

**PROFILING ECOTOURISTS WITHIN THE CAPRICORN  
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, Nheta Daniel Silent, hereby declare that this dissertation titled “Profiling Ecotourists within the Capricorn District Municipality” and submitted to the Department of Business Management, University of Venda is my own work in design and execution. It has not been submitted in any form for another degree at any university or institution of higher education. Information derived from published or unpublished works of others has been duly acknowledged.

Signature ..... Date .....

**Nheta Daniel S (11613021)**

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## ABSTRACT

Increasingly, third-world countries are relying on ecotourism to boost their economies. Similar to other forms of tourism, ecotourism as a business initiative is perceived to contribute positively to economic development. However, tourism service providers generally do not deliver satisfactory services to ecotourists due to misunderstanding the segment's needs and the customer traits. In emerging countries such as South Africa, which has a conducive economic environment for tourism businesses, some provincial departments such as the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism has set objectives to make the Limpopo province a preferred ecotourism destination. These have been propagated by service providers who passively participate in ecotourism yet claim to be ecotourism service providers. Moreover, the attitude of passiveness by service providers is derived from insufficient knowledge of the ecotourist. This set the foundation for the current study, which sought to provide detailed profiles of ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality in order to gain a clear understanding of the ecotourists visiting the Limpopo province. The study reviewed theoretical and empirical works conducted by tourism scholars. The study was developed on a descriptive research design and employed a quantitative approach. It made use of self-administered questionnaires with a sample of 295 participants selected from tourism establishments and attractions in the region, utilising convenience and purposive sampling methods respectively. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 24 and Microsoft Office Excel was used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, cluster analysis and Chi-square tests were conducted to analyse the data of the study. The findings revealed demographic, psychographic and behavioural descriptors associated with the ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality. In addition, information sources preferred by ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality were identified. It is envisaged that the findings of the study will be of value to ecotourism service providers as they will provide a sound understanding of ecotourists and thereby help to deliver satisfactory ecotourist experiences. This will ultimately provide valuable input for the planning of the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism in promoting the Limpopo province as a preferred ecotourism destination in South Africa.

*Key terms:* ecotourism, ecotourist, responsible tourism, segmentation

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIO	Activities, interests, opinions
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ASATA	Association of South African Travel Agents
BARSA	Board of Airline Representatives of South Africa
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CDM	Capricorn District Municipality
COASA	Coach Operators Association of South Africa
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DEDET	Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
ECOS	Ecotourism Opportunity Spectrum
EXSA	Exhibition and Event Association of Southern Africa
FEDHASA	Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa
FTT	Fair Trade Tourism
GBCSA	Green Building Council of South Africa
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICSU	International Council for Science
ISSC	International Social Science Council
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LED	Local Economic Development
LEDET	Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
NDT	National Department of Tourism

NFSD	National Framework for Sustainable Development
NSSD	National Strategy for Sustainable Development
RASA	Restaurant Association of South Africa
SANParks	South African National Parks
SAT	South African Tourism
SITE	Society of Incentive and Travel Executives
SMME	Small, medium and micro enterprises
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
TOS	Tourism Opportunity Spectrum
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNWCED	United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In emerging countries such as South Africa, the economic environments are conducive for entrepreneurs to venture into tourism businesses (Mahadea and Pillay, 2008:431; Fatoki and Smit, 2011:1415; Maziriri and Chinomona, 2016:126). Worldwide, the tourism industry is one of the largest industries that provides reasonable opportunities to business persons, thus marking it a modern-day engine of growth (Brand South Africa, 2012:1). For instance, persons can easily convert their homes into registered guest houses and thereby offer accommodation services if they meet the guest house standards (Tourism Grading Council of South Africa, 2016:1).

Due to the tourism industry comprising different forms of tourism, it is evident that this industry creates jobs and boosts the gross domestic product of emerging countries (United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2010:11). Certain forms of tourism such as ecotourism are perceived to make reasonable profits whereas most businesses in the industry operate on tight profit margins (Ashley, De Brine, Lehr and Wilde, 2007:6; Kirkby, Giudice-Granados, Day, Turner, Velarde-Andrade, Duenas-Duenas, Lara-Rivas and Yu, 2010:1).

For this reason, Zhao, Ritchie and Echtner (2011:1572) and Sarfaraz, Maedah, Reza and Edmundas (2015:17) are of the view that a number of service providers who ventured into new forms of tourism such as ecotourism may have been motivated by the expected economic benefits arising from ecotourism. Undesirably, some service providers are found wanting with regard to serving ecotourists. Schwarts and Hornyk (2010:486) and Chimucheka and Mandipaka (2015:312) suggest that service providers lack market-research skills, and this could lead to misjudging the expectations of the potential customer.

In emerging countries, tourism ventures together with other entrepreneurial initiatives have been seen as lifeline opportunities to evade social issues arising from unemployment and to improve the economic environment of the specific country (Mahadea and Pillay, 2008:431; Lekhanya and Visser, 2016:73; Maziriri and Chinomona, 2016:127). However, with the tourists of today becoming dynamic and resourceful, some service providers in ecotourism are found wanting with regard to the knowledge needed in understanding the dynamic ecotourist, and this can lead to business failure (Lindberg, Hansen and Eide, 2014:504; Chimucheka and Mandipaka, 2015:309).

If unresolved, this could possibly drive ventures into liquidation. The ecotourism paradigm has been associated by many with green consumerism and sustainable practices (Sarfaraz et al., 2015:17). This has caused most service providers to highlight the initiation of greening practices without confirming whether the practices are being implemented or not (Viviers, 2009:31) and to overlook the important aspect of understanding the profile of the ecotourist. Therefore, service providers should comprehend the attributes found in the profiles of targeted ecotourists, thus making it possible to align service providers' offerings with ecotourists' expectations. Consequently, this study seeks to undertake research on the profiles of ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality.

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, the objectives, the methodology, the significance of the study research as well as the research layout.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The tourism industry is a dynamic industry that comprises various forms such as sports tourism, adventure tourism, religious tourism, dark tourism and ecotourism. The term 'ecotourism' only began to appear in tourism academic studies in the 1980s despite the emergence of ecotourism in the 1960s (Weaver and Lawton, 2007:1169; Arachchi, Yajid and Khatibi, 2015:211). Notably, ecotourism has since become a study area of interest to scholars.

Ecotourism is a type of tourism that improves visitor and host awareness of environmental conservation principles through minimising visitor impact and promoting the edification of tourists while generating economic revenue for the locals (Poupineau and Pouzadoux, 2013:7). Ecotourism centres on experiencing natural environments while advocating environmental conservation (Yen-Ting, Wan-I and Tsung-Hsiung, 2014:321). According to Hunt and Stronza (2009:1) and Arachchi, Yajid and Khatibi (2015:212), ecotourism has become the fastest growing segment in the international tourism market.

This remarkable growth, according to Epler-Wood (2010:8), constitutes 5% to 10% of the global travel market. Relatedly, Resulaj, Kadiu, Risillia and Jaupi (2012:69) pinpoint the growth of ecotourism to be the result of the need for tourism service providers to address the social, economic and environmental aspects of tourism developments. Similarly, Slabbert and Du Plessis (2013:640) documented that ecotourism growth is the result of increased global awareness and protection of the natural environment. Additionally, increases in leisure time, mobility and



education among potential travellers are indicated to be contributing factors to ecotourism growth (Slabbert and Du Plessis, 2013:640).

However, studies such as that by Lu and Stepchenkova (2012:702) indicate that European countries are the major markets for ecotourism travel. Moreover, Resulaj et al. (2012:70) determined that third-world countries are increasingly relying on ecotourism to boost their economies. According to Weaver and Lawton (2007:1168), the current position of ecotourism in the industry and its status as a prominent research area could not have been predicted during the 1980s because ecotourism was then in its developmental stages. In the modern era, Weaver and Lawton (2007:1168) emphasise that ecotourism is recognised as a significant niche market that is accumulating literature on various aspects such as profiling ecotourists.

Worldwide, organisations that target ecotourists have in the last two decades emerged. Examples include National Geographic Expeditions that originated in the United States and offers eco-expeditions for adventurous tourists. The expeditions support responsible exploration and assist in providing information for research purposes (National Geographic Expeditions, 2015:1). In the local context, there are tour operators such as Baobab Travel, which was originally founded in the United Kingdom. It is now operating in South Africa with the purpose of providing responsible and sustainable ecotourism packages (Baobab Travel, 2015:1).

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Despite studies being undertaken on ecotourist profiling, a number of authors such as Dey and Sarma (2006:31), Dolnicar, Crouch and Long (2008:199), Nowaczek (2009:4), Slabbert and Du Plessis (2013:640) and Deng and Li (2015:270) still argue that not much has been produced to create a clear platform for understanding the ecotourist. In addition, destinations have different characteristics. Destinations attract different types of ecotourists who respond differently to the destination mix offered in the area. Each destination thus has an overall different visitor profile (Tkaczynski, Rundle-Thiele and Beaumont, 2009:169). Destination developers need to profile the travellers by acquiring market intelligence pertaining to the travellers that visit and consume the services found at the respective destinations (Diaz-Perez and Bethencourt-Cejas, 2016:77; Srihadi, Sukundar and Soehadi, 2016:33).

In the South African context, many studies concentrate on understanding ecotourism and few on profiling ecotourists, thus creating limited information on understanding the ecotourist (Kwan, Eagles and Gebhardt, 2008:698; Moswete, 2009:127; Chaminuka, Groeneveld, Selomane and

Van Ierland, 2012:170). As a result, new ecotourism service providers found within emerging countries in most cases show a lack of understanding of the ecotourist. In marketing, failure by a service provider to be mindful of who the customers are, what the customers need and how they want services and products delivered becomes a problem (Donohoe and Needham, 2006:193). Furthermore, Donohoe and Needham (2006:194) mention that service providers in the tourism industry experience confusion in comprehending the ecotourist. Similarly, Lu and Stepchenkova (2012:703) and Arachchi et al. (2015:212) emphasise that tourism service providers commonly do not deliver satisfactory services to ecotourists due to misunderstanding the segment as an area that can be easily penetrated if one 'advocates' green consumerism, thereby shadowing the expectations of ecotourists.

Moreover, Cheung and Jim (2013:182), Sheena, Mariapan and Aziz (2015:3) and Zhang, Zhong, Xu, Dang and Zhou (2015:21) strongly agree about the greenwashing that is occurring in the industry. The authors boldly state that service providers such as tour operators are simply rushing for the ecotourism trend or idea without fully understanding who the ecotourist is and how the market functions. This could be the result of insufficient understanding of the essential factors in the choice of ecotourism services by ecotourists (Cheung and Jim, 2013:182).

*Hence, there is a need to create a consumer profile that will provide an understanding of ecotourists for emerging and existing service providers. If clarity on the ecotourism segment is expanded, ecotourism will not only be viewed as an emerging and profitable market but also as a segment that has customers who can foster responsible behaviour among organisations in the tourism industry. This signifies the need to understand the consumer when organising services for satisfactory experiences (Erasmus, Strydom and Rudansky-Kloppers, 2013:371).*

When targeting a market segment, it is important for a service provider to comprehend what motivates the targeted customer (Dolnicar, Crouch and Long, 2008:201). In South African studies, little has been documented on comprehending the targeted customer and the role of ecotourism in improving sustainable acts within the tourism industry, thus leaving a gap in the ecotourist profile (Spenceley, 2005:137; Chaminuka et al., 2012:168). Therefore, the need arises to understand the demographic and behavioural characteristics and the psychographic attributes of the targeted customer, which are key elements in profiling a consumer (Dolnicar, Crouch and Long, 2008:201). Realising the potential growth of ecotourism in South Africa and specifically in the Limpopo province, there is a justifiable need to provide organisations with relevant information to minimise the challenges encountered by new entrants and thereby assist in developing customer-oriented values that lead to quality ecotourism services.

## **1.4 OBJECTIVES**

The following section outlines the primary and secondary objectives of the study.

### **1.4.1 Primary objective**

The main objective of the study is to determine the consumer profile of ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality.

### **1.4.2 Secondary objectives**

These objectives make it possible to achieve the main objective of the study and are as follows:

- To identify and analyse:
  - the demographic descriptors applicable to ecotourists
  - the psychographic descriptors applicable to ecotourists
  - the behavioural descriptors applicable to ecotourists

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What is the customer profile of ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality?
- What are the activities preferred by ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality?
- What determines ecotourist participation in ecotourism?
- What are the spending patterns of ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality?

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This section briefly discusses the methodology and the research process applied in this study. The indicated areas are presented in detail in Chapter 4.

### **1.6.1 Research design**

A descriptive research type and a quantitative approach were implemented for the study. The implementation of the quantitative approach was made possible by using a questionnaire as a research instrument. The research population consisted of tourists and visitors to the Capricorn

District Municipality. A realised sample size of 295 participants was used for the study. Purposive sampling was implemented in selecting tourism establishments and attractions while convenience sampling was used to select the respondents of the study.

### **1.6.2 Types of information sources**

The gaining of a deep insight into the researchable problem as well as the study objectives required an exploration of available literature. The research used literature sources that made it possible to identify relevant concepts useful for the progress of the study. The literature search provided information on ecotourism, the ecotourist, segmentation, profiling and other concepts that led to the development of the data collection process and the research instrument. Chapter 4 clearly indicates the types of information sources used in this study.

### **1.6.3 Research instrument**

A self-completion questionnaire was used for the study. It was based on literature input, with all questions being closed-ended. The instrument consisted of three sections, which are indicated in Chapter 4.

### **1.6.4 Data collection and capturing**

Based on the understanding obtained from the literature search, primary data was collected using the research instrument. A pilot study was initially conducted on the research instrument, resulting in positive changes and ultimately improving the data collection process. The research instrument was hand delivered to the participants, and the respondents were prompted to complete the questionnaire in the vicinity of the researcher or fieldworker. The fieldwork involved two fieldworkers and the researcher. Data collection was conducted while being mindful of the ethical obligations governing this study. Data capturing was done by the researcher using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.

### **1.6.5 Data analysis and interpretation**

In order to achieve the primary objective of the study, secondary objectives were met by conducting descriptive statistics involving ANOVA and chi-square tests as well as factor analysis and cluster analysis. These are presented in Chapter 4. The results of the analyses are presented in Chapter 5.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study will contribute towards ecotourism and the ecotourist body of knowledge. Since the research has provided a detailed consumer profile of the ecotourist, it will aid in dissipating the current misunderstanding and confusion of service providers and marketing agencies around the Capricorn District Municipality regarding their consumers. It will also enhance ecotourists' experience since there would be a clear understanding of who they are. Therefore, service providers will understand the expectations and wants of ecotourists, resulting in improved services being offered.

## **1.8 STUDY SETTING**

The study focused on the ecotourism sector in the Capricorn District Municipality, with the study sample being drawn from the five local municipalities. The five municipalities are Aganang, Blouberg, Lepelle-Nkumpi, Molemole and Polokwane. The Capricorn District Municipality has various ecotourism attractions, activities and eco-friendly establishments, and these made the area suitable for the study (Capricorn District Municipality (CDM), 2014:1).

## **1.9 CONCEPT DESCRIPTION**

The concepts used in this study are explained below:

*Profiling:* This is a process that portrays a clear view of a typical tourist. A number of segmentation variables may be used to assist in a more complete presentation (Lu and Stepchenkova, 2012:708).

*Demographic attributes:* These are items used to distinguish typical tourists and include the identification of variables such as age, gender, race and religion. (Erasmus, Strydom and Rudansky-Kloppers, 2013:367).

*Ecotourism:* This is a type of tourism that improves visitor and host awareness of environmental conservation principles through minimising visitor impact and promoting the edification of tourists while generating economic revenue for the locals (Poupineau and Pouzadoux, 2013:7).

*Ecotourist:* This refers to one who travels responsibly to areas that are in their natural state. Ecotourists conserve the environment while their visits contribute to the host economy (Resulaj et al., 2012:69).

*Market segmentation:* This refers to the breaking down of a heterogeneous market group into smaller, distinct, homogenous market groups (Erasmus, Strydom and Rudansky-Kloppers, 2013:368).

*Niche market:* This is a unique subset of a market that has specific attributes on which a specific product(s) is focused (Erasmus, Strydom and Rudansky-Kloppers, 2013:368).

## **1.10 RESEARCH LAYOUT**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction and background to the study**

Chapter 1 provides a general background on the emergence of ecotourism and how developing countries are slowly embracing this form of tourism. The problem statement, project objectives, significance of the study and methodology are addressed and the concepts are explained. The chapter concludes by presenting the study setting.

### **Chapter 2: The nature of ecotourism**

Chapter 2 comprises a detailed analysis on the nature of ecotourism. It addresses the origin of ecotourism and mentions the role players responsible for the successful embracement of ecotourism. A discussion regarding the integration of ecotourism and sustainable development is presented. Additionally, the factors determining the evolvement of ecotourism, the factors affecting the existence of ecotourism and the role of ecotourism are included in the chapter discussions. The chapter concludes by examining ecotourism in the study area.

### **Chapter 3: Identifying the ecotourist**

The discussions in the chapter are established on a market-segmentation platform. From this platform, the main purpose of market segmentation and segmentation benefits surface. These discussions provide a solid foundation for the identification of the ecotourist through further examination of the applicable segmentation criteria. Chapter 3 concludes by expanding on the motivations and preferences of ecotourists.

### **Chapter 4: Research methodology**

Chapter 4 discusses the research design type and the quantitative method used in the study. The study setting, sample size, fieldwork, data analysis, reliability and validity as well as the ethical aspects bonding the study are highlighted. The chapter outlines the sequential order pertaining to the data analysis, with descriptive statistics being initially presented. This is followed by factor analysis and lastly, cluster analysis.

### **Chapter 5: Data analysis and interpretation**

The chapter presents the results of the study by statistically analysing the findings in the form of figures and tables. The data analysis was conducted according to the sequential order indicated in the layout of Chapter 4.

### **Chapter 6: Inferences and recommendations**

Chapter 6 provides inferences from the findings noted in Chapter 5. The chapter initially examines the objectives of the study, which are approached in the order indicated in section 1.4 above. The identified ecotourist profile is then discussed, with practical recommendations and research limitations. Lastly, the summary of the chapter is presented, which includes the recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE NATURE OF ECOTOURISM**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Ecotourism has emerged as a link between tourism development and environmental protection (Wu, Zhang, Yang, Qin, Wang and Wang, 2015:2684). According to Mbaiwa (2015:205), ecotourism is perceived as a solution to environmental conservation problems. The nature of ecotourism is the involvement of primitive areas, such as the Capricorn District Municipality, which proves to have a wide geographical area of undisturbed, natural settings (De Witt, Van der Merwe and Saayman, 2014:181).

It is in these types of natural settings that ecotourism may be implemented, initiating sustainable development that fosters protection of natural landscapes such as wetlands and grasslands (Zhang et al., 2015:26). Considering the potential of ecotourism to protect natural landscapes, it is, therefore, practical to replicate the ecotourism concept in developed areas such as metro zones (Kiper, 2012:776), thus protecting and conserving the remaining natural surrounds of the developed areas (Wu et al., 2015:2684).

The rapid development of tourism has initiated a need for the conservation of natural attractions. To some extent, natural hotspots are slowly being exposed to substantial human activity. For instance, in Botswana, biodiversity conservation in the Okavango Delta is endangered (Mbaiwa, 2015:205). Similarly, Darkoh and Mbaiwa (2014:2) emphasise the key role played by mass tourism in threatening environmental conservation in the Okavango Delta area. It is in such areas that the ecotourism concept is being implemented in an attempt to address the environmental conservation problems.

This chapter presents a theoretical analysis on tourism and ecotourism. It presents a breakdown of the meaning of ecotourism, the role of ecotourism in the tourism industry, the factors that influence ecotourism and the nature of ecotourism in the Capricorn District Municipality. The chapter further highlights how ecotourism has become of interest to marketers and service providers, resulting in the need to understand tourists' participation in ecotourism.



## **2.2 UNDERSTANDING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

In South Africa, the tourism industry has been identified as having the potential to reduce unemployment and poverty and to contribute significantly to the country's economy (Spenceley, 2006:650; Akinboade and Braihmoh, 2010:149; Anon., 2011:46; Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), 2016:1). However, before the first democratic elections in 1994, tourism was based on a discriminatory law that hampered the growth of tourism (Sebola, 2008:59). With liberation from this discriminatory law, opportunities arose that resulted in the improvement of South African domestic tourism. This brought about a steady growth in which different forms of tourism such as ecotourism began to contribute meaningfully to the country's economy (Sebola, 2008:60).

Globally, the tourism industry is firmly established as a system that improves the economies of countries (Akinboade and Braihmoh, 2010:149; Jones and Lalley, 2013:267). The industry creates employment, reduces poverty and boosts the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of emerging countries (Spenceley, 2006:650; Yurtseven, 2012:37; Santiago, 2013:1; Cardenas-Garcia, Sanchez-Rivero and Pulido-Fernandez, 2015:206). In Africa, tourism was prompted by a Western culture that observed environmental values and enjoyed the scenic views of the African landscape (Jones and Lalley, 2013:267). In emerging countries such as South Africa that still have natural resources as tourism assets, different types of tourism have emerged to exploit the benefits of tourism and to cater for the ever-changing needs of tourists (De Witt, 2011:47). Different types of tourism provide an equally beneficial platform for tourism development and community conservation schemes set on a foundation of responsible tourism (Murray, 2008:1). For the beneficial platform to be set, a brief examination of tourism is presented in the following section.

## **2.3 WHAT IS TOURISM?**

In research, the tourism concept encounters different perspectives, which results in no agreed consensus regarding its definition (Tribe, 2009:43; Dimitrios and Darcy, 2011:2). This could be due to the presence of interdisciplinary approaches towards tourism (Tribe, 2009:2; Darbellay and Stock, 2011:442). However, a general definition of tourism that provides a starting point for different disciplines to define tourism within their context has been set. This general definition is used by academics in most tourism studies and hence, is relevant to this study.

According to the United Nations (2001:13) in the *Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework*, tourism is defined as being made up of the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one

consecutive year. The reasons for travel may be leisure, business and other purposes that are not connected to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. From the definition, the elements that must be present for an activity or individual to be grouped under tourism can be identified.

Additionally, the United Nations describes a tourist as:

[A]ny person travelling to a place other than that of his/her usual environment for less than 12 months and whose main purpose of the trip is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. (United Nations, 2001:13)

The different perceptions concerning the definition of tourism may be due to the vast array of activities that can be associated with tourism. Nonetheless, tourism can be classified into four distinct elements; domestic, international, outbound and inbound. Smith and Stewart (2014:4) define the four concepts as indicated in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Classification of tourism**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Domestic tourism</b>	The tourism trip or activity takes place within one's home country.
<b>International tourism</b>	The tourism activities are undertaken across national borders, not within one's home country.
<b>Outbound tourism</b>	The tourists travel from their point of origin to a destination area that crosses national borders.
<b>Inbound tourism</b>	The destination area (receiving area) receives outbound tourists, resulting in the destination area identifying the tourism activity as inbound tourism.

Source: (Smith and Stewart, 2014:4)

With such classifications set, it becomes easier to identify the reasons why people travel, which include travel for leisure, for business or to visit friends and relatives (United Nations, 2001:13). Furthermore, as the motivations and reasons are investigated, niche markets such as dark tourism, medical tourism, religious tourism and the emerging concept of ecotourism can be identified (Smith and Stewart, 2014:4).

In addition, for tourism to succeed, an in-depth understanding of its characteristics is required. The structure of the tourism system comprises elements identified in the tourism definition of the United Nations (2001:13). The following section attempts to expand on the elements.

## **2.4 ELEMENTS OF TOURISM**

The tourism industry has a number of elements that are interwoven by various role players who fuse specific elements to provide an experience for the tourist (Ashley, De Brine and Wilde, 2007:7). Tourists are, therefore, key elements in the system, and their absence leaves the tourism system incomplete (Vanhove, 2011:75). This is derived from definitions that have been used in many tourism studies, some of which are discussed below.

Leiper (1979:391) defines the tourism industry as a system that has five elements, namely the tourist, the generating region, the destination region, the transit region and the tourist industry. Fennell (1999:4) and Buultjens, Neale and Lamont (2013:186) concur with Leiper (1979) and define the tourism industry as a system that comprises service providers, a diverse network of hosts, tourists and services such as transportation and accommodation, all of which are interconnected to allow movement and to deliver an experience for the tourist.

In Leiper's definition (2004:128), the tourist originates from the generating region and progresses to the transit region (transportation and travel), arriving at the destination region in which the tourist industry is located (facilities, accommodation and services). Since it is a system, the tourist experience begins in the originating area and ends after the return trip. Similarly, Fennell (1999:4) and Buultjens, White and Neale (2012:19) state that movement begins when the tourist departs from his or her area of origin for the tourist destination, and this is the starting point of the experience. In each tourist destination, different tourism service providers supply their services to the tourist through collaboration and cooperation, ultimately creating a complete touristic experience (Hall and Page, 2010:303; Merinero-Rodriguez and Pulido-Fernandez, 2016:132).

Tourism elements may stand alone as tourist attractions (Leiper, 2004:129). A tourist may have an intrinsic need that becomes attached to a nucleus, which could be a feature or a characteristic of a destination (Leiper, 1990:381; Richards, 2002:1049; Bello, Raja, Yuhanis and Khairil, 2014:8). Thus, different elements such as transportation can be tourist attractions. For example, people travel to experience a journey on the Blue Train in South Africa. However, tourism elements need management and support structures for their effective use. Different role players have been established in the tourism industry with the aim of either managing or offering support

services directly or indirectly for a smooth flow of the tourism system (Zaei and Zaei, 2013:13). Certain role players are discussed in the following section.

## **2.5 ROLE PLAYERS IN TOURISM**

The tourism industry involves various role players who are responsible for different activities within the supply chain. The combined efforts of role players are aimed at delivering a satisfying tourism experience. The complex structure of the tourism industry consists of but is not limited to international organisations, non-governmental organisations, travel agencies, airlines, car rental agencies, tour operators, accommodation facilities, national tourism bureaus and recreational sites (Honey and Krantz, 2007:35).

At an international level, organisations such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank and Agency for International Development (USAID) have facilitated the spread and development of tourism around the globe. These organisations have integrated with major role players in destination countries such as government organisations. To improve tourism development and ease of tourism service delivery in host countries, role players such as hoteliers, travel agencies and airlines have become more cohesive in regard to management, financing and development (Honey and Krantz, 2007:37). Locally, South Africa has a number of role players responsible for improving and maintaining the country's competitiveness and ensuring the delivery of memorable tourism experiences within the tourism system (StatsSA, 2017:153).

However, there are other players in South Africa that are not necessarily 'key role players' but have a significant influence on tourism directly and indirectly, for instance, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). The DHA sets policies and regulations that influence the country's level of accessibility. In 2014, the number of tourist arrivals was 2 226 947. In 2015, this decreased to 2 015 056, while in 2016, a 10.4% increase in 2015 arrivals was recorded, with a total of 2 224 622 tourist arrivals reported (South African Tourism (SAT), 2016d:6).

Importantly, meetings were held by the National Department of Tourism (NDT) and the DHA regarding visa requirements in the year 2015. These visa regulations required tourists to renew travelling visas in their place of origin (Department of Home Affairs (DHA), 2016:1). The visa regulations regarding other factors significantly affected tourist arrivals as witnessed by the

decline in 2015. Resultantly, further meetings initiated the relaxing of certain visa regulations, leading to an increase in tourist arrivals in the year 2016 (SAT, 2016d:3).

Furthermore, in South Africa, a number of government departments such as the DEA complement the tourism industry. This department aims to conserve and protect the natural environment. The aim of conserving the environment supports the existence of tourism within the country (Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), 2016:1). Ecotourism is a form of tourism that primarily focuses on the natural environment and without the natural surroundings, ecotourism development could be a failure. Considering this, the DEA is significantly supporting the sustainability of ecotourism within the country (DEA, 2016:1).

There are main players who are directly involved with the tourists, specifically the service providers. Associations have been formed in the interests of the industry's survival. These include the Association of South African Travel Agents (ASATA), the Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA), the Coach Operators Association of South Africa (COASA), the Society of Incentive and Travel Executives (SITE), the Exhibition and Event Association of Southern Africa (EXSA), the Board of Airline Representatives of South Africa (BARSA), the Restaurant Association of South Africa (RASA) and various labour organisations. Table 2.2 indicates the role players and their responsibilities within the South African tourism scope.

**Table 2.2: Tourism role players in South Africa**

<b>Role player</b>	<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>
<b>NDT</b>	The role of the NDT is to ensure that tourism makes a sustained and increasing contribution to the South African economy. It also provides policy advice to the Minister of Tourism and administers and monitors government's investment in tourism marketing and other programmes. The department manages the core tourism data set and distributes this and other research information to the public and private sectors.
<b>SAT</b>	SAT is an entity responsible for marketing South Africa as an international visitor destination. It owns the South African tourism-marketing brand under which the global tourism campaign is managed. SAT strengthens its key marketing messages by providing quality information to visitors through its website.
<b>TBCSA</b>	TBCSA is a private-sector membership organisation that has positioned itself as a united voice for the tourism industry. The organisation advocates the interests of its members with government and other decision-makers.
<b>TGCSA</b>	TGCSA is responsible for grading accommodation establishments in South Africa through the star quality assurance programme.
<b>TECSA</b>	TECSA is responsible for monitoring the industry's compliance with the tourism BEE charter and scorecard and for promoting transformation in South Africa's tourism sector.
<b>TEP</b>	TEP is responsible for supporting the development and growth of SMMEs in the sector.
<b>THETA</b>	THETA is responsible for ensuring that training and development standards are in place in the tourism and hospitality sectors. The authority also provides leadership within the

<b>Role player</b>	<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>
	industry on skills and training matters by identifying current and future skill needs, developing strategic plans to assist the industry in meeting these needs and promoting training that will meet the needs of employers and employees.
<b>Provincial tourism organisations</b>	These organisations act as a link between tourism operators, national tourism bodies and local and national government. They are responsible for promoting their provinces to domestic and international visitors. At present, there are nine provincial tourism organisations funded by the respective provinces:
	Western Cape
	Eastern Cape
	Northern Cape
	KwaZulu-Natal
	Gauteng
	North West
	Free State
	Limpopo
	Mpumalanga
<b>Local government</b>	South Africa's local governments comprise 5 metros, 46 district councils and 232 local municipalities. Local authorities must make decisions and set directions for promoting the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of their communities. Their role in the tourism sector is to manage assets such as public land and to provide important infrastructure. Local governments also represent host communities. Nationally, SALGA represents local governments.

Source: (NDT, 2015:50)

The core activities of these associations focus on the improvement of the tourism industry in such a way that South Africa's competitiveness is enhanced (NDT, 2015:52). As the tourism industry develops and the tourists' needs evolve, more role players have emerged. Organisations such as the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA) and Fair Trade Tourism (FTT) have been observed to deal with these situations. Such organisations focus their interest on the greening of South African tourism (Nheta and Nethengwe, 2016:7). Their presence and influence in the tourism industry in regard to ecotourism development is of paramount importance. If tourism establishments partner with local role players such as the GBCSA and the FTT, the greening of destinations such as the Limpopo province will be an achievable task.

