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FINAL REPORT:

**DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH UNDERSTANDING
TOURISTS' EXPECTATIONS AND
MEMORABLE TOURIST EXPERIENCES
AT MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS**

ISIMANGALISO WETLAND PARK

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA: TOURISM
MANAGEMENT DIVISION**

MARCH 2017



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: ISIMANGALISO WETLAND PARK

iSimangaliso Wetland Park is a unique site with international significance as a Heritage site. It contains pristine beauty and offers visitors a variety of experiences. The diversity of landscapes makes it appealing to different visitor types, from adventure seekers to family holiday goers and nature lovers. It has the potential to be a world class experience.

Elements from the site observation were not conducive to the image of iSimangaliso as a tourist attraction. With some areas branding is visible, but in others not, to the extent that tourists do not always know that they are in a unique Heritage site. Confusion is created when moving through the different entry gates for iSimangaliso versus KZN Wildlife, with fees differing, separate permits having to be obtained. The quality of infrastructure and service delivery also differs across the different sections of the Park; being old and rundown in some areas, while modern and new in others. There is a clear difference between properties managed by iSimangaliso versus KZN Wildlife. This can impede on visitors' image and perceptions about the Park as a holistic, well run attraction.

The tourist survey on Memorable Tourist Experiences (MTEs) delivered the following results:

Number of responses:

Total pre: 78 (60 Sodwana, 2 Kosi Bay, 16 St Lucia)

Total post: 79 (60 Sodwana, 7 Kosi Bay, 12 St Lucia)

Profile of respondents

The majority of the respondents were domestic visitors with male respondents dominating the pre and females the post samples. Approximately half of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 35 and almost all respondents having secondary education and above. The majority of respondents in both the pre and post samples were White (approximately 84%).

Trip behaviour

Slightly more than half of the respondents were overnight visitors and about half first time visitors. Those that were repeat visitors had made an average of five trips to the Park in the past. The overwhelming



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majority of respondents travelled with family and friends. Word of mouth was the primary source of information, followed by the site's website (either iSimangaliso or KZN Wildlife).

Motivation to visit

The main motivation for visiting iSimangaliso was indicated as 'the beautiful surroundings' followed by the desire to have a nice holiday and experience fun/socializing/rest/relaxation. It is this aspect that may require some specific managerial interventions to increase the quality of the experience.

Less than 10% of respondents said that their decision to visit was influenced by the Heritage status while a third indicated that the world heritage site status had some influence on their decision to visit.

Motivations showed significant differences between groups based on the choice to visit, time of last visit, who arranged the visit, place of origin, level of education and racial group.

The majority (approximately 70%) said they would definitely revisit iSimangaliso and almost 80% said they would recommend it.

Memorable tourist experiences

The overall aspects contributing most to making a visit to iSimangaliso a memorable experience is the oceanside and landscape. Visitors experience a sense of freedom, real enjoyment and visiting a place where the visitor really wanted to go when visiting the Park. They also regard it as an authentic experience and value the state of the natural resources. Respondents' experiences of all the site specific features were mostly positive with uMkhize and Cape Vidal receiving the most favourable scores. Majority of respondents spent time on the beach, and diving along with turtle tours received the second highest score as a positive experience.

Gap analysis (expectations vs experiences)



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Highest expectations were for 'safety of person and belongings', 'helpful friendly staff' and 'connect with nature'. Highest scores achieved for visitor experiences were 'connect with nature', 'authenticity' and 'viewing time in one spot'.

Eleven factors (each made up of a number of items) were used to measure the difference between expectations and experiences with the composite score of the items making up each factor. On an overall level (across all sites) all the results indicated a negative gap i.e. expectations on all the factors were not met. The gap analysis clearly indicated a trend of negative performance where visitor expectations are not being met. The most notable differences are in terms of 'safety of person and belongings', 'quality infrastructure/ architecture', 'affordable activity options', 'surprised by unusual things' and 'efficient service reception/entry'.

Graphic illustration of gaps between expectations and experiences



Comparison between the pre and post gap factor scores reiterate the findings of the previous gap analysis table. From the table above it is clear that in all instances where statistically significant



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differences were found between visitors' expectations and their experiences (indicated with * or **), a negative gap was found (in other words, the attraction performed worse than what was expected). The factors raising most concern are service quality, on-site facilities and infrastructure and content.

Day visitors gave higher scores than overnight visitors on several factors, while visitors whose visit was focused on the whole site gave higher scores on all aspects than those only attending an event at the site. Indian visitors also gave higher scores on some aspects than other racial groups.

Current management challenges appear to be hampering the effective running of the Park from a tourism perspective. Issues of ownership are evident in the way facilities are maintained, the Park is promoted, as well as service delivery. The branding of the Park and its various sections as a holistic attraction requires attention in order to establish a strong brand within which all aspects of the experience is contained. Stakeholder collaboration is greatly required to improve current marketing and communication efforts. Local community members and some visitors also have a negative perception about iSimangaliso as 'institution' that enforces rules and takes away visitor pleasures – a perception that has to be addressed through effective communication.



1. INTRODUCTION

This study is about understanding expectations of tourists to iSimangaliso Wetland Park and determining what constitutes a memorable tourist experience. The purpose is to enhance destination development through minimising the gap between tourists' expectations and experiences. This report must be read in conjunction with the report on the overall sample description which provides the context and background of the study. This report focusses on the methodology and the results followed by a discussion and recommendations.

2. OVERALL AIM OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of the study is to identify whether gaps exist between the expectations of tourists and their experience at iSimangaliso Wetland Park, based on established criteria of what constitutes a memorable tourist experience, with a view to developing the destination to serve the interest of visitors more effectively. Major tourist attractions that have been identified for investigation are:

- Mapungubwe National Park, both as a heritage site and a national park.
- Augrabies National Park
- Walter Sisulu National Botanical Gardens
- The Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site
- iSimangaliso Wetland Park

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In meeting the overall aim of the study on developing tourist destinations based on why tourists visit major attractions, their travel patterns around major attractions and what their overall experience is, the following specific objectives were set:

- (a) To analyse the product offering at selected tourist attractions in terms of its image and communication about the site;
- (b) To determine tourists' flow of movement within the major attractions during their visit;
- (c) To determine tourists' motivations for visiting a tourist site, encompassing the reasons for visitation;
- (d) To measure tourists' expectations of their visit to a tourist site
- (e) To determine tourists' overall memorable tourism experience of the tourist site



- (f) To conduct a gap analysis between the expected and actual experiences
- (g) To recommend site-specific interventions and plans to facilitate/deliver a memorable tourism experience

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Two phases make up the empirical part of the study. The first phase covers the analysis of the selected sites in terms of their core tourism product offering and the second phase covers an analysis of the tourists' experiences at each selected site. Once all data had been collected from both phases a gap analysis between the expected and actual experiences of tourists of the selected tourist attractions was conducted.

4.1 Phase 1: Analysis of the core product offering at each selected site

In this first phase the primary product or what "pulls" tourists towards the attraction, according to the site management and promotional messages, was determined.

i. Research site overview (ANNEXURE A)

The purpose of the research site overview was for the researcher to gain an understanding of the tourism potential of the site by completing the Tourism Attraction Assessment Sheet (McKercher & Ho, 2006) through:

- a. Reviewing background documentation to familiarise themselves with the site.
- b. Interviewing one or two managers (CEO and/or Marketing Manager) for insight as per indicators from the management's perspective
- c. Conducting on-site inspection independently assessing each indicator holistically i.e. providing an overall view of what they are perceiving.

ii. Observation sheet per site (ANNEXURE B)

The purpose of the observation was to assess the quality of the physical layout and facilities at the site as well as to form an idea of the movement of tourists around the site.

4.2 Phase 2: Analysis of the tourists' experiences at each selected site.

Data was collected from tourists through a survey instrument on their expectations pre-visit survey) and experiences at the site (post-visit survey). While the ideal would have been to collect the



pre-visit and post-visit from the same tourists at each site, this was logistically very difficult and the decision was made to collect data from tourists entering the site and tourists exiting the site.

1. Tourist Pre-Visit Survey - Questionnaire 1 (ANNEXURE C)

The pre-visit questionnaire was designed to measure tourists'/visitors' motivations for visitation as well as their expectations of the major components of the experience. The scale used to measure these expectations contained 43 items under 11 factors and measured a range of aspects of the product offering. This group of visitors was targeted BEFORE visiting the site and the aim per site was for at least 100 responses to be attained.

2. Tourist Post-Visit Survey - Questionnaire 2 (ANNEXURE D)

The post-visit questionnaire was designed to measure tourists'/visitors' experiences – both overall memorable experiences and site-specific experiences. The overall MTEs were measured at the hand of a 4-factor MTE scale. The site-specific experiences were measured using the same scale used in the pre-visit survey, but stated as experiences (current) and not as expectations (future). This allowed for direct comparisons between expectations and experiences regarding the 43 listed aspects (11 factors) of the product offering. This group of visitors were targeted AFTER visiting the site and the aim per site was for at least 100 responses to be attained.

In selecting respondents, convenience sampling was employed i.e. those prepared to complete the questionnaires were included in the sample.

5. RESULTS: ISIMANGALISO WETLAND PARK

The results are presented under the following headings:

1. Site description
2. Core product (main promotional message)
3. Site observations
4. Site interviews
5. Challenges experienced by researchers
6. Survey result



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7. 5.1 Site description

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park was listed as South Africa's first World Heritage Site in December 1999 in recognition of its superlative natural beauty and unique global values. It falls within the legal framework of a UNESCO site and has to be managed in a specific manner to retain this status. It cannot be modified without thorough consideration and permission. The iSimangaliso Authority was set up to manage the Park, created from 16 different parcels of land – a patchwork of state-owned land, commercial forests and former military sites. The all-weather 'Lubombo Road' (R22) – linked to the N2 from Durban – from Hluhluwe to the Mozambique border, via Kosi Bay has created an easy route for tourists and improved community access. Close co-operation between the Mozambican, Swazi and South African governments has almost entirely removed the threat of malaria from the area.

The visa waiver agreement between South Africa and Mozambique, effective since April 2005, has eased access into the region.

The 332 000 hectare Park contains some internationally significant features such as three major lake systems, interlinking ecosystems, 700 year old fishing traditions, most of South Africa's remaining swamp forests, Africa's largest estuarine system and 25 000 year-old vegetated coastal dunes – among the highest in the world. Main features promoted include the lakes (including Lake St Lucia as Africa's largest estuary); water surfaces; extensive biodiversity (8 ecosystems); the coastline (ocean and sand dunes), land-based wildlife (mammals, birds, reptiles, insects), marine wildlife (coral reefs, fish, mammals). The Park strongly focuses on conservation. Park establishment programs have seen the removal of some 12 000ha of alien plants and commercial forests. Wetland and dune rehabilitation programs, the introduction of game, the building of new roads, game fences, new water supply and bulk electricity supply systems and substations have all contributed to building the new Park.

5.2 Core product (main promotional message)

The Park promotes diverse experiences in 10 areas (features) that make up the iSimangaliso Wetland Park: Maphelane, Lake St Lucia, Cape Vidal and the Eastern Shores, Charters Creek and the Western Shores, False Bay, Sodwana Bay, uMkhuze, Lake Sibaya, Coastal Forest and Kosi Bay (Mozambique border). Along the 220 kilometre shoreline, a variety of activities is available to visitors. The diversity of



landscapes makes it appealing to different visitor types, from adventure seekers to family holiday goers and nature lovers.

5.3 Site observations

Three observation sheets were completed for the three areas included in the survey (Sodwana, St. Lucia, Kosi Bay).

