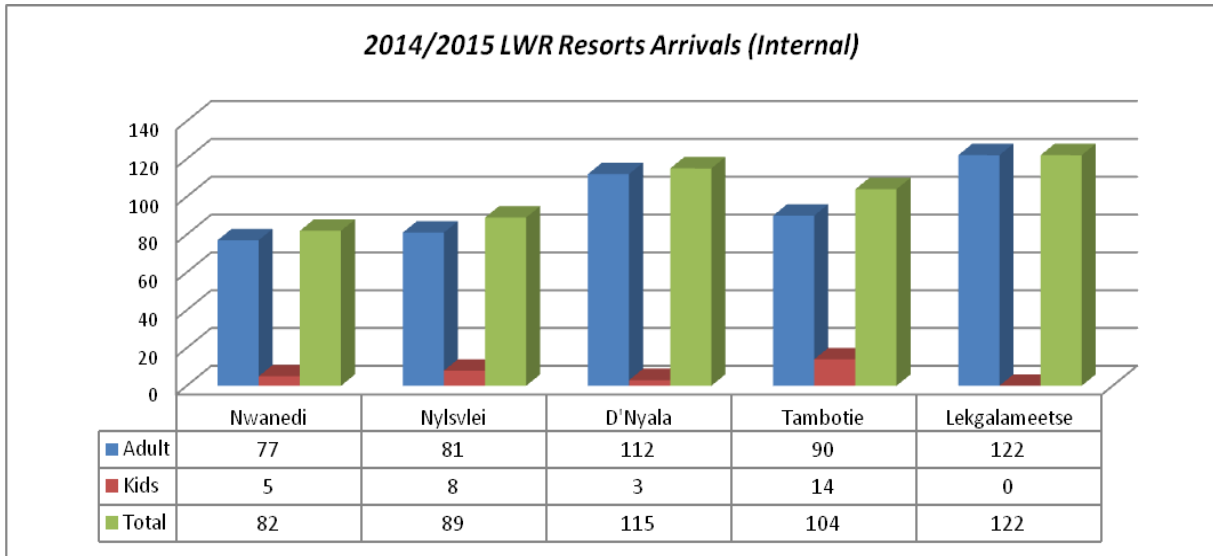
Looking at the tariffs payable, it is clear that if internal employees of LTA utilise the free complementary free days they are saving because they can use that for their family members who will not pay any cent. This contributes to job satisfaction and motivates employees to enhance their productivity. Productivity ensures enhanced customer satisfaction and high quality service (Ejikeme 2016) [9]. If there are customer satisfaction, the chances of increased economic contribution rises and this contributing to the creation of job opportunities as revealed by the study Vishal et al. (2016) [21]. The complementary days are 20 per annum allocated to every one of the employees.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Pax</b>	<b>And group camps that are used for accommodation Tariff</b>
Adult	Per Person	R20.00
Child <12 years	Per Person	R15.00
Pensioners/Disabled	Per Person	R15.00
Vehicles	Each	R30.00

Combi	Each	R45.00
Bus/Truck	Each	R70.00
<b>D’Nyala Nature Reserve</b>		
Wooden Chalet	6 pax	R700.00
Wooden Chalet	4 pax	R500.00
VIP Suite	2 pax	R700.00
Flat	2 pax	R380.00
Venue Hire (Hall)	50 pax	R700.00
<b>Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve</b>		
Makhutsi camp chalet	4 pax	R650.00
Makhutsi camp chalet	2 pax	R520.00
Paris Guesthouse	6 pax	R640.00
Adventure camp	2 pax	R230.00
Venue Hire (Hall)	20 pax	R550.00
<b>Nwanedi Nature Reserve</b>		
Rondavel	2 pax	R530.00
Rambuda Loft room	4 pax	R600.00
Marula Room	2 pax	R440.00
Camp Sites	Rate per person	R60.00
Venue Hire (Hall)	40 people	R550.00
Venue Hire (Hall)	70 people	R1 450.00
<b>Nylsvlei Nature Reserve</b>		
Guesthouse	2 pax	R640.00
Guesthouse	1 pax	R230.00
Presidential Suite	2 pax	R870.00
Chalet	2 pax	R560.00
Group Camp	18 pax	R1430.00
Camping Site	Rate per person	R40.00
Venue Hire (Hall 1)	40 -people	R550.00
Venue Hire (Hall 2)	100 people	R800.00
<b>Tambotie Resort</b>		
Chalet	2 pax	R560.00
Family Unit	2 pax	R640.00
Chalet	1 pax	R230.00
Camping	Rate per person	R40.00
Venue Hire (Hall)	200 people	R2000.00