**2.6 TYPES OF TOURISM**

A tourism experience involves an interconnected network of services. Different types of tourism may interconnect through the activities and services sought by tourists (Yogi, 2010:10; Mokoena, 2014:64). However, distinction is made in the values and principles observed by each type of tourism, regardless of the criterion used in effecting the different types of tourism (Sala, Ciuffo

and Nijkamp, 2015:315). In practice, there is an array of possibilities and decisive factors that can be used to introduce different forms of tourism (Gozner and Zarrilli, 2012:113). This chapter provides an exposition of two basic types of tourism, which are presented as encompassing terms for forms of tourism yet to be discussed. The two terms are conventional mass tourism and alternative tourism. To attain an understanding of these two types of tourism, Figure 2.1 presents images of each type.



**Figure 2.1: Two types of tourism**

Source: (Ecotourists 3D, 2017:1)

### **2.6.1 Conventional mass tourism**

Conventional mass tourism involves large numbers of tourists visiting familiar places that offer replications of their own culture in institutionalised settings (Hill and Gale, 2009:3; Kiper, 2012:778). In many cases, conventional mass tourism is perceived to be responsible for negative impacts on the environment due to the consumptive nature of certain activities conducted by tourists and service providers and the absence of sustainable measures within this type of tourism (Powell and Ham, 2008:468; Loizos, 2012:1; Vainikka, 2016:66). This is attributed to the large influx of tourists during peak seasons, mainly by those visiting to experience the sea, sun and sand (Loizos, 2012:1). Relatedly, mass tourism destinations emerged due to large-scale, capitalist-oriented developers (Ayhan, 2011:290; Vainikka, 2016:66). With developments such as the right to free movement, paid work holidays and improvement in the standard of living in the 20th century, conventional mass tourism boomed (Rosa and Gonzalez, 2011:1589). This era was promoted by economic growth in most European countries, which gave the traveller the ability to

travel frequently (Rosa and Gonzalez, 2011:1589). Hence, conventional mass tourism became a significant generator of income for most countries, especially for third-world countries, as is still witnessed in today's tourism industry (Ayhan, 2011:293).

The need for revenue by tourism developers in the 20th century overshadowed the innocent need of experiencing conventional mass tourism offerings and laid the foundation for rapid tourism developments that exerted pressure on both the environment and infrastructure (Ayhan, 2011:294). As a result, there was a need to save the environment and infrastructure. Nevertheless, sacrificing tourism was unfeasible since it was used as an economic development tool by emerging countries (Meler and Ham, 2012:130). However, a new form of tourism emerged in the name of re-directing conventional mass tourism to a more environmentally friendly and feasible type of tourism that would preserve social, natural and historical tourism assets (Loizos, 2012:1). The redeemer of conventional mass tourism known as alternative tourism is described by Stanciulescu and Diaconescu (2015:284) as a suitable depiction of what sustainable development within tourism should be.

### **2.6.2 Alternative tourism**

Alternative tourism provides a platform where compliance to environmentally friendly practices and community development is supported by the aim to preserve destination attractiveness (Kiper, Ozdemir, Saglam, 2011:4009; Loizos, 2012:1; Stanciulescu and Diaconescu, 2015:284). Since alternative tourism promotes sustainable tourism, Eriksson (2003:17), Kiper (2012:777) and Stanciulescu and Diaconescu (2015:285) accentuate adventure tourism, cultural tourism and ecotourism as being the main sub-components of alternative tourism.

Alternative tourism aims to address sustainable development and conservation and sets a solid foundation for sub-components that are defensive, nature-oriented and environmentally responsible to develop (Meler and Ham, 2012:130). Ecotourism is such a sub-component and has been interchangeably seen as an effective tool for sustainable development and conservation (Kiper, Ozdemir, Saglam, 2011:4010; Kiper, 2012:773). Most emerging countries have generally embraced ecotourism as a practical option that fosters the establishment of alternative tourism and mitigates the perceived negative effects of mass conventional tourism (Regmi and Walter, 2016:1). This embracement by emerging countries comes highly recommended by international institutions such as “[the] World Bank, global environmental organisations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), global business organisations such as the Business



Council for Sustainable Development, and national governments” (Regmi and Walter, 2016:5). A number of reasons underlie why sub-components of alternative tourism have resisted conventional mass tourism. Nonetheless, understanding the characteristics of these types of tourism becomes valuable to an individual or organisation that intends to change from conventional mass tourism to alternative tourism or simply to pursue it out of interest. The following section provides an exposition of the key characteristics of ecotourism and conventional mass tourism with which one should be familiar when embracing alternative tourism sub-components.

### 2.6.3 Characteristics of ecotourism and conventional mass tourism

The distinct characteristics of ecotourism and conventional mass tourism as indicated in Table 2.3, reveals reasons why ecotourism has been generally adopted in most countries. From Table 2.3, it is observed that ecotourism is oriented towards sustainable development, which counteracts the principles of conventional mass tourism. Additionally, ecotourism conforms to the basic principle of alternative tourism, which states that tourism activities should be identified by small-scale sustainable activities (Dorobantu and Nistoreanu, 2012:264). Furthermore, different types of tourism may be differentiated based on two distinguishing elements, consumptive and non-consumptive tourism. Types of tourism can be distinguished by the values offered by each specific form of tourism (Marina, Natalie and Rabiul, 2014:89).

**Table 2.3: Distinct characteristics of conventional mass tourism and ecotourism**

Characteristics of conventional mass tourism	Characteristics of ecotourism
Large groups of visitors	Small groups of visitors
Urban	Rural
General touristic marketing activities	Eco-marketing activities
Average prices for purpose of market penetration	High price with purpose of filtering the market

Characteristics of conventional mass tourism	Characteristics of ecotourism
Impact on natural environment	Little impact on the natural environment
Advanced control options	Limited possibilities of control
Management based on macroeconomic principles	Management based on local economic principles
Anonymous relationship between visitors and local community	Personalised relationships between visitors and local community
General development goals	Local development objectives
Behaviour-oriented leisure activities, leisure entertainment. Opposed to education and training actions	Loyalty in the process of training and education for appropriate conduct regarding the natural environment
Intensive development of tourism facilities	Reduced development of tourism facilities

Source: (Dorobantu and Nistoreanu, 2012:264)

Consumptive tourism focuses on goods produced by the ecosystem that can be used by people, whereas non-consumptive tourism makes use of the goods that benefit people but does not involve the consumption of the goods or services (Marina, Natalie and Rabiul, 2014:90). Ecotourism inherently nurtures the non-consumptive nature of tourism (Saayman, 2009:11; De Witt, 2011:48). For example, wildlife viewing (non-consumptive) may be classified under ecotourism. However, it also relates well to adventure tourism and can be classified as consumptive tourism if it involves hunting. Therefore, differences in purpose of travel can be based on the values of the tourists participating in the activities.

Ecotourism is guided by principles that are incorporated into other forms of tourism, for example, rural tourism and nature-based tourism. These principles promote a non-consumptive form of alternative tourism (Powell and Ham, 2008:468; De Witt, 2011:47). Despite the commercialisation of the term ecotourism by various organisations that have ‘misused’ it for the purpose of penetrating ecotourism market segments, ecotourism is nonetheless a practicable tool for

conservation (De Witt, 2011:47; Kiper, 2012:773). Figure 2.2 demonstrates that components of ecotourism overlap with other forms of tourism (Honey and Krantz, 2007:33; Hill and Gale, 2009:5). These areas represent the integration of ecotourism principles that foster eco-friendly behaviour and respect for different cultures and human rights in tourists and service providers (Bricker, 2013:40; Das and Chatterjee, 2015:8). This lays a foundation for non-consumptive tourism that actively contributes to conservation (Saayman, 2009:11; De Witt, 2011:48). Therefore, Figure 2.2 also illustrates the penetration of alternative tourism through the integration of ecotourism into other forms of tourism.



**Figure 2.2: Forms of ecotourism**

Source: (Honey and Krantz, 2007:33; Hill and Gale, 2009:5)

Similarly, Weaver and Lawton (2007:1169) believe that ecotourism is expanding its boundaries and incorporating other forms of tourism, thus actively contributing towards conservation. The authors emphasise the key roles played by various forms of tourism such as adventure and cultural tourism in fostering the principles of ecotourism (Weaver and Lawton, 2007).

The following section briefly explores how the other forms of tourism illustrated in Figure 2.2 integrate with ecotourism.

#### *Adventure tourism*

Doran (2016:58) defines adventure tourism as a form of tourism that involves travelling to secluded areas to discover items of interest. According to Tshipala (2013:45), “adventure tourism is travel to natural, unusual, remote settings, utilising non-traditional modes of transport to participate in physical, exciting and specialised commercial activities that involve an element of calculated risk and cultural exchange”. Adventure-related activities include hiking, white water rafting, searching for treasure spots, camping in remote areas or participating in a cultural exchange (SAT, 2016a:1). However, one must understand the fundamental codes and values that link adventure tourism and ecotourism in order to determine if the principles of ecotourism are observed in adventure tourism. This differs among adventure tourism participants:

[The] eco-traveller seeks an authentic cultural experience and a connection with nature, [the] adventure traveller seeks interaction with nature by means of adrenaline boosting activities while the eco-adventurer seeks authentic thrilling and awakening activities. (Bricker, 2013:28)

Needs sought by adventure tourists to South Africa can be satisfied by a variety of attractions such as cage diving with great white sharks in Gansbaai, hot air ballooning over the Magaliesberg Mountains, adventure tours in the Cango Caves, the Ivory Route 4x4 trail challenge in the Limpopo province and exceptional hikes and walks in the Maluti Mountains (SAT, 2016a:1).

#### *Cultural tourism*

Culture is commonly referred to as the relationship between the man-made world and the existing world (Alexandru, Rodica and Corina, 2015:117). Cultural tourism focuses on the cohesion of societal knowledge and ensures the survival of a specific human community (Bujdoso et al., 2015:307). It is from this cohesion that tourism assets are identified. Cultural tourism embraces a legitimate role by promoting principles that improve the welfare of the host community during and after tourist-host interaction (Stratan, Percium and Gribincea, 2015:117). In the course of cultural exchange moments, cultural tourism ensures that minimal negative effects are placed on the host community during interaction (Weaver and Lawton, 2007:1172). Similarly, ecotourism observes the same principle. In South Africa, there are numerous attractions a tourist can visit that provide memorable cultural experiences and significant societal knowledge (SAT, 2016b:2). These include the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg Park in KwaZulu-Natal, home to the ancient rock art of the San, the Cradle of Humankind outside Johannesburg and the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site (SAT, 2016b:2).

#### *Rural tourism*

Rural tourism has emerged as a significant type of tourism during the past two decades, with Africa recording an 8.1% increase based on preservation schemes (Gavrila-Paven, 2015:112). It plays a significant role in conserving the landscape and biodiversity of a particular destination (Mafunzwaini and Hugo, 2005:253; Hernandez, Suarez-Vega and Santana-Jimenez, 2016:55). Rural tourism includes agricultural activities that seek to use natural resources responsibly. Rural tourism creates an opportunity for activities for tourists seeking solitude and primitive environments (Mafunzwaini and Hugo, 2005:254; Ionela, Constantin and Dogaru, 2015:1051; Wu et al., 2015:2684; Regmi and Walter, 2016:5). Rural tourism can contribute greatly to the alleviation of poverty and the development of marginalised areas (SAT, 2012:1).

The cohesion of ecotourism and rural tourism depicted in Figure 2.2 is based upon a similar foundation of conservation. These two forms of tourism resolve issues of environmental degradation by promoting environmental protection in a way that benefits the local community (Mafunzwaini and Hugo, 2005:254; Rid, Ezeuduji and Probstl-Haider, 2014:103; Jaszczak and Zukovskis, 2010 cited in Barkauskas, Barkauskiene and Jasinskas, 2015:168). The NDT has identified areas such as the Cederberg in the Western Cape province, Bushbuck Ridge and Vhembe District Municipality for possible rural tourism development in its National Rural Tourism Strategy (SAT, 2012). The strategy allows for community-led initiatives to emerge, thus observing the principles of ecotourism such as improving the welfare of the locals (SAT, 2012:1).

#### *Nature-based tourism*

Nature-based tourism can be regarded as a form of tourism that uses natural resources, undisturbed parks and protected flora and fauna. This form encompasses ecotourism, a low-impact tourism that contributes to conservation (Goodwin, 1996:288 in Fennel, 2008:20). According to Laarman and Durst (1987:5), the link between ecotourism and nature-based tourism was identified approximately two decades ago with researchers recognising that travellers are drawn to a destination because of its natural history. Additionally, visits included education, recreation and in most cases, adventure; therefore, similarities were identified that linked ecotourism and nature-based tourism. However, despite agreement regarding interest in natural environments, ecotourists were particular about the natural attractions they visited. Preference was given to secluded areas with an emphasis on conservation. This developed a non-consumptive form of nature-based tourism (Lu and Stepchenkova, 2012:702).

In practice, for the sustainable development of a non-consumptive form of tourism that is a neutral platform for ecotourism and nature-based tourism, one should comprehensively understand the

meaning of ecotourism, the impacts of ecotourism and generally, what determines the existence of ecotourism. The gaining of such knowledge could be assisted by visiting natural attractions such as Cape Town's beautiful beaches, Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve in Mpumalanga, Kruger National Park, the Blouberg mountains, Langjan Nature Reserve and Balule Nature Reserve in the Limpopo province, all of which provide scenic views for tourists (SAT, 2016c:1).

## **2.7 WHAT IS ECOTOURISM?**

Ecotourism is a type of tourism that centres on experiencing natural environments while advocating environmental conservation (Yen-Ting, Wan-I and Tsung-Hsiung, 2014:321). Francesca, Luigi and Paola (2012:89) postulate that ecotourism is a segment of nature-based tourism. Concurring, Lu and Stepchenkova (2012:702) view ecotourism as a promoter of nature-based tourism activities. Moreover, Vijay and Ravichandran (2013:149) state that ecotourism is a concept that was developed as a result of the need to fuse conservation and sustainable development. International organisations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), UNEP and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) have identified and emphasised the necessity for the conservation of natural areas in an economic, socio-cultural and environmentally sustainable manner, and ecotourism addresses this (Francesca, Luigi and Paola, 2012:88).

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) (2015:1) states that ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and upholds the welfare of the local people. Six principles that form the foundation of the definition by TIES have been identified:

- Minimising impacts
- Building environmental and cultural awareness
- Fostering respect
- Delivering satisfactory experiences for the host and the visitor
- Providing financial benefits for the local people
- Stressing the need to be sensitive to political and social environments of the host country

These principles are embedded within the values and codes of ecotourists and govern ecotourists' behaviour (Walter, 2013:21). It is due to these principles that a difference in the characteristics of tourists can be identified, thereby helping to segment the mass tourist base (Kachel and Jennings,

2009:134; Perkins and Brown, 2012:794). Moreover, Weaver and Lawton (2007:1170) mentioned that a visit to a predominantly nature-based attraction that provides a learning and educating experience, requires strict adherence to the principles of socio-cultural, economic and environmental sustainability for ecotourism to prevail.

Furthermore, the WTO (2016:1) defined ecotourism as travel driven by a tourist's will to visit an all nature-based attraction for the purpose of enjoying the wilderness and traditional cultures found in the destination area. In the definition, the WTO cited the inclusion of educational content, small groups of tourists for tours, minimal potential negative impacts on the natural and cultural environment, generation of economic benefits, job creation for the locals and an increase in awareness of sustainable principles among the host and the visitors. Similarly, international organisations such as the IUCN, UNEP and the WWF have identified the need to embrace the pillars of sustainable development in environmental issues, and ecotourism attends to this (Francesca, Luigi and Paola, 2012:88; Vijay and Ravichandran, 2013:149). This area of sustainable development and its link to ecotourism is discussed in the following section.

### **2.7.1 Integration of sustainable development and ecotourism**

Wilkins (2007:170) and Hanss and Bohm (2011:679) assert that consumers and organisations have exhibited a limited understanding of the concept of sustainable development and refer to it as a label for environmental issues and as a development objective. This reveals why sustainable development has been intensely linked to environmental issues (Awan, 2013:745). In South Africa, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) 2011–2014 outlines sustainable development as a “key mechanism for building capacity and governance to achieve human development based on sustainable production and consumption” (DEA, 2011:41).

Nonetheless, as stated by Park (2011:1), the different views of the sustainable-development concept by scholars create room for a constructive debate, which could clearly outline how best the concept can be made relevant to today's issues as well as identify other areas that could negatively affect the environment. In an effort to improve the understanding of the concept, Wilkins (2007:170) described sustainable development as a key element or mechanism of the overall structure for development, thus mirroring the adoption of sustainable development by the NSSD 2011–2014. This provides insight into how sustainable development should not be seen as an objective but as a tool that can be used to achieve other objectives in a greater dimension. Regarding this, the International Council for Science (ICSU) (2015:5) and the International Social

Science Council (ISSC) (2015:5) state that the United Nations has set a Sustainable Development Goals Framework that has effectively addressed the issues raised by Wilkins (2007:170). The framework discourses “key systematic barriers to sustainable development such as unsustainable consumption patterns and environmental degradation”, which are relevant to certain tourism activities (ICSU, 2015:5; ISSC, 2015:5).

Due to the consumptive nature of certain tourism activities and the wide extent of negative impacts that these activities exert on the environment, ecotourism provides a significant non-consumptive base that is conscious of the concepts of sustainable development (Chiutsi, Mukuroverwa, Karigambe and Mudzengi, 2011:17; Marina, Natalie and Rabiul, 2014:90). Considering some of the principles of ecotourism, this type of tourism observes a balance of ecology and economy while incorporating the welfare and participation of the host community (Kiper, 2012:775; The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), 2015:1). It thus becomes transparent why many researchers synonymously suggest ecotourism as an effective sustainable-development tool since it addresses social, economic and environmental issues (Barkauskiene and Sniesk, 2013:449).

Sustainable development and ecotourism have a symbiotic relationship due to the essence of sustainable development. The sustainable-development paradigm has been elucidated by various authors and organisations (Harris, Griffin and Williams, 2002:33; Butcher, 2007:17; Sustainable Development Commission, 2011:1; Corina, 2013:443), revealing different perspectives in comprehending the concept. The basis has been set in *Our Common Future* (United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (UNWCED), 1987:27), now commonly referred to as the *Brundtland Report*. The report outlines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (UNWCED, 1987:27). In essence, sustainable development is founded on three pillars, namely social, economic and environmental. These pillars have also been incorporated into business reporting structures as a framework for evaluation of business operations in an attempt to advance sustainable development (Slaper and Hall, 2011:4; Corina, 2013:442). Vijay and Ravichandran (2013:149) describe ecotourism as a concept developed to merge conversation and sustainable development.

The emergence of ecotourism provides a solid platform for sustainable tourism development to be deployed effectively into the local marginalised communities (George, 2007:29; Ivanovic, Khunou, Reynish, Pawson and Tseane, 2009:271; De Witt, 2011:67; Kiper, 2012:773). In most cases, marginalised areas offer pristine environments that have not been exposed to



modernisation, and this acts as an attractive force for ecotourists (De Witt, 2011:67; De Witt, Van der Merwe and Saayman, 2014:181). However, marginalised areas are in need of alternative sources that provide sustainable livelihood assets to local communities such as those identified by SANParks in its community-based conservation and socio-economic development projects (SANParks, 2013:11). In response to this need, Kiper (2012:773) alludes to ecotourism as being a suitable source that can deliver community development in a sustainable way. This capacity thrust upon ecotourism can be attributed to some of the principles of sustainable development that are indicated in Table 2.4 below.

### **2.7.1.1 Principles of sustainable development**

The Department of Environmental Affairs and the Department of Tourism in South Africa has unequivocally embraced the concept of sustainable development as outlined in the National Framework for Sustainable Development (NFSD) 2008 and the NSSD 2011–2014. The principles indicated in Table 2.4 are inclusive of those put forward in the NFSD 2008 and the NSSD 2011–2014. The NSSD 2011–2014 prioritises sustaining South Africa’s ecosystems and using natural resources efficiently (DEA, 2011:14).

**Table 2.4: Principles of sustainable development**

<b>Principles of sustainable development</b>
1. Entitlement: People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.
2. Value of nature: Individuals will always be part of nature, be embedded in the natural world and be totally dependent for economic and social well-being on the resources and systems that sustain life on earth.
3. ‘Fair shares’ sustainable economic development: This means ‘fair shares for all’, ensuring that people’s basic needs are properly met across the world while securing constant improvement in the quality of peoples’ lives through efficient, inclusive economies.
4. Polluter pays: Sustainable development requires that the costs of pollution and inefficient resource use are made explicit and that these costs are reflected in the prices paid for all products and services. It requires the recycling of revenue from these higher prices to drive the sustainability revolution that is now so urgently needed and to compensate those whose environments have been damaged.

## Principles of sustainable development

5. Good governance: There is no single plan for delivering sustainable development. It requires different strategies in different societies. All strategies will depend on effective, participative systems of governance and institutions, engaging the interest, creativity and energy of all citizens.

6. Adoption of a precautionary approach: Scientists, innovators and wealth creators have a crucial part to play in creating genuine sustainable economic progress. The current high levels of human ingenuity and technological power are capable of causing serious damage to the environment and to people's health through unsustainable development that pays insufficient regard to the wider impacts.

7. Environmental issues: These are best managed with the participation of all concerned citizens. Nations should facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making environmental information widely available.

8. Efficient and sustainable use of natural resources.

9. Socio-economic systems: These are embedded within and are dependent upon eco-systems.

10. Basic human needs: These must be met to ensure that the resources necessary for long-term survival are not destroyed for short-term gain.

11. Sustainable development: In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation. Eradicating poverty and reducing disparities in living standards in different parts of the world are essential in achieving sustainable development and in meeting the needs of the majority of people.

Source: (Power, 2004:4; DEA, 2011:9; UNEP, 2016:1)

The priorities mentioned in the NSSD 2011–2014 included increasing the number of 'blue flag beaches' (an eco-label assigned to the coastal environment) and increasing the land mass protected by government to limit environment degradation and to rehabilitate land affected by degradation (DEA, 2011:14).

### **2.7.1.2 Principles of ecotourism**

Considering the prioritisation of the NSSD regarding ecosystems, it is clear that ecotourism has a significant role to play in sustainable development. Mehmet (2013:178) describes ecotourism under sustainable development as an attempt to foster development that sustains the “activities of all persons and institutions in harmony with all other elements in the surrounding environment”. Kiper (2012:773) commends how ecotourism provides an enabling environment for the economic and social development of local communities. Relatedly, the DEA (2011:14) specified the vision of the NFSD 2008, which outlines how South Africa aspires to be “a sustainable, economically prosperous and self-reliant nation”. The vision is underpinned by the environment and social, economic and human rights aspects, which set a base for the principles guiding its framework (DEA, 2011:14). Credit may, therefore, be given to the principles of ecotourism because they address some of the main aspects and priorities mentioned in the vision of the NFSD and the strategic priorities of the NSSD and ultimately, advance sustainable development within the tourism context.

From the theoretical analysis, core principles of ecotourism can, therefore, be identified (Table 2.5). For the purpose of this study, the focus of ecotourism is based on the mentioned definitions: to conserve the natural environment for future generations; to enlighten tourists on sustainable practices; and to improve tourists’ awareness of diluting cultural attractions while at the same time, improve the well-being of the hosts in an economically and environmentally sustainable way. Ecotourism is viewed as a feasible form of tourism that is in a better position to be an effective conservation tool that advances sustainable development compared with conventional mass tourism (Powell and Ham, 2008:467; Arachchi, Yajid and Khatibi, 2015:211). Nevertheless, Tao, Eagles and Smith (2004:151) state that despite the appreciation of ecotourism improving the sustainability of tourism attractions, not all activities of ecotourism are truly sustainable, for example, long-haul commercial air travel.

**Table 2.5: Ecotourism principles**

<b>Involves the presence of a natural setting for ecotourism activities</b>	<b>Considers the welfare and participation of the hosts</b>
<b>Actively contributes to the conservation of the destination environment</b>	<b>Maintains a balance between ecology and economy</b>
<b>Promotes an interest in nature</b>	<b>Is sustainable</b>
<b>Increases awareness, understanding and sensitivity in regard to the host environment</b>	<b>Is non-consumptive</b>
<b>Minimises negative environmental impacts</b>	<b>Includes educational content</b>
<b>Involves the presence of a natural setting for ecotourism activities</b>	<b>Involves small-scale tourist groups</b>
<b>Encourages responsible travel</b>	<b>Develops environmental and cultural awareness</b>
<b>Creates socio-economic opportunities</b>	

Source: (Honey and Krantz, 2007:30; Honey, 2008:5; Fennell, 2008:34; Zambrano, Broadbent and Durham, 2010:62; Lu and Stepchenkova, 2012:703; Kiper, 2012:775; WTO, 2014:2; TIES, 2015:1)

In ecotourism activities, ecotourists travel responsibly to areas that exist in their natural state (Resulaj et al., 2012:69). In most cases, the travel is motivated by an interest in nature, flora and fauna and the need to reduce negative impacts on the environment. On the contrary, decades ago, mass tourists mostly travelled for personal experience with little or no concern for the protection of the natural environment (Andriotis, Agiomirigianakis and Mihiotis, 2007:54). However, more recently, mass tourists have encountered scrutiny and are prone to criticism due to their lack of responsible behaviour, which has prompted the development of a responsible tourist known as the 'new tourist' (Fennell, 2008:17).

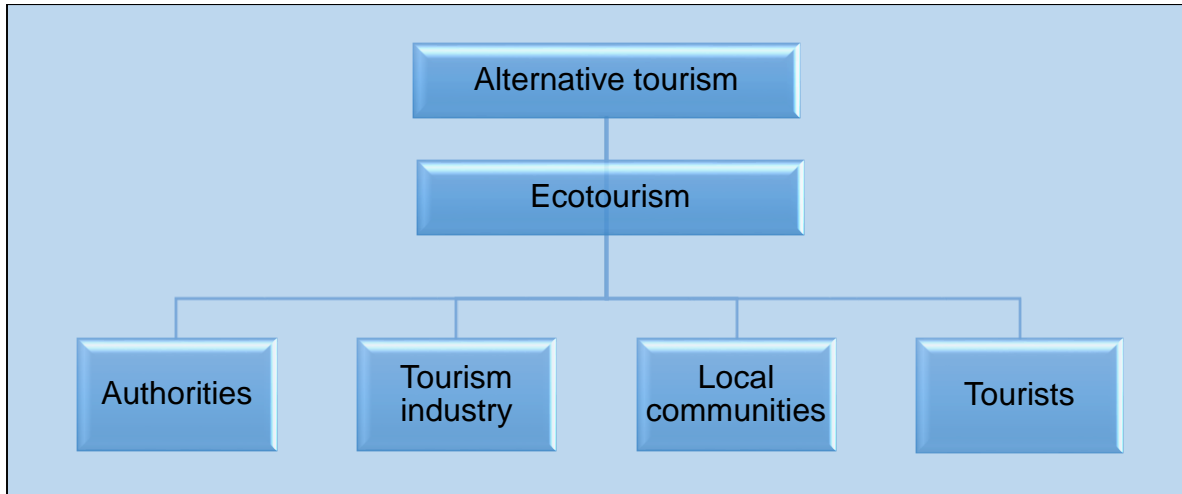
The lack of agreement regarding ecotourism may cause variations in definitions of ecotourism in certain destination areas (Tao, Eagles and Smith, 2004:152; Dey and Sarma, 2006:31; Yeo and Piper, 2011:11; Kgote and Kotze, 2013:325; Arachchi, Yajid and Khatibi, 2015:213; Zhang et al., 2015:21). In considering the principles underlying ecotourism that govern the behaviour of ecotourists, one is able to identify theoretically the possible values and codes that determine the characteristics of ecotourists in a specific area (Nowaczek, 2009:4; Valtonen, 2013:10). In attempting to grasp the concept of ecotourism, it is important to observe the various impacts of ecotourism on the economic, social and environmental aspects. This assists in understanding ecotourism variations among different destinations arising from different levels of limited acceptable change.

### **2.7.2 Understanding the ecotourism system**

A system is made up of components working together to achieve a principal objective. In the ecotourism system, a number of role players are present to support ecotourism in achieving its objectives (Mokoena, 2014:66; De Witt, 2011:52). The role players comprise the authorities, the tourism industry, the local community and the tourists. Each role player influences the probability of ecotourism existence in the area (Mokoena, 2014:66). The authorities are inclusive of government boards, organisations, ministries and departments such as South African Tourism (SAT). These authorities regulate the activities of each system, which are bound by law. Moreover, the authorities enforce a balance between the customer's needs and the service provider's offerings. They allow an acceptable pricing strategy that does not exploit the customers and oversee the services delivered to customers in an effort to match the cost to benefit (Yogi, 2010:9). In addition, the authorities are responsible for supporting ecotourism activities and monitoring the successful establishment of ecotourism-oriented activities (Awan, 2013:745). The ecotourism industry delivers support in different ways such as transportation, accommodation and other tourism-supporting activities (Yogi, 2010:10).

Eco-lodges and eco-resorts complement the ecotourism system. These establishments provide services in different packages from outdoor camping suites to green urban hotels, attempting to provide satisfactory experiences for ecotourists. The aim of ecotourism is to exist in a harmonious relationship with the local community (Kwan et al., 2008:698). This is improved by the community's willingness to participate in ecotourism activities. The local community is responsible for exhibiting the local culture to the ecotourists who are willing to learn more and appreciate the

existing cultures. To overlook the local community is, therefore, omitting a key area on which the ecotourism system depends (Cole, 2006:630). Figure 2.3 illustrates an ecotourism system based on the works of De Witt (2011:50).



**Figure 2.3: Ecotourism system**

Source: (De Witt, 2011:50)

The local community's attitude towards ecotourism activities is crucial since it determines the receptiveness of ecotourist arrivals in the community. Therefore, the partnership between ecotourism service providers and the local community results in a mutual understanding that leads to the aims of ecotourism being attained (Mokoena, 2014:67; Weaver and Lawton, 2007:1169).

Ecotourism predominantly serves the interests of ecotourists. However, a balance regarding the number of ecotourists must be maintained to avoid threshold levels since these could lead to an influx of tourists. Failure of the system to regulate ecotourist flow could lead to hostile relationships with the host community (Kwan et al., 2008:698). This would create detrimental issues that would hamper the growth of ecotourism in the area.

For smooth operation of the ecotourism system, there is a need to understand the contribution of ecotourism within the South African tourism industry.

### **2.7.3 Contributions of ecotourism**

The contributions of ecotourism are expressed according to the pillars of sustainable development (economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability). Contributions of ecotourism in the tourism industry should be outlined, whether the impacts be negative or positive.

#### ***2.7.3.1 The economic contributions of ecotourism***

Ecotourism contributes to tourism revenue and is a source of foreign exchange, which together with revenue generated by local ecotourism operators can be used for economic developments in the destination area (Kiper, Ozdemir, Saglam, 2011:4010; Nyuapane and Poudel, 2011:1347; Bricker, 2013:20; Das and Chatterjee, 2015:6; StatsSA, 2016:1). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2016:1) estimated that globally, tourism contributes approximately 9.8% of the GDP, and this is likely to increase by 4.2% per year in the coming decade. For instance, Kenya's economy receives approximately 25% of its GDP from tourism of which wildlife tourism contributes about 70% to the tourism revenue (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2016:1). Receiving foreign exchange via inbound tourism is an attractive goal for any country since it helps in keeping a positive tourism trade balance (Akinboade and Braimoh, 2010:149; Brida and Pulina, 2010:3; StatsSA, 2016:1).