The attraction is very big and consists of different parts. At the main entry points signage and branding of iSimangaliso is visible. When driving along the route between areas however, there is a lack of signage and visitors find signs stating 'thank you for visiting iSimangaliso Wetland Park', but then not having known that they were even in the Park. In some areas such as the beaches in St. Lucia clear branding is visible and signage that demarcates the Park, while in other areas such as Kosi Bay it is not so clear. Confusion is created when moving through the different entry gates for iSimangaliso versus KZN wildlife. Once through the iSimangaliso gate, no further branding is visible and one only finds KZN Wildlife branding for example. Visitors pay different sets of fees for both iSimangaliso and KZN. Visitors also require permits for both as separate entities and at each gate new forms/permit system has to be adhered to. The quality of infrastructure and service delivery also differs across the different sections of the Park; being old and rundown in some areas, while modern and new in others. There is a clear difference between property managed by iSimangaliso versus KZN Wildlife. This can impede on visitors' image and perceptions about the Park as a holistic, well run attraction. When a group of Dutch tourists, for example, were approached in St. Lucia to complete the questionnaire after they disembarked from the Lake St. Lucia boat cruise, they refused participation in the survey stating that they "have not been to this place" (iSimangaliso). There seems to be a lack of communication on the side of tour operators to also educate tourists about the Park as a whole instead of focusing on the individual (popular) experiences being sold.

5.4 Site interviews

Interviews were conducted with management at Kosi Bay and St. Lucia. From the interviews the perception was created that stakeholders welcome tourism and see it as part of their core business. Local community see the Park as a job creation opportunity (locals can apply and be 'registered' as guides/camp site helpers/cleaners). Many locals feel somewhat deprived of utilising the local asset as



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they have to pay an entry fee to visit some areas similar to what tourists have to (there are specific beaches where they can access for free in St. Lucia).

The site contains sensitive areas that require extensive conservation efforts; hence the recent implementation of restrictions to fishing and beach access for 4x4 vehicles (to the apparent frustration of visitors). The Park reflects a unique character, especially in terms of the natural resources but not so much of the cultural aspects. For example, in Kosi Bay there is a community living inside the park across the lake, but nothing much is being done to harness this resource from a cultural tourism perspective. The site has universal value (as acknowledged with the UNESCO listing) and has the potential to create an emotional connection with visitors due to the pristine, unspoilt and vast character of the natural resources.

Management acknowledges that not all areas of the site are accessible and that access to some areas is problematic. The site presents many hazards due to the wildlife present, but also the road conditions. There are also threats to personal safety as hijacking and theft is a problem in certain areas of the Park. As stated, some areas' facilities are well-maintained while others are outdated and need repair. The site is surrounded by a few other tourist attractions. Many visitors stay outside of the Park and one finds many lodges/guest houses etc. operating in the small towns adjacent to the Park at the main entry points. There are activities on offer to visitors, however management feels that more could be done. The process of adding any additional activities or events are however difficult and permission not always obtained. This situation is as a result of the UNESCO status restricting activity, but also the fact that different parts are managed by different entities. It is difficult for management who wants to attract more visitors, to get their initiatives off the ground.

5.5 Challenges experienced by researchers

Communication with and from the organisation proved a bit problematic. The researcher made contact a month before the intended field trip (31 August). Two weeks later (15 September) received written email confirmation that the fieldwork was approved, but was not informed of any further protocol such as permission letters etc. The researcher followed up again for final arrangements (27 September) and received awaited contact on day of departure (30 September), where it was said that a research permit form had to be completed and sent back in order to give access. Upon arrival, the gate at iSimangaliso



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(Sodwana) knew about our arrival. Apart from that no other staff members at Sodwana, Kosi Bay or St. Lucia or staff from Ezemvelo KZN knew about the team's visit and planned survey.

Despite not knowing about the research, a manager at St. Lucia's Siyabonga Visitor Centre and at Kosi Bay was willing to conduct an interview. The reception staff and management at Sodwana Bay was extremely unwelcoming, suspicious and refused to talk to the researcher, stating that they don't have 'freedom of expression in the company' and was also unwilling to assist the researcher in making contact with another manager that could have been of assistance. Reception also did not sensitise visitors upon arrival of the survey as was requested in initial contact.

The days of the visit (1 to 4 October) were all influenced by the weather as there was a very strong coastal wind keeping people away from the beach areas or outside of their tents; also making it difficult for willing participants to complete the forms on the beach/outside areas where the wind was blowing. Only a few of the chalet residents returned the completed questionnaires left with them.

On the day of the field trip to St. Lucia, the town and beaches were hit by rain making it difficult to reach tourists.

On the day of the field trip to Kosi Bay, the fieldwork was hampered by road conditions and the fieldworkers could not access the final last point where visitors may have been found (a local 'guide' took the fieldworkers on a dirt road which he said was 'redone', but where the vehicle got stuck in the sand and had to be towed out).

The distances and road conditions made it difficult for the team to explore all parts of iSimangaliso. However data was collected from the three main centres. Because no communication was made with any of the private lodges/accommodation within the wider park, the researchers could not approach these areas to request survey participation. Information regarding permission for these lodges/areas as well as that of the Ezemvelo managed areas within iSimangaliso was only communicated to the researcher on the day of departure and unfortunately did not allow enough time to make additional arrangements or complete additional research permission protocols.



5.6 Survey results: Sample profile, motivations and MTEs

5.6.1 Number of respondents

Total pre: 78 (60 Sodwana, 2 Kosi Bay, 16 St Lucia)

Total post: 79 (60 Sodwana, 7 Kosi Bay, 12 St Lucia)

5.6.2 Demographic profile of respondents

Table 1: Demographic profile

		PRE (%)	POST (%)
Place of origin	Domestic	90	89
	International	10	11
Gender	Male	54	48
	Female	46	52
Age	18 - 35	62	42
	36 - 50	29	46
	Over 50	10	12
Level of education	Primary school	4	3
	Secondary school/matric	37	28
	National diploma/certificate	24	30
	Undergraduate degree	18	15
	Postgraduate degree	17	24
Population group	African	10	1
	Coloured	1	6
	Indian	4	10
	White	85	83
	Asian	-	-



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Figure 1: Place of origin

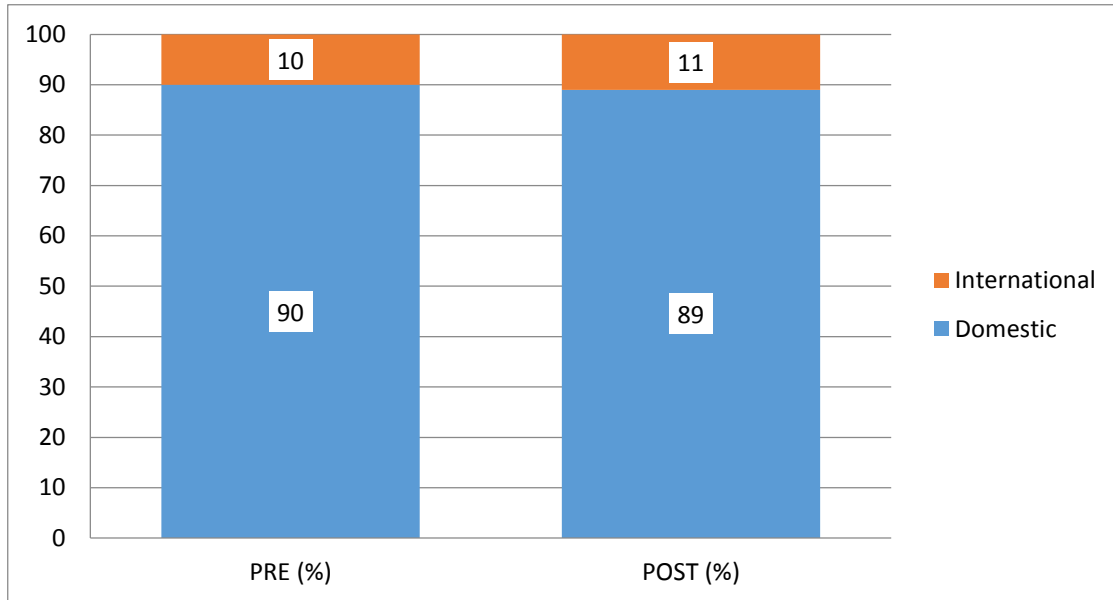
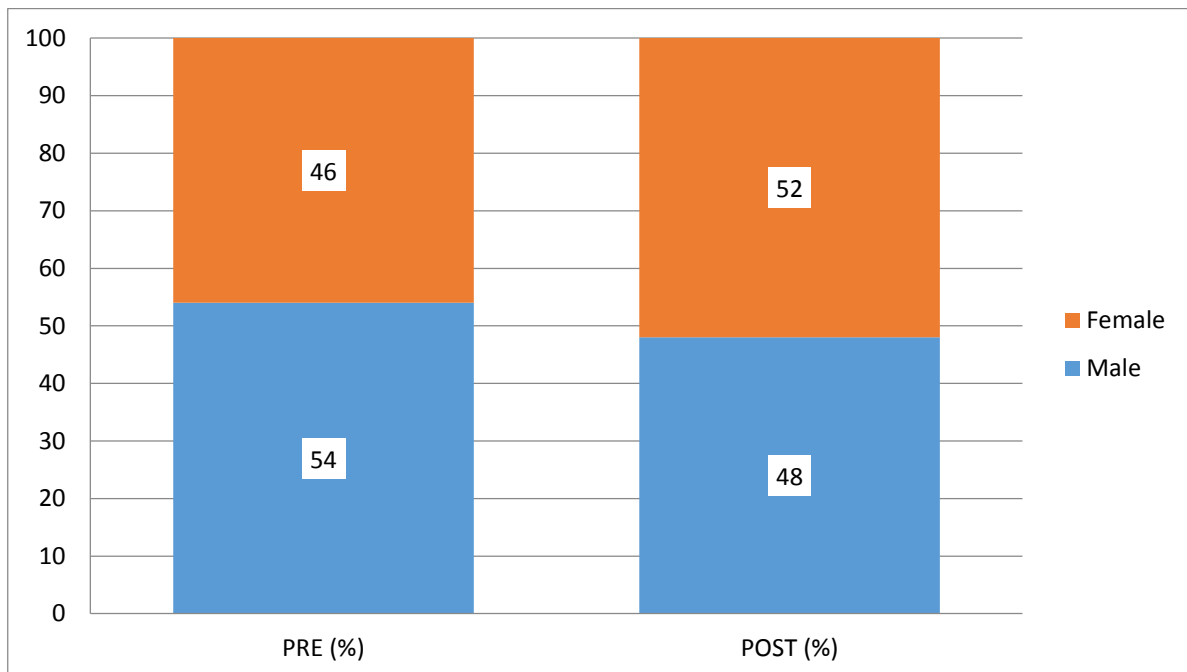


