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INSIGHTS INTO PERCEPTIONS ON THREATS TO THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ECOTOURISM:

A STUDY OF MPUMALANGA-BASED ECOTOURISM MANAGERS

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A dissertation submitted to the higher degrees committee of the School of Economics and Business Sciences, Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Commerce in the fields of Sustainability and Tourism Management.

Protocol No. H13/10/11

Declaration

I, the undersigned, _____ hereby declare that this research is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Masters of Commerce at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

I further declare that:

- I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others and,
- I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

_____ _____

MR Mokoena Date

Abstract

In an age where accountability can no longer be evaded, sustainability is fast becoming a global standard. Contemplations beyond the bottom line have taken on increased significance with the assimilation of social and environmental considerations of the business concern. In the face of these developments ecotourism has emerged as a form of sustainable tourism within the sustainability paradigm and is anticipated; to boost conservation efforts, economic development and to significantly improve the standards of living of the residents of surrounding communities in developing countries. Notwithstanding marked progress and developments following the country's political dispensation, South Africa is still plagued with the notorious trifecta; poverty, unemployment and inequality. If ecotourism is to be successful in its attempts to significantly alleviate these, factors that inhibit it progress need to be firstly identified then conscientiously evaluated. It is worthwhile to assess these from the vantage point of the managers of ecotourism businesses; who as a consequence of their occupations contend with these on a daily basis and as such a have accumulated a wealth of knowledge through their experience in the industry.

This research set out to investigate what ecotourism managers as the vanguards of the sustainability movement within the tourism industry; perceive as threats to the sector and to evaluate their efficacy in responding to these. This study additionally reviews the managers' perceptions at a meso-level; in an attempt to garner their personal dispositions towards sustainability and ecotourism and the nexus between these, in order to explore possible solutions.

The study identified a number of domestic threats to the sustainability of ecotourism; classified as either internal or external to the ecotourism business concern. The effective management of these requires a number of different interventions depending on the imminence of the risks themselves and the scope of the risks to the affected organisation. Suffice to say adequate financial and organisational backing as well as support from key stakeholders is vital to the successful implementation of sustainable tourism business practices within ecotourism.

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List of Acronyms

EIA	Environment and Social Impact Assessments
EMS	Environment Management System
FTTSA	Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa
GBC	Global Business Coalition
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ISIC	International Standards Industrial Classification
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LED	Local Economic Development
MDG's	Millennium Development Goals
MPTA	Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act
NFSD	National Framework for Sustainable Development
NMSRT	National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SD	Sustainable Development
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
TOC	Tragedy of the Commons
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WTO	World Tourism Organisation
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"Perplexity is the beginning of knowledge"
Kahlil Gibran

1.1 Context

Travel and tourism constitute the third largest industry in the world, contributing 9% of global gross domestic product (GDP); it is larger than the automotive manufacturing (8%) and mining (8%) industries (UNWTO, 2013). The size of this sector has in the past been consistently underestimated, but through the efforts of the G20 and the UNWTO it is now recognised as a major growth sector (South African Department of Tourism, 2012). The South African tourism industry mirroring the international trends of developing countries is an important source of income, employment and wealth (Pegas et al., 2013). Indeed the importance of tourism cannot be understated. Like any other industry, however, it is susceptible to risk (Shaw, Saayman & Saayman, 2012). These risks can manifest in different forms with potentially disastrous consequences for the industry, if they are not identified and managed effectively (Lepp & Gibson, 2003).

The South African government having earmarked tourism as a key industry has made concessions towards increasing the industry's contribution to the economy, both directly and indirectly, from the 2009 baseline of R189.4 billion (7.9% of GDP) to R499 billion by 2020 (South African National Department of Tourism, 2012). If growth of the sector is to be maintained and bolstered; sustainability and its features need to be operationalized and applied (Jamal, Borges & Stronza, 2006). Perfunctory commitments to sustainability are unlikely to advance neither the longevity of tourism nor the discourse of the sustainability paradigm within the industry.

Since its inception, ecotourism has grown consistently and is widely considered the fastest growing subsector of the tourism industry (Dowling & Fennell, 2003) with an emphasis on environmental and social sustainability (Chiu, Lee & Chen, 2014). It is this strategic focus that enables ecotourism to play a critical role in addressing the sustainability challenges of global tourism (Wanga, et al., 2013). Ecotourism exemplifies the epitome of a philosophy of sustainability within the tourism industry

and is viewed as the answer to dealing with the many risks that threaten the longevity of the industry (Welford, 2007; Tang, Robinson & Harvey, 2010). Nature and the environment lie at the heart of the South African tourism industry (de Witt, van der Merwe, Saayman, 2011). Provisions aimed at conserving, preserving and promoting effective management thereof have been constituted in the National Framework for Sustainable Development (NFSD) and the Millennium Development Goals (See Appendix F for Millennium Development Goals).

The seventh goal in the MDG report is to ensure environmental sustainability and to integrate the principles of sustainable development into countries' policies and programmes. This goal has three environmental and sociological targets:

i. The integration of the principles of sustainable development into the country's policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources,

ii. To halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water by 2015, and

iii. To have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

As environmental and social issues such as poverty, climatic changes and globalisation continue to persist and become more prominent, sustainability is increasingly touted as a timely and necessary response (Welford, 2007; Tang et al., 2011). The emergence of a culture of accountability, attributed at least in part, to the United Nations in the past four decades has cast a global spotlight on human rights violations and issues surrounding sustainability (De la Vega, Mehra & Wong, 2011). This has seen new commitments from countries, organisations and at micro-level, individual citizens who have made commitments and strides towards leading more sustainable lives. Ecotourism, having advanced as a key form of sustainable tourism, is anticipated to boost conservation and community development in Southern Africa (Chiutsi, et al., 2011).

Environmental and social phenomena such as climate change and societal instability and inequalities have raised awareness about environmental protection and the maintenance of ecological resources and social harmony, giving rise to ecotourism as a new niche within the travel industry (Chiu, Lee & Chen, 2013). A literature

analysis to the risks and threats faced by global tourism reveals its vulnerabilities. The volatility of the world economy, resulting from global financial crisis, rising prices and exchange rates, stifle tourism growth (UNWTO, 2009). Health and safety issues also affect the desirability of a country or region (Padilla, Guilamo-Ramos & Reyes, 2010). The prevalence of high crime rates (Behrmann & Smith, 2010), the incidence of communicable diseases (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2008), socio-political instability (Twine, Siphugu & Moshe, 2003) are but a few issues that have the potential to adversely affect tourism and its viability in the long run.

The management of threats in ecotourism and tourism at large is a complex issue, with both internal and external risks that have to be taken into consideration (Shaw, Saayman & Saayman, 2010). This research examines the implications that the threats faced by tourism translate to the sustainability of the industry. Since the manifestation of these could have disastrous effects on tourism and its very existence.

1.2 Problem Statement

Few, if any can understate the significance of the tourism industry. As a key contributor to the national accounts (Jänis, 2013), employment and the alleviation of poverty (Chifon, 2010), it follows that the continued success of the industry rests in its ability to remain viable in the long-run. Ecotourism has been heralded as the answer to ensuring this, by integrating conservation and tourism (and the economics associated with it), to benefit local communities with an emphasis on sustainable development (De Witt, 2011). This is perhaps more pertinent for developing countries typified by their over-dependence on the sector. Where, the exploitation of the natural resource base for the generation of income in the interim can harm the earning potential of an area or region in the future (Saayman & Saayman, 2006).

A key consideration that looms ominously over the sustainability of ecotourism is the prevalence of risks that threaten the smooth functioning and longevity of the industry. These can be broadly categorised as economic risks, socio-political risks, natural risks and health and safety risks. It is worthwhile to determine what the managers of ecotourism businesses perceive as risks and how they address or respond to these

through their capacities as change agents within the sector (Tang, Robinsons & Harvey, 2011). The managers of these establishments are key players in this regard, since they control management decision variables; which makes investigating their perceptions on the subject both legitimate and essential (Chendo, 2013).

Unfortunately, research on the role of the individual tourism managers as an agent for sustainability is sparse (Weiss, 2003; Chendo, 2012), especially relating to ecotourism within the South African context. This research will therefore investigate what ecotourism business managers, based on their personal experiences understand and perceive as threats to the sustainability of the industry. Attention on corporate sustainability typically focuses on how change can be achieved at the organisational level (Benn et al., 2006). Comparatively, research on the role of individual managers as change agents for sustainability is sparse (Weiss, 2003). This research aims to address this by directing emphasis on the managers of ecotourism managers as change agents for sustainability within the industry.

1.3 Defining the Scope and Significance of the Study

Given the magnitude of the research topic under investigation, there is a latent need to clearly define its parameters. As cited by Sharpley, “sustainability is a vague concept and is prone to a myriad of interpretations” (2000; 1). This is further complicated by the inclusion of ecotourism theory which overlaps with sustainability thought. This study examines this overlap in an attempt to understand the nexus between ecotourism and sustainability given various risks to the industry.

A key consideration that looms ominously over the sustainability of ecotourism is the prevalence of risks that threaten the smooth functioning and longevity of the industry. Shaw, Saayman and Saayman (2012; 192) categorise these broadly as international or domestic risks which can be external or internal to the individual ecotourism business. They further distinguish these risks as; economic risks, socio-political risks, natural risks and health and safety risks (2012; 193). A review of the literature reveals that these risks are enduing and well documented within tourism literature (Moutinho, 2000). The research on the ecotourism managers’ role in the management and their perceptions of these is lacking especially within the South

African context. Given a burgeoning ecotourism sector in South Africa and indeed Mpumalanga (De Witt, Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2011), it is worthwhile to determine what the managers of ecotourism businesses perceive as risks and how they address or respond to these through their capacities as change agents within the sector (Tang, Robinsons & Harvey, 2011). The managers' intentions in respect to the management of these risks are also of significance to this study. By examining the managers' propensities towards sustainability against levels of business sustainability output we can begin to explore factors that hinder or promote the sustainability thought within ecotourism businesses.

The personal accounts of the experiences and perceptions of ecotourism managers based in Mpumalanga serve as the impetus for this study. Ten managers were cross-examined, with the in-depth interview as a data collection technique. By garnering a general sense of what they consider the most imminent threats to the industry and analysing how they respond we can perhaps get a better sense of how these can be managed.

1.4 Definitions of Key Terms

In order to understand the purpose and significance of this study and the forthcoming findings, it is necessary to first understand the key concepts referred to in the study. The following discussion examines the most prominent definitions of these concepts.

Ecotourism

Ecological tourism, commonly known as ecotourism is a subdivision of the tourism industry that has a strategic focus on environmental and social sustainability (UNEP, 2011; Wanga, et al., 2013). It forms part of the sustainable tourism paradigm (Wight, 2003). The large number of the sometimes contradictory definitions that exist within the literature can be summated to delineate ecotourism as environmentally friendly, nature-focused, explorative/conservation and culture based tourism (Butler, 1998, Ziolkowski, 1990, Weaver, 2001, Powell & Ham, 2008), with a long term perspective view of the business.

Risk/Threat

The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) defines risk (and threat, used interchangeably) as "the probability that a hazard will turn into a disaster". According to the UNISDR vulnerability and hazards are not in themselves dangerous when taken separately. It is the confluence of these that increases the probability of a disaster occurring (UNISDR, 2009). For the purposes of this dissertation Kuratko and Welsch's definition risk will be observed as it is better suited for the scope of this research. They define risk as "the degree of uncertainty and the possible potential loss that can be associated with the outcomes from a given behaviour or set thereof" (2001; 212).

Tourism

The UNWTO (2013) defines tourism as a "social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes". These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure.

Sustainability/Sustainable Development

The early definition provided by the Bruntland Commission[1] has proven popular and is accepted by scholars and policy-makers alike. The Commission defined sustainability/ *Sustainable Development* as (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987):

> *"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*

[1] Once named the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), the Brundtland Commission had as its mission; to unite countries in order to pursue sustainable development together. The Brundtland Commission was officially disbanded in December 1987 after the release of the Brundtland Report, also commonly known as Our Common Future.

The WTO provides a more elaborate definition, and describes sustainable development as:

> *"Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refers to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability."*

Drawing inspiration from the definition provided by the Brundtland Commission South Africa has formalised its definition of sustainable development by enacting it in law. The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), Act No. 107 of 1998 defines sustainable development as "the integration of social, economic and environmental factors into planning, implementation and decision-making so as to ensure that development serves present and future generations"

Sustainable Tourism

According to the World Tourism Organisation sustainable tourism is "tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future" (WTO, 2002; 20).

1.5 Research Questions

This research is set out to answer the following research questions:

1. What do the managers of ecotourism businesses in Mpumalanga perceive as threats to the sustainability of ecotourism?
2. How effective are ecotourism business managers in dealing with these threats?

The power of research questions within the qualitative research paradigm lies not only in directing investigative inquiry but also in the possibility of uncovering

unanticipated results. It is in the discovery and identification of different and undocumented findings that new knowledge and theory is created.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this dissertation was to investigate stakeholder i.e. ecotourism managers' perceptions of the threats to the sustainability of ecotourism and to ascertain their effectiveness of their responses to these. The success of this study was dependent upon achieving the following objectives:

- To track and review sustainability in South Africa within the tourism and ecotourism industry.
- To identify and analyse the key issues affecting the sustainability in South African ecotourism.
- To garner the level of knowledge and the perceptions ecotourism managers have towards sustainability.
- To assess ecotourism managers' dispositions towards ecotourism and sustainability, given the threats faced by the industry.

1.7 Structure of the Dissertation

Quality research is firmly rooted in theoretical understandings, with the intent of broadening a body of knowledge and its practical applications (Scapens, 2008). In keeping with this idea, this dissertation is structured in six areas of discussion.
Chapter one, introduced the study, its purpose, objectives, problem statements and the research questions to be answered. Chapter two, three and four comprise of the literature review, which examined existing and pertinent literature on sustainability, ecotourism and the nexus between these. The research design and methodology undertaken in the study is explained in chapter five. The findings are presented in chapter six; where preliminary analysis also ensued. In chapter seven, the results are discussed in relation to the literature and the research questions answered. Chapter eight concludes the report.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABILITY

"The greatest danger to our future is apathy"
Jane Goodall

2.1 Introduction

Sustainability and equally sustainable development remain elusive and indistinct concepts even after over two decades after the Brundtland Commission brought them into prominence (Gasparaos, El-Haram & Horner, 2007). According to Sancho et al., (2002) these concepts form a nexus between the development of society and the economic agents that operate within it, and are bound by environmental, socio-cultural and economic frameworks. Since sustainability as a dynamic concept is not reserved and applicable to only a few constituents, it is useful to evaluate it within the confines of the industry within which it is applied.