Profiles of ecotourists in Asian countries reveal high disposable incomes, and their spending contributes to the stimulation of infrastructure development and the improvement of the locals' welfare (Bricker, 2013:20). Due to the potential growth of ecotourism, it has the potential to uplift the living standards of people who are directly and indirectly involved in it (Arachchi, Yajid and Khatibi, 2015:211; Das and Chatterjee, 2015:6). In South Africa, ecotourism has created opportunities for small business start-ups. This has resulted in direct and indirect employment opportunities being created. Since ecotourism promotes the participation of the locals, the marginal areas of different communities where ecotourism takes place have gained from the redistribution of wealth (George, 2007:29; Ivanovic et al., 2009:271; De Witt, 2011:67). Ecotourism, therefore, has the ability to improve the living standards of people who are directly and indirectly participating in ecotourism activities (Kiper, 2012:773). This can be attributed to the positive outcomes that ecotourism can have on job creation, income generation and education (Regmi and Walter, 2016:5, StatsSA, 2016:1).

However, dependency solely on ecotourism by some communities could potentially be dangerous. Due to the nature of ecotourism depending on the existence of natural attractions in a destination area, exploitation of resources would likely lead to community-based ecotourism failure (Wuleka, 2012:99). This could be aggravated by the sense that tourism has deprived locals of their livelihood assets (Serena, Peterson, Wallace and Stowhas, 2016:3). As a result, unemployment levels could rise due to the loss of jobs and ecotourism off-peak seasons, leading to poverty generation (George, 2007:29; Ivanovic et al., 2009:271).

### ***2.7.3.2 The socio-cultural contributions of ecotourism***

Ecotourism creates a platform for host-visitor interactions to take place. In so doing, ecotourism nurtures respectful relationships between tourists and hosts (Das and Chatterjee, 2015:8). However, regarding the cultural impacts, these are observed over a significant period of time. This is due to the fact that cultural aspects are socially accepted and integrated into the culture of the host community over a considerable period of time (George, 2007:301). Ecotourists are therefore, governed by principles such as respect and sensitivity towards the local culture (Walter, 2013:21). However, socio-cultural impact also depends on the flexibility of the ecotourist to integrate with the local culture without affecting the culture negatively. Failure to do so might result in conflict with the locals, leading to hostile attitudes, which ecotourism aims to reduce (Nyuapane and Poudel, 2011:1349).

Ecotourism has an educational element that improves the cultural awareness level of the host and the visitor (Kiper, 2012:773). This lays the foundation for a harmonious meeting, which reduces or eliminates stereotyping (George, 2007:301). For example, heritage sites such as the Cradle of Humankind can be effectively preserved if exposed to ecotourists as opposed to conventional mass tourism. Ecotourism promotes international peace between international tourists and locals (Serena et al., 2016:11). This results from the direct interaction created by ecotourism that allows locals and hosts to understand their differences. As community members become more receptive to ecotourists, they are more accepting of infrastructural developments within the community due to the insight shed by ecotourism (Honey, 2008:31; Serena et al., 2016:12).

Local businesses have witnessed economic opportunities arising from ecotourism (Swilling and Annecke, 2012:27). However, the rush to take advantage of ecotourism and access significant profits by new businesses that claim to be 'eco-friendly' has led to the creation of staged



authenticity (Das and Chatterjee, 2015:4). This commercialisation of ecotourism may lead to an increased demand for authentic cultural experiences, which are then replaced by staged experiences. These are offered in a bid to take advantage of the economic benefits, resulting in the loss of the original meaning of the culture experience (Swilling and Annecke, 2012:27).

Most ecotourists visiting African natural attractions originate from European countries (Cini and Saayman, 2014:1). They bring in a Western culture that some communities may find disrespectful to the local culture, thus creating antagonism (Honey, 2008:31). In addition, tourists are perceived to have favourable characters that easily influence the locals, leading to the demonstration effect, which is a concept that refers to the adoption of tourist consumption and spending behaviours by the local community (Monterrubio and Mendoza-Ontiveros, 2014:97). Moreover, ecotourism allows direct interactions with the locals, which could possibly lead to health issues. This is due to the link created by tourists originating from an affected area and travelling to an unaffected host area (Kuenzi and McNeely, 2012:9). For example, tourists from Angola need a vaccine for yellow fever before visiting South Africa. Therefore, there is a high chance of spreading diseases such as swine-flu and HIV/AIDS (George, 2007:301; Honey, 2008:31).

### ***2.7.3.3 Environmental contributions of ecotourism***

The term environment consists of the built and the natural environment. Ecotourism experiences are mostly based on the natural environment; however, ecotourism depends on the built environment for it to flourish (Keyser, 2009:340). Ecotourism contributes to the environment in a diverse way. The revenue generated by ecotourism activities can be re-invested for the conservation of pristine natural attractions. Educational programmes aimed at improving public awareness on the importance of the environment can be initiated (Keyser, 2009:339). This would lead to increased conservation support by the public, resulting in accepting possible expansion of protected areas and thus preserving species from extinction (Holden, 2008:19). Ecotourism addresses needs such as environmental sustainability in a practical manner and provides an alternative form of tourism that presents the principles of sustainable tourism (Fennell, 2006:5; Spenceley, 2006:650; Mokoena, 2014:64).

However, with a number of ecotourism operators commercialising ecotourism, negative impacts on the environment are certain to occur. Trampling by ecotourists damages the vegetation and causes erosion, which also affects the micro-particles found in the ecosystem (Kelly, Haider, Williams and Englund, 2007:379). In meeting possible ecotourists' demands, there could be an

increase in the use of natural resources, which could result in the over-exploitation of natural resources. In some cases, camp fires started by campers in unprescribed places can cause significant destruction to the biodiversity (Honey and Krantz, 2007:21). Despite the non-consumptive nature of ecotourism, ecotourists viewing wildlife may also destroy animal habitats and affect breeding patterns in different ways (Holden, 2008:19). Similarly, ecotourists may cause pollution. In addition, ecotourism mainly comprises long-haul travel that involves air travel. This leads to increased carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, which contributes to climate change (Kelly et al., 2007:379; Page and Connell, 2009:423). The different means of transportation used within a natural attraction such as cars can also negatively affect the environment. Among other issues, oil leakages and noise from the vehicles can pose harm to the health of the animals, which in turn, leads to the disruption of animal living patterns and thus affects the core base of ecotourism since it depends on the natural environment (Page and Connell, 2009:423).

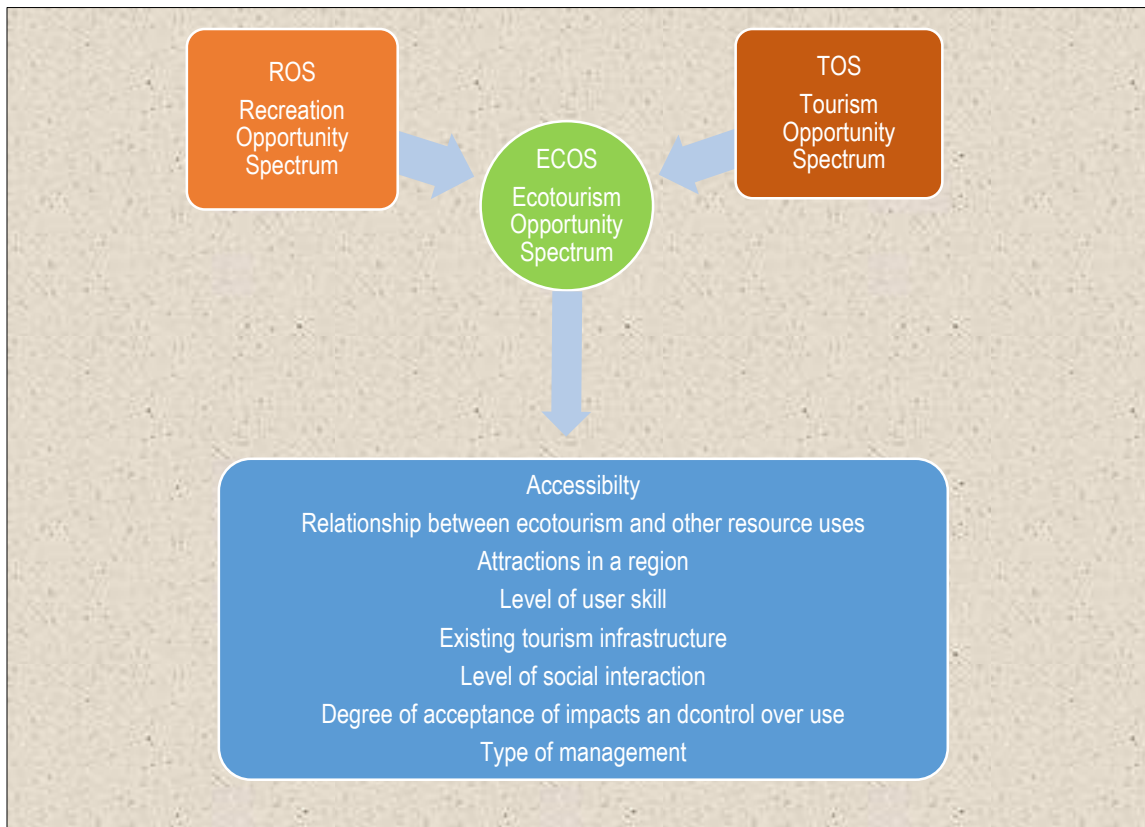
Despite critiques of ecotourism for development and the questionable inclusion of an alternative model of development in the quest to solve economic issues in developing countries and to replicate the consequences of conventional mass tourism through ecotourism as identified by Honey (2008:34), Mowforth and Munt (2009:375), Cohen and Cohen (2015:15) and Regmi and Walter (2016:5), ecotourism can still be considered better than conventional mass tourism. Ecotourism promotes non-consumptive activities and thus, it has a higher degree of acceptable change as opposed to conventional mass tourism (Kiper, 2012:792). Therefore, for minimal negative impacts to occur, an understanding of the ecotourism concept and a sound knowledge of the ecotourist by service providers are required while maximising on the positive contributions that ecotourism brings. Furthermore, since ecotourism has seeded much potential for sustainable development in emerging countries, one needs to comprehend the factors that determine the establishment of ecotourism activities that eventually will generate the different roles found within the sphere of ecotourism and develop the areas in which it co-exists in harmony.

The following section discusses the factors that influence the establishment and existence of ecotourism.

## **2.8 FACTORS INFLUENCING ECOTOURISM**

The Ecotourism Opportunity Spectrum (ECOS) model (Figure 2.4) is based on the Tourism Opportunity Spectrum (TOS) and the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) models, which

focus on tourism recreational opportunities. The ECOS was developed to determine opportunities identified by the existing opportunity spectrum models (De Witt, 2011:61).



**Figure 2.4: Ecotourism Opportunity Spectrum model**

Source: (Boyd and Butler, 1996:561; De Witt, 2011:61)

The ECOS model illustrates the factors that ecotourism marketers and service providers should consider. Influential elements such as attractions in the destination region are critical considerations for service providers before venturing into ecotourism. Knowledge of such factors assists marketers and management with planning and strategising. However, Boyd and Butler (1996:563) mention that management should be aware of the generalisation of terms presented by the model. It is, therefore, important to understand that in most cases, the social and environmental system of ecotourism differs with destination area (Abou-Jaoude, 2008:103; Joyanta, 2014:22). For example, each ecotourism attraction differs in terms of environmental sensitivity. The ECOS model focuses on eight factors that influence the existence of ecotourism. The factors are illustrated in Figure 2.4 and are summarised in Table 2.6.

**Table 2.6: Factors influencing the existence of ecotourism**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Accessibility</b>	This involves: the means of transport from one key area to the other; ease of access to information; freedom of movement within the destination area; and ease of access to other facilities.
<b>Relationship between ecotourism and other resource users</b>	The possibilities include conflict, isolation or a harmonious relationship between ecotourism and other resource users.
<b>Attractions in a region</b>	This factor comprises the types of attractions available and how they can provide authentic ecotourism experiences.
<b>Level of user skill</b>	The knowledge of service providers regarding ecotourists has a direct implication on the services offered and the experiences attained.
<b>Existing tourism infrastructure</b>	The need for shelter and security as a basic need emphasises the provision of accommodation facilities that suit the ecotourist as a primary concern.
<b>Level of social interaction</b>	The level of social and cultural barriers to host-ecotourist and inter-ecotourist interactions influence the possible ecotourism opportunities that are offered in the area.
<b>Degree of acceptance of impacts and control over use</b>	This involves the extent to which the impacts on the attraction are managed and the implementation of possible control measures to sustain the attraction.
<b>Type of management</b>	Management should be aware of: the ecotourism system of that particular area; how tourism products can be sustained and protected; and the compatibility of ecotourism activities with present local activities.

Source: (Boyd and Butler, 1996:561; De Witt, 2011:61)

To a large extent, these factors influence the flow of ecotourism in a destination area. Similarly, the factors influence the type of ecotourists visiting a particular destination (Poupineau and Pouzadoux, 2013:27; Sinitsyn, 2015:26).

The role of ecotourism in the South African tourism industry, ecotourist arrivals in the Limpopo province and the state of ecotourism in the Capricorn District Municipality are discussed briefly below, highlighting certain factors that influence ecotourism as indicated in the ECOS model.

## **2.9 ROLE OF ECOTOURISM IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM INDUSTRY**

South Africa has unique natural attractions such as the Kruger National Park, which draws millions of domestic and international tourists each year (South Africa Yearbook, 2015:1). Tourism exists only if a destination attraction retains its value. However, some attractions have become 'obsolete' and have lost their value due to various reasons such as an unstable economy, political interference or mismanagement of the attraction (Du Cros and McKercher, 2014:181). For example, steam locomotives lost their value in past decades, but private groups in South Africa such as the Sandstone Heritage Trust have rejuvenated the value of these attractions. This has resulted in more private groups being formed to preserve other attractions from becoming obsolete (SAT, 2015:2).

Consequently, ecotourism has the role of creating a platform that addresses needs such as the conservation of natural attractions (Fennell, 2006:5; Spenceley, 2006:650; Newsome and Hassell, 2014:2). De Witt (2011:54) purposively suggests that the roles of ecotourism can be effectively carried out if the ecotourism system is unequivocally understood within its geographical context. De Witt (2011:54) suggested four pillars to set the roles of ecotourism in the South African tourism industry. In the view of De Witt (2011), if ecotourism is entirely expressed based on its principles, the following would be the key roles of ecotourism in the South African tourism industry:

- Sustainable development of the physical environment, economic environment and social environment in the South African tourism industry.
- Provision of authentic ecotourist experiences.
- Exposure of locals and visitors to environmental education.
- Enhancement of the local natural environment and cultural environment.

With reference to the need of emerging ecotourists to experience the pristine environments that ecotourism offers, ecotourism has created an opportunity for emerging countries to preserve their natural sites and market them as tourism attractions (Honey and Gilpin, 2009:3; Regmi and Walter, 2016:6). Most emerging countries have attractions that have not yet been exposed to the

adverse effects of modernisation. Nonetheless, some governments do not have adequate funds to manage the conservation areas and, therefore, such areas are inclined to lose value (TIES, 2015:1). Ecotourism thus creates an opportunity to generate revenue and simultaneously conserve pristine environments. In addition, most communities near conservation areas in developing countries are rural settlements. These communities anticipate the sustainable socio-economic benefits that are created by ecotourism and that will reduce the levels of impoverishment among locals (Jones and Lalley, 2013:266). In developed countries such as the European states, ecotourism has a legitimate role of preserving the existing natural attractions through environmental education of staff and tourists (Clifton and Benson, 2006:239).

In support of De Witt's (2011:54) suggestions, ecotourism conserves the natural state of destination attractions while creating economic opportunities for the host community, for example, the nine community-based, socio-economic initiatives implemented by SANParks in 2014 (Santiago, 2013:1; SANParks, 2014:10). Ecotourism fosters the management of a suitable carrying capacity, which sustains the attraction. In nature tourism, most attractions are based on natural sites. These sites, if mismanaged, could plummet into a decline phase that would impede tourism existence in the respective destination area.

Ecotourism promotes nature-based tourism (Lu and Stepchenkova, 2012:702) and therefore, has a role to preserve the sites visited. Tourists participating in ecotourism mostly have knowledge of how to behave in a responsible manner that is governed by ecotourism principles (De Witt, Van Der Merwe and Saayman, 2014:181). This enforces the conservation of attractions and thereby improves the level of tourism in the destination area. South Africa National Parks is a good example of organisations bearing witness to the roles played by ecotourism in boosting tourism.

In 2009, SANParks received 4.3 million visitors, which made it a top destination in South Africa. The remarkable number of tourists was achieved by observing ecotourism principles while providing authentic ecotourism experiences that conserve nature and account for the needs of the locals (Slabbert and Du Plessis, 2013:641; SANParks, 2014:7). SANParks' reputation in conserving nature, which is supported by its Environmental Education Programme, saw an annual increase in learners of 39 652 in 2014. According to SANParks (2014:10), in the same year, tourism opportunities were boosted for the locals by the organisation's support of 624 small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), its implementation of nine community-based socio-economic initiatives and its employment of a large number of recruits for 13 141 temporary jobs, which is supported by the Expanded Public Works Programme of SANParks. Hence, these statistics stand as evidence of the key roles that ecotourism has played in South Africa

(SANParks, 2014:10). These aforementioned roles could emerge from different variables that contribute and influence the existence of ecotourism.

## **2.10 LIMPOPO PROVINCE ECOTOURIST ARRIVALS**

A brief description of ecotourists in the Limpopo province, under which the Capricorn District Municipality falls, can be approximated by considering the share of tourist arrivals that the Limpopo province received from 2014 to the second quarter of 2016. According to SAT (2016d:11), in 2014, the Limpopo province received 124 820 arrivals and in 2015, the province received 99 419 arrivals. This decline in tourist arrivals was experienced by most provinces due to the strict visa regulations implemented by the South African Government (SAT, 2016d:3). By the end of the second quarter of 2016, the Limpopo province had received 162 796 tourist arrivals, marking an increase of 37 976 from the number of arrivals in 2014. Additionally, tourist spend was R2.3 billion in 2014, R1.4 billion in 2015 and R1.6 billion in 2016.

Furthermore, the share of foreign tourist arrivals in 2014 for the Limpopo province was 17.2%, 13.7% in 2015 and 15.3% in 2016 (SAT, 2016d:34). Investigating the activities of foreign tourist arrivals within the country, SAT (2016d:41) indicates that in 2016, 11.8% of the foreign tourists participated in visiting natural attractions, 8.8% participated in cultural, historical and heritage activities, 8.5% participated in wildlife activities and 3.5% participated in adventure activities. These activities are areas in which ecotourists often actively participate and hence, it is possible to suggest the presence of ecotourists in the percentage distribution. Table 2.7 indicates the percentage distribution of certain ecotourism activities undertaken by tourists in the Limpopo province from 2014 until the second quarter of 2016.

**Table 2.7: Ecotourism activities undertaken by tourists in the Limpopo province**

<b>LIMPOPO PROVINCE</b>			
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Visiting natural attractions</b>	17.4%	25.4%	23.6%
<b>Cultural, historical and heritage</b>	13.3%	27.3%	26.6%
<b>Wildlife</b>	26.4%	33.7%	34.7%
<b>Adventure</b>	17.5%	22%	23.2%

Source: (SAT, 2016d:43)

Further examination of the attractions within the Limpopo province that fall within the scope of ecotourism attractions revealed the statistics indicated in Table 2.8. However, the information displayed is not a specific representation of the ecotourists that visited attractions in the Limpopo province. It merely provides a general understanding of what tourists holidaying in the province prefer visiting.

**Table 2.8: Top ten ecotourism attractions visited in the Limpopo province**

<b>ATTRACTION</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Kruger National Park via Orpen, Phalaborwa, Punda Maria</b>	63.4%
<b>Mapungubwe National Park</b>	18.0%
<b>Bela Bela Conservatory</b>	13.5%
<b>Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape</b>	6.8%
<b>The Chuene Resort</b>	6.1%
<b>Soutpansberg Mountains</b>	5.3%
<b>Ga-Modjadji / Motyaj</b>	5.0%

Source: (SAT, 2016d:54)



Nonetheless, it can be deduced from the readings in Table 2.8 that a certain percentage of tourists visiting the attractions may be ecotourists since the identified attractions possess attributes that fall within the interests of ecotourists. However, statistics and literature are generally absent regarding the estimated number of ecotourists visiting attractions not only in the Limpopo province but also in South Africa as a whole.

## 2.11 ECOTOURISM IN THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

The Capricorn District Municipality has a vast area of natural tourism assets. It nurtures responsible tourism based on the principles of the charter for Fair Trade Tourism. Furthermore, tourism attractions that are known worldwide are found close to the district, and these include the Kruger National Park, ancient landscapes and the Mapungubwe Heritage Site (Local Economic Development (LED), 2016:1). The district offers activities for both ecotourists and adventure-seeking tourists with attractions such as the Polokwane Game Reserve, the Polokwane Bird Sanctuary, a number of informative art museums and Bakone Malapa Open-Air Museum, which is an on-site cultural village (Capricorn District Municipality (CDM), 2014:1). Table 2.9 indicates some of the attractions that ecotourists may visit while holidaying in the Capricorn District Municipality.

**Table 2.9: Attractions in Capricorn District Municipality**

<b>CAPRICORN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY</b>			
<b>Nature Reserves</b>	<b>Tourist Routes</b>	<b>Wildlife Experiences</b>	<b>Education, Culture and Heritage</b>
<b>Friends of Blouberg</b>	Soutpansberg – Limpopo Birding Route	Walking safaris	Museums and monuments
<b>Blouberg Nature Reserve</b>	Ribolla Open Africa Route	Horseback safaris	Cultural villages
<b>Percy Fyfe Conservancy</b>	African Ivory Route	Wildlife conservation	Rock art sites
<b>Schuinsdraai Nature Reserve</b>	Limpopo Valley Route	Wildlife photography	Arts and crafts
<b>Balule Nature Reserve</b>	Heritage Route	Birding	Heritage sites

Source: (Limpopo Tourism Agency, 2016:1)

The Capricorn District Municipality integrated ecotourism into the tourism development plan with the aim of promoting responsible tourism within the district and making the province a preferred

ecotourism destination (CDM, 2014:1). A need for the conservation of natural attractions was recognised, which resulted in zoning of game reserves and conservational parks within the Limpopo province. As a result, the Capricorn District Municipality has become a favourable destination for ecotourists who want to interact with nature in unspoilt environments (CDM, 2014:1). Furthermore, the district is surrounded by sacred spiritual sites and places of historical significance such as cultural villages. These lure ecotourists who want to learn more about the people who originate from the district. The Capricorn District Municipality thus provides a suitable study setting for the compilation of ecotourist profiles.

## **2.12 SUMMARY**

Chapter 2 provided descriptions for the areas of understanding tourism, tourism elements and role players in the tourism industry. This laid a foundation for the introduction of ecotourism as a form of tourism. A dissection of ecotourism was attempted that involved the exploration of how sustainable development is integrated into the ecotourism concept, the contributions of ecotourism economically, socially and environmentally, the factors influencing the existence of ecotourism, the role of ecotourism within the South African tourism industry and the state of ecotourism in the Capricorn District Municipality. This chapter thereby, established a platform for a better understanding of ecotourism. The following chapter identifies the ecotourist and highlights certain areas of market segmentation.

## CHAPTER 3

### IDENTIFYING THE ECOTOURIST

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Because ecotourism service providers worldwide are confronted by the demands of a dynamic traveller, market segments have been identified that can be satisfied by different marketing strategies with different services and products (Zografos and Allcroft, 2007:44). With the increasing pressure on ecotourism service providers, a need to split the larger heterogeneous market into smaller homogeneous market groups was realised. Various ecotourists such as soft and hard ecotourists have been identified by a number of notable researchers such as Lindberg (1991:3) and Weaver (2002:271). However, the importance of ecotourism service providers to understand the visitor profiles that make up the different homogeneous groups is undeniable. There is a growing need to understand the ecotourist in the tourism industry convincingly (Zografos and Allcroft, 2007:44).

Study areas of ecotourism are mainly concerned with the ecological impacts of wildlife viewing and community-based ecotourism and its definitions (Weaver and Lawton, 2007:1168). Despite the few reputable studies by Lindberg (1991:3), Kusler (1991:2), Wight (1996:21), Palacio and McCool (1997:234), Twynam and Robinson (1997:2) and Weaver (2002:27) that attempted to differentiate ecotourists into distinct segments, not much attention was given to a sound understanding of the ecotourist or ecotourist patron. Previous studies mainly focused on the socio-demographic characteristics and perceptions, with the aim to identify the 'ideal' ecotourist (Kwan et al., 2008:700; Deng and Li, 2015:256).

Nonetheless, Cleaver and Muller (2002:174) and Holden and Sparrowhawk (2002:438) arguably indicated that the ideal ecotourist rarely exists but rather, a spectrum of ecotourists whose characters can be influenced by the destination visited are present. With such insight, Deng and Li (2015:256) emphasised the need to consider the self-identification approach, which reduces the chances of a traveller impulsively becoming an 'ecotourist' upon being questioned. This could be achieved by realistically questioning the extent to which the traveller considers himself/herself to have been an ecotourist during their life. Resultantly, ecotourist profiles gathered at a particular destination are likely to be linked to the respective destination visited (Deng and Li, 2015:256).

Considering these findings, it thus becomes desirable for service providers who do not have a sound market intelligence for identifying the likely ecotourist to make use of the information

provided by studies such as this one being undertaken. As with any other business, there is a need for market research to be conducted to keep businesses competitive and up-to-date with today's dynamic traveller. Market intelligence is important for the continuance of businesses; it provides marketers with an ability to influence consumer decisions and can only be achieved through comprehensive research (Kwan et al., 2008:699; Tkaczynski et al., 2009:169). Due to the presence of a the wide spectrum of ecotourists at different destinations, a profound need to infuse the concepts of the self-identification approach, the site- and activity-based approach and the motivation approach as suggested by Deng and Li (2015:257) are used in this study. This is in an effort to cover the relative paucity of literature in regard to comprehending the range of ecotourists likely to be found at destinations. This study will elaborate on ecotourists and how they can be identified based on the different segmentation criteria that include geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural attributes.

### **3.2 UNDERSTANDING THE ECOTOURIST**

Typically, ecotourists have been identified by their involvement in ecotourism, and the simple participation of tourists in nature-based activities labels them as ecotourists (Dey and Sarma, 2006:32; Kwan, Eagles and Gebhardt, 2010:3; Sheena, Mariapan and Aziz, 2015:2). However, the identification of ecotourists by their involvement in certain ecotourism activities carries the danger of misrepresenting the real ecotourist (Deng and Li, 2015:256). This traditional concept disregarded identifying the core values of tourists for them to be referred to as ecotourists. Similarly, a number of tourism scholars have referred to ecotourists as nature-based tourists (Mehmet, 2005:358; Perkins and Brown, 2012:794).

The generalities professed by a number of researchers on the definition of an ecotourist created a platform for debate. However, this debate could be aggravated by the lack of a precise and operational definition of ecotourism that would demarcate the framework in which an ecotourist could be identified (Blamey, 1997:110; Tao, Eagles and Smith, 2004:152; Dey and Sarma, 2006:31; Yeo and Piper, 2011:11; Arachchi, Yajid and Khatibi, 2015:213). Resultantly, more definitions and approaches are being proposed in an attempt to clear the misconceptions arising from the different perspectives of researchers, leaving a non-universal definition of the term, ecotourist (Deng and Li, 2015:255; Sheena, Mariapan and Aziz, 2015:3).

Prior research has assisted in comprehending the different categories that could be used in segmenting ecotourists, for example, the research of Laarman and Durst (1987) cited in Fennel

(2015:22), Kwan, Eagles and Gebhardt (2010:3) and Tangeland (2011:11), all of whom made a distinction between hard nature tourists and soft nature tourists. Some of these ecotourists typologies are indicated in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Characteristics of ecotourists' typologies**

Study	Hard ecotourists
<b>Dey and Sarma (2006:35); Kwan et al. (2010:3); Weaver and Lawton (2016:1)</b>	Characterised by small groups of long-trip travellers who have strong environmental attitudes. They prefer physically challenging activities and make their own travel arrangements. Enhance sustainability, specialised trips, emphasis on personal experience
<b>Krider, Arguello, Campbell and Mora (2010:782)</b>	Seek destinations that are undisturbed and obscure due to their strong commitment to the environment and mainly prefer unfrequented destinations that allow an authentic ecotourism experience. Such destinations should be void of pollution caused by sprouting tourism infrastructure. Tourists have a greater ability to learn since they allow a direct and personal interaction.
<b>Soft ecotourists</b>	
<b>Dey and Sarma (2006:35); Kwan et al. (2010:3); Weaver and Lawton (2016:1)</b>	Travellers enjoy both ecotourism and traditional tourism experiences. They prefer comfort, to be in large groups, good quality services and are not physically enthusiastic. Travel agencies and tour operators play a vital role in the ecotourists' experiences. Steady-state sustainability, short trips, multi-purpose trips, physical comfort, services expected, rely on travel agencies
<b>Krider, Arguello, Campbell and Mora (2010:782)</b>	Have a low level of environmental commitment and regarding learning, they prefer a formal interpretation. A destination becomes more appealing to soft ecotourists if it has tourism infrastructure.
<b>Structured ecotourists</b>	
<b>Dey and Sarma (2006:35); Kwan et al. (2010:3); Weaver and Lawton (2016:1)</b>	Are a combination of hard and soft ecotourists. They prefer interacting with nature and being physically active. They enjoy large groups and short or long trips.

Source: (Dey and Sarma, 2006:35; Krider et al., 2010:782; Kwan et al., 2010:3; Weaver and Lawton, 2016:1)

In continuation of the aforementioned ecotourist categories, Lindberg (1991:3) added to the typologies of Laarman and Durst (1987) by identifying hardcore nature tourists, mainstream nature tourists, casual nature tourists and dedicated nature tourists. Similarly, Blamey and Braithwaite (1997:30), Palacio and McCool (1997:235), Diamantis (1999:100) and Poupineau and Pouzadoux (2013:33) made developments to the existing typologies, resulting in the identification

of new characteristics that shaped hard ecotourists, soft ecotourists and structured ecotourists, and these are indicated in Table 3.1.

Comprehending these existing typologies (Table 3.1) requires a certain level of understanding because they may require empirical data to support their existence at a particular destination (Dey and Sarma, 2006:33). The setting of ecotourist-definition parameters within the framework of the identified typologies in Table 3.1 without considering new findings could result in a prejudiced view of the ecotourist. Therefore, the typologies should act as a general platform that may be used in market segmentation. When profiling visitors, a researcher should not be limited to conforming to the characteristics and traits displayed by the existing typologies. Destinations have unique aspects that attract different travellers with different motives and needs (Dey and Sarma, 2006:33). Consequently, applying a universal definition and universal characteristics of an ecotourist to the different visitor profiles of destinations becomes an arduous task. However, some notable definitions and characteristics of ecotourists have been put forward that could act as a framework in compiling visitors' profiles at a particular destination.