Figure 2: Gender





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Figure 3: Age group

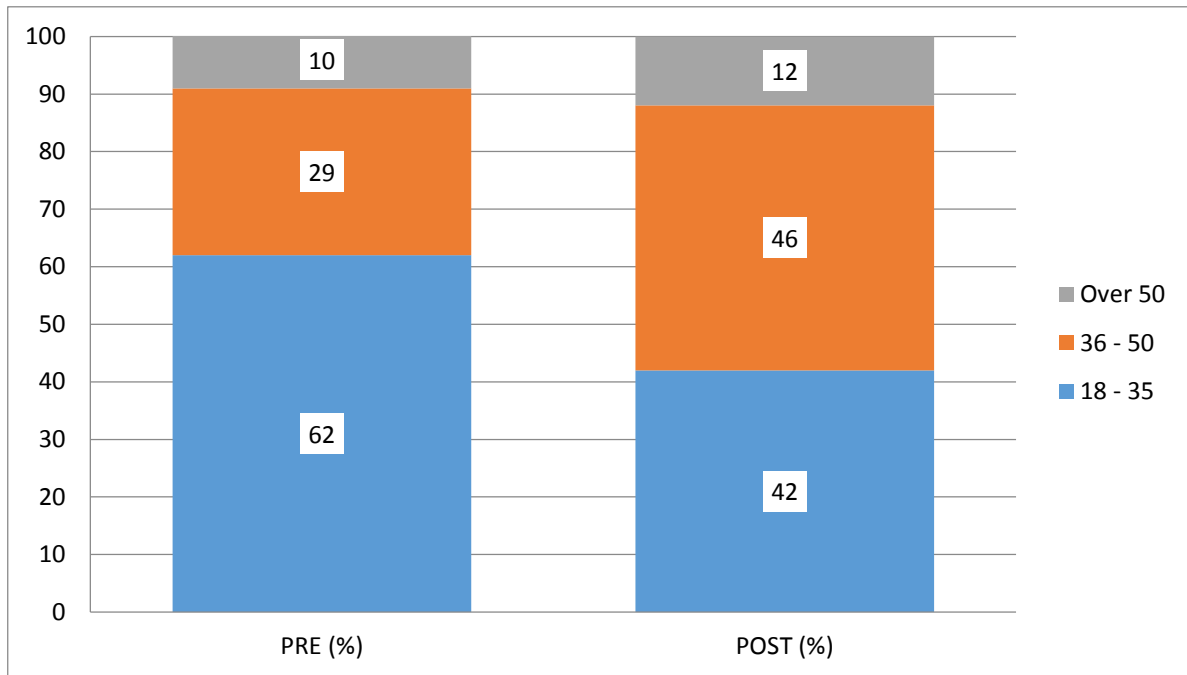


Figure 4: Level of education

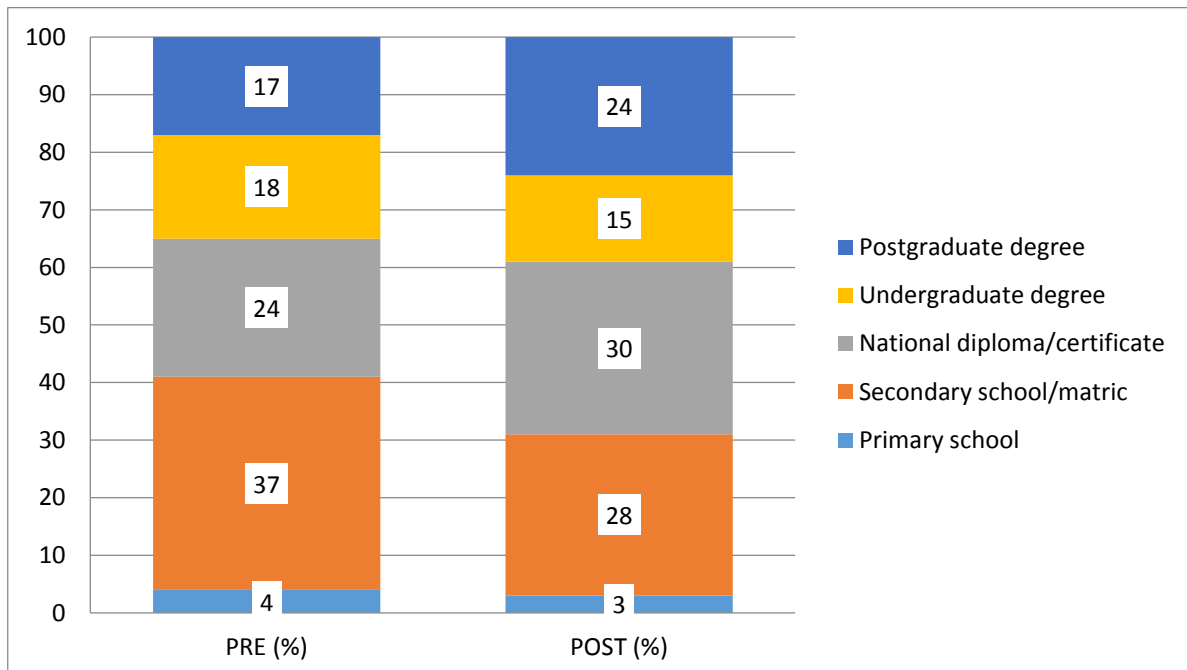
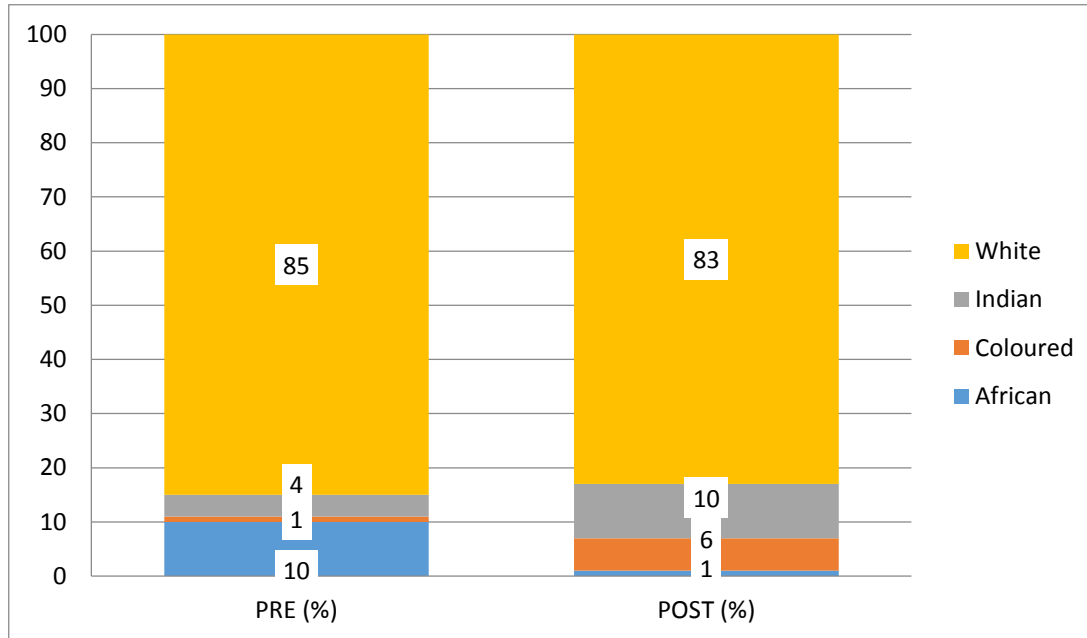




Figure 5: Population group



The majority of the respondents to both the pre (90%) and the post (89%) questionnaire were domestic visitors. Male respondents dominated the pre and females the post samples. The majority of respondents in the pre sample were between the ages of 18 and 35 (62%) and between 36 and 50 in the post sample (46%). Level of education was similarly spread in both the pre and post samples. Majority of respondents in the pre and post samples were white.

According to Park information, this is an accurate reflection of the typical visitor profile, with most visitors being domestic visitors coming for holidays, diving and fishing. The Park has seen a recent increase in foreign visitors from the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and France (management, Kosi Bay).

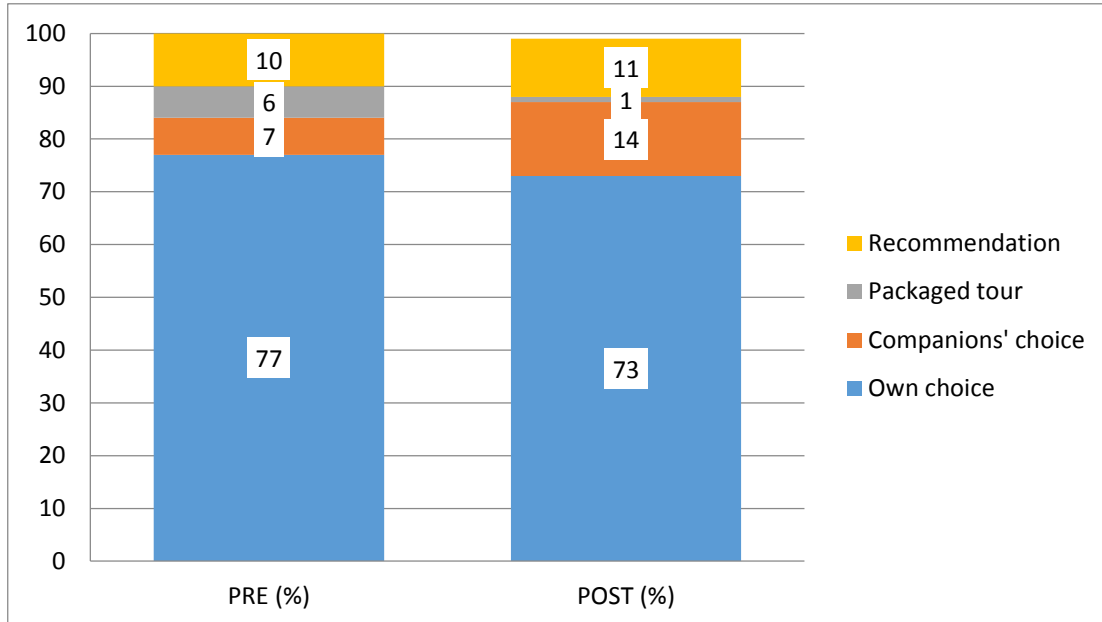
5.6.3 Trip behaviour



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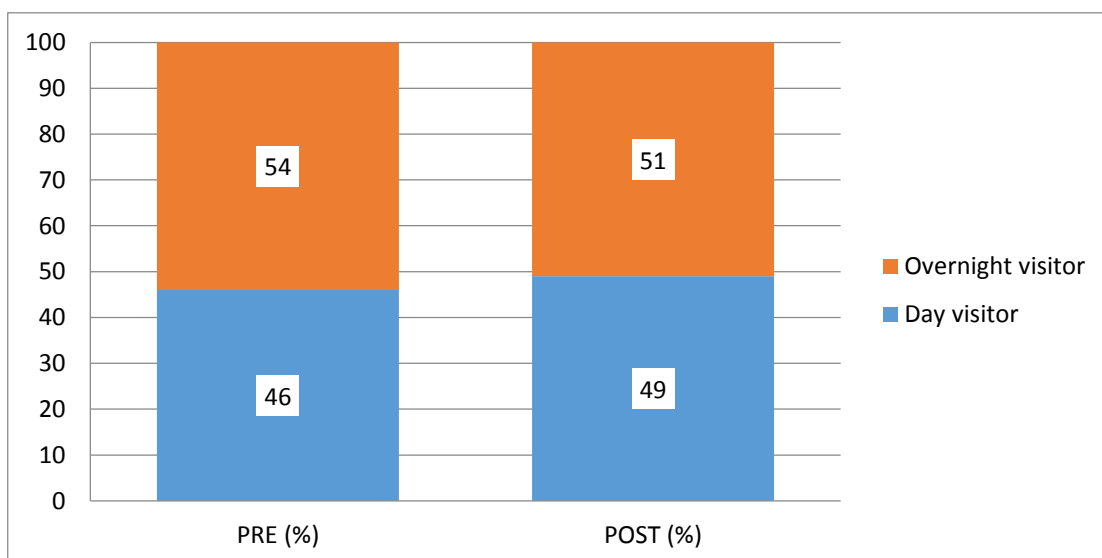
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Figure 6: Choice to visit



Most respondents agreed that it was their own choice to visit iSimangaliso, followed by recommendation for the pre questionnaire and companions' choice for the post questionnaire.

