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First-time versus repeat visitors: the Volksblad Arts Festival

First submission: 26 October 2009

Acceptance: 5 August 2010

This article focuses on the differences and/or similarities between first-time and repeat visitors at the Volksblad Arts Festival as an alternate approach to market segmentation. The research was conducted by means of a visitor survey, during which 397 questionnaires were administered. Two-way frequency tables and *chi-square* tests were used to compare first-time and repeat visitors based on socio-demographics, behavioural characteristics, overall satisfaction with the festival and the type of shows/productions attended. The results indicate differences that could affect the sustainability and future of the festival. These differences should be considered as determinants when the festival programme is designed and marketed.

Eerstekeer- teenoor herhalende besoekers: die geval van die Volksblad Kunstefees

Hierdie artikel fokus op die verskille en/of ooreenkomste tussen eerstekeer- en herhalende besoekers na die Volksblad Kunstefees as 'n alternatiewe benadering tot marksegmentering. Die navorsing is uitgevoer deur middel van 'n besoekersopname, waar 397 vraelyste geadminestreer is. Twee-riktig frekwensietabelle en *chi-square*-toetse is gebruik om eerstekeer- en herhalende besoekers gebaseer op sosio-demografiese aspekte, gedragseienskappe, algehele tevredenheid met die fees sowel as die tipes vertonings/produksies wat bygewoon is, te vergelyk. Die resultate toon verskille wat moontlik die volhoubaarheid en toekoms van die fees kan beïnvloed. Hierdie verskille moet oorweeg word wanneer die program ontwerp en bemark word.

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Acta Academica
2010 42(4): 91-121
ISSN 0587-2405
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<<http://www.ufs.ac.za/ActaAcademica>>

SUN MEDIA
BLOEMFONTEIN

Launched in 2001, the Volksblad Arts Festival (hereafter referred to as Volksblad) celebrated its eighth year of existence in 2008. This Afrikaans arts festival takes place annually for six days during July in Bloemfontein in the Free State province of South Africa (*cf* Figure 1). According to Visser (2005: 165), Van Zyl (2006: 150) and Van Zyl & Strydom (2007: 121), the overabundance of festivals in South Africa leads to increased competition between the various festivals for visitors, artists and sponsors. This has a direct impact on the sustainability of the festivals. With regard to visitors, Gitelson & Crompton (1984), Oppermann (1997) and Lau & McKercher (2004) found that there are significant differences in the composition and travel behaviour of first-time visitors versus repeat visitors in general. According to Shanka & Taylor (2004: 135), many annually held festivals rely on their repeat visitors. This raises the question whether there are differences between the two types of visitors since any differences will have an impact on the market strategy. Significant differences will imply different market segments that will ultimately lead to different strategies. Therefore, it is worthwhile to determine which attributes significantly distinguish first-time visitors from repeat visitors.

Shanka & Taylor (2004: 135) believe that determining the characteristics and requirements of both first-time and repeat visitors is vital for the short-term momentum, and hence long-term sustainability, of the festival. This information can be used for effective planning, management and improved marketing (Kemperman *et al* 2003: 164). Ultimately, the information can lead to a customised festival programme aimed at retaining repeat visitors while also attracting new first-time visitors.



Figure 1: Free State province

Accordingly, this article aims to investigate the differences and/or similarities between first-time and repeat visitors to Volksblad by means of a literature review of similar research conducted on the topic. A profile of repeat and first-time visitors will be compiled and recommendations made concerning the sustainable management of the event.

1. Literature review

Oppermann (1999: 50), Lau & McKercher (2004: 279) and McKercher & Wong (2004: 171) indicate that, although visitors could be categorised in different categories, a popular method is to distinguish between first-time and repeat visitors visiting a destination (in this instance, an arts festival). Although event organisers need to retain “old” or repeat *festino's*, it is also important to attract new visitors since new visitors are an indication of growth (Oppermann 2000). The importance of repeat visitors, however, lies in the following: first, these visitors are familiar with

the destination or festival and are satisfied with the experience offered; secondly, it is believed that the marketing costs needed to attract repeaters are lower than those required for first-time visitors (Lau & McKercher 2004: 279); thirdly, repeat visitors have proven to be a stable income source that enables destinations (festivals) to invest in that target market (Lau & McKercher 2004: 279); fourthly, a return visit is a positive indicator of satisfaction and of needs that were fulfilled and, finally, a willingness to attend increases the visitors' likelihood to return (Oppermann 1998). According to Oppermann (1997), both groups play a fundamental role in the overall well-being and success of a destination (festival). For this reason destination (festival) managers (organisers) strive to achieve a balance between first-time and repeat visitation. Information regarding visitors' status as first-time and repeat visitors can be useful in market segmentation (Formica & Uysal 1998), signalling destination (festival) familiarity (Tideswell & Faulkner 1999), and by determining a destination's (or a festival's) position in its life cycle (*cf* Oppermann 1995: 535 & 1998a, Priestly & Mundet 1998).