Generally, the definition of an ecotourist by Blamey (1997:119) has been used by most tourism scholars. The author defined an ecotourist as a person who travels with the primary reason of enjoying, viewing and experiencing pristine natural environments. Correspondingly, Chirgwin and Hughes (1997:7) added to the definition by indicating that human-made watercourses associated with wetlands which are aesthetically pleasing and providing an opportunity to view wildlife could serve as ecotourist venues thereby augmenting the ecotourist's experience.

An attempt to characterise the ideal ecotourist of the millennium year was undertaken by Weaver (2001:2). Weaver (2001:2) noted that ecotourists are generally from developed countries, have an above-average education and income level and are often older than the average tourist. Consistent with this, Cheung and Jim (2013:187) ascertained a significant association between ecotourists and socio-economic attributes such as annual income and better level of education.

Perkins and Brown (2012:795) provided a clear definition of an ecotourist by outlining a traveller as one who has "strong biospheric values, who expresses greater support for environmental responsibility in tourism, expresses support for green tourism suppliers and feels less entitled to consume resources simply for enjoyment without considering personal impact on environment". Relating to ecotourists' accommodation choices, Lu and Stepchenkova (2012:702) described an ecotourist as a traveller who frequently makes use of eco-lodges since this type of

accommodation provides close access to the natural surroundings in which ecotourists are interested.

Furthermore, a comparison of Canadian ecotourists with general tourists by Eagles (1992) and cited in Lu and Stepchenkova (2012:703) revealed that ecotourists prefer destinations that comprise rural areas, lakes, streams, wilderness, mountains, parks and coastal areas. Similarly, Reimer and Walter (2013:124) identified national parks and conservation areas that have unique natural attractions as areas of intense interest for ecotourists.

However, these definitions and characteristics in some way limit the identification of an ideal ecotourist. Despite the seemingly exhaustive general definitions and characteristics indicated by the aforementioned authors, definitions and characteristics of ecotourists are likely to differ among destinations. Moreover, Sharpley (2006:10), Muganda, Sirima and Ezra (2013:56) and Deng and Li (2015:256) deem that for a clear understanding of the ecotourist in a specific destination, a mere assumption based on tourist's participation in ecotourism should be disregarded. A comprehensive analysis on the tourists' demographic, psychographic and behavioural characteristics derived from market segments should be considered for the most reliable identification of an ecotourist pertaining to a destination (Buffa, 2015:14045). This would eliminate the confusion of whether a tourist is a nature tourist or an ecotourist and thereby create a clear understanding for future reference (Buffa, 2015:14046).

To ascertain the meaning of an ecotourist and ecotourism in a specific region, an empirical investigation on understanding the core values that evolve around ecotourism based on market segmentation should be undertaken. Due to the critics that are opposed to the use of demographic criteria in segmenting travellers, the empirical investigation should consider the applicability of different approaches to the study (Tkaczynski et al., 2009:169). The approaches should be empirically tested and designed specifically to identify ecotourists and should be based on multiple criteria such as self-identification, site and activity, motivation and value (Deng and Li, 2015:257). Regarding this research, the self-identification approach has been infused in the development of the research instrument.

In the 20th century, mass tourists were perceived to be irresponsible individuals (Ayhan, 2011:290; Marzouki, Froger and Ballet, 2012:134). However, as globalisation improved access to information by tourists, it increased their knowledge in regard to being environmentally responsible (Mihajlovic, 2012:151; Mihajlovic and Krzelji, 2014:115). New characteristics began to be noted, and changes in the motivations, expenditure patterns and interests of tourists

emerged (Fennel, 1999:33). The emergence of the 'new tourist' became evident within the tourism industry as changes in preferences were noted and a more demanding and discerning tourist was observed (Cheung and Jim, 2013:184). As a result, different tourist typologies that included the descriptors of the new ecotourist began to be documented.

Nonetheless, literature reveals diminutive information on the spectrum of ecotourist profiles despite early findings that date back to the 1980s (Krider et al., 2010:780). Understanding the traits of ecotourists in a specific destination is of value to policymakers and destination developers. Therefore, it becomes of paramount importance to comprehend the visitors travelling to destinations since this creates breakthroughs in destination offerings, ultimately enhancing the experiences sought (Krider et al., 2010:780; Slabbert and Du Plessis, 2013:640).

Previous research in developing countries focused primarily on the understanding and the setting of a standard definition of what ecotourism entails, the economic developments resulting from ecotourism and the means to manage conservation areas (Tao, Eagles and Smith, 2004:152). The influx of different definitions caused great confusion to tourism stakeholders, resulting in, for example, marketers within the industry having an unclear understanding of the ecotourist (Holden and Sparrowhawk, 2002:436; Dowling and Fennell, 2003:18; Dey and Sarma, 2006:31; Donohoe and Needham, 2006:193). The influx of definitions created a need to refocus on the understanding of 'who the ecotourist is', which prompted researchers to initiate comprehensive profiling studies of ecotourists.

As a result of various ecotourist and ecotourism definitions being academically accepted, a number of market segments under ecotourism have been identified. The segments are theoretically founded on the differences identified among the attributes and traits of ecotourists (Krider et al., 2010:779; Francesca et al., 2012:91). Thus, an empirical study can identify the differences among tourists in a certain area and thereby associate the ecotourist with a specific market segment. This improves the service providers' understanding of the traveller and thereby enhances the services provided to ecotourists (Zografos and Allcroft, 2007:45).

### **3.3 MARKET SEGMENTATION**

Market segmentation is a marketing principle that a tourism service provider should consider. It assists with the identification of business opportunities and has been reported to deliver competitive advantage (Frauman, 2011:28; Malcolm and Dunbar, 2012:7; Liao, Chen and Yang,



2013:636; Katsoni, Giaoutzi and Nijkamp, 2013:331). Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff, Terblanche, Elliot and Klooper (2011:177) define a market as people or organisations with needs and wants that have the ability and willingness to buy a product or service.

A market is broad in nature since it consists of different people or organisations with different needs and, therefore, there is a need to refine it (Sikarwar and Verma, 2012:1). For better targeting and product positioning purposes, marketers should divide a heterogeneous market into smaller homogeneous markets and this is known as market segmentation (Lamb et al., 2011:177; Sulekha and Kurukshetra, 2011:47; Tangeland, 2011:9; Diaz-Perez and Bethtencourt-Cejas, 2016:277).

The concept behind segmentation is to focus on a specific customer or various customer groups, for instance, the ecotourist (Zografos and Allcroft, 2007:44). Customers with a high degree of variation need to be divided into smaller groups that have little variation. These actual and potential customers are then exposed to different marketing strategies formed on the composition exhibited by the segment (Esu, 2016:121). It thus becomes the responsibility of the marketer to evaluate which segments to target (Tangeland, 2011:10). Lucrative segments are thereby targeted by marketers with the goal of satisfying the ecotourists' needs and wants in a profitable manner (George, 2008:4).

In the tourism industry, the market is generally made up of a group of potential and actual consumers with different needs and wants (George, 2014:167). The industry is divided into the tourist market, the resale market and the government market. The tourist market consists of individuals, groups of tourists or families purchasing tourism offerings for consumption. The resale market consists of intermediaries who purchase offerings for resale to consumers. The government market consists of departments that supply services to the public in support of tourism activities (Du Toit, Erasmus and Strydom, 2012:379). These general markets are further segmented into smaller markets based on the needs of the consumers of that particular market. The needs are then grouped into smaller sub-groups that have similar characteristics and thus become potential target markets (Zografos and Allcroft, 2007:45).

A number of investigations into ecotourism have emphasised the importance of market segmentation in differentiating the various sub-groups of ecotourists from the mass tourist group (Dey and Sarma, 2006:32; Marques, Reis and Menezes, 2010:972; Lu and Stepchenkova, 2012:704; Poupineau and Pouzadoux, 2013:23). The sub-groups have mostly been identified through the demographic and psychographic characteristics similar to what has been employed

for the purpose of this study. Additionally, Sheena, Mariapan and Aziz (2015:2) stated that replicating the segmenting techniques used at various destinations is currently unsatisfactory.

There is still limited research that proves the successful replication of segmenting techniques (Sheena, Mariapan and Aziz, 2015:2). Similarly, Baker and Saren (2016:261) state that there is no standardised segmenting technique suitable for all destinations since destination characteristics differ. For researchers, this gives rise to the arduous task of choosing the most suitable technique to use in segmenting ecotourists at different destinations and proving the technique's suitability in retrieving the needed information. For this study, segmenting techniques were rationally considered based on past research.

### **3.4 MAIN PURPOSE OF SEGMENTATION**

Different destinations attract different kinds of tourists. Destination developers and marketers thus need to comprehend the needs of the particular traveller so as to target each group rightfully (Tkaczynski et al., 2009:169; Srihadi, Sukundar and Soehadi, 2016:33). Segmentation provides an area of study with valuable recommendations that are practical for destination marketing exercises (Sheena, Mariapan and Aziz, 2015:3). Moreover, in the tourism industry, key strategic decisions on employing certain marketing mixes are derived from valuable information retrieved from market segmentation (Dolnicar, Grun and Leisch, 2014:298). Segmentation, therefore, assists management in focusing resources on a market group that is responsive and substantial. In most cases, segmentation is based on behaviour, preferences and motivations (Du Toit et al., 2012:380).

Segmenting the market is an ongoing activity that, if braced to its capacity, can have significant input in devising market strategies for specific market segments (Liao, Chen and Yang, 2013:636). Moreover, sales and profits can be improved as a result of effective market segmentation (Esu, 2016:120). Wedel and Kamakura (2012:4) cited that the effectiveness of marketing strategies can easily be measured by the application of the following criteria on distinct segments: easy identifiability, accessibility, substantiality, actionability, stability and responsiveness.

Market segmentation is accordingly responsible for developing distinct segments that will likely meet the criteria and lead to the effective deployment of marketing strategies. Decision makers then have the simple task of choosing the most favourable segments to target (Wedel and Kamakura, 2012:4). In addition, the wide spectrum of ecotourists found at destinations has been

observed as a challenge in ideally identifying the ecotourist (Dey and Sarma, 2006:31). Market segmentation emanates to the situation by gathering customer knowledge that is used to group alike travellers into identified segments. This leads to distinct segments on which different classification approaches can be used in the search for the ideal ecotourist (Liao, Chen and Yang, 2013:636).

Tourism operators need to have a good understanding of the target markets derived from market segmentation. The purpose of market segmentation is simply to create distinct groups that a tourism operator can target while concentrating business resources on that specific group (Sulekha and Kurukshetra, 2011:46). Moreover, marketers need to understand the interaction between ecotourists and the destinations visited, which can be successfully achieved by segmentation (Kridler et al., 2010:780). It becomes the onus of tourism operators to familiarise themselves fully with the needs and wants of the potential consumers they will be serving, which can be done by examining the profiles of ecotourists.

In this competitive era, service providers need to make use of their ability to deliver superior customer value. This pursuit can be achieved by differentiating and providing unique products and service offerings to customers (Frauman, 2011:28). Market segmentation consequently is a tool of analysis used for guidance in strategic planning, defining marketing objectives, differentiation and the accurate allocation of resources (Lamb et al., 2011:178; George, 2014:169).

Ecotourism is successful if ecotourists are present and spending income on ecotourism activities (De Witt, 2011:84). However, the availability of different ecotourism services and potential substitutes creates alternative choices for the ecotourist and therefore, marketers need to understand the demand for specific products so as to serve certain groups of ecotourists satisfactorily (Zografos and Allcroft, 2007:45). Market segmentation thereby assists service providers by familiarising them with the type of ecotourists who consume their services and products and presenting them with expenditure patterns associated with a particular group (Diaz-Perez and Bethencourt-Cejas, 2016:278). Market segmentation thus enhances understanding of a market segment (Liao, Chen and Yang, 2013:636). Therefore, tourism operators should follow a consumer-oriented marketing approach that is channelled by market segmentation. Table 3.2 illustrates certain market segments identified by various researchers.

**Table 3.2: Market segments**

Study	Segments
<b>Galloway (2002): Ontario Parks, Canada</b>	Segmentation basis: <i>motivation push factors (sensation seeking)</i> 1. Stress Escapers (42%). Important issues: security in park and staff response 2. Active Nature Enjoyers (31%). Important issues: condition of campsite 3. Sensation Seekers (27%). Important issues: park performance and management
<b>Weaver and Lawton (2002): Lamington NP, Australia</b>	Segmentation basis: <i>ecotourist behaviour</i> 1. 'Structured' Ecotourists (40%). Experience: more structured (e.g. escorted tours) and small groups, learn about nature 2. 'Hard' Ecotourists (34%). Experience: nature-based learning, self-reliant, non-mediated, risky and challenging 3. 'Soft' Ecotourists (27%). Experience: less preference for physical challenge, risk and lack of comfort
<b>Blamey and Braithwaite (1997): Australia</b>	Segmentation basis: <i>social values</i> 1. Dualists (33.5%). Social Values: development and control, equality and harmony 2. Libertarians (27.5%). Values: little regard for equality and harmony and high regard for rights 3. Moral relativists (21.5%). Values: not particularly supportive of any value domain 4. Ideological Greens (17.5%). Values: high support for equality, harmony and rights and low support for development and control
<b>Palacio and McCool (1997): Belize</b>	Segmentation basis: <i>benefits of ecotourism</i> 1. Comfortable Naturalists (33.3%). Benefits: health benefits and shared experiences 2. Passive Players (25.9%). Benefits: low interest in all benefits 3. Nature Escapists (21.5%). Benefits: escape to nature, appreciate-and-learn 4. Ecotourists (18%). Benefits: highest average scores for all four benefit domains
<b>Twynam and Robinson (1997): Ontario, Canada</b>	Segmentation basis: <i>ecotourism activity preferences</i> 1. Enthusiast Setting: environment with no or low indication of human interference. Activity: eager to try any activity (from relaxing to adventurous) 2. Adventurer Setting: remoteness and raggedness of natural environment. Activity: favour active, challenging and physically demanding outdoor sports 3. Naturalist Setting: pristine natural environments. Activity: nature activities, visiting natural areas and unique landscapes, wildlife variety 4. Escapist Setting: remoteness, unaltered nature. Activity: importance of solitude, knowledge and learning as part of experience

Source: (Zografos and Allcroft, 2007:47)

Table 3.2 indicates specific segments that may act as a guideline to marketers on how best to segment the market when considering local destinations. However, it is important to heed that the market segments identified in Table 3.2 may not be applicable to certain destinations due to the unique characteristics which destinations possess.

### **3.5 BENEFITS OF MARKET SEGMENTATION**

The analytical tool (market segmentation) assists tourism operators in discovering particular groups in their market area that they can target. It is a management strategy that enhances management cognitive aspects (Tkaczynski et al., 2009:169; Katsoni, Giaoutzi and Nijkamp, 2013:331). Tourism service providers and marketers are induced to understand the needs and wants of a specific consumer group, and this subsequently helps in forecasting tourists' choices (Cini, Leone and Passafaro, 2012:88). Results of market segmentation provide a solid platform for strategic planning decisions to be made. For instance, the decision on the target market and campaign strategy becomes easier if the target market's needs are known and understood. This maximises the return on investment on the financial resources of the organisation (Tkaczynski et al., 2009:169; Sheena, Mariapan and Aziz, 2015:4).

Segmentation enhances the ability to recognise and take heed of customers' differences, which is vital for the identification of new opportunities and the development of specific marketing variables (Malcolm and Dunbar, 2012:7; Esu, 2016:120). The market segmentation process will directly influence the organisation to invest its resources collectively in a sustainable target group, which would resultantly lead to the patronisation of the segment (Esu, 2016:120). Previously, ecotourism was viewed as a niche market. However, as research unearthed new findings concerning the wide ecotourist spectrum, the niche market has been further fragmented into smaller sub-segments. Market segmentation hence brings undeniable benefits to businesses. The sophisticated process of determining which markets have high returns on investment is made easier by a thorough segmentation process that sets distinct segments for evaluation (Malcolm and Dunbar, 2012:7). This provides the business with an option to specialise in a certain group of travellers, resultantly identifying profitable market segments (Esu, 2016:120).

With an improved understanding of market groups as a result of market segmentation, suitable marketing strategies are designed and tailored to influence consumer decisions (Malcolm and Dunbar, 2012:40; Stanford, 2014:669). Predictions on consumer behaviour based on segment trends can be effectively undertaken, thus sparing the organisation from future losses arising from

unfavourable changes within target segments (Cini, Leone and Passafaro, 2012:88; Malcolm and Dunbar, 2012:40). Effective segmentation clearly sets a favourable path for an organisation and destination marketers and service providers will have the advantage when preparing for possible changes arising from customer trends. For example, research has already noted that travellers are becoming dynamic in nature and thus, more research is required for marketers and destination developers to remain aware and anticipate possible changes that could affect the business negatively (Katsoni, Giaoutzi and Nijkamp, 2013:329).

Recent technological developments have brought changes to the markets. Geographical boundaries are no longer standing barriers in the tourism industry but rather create opportunities and challenges for marketers (Wedel and Kamakura, 2012:4). With the necessity for more reliable and accurate information pertaining to emerging geographical markets, marketers are in need of richer sources, which can be significantly delivered by effective market segmentation (Katsoni, Giaoutzi and Nijkamp, 2013:330). Segmentation thus benefits organisations that intend to implement micro marketing and effectively make use of direct marketing in new geographical markets, and this is likely to be a favourable concept in the ecotourism sector (Wedel and Kamakura, 2012:4).

Generally, market segmentation as an analytical tool that assists in structuring a favourable market in which an organisation can effectively and sustainably engage. This relies on the segment's ability to achieve the organisation's objectives and the ability of the organisation to take advantage of identified opportunities (Malcolm and Dunbar, 2012:304). Segmentation further provides a platform for management to be resourceful and to devise a proposition that is attractive and competitive for the target market (Baker and Saren, 2016:253).

### **3.6 TYPES OF MARKET SEGMENTATION**

According to Wedel and Kamakura (2012:8), there are two classifications that create a foundation for the development of all segmenting bases. These classifications are observable and unobservable. Regarding the observable classification, geographic, demographic, socio-economic and cultural aspects are identified within this scope. The unobservable classification comprises psychographic and behavioural aspects.

Tkaczynski et al. (2009:170) state that a number of past researches have mainly used the basis of a demographic or geographic combination in segmenting the market. Similarly, Dibb and Simkin (2009:121) concurred by stating that demographics is the most commonly used base in

market segmentation. Tkaczynski et al. (2009:170) emphasised the criticism of relying on the use of one or two segmenting approaches. In their suggestions, a combined approach was highlighted. This approach concurs with the concept of the self-identification approach (Deng and Li, 2015:256). These two approaches do not exclude demographic segmentation criteria because research has proved that information sought under this criteria is easily accessible and measurable (Mostofa, 2012:63; Kamarulzaman and Abu, 2012:112). Demographic segmentation creates a framework on which other types of segmenting can be based, thereby assisting in developing an ideal profile (Tkaczynski et al., 2009:170).

Different types of market segmentation tools are available for use. Past researchers such as Horneman, Carter, Wei and Ruys (2002:26) used demographics and psychographic descriptors to identify distinct market segments. Other researchers, for example, Frochot (2005:336), Chang (2006:1225) and Walker and Hinch (2006:571) used a wider base for market segmentation that was inclusive of the academically criticised demographic criteria. This wider-base segmentation includes a number of segmenting bases that are subject to the judgement of the researcher (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham, 2006:21).

As acknowledged by Tkaczynski et al. (2009:170), the wider base that researchers term a combined approach cannot ignore the ability of demographic descriptors to provide measurable and easily accessible information. Nonetheless, when confronted with the need to provide the best description of market segments, the combined approach makes use of variables such as geographic descriptors, behavioural descriptors, socio-economic descriptors and in most cases, motivations of travellers (Katsoni, Giaoutzi and Nijkamp, 2013:331).

### **3.6.1 Geographic segmentation**

Mostofa (2012:63) defines geographic segmentation as a base used to define customers by their areas of origin. George (2014:170) states that geographic segmentation is simple and is one of the most commonly used ways to segment a market. The reason for this is that the marketer simply focuses on the areas of origin such as local, provincial, national, regional or international (Dolnicar and Grun, 2008:63; Sikarwar and Verma, 2012:2; Pesonen, 2013:29). The marketer can even consider segmenting small areas such as suburbs of the area or municipalities within a district. Furthermore, climate can be used to segment tourists, for example, Northern Hemisphere tourists prefer to visit the Southern Hemisphere for warmer climate conditions during winter in the north.

In the tourism industry, tourists who are geographically segmented are referred to as domestic or international tourists. Domestic tourists originate within the borders of a specific country whereas international tourists originate from outside the borders of that country. Moreover, tour operators use the terms 'inbound' or 'outbound' based on the geographical destination of the tourist. Inbound tour operators, such as Abercrombie & Kent South Africa, deal with incoming tourists, that is, tourists who are arriving in the country. In contrast, outbound tour operators deal with tourists crossing the country's borders for an outside destination (George, 2014:171).

However, geographic segmentation does not entirely define who the consumer is. It gives a basic understanding of the area of origin and all that is associated with the generation area (Tangeland, 2011:14). Similarly, customers from the same geographic segment are likely to have different preferences and values and in the tourism industry, geographical boundaries bring different cultures and societies. The relevance of this type of segmentation is observed when it provides information for marketers and edifies their understanding of the target market based on geographical area.

Ethically, geographic segmentation should lead to respecting and upholding the cultural values practised and observed in the specific geographical area (Kamarulzaman and Abu, 2012:107). This avoids the broadcasting of promotional material or products that may not be suitable or are sensitive in specific areas, which would consequently build a negative image for the business. Such poor marketing efforts can be redirected into meaningful and responsive actions if the business is aware and recognises the differences arising from geographic segments. For a comprehensive understanding of the consumer, further division should be done, focusing on demographic patterns that highlight the potential target populace.

### **3.6.2 Demographic patterns**

Demographic segmentation consists of using variables such as age, gender, family, income, occupation, education, religion, race and nationality to split the market (Sikarwar and Verma, 2012:2; Esu, 2016:122). Demographic changes in tourist flow have been identified as a cause for the remarkable growth of ecotourism when compared with the tourism industry as a whole (Hill and Gale, 2009:3). This illuminates the reason for the importance of segmenting the market using demographics since it provides a base for identifying competitive factors (Mazurek, 2014:89). Understanding the variables identified by demographic segmentation assists with the strategising of sustainable marketing (Pesonen, 2013:30). Sustainable marketing creates a balance between



the environment and tourists' needs, which compels future and repeat visits (Slabbert and Du Plessis, 2013:641).

In tourism, a clear demarcation of targeted markets based on demographic criteria is expressed by tour operators such as Saga Holidays, which targets the elderly age group. Ecotourists can be segmented based on a number of variables such as gender, income, age, religion, ethnicity and lifestyle. George (2014:172) indicates that age can determine the propensity to travel similarly, income group determines the disposable income available, thus influencing the choice of holiday to undertake.

Ecotourism products are relatively expensive compared with conventional tourism products and thus, if a marketer is aware of the income groups of the potential consumers, a sound decision can be made on the type of consumers to target (Slabbert and Du Plessis, 2013:643). As potential and actual customers become more affluent, issues such as price become a sensitive matter. The higher the price bracket, the better the service quality or benefit sought. It is difficult to ignore that when an educated individual spends more, a certain level of standard is sought that may be used to reveal a desired status. Therefore, a delivered service quality may be found offensive if it fails to portray the desired status. This is supported by the number of grading stars awarded to a tourism establishment. The more grading stars that an establishment has, the better the service quality and the status recognition it grants to the consumer.

Subsequently, a high-star rated establishment intending to serve ecotourists requires a detailed demographic segment description. This assists the management of the establishment in understanding the income levels that influence consumers' wants and needs (Kamarulzaman and Abu, 2012:108). As a result of the input provided by demographic segmentation, ecotourism products and services may be designed to target the different age groups and income levels, resulting in satisfying offerings being provided. This clearly outlines the important role played by demographic segmentation in improving ecotourism services.

In particular, it should be noted that demographic segmentation alone provides a limited understanding of the ecotourist, imparting only information such as age group, income level and gender (Mehmetoglu, 2011:207; Tangeland, 2011:13). It does not clarify the purpose behind the travel or the motive for selecting a particular destination, which is why marketers need to further their understanding by considering psychographic segmentation (Tangeland, 2011:14; Katsoni, Giaoutzi and Nijkamp, 2013:330).

### **3.6.3 Psychographic segmentation**

Psychographic segmentation creates a better competitive advantage for tourism service providers since they become knowledgeable on purchasing patterns of the consumers. Brassington and Pettitt (1997) cited in Mostofa (2012:63) define psychographic segmentation as a base that focuses on a customer's emotional state and the benefits that the customer expects to receive (Kamarulzaman and Abu, 2012:108). It is simple for an organisation to create advertisements that will positively influence the decision-making of customers if the customer's expected benefits are known (Yankelovich and Meer, 2006:6; Lynn, 2011:2; Mazurek, 2014:90).

This segmentation criteria focus on the consumer's lifestyle, personality and even social class (Dey and Sarma, 2006:36; Sikarwar and Verma, 2012:2). Srihadi, Sukundar and Soehadi (2016:32) highlight that lifestyle attributes are more favourable and plausible for segmenting travellers than the common approach of demographic grouping. Furthermore, Du Toit et al. (2012:382) identified aggressiveness, conservation, optimism, progressiveness and materialism as possible personality traits of individuals. These create a common platform that can be used to group consumers based on similar personality traits (Mazurek, 2014:76). Values held by the potential consumers can, therefore, be determined (George, 2014:175).

There are two possible groups of tourists that can be distinguished by personality traits: psychocentric and allocentric tourists (Plog, 1984 cited in George, 2014:175). Psychocentrics can be associated with soft ecotourism because they are fairly unadventurous and prefer routine services and well-organised tours. Allocentrics can be associated with hard ecotourism since they prefer out-going activities and visiting pristine environments while taking independent trips. The identification of ecotourist typologies, therefore, includes a sound psychographic segmentation process together with an understanding of the ecotourists' preferences and motivations.

Tourists may become less predictable and buying habits may change, and those with a basic education may become more affluent and price conscious. Resultantly, purchasing patterns will no longer be in line with factors such as age or income. This results in demographic segmentation being unable to provide the relevant input for decision-makers if used alone (Tkaczynski, Rundle-Thiele and Prebensen, 2015:260). Understanding the needs and values of tourists at this level by marketers and service providers is crucial in linking their services to the right market segment.

Psychographic segmentation provides decision makers with detailed information that can assist in understanding customer changes, thereby stimulating product innovation, suitable pricing and distribution channels directed at a target market (Tkaczynski et al., 2015:260). Service providers

are then able to provide the necessary facilities to potential consumer at satisfactory levels, consequently encouraging repeat visits that in turn, boost tourism activities in the destination area.

Lifestyle variables comprise activities, interests and opinions (AIO) (Du Toit et al., 2012:382; George, 2014:176). These are closely related to personal traits, which reflect the lifestyle of the consumer (Cini, Leone and Passafaro, 2012:89). This area is of momentous value to destination developers because the AIOs determine the choice of destination of the traveller. Hence, psychographic segmentation may assist in providing services that are aligned to the activities sought by consumers based on their interests and opinions.

Despite the main influence of social class being income, which can also be used for segmentation, an individual's perception may influence the level of social class with which the consumer is associated (Kamarulzaman and Abu, 2012:108). Psychographic attributes such as lifestyle help in identifying the way people live. These are useful in comprehending consumers despite differences in culture (Srihadi, Sukundar and Soehadi, 2016:33). To a great extent, lifestyle influences consumer choices over products or services used and even attractions or destinations visited (Fuller and Matzler, 2008:118).

#### **3.6.4 Behavioural segmentation**

Behavioural segmentation is defined as the distinction of sub-groups based on their knowledge or attitudes towards a product or service (Lamb et al., 2011:180; Lynn, 2011:2). A thorough understanding of behavioural segmentation can be achieved if factors such as usage rate, brand familiarity, benefits sought, perceptions, beliefs and purchase occasion are incorporated for segmentation purposes (Sikarwar and Verma, 2012:2).

In tourism, loyalty programmes are used to promote repeat purchase. These originate from the usage rates of customers monitored by service providers. Such programmes are useful in targeting promotional material to responsive consumers. Therefore, marketers have noted the need to include usage rate as a guiding factor in segmenting the market. Usage rate helps to identify former users, potential users, first-time users and heavy users (Lamb et al., 2011:180).

Ecotourists can be subdivided based on their behavioural patterns. These patterns include products they regularly purchase, services they often use and activities in which they participate, and these can be used in differentiating heavy users from irregular users (Sikarwar and Verma, 2012:2; Erasmus, Strydom and Rudansky-Kloppers, 2013:396). Behavioural segmentation

criteria can differentiate active ecotourists from passive ecotourists (Dey and Sarma, 2006:36) and behavioural patterns can, therefore, be used to develop customer profiles of different types of ecotourists.

It is thus important to evaluate the purchasing patterns of ecotourists. In addition, an evaluation of the usage rate of ecotourism products should be conducted. The segmentation criteria based on behavioural aspects have considerable relevance to the tourism industry as it allows the identification of products and services regularly purchased. This inherently leads a service provider to provide regularly purchased offerings satisfactorily. If needed, organisational resources may be invested in the improvement of products and services so as to enhance product attractiveness and ensure repeat purchases.

Relatedly, ecotourism products are relatively expensive and incurs the factor of price sensitivity. Previous studies highlighted ecotourists as having a higher income, which could imply that ecotourists are price insensitive. However, recent studies such as those by Adamu, Yacob, Radam, Hashim and Adam (2015:140) and Kaffashi, Yacob, Clark, Radam and Mamat (2015:9) reveal a need to understand clearly the willingness of ecotourists to spend more money for ecotourism products. This emphasises the importance for marketers to consider price sensitivity as a significant factor for the behavioural segmentation of ecotourists. Such behavioural patterns can, therefore, be used to profile different types of ecotourists, which is useful for marketing purposes. This narrative thereby requires an understanding of what profiling gives rise to. The next section therefore addresses the profiling concept.

### **3.7 PROFILING ECOTOURISTS**

Understanding the marketing profiles of ecotourists is a key element in the tourism industry and assists service providers in becoming competitive (Kwan et al., 2010:4). It leads to the development of better management plans and strategies, which leads to improved customer experience (Tao, Eagles and Smith, 2004:149). Numerous studies have been conducted in an attempt to comprehend tourism demand however, of interest to this study are studies dating back to the 1980s which revealed ecotourists to be predominantly male, wealthy and well educated (Fennell, 2008:40; Kim and Slevitch, 2010:79; Torres-Sovero, Gonzalez, Martin-Lopez and Kirkby, 2011:547; Sheena, Mariapan and Aziz, 2015:3).

However, most studies did not cater for the differences in ecotourists' preferences and motivations for other activities such as visiting pristine environments, and this prompted researchers to

attempt to classify ecotourists into various categories (Weaver and Lawton, 2007:1170; Jones and Lalley, 2013:270). In addition, most profiling studies were based on Western ecotourist traits together with Asian characteristics, and these comprised the generally accepted categories used in ecotourism literature (Kim and Slevitch, 2010:78).