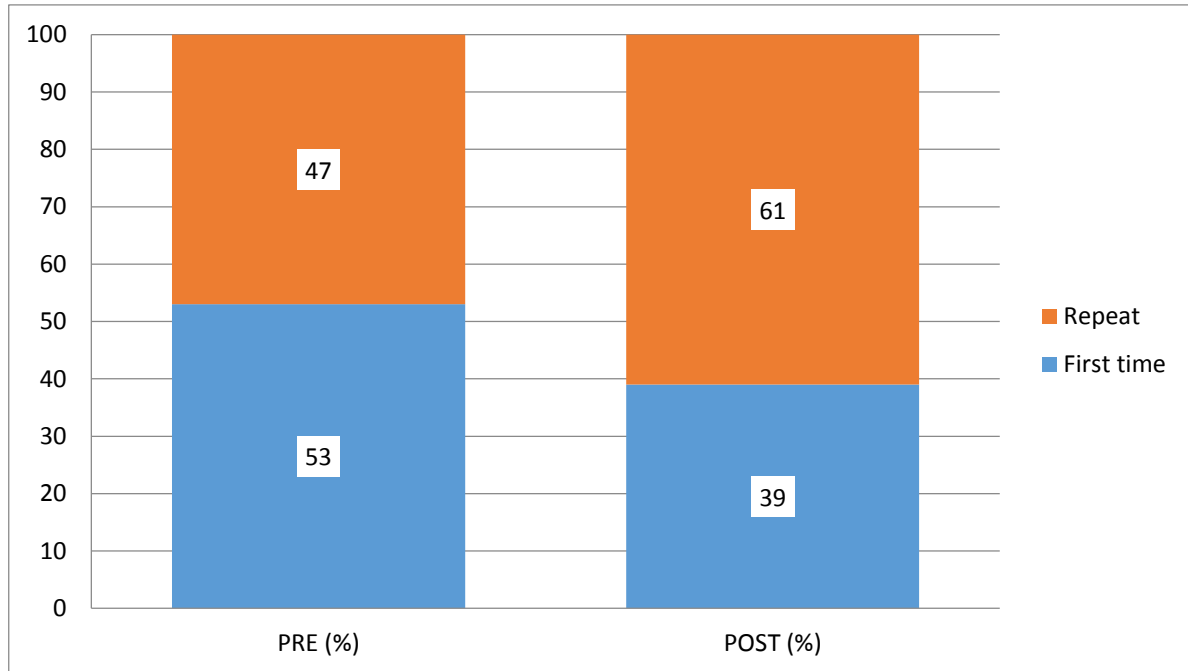
Figure 7: Visitor type





Overnight visitors to the site dominated the sample for both the pre and post questionnaire, followed by overnight visitors to the area.

Figure 8: Last visit to the site



Just over half of respondents to the pre questionnaire were first time visitors (53%), followed by those visiting the Park less than a year ago. For post questionnaire respondents, majority (39%) were first time visitors followed by those visiting the Park less than a year ago.

Number of visits to sit

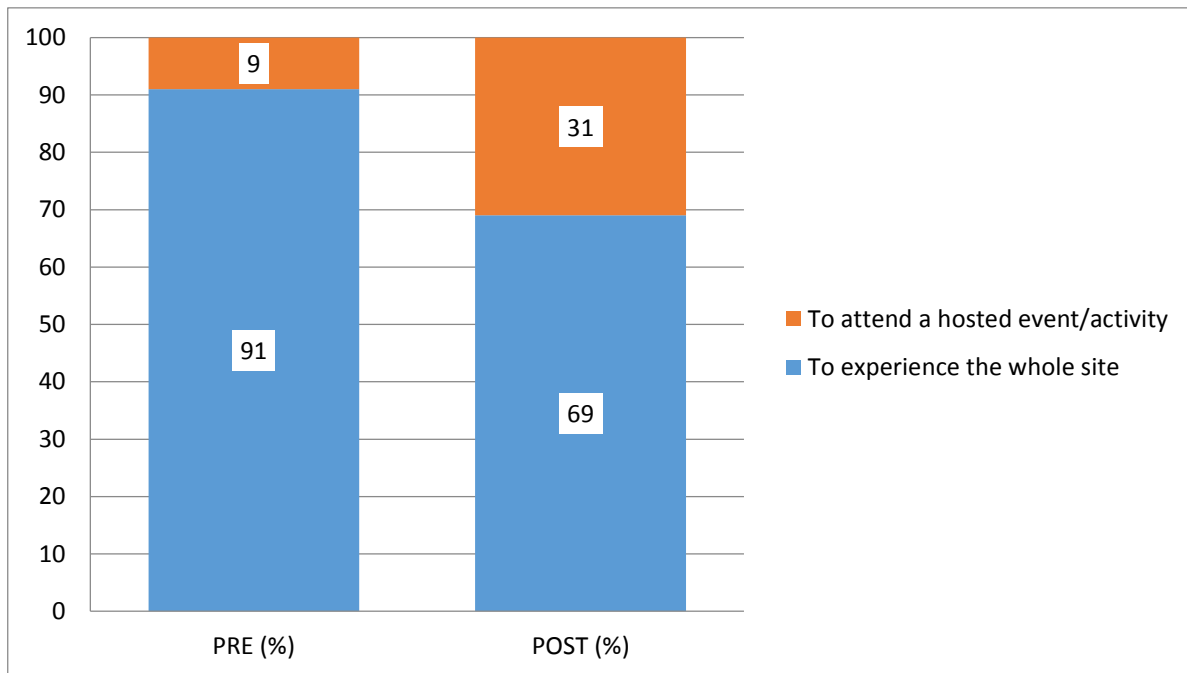
Respondents to the pre questionnaire made an average of 4.7 trips to iSimangaliso. The minimum number of trips was 1 and the maximum number of trips 20. Nineteen respondents visited once, six visited 10 times, seven visited twice, four visited three times, three visited 20 times, two visited four and six times respectively, and single respondents visited seven and 15 times respectively.

Post-questionnaire respondents made an average of 6.8 trips to the Park. Again, the minimum number of trips was 1 and the maximum number of trips were 100 (respondents that have been visiting over the last 25 to 30 years). Twenty-one respondents visited once, 12 visited twice, five visited three and 10



times respectively, four visited four, five and six times respectively, three visited 20 times, one visited nine times, and two visited 100 times.

Figure 9: Focus of the visit



For both the pre and post questionnaire, the main focus of the visit was to experience the whole site. Majority of the respondents of the post questionnaire (39) indicated that they were not visiting any other attractions. Eighteen of the respondents indicated 'yes', but then mentioned other parts of iSimangaliso (e.g. Sodwana, Cape Vidal, St Lucia and Kosi Bay). Only five visitors indicated that they were also visiting other attractions in the area including Hluhluwe/Umfolozzi Game Reserve, the Cheese Factory and Etola.

Table 2: Travel companions

Travel companions	PRE (%)	POST (%)
Family	59	63
Friends	44	53
Alone	4	4
Work colleagues	9	9
Education group	8	5
Special interest group	3	-
Other	-	--

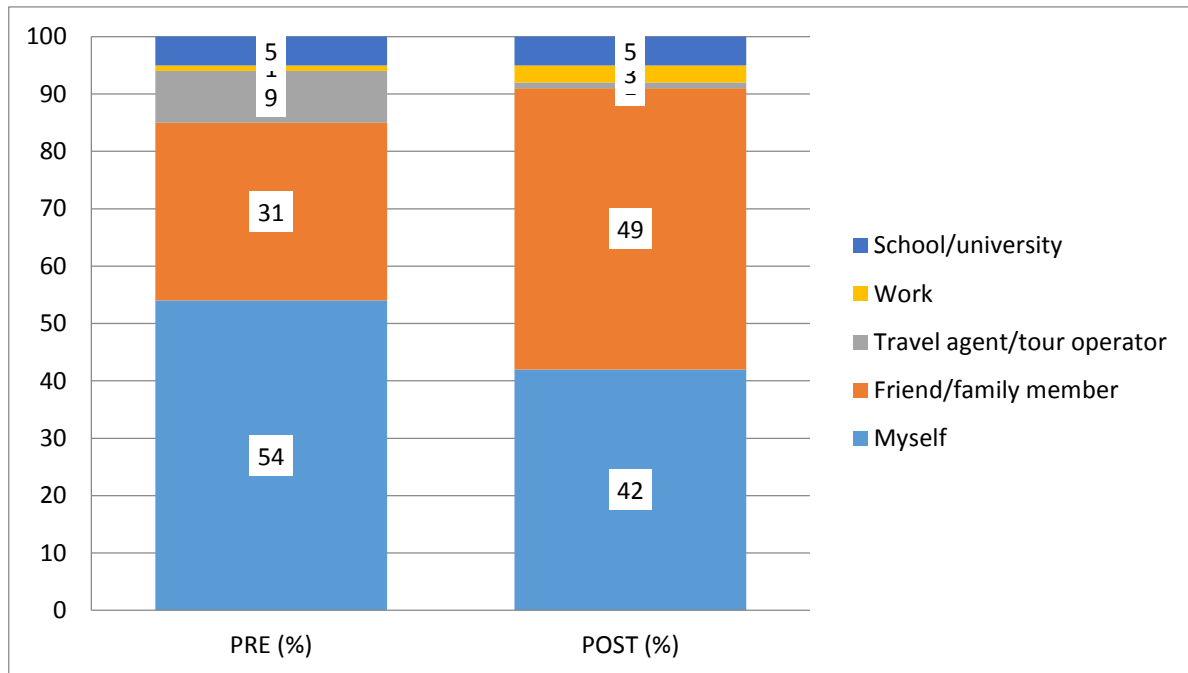


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For both the pre and the post questionnaire, the majority of respondents indicated that their family was their travel companions, followed by friends.

Figure 10: Who arranged the visit



For the pre questionnaire, 54% of respondents indicated that they arranged their trip themselves, followed by the trip being arranged by a friend or family member. For the post questionnaire, 49% of respondents said a friend/family member arranged their visit (49%), followed by themselves (42%).

Table 3: Source of information

Source of information	PRE (%)	POST (%)
Site's website	33	28
Site's social media account	10	8
Word of mouth	67	71
DMO website	10	5
VIC of surrounding destination	10	1
VIC of other destination	5	3
Travel agent/tour operator	12	3
Other	1	4



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Respondents to both the pre and the post questionnaire mentioned word of mouth as their primary source of information, followed by the site's website. It is not clear whether this refers to the iSimangaliso or KZN wildlife website (where accommodation bookings have to be made).

Other sources mentioned were 'other websites' and 'has always been our holiday destination' (no new information searched).

Table 4: First thoughts on of the site

Thought (aspects)	PRE (nr of times mentioned)	POST (nr of times mentioned)	Total mentions
Beach	3	6	9
Camp sites	1	1	2
Conservation, national park, heritage site	1	6	7
Diving	7	14	21
Family time, socialising	2	2	4
Fishing	1	4	5
Holiday, relaxing, fresh air, sun, escape, fun, good time	5	6	11
Nature, marshes, monkeys, hippos, wildlife, forest, animals, lakes, ocean life	9	20	29
Ocean, sea, water	9	8	17
Wind	-	3	3

Aspect mostly mentioned were nature/wildlife aspects (29 times) followed by diving (21 times) and the ocean/sea (17 times).



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Descriptive word used included 'beauty' (most used), 'very special', 'green', 'unspoilt', 'untouched beauty', 'very pretty', 'out of this world', 'peaceful', 'quiet' and 'clean'.

Negative comments included "potholes", "This is the organisation that make rules as they wish, regardless how would that rule affect the society", "restricted access" and "facilities very run-down".

These images coincide with the information provided on the website and it appears that the message being communicated about the Park matches the perceptions that visitors have about the Park.