Gitelson & Crompton (1984) pioneered research into first-time and repeat visitors, and concluded that first-time and repeat visitors had different motivations, leading to different intended activity sets. Numerous researchers in the tourism field have developed this idea further and have identified the differences between first-time and repeat visitors. The most notable differences include socio-demographics, spending behaviour, destination perceptions, perceived value, travel motivations and post-trip evaluation.¹

Collectively, the results from these studies suggest that first-time visitors are more likely to be younger and are less likely to visit friends/family than are repeat visitors.² First-timers are also

1 *Cf* Fakeye & Crompton 1991, Gitelson & Crompton 1984, Lau & McKercher 2004, McKercher & Wong 2004, Oppermann 1996 & 1998a, Petrick 2004, Shanka & Taylor 2004, Tang & Turco 2001.

2 *Cf* Gitelson & Crompton 1984, Lau & McKercher 2004, Tiefenbacher *et al* 2000: 307, Li *et al* 2008: 282.

more likely to be long-haul visitors (*cf* Gitelson & Crompton 1984, Li *et al* 2008: 289). First-time visitors typically explore a destination widely, and participate in a variety of activities (Gitelson & Crompton 1984: 214, Oppermann 2006, Wang 2004: 108), with particular interest in events (Lau & McKercher 2004) and cultural experiences (Gitelson & Crompton 1984: 214, Rosenbaum 2006: 294). First-timers also have shorter stays at a destination (Lau & McKercher 2004, Oppermann 1998a & b) and have more complex and differentiated images of destinations than do repeat visitors (Fakeye & Crompton 1991). While some researchers³ found that expenditures of first-time visitors are slightly higher than repeat visitors, Lau & McKercher (2004) and Wang (2004) discovered the exact opposite in their respective studies of visitors to Hong Kong.

By comparison to first-timers, repeat visitors have drawn greater research attention, owing to the tradition of loyalty and repurchase behaviour studies in this field (Li *et al* 2008: 279, Darnell & Johnson 2001: 119). Repeat visitors are destination-aware tourists whose expectations are based on previous experiences and on factors inherent in the destination such as the quality of the surroundings or accommodation, while first-timers have to solely act on external information and factors, including the price of the excursion (*cf* Alegre & Juaneda 2006: 686, McKercher & Wong 2004, Reid & Reid 1993). Repeaters stay longer at a destination and plan their trip in more detail than do first-time visitors who might just be exploring (Tiefenbacher *et al* 2000: 307). In addition, previous research suggests that repeat visitors are less likely to be satisfied (McKercher & Wong 2004), but have a stronger intention to revisit in the future than do first-time visitors.⁴ However, Li *et al* (2008: 290) and Mohr *et al* (1993) revealed that repeat visitors had a higher level of satisfaction than first-timers. In addition, repeat visitors will

3 *Cf* Oppermann 1997, Tiefenbacher *et al* 2000: 307, Wang 2004: 108, Petrick 2004: 469, Alegre & Juaneda 2006: 294, Li *et al* 2008: 282.

4 *Cf* Juaneda 1996, Petrick & Backman 2002a, Sonmez & Graefe 1998, Petrick *et al* 2001, Kozak 2001: 800.

advertise a destination (festival) by word-of-mouth to friends, relatives and other potential visitors.⁵ According to Reid & Reid (1993) and to Gitelson & Crompton (1984: 214), word-of-mouth recommendation is the most inexpensive and most powerful form of advertisement and therefore indicates less persuasion effort and lower promotional expenditure for destination marketers to secure repeat visits than attracting new visitors (Lau & McKercher 2004). Repeat visitors are, however, more price sensitive when compared to first-time visitors, and are more apt to search for lower prices (Petrick 2004, Li *et al* 2008: 288).