**Figure 2: Tariffs at the resorts**

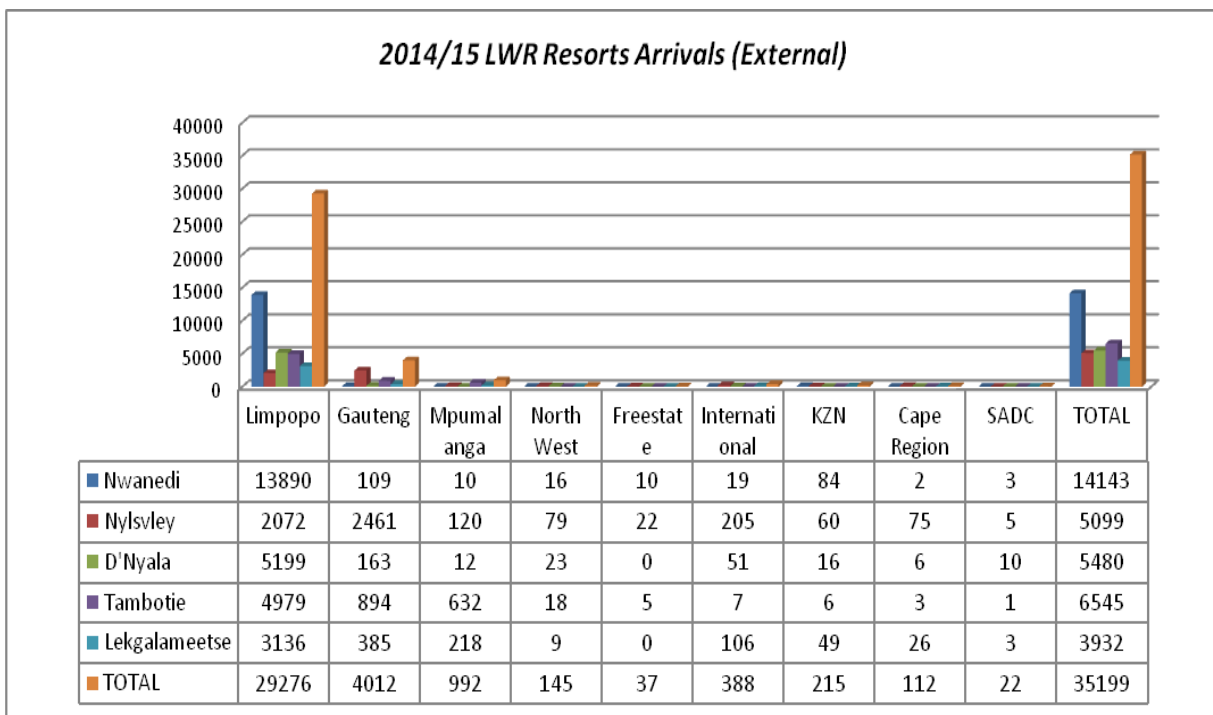
The aim of Fig 2 above was to determine the arrivals to the five resorts. These are the internal (bed nights) arrivals by those employees of Limpopo Tourism Agency.



**Figure 3: 2014/2015 LWR Resorts arrivals (internal)**

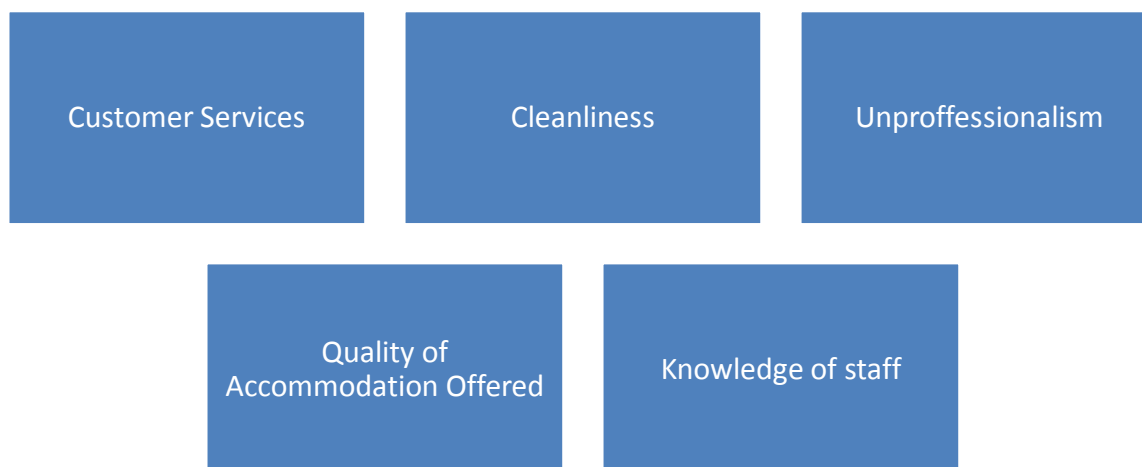
The findings of Fig 3 above shows that the statistics of internal (bed nights) arrivals for the period are shown to be utilising the free bed nights provided for them at the resorts.