5.6.4 Motivations to visit (pre questionnaire)

Table 5: Motivations to visit

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Beautiful surroundings	4.37	.842
Have a nice holiday	4.30	.923
Positive life experience	4.26	.949
Time with friends and family	4.10	1.148
Self-expression of interests	3.94	1.013
Learn new things	3.93	1.039
New place never visited	3.56	1.500
Socialise with other visitors	3.31	1.198
Spiritual experience	2.86	1.207

From the results it is clear that respondents agreed strongly that the beautiful surroundings made them decide to visit iSimangaliso, followed by having a nice holiday and a positive life experience. The low score on spiritual experience should be seen along with the high standard deviation, possibly indicating varied interpretation/understanding of the meaning.



Table 6: Motivations to visit Comparisons between groups

	Choice to visit	Last visit	Who arranged	Stay-over	Place of origin	Level of education	Racial group
Beautiful surroundings	-	-	-	5.816**	5.103**	-	
Have a nice holiday	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Positive life experience	-	-	6.863*	-	-	-	
Time with friends and family	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Self-expression of interests	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Learn new things	6.087*	-	-	-	-	-	
New place never visited	-	17.361*	-	-	9.406*	-	
Socialise with other visitors	10.744*	-	6.653*	-	-	3.817*	14.536*
Spiritual experience	-	-	-	-	-	-	

*p<.01

**p<.05

When the motivations to visit iSimangaliso were compared across different groups, some significant differences became evident. From the above table it is clear that the motivations that showed significant differences between groups were to socialise with other visitors and to have spiritual experiences. Those visitors who chose to visit iSimangaliso because they were part of a package tour (n=4, M=1.75), agreed significantly less that they visit the Park to socialise with other visitors than those who visited because it was their own choice (n=49, M=3.39). Visitors on a package tour (n=4, M=2.25) also agreed significantly less that they visit the Park to learn new things when compared to those who visit by own choice (n=50, M=3.92), by a companion's choice (n=5, M=4.20), or those visiting through a recommendation (n=7, M=4.71).

As can be expected, first time visitors were motivated significantly more (n=34, M=4.12) than repeat visitors (n=28, M=2.61) to experience a new place never visited before.



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Overnight visitors (n=34, M=4.62) were motivated more by the desire for beautiful surroundings than day visitors (n=39, M=4.15).

When the visit was arranged by a school/university (n=4, M=4.25) the motivation to socialise with other visitors was higher than when it was arranged by a travel agent/tour operator (n=7, M=2.14). The motivation to have a positive life experience was also higher when arranged by a friend/family member (n=21, M=4.67) than when arranged by a travel agent/tour operator (n=7, M=3.57).

Foreign visitors were motivated more (n=6, M=4.33) than domestic visitors (n=50, M=3.40) to experience a new place never visited and to experience beautiful surroundings (M=4.83 as opposed to M=4.36).

Respondents with a national diploma/certificate (n=15, M=4.00) had a significantly higher motivation to socialise with other visitors than those with a postgraduate degree (n=12, M=2.24).

African visitors (n=4, M=4.75) had a higher motivation to socialise with other visitors than white visitors (n=57, M=3.30).

None of the other categories delivered significant differences between groups.

Influence of World heritage status

Majority of respondents (36%) indicated that the world heritage site status had some influence on their decision to visit, while 31% was unaware of this status and 26% were not influenced by this status. Only 7% of respondents' decision to visit was influenced by the status.

Future intention (post questionnaire)

Seventy percent of respondents said they would definitely revisit iSimangaliso, and 77% of respondents indicated that they would also definitely recommend others to visit. Twenty-seven percent were not sure whether they would revisit the site; and twenty percent not sure whether they would recommend the site.



5.6.5 Memorable tourism experiences

Table 7: Memorable tourism experience (post questionnaire)

FACTORS (new)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Overall mean	Significance
Hedonism				
Thrill about having a new experience	3.92	1.105	3.89	-
Indulgence in the activities	3.62	1.131	3.62	-
Real enjoyment	3.99	.939	4.19	-
Excitement	3.82	1.016	3.92	-
Novelty				
Once-in-a lifetime experience	3.33	1.148	3.47	-
Uniqueness	3.87	1.044	3.98	-
Different from previous experiences	3.61	1.150	3.78	-
Something new	3.47	1.216	3.74	-
Accomplishment	3.54	1.161	3.64	-
Self-discovery	3.47	1.208	3.58	-
Knowledge gain	3.43	1.282	3.92	10.510*
New culture	2.80	1.233	3.49	20.999*
Refreshment				
Sense of freedom	4.01	1.125	4.08	-
Revitalisation	3.87	1.100	3.94	-
Meaningfulness	3.89	1.067	4.04	-
Involvement				
Place where I really wanted to go	3.94	1.056	4.02	-
Activities really wanted to do	3.84	1.139	3.75	-
Main activity of great interest	3.87	1.063	3.76	-
Exploration	3.74	1.105	3.97	-

* p<.01

*p<.05



The items that contributed most to a memorable tourism experience at iSimangaliso were: sense of freedom, real enjoyment and visiting a place where the visitor really wanted to go.

The MTE at iSimangaliso was statistically different from the overall mean (MTE across all sites) in terms of: 'knowledge gain' and 'new culture'. In both these aspects, iSimangaliso scored lower than the overall mean.

Table 8: Memorable tourist experience comparisons between groups

FACTORS	Hedonism	Novelty	Refreshment	Involvement
α	.847	.902	.897	.872
Place of origin	19.289*	9.389**	9.469**	5.485**
Racial group	9.531*	6.581*	-	-
Last visit	-	-	-	4.307**

* $p < .01$

** $p < .05$

Repeat visitors ($n=45$, $M=4.03$) had higher scores on 'involvement' than first time visitors ($n=30$, $M=3.56$).

Domestic visitors ($n=65$) had significantly higher scores on all four experience levels than foreign visitors ($n=8$) (scoring 'hedonism' at $M=3.92$ as opposed to $M=3.13$; 'novelty' as $M=3.52$ as opposed to $M=2.72$; 'refreshment' as $M=4.06$ as opposed to $M=2.88$; and 'involvement' as $M=3.87$ as opposed to $M=3.18$). The aspect of pleasure (hedonism) had the greatest difference (at $p < .01$).

Coloured visitors ($n=4$) had significantly lower scores on 'hedonism' and 'refreshment' than both Indian ($n=7$) and White ($n=55$) visitors (scoring 'hedonism' at $M=2.31$ as opposed to $M=4.21$ and $M=3.99$; and 'refreshment' at $M=2.33$ as opposed to $M=4.05$ in both instances). (As there was only one African visitor the case was removed to allow for comparisons).

Repeat visitors ($n=45$, $M=4.03$) had higher scores on 'involvement' than first time visitors ($n=30$, $M=3.56$).

None of the other categories delivered significant differences between groups



5.6.6 Gap analysis

Table 9: Expectations vs experiences

FACTORS (new)	PRE	POST	Significance
On-site facilities and infrastructure			
Easy accessible visitor facilities	4.40	3.84	11.138*
Well-maintained facilities	4.42	3.74	13.993*
Internet access	3.37	2.53	10.283*
Book additional activities	4.26	3.53	9.311*
Able to buy souvenirs	3.17	3.72	-
Universal accessibility	3.55	2.75	9.236*
Safety of person and belongings	4.64	3.36	53.309*
Unique design infrastructure/architecture	3.69	2.90	16.672*
Quality infrastructure/architecture	3.63	2.64	34.746*
Signage/directions	4.28	3.47	14.543*
General offering			
Cater for families/children	3.80	3.96	-
Value for money	4.45	3.89	16.298*
Match marketing material	4.27	3.74	5.814**
Accessibility			
Convenient to get to	4.28	3.54	19.450*
Short travel distance	3.85	3.33	5.969**
Efficient parking/access system	4.23	3.56	14.501*
FACTORS (new)	PRE	POST	Significance
Content			
Challenged to spot/interact	4.12	3.57	10.946*
Surprised by unusual things	4.28	3.34	25.454*
Guided by rules/regulations	4.02	3.62	4.925**
Variety of things	4.42	3.76	16.252*



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FACTORS (new)	PRE	POST	Significance
Authenticity	4.46	4.21	-
Close encounters	4.38	3.96	4.670**
Excitement viewing rarities	4.39	3.83	10.686*
Learning			
Engage with other visitors	3.50	3.47	-
Articulate guide	3.39	2.90	4.140**
Talks	3.37	3.00	-
Literature	3.15	2.93	-
Interpretation facilities	3.16	2.41	12.012*
Audio guide	2.79	2.22	7.619*
Activities/events			
Variety of recreational activities	4.05	3.39	10.536*
Specific event/exhibition of interest	3.54	2.95	4.457**
Affordable activity options	4.31	3.12	29.287*
Visitor management			
Good information	4.05	3.19	14.103*
Viewing in predictable locations	4.05	3.60	6.089**
Well-structured layout	3.72	3.35	4.891**
Easy movement between areas	4.05	3.54	6.985*
Viewing time in one spot	4.20	4.02	-
Service quality			
Efficient service reception/entry	4.56	3.67	24.731*
FACTORS (new)			
Helpful friendly staff	4.62	3.78	18.627*
Personalised service	3.98	3.46	5.861**
Local culture			
Experience local way of life	3.94	3.36	-
Engage with informative locals	3.89	3.31	4.851**
Place attachment			



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Most favourite place to visit	3.85	3.39	5.569**
PRE	POST	Significance	
Finally seeing unique thing	4.08	3.51	9.742*
Fulfilment			
Connect with nature	4.57	4.28	5.639**
Connect with mankind	3.86	3.54	-
Connect with history	3.52	3.09	-

* p<.01

**p<.05

The items 'safety of person and belongings', 'helpful friendly staff' and 'connect with nature' achieved the highest mean scores in terms of visitor expectations. 'Connect with nature', 'authenticity' and 'viewing time in one spot' achieved the highest mean scores in terms of visitor experiences.

From the table above it is clear that in all instances where statistically significant differences were found between visitors' expectations and their experiences (indicated with * or **), a negative gap was found (in other words, the attraction performed worse than what was expected). The most notable differences are in terms of 'safety of person and belongings', 'quality infrastructure/ architecture', 'affordable activity options', 'surprised by unusual things' and 'efficient service reception/entry'.

Table 10: Expectations/experiences (gap comparisons between pre/post)

FACTORS	α (pre)	α (post)	Comp mean score PRE	Comp mean score POST	Significance
On-site facilities and infrastructure	.735	.824	3.95	3.29	26.114*
General offering***	.579	.748	4.13	3.88	-
Accessibility	.761	.659	4.08	3.42	17.287*
Content	.745	.861	4.29	3.72	21.081*



FACTORS	α (pre)	α (post)	Comp mean score PRE	Comp mean score POST	Significance
Learning	.753	.928	3.27	2.90	-
Activities/events***	.430	.882	3.96	3.23	15.857*
Visitor management	.761	.876	4.01	3.49	10.346*
Service quality***	.716	.904	4.59	3.60	31.138*
Local culture	.725	.676	3.88	3.48	4.852**
Place attachment	.670	.808	3.98	3.41	10.347*
Fulfilment***	.580	.703	4.19	3.59	13.822*

* p<.01

**p<.05

***The item 'personalised service' was removed as it lowered the alpha level for the pre sample (.587). The item 'connect with history' was also removed as it lowered the alpha for the pre sample (.566). In the cases of 'general offering' and 'activities/events' no items were removed as none would increase the alpha level.

Comparison between the pre and post gap factor scores reiterate the findings of the previous gap analysis table. From the table above it is clear that in all instances where statistically significant differences were found between visitors' expectations and their experiences (indicated with * or **), a negative gap was found (in other words, the attraction performed worse than what was expected). The factors raising most concern are service quality, on-site facilities and infrastructure and content.

Figure 11: Graphic illustration of gaps between expectations and experiences



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The factor scores were also used to make comparisons in the experiences (the post-visit survey) between different visitor categories.