Studies on profiling ecotourists took precedence in the early days of ecotourism, with the aim of creating a better understanding of the ecotourist and grasping the experiences sought by ecotourists as groups and individuals (Fennell, 2008:39). Nonetheless, insight from contemporary studies reveals that despite the general typologies of ecotourists, specific profiles of ecotourists are found within particular destination regions. This can be attributed to the ever-changing needs of consumers and the improvement in accessing informative material for consumers.

Profiling potential and actual customers is of paramount importance to policymakers, market analysts, managers and destination developers since it helps in developing strategies and in planning (D'Urso, De Giovanni, Disegna and Massari, 2013:4948). Profiling, therefore, consists of combining different variables into segments that result in meaningful information that can be used for competitive marketing purposes. Depending on the study undertaken, variables used could include gender, income, age, education level and area of origin or culture (Tao, Eagles and Smith, 2004:149).

With the motive of this study being to understand the ecotourists found within the boundaries of Capricorn District Municipality, an ecotourist profile will be presented in the recommendations of this study based on insight from past studies. Such insight can be derived by studying ecotourists' preferences and motivations. Therefore, the next section illuminates on motivations of ecotourists.

### **3.8 MOTIVATIONS OF ECOTOURISTS**

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, motivations are the result of an identified intrinsic need that must be satisfied (Mehmetoglu and Normann, 2013:4). The motivations to take a holiday or travel are influenced by push and pull factors (Nelson, 2013:31). Mehmetoglu and Normann (2013:4) and Nelson (2013:31) view a push factor as a socio-psychological need for a temporary change in setting or environment while a pull factor is a drawing attribute found at the destination that is unavailable at home.

Jang and Wu (2006:308) suggest that push factors involve a thinking process focused on travelling motivation. It is inclusive of seeking novelty, relaxation and rest, dream fulfilment and

even self-esteem (Chikuta, Du Plessis and Saayman, 2017:4). Pull factors are aspects that are noticeable cues aligned to a specific destination that drive visitors to recognise their need for travel (Slabbert and Du Plessis, 2013:642). Despite motivation being indicated as an important aspect in understanding consumer behaviour, Holden and Sparrowhawk (2002:437) and Kruger and Saayman (2010:94) point out that motivation as an area of study is still lacking empirical evidence. However, a number of authors such as Weaver and Lawton (2002:272), Kwan et al. (2008:700) and Saayman, Slabbert and Van der Merwe (2009:82) conducted research on motivational factors in an attempt to illustrate motivation as a significant study area.

Specifically, Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008:156) and Saayman and Saayman (2009:7) identified natural setting, activities at the destination, nostalgia, novelty, escape, photography and family socialisation as travel motives associated with travellers visiting conservation areas. In the same way, Luo and Deng (2008:396) conducted empirical research that identified certain motivational factors of travellers visiting a national forestry park and pinpointed the need for a natural environment, the acquisition of knowledge, a sense of self-development, physical activities and an escape from home. Additionally, Raadik, Cottrell, Fredman, Ritter and Newman (2010:237) described four variables considered as ecotourist motivations. The study revealed seeking privacy by experiencing new places in an attempt to challenge and discover oneself. The motivations of ecotourists have generally been used for segmentation purposes, and this has contributed to a deeper understanding of ecotourists' needs regarding a particular ecotourism activity or product (Kruger and Saayman, 2010:93).

A traveller can be motivated by more than one motive at a particular time. Motivation comes into effect when a traveller has identified the need and takes steps to satisfy that need (Van der Merwe and Saayman, 2008:154; Saayman, Slabbert and Van der Merwe, 2009:82). It is, therefore, important to comprehend the motivations of ecotourists since the motives influence the propensity to travel and the decisions made (Slabbert and Du Plessis, 2013:642). Additionally, motivations are invaluable in assisting marketers and destination developers in segmentation and in compiling destination offerings that are suitable for the potential and the actual customer (Vuuren and Slabbert, 2011:295). It is clear that different destinations have different pulling factors and henceforth, a marketing mix that works for one destination should not necessarily be used on another destination with the assumption that it will succeed (Saayman, Slabbert and Van der Merwe, 2009:92; Kruger and Saayman, 2010:94).

Furthermore, comprehending motivational factors facilitates pinpointing why certain destinations are preferred to others (Kruger and Saayman, 2010:94). For instance, the study on the Kruger

and the Tsitsikamma National Parks by Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008:157) and Kruger and Saayman (2010:100) revealed that tourists were motivated to travel to the two destinations because they sought relaxation and escape from their everyday routine. Knowledge of these motivational factors would make the marketer's task easier since the factors provide distinct descriptions for segmentation and thus allow the design of a customised package for the distinct markets. Continually, Slabbert and Du Plessis (2013:642) have pointed out that the motives of ecotourists differ from those of general tourists. Moreover, within the ecotourist spectrum, motives also differ from one individual to the other, which creates distinct segments based on motivations.

A number of researchers such as Crompton (1977:410), Huang and Xiao (2000:210), Lee, Lee and Wicks (2004:62), Law, Cheung and Lo (2004:357), Correia, Oom do Valle and Moco (2006:47) and Saayman, Slabbert and Van der Merwe (2009:81) have valued the notion and attempted to understand travel behaviour based on ecotourists' motivations, making travel motivations an area of interest for tourism studies. Motivations are still the most applicable for understanding and predicting consumer behaviour based on market segmentation (Saayman and Dieske, 2015:78). Table 3.3 illustrates certain travel motives and the demographic aspects associated with ecotourists and furthermore provides empirical evidence of the motivations of a specific type of traveller with reference to the areas studied.

From Table 3.3, it is evident that issues such as disposable income also influence travellers' motives. Mid-price level receivers who are aged 38 years (Table 3.3) form the majority of the ecotourists travelling to natural settings, whereas those in the budget level seek comfort in visiting friends and family. This provides a clear indication to a marketer or service provider on how to target and provide relevant and attractive offerings to the different segments categorised by the range of motives. Some of the travel motives and demographic aspects of ecotourists are presented in the following Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: Travel motives and demographic aspects of ecotourists**

STUDY	TRAVEL MOTIVES	DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS
<b>Weaver and Lawton (2002): Overnight ecotourist market segmentation in the Gold Coast hinterland of Australia</b>	Hard Ecotourists	
	Strong desire to learn Enjoy wild and remote destination challenges Backpacker accommodation	Younger Highly educated High income
	Soft Ecotourists	
	Less committed to the environment Nature settings Accommodation with good services	Travel with family Highly educated High income
	Structured Ecotourists	
	Committed to environment High level of service and facilities	Older travellers High income
<b>Weaver (2002): Hardcore ecotourist in Lamington National Park, Australia</b>	High level of environmental commitment Demand fewer services Active in search for information	Travel in small groups Take longer trips
<b>Kwan et al. (2008): A comparison of ecolodge patrons' characteristics and motivations based on price level: a case study of Belize.</b>	Budget	
	Meet people with similar interests Visiting friends and relatives Value for money	Least educated Long trips 16–35 year age group
	Mid-price	
	Warm climate Nature settings Family togetherness Visiting friends and relatives Seeing as much as possible Being physically active Value for money	Middle level of education Employed full time 36–55 year age group
	Upscale	
	Being together as family Quality of environment	Educated Employed full time Short trips Average age of 38 years Married Well educated

Source: (Slabbert and Du Plessis, 2013:644)

With an understanding of ecotourists motivations achieved in the former discussions, the next section elaborates on the preferences of ecotourists.



### 3.9 PREFERENCES OF ECOTOURISTS

The preferences of ecotourists have been linked to decision-making in their travel choices (Dhami, Deng, Burns and PiersKella, 2014:165). The preference of one destination over another is based on a set of beliefs that conform to the ecotourist's expectations (Tangeland, 2011:11; Nelson, 2013:31). An early definition of preferences by Decrop (1999:104) outlined that preferences are a unique case of attitudes in which product alternatives are evaluated, and one is selected over the other. Destination offerings are, therefore, expected to meet the anticipations of ecotourists if a particular destination intends to be distinctive and be the preferred location (Hsu, Cai and Li, 2010:285). For instance, the Limpopo province aims to be the preferred ecotourism destination in South Africa by employing procedures such as increasing the sustainable use of natural resources and conserving natural attractions, thus transitioning the province into a green economy (Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (DEDET), 2013:3). Since certain ecotourists prefer selectors such as quality tour guides offered at a destination, the Limpopo province must accommodate such preferences by providing services that greatly exceed expectations and through this, become the preferred destination of the respective ecotourist group.

Preferences develop from motivations that are inclusive of values and beliefs, and a destination can win preference if it is attached to the particular prospective values and beliefs of the tourist (Kwan et al., 2010:4). However, Cheung and Jim (2013:184) and Dhami et al. (2014:165) emphasise that little information has been disseminated in regard to ecotourist preferences for ecotourism services and the identification of destinations by including tourists' preferences for destinations. The cause of this is the inadequate information available on addressing preferences and expectations of ecotourism services (Cheung and Jim, 2013:184). Moreover, Cheung and Jim (2013:184), Tran, Nomura and Yabe (2015:81) and Won, Dong-Wan, Joonho and Jiyeon (2016:1303) stress the importance of understanding ecotourist preferences in management decisions, which is vital in improving the quality of experiences offered to ecotourists. This establishes a good foundation for ecotourism development within a destination (Won et al., 2016:1303).

Ecotourism development is also improved through an understanding of market demands that are shaped by socio-economic characters such as age, gender, education and income and which influence tourist preferences for ecotourism services (Dhami et al., 2014:167). Cheung and Jim (2013:184) in their study on ecotourism service preference and management in Hong Kong identified low-impact activities, quality of tour guides and quality of information on ecotourism

products, specifically digital information, as having a significant influence on ecotourist preferences. In their view, well-educated and affluent ecotourists tend to be more demanding and discerning in nature, leaving room for emerging ecotourists to develop by exploring an ecotourism experience and learning from it (Cheung and Jim, 2013:184). Table 3.4 highlights the main selectors associated with destinations that are preferred by ecotourists in Hong Kong.

**Table 3.4: Ecotourist preferences**

Selector	Ecotourist typology
<b>High quality information</b>	<b>Knowledge seeker:</b> Eager to learn more about nature through the synergy of information, guides and inherent site ecology
<b>High quality guide</b>	
<b>High ecological value</b>	<b>Leisure traveller:</b> Accessibility and more concerned about convenience and comfort offered by extrinsic site attributes of facilities
<b>Good facilities at the destination</b>	
<b>Good destination management</b>	<b>Nature lover:</b> More concerned about intrinsic site ecological value and minimum environmental impact of visitor activities
<b>Low environmental-impact activities</b>	

Source: (Cheung and Jim, 2013:190)

From Table 3.4, it is clear that ecotourists who are motivated by the need to acquire knowledge (knowledge seekers) will prefer a destination that provides high quality information and quality tour guides. It, therefore, galvanises management that overlooked factors such as ecotourists' preferences since these are critical factors that directly determine the volume of tourists that a destination will be able to attract (Won et al., 2016:1307). Management's comprehension of ecotourist preferences is, therefore, equally as important as any other considered market attribute when evaluating market segments (Tran et al., 2015:81).

To summarise, preferences become relevant when a tourist decides on one destination over others. The preference resulting from a given attitude towards the chosen destination is derived from the values and beliefs harboured by the tourist, which is an important area to grasp from management's perspective. This is another reason why values and beliefs have been continuously used as a tool for segmentation purposes (Won et al., 2016:1301).

### **3.10 SUMMARY**

This chapter provided insight into ecotourism and how other forms of tourism can integrate with it, forming a detailed background for service providers and marketers in comprehending the consumers participating in ecotourism. With such knowledge, the identification of the different requirements needed to pursue ecotourism-centred activities is possible. This chapter further gives the marketer a fair position on what to focus on, in order to become familiar with the needs and wants of ecotourists, thereby making this simple for marketing purposes. Despite a number of studies being undertaken to understand the ecotourist in other countries, there is a need for more reliable information relevant to the local service providers and marketers. Considering the growth of domestic tourism in South Africa, marketers should be in a position to keep abreast with the ever-changing demands of tourists, which can only be done if research on profiling ecotourists is done. To market ecotourism effectively within a country's borders, there is a need to generate more detailed information regarding the potential and the actual ecotourists that visit local attractions. The chapter has, therefore, highlighted the effective ways used to identify ecotourists, thus enabling marketers and service providers to target ecotourists and provide satisfactory ecotourism experiences.

# CHAPTER 4

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

For decades, research has been used to solve problems and to formulate policies (Szyjka, 2012:110). A range of scientific research systems have been employed to achieve a wide spectrum of research objectives (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2013:33). Scientific research particularly has been and is being used to test ideas that could be implemented in dynamic business situations. Generally, scientific research is a way of acquiring knowledge (Wiid and Diggins, 2013:11). The legitimacy of the outcomes obtained from scientific research is to a certain degree dependent on the research methodology used.

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:60) attest that the methodology used is the process carried out to acquire scientific knowledge in the given field of study and hence, if the methodology used is not applicable to the field of study, it will not succeed in providing results that are valid and reliable. As indicated in Chapter 1, this chapter focuses on the procedures performed during the study. Therefore, Chapter 4 clarifies the state of inquiry used in data collection, the instrument employed and the way in which the data was statistically analysed. Lastly, the ethical considerations that were observed during the course of the research project are presented and Figure 4.1 illustrates the chapter layout.

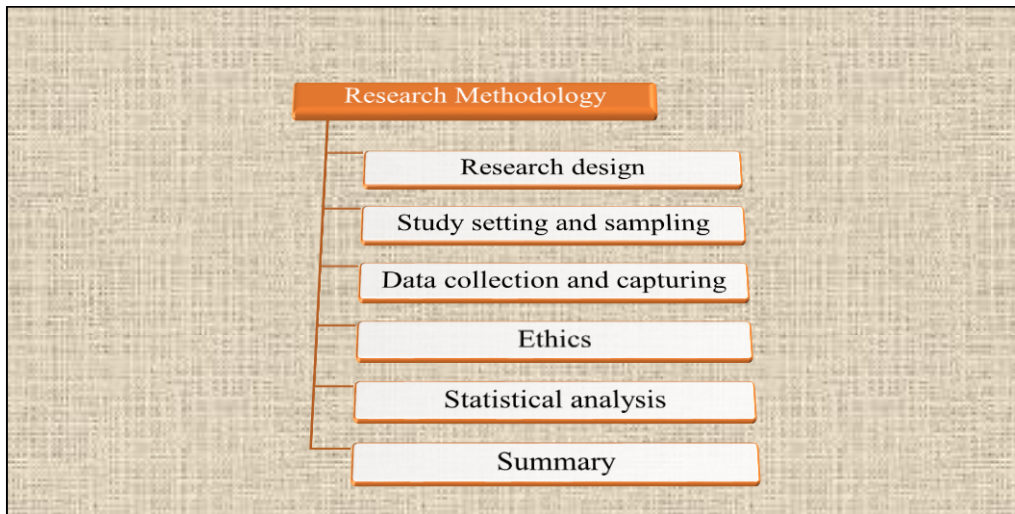


Figure 4.1: Chapter 4 layout

## **4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Zikmund (2011:43) defined a research design as a principal plan that sets out clear procedures that are used to obtain and analyse the needed information. Pertaining to this study, a descriptive research type was used. Holmes (2010:6) describes descriptive research as a method used to identify a researchable problem, which collects data that is empirically tested in its natural state. A descriptive research type is generally applicable to studies that intend to observe or study behavioural characteristics, which is the case in this study. This study used a quantitative approach because the quantitative approach is a means of testing objective theories that allows statistical analysis of quantifiable numerical data derived from examining relationships among variables (Maree, 2012:30; Creswell, 2013:236; Wiid and Diggines, 2013:59).

The approach to the study was aimed at deducing an understanding of the theory through empirical testing. It assisted in understanding the psychographic attributes of ecotourists while revealing their demographic aspects, which was valuable in identifying general behaviour patterns (Bryman et al., 2014:64). This was made possible by employing a quantitative survey strategy of inquiry that involved a cross-sectional study (Creswell, 2013:37). A cross-sectional study enhances the accuracy of data collected in a single meeting regarding the given sample of the population (Malhotra and Birks, 2005:18).

## **4.3 METHODOLOGY**

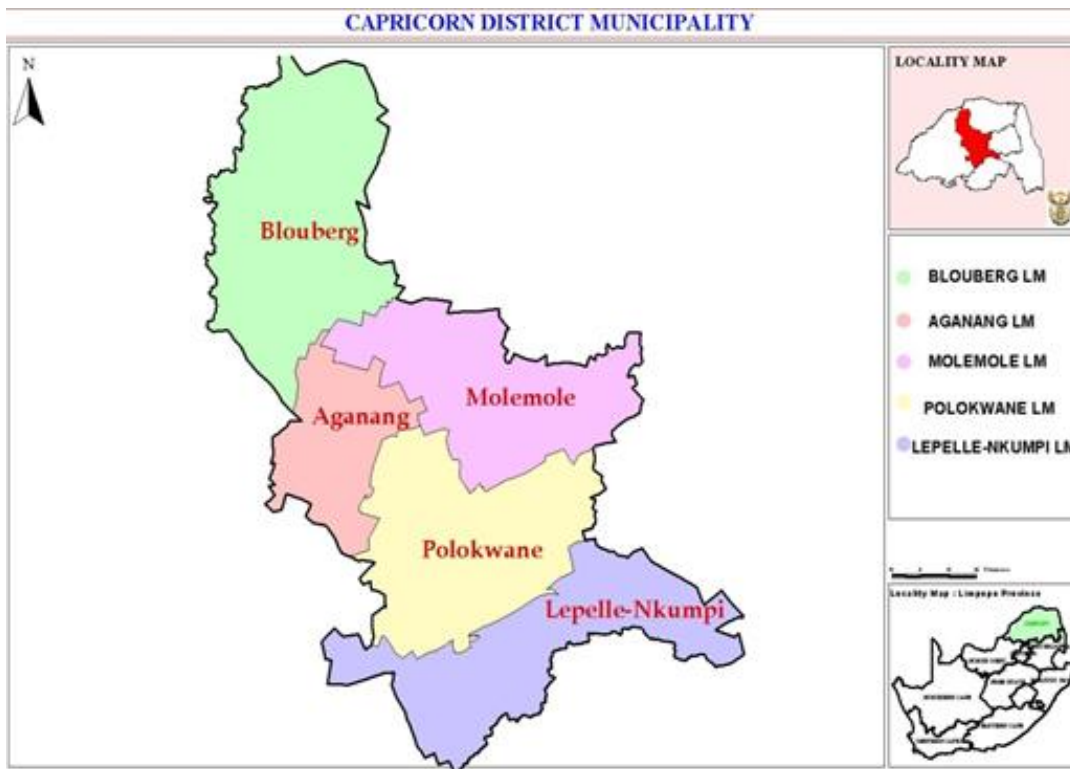
This section presents the study setting, study population, types of information sources used, sample size and sampling method used in this study.

### **4.3.1 Study setting**

This investigation was carried out in the Capricorn District Municipality, which is named after the Tropic of Capricorn in the Limpopo province (LED 2016:1). The district has five local municipalities, namely Aganang, Blouberg, Lepelle-Nkumpi, Molemole and Polokwane. As highlighted in Table 2.6, the district has a number of ecotourism attractions that include nature reserves and tourist routes, providing wildlife experiences, education, culture and heritage (Limpopo Tourism Agency, 2016:1). Specifically, Aganang and Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipalities have accommodation facilities that provide an environmentally friendly atmosphere, while nature reserves are located within the Blouberg Local Municipality. In Molemole Local Municipality, a number of wildlife experiences are available such as those offered by the Marlothii

Bush Camp at the farm Dedimus in the district of Dendron. The Polokwane area offers a number of attractions, including the Turfloop Nature Reserve and the Ribolla Open Africa Route as well as informative art museums, cultural villages and walking safaris (Limpopo Tourism Agency, 2016:3).

The Capricorn District Municipality is host to Polokwane International Airport, which is a gateway to the Limpopo province and receives tourists visiting the local attractions such as the Kruger National Park and the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site. Therefore, a significant number of ecotourists are likely to be found in the Capricorn District Municipality (Limpopo Tourism Agency, 2016:3). The study setting, as illustrated in Figure 4.1, was motivated by the need to support Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET)’s strategic objective of making the Limpopo province a preferred ecotourism destination (LEDET, 2012:7).



**Figure 4.2: Capricorn District Municipality**

Source: The Local Government Handbook, 2017:2

### 4.3.2 Study population

The study population consisted of tourists and visitors found within the Capricorn District Municipality. Tourists are travellers that spend more than 24 hours at a destination, while visitors are travellers that spend 24 hours or less at a destination (Keyser, 2004:41). Establishments and attractions were selected from each of the local municipalities within the Capricorn District Municipality in an attempt to cover a wider area and thus obtain a fair representation of the population.

### 4.3.3 Types of information and sources

The research project included a literature search that allowed an in-depth understanding of the study domain. In the process, key words were used to select related and relevant articles. The search selected concepts and methods that were useful for the study. The literature review assisted in the formulation of a research tool relevant to ecotourism and ecotourist-based studies and was conducted through the use of:

- Public documents
- Organisational documents such as annual reports
- Visual documents
- Scholarly published works
- Mass media such as newspapers
- Electronic media such as the SAGE database

### 4.3.4 Sample size

The target population included tourists and visitors found within the Capricorn District Municipality. The participants comprised individuals above the age of 18 years. The researcher used the following recommended Raosoft formula to attain the minimum sample size to be used in the study:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2} \longrightarrow \frac{1.64^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05^2} = 268$$

n = sample size  
Z = confidence level (90%)  
e = sampling error  
p = degree of variability

This formula was adapted from Cochran (1963:75), Lotter, Geldenhuys and Potgieter (2012:100), Puszczak, Fronczyk and Urbanski (2013:5) and Arachchi et al. (2015:216).

According to Puszczak, Fronczyk and Urbanski (2013:4), a 50% degree of variability indicates the maximum variability used in calculating a more conservative sample size. Different combinations of confidence level and sampling error can be further used to determine an appropriate sample size for a particular study as opposed to referring to similar studies only (Puszczak, Fronczyk and Urbanski, 2013:4). After such consideration, the minimum sample size was identified, and 350 questionnaires were distributed. The realised sample was 295 completed questionnaires.

#### **4.3.5 Sampling methods**

Wiid and Diggines (2013:188) refer to two sampling categories: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. With probability sampling, a unit's chance of being chosen is known whereas with non-probability sampling, it is unknown. For this study, the non-probability sampling category was considered due to the absence of a sampling frame. Additionally, various techniques are used to select respondents under each sampling method. Among the techniques for the non-probability sampling method is the purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique does not require supporting theories to determine the number of participants and is a measured choice when certain qualities or characteristics are possessed by the subjects or the elements of the study (Ilker, Sulaiman and Rukayya, 2015:2). This sampling technique was appropriate for the current study since it allowed the researcher to focus on establishments and attractions and subsequently to identify through the convenience sampling technique, the ecotourists who would complete the questionnaires.

The establishments and attractions were selected using the purposive sampling technique due to time constraints, and the convenience sampling technique was used to identify the subjects of the study. The convenience sampling technique makes use of the first available source with regard to ease of access, geographical proximity, willingness and availability of respondents (Kumar, 2014:244; Ilker et al., 2015:2).



#### **4.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The relevant instrument for this study was a self-completion questionnaire. According to Bryman et al. (2014:192), self-completion questionnaires should have fewer open-ended questions and more closed-ended questions to avoid respondent fatigue. In addition, the questionnaire should have an attractive presentation without the clustering of questions. Through implementing these suggestions, the instrument should be the most reliable instrument for a study (Tassiopoulos and Haydam, 2008:875). Furthermore, the instrument is conveniently cheaper and quicker to use and avoids interviewer effects, thus increasing the chances of reliable data being collected (Bryman et al., 2014:192). The questionnaire was hand delivered to the respondents. The researcher integrated certain attributes used in past research instruments into the development of this study's instrument such as those indicated by Deng and Li (2015:259), Leonidou, Coudounaris, Kvasova and Christodoulides (2015:643), Walters and Ruhanen (2015:526) and Youn and Ryu (2016:4).

The instrument (refer to Annexure C) consisted of three sections:

- **Section A:** Preferences
- **Section B:** Responsible behavioural descriptors
- **Section C:** Demographical information

The questionnaire was accompanied by an official cover letter requesting permission from establishment management to approach willing participants. The letter also provided details of the researcher, the supervisory team and the university's research office for referral use.

#### **4.5 DATA COLLECTION AND CAPTURING**

This section provides clarity on how the data was collected, beginning with a description of the pilot study undertaken, following with the fieldwork and concluding with how the data was captured.

##### **4.5.1 Pilot study**

A pilot study serves as a base in which shortcomings of the instrument are identified before it is used (Wiid and Diggins, 2013:230). In the case of this study, the pilot study was conducted at a

local hotel (Khoroni Hotel Casino Convention Resort) where 15 questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to tourists on site. The aim was to identify and scrutinise the shortcomings of the questionnaire, examining the format, sequencing and wording used and how long it would take to complete the survey. The pilot study identified areas that needed improvement such as ambiguous questions as well as limited response options. With these shortcomings identified, a better and revised instrument was developed for the study. The results of the pilot study were not included in the analysis or discussion of this study.

#### **4.5.2 Fieldwork**

The fieldwork was conducted by the researcher and two fieldworkers. The fieldworkers were student researchers at the University of Venda in the study fields of Human Resources Management and Business Management. From their studies, the fieldworkers had been trained on how to collect primary data using questionnaires as study instruments. Hence, it was simple to inform and explain the tourism terms in the instrument. Thereafter, the fieldworkers themselves completed the questionnaire as a practice-run so that they could clarify areas that they did not comprehend before venturing into the field. The responses from the fieldworkers were not included in the analysis of the study. During the course of data collection, the questionnaires were completed by the participants in the presence of the researcher or one of the fieldworkers. Questionnaires were not left for later collection because this was deemed to lead to unresponsive participants.

The only parameter implemented during data collection to attain meaningful responses was age. Based upon the researcher's and fieldworkers' judgement, respondents above the age of 18 years were approached to participate in the survey. When necessary, respondents were respectfully asked their age range to ascertain if they qualified to participate. Furthermore, terminologies that respondents found difficult to understand were also explained. In regard to accessing establishments, telephone calls were made to certain organisations prior to the visit appointments. However, some establishments were spontaneously visited during data collection with no appointments made. The amount of time spent at an establishment was based upon the availability of tourists and visitors. For instance, tented camps in the Blouberg area had repeat visits in order to balance the data collected with other areas such as the Dalmada area in the city of Polokwane. Scrutiny was carried out during the repeat visits to avoid long-stay tourists from participating twice in the survey.

### **4.5.3 Capturing**

Data capturing was done by the researcher using SPSS version 24. Seventeen questionnaires were discovered to be unusable and thus were not included in the final analysis, resulting in 295 usable questionnaires for the study.

## **4.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

In order to answer the objectives, the following analyses were conducted:

- Descriptive statistics
- Factor analysis
- Cluster analysis

### **4.6.1 Descriptive statistics**

Generally, descriptive statistics assist in the presentation of data in a meaningful manner that makes it easier for a reader to comprehend (Bryman et al., 2014:318). Most descriptive statistics include the use of charts and frequencies and were employed in describing the characteristics of the respondents such as age and gender. The descriptions compiled from the respondents' characteristics assisted in establishing assumptions that required follow-up tests to be done. These follow-up tests were the chi-square and the ANOVA tests.

A chi-square test is an analysis that compares the goodness of fit of theoretical and observed frequency distributions, while the ANOVA test is a method used to test differences between two or more means (Hamilton, 2013:151). In this study, chi-square tests were done to determine if there was a relationship between variables (Bryman et al., 2014:326). Bivariate Analysis was employed in the chi-square test. According to Bryman et al. (2014:318), Bivariate Analysis refers to the analysis of two variables at a time. No control variables were used during cross tabulation for the chi-square tests.

Furthermore, chi-square tests were conducted to ascertain the existence of significant differences between clusters or other variables. For example, a cross tabulation of education and being an ecotourist was conducted. Similarly, ANOVA tests were done to compute means of clusters and specific variables as well as to determine the differences between clusters (Field, 2009:354). The

ANOVA tests included a test of homogeneity of variances and descriptive statistics such as frequency tables indicating the number of cases, the mean and the standard deviation used to summarise the distribution of the variables.

#### **4.6.2 Factor analysis**

Factor analysis refers to a range of techniques that aim to explain a larger number of variables through the use of smaller groupings of composite variables (Field, 2009:628; Wiid and Diggins, 2013:100). In regard to factor analysis, two constructs of interests were used to conduct the principal component factor analysis. The analysis determined the preferences regarding the ecotourism activities of ecotourists and the behavioural descriptors applicable to ecotourists. Preferences were measured by 16 Likert-scale questions on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 representing 'not important' and 4 representing 'very important'. Another set of 20 Likert-scale questions measured responsible behavioural descriptors. The scale ranged from 1 to 4, with 1 representing 'strongly disagree' and 4 representing 'strongly agree'. Specifically, Principal Component Analysis was conducted on both preferences and behavioural descriptors using Varimax with the Kaiser Normalisation rotation method. Only cases that indicated 'Yes' to being an ecotourist were used for this analysis. This was done in an attempt to segment the listed cases based on ecotourists' preferences.

#### **4.6.3 Cluster analysis**

Cluster analysis is a technique that groups similar entities together in order to provide a class structure from a data set (Renato and Christian, 2015:126). A cluster analysis using direct marketing was conducted. This was done to realise the possible clusters constructed on similarities among responses. The number of clusters calculated was equally determined by the differences in the responses. It was observed that within each cluster, a high level of homogeneity was present. Similarly, a reasonable level of heterogeneity was present among the clusters (Renato and Christian, 2015:126). The technique of cluster analysis using direct marketing resulted in the emergence of three clusters. The first cluster labelled *heavy spenders* had the least cases but was the most lucrative. Conversely, the third cluster labelled *minor spenders* had the most cases but was the least lucrative cluster of the three clusters.

## 4.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Wiid and Diggines (2013:134) define the term reliability as the consistency of a measure of a concept. Bryman et al. (2014:36) identified three key areas that should be considered when judging whether a measure is reliable or not. These are: *stability*—describes the confidence in the measure, that is, if it is stable over a period of time; *internal reliability*—describes the consistency of the indicators used; and *inter-observer consistency*—describes the consistency of the recordings carried out by observers. A pilot study confirmed the replicability of this study, hence outlining the research project’s independent consideration of researcher’s bias, values, special characteristics and expectations (Bryman et al., 2014:40). Concurrently, the pilot study was confirmed by a test-retest method as suggested by Bryman et al. (2014:36).

Measurement for internal reliability of the items used in the instrument was done. A cut-off point of 0.3 was implemented for item-total correlation value. Items in a subscale that had a value below the cut-off point were excluded from further analysis. Similarly, the test for stability was performed on each scale. The following criteria for interpreting the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient were used to determine the stability of the scales.