The results below showcase the statistics at the resorts/reserves audited for this study. It can be observed that at almost all the reserves, guests book in at the resorts without their kids (30), for the year 2014/15. This may be because the resorts themselves are not viewed by the employees as family-orientated or suitable enough to take your kids along. It also comes to light that the bookings are mostly made during weekends as compared to any other period mentioned above. It may be assumed that guests at these resorts do not necessarily consider them as appropriate environment to take their kids as such they only book for nothing longer than a weekend and do not take their kids along on these trips. The statistics indicate that just a small percentage was that of booking made on a 1 night basis or for 4 nights. As for the in night stays, one might assume that the resort/reserve was utilised as a stopover on the way to another destination and for the 4 nights stay, the booking could presumably made for the weekend and the check-out day is Monday which makes the total number of nights 4 (four). All the above are sure raise questions about the state of the resorts or the comfort of guests that should determine their length of stay at the resorts.



**Figure 4: 2014/2015 LWR arrivals (External)**

The findings of Fig 4 show that most of the visitors for the year 2014/15 were recorded in Nwanedi resort (13890), followed by Tambotie (6546) and D’Nyala (5480) respectively; whereas the total arrivals at all the resorts stands at (35 199) for the year 2014/15. Most of the visitors came from Limpopo (29 276) and Gauteng (4012) Provinces than any other province of origin mentioned below. The statistics also show a positive recording of (388) for international visitors. Overall the number of external bookings surpasses those of internal bookings. This simple indicates that the resorts are favoured by outsiders more than LTA’s own staff.



**Figure 5: Complaints from visitors**

The aim of this Fig 5 was to determine the type of complaints from the visitors. These complains may explain the reasons why many internal employees of LTA do not visit their own resorts even if they are offered free bed nights instead of making payment for them.

The findings of Fig 5 show that there are problems of customer services in the LWR resorts of LTA. There are also problems of not cleaning the accommodation facilities to the satisfaction of tourists. The other finding is that the staff displays a sense of unprofessionalism towards visitors. This may corroborate the study by Davis et al. (1985) [2] which found that job satisfaction combines positive or negative feelings that employees have towards their work. This might suggest that employees lack job satisfaction. Finally the employees have little knowledge about the management of resorts. The finding suggests training of employees is not taking place and this is in contrast to Tella et al. (2007) [4] who argued that human capital should be developed and nurtured through deliberate strategies by organisations.

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion, the conclusion highlights findings and recommendation for this study.

### **Findings**

The findings of the study revealed that top three visited resorts for the year 2014/15 were recorded in Nwanedi resort (13890), followed by Tambotie (6546) and D’Nyala (5480) respectively. The total arrivals at all the resorts stood at (35 199) for the year 2014/15. Most of the visitors came from Limpopo (29 276) and Gauteng (4012) Provinces than any other province of origin mentioned below. The statistics also revealed a positive recording of (388) for international visitors. Overall the number of external bookings surpasses those of internal bookings.

The study also revealed some problems at the resorts. They pertain to lack of cleaning the accommodation facilities to the satisfaction of tourists. The other finding is that the staff was unprofessionalism towards visitors. It was also revealed that the level of job satisfaction was low amongst the employees in the resorts. The study further revealed that employees had little knowledge about the management of resorts. It can be observed that at almost all the reserves, adult’s guests’ book in without their kids. It also comes to light that the bookings are mostly made during weekends as compared to any other period. The statistics indicate that just a small percentage was that of booking made on a 1 night basis or for 4 nights.



## **Recommendations**

More investment on the top three visited resorts must be maintained. There should be gradual investment for the other poorly performing resorts to grow them above their current status. More awareness should be planned and sustained for Limpopo citizens to continue visiting their resorts. More marketing efforts should be enhanced in Gauteng to maintain their presence in visiting Limpopo resorts. There should be increased budget to international marketing through representatives and embassies should be enhanced to maintain international visitors. The statistics also revealed a positive recording of (388) for international visitors. Enhanced vigorous awareness should be made to motivate internal employees to visit their own products so that it is not only external visitors who market our own products whilst we shy away from them. Training through education, workshops, seminars and also appraisal should be conducted to motivate employees to promote customer services. This will enhance the sense of professionalism and they might start to feel part of the organization and begin to promote their products. Parents should take along their kids to inculcate the spirit of visiting from early age. More and more marketing efforts should be engaged on to increase the night stay in our resorts. Human resource is the sole strategic asset of every organization. In the age of globalization, if organizations are to sustain and grow their way out of the current economic depression, they have to utilize their human resources effectively. And these resources will retain and give their best when they are motivated by several organizational and other factors.

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