Table 11: Experiences comparisons between groups

FACTORS	Choice to visit	Stay-over	Focus of visit	Gender	Population group
On-site facilities and infrastructure	-	-	11.210*	-	-
General offering***	-	6.341**	4.270**	-	-
Accessibility	-	-	-	-	-
Content	-	-	-	-	4.785*
Learning	-	9.340*	-	-	-
Activities/events***	5.572**	5.400**	-	7.422*	23.426*
Visitor management	-	5.200**	5.389**	4.854**	11.547*



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FACTORS	Choice to visit	Stay-over	Focus of visit	Gender	Population group
Service quality***	-	-	-	-	-
Local culture	-	-	11.337*	-	-
Place attachment	-	-	-	-	-
Fulfilment***	-	-	7.127**	-	-

* $p < .01$

** $p < .05$

Visitors who visited the site out of own choice ($n=52$, $M=3.41$) gave higher scores to activities/events than those whose visit was the companion's choice ($n=10$, $M=2.25$).

Day visitors (37) gave higher scores than overnight visitors ($n=38$) in terms of general offering ($M=4.09$ versus $M=3.64$), learning ($M=3.31$ versus $M=2.51$), activities/events ($M=3.51$ versus $M=2.89$) as well as visitor management ($M=3.76$ versus $M=3.28$).

Visitors whose visit was focused on experiencing the whole site ($n=50$) gave higher scores than visitors only attending an event at the site ($n=23$) in terms of on-site facilities and infrastructure ($M=3.51$ versus $M=2.83$), general offering ($M=4.01$ versus $M=3.56$), visitor management ($M=3.63$ versus $M=3.11$), local culture ($M=3.54$ versus $M=2.71$) and fulfilment ($M=3.84$ versus $M=3.18$).

Males ($n=34$) gave higher scores than females ($n=37$) for activities/events ($M=3.57$ versus $M=2.85$) and visitor management ($M=3.77$ versus $M=3.30$).

Indian visitors ($n=5$, $M=3.97$) and White visitors ($n=55$, $M=3.80$) gave higher scores than Coloured visitors ($n=4$, $M=2.70$) on content. Indian visitors also gave higher scores than White and Coloured visitors in terms of activities/events ($M=4.47$ versus $M=3.16$ for White and $M=1.67$ for Coloured). They also gave higher scores on visitor management than Coloured visitors ($M=4.43$ versus $M=2.50$).



5.7 Site specific evaluation

Table 12: Experience of specific features

Specific features	Experienced (%)	Performance (Mean score)
Kosi Bay	44.6	3.80
Sodwana	88.6	3.98
False Bay	28.6	3.11
Lake St. Lucia	51.5	3.79
Coastal Forest	18.3	3.50
Swamp Forest	10.0	3.43
Lake Sibaya	36.5	3.75
uMkhize	16.7	4.27
Western Shore	14.5	3.30
Cape Vidal	47.0	4.00
Maphelane	15.6	3.57
Mtubatuba	49.2	3.53

The visitors sampled have experienced various aspects of the Park, with the majority having experienced Sodwana (where most visitors could be found and which is also a main visitor area in the Park). From the mean scores, it is evident that respondents' experience of all the site specific features were mostly positive (on a scale where 1 = extremely negative and 5 = extremely positive), with uMkhize and Cape Vidal receiving the most favourable scores.

Table 13: Experience of specific activities

Activities	Experienced (%)	Performance (Mean score)
Turtle tour	11.5	4.38
Scuba diving	42.4	4.53
Birding	26.2	3.94



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Activities	Experienced (%)	Performance (Mean score)
Time on the beach	85.9	4.32
Deep sea fishing	31.3	4.09
Boat cruise	26.7	4.06
Game viewing	31.1	4.17
Horse riding	8.5	3.40
Kayaking	5.1	4.00
Whale watching	19.7	4.00
Shootout festival	3.4	3.75

Majority of respondents spent time on the beach, followed by diving (take into consideration that most respondents were sampled at Sodwana which is a popular diving site). Though only 12% of visitors undertook turtle tours, these tours received the second highest score as a positive experience (diving having the highest score).

Table 14: Experience of specific services used

Services used	Experienced (%)	Performance (Mean score)
Accommodation (camping)	76.8	4.02
Accommodation (catered)	42.9	4.26
Information services	19.2	3.23

Majority of the sample made use of camping facilities, while the catered accommodation received a higher score in terms of performance.

Table 15: Overall aspects contributing to memorable tourist experience (descending order)

	N	Mean
Oceanside	72	4.51
Landscape	72	4.32



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	N	Mean
Wildlife (ocean)	74	4.18
Flora	71	3.83
Wildlife (land)	73	3.82
Variety of activities	62	3.23

The overall aspects contributing most to making a visit to iSimangaliso a memorable experience is the oceanside and landscape, fitting with the main images that people have of iSimangaliso as well as their main motivation to visit ('beautiful surroundings'). Take into consideration that aspects related to holiday/fun/ socialisation/relaxation were not included in this scale, but featured strongly as respondents' main connotations with and reason to visit the Park.

8. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

iSimangaliso Wetland Park is a unique site with international significance. It contains pristine beauty and offers visitors a variety of experiences. It has the potential to be a world class experience. Visitors experience a sense of freedom, real enjoyment and visiting a place where the visitor really wanted to go when visiting the Park. They also regard it as an authentic experience and value the state of the natural resources, with the main motivation for visiting being the beautiful surroundings. At the same time, the second most important reason to visit is to have a nice holiday and experience fun/socializing/rest/relaxation. It is this aspect that may require some specific managerial interventions to increase the quality of the experience.

The gap analysis clearly indicated a trend of negative performance where visitor expectations are not being met. Specific key changes/efforts could improve on those aspects creating the greatest discontent amongst visitors and potentially bring about significant change to visitor numbers. These include the entry permit system and fees; the maintenance of accommodation facilities; service delivery by interface staff; availability of more activities; and addressing safety concerns in a visible manner.

Current management challenges appear to be hampering the effective running of the Park from a tourism perspective. Issues of ownership come through in the way facilities are maintained, the Park is promoted, as well as service delivery. The branding of the Park and its various sections as a holistic



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attraction requires attention in order to establish a strong brand within which all aspects of the experience is contained. Stakeholder collaboration is greatly required to improve current marketing and communication efforts. Local community members and some visitors also have a negative perception about iSimangaliso as 'institution' that enforces rules and takes away visitor pleasures – a perception that has to be addressed through effective communication (as two respondents commented: "iSimangaliso don't take society's views, (making recommendations) would be a waste of time" and "remove the capitalistic agenda such as iSimangaliso").

It is important to understand the differences between visitor categories that visit the Park. The main motivations for visitation are beautiful surroundings, to have a nice holiday and to have a positive life experience. Motivations showed significant differences between groups based on the choice to visit, time of last visit, who arranged the visit, place of origin, level of education and racial group.

In terms of a memorable tourism experience, the experience at iSimangaliso was statistically different from the overall mean (MTE across all sites) in terms of: 'knowledge gain' and 'new culture'. In both these aspects, iSimangaliso scored lower than the overall mean. In all other aspects it scored similar to other attractions surveyed in the study. Differences were indicated based on place of origin and racial group.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

On-site facilities and infrastructure

In all aspects of this category, iSimangaliso was rated with a negative gap (only 'ability to buy souvenirs seen as positive). The most negative aspects were the safety of person and belongings, as well as the quality infrastructure/architecture. Overall improvement of facilities is required with maintenance of especially accommodation and campsite facilities. Ablution and electrical points for example were mentioned as 'unacceptable'. Several visitors mentioned the need for Wifi/free wifi/internet access. Mention was made for improvement of safety. One suggestion included little shops/ cafes near beach. Another suggestion was made to put up restricted shading for fishermen and for cars and 4x4s.

General offering



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Main suggestions were increase of facilities that cater for children (a playground, more children activities, child and baby ablution facilities need to be upgraded). This is very important considering that majority of visitors come with their families on holiday. The other key area to improve is the perception of 'value for money', with the gate/entrance fees being the most unsatisfactory. Suggestions included no charge at gate; a cheaper rate per person; or a flat rate per vehicle. A suggestion was also made to improve the website to provide more accurate information and ensure that the website and marketing content provide an accurate description of the product offering.

Accessibility

The main complaint was the permit system (make it easier; who gets the money if the receipt shows 'R0.00'?). The other complaint was the restricted access to the beach, especially among loyal return visitors that come for fishing. A suggestion was made to make at least a section of the beach available in a contained manner.

Content

The most negative gaps in this category occurred in terms of being surprised by unusual things as well as the variety of things on offer. This may be linked to the fact that almost half of the pre and majority of the post questionnaire respondents were repeat visitors, knowing what to expect from the product offering. The issue of being made aware of unusual things could be addressed in targeted communication campaigns such as announcements on recent additions to wildlife (e.g. new babies being born), interesting sightings or providing more information on the unique aspects of the site in a visible manner. It could also be addressed by hosting more special events (even small scale) to expose visitors to the unique aspects of the resources in a creative manner.

Learning

This category is the one with the least number of negative gaps, with the Park matching visitor expectations. Aspects that could be given more attention in appropriate locations (e.g. at the St. Lucia Siyabonga Visitor Centre, the different beaches or at Sodwana), is the availability of an audio guide or more interpretation services sharing facts about the resource with visitors (especially those that are not part of a tour group that receives the information from the tour guide). Learning was also not one of the



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top five motivations to visit (linking to the visitor profile of leisure/holiday seekers), creating a situation where they have lower expectations in this category.

Activities/events

Suggestions were made for more activities not influenced by weather. Minimal information is available regarding activities and how to reach the contracted providers outside the Park. Staff/reception should be more knowledgeable on activities in the Park and surrounding areas. It was also suggested that more activities should be created to attract tourists into the Park such as events.

Visitor management

The Park is spacious, with ample areas for visitors to move without experiencing congestion. This is however not the case during peak seasons at especially the campsites for Sodwana. There are times of the day when the gates are busy, but with a simplified permit system queueing could be minimised. The major gap was in terms of information provision. It is difficult to obtain a map with the whole Park and all the roads within the Park. Printed material is limited at reception and visitor information areas. Only limited information on the resource is provided through interpretive signage at Kosi Bay campsite and some at Sodwana. The issue of information provision is strongly linked to the following point of service delivery.

Service quality

A major area of complaint was that of service provision and staff attitude toward visitors. Staff seems unwilling to assist, especially at Sodwana. It was mentioned that the guards at the gate are also not well informed. They say "I don't know a lot" and they are unwilling to assist.

Local culture

As mentioned earlier, the Park does not currently facilitate a cultural experience (apart from viewing the traditional fishing techniques), with no showcasing of local community culture. A suggestion was to provide more entertainment like local artists and food stalls. Also to developing some interaction around the community living inside the Park at Kosi Bay.



Place attachment

As many visitors are repeat visitors and have been supporting the Park for many years, it is important to reward loyalty of repeat visitors. Also to keep these visitors well informed of new legislation/restrictions that now restrict/impede on activities enjoyed for many years. Another suggestion is to have a stronger focus on promoting the World Heritage Status of the Park and make visitors aware at the individual sites that they are actually within a bigger heritage site. This is not always known to visitors and seeing that majority were not influenced by this status when deciding to visit, it may indicate a lack of understanding of the value of this status.

Fulfilment

Create opportunities for cultural experiences as this is the one area of fulfilment currently lacking.

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This report on understanding tourist expectations and memorable tourist experiences at iSimangaliso Wetlands Park forms part of a larger study which also included Augrabies National Park, Mapungubwe National Park, The Cradle of Humankind and Walter Sisulu National Botanical Gardens.