**Table 4.1: Criteria for Cronbach’s alpha coefficient**

Coefficient	Interpretation
.9 < $\alpha$	Excellent
.8 < $\alpha$	Good
.7 < $\alpha$	Acceptable
.6 < $\alpha$	Questionable
.5 < $\alpha$	Poor
.5 > $\alpha$	Unacceptable

Source: George and Mallery, 2003:231

Scales that demonstrated a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient below the ‘Questionable’ scale as indicated in the criteria underwent a second item-reliability test. This was done in order to determine if there were items within the scale that upon deletion would improve the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the scale. If this was observed, such items were excluded from further analysis. The results of such tests are displayed in Annexure E.

Additionally, Bryman et al. (2014:38) define validity as “whether or not a measure of a concept actually measures the concept in study”. For this study, as suggested by Bryman et al. (2014:41),

the 'face validity test' was employed to ascertain the validity of the measure used. Face validity is based on an intuitive decision that involves the researcher's judgement and that of an expert in the field of study.

#### **4.8 ETHICAL ASPECTS**

Wiid and Diggins (2013:24) and Bryman et al. (2014:120) suggest certain business research ethics that must be adhered to when conducting a study and define ethics as the socially and morally acceptable way in which a study should be conducted. Principles that were used in this study included:

- Informed consent was obtained.
- No form of privacy was invaded.
- No form of deception was used.
- No participant was subject to harm.

The researcher sought approval from the University of Venda Research Committee who issued an ethical clearance letter with the reference number: SMS/16/BMA/03/2505 (refer to Annexure D). The issued clearance letter signified that the instrument of the study, that is, the chosen method for data collection did not violate any ethical aspects and that the actions of the researcher were under the auspices of the University of Venda. Supporting the clearance letter were two separate letters that informed the establishment or attraction manager of the intentions of the researcher. The second letter, which was the cover page of the questionnaire, informed the respondents of the researcher's intentions. These letters ensured that only willing managers would motivate willing guests to participate in the research and that participation was completely voluntary.

#### **4.9 SUMMARY**

Chapter 4 provided an account of the research methodology for the study. The methodology of the study was based on past ecotourism-related studies. A self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. Fieldworkers supported the successful exercise of data collection. As a result of the fieldworkers' exercise, a valid response rate was attained, which led to the effective

step of data analysis. Factor analysis, cluster analysis, chi-square tests and ANOVA tests were used for conducting the data analysis.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an exposition of the data analysed by means of SPSS after being captured on Microsoft Excel. From the interpreted results, the main goal of the study is addressed through the development of the visitor profiles of ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality. A description of the respondents is initially presented, and this is followed by cross-comparison analysis, factor analysis and cluster analysis in an attempt to achieve the objectives of the study.

Table 5.1 shows the response rate of usable questionnaires for data analysis. A response rate of 84% was achieved, totalling 295 usable questionnaires from 350 questionnaires distributed.

**Table 5.1: Respondents rate**

<b>Number of questionnaires distributed</b>	<b>Number of questionnaires received</b>	<b>Total response rate</b>
<b>350</b>	295	84%

The findings are presented in accordance with the sections of the questionnaire indicated in Annexure C. Section C, which is presented first, describes the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This is followed by Section A, which focuses on the preferences of the respondents. Lastly, Section B is presented, which focuses on the behavioural aspects.

#### 5.2 DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS

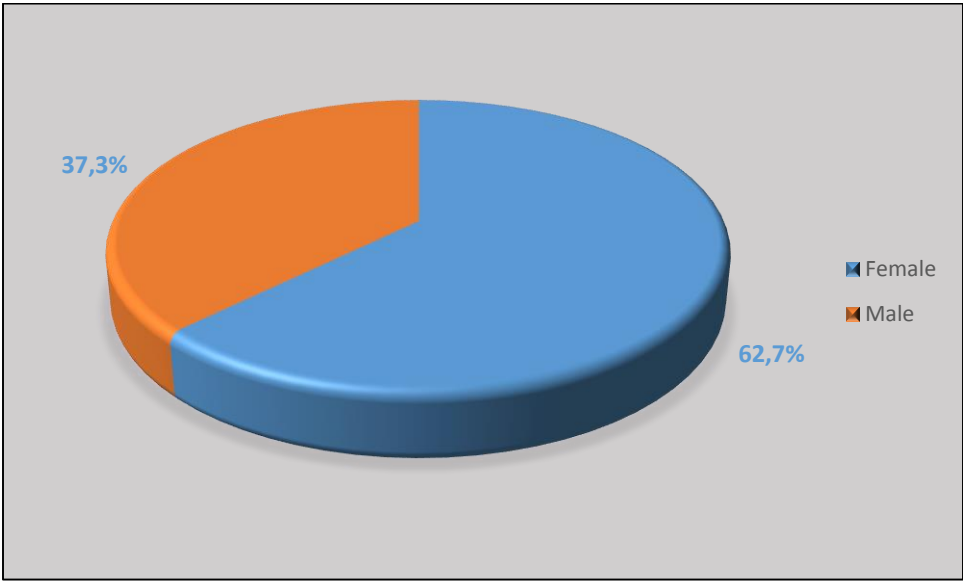
This section presents the demographic descriptions of the respondents who participated in this study. The section lays a foundation for follow up statistical analysis which are discussed in section 5.3.

##### 5.2.1 Gender

As illustrated in Figure 5.1, the respondents of the study comprised 62.7% (n=178) females and 37.3% (n=106) males. This difference in representation was attributed to the high number of



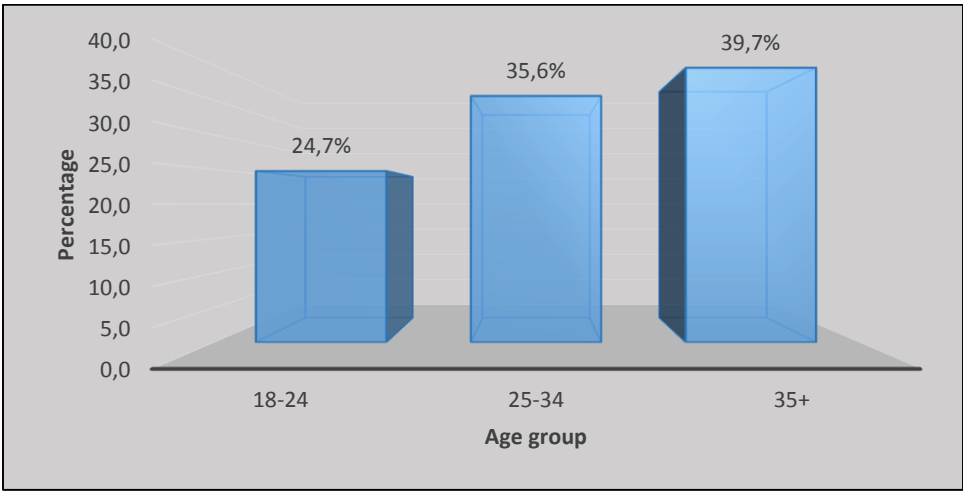
females present at the tourism establishments, attractions and who were willing to participate in this study, at the researcher's and fieldworkers' arrival times for data collection.



**Figure 5.1: Gender**

**5.2.2 Age**

Figure 5.2 illuminates the age groups of the respondents. The study purposively involved respondents in the age group of 18 years and above to avoid the lengthy processes involved in acquiring permission to survey minors, which could delay the study progress.

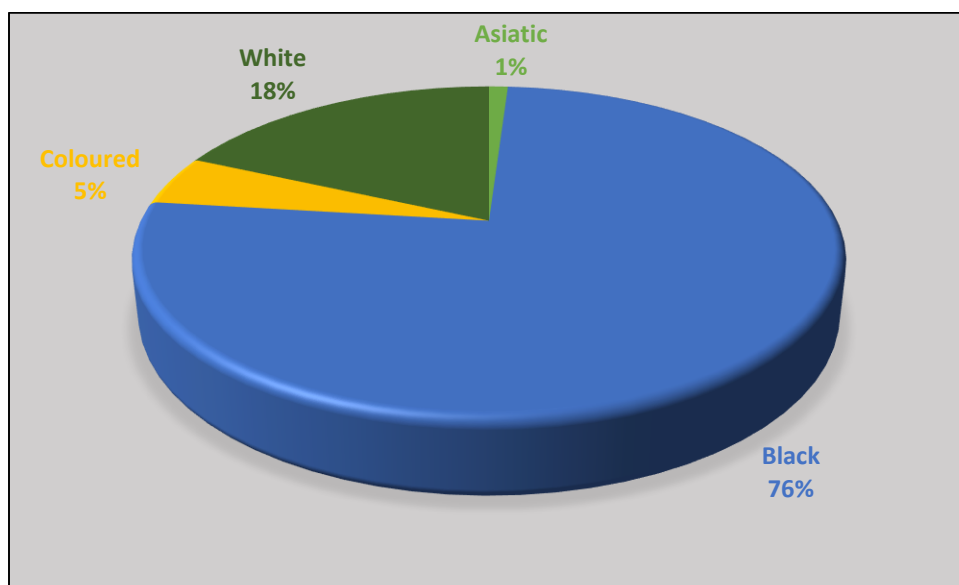


**Figure 5.2: Age group**

The age group of 18–24 years had a representation of 24.7% (n=73) participants, those aged between 25 years and 34 years had a representation of 35.6% (n=105), while the age group of 35+ years had a representation of 39.7% (n=117). The difference between the age group of 25–34 years and the age group of 35+ years is much less when compared with the age group of 18–24 years.

### 5.2.3 Ethnicity

Figure 5.3 informs the reader of the distribution of the ethnic groups among the respondents.



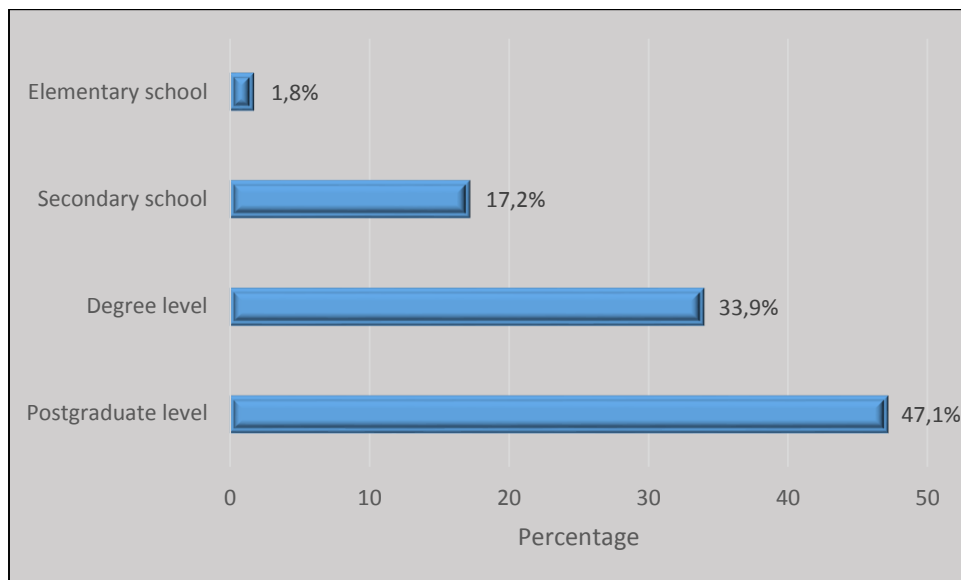
**Figure 5.3: Ethnicity**

The Asiatic ethnic group constituted 1% (n=3) of the respondents, the black ethnic group had the most representation with 75.9% (n=220), the coloured ethnic group comprised 4.8% (n=14), and the white ethnic group, which was the second-most represented, demonstrated 18.3% (n=53).

### 5.2.4 Level of education

A characteristic that is commonly associated with ecotourists is level of education. Figure 5.4 illustrates specific findings on the level of education possessed by the respondents. The highest level of education, which is postgraduate level, included the most respondents (47.1%; n=129), with most of the respondents being in the 25–34 year age group. Respondents who had a degree

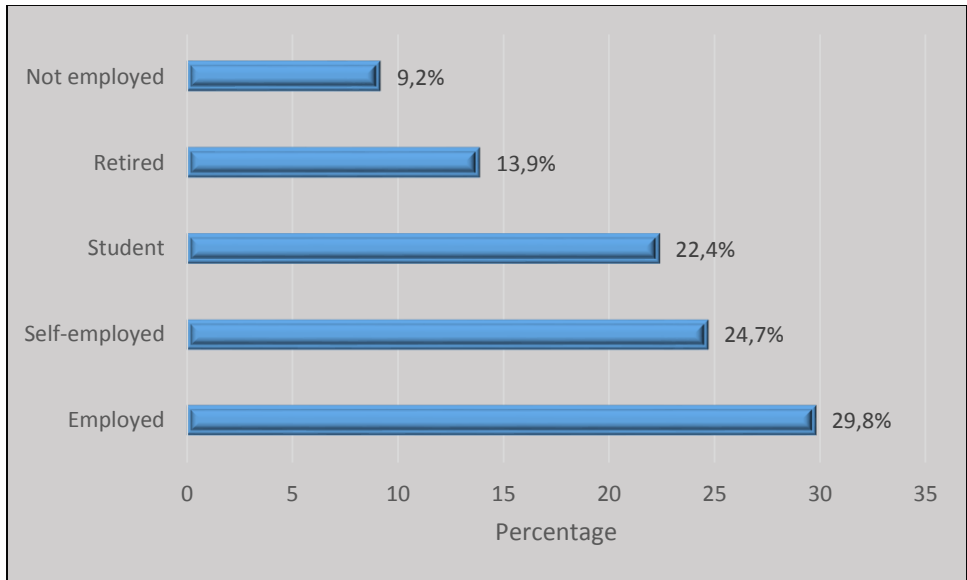
qualification constituted 33.9% (n=93) and were fairly distributed among all age groups. Those who had passed secondary school represented 17.2% (n=47), and this level was dominated by respondents in the age group of 35 years and above. The elementary school certificate equalled 1.8% (n=5), and only participants in the age group of 35 years and above responded to this segment.



**Figure 5.4: Level of education**

### 5.2.5 Occupational status

Occupational status was another key area surveyed and Figure 5.5 shows the results obtained in this regard. For analysis purposes, all tests that included occupational status had civil servant and employed status recoded to the 'employed' category. The employed group had a representation of 29.8% (n=88), while the self-employed group had a representation of 24.7% (n=73).

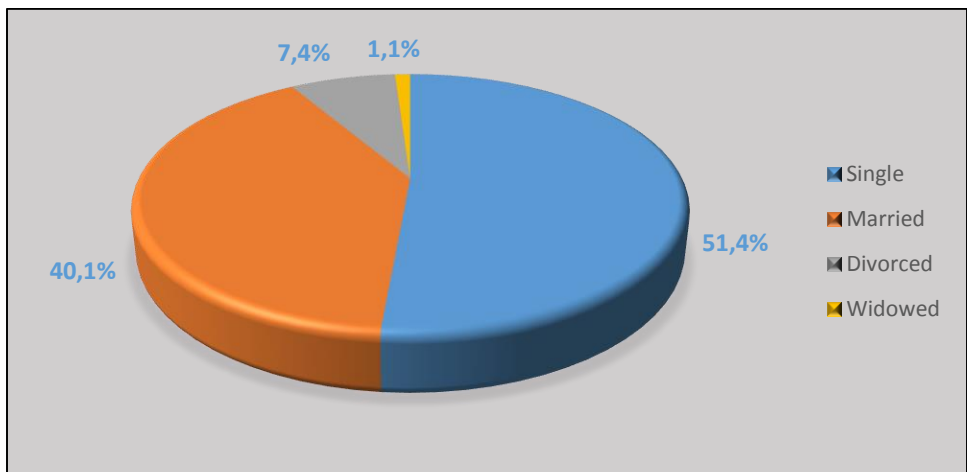


**Figure 5.5: Occupational status**

The student group had a representation of 22.4% (n=66), and not employed and retired had a low representation of 9.2% (n=27) and 13.9% (n=41) respectively.

**5.2.6 Marital status**

Figure 5.6 illustrates the marital status distribution of the respondents, which was divided into four segments.

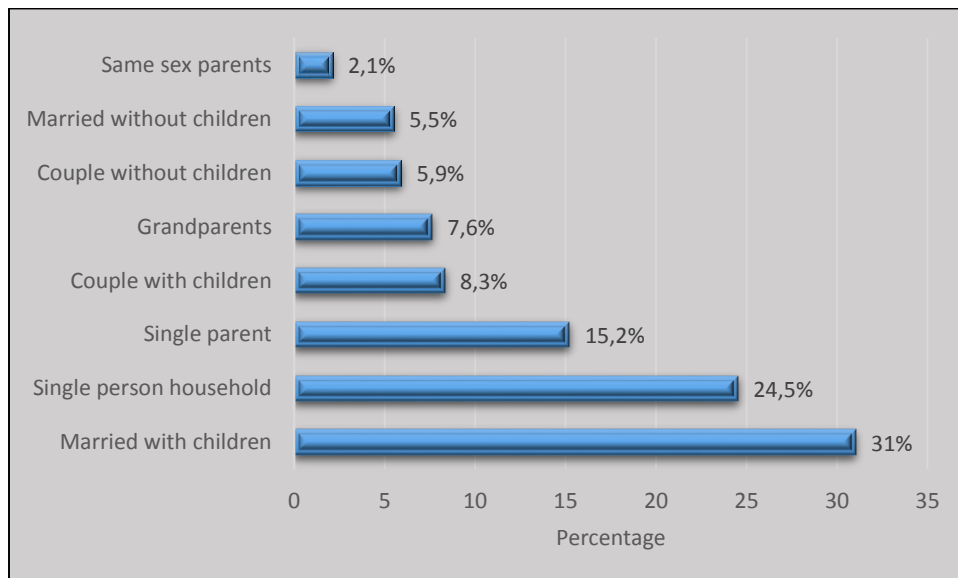


**Figure 5.6: Marital status**

The most represented segment was the single group with 51.4% (n=145). This was followed by the married group (40.1%; n=113), the divorced group (7.4%; n=21) and lastly, the widowed group (1.1%; n=3).

The single status category was dominated by participants in the age group of 25–34 years. This was followed by the age group of 18–24 years and lastly, the 35+ year age group. Regarding the married status category, respondents from the 35+ year age group dominated the category, with the least respondents in the 18–24 year age group. Likewise, the divorced status category demonstrated most of the respondents in the age group of 35+ years. Similarly, the age group of 35+ years was the only group that responded to the widowed category.

### 5.2.7 Household type



**Figure 5.7: Household type**

Figure 5.7 illustrates the findings relating to the household type of the respondents. Two marital categories dominated these household types, namely the single and married categories. Figure 5.7 indicates a high number of respondents in the household category of married with children (31%; n=90). The household category of single parent demonstrated 15.2% (n=44) together with the single-person household 24.5% (n=71), which relates to the mentioned marital status groups.

Other groups such as couple with children (8.3%; n=24), grandparents (7.6%; n=22) and couple without children (5.9%; n=17) were represented enough to provide a view of the ecotourists participating in ecotourism with regard to the specific groups. Regarding same sex parents, a representation of 2.1% (n=6) was observed.

### 5.2.8 Continent of origin

Figure 5.8 depicts the continent of origin. Respondents were mainly from Africa (98.6%; n=286), with 1.4% (n=4) originating from South America. South Africans constituted 96.9% (n=281) from the participating Africans, while other African nations made up 3.1% (n=9).

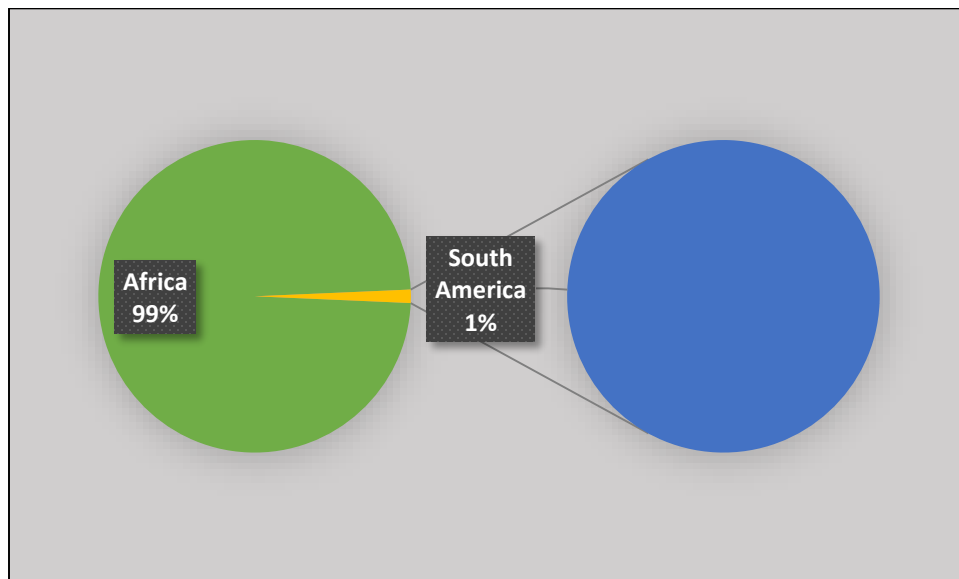
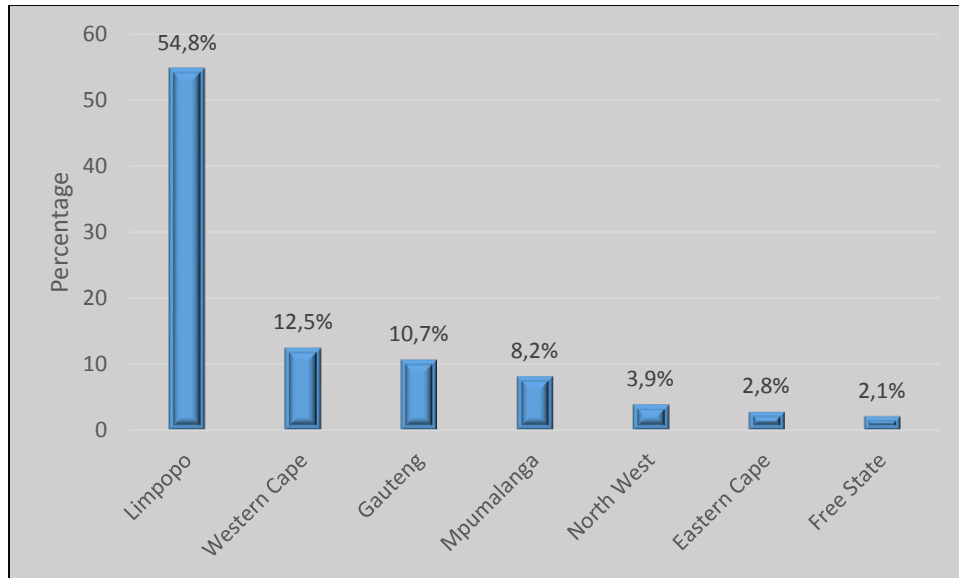


Figure 5.8: Continent of origin

### 5.2.9 Province of origin

In Figure 5.9, it can be observed that most participants were from the Limpopo province (54.8%; n=154), followed by those from the Western Cape province (12.5%; n=35). Gauteng province was represented by 10.7% (n=30) of the respondents. Mpumalanga province had a fair representation of 8.2% (n=23). The other provinces had a representation of 5% or less.

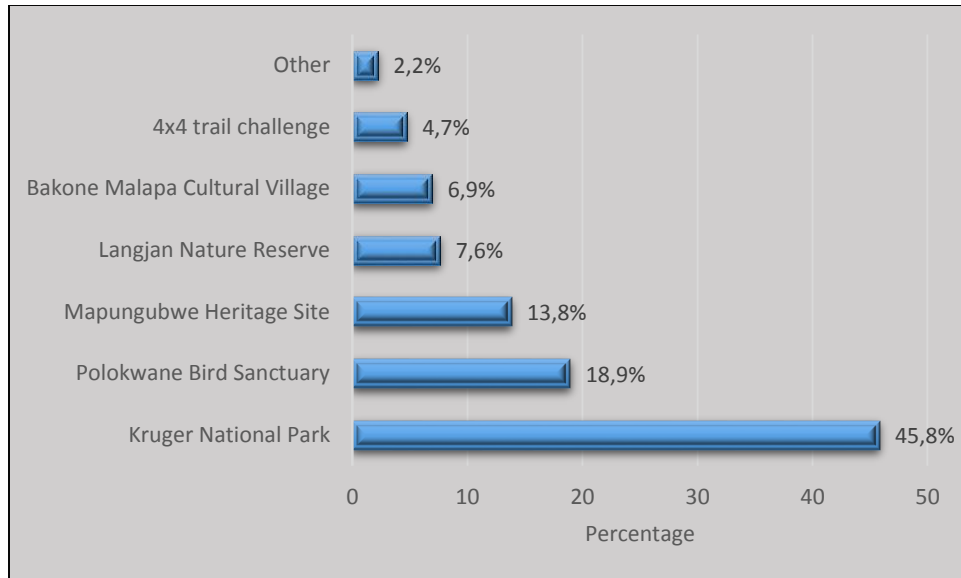


**Figure 5.9: Province**

### 5.2.10 Preferred attractions

The respondents were asked to indicate the attractions that they intended to visit. Figure 5.10 illustrates the survey responses. Most respondents (45.8%; n=126) indicated the intention to visit the Kruger National Park. The Polokwane Bird Sanctuary was second in preference, with 18.9% (n=52) of respondents intending to visit the attraction. Regarding the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site, 13.8% (n=38) of respondents indicated that they intended to visit this attraction. In addition, less than 10% (n=27) of the respondents intended to visit the remaining listed attractions.

It is noticeable that most respondents prefer to visit natural attractions that provide possibilities to interact with the natural environment rather than being involved in cultural and adventurous activities.



**Figure 5.10: Preferred attractions**

The following section presents the descriptive statistics that include the cross comparisons conducted on various attributes.

### **5.3 CROSS-COMPARISON ANALYSIS**

This section examines the assumptions arising from the respondents' descriptions to address the objective of identifying the demographic descriptors applicable to ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality. A number of cross-tabulation tests were conducted on specific variables in order to identify elements that an ecotourist may possess and to identify the elements that determine and influence a person to become an ecotourist.

#### **5.3.1 Cross comparison between gender and being an ecotourist**

Table 5.2 demonstrates that 37.4% of female participants (n=101) and 24.8% of male participants (n=67) indicated they were ecotourists. The percentage of female participation in ecotourism activities may be influenced by the improvement of women's rights and the recognition of women as a potential market.



**Table 5.2: Gender versus Ecotourist cross tabulation**

Variable			Ecotourist		
			Yes	No	Total
Gender	Female	Count	101	69	170
		% of Total	37.4%	25.6%	63.0%
	Male	Count	67	33	100
		% of Total	24.8%	12.2%	37.0%
Total		Count	168	102	270
		% of Total	62.2%	37.8%	100.0%
<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			Value	df	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square			1.542 <sup>a</sup>	1	.214
Likelihood Ratio			1.555	1	.212
Linear-by-Linear Association			1.537	1	.215
No. of Valid Cases			270		

0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 37.78.

The chi-square test for this analysis indicated an insignificant relationship between gender and being an ecotourist ( $X^2=1.542$ :  $p>.214$ ). It can, therefore, be accepted that there is no association when ecotourists are selected based on gender. Table 5.2 demonstrates a high number of females; however, this does not indicate a positive association for women becoming ecotourists.

### 5.3.2 Cross comparison between age and being an ecotourist

The attribute age was analysed to determine if it influenced one to become an ecotourist. This would assist in understanding the profiles of ecotourists visiting eco-friendly attractions and the establishments in the Capricorn District Municipality. As seen in Table 5.3, the number of ecotourists in the age group of 18–24 years was approximately 6% higher than normal tourists. Likewise, the age group of 25–34 years showed the representation of ecotourists to be higher than normal tourists by approximately 7%. As for the age group of 35+ years, it also indicated a positive representation of ecotourists that exceeded normal tourists by approximately 12%.

**Table 5.3: Age versus Ecotourist cross tabulation**

Variable			Ecotourist		
			Yes	No	Total
Age	18–24	Count	42	27	69
		% of Total	15.3%	9.8%	25.1%
	25–34	Count	58	40	98
		% of Total	21.1%	14.5%	35.6%
	35+	Count	71	37	108
		% of Total	25.8%	13.5%	39.3%
Total		Count	171	104	275
		% of Total	62.2%	37.8%	100.0%
<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			Value	df	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square			1.007 <sup>a</sup>	2	.604
Likelihood Ratio			1.011	2	.603
Linear-by-Linear Association			.557	1	.455
No. of Valid Cases			275		

0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 26.09.

The chi-square test results for this particular attribute proved an insignificant association between age and becoming an ecotourist ( $X^2=1.007$ :  $p>.604$ ). However, an increase in age does not mean that one is likely to become an ecotourist. Interestingly, in this case, the 35+ year age group constituted most of the ecotourists who participated in this study (25.8%).

### 5.3.3 Cross comparison between occupational status and being an ecotourist

The study surveyed occupational status. The results in Table 5.4 indicate that the self-employed group had the most respondents as ecotourists. This was marked by 19.6% ( $n=54$ ) of ecotourists compared with 4.7% ( $n=13$ ) of non-ecotourists. The second-highest group was in the employed category. The results indicated 14.5% ( $n=40$ ) of ecotourists compared with 15.3% ( $n=42$ ) of non-ecotourists.

Regarding the retired group, 8.7% (n=24) of respondents within the retired group indicated being ecotourists compared with 5.1% (n=14) who indicated being non-ecotourists. However, respondents in the student category demonstrated 12.4% (n=34) as ecotourists and 10.2% (n=28) as non-ecotourists, while the not-employed group indicated 6.9% (n=19) as ecotourists and 2.5% (n=7) as non-ecotourists.

**Table 5.4: Occupation versus Ecotourist cross tabulation**

Variable			Ecotourist		Total
			Yes	No	
Occupation	Employed	Count	40	42	82
		% of Total	14.5%	15.3%	29.8%
	Student	Count	34	28	62
		% of Total	12.4%	10.2%	22.5%
	Self employed	Count	54	13	67
		% of Total	19.6%	4.7%	24.4%
	Not employed	Count	19	7	26
		% of Total	6.9%	2.5%	9.5%
	Retired	Count	24	14	38
		% of Total	8.7%	5.1%	13.8%
	Total	Count	171	104	275
		% of Total	62.2%	37.8%	100.0%
<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			Value	df	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square			18.674 <sup>a</sup>	4	.001
Likelihood Ratio			19.510	4	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association			7.499	1	.006
No. of Valid Cases			275		

0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.83.

A positive association between occupational status and becoming an ecotourist was identified ( $X^2=18.674$ ;  $p<.001$ ). See Table 5.4. From these results, more time and more disposable income may improve the possibility of becoming an ecotourist. Hence, ecotourists are inclined to emerge from the self-employed, retired and employed occupational groups as indicated in Table 5.4.

### 5.3.4 Cross comparison between household type and being an ecotourist

Table 5.5 indicates the influence of household type on becoming an ecotourist. The results show that the household type of married with children is dominated by ecotourists, with 35.1% of ecotourists and 23.5% of non-ecotourists. This percentage of 35.1% ecotourists within the

household type of married with children also accounted for 22% of the ecotourists who participated in the study. The single-person household type was equally distributed between ecotourists and non-ecotourists. However, 15.4% of the ecotourists who participated in the study belonged to the single-person household. Additionally, the grandparents household type had a significant 9.9% of ecotourists compared with 4.9% of non-ecotourists. This could explain the retired occupational group being reflective of ecotourists.

**Table 5.5: Household type versus Ecotourist cross tabulation**

Variable			Ecotourist		
			Yes	No	Total
Household	Single person	Count	42	25	67
		% of Total	15.4%	9.2%	24.5%
	Couple without children	Count	10	2	12
		% of Total	3.7%	0.7%	4.4%
	Same-sex parents	Count	5	1	6
		% of Total	1.8%	0.4%	2.2%
	Single parent	Count	24	18	42
		% of Total	8.8%	6.6%	15.4%
	Married with children	Count	60	24	84
		% of Total	22.0%	8.8%	30.8%
	Grandparents	Count	17	5	22
		% of Total	6.2%	1.8%	8.1%
	Couple with children	Count	9	15	24
		% of Total	3.3%	5.5%	8.8%
	Married without children	Count	4	12	16
		% of Total	1.5%	4.4%	5.9%
Total		Count	171	102	273
		% of Total	62.6%	37.4%	100.0%
<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			Value	df	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square			24.789 <sup>a</sup>	7	.001
Likelihood Ratio			24.882	7	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association			3.946	1	.047
No. of Valid Cases			273		

3 cells (18.8%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.24.

Cells indicating values of less than five (5) represent areas that had little or no data for computing processes. The guidelines indicate that a test should not have more than 20% of cells with an expected count of less than five (5). Therefore, in this case, the test results in Table 5.5 were

acceptable for interpretation. There is a positive association of household types and becoming an ecotourist as represented by  $X^2=24.789$ :  $p<.001$ . This value shows that if one falls under a single-person household, married-with-children household or grandparents household, there is a likelihood of becoming an ecotourist.

### 5.3.5 Cross comparison between marital status and being an ecotourist

A test was conducted to determine if marital status had a significant association with being an ecotourist. Table 5.6 reveals the relationship between marital status and being an ecotourist. For analysis purposes, the responses were grouped into three categories (single, married, other) due to the minimal data available in the other response options.

**Table 5.6: Marital Status versus Ecotourist cross tabulation**

Variable			Ecotourist		Total
			Yes	No	
Status	Single	Count	78	56	134
		% of Total	28.4%	20.4%	48.7%
	Married	Count	73	35	108
		% of Total	26.5%	12.7%	39.3%
	Other	Count	20	13	33
		% of Total	7.3%	4.7%	12.0%
Total		Count	165	101	266
		% of Total	62.2%	37.8%	100.0%
<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			Value	df	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square			2.279 <sup>a</sup>	2	.320
Likelihood Ratio			2.296	2	.317
Linear-by-Linear Association			.753	1	.386
No. of Valid Cases			275		

0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.48.

Table 5.6 indicates that ecotourists dominated in the single status group, which had 28.4% (n=78) ecotourists and 20.4% (n=56) non-ecotourists. Similarly, married status had a response of 26.5% (n=73) ecotourists and 12.7% (n=35) non-ecotourists. The 'other' category consisted of widows and divorced respondents. Despite the low representation in count, a notable difference was observed with 7.3% (n=20) ecotourists and 4.7% (n=13) non-ecotourists.

However, the chi-square test indicated an insignificant relationship between marital status and being an ecotourist. The result of  $X^2=2.279$ :  $p>.320$  clearly signifies the non-related association between marital status and being an ecotourist. However, the counts in the single and married marital status groups are lucrative for business when compared with the 'other' category.

### 5.3.6 Cross comparison between income and being an ecotourist

Table 5.7 shows the results of the test for a possible relationship between income and being an ecotourist. Studies purport that ecotourists are associated with high-income. However, the results in Table 5.7 indicate differently. A total of 66.8% of respondents are presented as ecotourists, while 33.2% are non-ecotourists. From this observation, it can be deduced that if one has a source of income, the propensity to participate and become an ecotourist is positively influenced.

**Table 5.7: Income versus Ecotourist Cross tabulation**

Variable			Ecotourist		Total
			Yes	No	
Income	<R10 000	Count	57	39	96
		% of Total	23.1%	15.8%	38.9%
	R10 001–R20 000	Count	48	19	67
		% of Total	19.4%	7.7%	27.1%
	R20 001–R30 000	Count	28	9	37
		% of Total	11.3%	3.6%	15.0%
	R30 001–R40 000	Count	15	11	26
		% of Total	6.1%	4.5%	10.5%
	>R40 000	Count	17	4	21
		% of Total	6.9%	1.6%	8.5%
Total		Count	165	82	247
		% of Total	66.8%	33.2%	100.0%
<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			Value	df	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square			7.278 <sup>a</sup>	4	.122
Likelihood Ratio			7.449	4	.114
Linear-by-Linear Association			2.313	1	.128
No. of Valid Cases			247		

0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.97.

Table 5.7 indicates that in the income bracket of <R 10 000, the number of ecotourists is 23.1% as opposed to 15.8% non-ecotourists. The bracket of R10 001 to R20 000 demonstrated 19.4% ecotourists as opposed to 7.7% non-ecotourists. The bracket of R20 001 to R30 000 likewise,

had more ecotourists than non-ecotourists. Likewise, the bracket of R30 000 to R40 000, had more ecotourists (6.1%) than non-ecotourists (4.5%). Lastly, the bracket of >R40 000 had 6.9% ecotourists and 1.6% non-ecotourists.

As suggested by the differences in the totals of each category, it can be assumed that most ecotourists are found in the first three income brackets (<R10 000–R30 000). With reference to the chi-square results of  $X^2=7.278$ :  $p>.122$ , the two variables are independent of each other, suggesting a non-significant relationship between income and being an ecotourist.

### **5.3.7 Cross comparison between age and preferred attraction**

Table 5.8 indicates the findings of the cross comparison between age and preferred attraction. Respondents above 25 years in age prefer visiting natural attractions and cultural attractions compared with the age group of 24 years and below. Specifically, the Kruger National Park emerged as the most preferred attraction for all age groups, with the age group of 18–24 years indicating the highest intention of visiting.

The Mapungubwe World Heritage Site appeared to be the second preference in attraction choice by those aged between 25 years and 34 years, while the Polokwane Bird Sanctuary was the second preference for the 35+ year age group. Likewise, the Polokwane Bird Sanctuary was the second preference for respondents aged between 18 years and 24 years and was the third preference for the 25–34 year age group. Cultural attractions were the third preference for those aged 35 years and above. The results obtained are presented in Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8: Attractions versus Age cross tabulation**

Variable			AGE_R			Total
			18-24	25-34	35+	
Attractions	Kruger National Park	Count	47	36	43	126
		% of Total	17.5%	13.4%	16.0%	46.8%
	Mapungubwe Heritage Site	Count	5	22	11	38
		% of Total	1.9%	8.2%	4.1%	14.1%
	Langjan Nature Reserve	Count	6	8	7	21
		% of Total	2.2%	3.0%	2.6%	7.8%
	Polokwane Bird Sanctuary	Count	10	20	22	52
		% of Total	3.7%	7.4%	8.2%	19.3%
	Bakone Malapa Cultural Village	Count	0	8	11	19
		% of Total	0.0%	3.0%	4.1%	7.1%
	4x4 trail challenge	Count	1	4	8	13
		% of Total	0.4%	1.5%	2.9%	4.8%
Total		Count	69	101	105	275
		% of Total	25.7%	36.4%	37.9%	100.0%
<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			Value	df	P-value	
Pearson Chi-Square			29.270 <sup>a</sup>	10	.001	
Likelihood Ratio			33.456	10	.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association			13.692	1	.000	
No. of Valid Cases			269			

3 cells (19.3%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.33.

Interestingly, the 4x4 trail challenge was indicated as being the most-preferred activity by the 35+ year age group compared with the other age groups. The chi-square test results in Table 5.8 reveal a significant relationship between age and choice of attraction ( $X^2=29.270$ :  $p<.001$ ).

Additionally, symmetric measures showed a value greater than 0.3, confirming a strong relationship between age and preferred attraction. However, this excluded the Cramer's V value, which was less than 0.3 but was statistically significant and thus, the relationship between age and preferred attraction was accepted. It should be noted that the results in Table 5.8 indicate the responses of all participants without differentiating between ecotourists and non-ecotourists.

### 5.3.8 Cross comparison between age of ecotourists and preferred attraction

A second cross-tabulation test was conducted with the variable 'ecotourist' being the control variable. This was done to determine if the age of the ecotourist significantly influences the choice



of attraction. To avoid clustering of diagrams, the cross-tabulation results are explained without an illustration, and only the chi-square test results are shown in Table 5.9. It should be noted that the explanations are focused only on the ecotourists' responses.

**Table 5.9: Chi-square tests**

		<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>		
Ecotourist		Value	Df	P-value
Yes	Pearson Chi-Square	47.168 <sup>b</sup>	12	.000
	Likelihood Ratio	52.934	12	.000
	Linear-by-Linear Association	7.429	1	.006
	No. of Valid Cases	167		
No	Pearson Chi-Square	32.424 <sup>c</sup>	12	.001
	Likelihood Ratio	37.500	12	.000
	Linear-by-Linear Association	7.292	1	.007
	No. of Valid Cases	101		
Total	Pearson Chi-Square	29.417 <sup>a</sup>	12	.003
	Likelihood Ratio	35.088	12	.000
	Linear-by-Linear Association	14.789	1	.000
	No. of Valid Cases	268		

a. 3 cells (18.1%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.54.

b. 2 cells (17.6%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.75.

c. 3 cells (11.4%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.80.

A count of 167 ecotourists intended to visit the listed attractions compared with 101 non-ecotourists. However, the age group of 35+ years significantly emerged as the group with the most ecotourists (41.3%; n=69). The ecotourists within the 35+ year age group intended: (1) to visit the Kruger National Park; (2) to visit the Polokwane Bird Sanctuary; and (3) to participate in 4x4 trail challenges. The other attractions received minimal preference. The age group of 35+ years demonstrated 33.7% (n=34) non-ecotourists.

Relatively, the 25–34 year age group indicated 33.5% (n=56) ecotourists and 39.6% (n=40) non-ecotourists. The Kruger National Park and the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site were indicated as the most-preferred attractions, with an average of 27.7% (n=15). Langjan Nature Reserve, Polokwane Bird Sanctuary and Bakone Malapa Cultural Village were moderately preferred with an average of 14.3% (n=8). The adventurous activity (4x4 trail challenge) received minimal attention from this age group.

The age group of 18–24 years comprised the least number of ecotourists (25.1%; n=42), with 26.7% (n=27) non-ecotourists. For the ecotourists within this age group, the Kruger National Park was preferred by most (64.3%; n=27) of the ecotourists, while the responses for Polokwane Bird Sanctuary and Langjan Nature Reserve indicated 21.4% (n=9) and 11.9% (n=5) respectively. It is noticeable that within the age group of 18–24 years, natural attractions are the most preferred. These results indicate that a relationship between age and preferred attraction exists but depends on whether one is an ecotourist or not. The ecotourists exhibited a high level of preference for the mentioned attractions.

As indicated in Table 5.9, there is a statistically significant relationship between age and preferred attraction that depends on whether one is an ecotourist or not. The results of  $X^2=47.168$ :  $p<.000$  for ecotourists and  $X^2=32.424$ :  $p<.001$  for non-ecotourists were observed. The symmetric measure values were all greater than 0.3, thereby confirming a strong relationship for this aspect.

### 5.3.9 Cross comparison between education and being an ecotourist

The education attribute of ecotourists and non-ecotourists was explored in an attempt to determine if education level influences one to become an ecotourist. Table 5.10 indicates the results.

**Table 5.10: Education versus Ecotourist cross tabulation**

Variable			Ecotourist		Total
			Yes	No	
Education	Elementary school	Count	1	4	5
		% of Total	0.4%	1.6%	1.9%
	Secondary school	Count	21	25	46
		% of Total	8.1%	9.7%	17.8%
	Degree level	Count	57	21	78
		% of Total	22.1%	8.1%	30.2%
	Postgraduate level	Count	79	50	129
		% of Total	30.6%	19.4%	50.0%
Total		Count	158	100	258
		% of Total	61.2%	38.8%	100.0%
<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			Value	df	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square			12.896 <sup>a</sup>	3	.005
Likelihood Ratio			12.962	3	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association			3.071	1	.080

2 cells (25.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.94.

As indicated in Table 5.10, the number of ecotourists increases with the level of education acquired. A total of 30.6% of ecotourists surpassed or are currently at the postgraduate level, while 19.4% of non-ecotourists demonstrated the same level of education. A similarity to certain other ecotourism studies is observed within this study since the group at the postgraduate level of education has the highest number of respondents who are ecotourists. In contrast, the lowest level, elementary school, shows the least number of ecotourists. However, the chi-square test results indicate  $X^2=12.896$ :  $p=.005$  and thus, the relationship between education and being an ecotourist is statistically significant.

The following section presents the factor analysis conducted on a variety of aspects that may be identified as psychographic descriptors or behavioural descriptors.

## **5.4 FACTOR ANALYSIS**

### **5.4.1 Factor analysis on psychographic attributes based on choice of activities**

A factor analysis on psychographic attributes was conducted to address the objective of identifying psychographic descriptors applicable to ecotourists based on choice of activities. This was done by identifying the inherent and preferred activities of ecotourists at destinations, thus answering the research question regarding preferred activities of ecotourists. This assists in identifying the main attributes that trigger, influence or pull an ecotourist to participate in ecotourism activities at a certain destination. Before the factor analysis was conducted, tests for the measurement of internal consistency and inter-correlation values on items under responsible ecotourism activities and responsible behavioural descriptors were conducted (refer to Annexure E).

Principal Component Analysis was conducted on 16 activity preferences using Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation rotation method. Only cases that indicated 'Yes' to being an ecotourist were used for this analysis. This was done in an attempt to segment the listed cases based on ecotourists' preferences. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) confirmed the sampling adequacy for the analysis. The KMO value was 0.780, and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity reported a value of 1153.091, making it significant for Principal Component Analysis. Factors with an eigenvalue greater than one (1) were extracted, with factor loadings that had an absolute value below 0.4

being suppressed. Three items were dropped from the analysis since these had little correlation with other items. Table 5.11 indicates the emergence of two components that explained 63% of the total variance.

**Table 5.11: Factor structure for ecotourism activities**

Item	Component		Communalities
	Social action	Nature-based escape	
River rafting	.887		.796
Mountain biking	.847		.721
Canoeing	.834		.723
Fishing	.806		.664
Motorcycling	.790		.626
Guided game drives	.726		.617
Nature photography		.830	.703
4x4 trails		.821	.738
Hiking trails		.774	.619
Type of accommodation		.760	.586
Picnic sites		.704	.522
Backpack trails		.665	.687
Cronbach's alpha	.898	.838	
Eigenvalues	5.158	2.983	
% of variance	39.673	22.943	
Total variance	39.673	62.616	

- a. Only cases for which Ecotourist = Yes are used in the analysis phase.
- b. The criteria were based on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not important) to 4 (very important).

The two identified factors in Table 5.11 had Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .898 and .838 respectively. The indicated coefficients were interpreted as good, with Factor 1 closely reaching the excellent level of interpretation. This made it possible to analyse and interpret the two identified factors that are described in Table 5:12.

**Table 5.12: Factor description**

<b>Factor No.</b>	<b>Name of factor</b>	<b>% of variance</b>	<b>Factor description</b>
1	Social action	40%	Factor 1 consisted of activities such as river rafting, mountain biking, canoeing and fishing, with factor loadings greater than .800. The ecotourists prefer destinations that provide physically engaging activities that allow them to discover their stamina. Most of the identified activities are high-adrenaline boosters and, therefore, ecotourists participating in such activities generally have high levels of exploration. Therefore, destinations that satisfactorily provide the mentioned activities have a better competitive advantage.
2	Nature-based escape	23%	Activities with factor loadings greater than .800 were nature photography and 4x4 trails. This indicates that ecotourists who are oriented towards nature-based escape would opt for destinations that provide opportunities to participate in such activities. As indicated by the factor loadings, ecotourists preferring the indicated activities are associated with the need to seek relaxation. They prefer activities that are mentally relaxing such as the symbiotic engagements with the natural environment that can be achieved by participating in hiking trails.

#### **5.4.2 Factor analysis on behavioural descriptors and psychographic descriptors based on viewpoint**

A second factor analysis was conducted to address the objectives of identifying behavioural descriptors and certain psychographic descriptors that are applicable to ecotourists based on

ecotourist's viewpoint. The section also answers the research question regarding what determines ecotourists' participation in ecotourism. The results are indicated in Table 5.13. Cases that met the condition of 'Yes' to being an ecotourist were used in this analysis in an attempt to categorise the 20 cases being analysed. One item was excluded from the analysis because it had little correlation with the other items. The KMO and the Bartlett's test resulted in values of 0.682 and 1408.054 respectively, thus justifying the use of Principal Component Analysis.

**Table 5.13: Factor structure for behavioural descriptors**

Item	Component					Communalities
	1	2	3	4	5	
I travel in a group	.750					.672
I travel with family	.701					.670
I am willing to spend a portion of travel cost on protecting the environment	.642					.605
I use friends and family to provide information before travelling	.524					.441
I have a precise idea of where I want to go		.895				.834
I am pulled to a destination because of its attractions		.630				.663
I try to learn and understand the destination environment		.595				.594
I use the Internet, social media or blogs for information before travelling		.580				.624
Ecotourism is expensive			.774			.700
I always choose eco-tour operators			.704			.668
I travel to meet other people and share culture			.597			.632
I visit natural areas			.587			.658
I use green products			.561			.762
I am a responsible traveller				.772		.665
I conserve the environment				.756		.627
I arrange my own travel					.833	.740
I improve the well-being of local people					.705	.621
I travel to relieve stress and escape from crowds					.559	.625
Green attitude is important to me					.474	.568
I travel as a couple					.429	.432
Cronbach's alpha	.650	.750	.742	.755	.727	
Eigenvalues	5.866	2.367	1.805	1.438	1.328	
% of variance	29.328	11.836	9.023	7.188	6.642	
Total variance	29.328	11.836	9.023	7.188	6.642	

- Only cases for which Ecotourist = Yes are used in the analysis phase.
- The criteria were based on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

Five factors were limited for extraction. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were acceptable with Factor 2 to Factor 5 demonstrating .750, .742, .755 and .727 respectively, while the coefficient for

Factor 1 (.650) was interpreted as questionable. Factor 1 to Factor 5 were categorised as companionship; destination qualities; enriching and learning experience; conservationist; and relaxation respectively. Each factor is presented in Table 5.14.

**Table 5.14: Factor description**

<b>Factor No.</b>	<b>Name of factor</b>	<b>% of variance</b>	<b>Factor description</b>
1	Companionship	29%	Factor 1 comprises travel that is mainly in groups with known people such as family and friends in order to seek relaxation while escaping everyday life. The ecotourist is comfortable around familiar faces and seeks company the entire period of stay. The individual makes use of 'word-of-mouth' sources such as close friends and family members. The ecotourist is also willing to spend more on protecting and conserving the environment.
2	Destination qualities	12%	An important item was having knowledge of the destination to be visited. Additionally, the attractions at the destination were indicated as an important attribute. Since the ecotourist is particular about the services and attractions available at the destination, the selection of the destination is based upon the ability and potential of the destination characteristics and services to meet the needs of the respective ecotourist.

<b>Factor No.</b>	<b>Name of factor</b>	<b>% of variance</b>	<b>Factor description</b>
3	Enriching and learning experiences	9%	Factor 3 clarified the options of choosing natural attractions and ecotourism services that provide learning experiences such as acquiring knowledge of other cultures. The ecotourist selects destinations that create or provide opportunities to learn about various experiences that inherently enrich and improve one's knowledge.
4	Conservationist	7%	Being a responsible traveller and conserving the environment had similar factor loadings. The ecotourist values the protection of biodiversity and chooses to travel to destinations that will foster or enable the conservation of attractions. The ecotourist is mindful of actions that may harm the environment or disrupt the natural composition of cultural attractions.
5	Relaxation	7%	Arranging one's own travel itinerary offers peace of mind since the individual is assured that he/she has catered for all needs and is also aware of needs that may not be met during the trip. Other items included in this factor that indicated a high factor loading were relief from stress and improvement in the well-being of the local people. These are likely to improve the mindset and self-actualisation of the ecotourist.



The following section presents the cluster analysis. The test indicates possible clusters of ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality by grouping related attributes within each cluster.

## 5.5 CLUSTER ANALYSIS

The cluster analysis was based on the psychographic descriptors that were identified through the factor analysis (see Table 5.14). This resulted in the emergence of three clusters as indicated in Table 5.14. The cluster analysis was conducted to address the general objective of the study of determining the consumer profile of ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality and to answer the research question regarding the consumer profile of ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality. The identified clusters were subject to cross tabulation and ANOVA tests to determine the demographic descriptors of each cluster. It should be noted that high F values and statistically significant values were used to determine the most important attributes among the clusters.

**Table 5.15: Cluster analysis of preferences and behavioural indicators**

VARIABLE	CLUSTER			ANOVA		
	1	2	3	df	F	P-value
<b>No. of ecotourists</b>	51	35	55			
	<b>Preferences and behavioural indicators</b>					
<b>Purpose</b>	3	3	4	2	48.681	.000
<b>Accommodation</b>	5	3	4	2	5.337	.005
<b>Sponsor</b>	1	1	3	2	.670	.513
<b>Spending</b>	2	1	3	2	12.543	.000
<b>Length</b>	1	2	3	2	4.188	.016
<b>Trend</b>	5	3	5	2	2.984	.053
<b>Period</b>	1	3	2	2	7.911	.001
<b>Month</b>	2	12	12	2	22.946	.000
<b>Attractions</b>	1	1	2	2	1.084	.340

**Table 5.16: Cluster analysis of demographics**

VARIABLE	CLUSTER			ANOVA		
	1	2	3	df	F	P-value
<b>Demographic indicators</b>						
<b>Gender</b>	1	2	1	2	9.729	.000
<b>Age</b>	2	3	2	2	10.509	.000
<b>Ethnic group</b>	2	2	2	2	1.808	.166
<b>Education</b>	3	4	4	2	6.855	.001
<b>Occupation</b>	1	4	3	2	10.319	.000
<b>Status</b>	2	2	1	2	11.130	.000
<b>Household type</b>	5	5	4	2	3.549	.030
<b>Income</b>	1	1	2	2	2.178	.116
<b>Province</b>	5	9	5	2	17.850	.000

The three clusters presented in the following section are according to the findings indicated in Table 5.15 and Table 5.16.

### **5.5.1 Cluster 1: Moderate spenders**

This cluster was identified as the most dissimilar cluster and consisted of average spenders who use lodges for accommodation, spent an average of one day at the destination and spent between R5 000 and R10 000 during the eco-holiday. This cohort was observed to have been active in ecotourism for a period not exceeding two years. The cluster comprised ecotourists with a degree qualification who were aged between 25 years and 34 years. The cluster represented employed females in single-parent households who were interested in cultural activities and who originated from the Limpopo province. The purpose of travelling and participating in ecotourism activities was based on cultural motivations. The moderate spenders indicated the month of February as their peak season for travelling. However, this cluster only portrayed the capacity to travel within the destination as indicated by the number of days spent and hence demonstrated minimal potential to cause positive and significant spill-over effects into the surrounding communities.

### **5.5.2 Cluster 2: Minor spenders**

This cluster contained the least number of ecotourists and consisted of those who spent less than R5 000 at the destination and stayed for approximately two to three days. These ecotourists use

guesthouses for accommodation and prefer travelling in December. The cluster comprised individuals who have been active ecotourists for about five to ten years, are highly educated with a postgraduate degree qualification and are interested in attending cultural activities, preferably for exposure and learning opportunities. The group was dominated by retirees (35+ year age group) and by males who were married and originated from the Western Cape province.

### **5.5.3 Cluster 3: Heavy spenders**

This cluster consisted of the majority of ecotourists and comprised heavy spenders who spent between R10 000 and R15 0000 (total expenditure of the eco-holiday) at the destination and stayed in hotels for approximately four to five days. The description obtained from the demographics indicated the self-employed group as the key occupational group, and the company or the ecotourist was mainly responsible for sponsoring the trip. These descriptors imply that members of the cluster may be business ecotourists. In Cluster 3, the ecotourists were aged between 25 years and 34 years, were females in single-parent households and were interested in exhibitions. Those who were observed to have been active in ecotourism for about two to four years dominated the group. Mainly, the ecotourists' area of origin was the Limpopo province, and they preferred travelling in December. This cluster can create positive spill-over effects into surrounding communities since these ecotourists tend to travel extensively within and outside the destination during their visitor stay. This is observed by the intent to visit several natural attractions such as the Kruger National Park and the Polokwane Bird Sanctuary.

## **5.6 SUMMARY**

Chapter 5 provided the findings of the study that were subjected to statistical analysis, and which were obtained by means of a questionnaire. It can be assumed that the level of education observed influenced the trustworthiness of the received responses since most respondents were well educated and had a degree qualification or higher. The results indicated a high number of female participants and most respondents were above the age of 35 years. Not surprisingly, the black ethnic group dominated the study, and this was followed by respondents of white ethnicity.

It was observed from the findings that a number of items contribute to active participation in ecotourism and to the eventual development of an ecotourist. As noted in this study, in order for one to travel, there must be time and disposable income. Demographic descriptors identified in

this study are: single and married; single-parent household type and married-with-children household type; minimum education of a degree; age groups of 25–34 years and 35+ years; civil servant, self-employed and retired; and female.

The psychographic attributes observed in the study indicated social action and nature-based escape as the categories regarding activities for ecotourists. These categories have similarities to allocentrics and psychocentrics respectively. Additionally, companionship, destination qualities, enriching and learning experiences, conservation and relaxation were noted as important factors that determined the values and attitudes of ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality. Concerning behavioural attributes, heavy spenders, moderate spenders and minor spenders were identified.

The following chapter presents discussions of the findings in an attempt to provide sufficient recommendations and policies for ecotourism service providers, industry role players and stakeholders who have an interest in entering the ecotourism business.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **INFERENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 6 delivers an account of the previous chapters. The objectives of the study are initially addressed, and the presentation of the ecotourist profile in the Capricorn District Municipality follows. Practical recommendations, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are presented.

#### **6.2 SECONDARY OBJECTIVE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTORS**

As indicated in Chapter 5 section 5.3, several descriptors were identified to determine if one can become an ecotourist or if being an ecotourist is based on the applicability of the descriptor to the individual, resultantly meeting Secondary Objective 1.

The results of the study indicated a higher number of female participants than male participants with regard to gender distribution. From the findings in Chapter 5, ecotourists were highly represented in the female category, with 56.7% (n=101) of the total female participants indicated as ecotourists compared with 63.2% (n=67) in the male category (cf. Table 5.2). This study, therefore, discovered that ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality are mostly females. Similarities are identified in the findings of Zografos and Allcroft (2007:54) that indicate females dominating the ecotourism market. Relatedly, other ecotourism studies such as the self-identification of ecotourists by Deng and Li (2015:260) show similarities with respect to females outnumbering males, which could lead to the assumption that ecotourists are mostly females.

Regarding the age descriptor, the study identified the 35+ year age group as dominating (cf. Table 5.3). Other ecotourism studies such as the studies conducted by Yen-Ting, Wan-I and Tsung-Hsiung (2014:325) and Sheena, Mariapan and Aziz (2015:13) identified the young age group of 21–30 years and the age group of 21–40 years respectively as being significantly active in ecotourism activities. Therefore, the results of this study are in line with the findings of previous studies with regard to age. Weaver and Lawton (2002:277) suggest that the identification of such a relatively young age group could mean the presence of softer ecotourists in the study area,

which could denote that ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality are inclusive of softer ecotourists.

Referring to the occupational attribute results, the self-employed occupational group is highly significant in influencing one to become an ecotourist (cf. Table 5.4). Additionally, results in the study revealed a statistically significant relationship between education and being an ecotourist (cf. Table 5.10). Strong relationships were identified between both occupation and level of education and being recognised as an ecotourist or being influenced to become an ecotourist. Consistently, Fennell (2008:40), Kim and Slevitch (2010:79) and Torres-Sovero et al. (2011:547) identified highly educated individuals as dominating the ecotourism market. This leads to the suggestion that educated individuals in the Capricorn District Municipality with good occupations that provide more free time are likely to become ecotourists or understand ecotourism.

The results for household type indicated a statistically significant association with being an ecotourist (cf. Table 5.5). According to the study findings, ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality are mainly from the married-with-children, grandparents and single-person household types. Regarding marital status, a statistically insignificant relationship was indicated, representing an independent relationship between being an ecotourist and marital status (cf. Table 5.6). The absence of literature on the attribute 'household type' made it impossible to make comparisons with previous studies.

An attribute that is key in most tourism activities is the availability of disposable income. The more income earned, the more one is inclined to travel. However, the results of this study indicated a statistically insignificant relationship between being an ecotourist and income group (cf. Table 5.7). Deng and Li (2015:267) and Sheena, Mariapan and Aziz (2015:12) found similar results for income levels. This signifies that being an ecotourist is not dependent on one's income. Being an ecotourist is not influenced by disposable income increasing or remaining constant. However, the activities that the ecotourist undertakes are certainly dependent on disposable income and available time as well as the ecotourist's physical and mental ability to participate in the activity.

Possible reasons for the variations in demographics are:

- A possible cause of the representation of gender is outlined by Dinolia and Allen (1992) and cited in Lu and Stepchenkova (2012:711) as the tendency of women to disclose willingly more information to a stranger compared with men.

- The high number of females at eco-friendly establishments could be a matter of choice or simply women having more time to travel compared with men.
- Regarding occupational type, the study considers that from the two groups (retired and self employed), a common factor influencing the respondents to participate in ecotourism activities exists, and this may be the availability of more free time. Due to the nature of these occupations in which it is admissible for persons to manage their time freely, the inclination to travel and to participate in ecotourism activities is increased.
- The indicated household types show that when one falls under the single-person household, the married-with-children household or the grandparents household, there is a positive chance of becoming an ecotourist. The reasons behind such assumptions could be related to the family life cycle, which influences the type of trips taken and the attractions visited at a given point within the cycle.
- A common ground may thus be established in most family life cycles; visiting natural and cultural attractions that involve learning experiences is applicable to the identified households. This either intentionally or by chance aligns the individuals from these households to the principles of ecotourism, thereby influencing the individuals to become ecotourists or to participate in ecotourism activities.

### **6.3 SECONDARY OBJECTIVE 2: PSYCHOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTORS**

Chapter 5 section 5.4 indicated the analysis conducted to identify the psychographic descriptors applicable to ecotourists. The discussions in the study are based on the results indicated in Table 5.11, Table 5.12 and Table 5.13, which fulfil Secondary Objective 2: to identify and analyse the psychographic descriptors applicable to ecotourists.