Based on the above, four conclusions can be drawn. First, the literature clearly provides a consistent account of similarities or differences between first-time and repeat visitors in terms of their socio-demographic and behavioural (trip features/activities) characteristics (Li *et al* 2008: 281). Secondly, when compared to the characteristics of first-time visitors, considerably more research has been done to determine the characteristics of repeat visitors since many destinations rely on repeat visitation. Thirdly, this type of research has never before been applied to arts festivals in South Africa. Lastly, however, it is only an assumption that repeat visitors are the desirable visitors (Petrick 2004: 464) – a notion with which Oppermann (2000) agrees when he argues that empirical evidence has yet to show that repeat visitors are more desirable than new first-time visitors. Accordingly, knowledge of the characteristics of first-time and repeat visitors to the festival can help the organisers/marketers of Volksblad to distinguish between the two visitor groups and so determine the most valuable target market (Shanka & Taylor 2004: 135).

5 Cf Reid & Reid 1993: 3, Schoemaker & Lewis 1999, Tiefenbacher *et al* 2000: 300, Petrick & Backman 2000b, Li *et al* 2008: 290.

2. Methodology

2.1 Questionnaire

The structured questionnaire used to survey visitors to Volksblad in 2008 consisted of two sections. Section A captured demographic details (gender, home language, age, occupation, home province and preferred accommodation), spending behaviour (number of persons paid for, length of stay and expenditure) as well as the type of shows/productions attended and the number of tickets purchased. Section B focused on the evaluation of the festival and on the visitors' preference for visiting the festival. The section on festival evaluation consisted of thirteen items that were measured on a five-point Likert scale where respondents were asked to indicate to what degree they agreed or disagreed with each item on the scale (1 = totally disagree; 2 = do not agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree and 5 = totally agree). For the purposes of this article, the information obtained from both sections A and B was used. In total, 397 questionnaires were completed over a period of six days (8-13 July 2008) by means of convenience sampling. According to Cooper & Emory (1995: 207), for any population of 100 000 (N) the recommended sample size (S) is 384. Since 35 000 visitors attended Volksblad in 2008 (Kruger *et al* 2008: 1), the number of completed questionnaires therefore exceeds the required number of questionnaires. All questionnaires were completed at the main festival grounds or at various venues in Bloemfontein where fieldworkers moved around to minimise bias and to obtain a representative sample of visitors attending. Microsoft® Excel® was used for data capturing.

2.2 Data analysis

The analysis of the data in this study consisted of three stages. First, a general profile of visitors to Volksblad was compiled with the help of SPSS (2007). Secondly, a principal component factor analysis with Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation was performed on 13 evaluation items by means of SPSS. To explain the variance-covariance structure of a set of variables through a few linear

combinations of these variables, a principal component analysis was applied. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was also used to determine whether the covariance matrix is suitable for factor analysis. Kaiser's criteria for the extraction of all factors with eigenvalues larger than one were used because they were considered significant. In addition, all items with a factor loading above 0.4 were included in a factor, whereas all items with factor loadings lower than 0.4 were viewed as not correlating significantly with this factor. Any item which cross-loaded on two factors with factor-loadings greater than 0.4 was categorised in the factor where interpretability was best. A reliability coefficient (Cronbach's *alpha*) was computed for each factor to estimate the internal consistency of each factor. All factors with a reliability coefficient above 0.6 were considered acceptable in this study. The average inter-item correlations were also calculated as another measure of reliability. According to Clarke & Watson (1995), the average inter-item correlation should lie between 0.15 and 0.55. Thirdly, multivariate statistics were used to examine any statistically significant differences between motivational clusters. Two-way frequency tables and *chi*-square tests were employed to profile the first-time and repeat visitors demographically, and to investigate whether there are any significant differences between them. The study employed demographical variables (gender, home language, age, occupation and province of origin), behavioural variables (length of stay, preferred type of shows/productions, expenditure, other festivals attended and repeat visitation), as well as satisfaction levels, to examine whether statistically significant differences existed among the first-time and repeat visitors.

3. Results

3.1 Visitor profile to Volksblad

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic information of the sample. Visitors to Volksblad are predominantly 35-year-old, Afrikaans-speaking females from the Free State province. Many visitors are students or in a professional occupation, financially responsible

for two persons during their visit and stay an average of three days and three nights in Bloemfontein. Visitors are loyal to the festival and have visited Volksblad on average three times.

Table 1: Volksblad visitor profile 2008

Visitor characteristics	General profile of Volksblad visitors
Gender	Male 47% Female 53%
Home language	Afrikaans 84%
Age	Average age: 35 years
Province of residence	Free State 85%
Occupation	Students 24% Professionals 13% Education 11% Self-employed 9%
Number of days	Average of 2.6 days in Bloemfontein
Number of nights	Average of 2.8 nights in Bloemfontein
Number of people paid for	Average of 2.2 persons
Number of visits to festival	Average of 3.3 times
Average spending per person ^o	R793.43

Note: Spending per person, was calculated by adding the spending of the respondent on the various components asked, and subtracting transport cost to the festival from the number obtained, as the inclusion of transport cost would automatically cause a bias for visitors further away from Bloemfontein.

3.2 Results from the factor analysis

The pattern matrix of the principal component factor analysis using Oblimin with the Kaiser normalisation rotation method identified four factors that were labelled according to similar characteristics (Table 2). The five factors accounted for 60.3% of the total variance. All factors had relatively high reliability

coefficients ranging from 0.52 (the lowest) to 0.73 (the highest). The average inter-item correlation coefficients with values between 0.34 and 0.41 also imply internal consistency for all factors. In addition, all factor loadings were greater than 0.4. As stated earlier, any items that cross-loaded on two factors with factor loadings greater than 0.4 were categorised in the factor where interpretability was best. In this instance, none of the items cross-loaded. Relatively high factor loadings indicate a reasonably high correlation between the delineated factors and their individual items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy of 0.82 also indicated that patterns of correlation are relatively compact and should thus yield distinct and reliable factors (Field 2005: 640).

Table 2: Factor analysis results of visitors' evaluation of Volksblad

Motivation factors and items	Factor loading	Mean value	Reliability coefficient	Average inter-item correlation
Factor 1: Productions		3.87	0.73	0.41
Ticket sales are effective	0.824			
The quality of shows is excellent	0.745			
Variety of productions is good	0.700			
Front of house service at productions is effective	0.678			
Factor 2: Prices		3.50	0.52	0.35
Price of accommodation is reasonable	0.744			
Ticket prices are reasonable	0.619			

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Motivation factors and items	Factor loading	Mean value	Reliability coefficient	Average inter-item correlation
Factor 3: Festival characteristics		4.03	0.61	0.34
Different to other festivals	0.887			
Sociable festival	0.719			
It is primarily an Afrikaans festival	0.515			
Factor 4: Accessibility		3.82	0.67	0.35
Information about the festival is available	-0.748			
Service/prices of restaurants are good	-0.684			
Layout of festival is good	-0.534			
Volksblad is well organised	-0.494			
Total variance explained	60.3%			

Factor scores were calculated as the average of all items contributing to a specific factor so that mean scores could be interpreted on the original 5-point Likert scale of measurement. As shown in Table 2, Festival characteristics (factor 3) received the highest mean value (4.031). The reliability coefficient was 0.61 and the average inter-item correlation was 0.34. It is therefore clear that the unique nature and characteristics of the festival have a significant influence on visitors' satisfaction levels. Productions (factor 1) had the second highest mean value of 3.87, a reliability coefficient of 0.73 and an average inter-item correlation of 0.41. This indicates that visitors are mostly satisfied with the quality and type of shows/productions showcased

at the festival. This could be ascribed to the fact that Volksblad is the only arts festival in the country where well-equipped theatres are available to the organisers without extra charge. Accessibility (factor 4) received the third highest mean value (3.82) with a reliability coefficient of 0.67 and an inter-item correlation of 0.35. Prices (factor 2) received the lowest mean value (3.50), the reliability coefficient was 0.52 and the average inter-item correlation was 0.35. The low mean value could be explained by the fact that the majority of the visitors are local residents who do not make use of paid accommodation.

3.3 First-time versus repeat visitors

Since Volksblad is still a “young” festival (in only its eighth year of existence), visitors were divided into five groups based on the number of times the festival has been visited. Table 3 gives an indication of the size of each group. It is clear that there is an even distribution between the different groups. A large portion of the sample can be labelled as loyal as they have visited the festival at least five or more times. It is also evident that a large percentage of visitors to Volksblad are first-time visitors.

Table 3: Visitor groups at Volksblad based on the number of times the festival has been visited

Number of times Volksblad has been visited	Count	Percent
1 (first time)	63	15.87
2 times	60	15.11
3 times	74	18.64
4 times	54	13.60
5+ times	77	19.40

Two-way frequency tables and *chi*-square tests were employed to determine the differences between first-time and repeat visitors. To delineate the differences in festival evaluation between the five groups, means for each evaluation item were calculated. Table 4 shows differences in means between the five groups and reveals the agreement with each of the factors for members of each group.

Results of the analysis revealed that the festival characteristics received the highest mean scores in all five visitor groups, followed by productions and accessibility. Visitors who have visited Volksblad four times are the most satisfied with the festival, and had the highest mean scores on all the items, whereas first-time visitors were mostly satisfied with the festival, especially with the festival characteristics, with prices receiving the lowest score.

Table 4: Comparing first-timers and repeaters' evaluation of festival

Characteristics	Number of previous visits					F-ratio	Significant level
	1 (N=63)	2 (N=60)	3 (N=74)	4 (N=54)	5+ (N=77)		
Productions and general services	3.711 ^a	3.907	3.824	4.044 ^b	3.989	3.007	0.016*
Prices	3.355	3.525	3.527	3.594	3.451	1.085	0.363
Festival characteristics	3.950 ^a	4.136	3.887 ^a	4.278 ^b	4.037	4.314	0.002*
Additional	3.755	3.777	3.815	3.887	3.848	0.425	0.790

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how they evaluate each item on the scale (1 = totally disagree; 2 = do not agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree and 5 = totally agree). Statistically significant differences exist among the clusters with different superscripts. For example, in terms of general services and offerings, differences were found between the first-time visitors (with superscript a) and those who have visited the festival four times (with superscript b).

A cross-tabulation calculation was also performed to provide a complete demographic profile for each of the five groups. *Chi*-square statistical analysis was used to determine whether significant socio-demographic and behavioural differences existed between the five groups. The results in Table 5 indicate that both the age and the length of stay in Bloemfontein differ significantly between the groups. Visitors who have visited the festival twice are significantly younger compared to the other groups and visitors who have visited the festival four and five or more times are older. First-time visitors spend fewer days and nights (two days and three nights) when

compared to repeat visitors who stay between 2 and 3 days and 3 and 5 nights in Bloemfontein. There were no significant differences between the groups based on the number of people in the travel party, number of people paid for, visitor expenditure, and the number of tickets bought. Although there are no statistically significant differences between the groups based on expenditure, Table 5 shows that first-time visitors spend significantly more compared to repeat visitors. First-time visitors are also inclined to attend one less show/production than do repeat visitors.

Table 6: Behavioural comparison between first-time and repeat visitors

Characteristics	Number of previous visits					F-ratio	Significant level
	1 (N=63)	2 (N=60)	3 (N=74)	4 (N=54)	5+ (N=77)		
Age	35	30 ^a	32 ^a	37	40 ^b	4.629	0.001*
Number of people in travel party	2.839	3.439	3.338	3.283	2.921	0.736	0.568
Number of people paid for	1.818	2.212	2.364	2.137	2.397	0.916	0.455
Length of stay							
Days	1.968 ^a	2.373 ^a	2.716	2.906 ^b	3.377 ^b	6.157	0.000*
Nights	2.546 ^a	2.790	3.696	4.750 ^b	4.368 ^b	4.468	0.002*
Expenditure per person ^o	R963.22	R661.09	R901.00	R918.39	R695.00	0.720	0.579
Number of tickets bought	3.158	2.838	3.915	4.211	4.771	1.982	0.094

Note: Statistically significant differences exist among the clusters with different superscripts. For example, in terms of the number of days, differences were found between the first-time visitors (with superscript a) and visitors who have visited the festival 4 and 5 times, respectively (superscript b).

In addition, no significant differences were found based on other socio-demographic and behavioural characteristics. Appendices A and B provide a summary of the profile of the five groups based on

various demographic and behavioural variables as well as the shows/productions attended.

4. Findings

This study compared first-time and repeat visitors at Volksblad based on four aspects, namely socio-demographics, behavioural characteristics, overall satisfaction with the festival and type of shows/productions attended. Table 7 provides a summary of the findings and presents the similarities and/or differences between first-time and repeat visitors.