Visitors to iSimangaliso were motivated most by a desire to experience the beautiful surroundings but in comparison to the other sites, visitors' desire for a nice holiday was significantly higher than for other sites where motivations such as 'to experience a new place', 'desire to learn' and 'have a spiritual experience' were ranked higher. In terms of a memorable tourism experience, the experience at iSimangaliso was statistically different from the overall mean (MTE across all sites) in terms of: 'knowledge gain' and 'new culture'. In both these aspects, iSimangaliso scored lower than the overall mean. In all other aspects it scored similar to other attractions surveyed in the study.

Other significant results that came out was in terms of the novelty factor where iSimangaliso Wetland Park scored lower than Augrabies National Park but higher than the other sites and the refreshment factor where iSimangaliso scored lower than Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens but higher than the other sites.



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The results showed that while iSimangaliso, within the boundaries of the selected sample and limitations of the study, exceeded the expectations of tourists on three items, namely the ability of tourists to buy souvenirs, catering for families and children and engaging with other visitors, where the overall factors are concerned none of the expectations were met.

As a holiday destination and tourist attraction iSimangaliso is therefore urged to address the numerous aspects where tourists may be disappointed.

ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: RESEARCH SITE OVERVIEW

ANNEXURE B: OBSERVATION SHEET

ANNEXURE C: TOURIST PRE-VISIT SURVEY

ANNEXURE D: TOURIST POST-VISIT SURVEY



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ANNEXURE A

RESEARCH SITE OVERVIEW

RESEARCHER NAME.....

DATE OF ASSESSMENT.....

Attractions drive tourism. Cultural and heritage assets are ideally suited to become tourist attractions, for they encompass the unique features of a place, are experiential in nature and help promote the rich tapestry of a destination's traditions, ethnic backgrounds and landscapes.

A Qualitative Framework consisting of four dimensions:

Cultural

Physical

Product

Experiential

Each dimension is assessed holistically through the indicators.

Indicators provide guidance about what to consider but are not discrete sub-elements to be assessed in their own right.

An ordinal scale marking system is based on five categories:

1. Low
2. Low/Moderate
3. Moderate
4. Moderate/High
5. High



STEPS FOR EACH RESEARCHER (2 PER SITE):

STEP 1

Complete Tourism Attraction Assessment Indicators Table 1

1. Review background documentation to familiarise yourself with site
2. Interview one or two managers (CEO and/or Marketing Manager) for insight as per indicators of management’s perspective
3. Conduct on-site inspection independently assessing each indicator holistically i.e. provide an overall view of what you are perceiving.

Score the indicator according to the ordinal scale

4. Provide a brief written motivation for score
5. Highlight major flaws

STEP 2

Transfer score onto Assessment of Tourism Potential Table 2

TABLE 1: TOURISM ATTRACTION ASSESSMENT INDICATORS

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Tourists Attraction Typology	Scale Value	Leisure Superstructure Historical: Museum & Heritage Site
<i>Cultural values</i>		
1. Do the stakeholders want tourists/tourism?		
2. Can the asset withstand visitation without damaging its cultural values (tangible and intangible)?		Obtain reports/policy documents: visitation numbers and impact on asset values (tangible and intangible)
3. Does the asset reflect a unique character in terms of its value (living or disappeared)?		
4. Is the asset of local, regional or international cultural significance?		For whom is it important?



ROBBEN ISLAND		
Tourists Attraction Typology	Scale Value	Leisure Superstructure Historical: Museum & Heritage Site
<i>Cultural values</i>		
5. Does a visit create an emotional connection with the individual?		Memorable Tourism Experience
6. Is the asset worth conserving as a representative example of the community's heritage?		
<i>Physical values</i>		
1. Can all areas be accessed (if not what can be done to rectify)?		
2. Does the site represent potential hazards for visitors (if so what can be done to rectify)?		
3. What is the physical state of repair (any wear and tear) and will its authenticity be damaged after repairs are made?		
4. Can it be modified for use (legally, practically)?		Legally: UNESCO? Practically: Physical outlay
5. Are both the site (inside its physical boundaries) and the setting (its surrounds) appealing to tourists?		An overall assessment
<i>Product values</i>		
1. Is the site big enough to attract and retain tourists for a long time?		
2. Is the effort required by tourists to get to it too difficult to make a visit worthwhile (time, cost, effort)?		



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ROBBEN ISLAND		
Tourists Attraction Typology	Scale Value	Leisure Superstructure Historical: Museum & Heritage Site
Cultural values		
3. Is it near other attractions (similar or different types)?		
4. Is there sufficient information about the site available (e.g. magazine, website, etc.)?		
5. Does the site have tourist market appeal?		
Experiential values		
1. Does this asset have the potential to offer interesting experiences to tourists?		
2. In what ways is this asset capable of providing a participatory, engaging and/or entertaining experience?		
3. Is this asset capable of meeting different tourists' expectations?		
4. How authentic would general tourists perceive of the experiences offered by the asset?		
5. Is good quality interpretation currently available and if not, how		

TABLE 2: OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF TOURISM POTENTIAL:

Asset	Cultural values	Physical values	Product values	Experiential values	Overall assessment	Fatal flaws
Isimangolisa						



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Asset	Cultural values	Physical values	Product values	Experiential values	Overall assessment	Fatal flaws
Mapungubwe						
Augrabies						
Maropeng						
Walter Sisulu						

Source: McKerchner, B. & Ho, P.S.Y. 2006. Assessing the Tourism Potential of Smaller Cultural and Heritage Attractions. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 14(5):473-488.



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ANNEXURE B
OBSERVATION SHEET PER SITE

SITE:

DATE:

TRANSPORTATION/SELF DRIVE TO SITE:					
SIGNAGE/DIRECTIONS ON GOOGLE MAPS:					
PARKING AT SITE	Excellent	Average	Poor	N/A	Comment
- EASY TO ACCESS					
- SUFFICIENT PARKING BAYS					
- SECURE AREA WITH GUARDS					
ENTRANCE AT SITE	Excellent	Average	Poor	N/A	Comment
- ARCHITECTURE OF BUILDING					
- QUEUING/BOTTLENECK AT ENTRANCE					
- ENTRANCE FEE					
- COURTEOUS STAFF OVERALL					
- INFORMATION/INTERPRETATIVE SERVICES STAFF					
- INFORMATION TO TAKE: MAPS/BROCHURES					
- SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS FOR EXTRA CHARGE					
- BOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES					
- GUIDED TOURS AVAILABLE					
- AUDIO GUIDES FOR RENT					



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FACILITIES AT SITE AND QUALITY	Excellent	Average	Poor	N/A	Comment
- LAYOUT OF SITE					
- WALKWAYS					
- DISTANCE BETWEEN ITEMS TO VIEW					
- UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY					
- CATERS FOR CHILDREN					
- WIFI/INTERNET ACCESS					
- ACTIVITIES ON SITE					
- FOOD/RESTAURANTS					
- SHOPS TO BUY CURIOS					
FACILITIES AT SITE AND QUALITY	Excellent	Average	Poor	N/A	Comment
- BENCHES/RESTING AREAS					
- PICNIC AREAS					
- WC/ABLUTION					
- BEACHES (SODWANA)					
- CATERED LODGE					
- SELF-CATERING CHALETS/CAMPING					
- DUSTBINS					
- SAFETY (AREAS OF RISK)					
- SECURITY ON SITE					
FACILITIES AT SITE AND QUALITY	Excellent	Average	Poor	N/A	Comment



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FACILITIES AT SITE AND QUALITY	Excellent	Average	Poor	N/A	Comment
- MEDICAL ASSISTANCE ON SITE					
- SURROUNDINGS NEAT OVERALL					
MOVEMENT OF VISITORS AT SITE	Excellent	Average	Poor	N/A	Comment
<i>BOTTLENECKS/QUEUING</i>					
- AT EXHIBITS/AREAS					
- WC SIZE (TOO FEW) – QUEUING					
- RESTAURANTS					
<i>BEHAVIOUR OF OTHER VISITORS</i>					
OTHER ASPECTS	Excellent	Average	Poor	N/A	Comment



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YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA**

ANNEXURE C: PRE-VISIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Consent for participation in a research study

Division Tourism Management

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT THROUGH UNDERSTANDING TOURISTS' EXPECTATIONS AND MEMORABLE TOURIST EXPERIENCES AT MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Research conducted by:
Division Tourism Management
Tel: 012 420 4374

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by the Division Tourism Management at the University of Pretoria on behalf of the National Department of Tourism.

The purpose of the study is to determine the aspects that contribute to a memorable tourist experience when visiting a major tourist attraction.

Please note the following:

- This study involves an anonymous survey. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 10 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes as well as to inform policy decision making and may be published in an academic journal.
- Please contact the study leader, Prof Berendien Lubbe, on e-mail. Berendien.lubbe@up.ac.za if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.



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- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Respondent's signature

Date



GENERAL

1. Please indicate the following context (tick the most applicable option):

Visiting this attraction was:	
My own choice	
My travel companions' choice	
Part of a packaged tour	
Recommended by someone	

2. What first comes to mind when you think of (site name)?

3. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements as your **reasons for visiting this attraction** (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

I decided to visit this place because I want to ...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Explore/see a new place where I have never been before					
2. Have a spiritual experience (opportunity to reflect)					
3. Spend time with friends and family					
4. Just have a nice holiday/visit					
5. Engage with other visitors to socialise					
6. Express part of my interests					
7. Enjoy beautiful surroundings					
8. Have a positive life experience					
9. Learn new things					

1. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements regarding **aspects related to your visit to this attraction** (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).



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During the visit I want to ...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Experience a site:						
1. That has easy access to visitor facilities (ablution, shops, catering, accommodation)						
2. With well-maintained facilities (ablution, shops, catering, accommodation)						
3. That offers access to the internet						
During the visit I want to ...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly	Not
Experience a site:						
4. Where I can easily book for additional activities						
5. Where I am able to buy souvenirs						
6. That is accessible to the physically challenged						
7. Where I feel safe and know my belongings are safe						
8. That has uniquely designed infrastructure/architectures						
9. That has high quality of infrastructure/architectures						
10. That has good signage/directions						
Experience a site that:						
11. Caters for families/children						
12. Offers value for money						
13. Offers what were depicted on the marketing material (website, brochures)						
Experience a site that:						
14. Is convenient to get to						



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15. Is within a short travel distance						
16. Has an efficient parking/access system						
Have the opportunity to:						
17. Identify/spot as many species as possible/to interact with as many exhibits as possible						
Have the opportunity to learn about the site via:						
18.1 engaging with other visitors						
18.2 a knowledgeable articulate guide						
18.3 talks						
18.4 literature						
18.5 an interpretive centre/interactive displays (e.g. videos)						
18.6 an audio guide						
During the visit I want to ...						
19. Be surprised by unusual things						
20. Be guided by rules to behave appropriately						
21. See different kinds of animals/species/exhibits						
22. Experience wildlife/nature in its natural state						
23. Come as close as possible to wildlife/nature/artefacts						
24. Be excited by viewing rare species of animals/flowers /artefacts						

During the visit I want to ...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not
25. Partake in different kinds of recreational activities						
26. Attend a specific event/exhibitions that I am interested in						
27. Have affordable options for different activities						
28. Receive good information (maps, brochures, signage)						
29. Easily view animals/nature in predictable locations						
30. Easily view exhibits in a well-structured layout						



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31. Easily move between different sightings/exhibits						
32. Be able to spend as much time as I want in the same location viewing my favourite animal/exhibit/plant						
33. Experience fast and efficient service at reception/entry						
34. Be served by helpful and friendly staff						
35. Be offered personalized service						
36. Have a variety of opportunities to experience the local way of life						
37. Engage with local people that are willing to share information about the place						
38. Spend time at this place as it's my most favourite place to visit						
39. See many things unique to this park/site that I have always been interested in						
<i>Have a deep connection with:</i>						
40.1 Nature						
40.2 Mankind						
40.3 History						