The results of the study indicated *social action* and *nature-based escape* as psychographic descriptors for ecotourists (cf. Table 5.11). Likewise, Walters and Ruhanen (2015:529) indicated social action and nature-based escape as important motivations and reasons to participate in ecotourism. Jang and Wu (2006:308) indicated the same psychographic attributes. Du Toit et al. (2012:382) identified psychographic attributes such as aggressiveness and conservation, which are in line with this study's findings. Hence, it is reasonable to accept the indicated psychographic descriptors identified in this study. This study, therefore, proposes that individuals who seek the aggressiveness attribute tend to prefer social activities that involve physical activities such as those indicated in the social-action descriptor in this study. Holden and Sparrowhawk (2002:444) classify such individuals as hard ecotourists. The conservation attribute is associated with

individuals who pursue relaxation and learning, thus relating to soft ecotourists and associating with ecotourists seeking a nature-based escape experience.

The results of this study show that ecotourists seeking social action prefer destinations that offer activities such as river rafting, mountain biking, canoeing, fishing, motorcycling and guided game drives. The ecotourists that seek a nature-based escape consider nature photography, 4x4 trails, hiking trails, backpack trails, picnic sites and type of accommodation to be of significant value in satisfying their needs (cf. Table 5.11).

Despite the arduous task of attempting to generalise ecotourists' descriptions, Sheena, Mariapan and Aziz (2015:13) indicated similar traits in ecotourists seeking to connect with the natural surroundings. Likewise, Walters and Ruhanen (2015:530) identified related traits falling under relatively common constructs in a study that attempted to identify viable visitor segments for climate-affected Alpine destinations. Therefore, this study concludes that ecotourists found in the Capricorn District Municipality have a spectrum of favoured activities in which to participate, with social-action and nature-based escape activities being the most preferred.

Psychographic attributes influence the choice of destination and considering this, *destination quality* is another psychographic descriptor identified and accepted in this study (cf. Table 5.13). Likewise, Walters and Ruhanen (2015:530) identified a similar descriptor as reliable in recognising ecotourists. This study, therefore, suggests that ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality choose their destination because they have precise knowledge of where they are going, are aware of the availability of preferred attractions or are simply willing to learn and understand the destination (cf. Table 5.13). This outlines why destination quality as a descriptor is important in identifying ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality.

Additionally, this study's results indicated *relaxation* as a psychographic descriptor that was accepted by this study for recognising and identifying ecotourists. As identified in the study's findings, ecotourists seeking relaxation prefer to arrange their own travel, and they travel to relieve stress and are willing to improve the well-being of local people (cf. Table 5.12). Relaxation as a psychographic attribute has been identified in many studies such as that of Jones and Lalley (2013:271). However, in their study, the attribute was linked to ecotourists seeking relaxation through game viewing (Jones and Lalley, 2013:271) whereas in the findings of Walters and Ruhanen (2015:258), relaxation was associated with romantic getaways. The current study, therefore, suggests that ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality have a diverse way of relaxing compared with the ecotourists described by Jones and Lalley (2013:271) who were



visiting and staying at the lodges surrounding the Kruger National Park. This outlines the fact that destinations are indeed unique and attract different types of ecotourists, making the descriptor relaxation important in identifying ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality.

Furthermore, *compassion* as a psychographic attribute was identified in this study (cf. Table 5.12). Compassion was termed by Walters and Ruhanen (2015:30) as family friendly while Srihadi, Sukandar and Soehadi (2016:35) considered it as travel companionship; in both cases, the descriptor was identified as important in identifying ecotourists. A common ground in these findings is seeking comfort in a group of people at a destination that offers the experience of relaxation. This was also identified in a number of other studies such as those by Dey and Sarma (2006:35), Kwan et al. (2010:3) and Weaver and Lawton (2016:1), thereby making the compassion descriptor acceptable in identifying and recognising the ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality.

Lastly, the study recognised *enriching and learning* as a psychographic descriptor. The acceptance of the descriptor was derived from Saayman, Slabbert and Van der Merwe (2009:90) who likewise identified enriching and learning as an important descriptor in motivating ecotourists to participate in ecotourism activities. However, the need to learn and enrich one's knowledge was identified earlier by Huang and Xiao (2000:212) and Lee, Lee and Wicks (2004:68), which strengthened the reason to accept the descriptor as applicable to ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality. This study, therefore, suggests that ecotourists prefer destinations that offer enabling environments for learning and enriching oneself. Correspondingly, the findings in this study highlighted alike traits with regard to enriching and learning. This presents service providers with a better perspective on what ecotourists may regard as an ecotourism product; the product should facilitate enriching and learning experiences for the ecotourist.

Possible reasons for the identified psychographic descriptors are:

- Ecotourists are driven by push and pull factors. In this case, the need for social action or nature-based escape could act as a push factor for the ecotourists found in the Capricorn District Municipality. Considering the time of the year that the data collection was conducted (September to December), a peak season for travellers, potential ecotourists might have sought the need to be away from their everyday life and demanding jobs. Moreover, improved access to educative information such as environmental awareness programmes has indirectly improved travellers' choices and made travellers mindful of the alternative forms of tourism such as ecotourism.

- Destination qualities are considered to be pull factors. The Capricorn District Municipality is known for its natural attractions such as the Blouberg Nature Reserve. The unique attributes act as pull factors. Therefore, ecotourists motivated by the need for a social action or nature-based escape experience found Capricorn District Municipality suitable to satisfy their needs. It is, therefore, evident that the Capricorn District Municipality has noticeable cues that invoke ecotourists to recognise their need to travel.
- Luo and Deng (2008:396) identified travellers visiting natural attractions who were seeking a nature-based escape experience, and a similar case was observed in this study. Ecotourists may seek a natural environment for the acquisition of knowledge, a sense of self-development, an escape from home as well as for physical activities. Additionally, they could be seeking an experience in new places in an attempt to challenge themselves and discover who they are (Raadik et al., 2010:237).
- The findings in Chapter 5 (cf. Table 5.11) indicated that ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality prefer the physically challenging activities (social action) compared with the less physically demanding activities (nature-based escape).

#### **6.4 SECONDARY OBJECTIVE 3: BEHAVIOURAL DESCRIPTORS**

Chapter 5 section 5.5 provided information that indicated the behavioural descriptors, thus making it reasonable to meet the secondary objective of identifying and analysing the behavioural descriptors applicable to ecotourists. The discussions are based on the results indicated in Table 5.12 and Table 5.14.

Specific behavioural descriptors such as *responsible behaviour* and the *act to conserve the environment* were identified for ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality (cf. Table 5.12). In the findings of Zografos and Allcroft (2007:47), behavioural descriptors such as responsible behaviour was associated with individuals who place high value on biodiversity preservation. Relatedly, Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008:156) and Saayman and Saayman (2009:7) identified the motives behind travelling to conservation areas, and these included seeking a natural setting, activities at the destination, escape, photography and family socialisation. Therefore, this study suggests that ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality are responsible, conserve the environment and place a high value on conservation and preservation of the natural environment.

The attribute trend of travelling indicated the travelling patterns of ecotourists. This attribute was seen as necessary in identifying ecotourists. It was observed that ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality are mainly characterised by *travelling twice per year* (cf. Table 5.13). The findings indicated that ecotourists travel every six months, which means taking a holiday or business trip twice a year. The ecotourists indicated *spending R15 000 at most* for the trip. This spending occurred within the destination although the ecotourists indicated the intent to visit attractions beyond the study area (cf. Table 5.13). These two aforementioned attributes lack substantial literature from previous studies to make reasonable comparisons.

Other descriptors identified were derived from the length of stay, the month travelled and the type of accommodation used. The study findings indicated a *4- to 5-day trip* for most ecotourists, with the month of travel being *December* (cf. Table 5.13). The most-used accommodation type was the *hotel* (cf. Table 5.13). These descriptors have not been addressed by many researchers in their studies on segmenting ecotourists based on behavioural attributes. Loyalty points and special patron packages are becoming common with modernised accommodation establishments. Loyalty points may be gained through repeat visits and long stays and in this case, the research findings will be of value since it will be simple to segment guests based on their usage rate (Sikarwar and Verma, 2012:2). The current study thus endorses the identified descriptors as suitable for ecotourist identification purposes.

Based on the identified behavioural descriptors, segmentation can effectively be conducted, identifying active ecotourists and passive ecotourists (Dey and Sarma, 2006:36). Such behavioural patterns can subsequently be used to develop customer profiles (Erasmus, Strydom and Rudansky-Klopper, 2013:396). The mentioned descriptors were identified from the most lucrative cluster of the heavy spenders (cf. Table 5.13).

## **6.5 ECOTOURIST PROFILE**

Attempts to profile ecotourists in the world have been made, with notable breakthroughs being achieved by researchers such as Lindberg (1991:3), Blamey and Braithwaite (1997:30), Palacio and McCool (1997:235), Diamantis (1999:100), Dey and Sarma (2006:35), Krider et al. (2010:782), Kwan et al. (2010:3), Tangeland (2011:11) and Weaver and Lawton (2016:1). As more researchers delve into classifying the ideal ecotourist, painstakingly trying to define a universal ecotourist profile, variances are observed in their findings (Deng and Li, 2015:267). Significant reasons for these variations may include the measurement used to classify the

ecotourist and the sample size used to devise the ecotourist classifications. Classifying ecotourists according to the specific destination visited was thus adopted in this study. This technique is preferable in creating a profile of the ecotourist specific to the respective destination and led to the identification of the following profile indicated in Table 6.1 for ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality.

**Table 6.1: Ecotourist profile for Capricorn District Municipality**

ITEM	THE VISITOR
Area of residence	Limpopo province
Age	35+ years
Gender	Female
Education	Postgraduate qualification
Occupational status	Self employed
Monthly income level	R10 000–R20 000
Household type	Single parent
Psychographic determinant	Destination qualities, relaxation
ITEM	THE VISIT
Period of visit	December
Purpose of visit	Exhibitions
Duration of stay	4–5 days
Trend of travel	Twice per year
Accommodation used	Hotels
Attractions visited	Kruger National Park, Polokwane Bird Sanctuary
Source of destination information	Internet and tour operators
Expenditure	R10 000–R15 000 (Heavy spenders)
Activities	Social action

The identified ecotourist profile indicated in Table 6.1 illuminates the ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality and is developed from Chapter 5 section 5.5. The profile assists in linking certain attributes to specific motives of travel and identifying the accompanying traits that could distinguish the different types of ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality.

The profile is described as follows:

- It is evident that the Capricorn District Municipality is supported by inhabitants originating from the Limpopo province (cf. Table 5.15). Observing the profile, ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality are well educated and are in the age group of 35 years and above.
- The profile comprises ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality who have the propensity to travel at least twice a year to ecotourism destinations. The identified ecotourist profile indicates multiple ecotourism attractions that ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality intend to visit during their holiday or trip (cf. Table 5.14).
- The profile indicates self-employed ecotourists who are in the 'heavy spenders' category in terms of spending for the trip (cf. Table 5.14).
- The ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality travel mainly to attend exhibitions and stay at hotels for accommodation (cf. Table 5.14).
- Ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality prefer to use Internet sources and tour operators for destination information before travelling (cf. Table 5.12). Hence, promotional material directed through the mentioned channels can effectively reach the desired audience.
- In terms of motivation to travel, ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality seek relaxation. Destination qualities augment the need to be on holiday. This entails that the ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality are particular about the destinations visited (cf. Table 5.12).
- Regarding activities, the profile of ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality indicates social activities being the most preferred (cf. Table 5.11).

Many ecotourism studies such as those of Weaver (2002:22) and Weaver and Lawton (2002:273) use psychographic attributes to categorise ecotourists and identify the ecotourist profile. This study went further and merged the psychographic attributes and behavioural descriptors in an attempt to identify the most important differences among ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality. This resulted in three clusters being identified that could provide additional information with regard to targeting other ecotourist profiles (cf. Table 5.14 and Table 5.15). For advancement in the ecotourism market, only the lucrative cluster (the dominating cluster in terms of population) was recommended and prescribed as the main profile for ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality.

The following section examines the possible recommendations applicable to various stakeholders in order to improve ecotourism services through the understanding of the Capricorn District Municipality ecotourist.

## **6.6 PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

From an academic viewpoint, this study has directly responded to needed market intelligence. Literature indicated the inadequate understanding of service providers with regard to the ecotourist. The following are recommendations derived from the demographic descriptors:

- The study identified demographic descriptors for ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality that should provide service providers with a platform to understand reasonably the characteristics of the potential customer.
- The results of the study may, therefore, be used as a focal point for marketing strategies such as the segmentation processes based on customer characteristics.
- With the availability of knowledge regarding the ecotourist, ecotourism product and service management can improve their marketing strategies by ideally conducting an introspection of the services offered to ecotourists.
- Inherently, the demographic descriptors could provide new avenues to exploit, which could lead to promotional material effectively reaching the targeted ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality.

The study illuminated the psychographic descriptors that are important in understanding the expectations of ecotourists. The following benefits resulted from the psychographic descriptors:

- An understanding of the psychographic descriptors would enhance management's perceptions of potential ecotourists.
- The results of the study should enable management to implement strategies in line with ecotourists' expectations.
- Service providers would improve their competitiveness in the market since they would align their offerings with ecotourists' expectations.
- The presence of market intelligence derived from psychographic descriptors would assist service providers in marketing and delivering the expected and the right products and services to the potential ecotourist.

- Product packages can be effectively designed if psychographic attributes are included during the design process. Resources are thereby cost-effectively managed and directed to profitable ecotourist segments of similar psychographic attributes.
- The alignment of offerings with ecotourists' expectations would improve the service quality, which in turn, would lead to the satisfaction of visiting ecotourists.
- As psychographic descriptors of ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality are used to recognise and perceive the expectations of ecotourists that are guided by the demographic descriptors, satisfaction may be achieved for the different types of ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality.

Another area of importance to service providers are the behavioural descriptors of the ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality. The study identified traits associated with the ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality, which resulted in identifying the following benefits and recommendations:

- Behavioural descriptors denoted in the 'minor spenders' cohort, the 'average spenders' cohort and the 'heavy spenders' cohort will assist service providers by providing information that they should use to predict customer trends.
- The tourism industry is marked by peak and low seasons. The behavioural characteristics of ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality will assist service providers and stakeholders in gaining a better vision of what to expect in the following season, the type of ecotourist that will be dominating the season and the type of expectations the ecotourists may have during defined seasonal times.
- The identified traits together with the psychographic and demographic descriptors may provide the opportunity for strategic decisions to be implemented on the emerging clusters.
- The clusters identified in the study could provide a base for target marketing. Ideally, the identified clusters will assist in directing marketing messages and delivering expected ecotourism services to the categorised ecotourists, thereby addressing the ecotourism trend experienced in the industry.

The study identified the profile of ecotourists in the Capricorn District Municipality. Benefits and recommendations according to the identified profile are presented below:

- In an effort to achieve the plan of the Limpopo province becoming the preferred ecotourism destination in South Africa, responsible government departments should understand and gain knowledge of the profile of ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality.
- Through the study results, a perspective of the potential ecotourist can be established. The findings provide the foundation and the directions to follow for understanding the ecotourist.
- Through understanding the ecotourist, programmes aimed at improving service providers' offerings may be organised.
- An operative environment guided by policies that foster the conservation and preservation of natural and cultural attractions can be set, delivering satisfactory services to ecotourists visiting the Capricorn District Municipality.
- The availability of market intelligence such as the identified profile and clusters will aid service providers in identifying viable markets that they can effectively service.
- With such understanding by service providers, it becomes less strenuous to adjust to market needs and hence, less challenging to move swiftly to address the needs of the dynamic customer of today.
- Ecotourism service providers will be able to comprehend the seasonality issues experienced in the ecotourism market.
- Planning becomes realistic since seasonality issues are considered, thus improving the implementation processes and subsequently enhancing the working environment. Ultimately, this will improve service quality and lead to satisfied ecotourists.

## **6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Achieving reasonable results from the study was an arduous task. However, the use of eco-friendly accommodation establishments and attractions made it possible to complete the study. Certain limitations were encountered during the course of the study:

- The absence of a distinct sample frame made it difficult to select certified eco-friendly attractions and establishments where ecotourists were likely to be found.
- Literature on ecotourist arrivals in the Capricorn District Municipality was limited, making it difficult to present comparisons with other destinations.



- South African ecotourism statistics are unavailable from recognised and legitimate sources.
- Certain accommodation establishments from the sample denied the researcher access to guests, making it difficult to obtain the desired response rate.
- As patrons enjoyed their holidays, participating in the study was seen as a disturbance. In some cases, respondents did not return the questionnaires.
- The study results are limited to a local context since most of the respondents were South African.

## **6.8 FURTHER RESEARCH**

During the course of the study, certain areas that require further investigation were identified. These are as follows:

- Concerning the availability of literature focusing on ecotourists within the local context, the body of knowledge appears to be limited and hence, the need for additional information from scholars exists.
- Since ecotourism is still developing within South African borders, there is a need for additional information regarding the specific destinations that may become ecotourism destinations. This would support the establishment of ecotourism in the respective areas.
- In order to improve the competitiveness of the ecotourism industry, comparisons should be made among ecotourism destinations to identify areas that could be replicated in other destinations.
- The research findings indicated an independent relationship between income and being an ecotourist. More investigations should be conducted for a better understanding of this relationship.

## **6.9 CONCLUSIONS**

The study is envisaged to assist in improving ecotourism services in the Capricorn District Municipality. The distribution of the information provided in this study to policy makers, market analysts, destination developers, tour operators, marketing agencies, hoteliers, business owners, managers of establishments and attractions, government departments and interested stakeholders should enhance decision-making and lead to improved planning and better marketing strategies. This should enable service providers to design better tour packages and to

achieve improved customer perceptions, resultantly meeting customer expectations. If the services are improved, a harmonious relationship between the environment and ecotourism is simultaneously fostered, leading to the conservation of natural and cultural attractions and the preservation of the heritage of destinations. Ultimately, the cues for transformation of the Limpopo province into a green economy will become real. Overall, the Limpopo province will improve its competitiveness and thereby become the preferred ecotourism destination in South Africa.

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## ANNEXURE A: CONSENT FORM



### SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

### DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

#### INTRODUCTION

My name is **Nheta Daniel. S**, a full-time Master's student at the University of Venda. I am carrying out research on: **Profiling Ecotourists within the Capricorn District Municipality.**

I kindly request for your participation in this research by expressing your views on the topic. The purpose of this study is to create an understanding of ecotourists in terms of who they are, what they need, what they prefer, how they participate in ecotourism activities which will be arrived at by profiling an ecotourist. This will help ecotourism service providers in comprehending the needs and wants of ecotourists and thus developing eco-friendly services and ecotourism products that meet the expectations of ecotourists.

Your participation is voluntary, and you will be asked to respond to questions related to the research topic. You are also reminded that should you feel the questions are not proper, you can choose not to answer and you have the right to withdraw from the study even after you started completing the questions. The questionnaire will take about 7-10 minutes to complete. The questions do not require you to provide your details such as your name and contact details. Thus, your confidentiality will be protected and the information provided will not be shared with third parties without your consent. Therefore, you are kindly asked to give your honest opinion as it will influence the quality of ecotourism services you will receive in the future.

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Venda, you are invited to complete this form as an indication of your permission to voluntarily participate in this study

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby confirm that I have been fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and activities of the study. The rights and risks of learners' participation have also been fully explained to me. I was given full opportunity to ask any questions and I understand that participants can withdraw from the study at any stage and time, without giving any reasons.

I therefore hereby **Give/Do not give** my consent to voluntarily take part in the study as outlined **(Delete the inapplicable)**.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## ANNEXURE B: PERMISSION LETTER



**SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT**  
**PERMISSION LETTER**

Private Bag X5050

Thohoyandou

(015 962 9105)

Tourism accommodation establishments

Capricorn District

Limpopo Province

Dear Sir/Mam

RE: Request for permission to interview your guests

Good day, my name is Daniel Silent NHETA; 11613021 a full-time Masters student. I am presently working on a Masters dissertation titled Profiling Ecotourists within Capricorn District Municipality under the auspices of University of Venda. The purpose of the research is to find out the characteristics of Ecotourists. A purposive sampling technique was used to select your establishment. It will represent the other establishments in Capricorn District. Your help and support on this interview will be instrumental for the completion of the dissertation.

I hereby request for permission to approach your present guests and interview them. **All the information they will provide will not be directly linked to your establishment. The information provided will only be used for the mentioned research purposes only. I will ensure that the interview session will not influence a negative experience related to your establishment.** For further information do not hesitate to contact the Head of Department on the details provided above.

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Venda, you are invited to complete this form as an indication of your permission to voluntarily participate in this study

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby confirm that I have been fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and activities of the study. The rights and risks of learners' participation have also been fully explained to me. I was given full opportunity to ask any questions and I understand that participants can withdraw from the study at any stage and time, without giving any reasons.

I therefore hereby **Give/Do not give** my consent for the guests and any relevant member to voluntarily take part in the study as outlined (**Delete the inapplicable**).

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## ANNEXURE C: ECOTOURIST QUESTIONNAIRE



University of Venda

**SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT  
PERMISSION LETTER**

Private Bag X5050  
Thohoyandou  
(015 962 8216)

### COVER LETTER – SURVEY

Dear Sir/Madam

#### **SURVEY OF PROFILING ECOTOURISTS WITHIN CAPRICORN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

I am currently in the process of collecting data for the completion of a Master's degree in Tourism, under the auspices of University of Venda Department of Tourism & Hospitality. The purpose of the study is to Profile Ecotourists in Capricorn District Municipality. It will be appreciated if you could answer all the questions in the attached questionnaire. It should not take more than fifteen minutes of your time and we want to thank you in advance for your cooperation. By not placing your name on the questionnaire your responses are kept anonymous and no one will be able to identify you as a respondent in this study.

YOURS SINCERELY

-----  
Daniel Silent NHETA; 11613021  
RESEACHER

Email: danielnheta@gmail.com

**Primary investigator:** Mr. DS Nheta

**Supervisor:** Dr. N. Tshipala

**Co-Supervisor:** Mrs. T. Madzunye

**SECTION A: PREFERENCES (CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX)**

<b>1. Which transport method do you prefer to use <i>when traveling to a destination</i>?</b>									
Airplane	1	Bus	2	Vehicle hire	3	Taxi /shuttles	4	Own vehicle	5
<b>2. Which transport method do you prefer to use <i>within the destination</i>?</b>									
Airplane	1	Bus	2	Vehicle hire	3	Taxi /shuttles	4	Own vehicle	5
<b>3. What is the purpose of your visit? (Indicate one)</b>									
Business	1	Conference	2	Cultural	3	Exhibition	4	Health issues	5
Holiday	6	Incentive	7	Religious	8	Family	9	Studying	10
Friends	11	Other .....							
<b>4. What type of accommodation would you prefer? (indicate one)</b>									
Backpacker	1	Family home	2	Guest house	3	Hotel	4	Lodge	5
Resort	6	Self-catering	7	Camping	8	Caravanning	9	Friend home	10
Other .....									
<b>5. Who pays for your ecotourism trip and activities?</b>									
Yourself	1	Children	2	Company	3	Family	4	Friends	5
Spouse	6	Other	7	-		-		-	
<b>6. How much do you generally spend on a trip?</b>									
Less than R5 000	1	R5 000 to R10 00	2	R10 001 to R15 000	3	R15 001 to R20 000	4	More than R20 000	5
<b>7. How long do you spend on a trip?</b>									
1 day	1	2-3 days	2	4-5 days	3	6-7 days	4	2 weeks	5
3-4 weeks	6	1 month	7	2 months	8	3 months	9	>3 months	10
<b>8. Which month of the year do you prefer to travel?</b>									
January	1	February	2	March	3	April	4	May	5
June	6	July	7	August	8	September	9	October	10
November	11	December	12	-		-		-	
<b>9. How often do you travel to ecotourism destinations within a year?</b>									
Daily	1	Weekly	2	Monthly	3	After 3 months	4	After 6 months	5
<b>10. Do you consider yourself an eco-tourist?</b>								YES	NO
<b>11. If YES to question 10, how long have you been a responsible ecotourist?</b>									
Less than 2 years	1	2-4 years	2	5-10 years	3	More than 10 years	4		

**12. Which attractions do you intend to visit within Limpopo Province?**

Kruger National Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Mapungubwe Heritage site	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Langjan Nature Reserve	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	Polokwane Bird Sanctuary	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Bakone Malapa Cultural Village	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	4x4 trail challenge	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
Other .....					

**13. Rate the following according to how you perceive them as relevant in responsible ecotourism activities. Use the following scale:**

1 = Not important		2 = Important		3 = Slightly important		4 = Very important					
ACTIVITY		SCALE		ACTIVITY		SCALE					
Guided game drives		1	2	3	4	Nature photography		1	2	3	4
Bird watching		1	2	3	4	Swimming pool		1	2	3	4
Picnic sites		1	2	3	4	Back-pack trails		1	2	3	4
Guided nature walks		1	2	3	4	Mountain biking		1	2	3	4
Horse-riding		1	2	3	4	Canoeing		1	2	3	4
Type of accommodation		1	2	3	4	River-rafting		1	2	3	4
Hiking trails		1	2	3	4	Fishing		1	2	3	4
4x4 trails		1	2	3	4	Motorcycling		1	2	3	4

### SECTION B: RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOURAL DESCRIPTORS

Kindly cross the number which applies to you as represented by the scale. **SCALE =**

1 = Strongly disagree		2 = Disagree		3 = Agree		4 = Strongly agree	
STATEMENT		SCALE		SCALE		SCALE	
14	I am a responsible traveler.	1	2	3	4		
15	I visit natural areas.	1	2	3	4		
16	I conserve the environment.	1	2	3	4		
17	I improve the well-being of local people.	1	2	3	4		
18	Green attitude is important to me.	1	2	3	4		
19	I use green products.	1	2	3	4		
20	I travel to relieve stress and escape from crowds.	1	2	3	4		
21	I travel to meet other people and share culture.	1	2	3	4		
22	Ecotourism is expensive.	1	2	3	4		
23	I always choose eco-tour operators.	1	2	3	4		
24	I use the internet, social media or blogs for information before travelling.	1	2	3	4		
25	I use friends and family to provide information before travelling.	1	2	3	4		
26	I arrange my own travel.	1	2	3	4		
27	I try to learn and understand the destination environment	1	2	3	4		
28	I have a precise idea of where I want to go.	1	2	3	4		
29	I am pulled to a destination because of its attractions.	1	2	3	4		
30	I am willing to spend a portion of travel cost on protecting the environment	1	2	3	4		
31	I travel alone.	1	2	3	4		
32	I travel as a couple.	1	2	3	4		
33	I travel with family.	1	2	3	4		
34	I travel in a group.	1	2	3	4		

**SECTION C: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS. CROSS THE BOX WITH THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER**

**35. State your gender**

Female  1 Male  2 Other  3

**36. Kindly state your age group**

18-24  1 25-34  2 35+  3

**37. Kindly state your race**

Asiatic  1 Black  2 Coloured  3 White  4

**38. Please indicate your level of education**

Elementary school  1 Secondary school  2 Degree level  3 Postgraduate level  4

**39. What is your occupation?**

Civil servant  1 student  2 self-employed  3 retired  4 not employed  5 employed  6

**40. Marital status**

Single  1 Married  2 Divorced  3 Widowed  4 Other (specify) .....

**41. How many children do you have?**

None  1 1  2 2  3 3  4 4+  5

**42. How many are you in your family?** 1  1 2  2 3  3 4  4 5  5 6+  6

**43. What is your current household type?**

Single person household  1 Couple without children  2 Same sex parents  3

Single parent  4 Married with children  5 Grandparents  6

Couple with children  7 Married without children  8

**44. If you have any income, how much is your individual monthly income?**

≤R10 000  1 R10 001-R20 000  2 R20 001-R30 000  3 R30 001-R40 000  4 >R40 000  5

**45. Kindly state the continent you are coming from?**

Africa  1 Antarctica  2 Asia  3 Australia  4

Europe  5 North America  6 South America  7

**46. If you are from South Africa, kindly state the province you are coming from?**

Eastern Cape  1 Free State  2 Gauteng  3

KwaZulu- Natal  4 Limpopo  5 Mpumalanga  6

North West

7

Northern Cape

8

Western Cape

9

**Thank you for your participation!**

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:

**Mr DS Nheta**

**Student No: 11613021**

**PROJECT TITLE: Profiling Ecotourists at the  
Capricorn District: A case of Polokwane  
Municipality**

**PROJECT NO: SMS/16/BMA/03/2505**

**SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS**

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr NN Tshipala	University of Venda	Supervisor
Ms T Nethengwe	University of Venda	Co-Supervisor
Mr DS Nheta	University of Venda	Investigator - Student

ISSUED BY:

**UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Date Considered: May 2016

Decision by Ethical Clearance Committee Granted

Signature of Chairperson of the Committee: .....

Name of the Chairperson of the Committee: Prof. G.E. Ekosse



University of Venda

PRIVATE BAG X5050, THOHOYANDOU, 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA  
TELEPHONE (015) 962 8504/8313 FAX (015) 962 9060

*"A quality driven financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University"*

## ANNEXURE E: DATA ANALYSIS REFERRALS

A1: Measurement for internal consistency on items falling under responsible ecotourism activities

### Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
B13.1	42.12	126.989	.600	.768
B13.2	42.15	132.833	.304	.783
B13.3	42.31	128.566	.484	.773
<b>B13.4</b>	<b>41.93</b>	<b>117.491</b>	<b>.243</b>	<b>.815</b>
B13.5	42.11	120.151	.310	.792
B13.6	41.98	132.666	.328	.782
B13.7	42.35	127.284	.490	.772
B13.8	42.59	127.150	.520	.771
B13.9	42.33	131.295	.383	.779
<b>B13.10</b>	<b>42.07</b>	<b>124.444</b>	<b>.233</b>	<b>.800</b>
B13.11	42.55	122.851	.649	.762
B13.12	42.13	126.872	.499	.771
B13.13	42.40	125.944	.576	.767
B13.14	42.38	128.023	.506	.772
B13.15	42.22	127.330	.536	.770
B13.16	42.29	125.687	.541	.768

All items in red font were dropped out from further analysis as their deletion significantly improved Cronbach's Alpha value.

A2: Measurement for internal consistency on items under responsible behavioural descriptors.

**Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
B14	60.63	104.279	.514	.846
B15	60.71	103.010	.517	.845
B16	60.74	103.208	.419	.849
B17	60.88	103.138	.538	.845
B18	60.96	104.768	.387	.850
B19	60.83	102.507	.586	.843
B20	60.86	100.746	.524	.844
B21	60.77	103.661	.477	.846
<b>B22</b>	<b>61.00</b>	<b>107.521</b>	<b>.296</b>	<b>.853</b>
<b>B23</b>	<b>61.22</b>	<b>107.963</b>	<b>.219</b>	<b>.856</b>
B24	60.75	103.701	.487	.846
B25	61.09	102.356	.475	.846
B26	60.97	104.331	.343	.852
B27	60.90	102.285	.550	.844
B28	60.83	106.135	.398	.849
B29	60.95	102.247	.461	.847
B30	61.34	102.319	.489	.846
<b>B31</b>	<b>61.65</b>	<b>110.431</b>	<b>.049</b>	<b>.868</b>
B32	61.26	100.443	.531	.844
B33	60.89	102.344	.548	.844
B34	61.21	101.273	.481	.846

The items in the **red** font were dropped while those in **green** were retained as their deletion did not cause any significant change to Cronbach's Alpha value.