Table 7: Comparative analysis of findings about first time and repeat visitors

Variables		First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Demographic characteristics	Age	Average age of 35 years	Average age of 35 years
	Gender	Female	Female
	Language	Afrikaans and English	Mainly Afrikaans
	Occupation	Medium income	High and medium income
	Province of origin	Free State and Gauteng	Free State
Behavioural (trip) characteristics	Group size	Average of three people	Average of three people
	Distance travelled	Local residents and travelled a greater distance (from Gauteng)	Mostly local residents
	Length of stay	Average of 2 days and 3 nights	Average of 2 to 3 days and 3 to 5 nights
	Daily expenditure	Spend significantly more	Spend less

Variables		First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
	Type of accommodation	Non-paid and paid	Mainly non-paid
	Other festivals attended	KKNK and Innibos	Grahamstown and Innibos
	Number of tickets purchased	Average of 3 tickets	Average of 3 to 5 tickets
	Type of media	Newspapers and word-of-mouth	Radio, newspapers and word-of-mouth
Type of shows/ productions attended		Dance theatre, lectures and discussions, classical music, word art and poetry	Dance theatre, word art and poetry, lectures and discussions, visual arts and exhibitions
Festival evaluation	Festival as main reason for visit	Yes and local residents	Local residents
	Future return intention	Yes, perhaps	Yes, definitely
	Overall satisfaction	Moderately satisfied	Satisfied

Overall, Table 7 shows that there are differences, in particular from an economic point of view. These differences include that first-time visitors tend to be slightly younger, and more likely to be long-haul visitors (travelling from Gauteng). These findings are consistent with previous studies.⁶ First-time visitors also spend fewer days at the festival. This is supported by Lau & McKercher (2004) and Oppermann (1998a & b). Results also indicate that first-time visitors spend significantly more per person compared to repeat visitors.

6 Cf Gitelson & Crompton 1984, Lau & McKercher 2004, Tiefenbacher *et al* 2000, Li *et al* 2008.

This is supported by research carried out by Oppermann (1997), Tiefenbacher *et al* (2000), Wang (2004: 108), Petrick (2004), Alegre & Juaneda (2006) and Li *et al* (2008). Therefore, the results contradict the popular notion that repeat visitors are the more profitable market. This result is also supported by the findings of Petrick (2004) and Li *et al* (2008) that repeat visitors are more price sensitive. Repeat visitors, however, stay longer, as confirmed by Tiefenbacher *et al* (2000). Similar to research findings by Li *et al* (2008) and Mohr *et al* (1993), repeat visitors had a higher level of satisfaction with the festival and are more inclined to revisit in the future. This result is further supported by Juaneda (1996), Petrick & Backman (2002a), Sonmez & Graefe (1998), Petrick *et al* (2001) and Kozak (2001). Repeat visitors also purchase more tickets to support the festivals' shows/productions. However, both the first-timers and the repeat visitors attend a variety of shows and productions at the festival. This is contrary to the findings of Gitelson & Crompton (1984), Oppermann (2006) and Wang (2004) who revealed that first-time visitors participate in a wider variety of activities when compared to repeat visitors.

5. Implications and recommendations

The findings of the study imply that the organisers of the Volksblad Arts Festival should consider the following in the medium- to long-term planning of the festival:

- First, from a sustainability and marketing point of view, the marketing campaign should follow a two-pronged approach, regarding both groups of visitors as important for the future of the festival. The rationale behind this lies in the fact that first timers spend more, therefore the city of Bloemfontein and the region will benefit economically more from first timers. As first-time visitors are younger, it is important to develop a campaign that will focus on attracting them, as well as to develop the festival programme in order to satisfy their needs. Further research is, however, needed in order to elaborate on these needs. The province where most of these visitors (first-timers) originate is

Gauteng province. Therefore, the marketing campaign should focus on Gauteng with this particular market in mind. Repeaters, however, buy more tickets. Although not significantly more, it is paramount for the future of the festival that more tickets should be sold. Again, festival organisers should consider this when the festival programme and packages are developed. Festival packages could consist of accommodation, restaurants usage and entrance to productions, and should be considered between festival organisers and business people.

- Since repeat visitors are more price sensitive, a loyalty scheme with discounts could have a very positive impact to ensure affordability and value for money. Such a scheme may also entail regular comparisons of prices with other comparable festivals, prices of other types of local entertainment or even a sales promotion strategy of, as an example, buy two productions tickets and get a 20% discount on the third one.
- The needs of female visitors who are dominant both as first-time and repeat visitors should be emphasised. It is suggested that research should be undertaken to determine the needs of female visitors in the different age groups. Their needs may also have an impact on the type and variety of stalls to encourage at the festival, as well as needs in terms of entertainment for children.
- The most significant type of advertising media for both first-time and repeat visitors is word-of-mouth, which once again emphasises the importance of quality productions and the provision of excellent service. The latter not only implies good service during the festival, but also requires the formulation of a service strategy based on three levels, namely service before the festival (for example responding time on enquiries), service during the festival, and after-festival after-sales service (for example, a thank-you-for-your-support card in the media).
- Free State tourism authorities should become involved in the festival in an attempt to increase the length of stay, in particular of the first-time visitors. It is an ideal opportunity to market other tourist attractions in the Free State through effective packaging

to visitors from outside the province. Since the festival takes place during the July school holidays, marketing efforts should aim to draw visitors after the festival to the Eastern Free State or other districts for a total Free State experience.

- Lastly, the results show that fourth-time visitors have the highest level of satisfaction. Although the researchers cannot give specific reasons for this, this aspect needs to be investigated as it shows a level of saturation. This implies that the festival organisers might want to consider special packages for loyal visitors (who have been to the festival more than four times). It also highlights the fact that festival organisers most notably need to understand the needs of visitors but must also make regular changes to the festival programme, and ensure quality productions.

6. Conclusion

This research aimed to determine the differences and/or similarities between first-time and repeat visitors as an alternative market segmentation approach. The research provided some insights into the question whether there are differences or not. Results confirmed that there are differences, and prove that this is an alternative approach to market segmentation of visitors to arts festivals. Both these sets of visitors have a specific and important role to play to ensure the future existence of this festival. It was the first time that this innovative approach has been applied to visitors of a festival in South Africa. This makes it difficult to compare the results with results from other South African festivals, and is indicative of the gap in this type of research in the country. When compared to research done internationally, these findings simultaneously both contradict and support the research, as indicated earlier.

It is, however, important for festivals such as Volksblad to achieve and maintain a balance between first-time and repeat visitors. This aspect will become more challenging in the future, taking into consideration both the number of festivals or events, and the level of competitiveness. According to Lau & McKercher

(2004: 284), the generation of repeat visitation relies on the ability of destinations (festivals) to successfully convert first-time visitors into returning visitors. This depends on the ability of the festival to provide both visitors' (markets) with activities and with a festival programme tailored to satisfying their needs. The research therefore also highlights a number of implications that could assist festival organisers in achieving greater long-term sustainability and growth.

Appendix A: Comparing first-time and repeat visitors' preferred type of show/productions

Shows/productions attended	Number of previous visits					Chi-square value	df	Significance level	Pbi value
	1 (N=63)	2 (N=60)	3 (N=74)	4 (N=54)	5+ (N=77)				
Drama:						2.639	4	0.621	0.090
Yes	63%	72%	62%	59%	60%				
No	37%	28%	38%	41%	40%				
Dance theatre:						3.692	4	0.449	0.106
Yes	95%	90%	89%	96%	94%				
No	5%	10%	11%	4%	6%				
Word art and poetry:						1.776	4	0.777	0.074
Yes	94%	93%	95%	96%	97%				
No	6%	7%	5%	4%	3%				
Children's theatre:						8.041	4	0.542	0.097
Yes	92%	98%	91%	83%	91%				
No	8%	2%	9%	17%	9%				

Shows/productions attended	Number of previous visits					Chi-square value	df	Significance level	Phi value
	1 (N=63)	2 (N=60)	3 (N=74)	4 (N=54)	5+ (N=77)				
Lecturers and discussions:						3.094	4	0.542	0.097
Yes	94%	95%	93%	98%	91%				
No	6%	5%	7%	2%	9%				
Contemporary music:						0.445	4	0.979	0.037
Yes	90%	88%	89%	89%	87%				
No	10%	12%	11%	11%	13%				
Music theatre and cabaret:						2.970	4	0.563	0.095
Yes	89%	83%	82%	83%	78%				
No	11%	17%	18%	17%	22%				

Kruger, Saayman & Strydom/First-time versus repeat visitors

Shows/productions attended	Number of previous visits					Chi-square value	df	Significance level	Pbi value
	1 (N=63)	2 (N=60)	3 (N=74)	4 (N=54)	5+ (N=77)				
Classical music:						5.164	4	0.271	0.125
Yes	95%	93%	88%	93%	86%				
No	5%	7%	12%	7%	14%				
Visual arts and exhibitions:						5.104	4	0.277	0.125
Yes	86%	95%	93%	94%	94%				
No	14%	5%	7%	6%	6%				
Comedies:						2.885	4	0.577	0.094
Yes	83%	75%	80%	72%	82%				
No	17%	25%	20%	28%	18%				

Appendix B: Socio-demographic comparison between first-time and repeat visitors

Demographic characteristics	Number of previous visits					Chi-square value	df	Significance level	Pbi value
	1 (N=63)	2 (N=60)	3 (N=74)	4 (N=54)	5+ (N=77)				
Gender:						10.761	8	0.216	0.182
Male	47%	65%	43%	49%	43%				
Female	53%	35%	57%	51%	57%				
Language:						21.588	8	0.006	0.257
Afrikaans	76%	85%	90%	87%	94%				
English	16%	13%	10%	13%	6%				
Other	8%	2%	0%	0%	0%				
Occupation:						7.707	8	0.463	0.158
High income: Professional, Management, Self-employed	35%	23%	32%	37%	34%				
Medium income: Technical, Sales, Farmer, Mining, Administrative, Civil service, Education	41%	32%	38%	35%	35%				
Low income: Housewife, Pensioner, Student, Unemployed	24%	46%	29%	29%	31%				

Kruger, Saayman & Strydom/First-time versus repeat visitors

Demographic characteristics	Number of previous visits					Chi-square value	df	Significance level	Phi value
	1 (N=63)	2 (N=60)	3 (N=74)	4 (N=54)	5+ (N=77)				
Province:						30.477	32	0.544	0.306
Western Cape	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%				
Gauteng	11%	0%	3%	4%	3%				
Eastern Cape	2%	3%	1%	0%	1%				
Free State	81%	87%	88%	94%	93%				
North West	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%				
Mpumalanga	3%	5%	1%	0%	1%				
Northern Cape	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%				
KwaZulu-Natal	0%	2%	3%	0%	0%				
Type of accommodation:						6.652	4	0.155	0.144
Non-paid accommodation: Local resident, Family or friends, Day visitor	83%	91%	85%	96%	92%				
Paid accommodation: Registered guesthouse or B+B/Festival guesthouse, Hotel, Rent full house, Hostel	16%	9%	15%	4%	8%				

Demographic characteristics	Number of previous visits					Chi-square value	df	Significance level	P/i value																																																																																					
	1 (N=63)	2 (N=60)	3 (N=74)	4 (N=54)	5+ (N=77)																																																																																									
Heard about festival: Television	Yes	25%	16%	22%	27%	3.216	4	0.522	0.099																																																																																					
	No	75%	84%	78%	73%					Radio	Yes	38%	47%	44%	58%	6.724	4	0.151	0.143	No	62%	53%	56%	42%	Website	Yes	19%	18%	33%	30%	7.020	4	0.135	0.146	No	81%	82%	67%	70%	E-mail	Yes	3%	5%	9%	8%	2.619	4	0.623	0.089	No	97%	95%	93%	92%	Magazines	Yes	16%	15%	19%	30%	6.444	4	0.168	0.140	No	84%	85%	76%	70%	Newspapers	Yes	54%	58%	61%	73%	5.883	4	0.208	0.134	No	46%	42%	39%	27%	Word of mouth	Yes	71%	70%	68%	66%	0.807	8	0.999	0.050
Radio	Yes	38%	47%	44%	58%	6.724	4	0.151	0.143																																																																																					
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Kruger, Saayman & Strydom/First-time versus repeat visitors

Demographic characteristics	Number of previous visits					Chi-square value	df	Significance level	Phi value
	1 (N=63)	2 (N=60)	3 (N=74)	4 (N=54)	5+ (N=77)				
Festival as main reason:									
Yes	32%	12%	18%	19%	15%				
No	22%	25%	18%	13%	12%				
Local resident:									
Attend again?	46%	63%	65%	69%	73%	16.780	8	0.032	0.226
Yes, definitely	79%	83%	86%	94%	96%	19.296	8	0.013	0.248
No, definitely not	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%				
Perhaps	21%	20%	14%	4%	4%				

Demographic characteristics	Number of previous visits					Chi-square value	df	Significance level	Phi value
	1 (N = 63)	2 (N = 60)	3 (N = 74)	4 (N = 54)	5 + (N = 77)				
Other festivals attended:									
Aardklop						6.262	4	0.180	0.138
Yes	81%	75%	65%	69%	65%				
No	19%	25%	35%	31%	35%				
Grahamstown						5.194	4	0.268	0.126
Yes	78%	90%	86%	78%	81%				
No	22%	10%	14%	22%	19%				
KKNK						11.639	4	0.020	0.188
Yes	73%	61%	61%	63%	52%				
No	27%	39%	39%	37%	48%				
Innibos						2.788	4	0.594	0.092
Yes	84%	88%	86%	92%	91%				
No	16%	12%	14%	8%	9%				

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