DEMOGRAPHICS

5. Are you (tick all applicable):

1. A day visitor to the attraction (not visiting other attractions in the surrounding area)	
2. A day visitor to the surrounding destination (also visiting other attractions)	
3. An overnight visitor to the attraction (staying over at the attraction)	
4. An overnight visitor to the surrounding destination (not staying over at the attraction)	

6. When last did you visit this attraction?

6.1 Including this visit, how many times have you visited in total? _____



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1. This is the first time	
2. Less than a year ago	
3. A year ago	
4. 2 – 3 years ago	
5. 4 – 5 years ago	
6. More than 5 years ago	

7. Are you visiting the attraction?

1. To experience the whole attraction	
2. Only to attend an event/activity hosted within the attraction	

8. With whom are you visiting the attraction? Please tick all applicable

1. Family	
2. Friend/s	
3. Alone	
4. Work colleague/s	
5. Educational group	
6. Special interest group (e.g. a club, society)	
Other (please specify)	

9. Who arranged this visit? Please tick most relevant option

1. Myself	
2. A friend / family member	
3. A travel agent/tour operator	
Other (please specify)	



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10. Where did you find information about this attraction? Please tick all applicable

1. The attraction's website	
2. The attraction's social media account (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)	
3. Word of mouth (family/friends)	
4. The destination's official tourism website	
5. A visitor information centre (the surrounding destination)	
6. A visitor information centre (a different destination)	
7. A tour operator/travel agent (face-to-face or online)	
Other (please specify)	

11. Please indicate your country of residence (city IF South African): _____.

12. Please indicate your gender:

1. Male	
2. Female	

13. Please indicate your highest level of qualification:

1. Primary school	
2. Secondary school/Matric	
3. National diploma/certificate	
4. Undergraduate degree	
5. Postgraduate degree	

FOR ADMIN PURPOSES ONLY:					
A	G1YA	G2A	G3S		
G	G1M	G2F			
E	G1A	G2C	G2I	G2W	G2A

**** THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION ****



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APPENDIX D: ISIMANGALISO

Consent for participation in a research study

Division Tourism Management

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT THROUGH UNDERSTANDING TOURISTS' EXPECTATIONS AND MEMORABLE TOURIST EXPERIENCES AT MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Research conducted by:
Division Tourism Management
Tel: 012 420 4374

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in research study conducted by the Division Tourism Management at the University of Pretoria on behalf of the National Department of Tourism.

The purpose of the study is to determine the aspects that contribute to a memorable tourist experience when visiting a major tourist attraction.

Please note the following:

- This study involves an anonymous survey. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 15 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes as well as to inform policy decision making and may be published in an academic journal.
- Please contact the study leader, Prof Berendien Lubbe, on e-mail. Berendien.lubbe@up.ac.za if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Respondent's signature

Date



ON-SITE EXPERIENCES

1. Please indicate the following context (tick the most applicable option):

Visiting iSimangaliso Wetland Park was:	
My own choice	
My travel companions' choice	
Part of a packaged tour	
Recommended by someone	

2. What first comes to mind when you think of iSimangaliso Wetland Park?

MEMORABLE TOURIST EXPERIENCES

3. To what level do you feel that the following **aspects have been part of your experience** during your visit to the park (1 = *not at all* and 5 = *very much*).

	<i>I have not experienced___</i> <i>I have experienced ___very much</i>				
	<i>at all</i>				
1. Thrill about having a new experience	1	2	3	4	5
2. Indulgence in the activities	1	2	3	4	5
3. Real enjoyment	1	2	3	4	5
4. Excitement	1	2	3	4	5
5. Once-in-a lifetime experience	1	2	3	4	5
6. Uniqueness	1	2	3	4	5
7. Something different from previous experiences	1	2	3	4	5
8. Something new	1	2	3	4	5
9. A sense of freedom	1	2	3	4	5
10. Revitalization	1	2	3	4	5
11. Meaningfulness	1	2	3	4	5



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12. Accomplishment	1	2	3	4	5
13. Self-discovery	1	2	3	4	5
14. A place where I really wanted to go	1	2	3	4	5
15. Activities which I really wanted to do	1	2	3	4	5
16. Main activities of great interest to me	1	2	3	4	5
17. Exploration	1	2	3	4	5
18. Knowledge gaining	1	2	3	4	5
19. New cultures	1	2	3	4	5

SITE-SPECIFIC EXPERIENCES

4. Please indicate your level of agreement that the following **aspects have been part of your visit** to iSimangaliso (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

During the visit I ...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
1. Have easy access to visitor facilities (ablution, shops, catering, accommodation)	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Enjoy well-maintained facilities (ablution, shops, catering, accommodation)	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Have access to the internet	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Can easily book for additional activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Am able to buy souvenirs	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Experience a site that is accessible to the physically challenged	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Feel safe and know my belongings are safe	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Encounter uniquely designed infrastructure/ architectures	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Encounter high quality of infrastructure/architectures	1	2	3	4	5	6



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10. Encounter good signage/directions	1	2	3	4	5	6
Experience a site that:						
11. Caters for families/children	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Offers value for money	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Offers what were depicted on the marketing material (website, brochures)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Experience a site that:						
14. Is convenient to get to	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Is within a short travel distance	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Has an efficient parking/access system	1	2	3	4	5	6
During the visit I ...						
17. Can identify/ spot as many species as possible/ interact with as many exhibits as possible	1	2	3	4	5	6
Have the opportunity to learn about the site via:						
18.1 engaging with other visitors	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.2 a knowledgeable articulate guide	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.3 talks	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.4 literature	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.5 an interpretive centre/interactive displays (e.g. videos)	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.6 an audio guide	1	2	3	4	5	6

During the visit I ...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
19. Am surprised by unusual things	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Am guided by rules to behave appropriately	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. See different kinds of animals/species /exhibits	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Experience wildlife/nature in its natural state	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Come as close as possible to wildlife/nature/artefacts	1	2	3	4	5	6



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During the visit I ...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
24. Am excited by viewing rare species of animals/plants/ artefacts	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. Partake in different kinds of recreational activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Attend a specific event/exhibitions that I was interested in	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. Have affordable options for different activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Receive good information (maps, brochures, signage)	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Easily view animals/nature in predictable locations	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. Easily view exhibits in a well-structured layout	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. Can easily move between different sightings/areas	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. Am able to spend as much time as I want in the same location viewing my favourite animal/plant/exhibit	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. Experience fast and efficient service at reception/entry	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. Am served by helpful and friendly staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. Receive personalized service	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. Have a variety of opportunities to experience local way of life	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. Engage with local people that are willing to share information about the place	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. Spend time at this place as it's my most favourite place to visit	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. See many things unique to this park/site that I have always been interested in	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Have a deep connection with:</i>						
40.1 Nature	1	2	3	4	5	6



40.2 Mankind	1	2	3	4	5	6
40.3 History	1	2	3	4	5	6

UNIQUENESS OF THE SITE

5. Was your decision to visit influenced by iSimangaliso’s World Heritage Site status?

Definitely	Definitely not	To some degree	I was unaware of this status

6. Are you also visiting other attractions in the surrounding area? If yes, which ones?

7. How likely are you to _____ iSimangaliso Wetland Park:

	Not at all	Not sure	Definitely
Revisit			
Recommend to family/friends			

8. Indicate which of the following **areas** you have already visited within iSimangaliso and then (if YES) on a scale from 1-5, where 1 is extremely negative and 5 is extremely positive, rate your overall experience of these areas:

	Visited		<i>Extremely negative</i>					<i>Extremely positive</i>
	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5	
Kosi Bay			1	2	3	4	5	
Sodwana			1	2	3	4	5	
False Bay			1	2	3	4	5	
Lake St. Lucia			1	2	3	4	5	



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Coastal Forest			1	2	3	4	5
Swamp Forest			1	2	3	4	5
Lake Sibaya			1	2	3	4	5
uMkhize			1	2	3	4	5
Western Shore/Charters Creek			1	2	3	4	5
Cape Vidal			1	2	3	4	5
Maphelane			1	2	3	4	5
Mtubatuba/St Lucia (town)			1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify):							

9. Indicate which of the following **activities** you have already undertaken during your visit within iSimangaliso and then (if YES) on a scale from 1-5, where 1 is extremely negative and 5 is extremely positive, rate your overall experience of these activities:

	Done		<i>Extremely</i>				
	Yes	No	<i>negative</i>			<i>positive</i>	
Turtle tour			1	2	3	4	5
Scuba diving			1	2	3	4	5
Birding			1	2	3	4	5
Time on the beach			1	2	3	4	5
Deep sea fishing			1	2	3	4	5
Boat cruise			1	2	3	4	5
Game viewing			1	2	3	4	5
Horse riding			1	2	3	4	5
Kayaking			1	2	3	4	5
Whale watching			1	2	3	4	5
Shootout Festival			1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify):							



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10. Indicate which of the following **services** you have already used during your visit within iSimangaliso and then (if YES) on a scale from 1-5, where 1 is extremely negative and 5 is extremely positive, rate your overall experience of these services:

	Used		<i>Extremely negative</i>					<i>Extremely positive</i>
	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5	
Accommodation (camping / self-catering)			1	2	3	4	5	
Accommodation (catered lodge)			1	2	3	4	5	
Information/interpretive services			1	2	3	4	5	

11. Which of the following **overall aspects** contribute to your visit being a memorable experience, where 1 is not contributing at all, and 5 is contributing greatly.

	<i>Not contributing at all</i>					<i>Contributing greatly</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	
Landscape	1	2	3	4	5	
Oceanside	1	2	3	4	5	
Flora	1	2	3	4	5	
Wildlife (land)	1	2	3	4	5	
Wildlife (ocean)	1	2	3	4	5	
Variety of activities offered	1	2	3	4	5	
Other (please specify):						

12. Any suggestions for improvement?

DEMOGRAPHICS

13. Are you (tick all applicable):

5. A day visitor to iSimangaliso (not visiting other attractions in the surrounding area)	
6. A day visitor to the surrounding destination (also visiting other attractions)	



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7. An overnight visitor to iSimangaliso (staying over in the park)	
8. An overnight visitor to the surrounding destination (not staying over in the park)	

14. When last did you visit iSimangaliso?

7. This is the first time	
8. Less than a year ago	
9. A year ago	
10. 2 – 3 years ago	
11. 4 – 5 years ago	
12. More than 5 years ago	

14.1 Including this visit, how many times have you visited in total? _____

15. Are you visiting iSimangaliso:

3. To experience the whole park	
4. Only to attend an event/activity hosted within the park	

16. With whom are you visiting iSimangaliso? Please tick all applicable

7. Family	
8. Friend/s	
9. Alone	
10. Work colleague/s	
11. Educational group	
12. Special interest group (e.g. a club, society)	
Other (please specify)	



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17. Who arranged this visit? Please tick most relevant option

4. Myself	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. A friend / family member	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. A travel agent/tour operator	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	

18. Where did you find information about iSimangaliso? Please tick all applicable

8. The park's website	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The park's social media account (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Word of mouth (family/friends)	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The destination's official tourism website (e.g. KZN Tourism)	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. A visitor information centre (the surrounding destination)	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. A visitor information centre (a different destination e.g. other province)	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. A tour operator/travel agent (face-to-face or online)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	

19. Please indicate your country of residence (city IF South African): _____.

20. Please indicate your age: _____ years.

21. Please indicate your gender:

3. Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Female	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

22. Please indicate your highest level of qualification: 23. Please indicate your race:

1. Primary school	
2. Matric (Grade 12)	
3. National diploma/certificate	
4. Undergraduate degree	
5. Postgraduate degree	

1. African	
2. Coloured	
3. Indian	
4. White	
5. Prefer not to say	
Other (please specify)	

**** THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION ****