

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SHARK CAGE DIVING TOURISM TO COASTAL ECONOMIES: A CASE STUDY OF A COASTAL TOWN IN THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA



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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Although tourism has been acknowledged as one of the biggest economic sectors in South Africa, limited research currently exists regarding the **economic contribution of coastal and marine tourism (CMT)**. One of the major draw cards to South Africa is the marine life that is found at various points along the coastline stretching over 3000 kilometres (Operation Phakisa, 2014). The past two decades have presented a growth in nature-based tourism, marine areas and marine species (Lange & Jiddawi, 2009:521; Vianna et al., 2012:267; Guerra & Dawson, 2016:3). It has also been noted that marine tourism is identified as one aspect of tourism making a significant contribution to global economies (Seymour, 2012:19). In 2014, The South African government launched Operation Phakisa, an initiative aimed at unlocking the economic potential of South Africa's oceans, for which CMT was identified as one of the six focus areas (Operation Phakisa, 2014).

Gansbaai, a small town befitting to this category of small towns receives a large amount of visitors annually to take part in shark cage diving (Cape Town Magazine, 2016). However there is limited information on the economic impact of shark cage diving. This research study therefore seeks to understand the economic impact of shark cage diving in the Gansbaai community by looking at the **profile of visitors** who visit the area, their **expenditure patterns** and the **role played by this activity** in the decision to visit South Africa and more specifically Gansbaai.



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the profile of visitors taking part in shark cage diving in Gansbaai
- To determine the expenditure patterns of visitors taking part in shark cage diving in Gansbaai
- To establish the role played by shark cage diving in the decision to visit South Africa

RESEARCH METHODS

The study will be conducted in Gansbaai, a coastal town located approximately 2 hours away from Cape Town, South Africa. Figure 1 below illustrates the study area and other coastal towns where CMT is undertaken. A self-administered survey will be distributed to the visitors who will be taking part in shark cage diving activity. The survey was piloted in Gansbaai and updated based on feedback from respondents.



Figure 1: Map of Gansbaai
 Source: (Maplandia, n.d).

The **methodology** of the study will consist of a **proportionate sampling** method. A sample size (n) of 361 is recommended for the (N) of 5060 in order to reach a 95% confidence level. Based on proportionate sampling, the sample size for international and domestic visitors will be n=319 and n=42 respectively. Figure 2 shows tourists as they enjoy shark cage diving experience in Gansbaai. The survey instrument is divided into three main sections: **visitor profile**, **expenditure patterns**, shark cage diving and adventure tourism as well as the demographic profile section. Ethical considerations were adhered to and permission was sought to prior data collection.

The collected data will be analysed through the use of statistical package (SPSS v24) and would assist in the generation of frequency tables.



Figure 2: Tourists enjoying Shark Cage Diving Experience in Gansbaai
 Source: (Marine Dynamics Facebook, n.d).

PROPOSED OUTCOMES

It is **envisaged** that the outcome of this study will lead to a **better understanding** of the **current market** for shark cage diving and the future opportunities to further develop CMT in the region.

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