Tourism is an activity that can impact sustainability, either positively or adversely by hindering and contradicting the principles of sustainable development (Stoian & Isbasescu, 2013). The sustainability of tourism involves a synergistic cooperation between various stakeholders such as tourist companies, tourist destinations, national, regional and local authorities in an active attempt to cover a wide group of challenges while simultaneously remaining economically viable and competitive (Angelkova, et al. 2012). With the increased popularity and significance of the sustainability movement it is worthwhile to evaluate its meaning, evolution and principles in order to better understand its relevance and applicability to tourism.

This chapter aims to elucidate this and other related concepts by reviewing them comprehensively and analysing key issues surrounding them.

2.2 Origin and History

The twenty first century having brought much liberties and amenities to mankind; socially, economically and politically to varying degrees is also faced with complexities unprecedented in human history. The other side to this story is however dire and threatens the very existence of humanity. Amidst the prosperity and advancement lies a melange of systematic dysfunction, each with its own ecological,

economic and social dimensions without simple cause or solution (Mebratu, 1998). As a result an evolution of new concepts and ideologies has surfaced including that of sustainable development as key to overcoming economic, environmental and social challenges. Although these concepts only sprung up in recent decades, concern about the environment and sustainability is old and enduring (Pezzey & Toman, 2002).

Malthus was amongst one of the first scholars to voice his concerns about the limitations and implications associated with satisfying the insatiable needs of humans. In his observations of the increasing British population in 1798 he questioned if the finite amount of land could continue sustaining the populace on the island nation (1976). In 1865, Jevons (1977) expressed similar concerns by speculating how British dependency on finite coal supplies could continue supporting the ever-increasing energy demands and consumption. The externalities associated with these activities both environmental and social also gained global attention (Weissman, 1983). These investigations were the beginnings of the conception of sustainability thought.

A sequence of events and consultations preceded the birth of the concept of sustainability and sustainable development. One of the first key points in its development was in 1972 at the Unite Nation Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm, where the importance of environmental management and the use of environmental assessments as a management tool was recognised (DuBose et al., 1995). Though no strong connection had been made between environmental issues and sustainability, the path had been laid for a link to be established. Shortly after a group of scientists and concerned citizens communed in Rome to discuss the impending environmental predicament the world was facing, which was expanding at an alarming rate. Later referred to as the Club of Rome, this assembly presented comprehensive reports on the state of the natural environment (Weizsacker, Lovins & Lovins, 1997).

It soon became apparent that the environment and development; then considered two sides of the same coin could not remain in a state of conflict after the 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment. Various terms emerged in the face of these sentiments such as; “environment and development”, “development without

destruction" and "environmentally sound development". The term "eco-development" then appeared for the first time in the literature in the UN Environment Program Review in 1978. By this period, it was recognised internationally that environmental and developmental ideas needed to be deliberated in unison and not separately (Mebratu, 1998).

The term sustainable development was finally introduced into the literature in 1983 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), formerly known as the Bundtland Commission named after the then chair and prime minister of Norway Gro-Harlem Bruntland (WCED, 1987; 8). A symposium was thenceforth convened to discuss the development of the third world as well as issues surrounding the degradation of global ecology.

2.3 Examining the Semantics of Sustainability and Sustainable Development

The terms sustainability and sustainable development are broad and as such hold different meanings to different people. These concepts of have proven more obstinate to define than first anticipated; as illustrated in a study by the World Bank which enumerated several definitions for the term (Pezzey, 1992), even more have since emerged in recent decades. Though the early definition provided by the Bruntland Commission has proven popular and is generally accepted by scholars and policy-makers alike, closer examination reveals shortfalls too great to be ignored. The Commission defines sustainability/SD as (WCED, 1987):

> *"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*

From this generalised and wide-ranging definition the following points are noted; the use of the term "future generations" implies a very long period, one which spans further than that of the current generation. Secondly, the idea that development is consistent i.e. within acceptable levels is another implication of the definition. Bartlett (2012; 2) offers the observation that the arithmetic of "sound growth" of the population or the rate at which resources are consumed for modest periods of time

leads to the sizes of these quantities to become so large as to be impossible to quantify. Perhaps the most striking criticism of this definition is that it focuses primarily on the needs of the present generation, which have according to some, little to do with sustainability and makes consideration for the future a secondary concern.

Needless to say the WCED's definition of sustainability does have some merit, as evidenced by its continued use and reference in the literature. A key feature of the definition's success to define the concept is as much an advantage as it is flawed. The vagueness of the definition enables it to be used across multiple industries; this however serves as a limitation because it is too broad.

For these reasons Bartlett (2012; 3) rephrased the WCED's definition to address the noted limitations and narrowed focus;

"Sustainable development is development that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

The South African definition of sustainable development entrenched in the Constitution was drafted to fit the context of the country, and is influenced heavily by the Brundtland Commission's definition. Section 24 (b) (ii) of the Constitution decrees that the "the environment be protected, for the benefit of future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development". South Africa formalised the definition by ratifying it at law. The National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998) defines sustainable development thusly:

"The integration of social, economic and environmental factors into planning, implementation and decision-making so as to ensure that development serves present and future generations".

The interaction of environmental, social and economic values is crucial in achieving sustainability, which rests on striking a precarious balance between these principles (James & Card, 2012). A common feature across all the definitions reviewed is the

reiteration of the consideration for future generations and the protection of their interests, use and enjoyment of resources. Further consensus beyond this point is perhaps inconsequential as it would deter for the emphasis of the concept and its fundamental purpose. This research however remained open to the prospect of finding further agreement regarding the fundamental basis and descriptions of the concept of sustainability.

The terms sustainability and sustainable development are in many instances used interchangeably, as they have throughout this dissertation. Though the nexus between these is strong, these concepts can be differentiated. Furthermore, the manner in which the term 'sustainable development' itself is used and interpreted also varies greatly. According to O'Riordan (1985) sustainable development is a contradictory conception, while Redclift (1987; 1) proposes that it may be "another development truism". Further confusion is caused by the misinterpretation of SD as sustained growth, when it can be simply defined as development that can be sustained or continued for a certain period of time or indefinitely (Lele, 1991; 609).

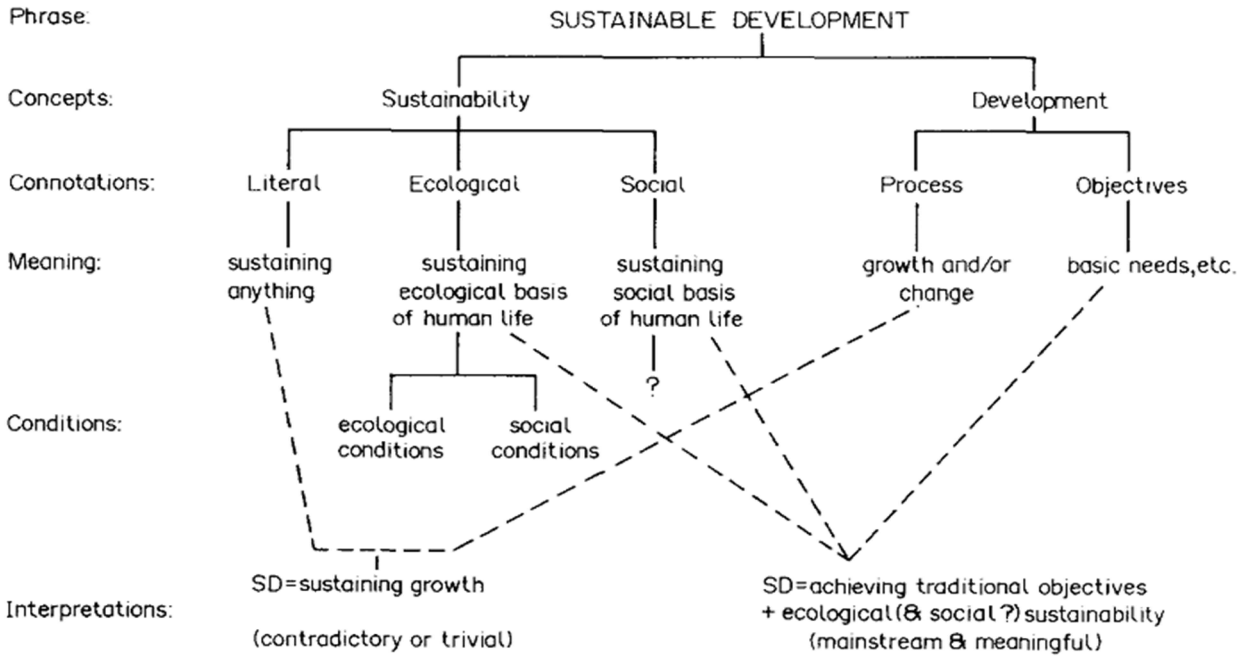


Fig 2.1 Semantics of Sustainable Development (Lele, 1991; 608)

Undoubtedly, much of the misinterpretation of these terms is semantic however it is prudent perhaps to examine and define what is meant by 'development' to fully appreciate the significance of the SD. While it may be easy to simply express

development by relating it to national figures such as the GDP as is customarily done, some include a number of factors and social phenomena in their conceptualisations (Arndt, 1981).

A definition of development must embody two elements; an objective/s of the process and the means to achieving the set objectives. Lele (1991; 609) defines development simply as “a process of directed change” and delineates it in the model developed to illustrate the differences and interrelations between sustainability and SD (Figure 2.1).

This model illustrates that sustainable development is a function of both sustainability and development, both of which have different meanings, connotations and interpretations. Sustainability is premised on the idea of preserving and ensuring the availability of the resource in question. It involves the considerations of the longevity of ecological and social aspects of our existence. Proponents of sustainability take it to mean "the existence of the ecological conditions necessary to support human life at a specified level of well-being through future generations" (Lele, 1991; 609). Development implies any change or gentrification as well as physical growth. The prime objective of which is to meet the basic or specified needs of the populace. In isolation, development involves the commitment of resources for the gratification of human needs, it is not concerned with the implications this has to the sustainability of the process.

A distinction needs to be made between growth and development, though sometimes used interchangeably, these represent two different ideas. “To grow” simply means “to increase in size by the assimilation of materials” and to “develop” means “to expand or realise the potentialities of; to bring to a fuller, greater or better state” (Goodland, 1995; 9). The distinction between these terms is more than semantic. By inference; growth implies a quantitative increase such as the quantity of a product produced or an increase in a country’s gross domestic product. Development refers to a more qualitative improvement such as an enhanced standard of living or a heightened sense of self, induced by better infrastructure and social situation. Where growth is quantitative and as such is measureable, gauging the amount of development that has occurred within a region in a given period is harder to compute with exactitude.

2.4 The Triple Bottom Line Agenda

As global attitudes around the ethical conduct of companies harden in the wake of disasters and scandal, pressure mounts for companies to take into account not only the profit related considerations but to adopt the more holistic three dimensional bottom line (Smith & Sharicz, 2011). Most are familiar with the idea of 'the bottom line' in respect to business and the manner in which it is operated; used to denote the fundamental reason for any business concern i.e. profit. Triple bottom line (TBL) is a more recent concept, coined by John Elkington in 1994, as an inclusive term developed to encompass a number of concerns relating to sustainability. Smith and Sharicz (2011; 73) define the triple bottom line sustainability as "the result of an organisation, voluntarily or governed by law, that demonstrate the ability of the organisation to maintain viable its business operations whilst not negatively impacting any social or ecological systems". The three aspects referred to in this concept are social, economic and environmental issues. The impact and interactions these have affects businesses and the levels of sustainability. Fundamentally, the TBL agenda centres corporation's attention not just on the economic value they add, but also on the environmental and social value they may add or destroy (Tyrrell, Paris & Biaett, 2012).

The idea of sustainability remains vague that it makes reviewing fundamental aspects that constitute it a rather cumbersome exercise. For this reason John Elkington's TBL paradigm, perhaps the most referred to elements i.e. economic, social and environmental aspects are used in this dissertation.

It has to be noted though that some are critical of this concept. Norman and MacDonald (2004; 256) view TBL concept as a "good old-fashioned single bottom line plus vague commitments to social and environmental concerns", making it easy for firms to half-heartedly embrace it never making any real change to the way they interact with these elements and the various key stakeholders (Tyrrel, Paris & Biaett, 2012). Needless to say, this perspective still has merit and was reviewed to form a theoretical foundation for this dissertation. Tourism provides a unique opportunity to promote and develop the TBL, as it is made up of many different forms of tourism and seeks to generate gains in conservation and community development simultaneously (Buckley, 2003).

2.5 Key Elements of Sustainability

This section examines the three key elements of sustainability with the aim of understanding their underpinnings and goals. The first element to be reviewed is the economic factor, still considered the most important of the three. The business of business is business after all and it is fitting to start with the original bottom line, considered by some as the only one that matters in practice (Norman & MacDonald, 2004).

2.5.1 Economic Sustainability

The idea of economic sustainability is attributed to Hicks, first mentioned in his 1939 seminal work *Value and Capital.* Basago (1999; 150) defines economic sustainability quite succinctly as a system of production that satisfies the current consumption levels without compromising that of future needs. He cites that economic sustainability seeks to maintain the feasibility of the economic system itself and is vested in ensuring tits self-regulation and ability to remain viable indefinitely.

Customarily, the economic assumption was that natural resources were unlimited, and emphasis was placed on growth and on the markets' ability to allocate resources efficiently (De Paula & Cavalcanti, 2000). Since the Stockholm Conference in 1972 evidence of the failure of economic systems to sustain continual growth with finite resources is confirmed by the rise in social and ecological degradation which affects two thirds of the world population (Mebratu, 1998). The age of enlightenment and accountability has since revealed truths that contradict this, as reserves of natural resources dwindle and face imminent decimation. Goodland (1995), Stotian and Isbasescu (2012) and others have since questioned the practicability of uncontrolled growth and exponential consumption as it became striking apparent that these pyrrhic gains have negative social and ecological consequences.

Economic sustainability strives to attain the goals, which speak directly to the core objective of any business concern .i.e. profit maximisation (with the exception of non-profit organisations). Litman (2012; 3) identifies the following five economic goals pivotal to the business concern;

- Enhance economic productivity
- Promote local economic development
- Promote resource efficiency
- Ensure that affordability is achieved
- Promote operational efficiency

The economic consideration of the business concern revolves around enhancing the business's ability as a mechanism to function in a manner that optimises turnover, revenues and ultimately profit. This involves committing the factors of production in combinations that are both economical and offer the greatest value to the organisation. Though the profit motive remains a key goal to any traditional business model which is set up with monetarist intentions, it is fair to say that it is not the only consideration. Simply observing profit as the only purpose of business in today's world would likely prove to be an unfruitful endeavour in the long-run.

The complex nature of organisations and the relationships formed as a result of interactions with a large number of the stakeholders means that other non-financial considerations need to be taken cognisance of (Yogi, 2010). Governments and private activist groups have considerable power and apply pressure to alter the manner organisations use resources and the environment from which they operate (Lozano-Oyola, et al., 2012). Furthermore as society's expectations on organisations' social and ethical performance continues to rise, forcing organisations to improve accordingly (Raviv, Becken & Hughey, 2013).

2.5.2 Environmental Sustainability

In this section environmental sustainability is defined partially by distinguishing it from social sustainability and to a lesser extent, from economic sustainability. Although all these, overlap environmental sustainability and economic sustainability have an especially strong link (Goodland, 1995). Since one is heavily dependent on the other; obligations towards the environment require significant economic commitments and vice versa. The growing concerns of the environmental sustainability of the past growth patterns coupled with the heightened awareness of

the potential future climate crisis have illuminated the idea that the environment and the economy can no longer be considered in isolation (OECD, 2010).

While economic sustainability is focused on the portion of the natural resource base which provides the physical inputs, both renewable and non-renewable into the production process, environmental sustainability's focus is directed. It adds the consideration for physical inputs into production and emphasises environmental life-support-systems; without which neither production nor humanity could exist (Goodland, 1995). These life-systems are extensive in their range and include everything from the atmosphere, land, water, flora and fauna found on the earth.

The fundamental aim of environmental sustainability is to sustain these life-systems and in some circumstances repair the damage caused by decades of misuse. An example of this would be the attempts of various reforestation programmes that attempt to replace the plant life lost and reverse the devastation caused by deforestation. At its very core environmental sustainability is motivated by the anthropocentric reason to protect human life and prevent its own self-inflicted demise.

2.5.3 Social Sustainability

Social sustainability theory calls for economic growth constrained by the requirements for social equity (Goodland, 1995). A precarious overlap between these two must be struck if true social sustainability is to be achieved. An environment needs to be created in which to allow optimal resource use, allocation and distribution among the population; this is however easier said than done. It is no secret that inequalities yet exist in twenty first century, and some provide evidence to suggest that these inequalities are not only persisting but widening. The ever increasing liberties available to those who 'have' seem to be stifling those of the 'have-nots'. This creates many problems particularly to social sustainability and equality. Resources and their subsequent use and distribution are available only to those can afford to acquire them. Perhaps the term "allocation" is misplaced here, for in any free or 'fair' market; supply is driven by demand backed with the ability and willingness to pay the set price. Following from this analysis it is therefore perhaps

fair to say that those not party to the market i.e. those that will not and cannot afford to participate in the market transaction will not bear the fruits of the resources sold. The 'have-nots' are therefore predisposed to persistent poverty while the 'haves' will continue to benefit and build their wealth. This is a continuous vicious and virtuous cycle for the poor and those better off, respectively.

Developed in 1912 by Italian statistician Corrado Gini, the Gini coefficient is a summary statistic that measures how equitably a resource such as income, is distributed in a population (Farris, 2010). And with an index of 63.1 it has determined that South Africa has the highest level of inequality in the world (www.data.worldbank.org), in terms of both income and wealth i.e. the dispersion between the rich and the poor. These variations have implications on the social stability in the country. As one of the measures to address this, the South African government is engaged in a number of social programmes aimed at narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor. The country's extensive welfare programmes is one such example and as a result has labelled the country as the largest welfare state in the world (Bosch, et al, 2010).

Breaking these cycles alas is no easy feat. Requiring the state interventions that are applied for indefinite periods, rarely achieving what they set out to achieve. South Africa presents an ideal example for this phenomenon, following the 1994 political dispensation and the birth of the new democratic republic. Even after the liberation of the country, inequality still plagues South Africa, a trend that has not improved in the two decades of freedom.

2.6 The Economics of Sustainability

Though there is overwhelming consensus on the importance of the sustainability movement in the literature, among academics and policymakers, the concept was however initially viewed with much suspicion. A key issue is the economic and financial implication that sustainability has on the bottom line. An economic analysis of the impact that the continuous misuse of resources helps shed light on how neglecting to consider the future has the potential to adversely affect the basic

objective of the business concern. The following discussion will unravel key issues surrounding the economics of sustainability.

2.6.1 The Tragedy of the Commons

Economist Garrett Hardin captured the essence of the argument for sustainability in his theory of limited resources he called *the tragedy of the commons* (TOC). In his seminal essay on TOC, he illustrates how the continuous misuse of limited resources will always invariably lead to the depletion of said resources. Hardin clarifies that the use of the word "tragedy", the essence of which is not unhappiness (Jamil & Yusof, 2013). A *commons* in this context refers to public goods or anything that can be used and shared among people such as water, air, the use of a national park. According to Hardin (1968), whenever a public resource i.e. a commons is in question successive use and misuse of the resource by the public will serve to deplete it over time. He makes the point that resources only have limited capacity and cannot always sustain the needs of an ever increasing number of users and their demands. Though previous generations might have been able to survive of a certain resource, without adversely affecting the supply or capacity of that resource the same might not hold true in the present. It is the *homo economicus* defined by Rees (2001; 1) as the "self-interested utility maximiser with immutable preferences and insatiable material demands" who make up entire societies. Everyone is assumed to act isolated and autonomously, the goal of which is to optimise personal consumption through participation in the increasingly global marketplace. Using the analogy of a herdsman, Hardin (1968) explains that a rational person always seeks to maximise his utility. A herder will therefore continue to increase his herd in so far as his marginal propensity permits him to do so. Notwithstanding the availability of a patch of grazing land available for all other herders. The sum of every person's demand for a public good puts a burden on that resources ability to sustain current wants as well as that of future generations. This point is emphasised by Malthus's observation made over two centuries ago and defines how population growth impacts resources. Malthus proposed based on his research that the growth of a population has the mathematical power to negate limited advances that result from all technical achievements of engineering and scientific establishments (Malthus, 1976).

In the context of tourism, resources utilised for tourism purposes by the respective businesses are also used and enjoyed by the local community. Tourists and residents collectively have to share the use of these resources (Jamil & Yusof, 2013). Tourism destinations are considered to be attractive and appealing from various sources. Some are man-made with historical, cultural or modern backgrounds, while other are derived from natural assets (Huybers & Bennett, 2003). It is widely recognised that ecotourism is founded on natural resources both natural and cultural and is based oxymoronically on the exploitation and preservation of these. National parks, particularly in more developed nations are founded upon this conflicting rationale, that attempts to both conserve nature while providing access to urban dwellers for recreation and generate profit (Holden, 2005). The natural environment is the main basis upon which nature-based tourism destinations compete with rival destinations and regions (Huybers & Bennett, 2003).

A case in context in which the TOC's occurred is in the Taman Negara, Pahang National Park in Peninsular Malaysia. Situated in centre of the peninsula, improved accessibility to the park due to recent improvements to the infrastructure and transport systems has created problems associated with the over-use of resources (Damin, et al., 2012). Destinations such as these and their resulting exploits can similarly be referred to as a public good and are susceptible to Hardin's theory of the tragedy of the commons.

2.6.2 The Law of Limits

Human nature's custom of taking care of oneself and placing the needs of the self before those of other and future is supported by society's belief of endless growth, now referred to as sustainable growth (De Paula & Cavalcanti, 2000). Society and entire economies are based on this oxymoronic concept, as policymakers, governments and business ignore the existence of limits (Bartlett, 2012). It is this universal economic belief that gives the present generation justification to believe that there will always be plenty left for future generations. It follows that consequently, the current generation need not concern itself by the imposed limitations to its rate of consumption. To suggest that the notion of sustainable development can be maintained indeterminately, amounts to a veritable fallacy and

can be equated to supporting the idea that there will always be room for further growth (no matter how small and manageable) indefinitely.

The limits of this model are not reliant on the availability of technical and natural resources only, but are bound on the earths' capacity to support and absorb the residues form the current production and consumption systems (De Paula & Cavalcanti, 2000).

2.6.3 The Hubbert Curve

The Hubbert Curve was developed in the 1950s by geologist King Hubbert as a predictive model to extrapolate the hydrocarbon production of the USA with a bell curve (Bertand, 2010). Hubbert's prediction was then published and though believed to be true by most; a number of experts remained sceptical. The approximation of the amount of oil available in one basin is one of the most important debates in energy economics (Bertrand, 2010; 2). This is remains a subject area of much speculation, the date when the world peak oil will occur is subject of much debate (Babusiaux, 2005). The main idea of Hubbert's curve methodology is to fit a bell shaped curve on the production curve. While Hubbert did not define the use of symmetrical curves, Gaussian and logistic curves are used in practice to fit oil production. As the peak of the global petroleum production draws closer, the transition is made from the left to the right side of the Hubbert Curve. Here, the quantity produced annually is finite that production is governed almost entirely by the quantities available. On the left-hand side of the Hubbert Curve the prices are relatively low and rise steadily, whereas on the right-hand side due to resource constrained production and decreased supply levels, prices increase rapidly (Figure 2.3). When a dwindling resource is in question, such as crude oil supply is guided by the levels of that resource availability. Berg and Korte (2008; 219) provide a mathematical description and analysis of the Hubbert's model of oil production which they refer to as a first-order nonlinear ordinary differential equation for the amount of oil, denoted as Q, which has been extracted from a region, country or continent. By assuming the maximum quantity Q_{max}, to be extracted (reserves at t=0), the rate of extraction, $\frac{dQ}{dt}$, i.e., the production, is determined by:

$$\frac{dQ}{dt} = aQ\ (Q_{max} - Q)$$

The terms on the right-hand side of this equation can be interpreted as follows: Oil production is proportional to (1) Q, the amount already extracted and "pumped" into the economy which is growing in turn and demands increasing amounts of oil, and (2) Q_{max} - Q, the remaining reserves, reflecting the rising difficulty in extracting oil with dwindling reserves. Although a very simple model, it has shown its capability in correctly predicting the 1970 U.S. oil peak about 14 years in advance (Hubbert, 1956), as exhibited in Figure 2.2.

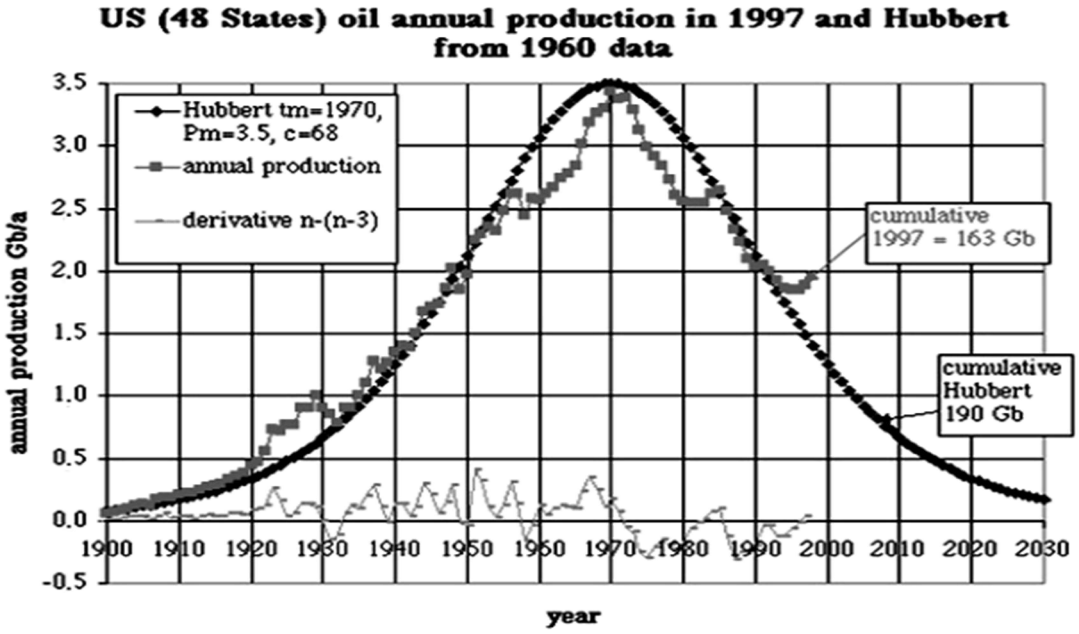


Fig 2.2 U.S. Annual Oil Production Data and the Matching Hubbert Curve with the Peak Set at 1970 (Berg & Korte, 2008; 219).

2.6.4 Shift from Demand-Driven Production to Supply-Driven Production

The fundamental law of economics states that the interaction between market forces; demand and supply dictates the price of any given commodity (Working, 1929). The level of demand consequently edicts the corresponding supply. This theory is however based on the assumptions that the resource or commodity in question is

available and that a market exists from which it will be bought or sold (Marshall, 1921).

Discussions in economics resoundingly advocate that the more the demand the market will respond by increasing supply. In these events production is largely governed by demand. Figure 2.3a illustrates this point; an increase in the supply of a commodity in a market denoted here as a shift in the supply curve from S1 to S2. The bolstered quantities (Q1 to Q2) as indicated in fig 2.4b will be met by a marginally lower price at P2. When the demand for a commodity increases and the market has the capacity to respond in kind the increased supply of the resource or product will also be met with a higher price denoted here as P2.

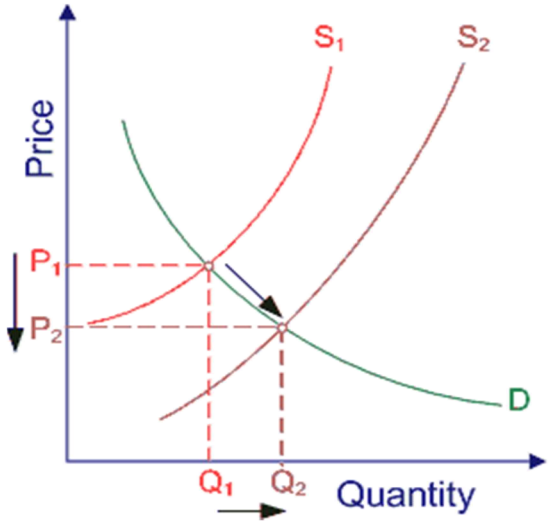


Fig 2.3a

Increase in Supply

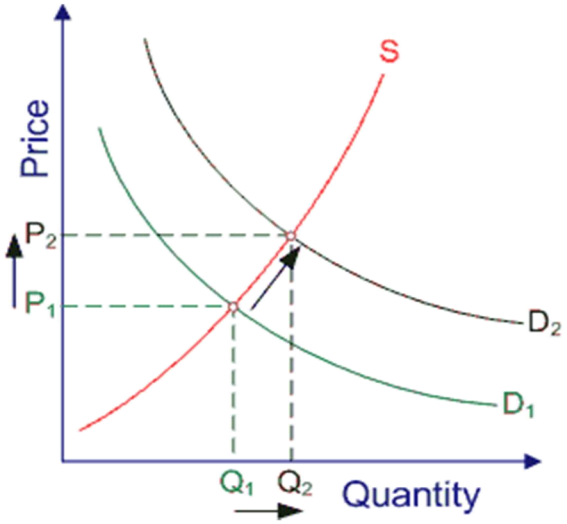


Fig 2.3b

Increase in Demand

2.6.5 Economics and Sustainability; Conflict or Convergence?

Having reviewed the different aspects of the labyrinth that is sustainability; a perhaps obvious tension between the fundamental ideologies of economics and the essence of sustainability was identified. The western model of economic growth is in conflict with social and environmental satieties because in this capitalist paradigm the economic system is stimulated though by heightened expenditure and consumption (De Paula & Cavalcanti, 2000). It can be said that economics is largely determined by consumers through their influence at a micro level; who have the proclivity to

expunge all they desire from the environment and from social systems. Sustainability lies on the opposite end of this continuum; the key of which is to conserve for the specified or indefinite future. It is suspected that a number of economists might not share this view; however the nexus between these two seemingly contrasting paradigms warrants close consideration.

According to Rees the doctrine of unlimited growth constantly side-lines the nagging ethical arguments for wealth redistribution (2001), environmental and social considerations as well as any negative externalities that arise as a result. Though some proclaim that "a rising tide raises all ships", i.e. in expanding economies even the poor benefit, there is a failure to recognise and accept the cost of development. Opponents of this notion are adamant in their resolve that economic growth and environmental degradation are not contradictory (Zhang, 2012; Kothari, 2013).

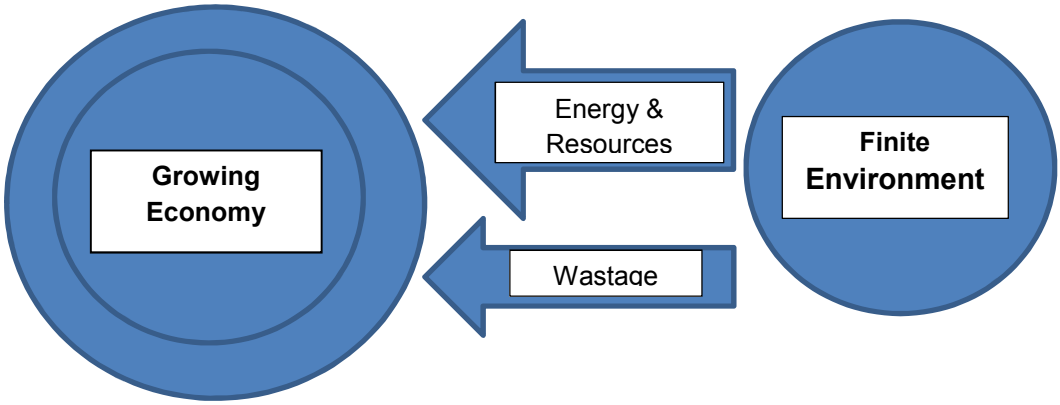


Figure 2.4 Flow of Resources, Adapted from Beckerman (1992; 2)

They argue that the continuing poverty in developing countries is the main cause of ecological decay in these regions and that the only way to repair the environment is through economic growth (Beckerman, 1992; WCED, 1987). This view is seen as oxymoronic by environmentalists as any significant growth in a country's economy will rely wholly or at least partly on the environment and resources extracted from it. Indeed few can refute the assertion that there is a trade-off between development and the environment; it is the extent of environmental use that sparks feverish debate between the environmentalist and the expansionist. Figure 2.4 depicts the flow of resources as they are extracted and used to support economic growth. The

diagram is one dimensional and merely indicates the manner in which resources from the environment are used, a caveat therefore needs to be made; many factors can be attributed to the growth and development, the environment is but one of these.

2.7 Sociological and Environmental Aspects of Sustainability

The proceeding examines the moral, ethical and sociological aspects associated with the sustainability paradigm.

2.7.1 The Ethics of Sustainability

Recognising and reviewing the underlying ethics and moral basis of issues is fundamental to understanding the many crises that afflict society. According to De Paula and Cavalcanti (2000; 111) building on from what Milton-Guinn (1998) described as an ecocentric point of view ethics has become “anti-ethics” in today’s society, once moral premises are established in the anthropocentricism and utilitarianism which makes up their configuration. The ecocentric philosophy adopts the idea that people have the responsibility to respect all natural resources and minimise their impact of their activities on ecosystems and the biosphere.

2.7.1.1 Ethical Theory and Morality

The term “ethics” refers to the morality or correctness of an action, the rules of conduct or the ‘goodness’ or ‘badness’ of the motives of particular actions (Hanekom, Rowland & Bain 1986; 152). Though these concepts are correlated there is a need to distinguish them more clearly before they are discussed further. Teleological ethical theories judge conduct as either right or wrong, and denotes the validity of actions. In its most basic form *morality* is concerned with social practices that define that which is right and wrong; along with customs, rules and norms, these are transmitted within cultures and institutions from generation to generation (Beauchamp & Bowie, 2004). Very similar to political constitutions and the

development of cultural norms and customs, morality tends to exist prior to the acceptance of its standards by the concerned individuals. In this regard morality cannot be purely a personal policy. The context within which actions occur is central to determining the morality and ethos of said action. The fundamental ethics used to judge the morality and correctness are therefore dynamic and differ widely from countries, cultures and even individuals.

In contrast to morality, ethics theory and moral philosophy point to the reflection on the nature and justifications of right actions (Beauchamp & Bowie, 2004). These concepts refer to attempts that introduce clarity, substance and precision of arguments into the domain of morality. These are concerned with personal interactions and more specifically concerned with the quality of these interactions (Botha, 2010). Ethics therefore aim to ensure that the interface between any two parties is mutually beneficial and is not prejudicial to one over the other. According to Rossouw (2006) three main ethical concepts revolve around ‘the self’, ‘the other party’ and ‘the good’. The desertion of any of these concepts would serve to distort one’s understanding of ethical behaviour (Rossouw, 2006).

Values are intrinsically associated to culture in any society, as culture defines what the positive and negative values are deemed acceptable and should be followed. Chaui (1995) asserts that culture is a result of the interpretations that humans have of themselves and of all their relationships, including that of nature. This extends to include organisational culture and the associated norms and values within companies regarding interaction with society, environmental and ecological resources.

2.7.2.2 Environmental Ethics

The ecological, environmental and social crises that countries globally are confronted with, are fundamentally the result of mankind’s inability and\or unwillingness to recognise the future (and present) implications of our actions and to take cognisance of these in our everyday lives. The insatiable need to consume more coupled with a myopic view and disregard for ramifications creates a vicious cycle, much to the detriment of the earth.

Environmental ethics is the theory of the values and duties man has to the natural world and their interaction with it. The underlying principle of which is that the natural environment has intrinsic value (Zsolnai, 2011). Natural and ecological systems, resources and all its constituents are not just means for accomplishing mankind's ends, but are ends in themselves. Advocates of Kantian ethics uphold that it is a universal categorical imperative that nature be treated as ends in themselves and not merely as means even when doing so yields no significant economic gains.

A number of philosophical principles have been used to justify why the environment needs to be protected from misuse. These are based in two philosophy schools of thought namely; deontological and teleontological ethics. Deontological ethics based on duty and obligation, i.e. the duties that everyone has a human being or member of society, for example it is generally accepted that everyone has the duty not to cause harm to another. It follows that corporate entities as juristic persons and members of society have obligations towards society and the environments within which they operate. Teleontological ethics however, deals with the morality of actions, i.e. the degree to which they are right or wrong.

Based in the deontological school of thought, advocates of Kantian ethics believe that any action that results in harm to another human being, currently or in the future, is morally unjust. Proponents' Kantian philosophy brings particular emphasis to the principles behind any given actions. Expropriation of benefits from nature leaves future generations at a disadvantage and greatly inhibits their ability to enjoy the environment and the resources available (Fox, 1990). It follows that morally correct conduct can be observed when actions are motivated by universal imperatives such as affording due respect and treatment of all living organisms and the environment.

The utilitarian thought can also be used to justify the argument for environmental ethics. Staunch environmentalists assert that the costs (not just economic) of disregarding sustainability and the sensible management of environmental resources far outweigh the immediate benefits gained. It is hard, if not impossible to quantify the cost of the extinction of an animal or plant species or the exhaustion of a fresh water fountain as the respective fauna, flora or resource is lost forever (Beauchamp, 2004). Similarly, the gains generated by tourism businesses to generate income by

exploiting natural resources and catering to the needs of current consumers could be viewed as pyrrhic.

2.7.2 Authenticity, Equity and Sustainability in Tourism

Sustainability in tourism remains a vague concept at best, due to its many varied interpretations (Sharpley, 2001; 1) and the absence of operational standardised guidelines. The documented sustainability benchmarks in ecotourism sites vary greatly with respect to their space and time (Tsaur, Lin & Lin, 2006). This can be attributed to the many exogenous factors that influence its applicability to the individual ecotourism enterprise, along with the fact that different ecotourism businesses have different sustainability goals and are at various stages of its implementation. As currently no blueprint for sustainability in tourism is in existence the concept is met with much confusion among industry players which brings to question the validity and legitimacy of sustainable tourism thought.

2.7.2.1 Authenticity

The issue of the authenticity of sustainability within the tourism merits closer consideration. The ambiguity surrounding this concept means that it is prone to misuse by interested parties, particularly tourism entrepreneurs (Cohen, 2002). It is challenging to discern those individuals who legitimately aim to conduct a truly sustainable tourism business from those who seek to do so only to appeal to the whims of the environmentally conscious consumer (Han & Chan, 2013). Needless to say the concept has accrued much promotional value since gaining popularity in recent decades (Cohen, 2002). This has given rise to spin-off concepts such as green spinning, green selling, green harvesting, enviropreneur marketing and compliance marketing aimed at appealing to the environmentally conscious consumer (Peattie & Crane, 2005) under the pretence of socio-environmental integrity.

Green spinning refers to any acts by companies, typically those in industries notorious for their negative environmental impact, such as oil/petroleum companies,

car manufactures and the like, that attempt through elaborate campaigns and public relations programs to downplay the adverse effects these companies have on ecological systems. The increased popularity of the green movement and the emergence of the environmentally conscious consumer have created new lucrative markets which companies seek to capture. Green selling involves the act of making insignificant alterations to one or more aspects of a product for the purpose of branding it as 'green', to appeal to the new more conscious consumer.

According to Hunter (1997; 859) sustainability in tourism should be conceived as 'an over-arching paradigm, within which several different development pathways may be legitimised according to circumstances'. He delineates several approaches to sustainable tourism ranging from weak to very strong sustainability. Hunter argues that considerations of sustainability will become more important the less tourism is already developed in an area, or less desirable if it is to develop due to the ecological importance of that area.

The sociological discourse of authenticity; initiated by Dean MacCannell in 1973, revealed a tensions between tourism and modernity. MacCannell's view was that people today feel an inherent disconnection with 'reality and authenticity' which is perceived to be elsewhere; in the past periods and other cultures (1976; 3). It is these areas that exhibit the highest levels of authenticity and therefore have touristic appeal. However, Hunter argues that vehemently that in these sites and areas tourism should be 'actively and continuously discouraged' so as to preserve the ecological and cultural heritage of these sites (Hunter, 1997; 862). This argument reveals that there is a latent hiatus in the literature between the authenticity and sustainability in tourism as to whether tourism should be encouraged, in a sustainable context, or done away with in favour of conservation.

2.7.2.2 Equity

Tourism is an ever expanding industry, which sees continuous development in unspoilt areas of environmental appeal. As the more successful mature tourist centres become destinations of mass tourism, a segment of this market move away from these offerings, seeking other facilities that feature a less commercial product

offering and target the more adventurous and authenticity-seeking consumer. This has meant that tourism entrepreneurs are continually on the prowl for new areas and opportunities from which to base their tourism business ventures. This presents interesting arguments as to whether doing so generates more positives than negatives. The question of the appropriation of the benefits reaped form such endeavours is also of concern, in respect to social equity and equality. The inhabitants of surrounding communities are often said to benefit but by what margin? (Strambach & Surmeier, 2013). The economic stimulation from tourism is recognised but is these pyrrhic gains socially justifiable?.

2.8 Sustainability Measuring and Reporting

The measuring and monitoring of sustainability is a relatively new phenomenon which has flourished over the past decade as organisations, non-governmental organisations and governments embark on efforts to develop systems that monitor the impact of their activities on the economy, the environment and society (Briassoulis, 2001). It follows that the success or failure of any program cannot be garnered if its progress is not marked and its intended effects analysed and compared against an earlier time. For this reason the measurement, analysis and reporting on sustainability and its progress has taken increased importance. If efforts aimed at fostering a culture of sustainability throughout society, government and the business society, it has to be shown to yield benefits that outweigh its costs. For example if the continued efforts by government and independent organisation to preserve or mitigate the negative impact of deforestation prove futile i.e. the cost of doing so becomes too burdensome, a proponent of the study of economics might suggest that all these efforts be seized. The question here now becomes; how does one know whether such efforts are successful or not?. It is perhaps prudent to mention advocates of Kantian ethics, view this question as irrelevant; as they believe that it is a categorical imperative that all the resources the earth has to offer, must always be preserved and protected (Beauchamp, Norman & Bowie, 2004).

There have been claims that the quantification of environmental and social costs and the incorporation of these expenses into business strategies can significantly reduce the operating costs of firms (Crowther, 2000). From a financial accounting standpoint

this seems very unlikely, never mind cumbersome to determine some of these costs. A question that would most probably arise is how would the declaration of additional costs (which eat away at the profit) serve to reduce the operating costs of the company?. Hardened capitalists with little regard for all else might feel justified to increase their production levels; thereby emitting more carbon emissions into the air, or use more resources than previously. It is still unclear, to most why simply reporting one's impact and accounting for this in financial statements would relieve some of the pressure organisations have on natural systems.

Unsurprisingly, little evidence exists to support this view. Pava and Krausz (1996) however provided empirical evidence to suggest that companies that were defined as 'socially responsible' performed, in financial terms, as well as those which are not socially responsible. Though their observations might be seen as subjective, given the existence of a myriad of definitions of sustainability, the implication being that what one person may consider a socially responsible firm, another may not. The results from Pava and Krausz's study are not futile, as an interesting observation is noted here. It appears that those firms regarded as socially responsible are not that different form their purely-economically motivated counterparts, but for their environmental sensitivities. Commitments to a more sustainable way of conducting one's business need not be a hindrance to the firm's core objectives. The sustainability ethic needs to be imbedded into the overall business strategic vision and not merely as a secondary objective.

2.8.1 Tools for Measuring Sustainability and its Features

A number of sustainability measuring tools have emerged in recent decades. As the importance of quantifying the economic, social and environmental damage and any efforts to amend these becomes increasingly necessary, various tools are used as litmus tests from which to base decisions regarding sustainable interventions. The purpose of 'green accounting' and other such related practices is to provide information on the sustainability of the economy, as no set doctrine is currently in existence on how to combine different and sometimes incongruous indicators and indexes in immediately useful ways (Phillis, et. Al., 2011; Munda, 2005). The next millennium will be marked by efforts to manage sustainability efficiently, if mankind is

to evade the imminent threats posed by the collapsing life supporting systems, unstable economies and social unrest (Phillis & Andriantiatsaholiniaina, 2001). Although consensus on the delineations of sustainability remains elusive (Gasparaos, El-Haram & Horner, 2007), few is any will refute the positive trajectory of the sustainability movement as it continues to gain prominence.

Table 2.1 illustrates the most prominent measures used globally to measure sustainability.

Indicator	Profile
Millennium Development Indicators	Set up by the United Nations to the progress of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (1990-2020). These indicators have a different goal other than measuring the sustainability of a country; they are not inclusive of the entire concept of sustainability. Measure the effectiveness of policy regarding the MDG's.
Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI-2005)	Developed by Columbia and Yale Universities, the ESI-2005 has 76 variables aggregated into 21 indicators to form 5 categories. The ESI covers a wide range of sustainability features.
Commitment to Development Index (CDI-2006)	Set up by the Centre for Global Development; an independent not for profit organisation based in the USA. Reviews the level of support provide to developing countries to realise prosperity, good governance, and security. Comprises of seven components; aid, trade, investment, migration, environment, security and technology.
Environmental Performance Index	Developed by Columbia and Yale Universities and published in 2006 to present more insight into the **environmental dimension** of the Millennium Development Goals. The EPI is comprised of 6 categories; Environmental health, Biodiversity and Habitat, Sustainable Energy, Water Resources, Air Quality and Productive Resource Management)
Human Development Index	Developed by the UNDP, The Human Development Index is published annually. It is made up of 4 data sets; life expectation at birth, adult literacy rate, combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools and GDP per capita.
Genuine Progress Indicator	Initially published in 1998 the GPI was developed by Redefining Progress. The idea of GPI and ISEW is to adjust the GDP computations to include costs not currently reflected in the national accounts such as environmental costs, human costs and the costs presented by various externalities.
Indicator for Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW)	The GPI and ISEW are both variants of the 'Green GDP'.
Wellbeing of Nations	Set up by Robert Prescott-Allen (2001) in conjunction with various international institutes. Consists of the Human Wellbeing Index and the Ecosystem Wellbeing Index. These comprise of 5 categories each with 7 indicators. Covers the concept of sustainable development comprehensively.
CSD Indicators	Developed by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. It has been published annually since 2003. The set is made up of 14

	themes, 44 sub-themes, 50 core indicators and 46 other indicators. Some of the indicators have little to do with sustainability such as GDP and Tourism, which are accounted for.

Table 2.1 Summary of Sustainability Measuring Tools

The question of whether one country or region is moving towards sustainability or away from it cannot as yet be answered with unanimous consensus (Munda, 2005; 117). The current sustainability measuring tools, as reviewed here though effective in measuring what they set out to measure are limited in their scope. It is this narrowed emphasis that is the source of much of the criticism. They fail take into account all possible factors affecting sustainability and focus on specific environmental (e.g. amount of CO_2 emissions and rate of resource usage) or socio-economic factors such as income per capita. The proposition of more inclusive and comprehensive measures seems sensible. Multi-criterion evaluations could be the answer to compensating for the shortcomings of present tools (Phillis, et al., 2011). A few of the commonly used tools for measuring sustainability are discussed below.

2.8.1.1 Carbon Footprint

The idea of 'the ecological footprint' was first introduced in 1996 by Wackernagel and Rees as a measure of the sustainability of a population's consumption. It is calculated by converting all the consumption into land used in production, along with the theoretical land needed to appropriate the greenhouse gases produced and emitted into the earth's atmosphere (Fiala, 2008). This method is useful in condensing large amounts of data from different factors to produce a single result i.e. a certain carbon units per capita. These results can then be compared to those of generated in other period, countries or companies.

Though the ability of this method to produce summarised values is indeed valuable criticisms of carbon foot printing have been raised. Gordon and Richardson (1998) as well as Van Den Bergh and Verbruggen (1999) say that there is a serious problem with the comparison of current ecological footprint with the actual size of the a region, country or city. In a study by Rees (2008) on the footprint of the city of Vancouver, Canada; calculations on the city indicated that the city required 174

times as much land to sustain it as is currently contained within the city (Fiala, 2008). This extreme example indicates that while it may be informative to understand what it takes to sustain a city, the ecological footprint of a city is significantly greater than the city's boundaries. This fact is derived from one of the most fundamental doctrines of economics, that products are produced according to comparative advantage. Therefore people live and migrate to cities because they are efficient hubs of production.

The ecological footprint computation fails to account for one of the most important issues of sustainability i.e. the degradation of land and its resources (Van Kooten & Bulte, 2000). Once the available land and natural resources and their ability to continually yield economically sufficient production levels, through over-farming, depletion of minerals or devastation by mining or production industries, new arable, resource rich land is sought out. The problem here is that the externalities and damage caused in the process of production is excluded in the CO_2 footprint computation of these activities. A study by Juvan and Dolnicar (2013) found that there are a large number of carbon calculators available; however most of these have very limited functionality typically allowing calculations for transport only.

The UNWTO in an attempt to reduce tourism's effects on the environment has called for consumers to take climate change into consideration when making travel decisions (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2013). With 5% of global carbon dioxide emissions and 14% of total greenhouse gas emissions being attributed to the tourism industry (UNWTO, 2009), the travel community has incredible influence in alleviating these figures.

The quantity and complexity of environmental information, barriers to obtaining the relevant information along with tedious carbon calculators available to consumers make assessing ones' carbon footprint difficult. Moreover, research indicates that the majority of tourists are unfamiliar with carbon calculators, and once alerted to their existence, find them difficult to use and are dubious of their credibility (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2013).

2.8.1.2 Gini Coefficient

The Gini coefficient is a summary statistic that measures how equitably a resource such as income or wealth, is distributed in a population (Farris, 2010; 851). Named after the Statistician Corrado Gini (1884-1965), the index offers a consistent way to analyse and present complex statistics involving national accounts or other tenuous categories. The Gini index gives a simplified tool for condensing and summarising economic data that allows for the illustration of how equity has changed over defined periods.

The simplicity and even bluntness of the Gini index as a single summary statistic, has borne the brunt of much criticism chiefly from social scientists who (Farris, 2010). As a summary statistic the index can only narrowly stipulate a particular piece of descriptive information such as the average income of citizens in a country per capita. Like other summary statistical tools it cannot reveal any more information beyond the particular statistic it measures. Perhaps this tool is best used in conjunction with other implements to present a fuller picture. Needless to say, the Gini index is an important instrument as evidenced by its continual usage by policymakers, countries and international organisations.

2.8.1.3 Multi-Criterion Measures

It is generally accepted that reliable measures of sustainability should be the result of integrating economic, social and natural resources accounts (Phillis & Andriantiatsaholiniaina, 2001). As the sustainability of an industry or country is based on a multitude of basic indicators (Phillis, Grigoroudis & Kouikoglou, 2011), inclusive measures present a more comprehensive picture of the state of sustainability. One such multi-criterion measure can be described mathematically in the following way as laid out by Munda (2005; 117): ***A*** is a finite set of ***N*** feasible actions or alternatives; ***M*** is the number of different points of view or evaluation criteria. ***M*** is considered relevant to a policy problem where the action (a) is evaluated to be better than action (b). Table 2.2 depicts how a decision problem can be resented in a tabular matrix. The impact matrix compares four cities according to a number of criteria.

Criteria	Budapest	Moscow	Amsterdam	New York
Houses owned (%)	50.5	40.2	2.2	10.3
Residential density (pers./hectare)	123.3	225.2	152.1	72
Use of private car (%)	31.1	10	60	32.5
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	40	62	22	36.5
Solid waste generated per capita (t./year)	0.2	0.29	0.4	0.61
City product per person (US$/year)	4750	5100	28 251	30 952
Income disparity (Q5/Q!)	9.19	7.61	5.25	14.81
Households below poverty line (%)	36.6	15	20.5	16.3
Crime rate per 1000 (theft)	39.4	4.3	144.05	56.7

Table 2.2 Impact Matrix for Four Cities (Munda, 2005; 118)

Phillis and Andriantiatsaholiniaina (2001) developed and proposed the Fuzzy Logic perspective measure of assessing sustainability also referred to as sustainability assessment by fuzzy evaluation (SAFE). SAFE is a hierarchical interface system that uses knowledge-encoded into “if-then” rules and fuzzy logic. 75 indicators or inputs are converted into more composite variables describing various environmental, social aspects as well as an overall sustainability index (Phillis, Grigoroudis & Kouikoglou, 2011; 542). They cite that this method is designed to handle vague and polymorphous concepts such as sustainability (2001; 435). This mechanism takes into consideration ecological, social and economic inputs which are treated individually then combined to provide an overall picture.

2.8.2 Sustainability Rating and Reporting

Credibility is a self-promoting mechanism which is known and in many instances proven to be true. As such, quantification systems accrue significant weight and sway in many spheres of society (Sauder & Espeland 2009). Numerical measurements in their many different forms are ubiquitous, and can be found even in the field of sustainable development where corporate sustainability performance is measured and ranked by a plethora of rating agencies (Parguel et al., 2011). The importance of evaluations and ratings lies in their power to allow comparisons from two different points in time or before and after an intervention. Perhaps the scepticisms surrounding sustainability, sustainable development, ecotourism and

other related new world ideologies in part can be attributed to the lack of evidence to attest to their effectiveness in addressing social and environmental problems.

It is not surprising that the movement towards sustainability discourses has been accompanied by a litany of measurements directed at addressing corporate social and environmental performance. The last decade has seen a surge in the number of agencies, associations, non-governmental organisations, associations and consulting firms providing measurements, grades and rankings for assessing corporate sustainability performance (Bessire & Onnee, 2010). The measurement of sustainability performance has become so widespread that academics speak of a tsunami of accountability and transparency (Caron & Gely 2004; 1553).

The measuring, monitoring and reporting activities so heavily practiced in this age of accountability and transparency is not without its drawbacks. Though this process has seen the legitimation of sustainability and it principles as increasing more stakeholders commit to its philosophy its limitations need to be reviewed to sought out possible solutions. Chelli and Gendron (2013; 190) cite that the measurement of corporate sustainability is never free of manipulation, uncertainty and methodological ambiguity.

The discourse by which sustainability performance is measured is not neutral, and tends to promote certain ideologies. This explains the differences in the many measurement and reporting systems which may emphases the importance of some indicators as more important than others. According to Hall (1997) these seek to define what is normal and acceptable and therefore who is trustworthy and who should be excluded. It can therefore be said that sustainability rating agencies deliberatively express certain ideologies that aim to convince the audiences of the validity of some ideas and not those scientifically determined or currently being experienced by society.

According to Thompson (1990) rating agencies draw their legitimacy from discursive pronouncements made in the public domain, discourse of which promotes a vision of the world that can impact how legitimacy is thought and acted upon in wider community. A perhaps overcritical analysis of this notion can view the very premise of the sustainability reporting cynically purely as a conceit, having very little to do with advancing the sustainability movement.

2.9 Achieving Sustainability

The fundamental rhetoric behind the sustainability debate is based on the idea that human activity is limited by three sets of long-term constraints (Cliff, 2007; 262), summarised by the Venn diagram in Figure 2.5. The tri-constraints are made up of eco-centric, socio-centric and techno-centric concerns which affect individual decisions and invariably the actions undertaken. Derived from the three principle considerations of sustainability, this model reiterates the precariousness of striking a balance conducive for sustainability.

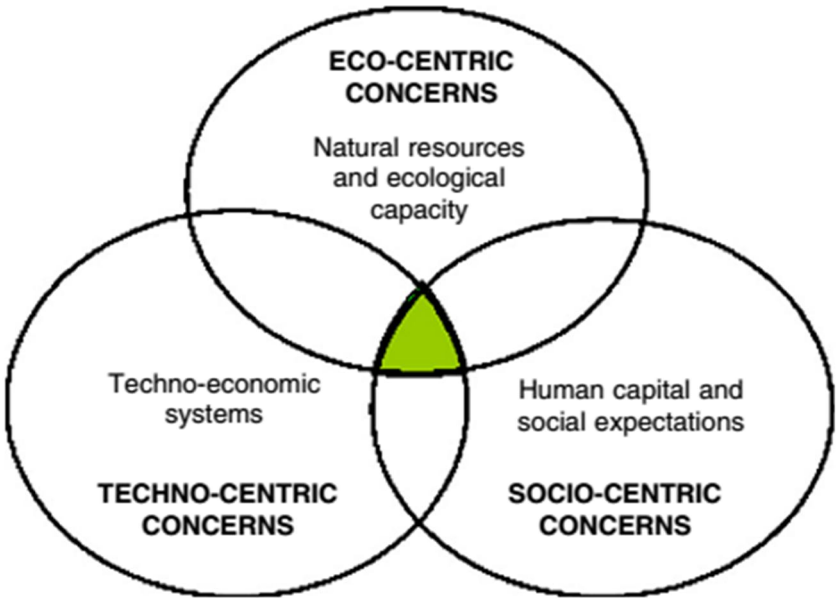


Fig 2.5 Sustainability Expressed as Long-Term Constraints (Cliff, 2007; 263)

Eco-centric concerns, mirror the environmental considerations of the TBL, and are imposed by the simple fact that the earth is a closed system with finite resources (Cliff, 2007). Socio-centric concerns are based on human expectations and the need to improve ones' quality of life in the present and the future. The techno-centric concerns are imposed by the finite human abilities faced in the short-run by the limited technology deployed in an economic system. Sustainable development is achieved when all three constraints are complied with and no one concern is traded off for another. It is only when this precarious balance is struck that sustainability can be achieved, depicted in the figure as the shaded area.

2.9.1 Weak and Strong Sustainability

The extent to which commitments to the principles of sustainability made by nations, organisations and individual persons varies greatly. The literature on the levels of sustainability positions it as interpreted by a continuum with two extremes; a neoliberal extreme and the critical approaches at the other end of the range (Pearce & Wardford, 1993; Hatch, 2001).

Weak sustainability as the term suggests, refers to the least demanding engagements within the sustainability paradigm. Weak sustainability has a strong association with market liberalism. From this point of view, all forms of capital are seen as having similar unlimited substitutability, whose value is passed on through generations (Pearce, Markandya & Barbier, 1989).

Neumayer (2003; 22) identify the key element of weak sustainability as unlimited substitutability which he cites as comprising of one or more of the following factors:

- An overabundance or excess supply of natural resources,
- Equal to or greater than unit elasticity for substituting man-made capital resources and
- Technical progress overcoming resource constraints.

Strong sustainability on the other hand emphasises the importance of natural capital. The origin of this notion can be traced to Daly in his book The Steady-State Economy (1972) in which he talks about the ecological economics and related issues. Under this view, the efficient allocation of resources though imperative, is secondary to issues of scale and distribution (Daly & Farley, 2004). The basic premise of this paradigm is about recognising and understanding nature's limits and allowing economies and industries to develop within these limits, both biophysical and morally (Daly & Frley, 2004; 21). Strong sustainability does not necessarily guarantee the conservation of ecological systems, as it requires keeping the aggregate value of natural capital constant. The main problem with this distinction is that substitutability within natural capital is not constrained (Davidson, 2008). An analogous example as permitted by this definition is that of accepting a bigger hole in the ozone layer in exchange for increased number of whales. Another interpretation of strong sustainability suggests that some natural capital is non-substitutable and therefore regarded as critical natural capital (Neumayer, 2003; 25).

2.9.2 Promoting Sustainable Development and Sustainability

Estimated to double in size over the next decade (UNWTO, 2009), and with wide evidence of the negative consequences of tourism there is concern around the sustainability of the industry (Moscardo, 2008). If this is to be addressed, one has to be able to measure present levels of sustainability and indicate how far we are from achieving it (Lawn, 2004).

According to Hales and Prescott-Allen (2002) achieving sustainability requires the definition of its components in measurable terms and setting the responsibility to assess progress. A noted tool in the mitigation of the negative environmental and social externalities caused by the industry is certification within industry (Melo & Wolf, 2005). Accreditations emphasise performance in the environmental, social and ecological domains and ensures that sustainability criteria are satisfied (Esparon, Gyuris & Stoeckl, 2013).

Governments have a number of tools at their disposal for promoting sustainability and sustainable development. Though there is no one sure way achieving sustainability and this has contributed to the past failures in its progressions and implementation (Perez, et al., 2013). By manipulating the following features governments can improve the publics' and the business community's approach and perceptions towards sustainability:

- Laws and regulations that control environmental pollution and regulate development and interactions of companies with local communities.
- Environmental education and awareness. The government can educate the public about environmental and social issues that affect the country and their communities through well-structured awareness programs.
- Providing good environmental and social services to people.
- Imposition of taxes; on industries and or activities that are unsustainable.
- Tax breaks and subsidies. Incentivising sustainable behaviour by providing funds for start-ups or tax reductions to parties that conduct themselves sustainably.

2.10 Business and Managers' Attitudes towards Sustainability

Insights into business manager's attitudes are essential. These have the capacity to influence managers output and performance which can be hindered if the attitudes may be negative. According to Dewhurst and Thomas (2003) the most serious barriers to change in business are attitudinal. Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of Reasoned Action states that a strong relationship exists between individuals' beliefs, attitudes and their behavioural intentions which incites certain behaviours. This theory further explains that beliefs and attitudes are formed through environmental factors, personal relationships, individual values and motivations. An important point derived from the study is that attitudes are formed and informed by various stimuli. These are dynamic and can change over time as people become more knowledgeable, experienced and exposed to other points of view. These aspects make studying and predicting attitudes a complex endeavour.

A survey of managers in the Danish tourism industry indicated that a comparatively large proportion of the businesses within the industry consider sustainability the responsibility of the government (Bramwell & Alletorp, 2001). Whether this can be said about the sentiments of managers in the tourism industry in general is doubtable. Unfortunately, research on the role of the individual managers as change agent for sustainability is sparse (Weiss, 2003). What literature there is on sustainability and the individual level typically focuses on four areas:

- The importance of values congruence between managers, employees and organisational values (Fryxell & Lo, 2003; Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004; Van Marrewijk, 2003)
- The instrumental association between individual concern, knowledge and commitment and corporate social and environmental responsiveness (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Keogh & Polonsky, 1998)
- Narrative accounts by sustainability managers of corporate "greening" (Andersson & Bateman, 2000; Prakash, 2001; Walley & Stubbs, 1999) and
- The role of sustainability managers as champions, entrepreneurs, or agents of change in their organisations (Fineman, 1997; Georg and Fussel, 2000; Starkey and Crane, 2003).

It is prudent to consider if other factors affect the degree of autonomy individual managers have in their respective postings. Managers with more control and span of responsibility are more likely to assume more responsibility than those with less.

The study of attitudes has for long been heavily researched in the field of psychology. As businesses strive to improve their performance, the human resource element of the business function has been under scrutiny. Attitudes are a function of numerous factors including personality, motivation, and external factors, some of which have been already garnered much attention in business research. The nexus between ecotourism and sustainability is often assumed and generally accepted to be positively correlated. However the attitudes of ecotourism business managers towards sustainability are yet to be established.

Many researchers set out to better understand the motivations and perceptions of tourism business managers in order to explore the determining factors of their attitudes towards sustainability (Deng et al., 1992; Dewhurst & Thomas, 2003). A European attitudinal study on chain hotel managers showed positive attitudes towards environmental protections and sustainability (Bohdanowicz & Martinac, 2003). The results revealed that 'the level of environmental awareness among the hoteliers surveyed was commensurate to the efforts made by the hotel chains' management towards developing and enforcing environmental policies and programmes (Bohdanowicz & Martinac, 2003: 4). It follows that the managers and owners of small to medium sized outlets were not influenced by management policies.

2.11 Sustainability in South Africa

The increased popularity of sustainability and related concepts such as the green movement have seen increased, though gradual, action towards more sustainable ways of living and the manner in which business is conducted. Unfortunately the global trends cannot be extrapolated to the South African case, as there is much to be improved upon if the country and indeed the continent are to emulate global inclinations towards sustainability (Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report,

2013). South Africa was ranked 64th in the Travel and Tourism Competiveness Index in 2013, a modest improvement from 66th in 2011.

The consequences of the failure for sustainable development to materialise in sub-Saharan Africa are very apparent (Burns, Audouin & Weaver, 2006). This is evidenced by the extreme levels of inequality in this region and in South Africa with one of the highest levels of in the world (Bosch, Rossouw, Claassens & du Plessis, 2010). South Africa's mixed economic structure exhibiting features of both developing and developed nations is somewhat better-off than many of other sub-Saharan countries in terms of state development. The country's economy experienced growth between 1995 and 2010 after two decades of stagnation and continued to expand modestly until 2012 (National Planning Commission, 2011; 7).

Corporate and stakeholder response and dispositions towards sustainability are varied, with some organisations making more strides and commitments sustainability than others. The absence of a standardised guideline or framework of sustainability serves to discourage firms from taking the first few steps towards sustainable operations. It is likely that once a certain level of sustainable guide or benchmark is in place, laggard firms; those who change only when it is absolutely necessary and required of them to, will follow suit.

It is encouraging that South Africa's' interest in the sustainable movement increasing, which has been followed by backing from industry. This is evidenced by the myriad environmental and sustainability colloquiums hosted and convened in the country in recent years, explicit commitments by corporate to improve their sustainability standing as well as the pronouncements of sustainability at law. The sustainability Indaba is but one of the most recently (May 2013) held cross-sectorial international gatherings; which was aimed at showcasing recent sustainable developments and implements as well as to provide a platform for businesses to liaise with other businesses.

2.12 Summary

The range of approaches evident in the sustainability debate, suggest the complexity of the issues encompassed within the overriding concept of sustainability, an

understanding of which can provide insight into how it is perceived, applied and operationalized (Davidson, 2008). The application of sustainability in practice has proven challenging as no universal framework for its implementation is currently in existence. Review of the literature showed that sustainability is increasingly important not just within the tourism industry but as a general standard for business.

This chapter aimed to review the key issues to be considered when applying sustainability particularly within tourism. In the next chapter pertinent theory on ecotourism is reviewed.

CHAPTER 3: EVALUATING ECOTOURISM

"In all things of nature there is something of the marvellous"
Aristotle

3.1 Introduction

Tourism is a multifaceted industry that is continuously evolving in the face of changing consumer touristic needs and sensitivities (Kim, Njite & Hancer, 2013). Ecotourism encompasses a wide range of ecologically focused or cultural based business undertakings within the tourism industry. These range widely from the provision of accommodation facilities, and opportunities for learning about and exploring scenic and natural attractions. The geographic location of South Africa is idyllically situated and offers a number of unique tourist attractions as the custodian and host of numerous well-known national parks, heritage sights and other offerings.

The permeation of the ideology of sustainability into the tourism, as in other industries has led to the development of related concepts within the sector. Ecotourism is one such concept along with sustainable tourism, responsible tourism (Buckley, 2003), community tourism (Nelson, 2010), conservation tourism (Buckley, 2010) and related terminologies continue to arise in the wake of this paradigm (Spenceley, 2008). Ecological tourism, commonly known as ecotourism has been a growing phenomenon as early as the 1950's as the worlds' appreciation of the vulnerability of nature and its resources gained increased attention (Roche & Wallington, 2007).

Ecotourism forms part of the sustainable tourism paradigm (Wight, 2003), which is derived from and wholly embraces the principles of sustainability. Natural-based touristic elements of holiday activities coupled with increased consumer awareness to mitigate the 'antagonistic' impacts of tourism on the environment, contributed to the demand for ecotourism holidays (Diamantis, 1999). This trend coincided with the emergence of the environmentally-conscious consumer whose aim is to reduce their personal footprint on the earth. The appeal of ecotourism as a conservation and development tool stems from the related benefits and perceptions that it is a practical alternative to the conventional and destructive tourism model (Powell & Ham, 2008; 468). Though historically the concept of ecotourism was adopted to describe the

nature-tourism phenomenon, it has since evolved and widened in focus (Wallace & Pierce, 1996).

This chapter reviews seminal and pertinent literature on ecotourism and related theories. The literature provides the context for the investigation firstly by introducing and then defining the relevant concepts. It also provides an analysis of the South African tourism industry with the aim of contextualising the study by forming a sold theoretical foundation for the research.

3.2 An Analysis of Ecotourism Definitions

The etymology of the term ecotourism can be linked to and taken as ecosystem-based tourism, as a substitute of deriving a sense as eco-friendly tourism (Tuclea, Padurean & Hornoiu, 2009). Numerous and often contradictory definitions of ecotourism exist within the literature (Chiutsi, et al., 2011). A study by Fennel (2001) identified 85 definitions of ecotourism, premised on the variables of education, culture, and benefit to surrounding communities and with reference to where ecotourism occurs, especially in the natural area. More definitions have since been formed and continue to appear in the literature. The different aspects of ecotourism, what it entails and how it differs from other traditional forms of tourism have been studied and reviewed extensively. A comprehensive collection of prominent definitions are tabulated below to give an indication of the evolution of the concept.

Author/s	Definition
Ceballos-Lascurain (1987; 14)	Travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas.
Butler (1989; 9-17)	Ecotourism can be described as the type of tourism that is inherently sensitive to communication, awareness and environmental enhancement. These characteristics of ecotourism make it less likely to create social and environmental problems commonly associated with conventional tourism. Ecotourism attempts to give travellers' a greater awareness of environment
Ziffer (1989, 6)	A form of tourism inspired primarily by the natural history of an area, including its indigenous cultures. The eco-tourist visits relatively undeveloped areas in the spirit of appreciation, participation and sensitivity. The eco-tourist practices a non-consumptive use of wildlife and natural resources and contributes to the visited area through labour or financial means aimed at directly benefiting the conservation of the site and the economic well-being of the local residents. The visit should strengthen the eco-tourists' appreciation and dedication to conservation issues in general, and to the specific needs of the locale. Ecotourism also implies a management approach by the host country or region

	that commits itself to establishing and maintaining the sites with the participation of local residents, marketing them properly, enforcing regulations and using the proceeds of the enterprise to fund the area's land management as well as community development.
Kutay (1989; 30)	Ecotourism is a model of development in which natural areas are planned as part of the tourism base and biological resources are clearly linked to social economic sectors.
Ziolkowski (1990; 16)	Low-impact tourism . . . focuses on experiencing the local culture and what it has to offer on its own unadulterated terms . . . far from the proverbial "beaten track."
Boo (1991; 6-7)	Ecotourism / nature-oriented tourism refers to tourism to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the (1991, pp. 4-8) specific objective of admiring, studying and enjoying the scenery and its flora and fauna.
Farrell and Runyan (1991; 34)	Focus on the environment in a special manner in which conservationists and tourist interests see mutual advantages of working together to preserve environmental quality while mutually protecting tourism . . . nature conservation aided by cooperative strategies . . . a subset of nature tourism taken a step farther, with nature and tourism considered equal partners . . . exclusively purposeful and focused on the enhancement or maintenance of natural systems through tourism.
Place (1991, p. 189)	Gradual small-scale approach, based on local savings and investment . . . local participation may provide the opportunity to integrate conservation and economic development for park-based tourism development.
Weaver (2001:15)	Ecotourism is a form of tourism that fosters learning experiences and appreciation of the natural environment, or some component thereof, within its associated cultural context. It has the appearance (in concert with best practice) of being environmentally and socially sustainable, preferably in a way that enhances the natural and cultural resources base of the destination and promotes the viability of the operation.
Stone (2002; 16)	Eco-tourism is defined as tourism which demands a high level of human responsibility involving "active contribution towards conservation and/or the improvement of host community welfare
Powell and Ham (2008:468)	Tourism to natural areas that supports environmental conservation, social equity and environmental education in an effort to maintain economic viability without degrading the host environment.

Table 3.1 Tabulation of Prominent Ecotourism Definitions in Chronological Order

As research into ecotourism broadens and intensifies on account of its heightened popularity and operational use. The concept continues to develop and be better understood. Although the question of how ecotourism is to be defined has begun to subside in more recent decades (Blamey, 1997); other aspects of the concept are studied and evaluated. A content analysis of the definitions listed in Table 3.1, reveals specific reference to several underlying themes that appear repeatedly. These include variables cited by Fennell (2010; 403) in a comprehensive analysis of ecotourism definitions:

- Reference to where ecotourism occurs
- Conservation

- Educational emphasis
- Social development and benefit to surrounding communities
- Culture

These varied themes noted from the definitions illustrate the broadness of ecotourism and all that it is comprised of. This poses a problem when trying to classify or discern the ecotourism business from the traditional tourism firm. Chiutsi et al., (2011) assert that the move towards the establishment of agreement on the ecotourism dynamic will contribute in crafting policies that will help institute appropriate frameworks to guide ecotourism development. Although it seems that some consensus has been reached as to the importance of universal and restrictive definition of ecotourism, an operational one remains elusive (Blamey, 2010).

Buckley's (1994) restrictive notion of ecotourism is comprised of four dimensions that define ecotourism as; nature-based, environmentally-educated, sustainably-managed and conservation-supporting. From these an operational definition can be formulated that can allow researchers and ecotourism business managers to classify and measure the ecotourism market segment. Lindberg (1994; 1) in support of this notion suggests that ecotourism needs to be defined in a manner that enables interested stakeholders; researchers and business managers to estimate the proportion of all tourists who are eco-tourist. Buckley (1994) however views an operational definition as unnecessary save for legal, administrative uses o for the procurement of capital from funding agencies.

In this study, for the purpose of clearly identifying the sample frame for the empirical investigation an operation definition is necessary. In order to classify ecotourism businesses Buckley's dimensions of ecotourism will be used to discern a 'conventional tourism enterprise' from an ecotourism business.

3.3 Ecotourism Illustrated

Tourism has been identified as one of the fastest growing industries in the world, contributing on average approximately 10% to the global economy annually (Chifon,

2010). This industry proves resilient and exhibits modest, though consistent growth even in the face of global economic depression. The South African government has a result declared tourism as one of the six pillars for economic growth in line with the New Growth Path. This has had the National Department of Tourism committing to the creation of 225 000 new jobs and bolstering economic contribution to GDP by R499 billion by the year 2020.

In recent decades, many forms of tourism have emerged in the face of growing consumer touristic needs which have been met by a rise in newer forms of tourism ventures aimed at catering to the new and emerging markets. The changing demands on the global tourism industry have led to increasing popularity of adventure, medical, cultural and other forms of tourism (Spilanis & Vayanni, 2003). Heightened consumer sensitivities and awareness of ecological and social issues have created a demand for more sustainable tourism business forms (Kang, et al., 2013). Ecotourism forms part of the sustainable tourism paradigm (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008; 42) which is considered different from the traditional form of tourism (Ivanov & Ivanov, 2013).

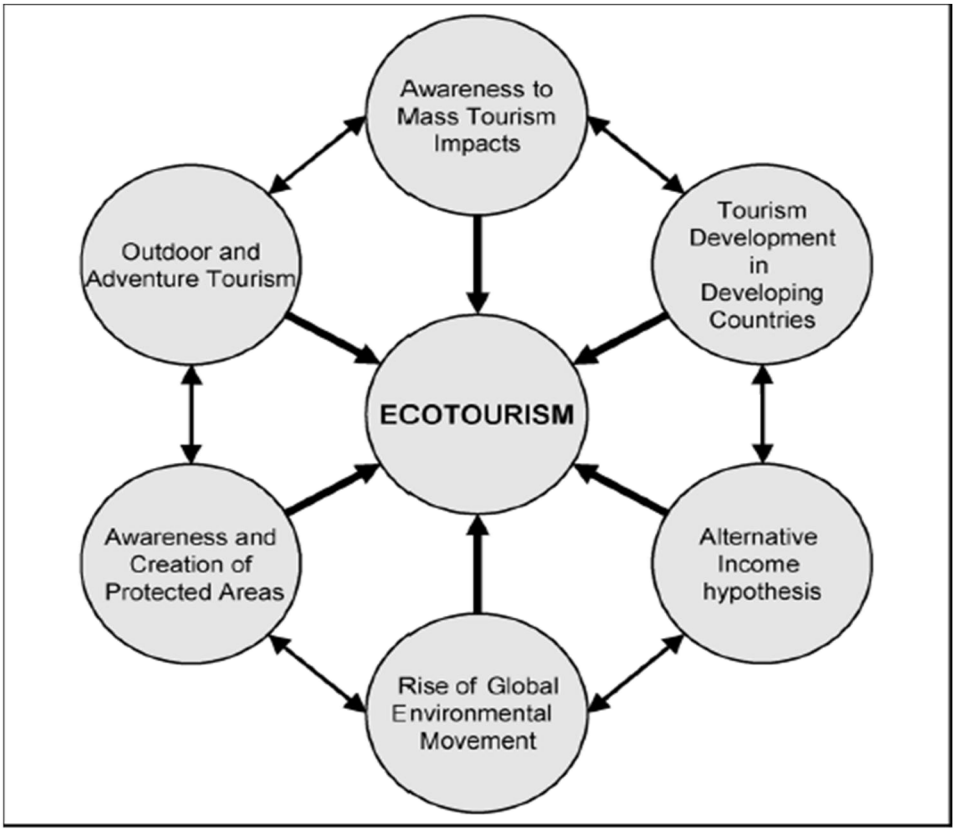


Fig 3.1 Factors Influencing the Rise of Ecotourism (Jamal, Borges & Stronza, 2006)

Figure 3.1 illustrates the diversity and interrelated aspects of ecotourism and shows factors that influenced its rise as an increasing favoured form of tourism. Although the primary basis of ecotourism in its earlier form was conservation-centred, the generation of economic benefits to local communities and proprietors was perceived as means to this end (Jamal, Borges & Stronza, 2008). According to Fennell (1999) ecotourism's potential facilitated the creation, visitation and the ecological management of new protected areas. The increased awareness on environmental issues met with a rise of the global environmental movement and the heightened appeal of alternative forms of tourism continues to propel the growth of this sector (Imran, Alam & Beaumont, 2014). Jamal, Borges and Stronza (2008) cite that the common held association of ecotourism with geographically remote areas and developing countries stemmed from tropical conservation concerns in areas like the Amazonian and African rain forests, and were emulated in other spheres of tourism globally.

Natural resources in South Africa particularly, form the basis for of the country's tourism industry, which attracts millions of domestic and international tourists yearly (Bodumela, 2012). It is from these resources that the South African ecotourism industry is created. This industry does not only bolster the economy through the continued business it generates but also has the potential if managed properly to expropriate social and environmental benefits (Jurdana, 2009).

3.3.1 Ecotourism vs Traditional Tourism Model

An important point to make is that traditional and even newer forms of tourism can also bare the ecotourism label, as long as they meet the criteria of sustainable business within the sector. From this perspective tourism activity can be classified as one of two categories; conventional tourism and 'new forms of tourism' (Turneret al., 1994). Conventional tourism activities, emphasises the importance of the market, pricing of resources i.e. profit maximisation and little regard for the environment insofar as it relates to the tourism product. Newer forms are divided into alternative and special interest forms of tourism. Figure 3.2 illustrates a conceptual model of tourism which depicts alternative forms of tourism distinguished from the traditional mass tourism model. Varvaressos, (1998; 76) described special interest forms as

being defined by special motives that induce travel, while alternative forms of tourism are related to the way the travel is organised and to the tourists' willingness to learn about the host area and to consume environmentally friendly products. It follows that newer forms of tourism may be either economically viable or environmentally friendly or both, depending on the business' strategic intent.

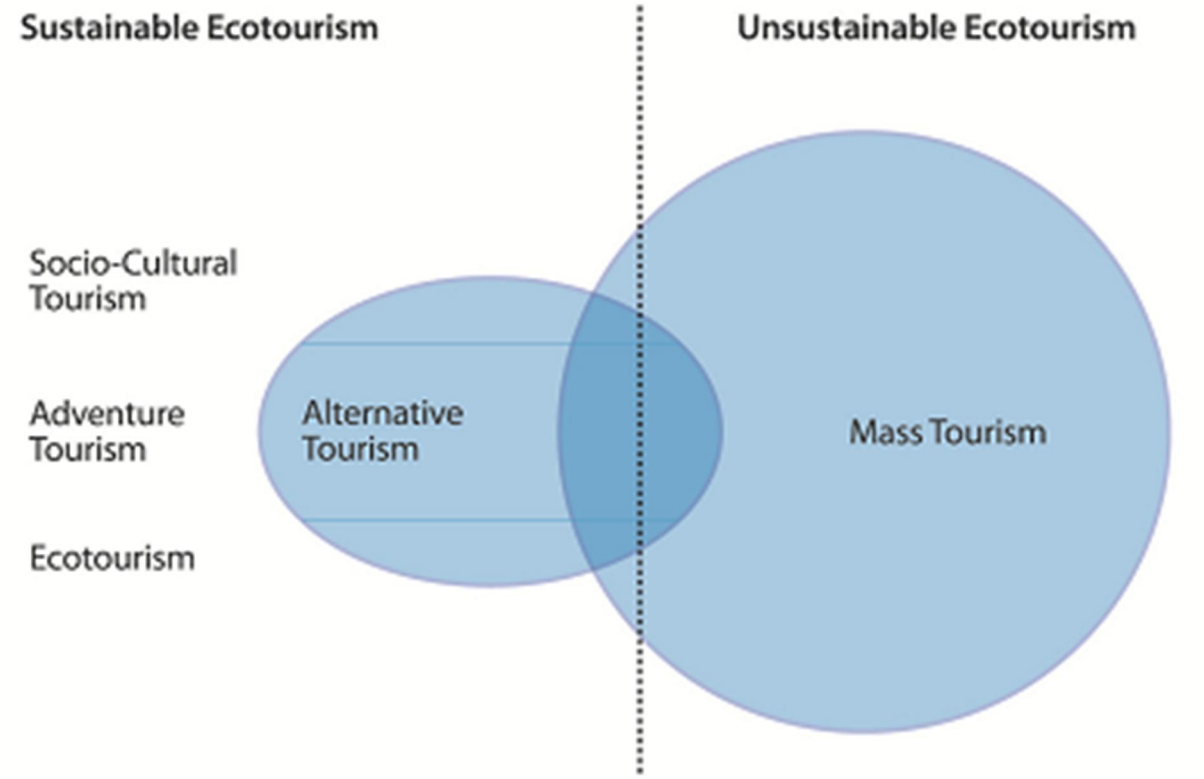


Fig 3.2 Conceptual Model of Tourism (Eriksson, 2003)

The idea that any tourism business undertaking can be classified as an ecotourism outlet is the source of much confusion. The misunderstanding lies in the question; how does on discern an ecotourism outlet from a traditional tourism one, especially amidst theoretical shortfalls and the lack of set standards for the operationalization of sustainability. Strambach and Surmeier (2013) define these standards tools that develop a common understanding of sustainability within the industry. They serve as benchmarks for organisational practices and provide a basis to convey credibility and establish confidence with stakeholders and intermediaries (2013; 736).The absence of such guidelines makes it particularly difficult to not only distinguish ecotourism business but also to operationalize it. Efforts to align certification schemes globally and to strengthen the social criteria remain a challenging task (Font & Harris, 2004).

3.3.2 Forms of Ecotourism

The South African ecotourism industry is centred on a wide range of businesses and activities that make up the industry. Chiefly, it is made up of those firms within the tourism industry with strict adherence of the three elements of sustainability. It is also flanked by such goods and services proprietors such as travel organisers, transportation and support services as depicted in Figure 3.3. The nature of the tourism industry is such that at any given time it is comprised of a number of industries, departments, stakeholders and businesses that work together for any tourism service or experience.

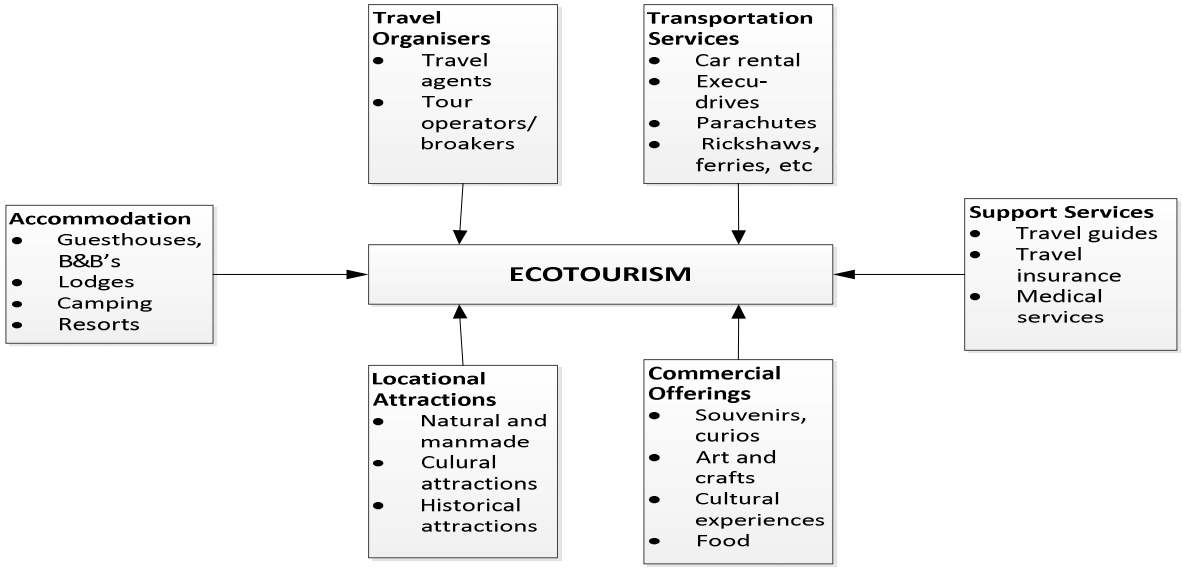


Fig 3.3 Components of Ecotourism

A practical model of ecotourism rather oxymoronically combines conservation and development, in which all stakeholders foster a spirit of sustainable development by uplifting the standards of living of local communities (Cristina, 2004).

3.3.3 A Model for Ecotourism

The model below developed by Wight (1998) depicts the core values and principals of sustainable ecotourism along with the various issues associated with it (Figure

3.4). The model is built around the three fundamental principles of sustainability. At the heart of the model lies the impetus of sustainable ecotourism summarised as: a constant awareness and cognisance of the future and the needs of generations to come, a moral responsibility to use conserve and use resources sparingly as guardians and to enlighten, educate and allow others to experience, see and enjoy what these precious resources have to offer.

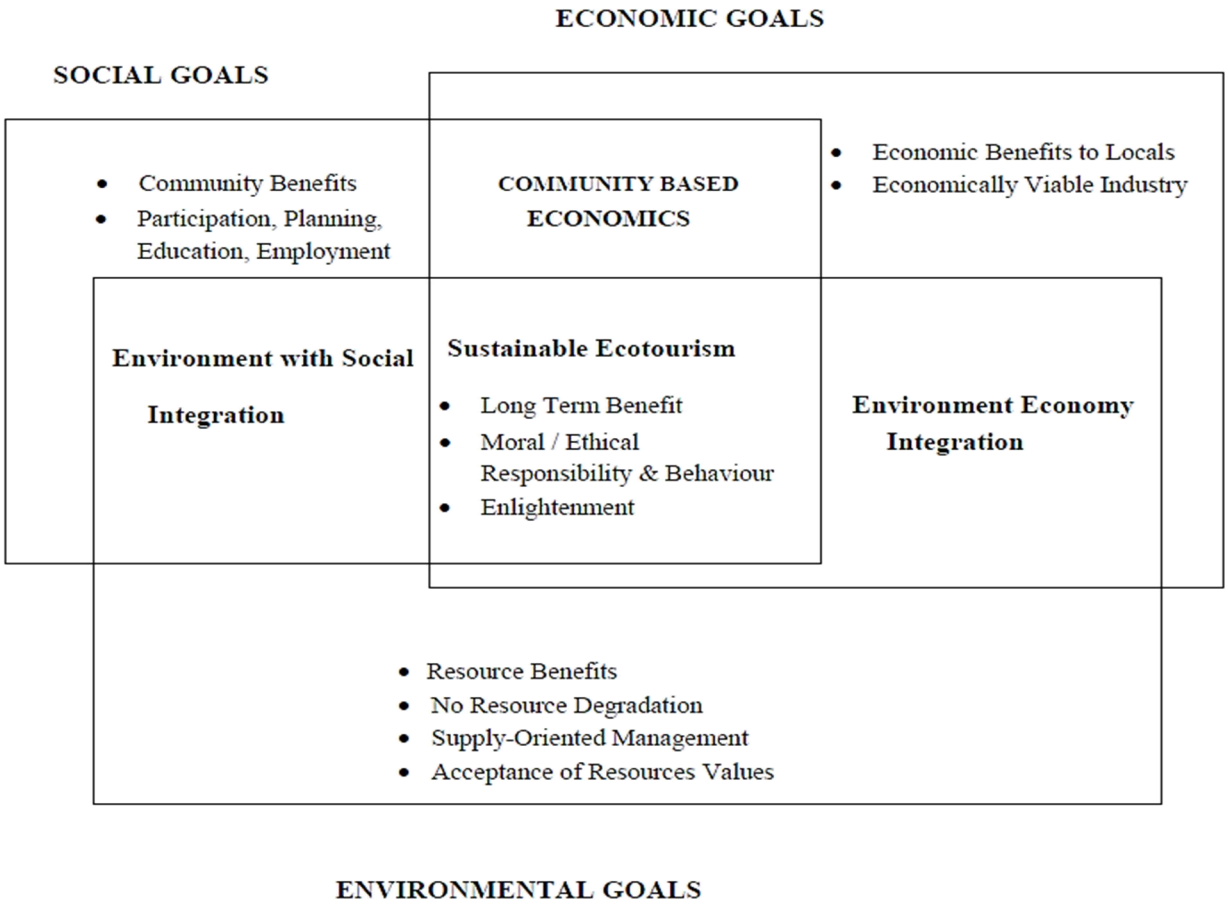


Fig 3.4 Sustainable Ecotourism Values and Principles Model (Wight , 1993; 57)

Arguably, economic goals represented in this model might be considered the most important, at least in the short run as none of the others can be upheld without the money needed to support these. Economic benefits extend far beyond the personal gains of proprietors and directly into the local economy and can also benefit local residents and stave off penury. Other social benefits include provision of employment to local communities, education of travellers and infrastructural development of the locale.

From an environmental perspective; the basic environmental modification of natural ecological systems and the environment of host tourism areas, concerns a series of parameters in relation to land use, water resources, energy consumption, waste generation and impacts on biodiversity (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Environmental considerations of the ecotourism business concern are centred on efficient management of resources and the benefits expropriated by following a supply oriented management philosophy which eases the burden on the environment and resources expropriated to advance the business endeavour.

Ecotourism is pivotal in the conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage while simultaneously helping in the generation of revenue (Yogi, 2010). The Kakum canopy walkway and rainforest in Kakum National Park in Ghana designed by Conservation International lead reforestation and rehabilitation of visitation efforts from approximately 2000 in 1992 to 70 000 in 1999 (Conservation International, 2000). Such ecotourism efforts when managed and implemented effectively, have the potential to revive entire economies and vastly improve the lives of surrounding communities while conserving the environment.

Wight's model of ecotourism values and principles illustrates clearly, the interrelated nature of the three goals of sustainability. These have to be viewed and managed in unison always taking care to consider how the other elements are affected by a change in any one. It follows that for true sustainability to be achieved no one of these takes precedence over the others.

3.4 Ecotourism Accreditation and Classification

In order to meet and maintain certain standards in ecotourism, it is necessary to develop evaluation and monitoring methods which recognise the quality of service in the tourism industry. Tuclea, Padurean and Hornoiu (2009; 49) define certification as "a voluntary procedure that assesses audits and gives written assurance that a facility, product, process or service meets specific standards. A marketable logo is typically awarded to those firms that meet or exceed the baseline standards and is reviewed periodically (Honey & R ome, 2001). Ecotourism certifications are strategic instruments for the official approval and promotion of design, production, marketing

and use of environmentally benign goods and services that have a reduced environmental impact (Tuclea, Padurean & Hornoiu, 2009).

The development of standards and certification programmes in global tourism has gained importance in the production-consumption nexus (Strambach & Surmeier, 2013; 736). Internationally certification within the industry is understood to play an important role in regulating and monitoring tourism enterprises and promoting sustainable development (Mahoney, 2006; Medina, 2005). This is despite the fact there is insufficient research to definitively accept or refute certification as a key tool in advancing the sustainable tourism agenda (Esparon, Gyuris & Stoeckl, 2013). Although many studies note an increased understanding of sustainability as evidenced by an increase of "green" interest (Prebensen & Lee, 2013) translated through consumers' purchasing behaviours (Fennel, 2008; Holden 2008). However, some are sceptical of this notion and suggest that the demand for sustainable tourism is limited and stress that not much progress has been made in changing tourist behaviour (Leslie, 2012; Valor, 2008).

In 2010, there were over 340 international eco-labels recognised by the World Resources Institute[2], with at least 40 relating to the travel community and the tourism industry (Piper & Yeo, 2011). Some authors maintain that this number is much higher; by at least 60 (McRandle, 2006) and even as high as 100 (Fairweather, Maslin & Simmons, 2005). This increase has been met by concurrent proliferation in ecotourism related businesses. Certification programmes represent an increasingly important strategy for encouraging the sustainable production of goods and services (Medina, 2005). This has however not occurred without controversy as some get accreditation with disingenuous intentions as they seek to gain the patronage of sustainability conscious stakeholders.

Classification System	Organisation Type
Eco-Management and Audit System (EMAS)	Public authority
Green Globe	Industry association
ISO 14001	Private
Eco-friendly Hotels Worldwide	Private

[2] The World Resources Institute is an internationally recognised organisation dedicated towards sustainability and the preservation of ecosystems and the natural environment. Their principle goals are; climate protection, economic and environmentally responsible development, reversal and negation of the harm to ecosystems and equitable treatment of people.

Ecotel	Private
Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System	NGO
Audubon Cooperative Signature Program	NGO
Blue Flag	NGO
Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA)	Public Authority

Table 3.2 List of Ecotourism Classification Systems

Eco-Certification programmes were developed as non-government, market-based interventions designed to promote sustainability by encouraging the preferential consumption of goods and services from companies that adhere to high social and environmental standards in their production (Conroy, 2001; 109). These have gained popularity as businesses within the tourism industry seek to differentiate themselves from traditional tourism outlets, thereby capturing the emerging eco-conscious consumer market. Consumers actively seek out environmentally friendly and ecotourism products and certification aids in identifying the relevant businesses to share their patronage with.

3.4.1 Types of Certification Programmes

The rise of certification programmes and ecolabelling systems reflects industry efforts to gain credibility, visibility and to operationalize sustainability in an increasingly competitive marketplace (Honey, 2002). To date numerous techniques aimed at legitimation are used in practice, such ecolabelling, trademarks, certification programmes, higher-level accreditations and associations with relevant causes as well as with organisations renowned for their sustainable efforts.

Institutionalisation has been carried forward by two types of certification programmes (Table 3.3) performance and process based systems, both of which entail an audit of the firm under review (Jamal, Borges & Stronza, 2006). Performance-based systems establish a set of frameworks or standards that serve as indicators to be achieved by the business being certified. The company is judged based on these guidelines; recommendations are then made for adequate compliance before certification is awarded. Process-based schemes require liaisons with Environmental Management System (EMS) such as the international ISO standards (Jamal, Borges & Stronza,

2006). Companies can therefore be certified for implementing an EMS even if no improvement occurs in the company's environmental performance.

	Performance-Based System	Process-Based System
Characteristics	• Specific performance benchmarks have to be achieved • Allows for comparisons between companies and their offerings • Environmental, sociocultural and economic indicators • Performance or achievement based	• A General criterion is followed. Relies on business commitment • Establishes how goods will be achieved using EMS • Does not test end result
Programmes	FTTSA, Blue Flag	ISO 14000, EMAS
Example	Water treatment meets effluent performance standards	Operator commitment to implement a process to meet desired outcome
Advantages	• Less expensive and available to SME's • Easier to follow guidelines • Allows for comparisons • Includes product quality, consumers benefit	• Applicable across all industries • Incentivises the investment process and technologies that reduce environmental impact
Criticisms	• Presence of greater ambiguity and imprecision • Some standards are qualitative i.e. subjective, therefore more difficult to measure • Does not inform how *to do*	• Only reflects set-up of EMS and not its implementation • Does not allow for comparisons • Less applicable to smaller firms • Significant consultant costs involved

Table 3.3 Types of Certification Programmes

Buckley (2013) classifies certification programs into either consumer-benefit and social-benefit programs. As the respective names suggest, consumer-benefit programs certify features that benefit the individual consumer and the social-benefit programs certify features that contribute to social goals (2013; 204).

A standard for ecotourism certification in South Africa were formed and is administered by the FTTSA organisation, the world's first fair trade certification program for tourism. Developed under the auspice of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the FTTSA is a non-profit enterprise aligned to the global sustainable tourism criteria (Greenloons, 2010).

3.4.2 FTTSA Certification Process

Upon registration, the tourism establishments' management completes an online application that provides the applicant with an immediate indication of the consistency of current operating principles is with the internationally accepted principles of fair trade (Strambach & Surmeier, 2013). The application is thenceforth submitted to an independent FTTSA Certification Panel which is comprised of local and government officials as well as an autonomous third-party accounting firm representative. After a thorough review of the application, the company undergoes a 2-5 day on-site evaluation for verification and supplementation of the application information. The report from the site evaluation is then reviewed by the FTTSA panel and feedback provided. Successful applicants submit and Improvement Action Plan after 12 months and undergo reassessment after 24 months (Mahoney, 2006).

The sixteen areas of the on-site evaluation are (www.Greenloons.com):

1. **Legal and general compliance** with all relevant national laws
2. **Labour standards compliance** with national and international laws
3. **Human resource practices** including management consistency, fairness and transparency
4. **Skills development** including training
5. **Employment equity** including access to equity plans and reports as well as opportunities for local residents
6. **Ownership and control policies** including where tourism relies on community held assets, businesses must ensure that the community is represented in the ownership and control of the business
7. **Procurement** including preference to South African organic, Fair Trade and environmentally-friendly products and services
8. **Community benefits** including the protection of local historic or cultural sites and ensuring that basic services such as water, energy, sanitation are not jeopardized by business operations

9. **Cultural sensitivity** including providing information about South African culture to tourists

10. **Environmental management** including building of infrastructure that is consistent with locally-appropriate principles of sustainable construction and reducing or eliminating sources of pollution

11. **Health and safety** including identifying dangers, educating staff to prevent injury and ensuring safety of guests

12. **Quality and reliability** including soliciting feedback from guests and annual star-grading by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA)

13. **Workplace culture** including staff participation in decision-making processes and non-discrimination

14. **HIV/AIDS and related issues** including non-discrimination of people with health conditions

Once the tourism activity has been awarded the FTTSA Certification, it is valid for a period of 12 months (Seif & Spenceley, 2006). Each year thereafter, the tourism company is required to renew the certification if they wish to do so, wherein another on-site assessment is scheduled every 24 months. Although this remains voluntary, it is important in regulating the ecotourism and sustainability within the industry, which can be subject to abuse (Mahoney, 2006). Certification is useful tool in making tourism more sustainable as an industry. Arbitrary certification programs purely aimed at improving the aesthetic appeal of businesses to gain favour with the eco-conscious consumer do very little if anything at all to advance the sustainability of the industry. To be truly effective, strong government support through policy and legislation is required (Tuclea, Padurean & Hornoiu, 2009). Ecotourism certifications should be used as regulatory tools to overall environmental objectives, such as ensuring that the tourism and its related activities benefit conservation efforts.

3.4.3 National Minimum Standards for Responsible Tourism

The national department of tourism in corporation with public and private tourism stakeholders, particularly accreditation agencies developed the National Minimum

Standard for Responsible Tourism (NMSRT). The multitude of regulatory bodies and schemes for certifying and accrediting responsible tourism businesses and behaviour in an aim to legitimate it is prone to complication (Sandve, Marnburg & Ogaard, 2014). Evaluating the credibility of certification schemes and confirming whether the various certification criteria are in line with national policy is problematic in the absence of national minimum standards (www.Tourism.Gov.za). NMSRT are important in regulating the industry and are a key tool in guarding against illegitimate and disingenuous programs. The development of a single set of standards applicable nationally across South Africa harmonises different sets of criteria that are used to certify sustainability of tourism businesses.

The NMSRT developed and ratified under the guise of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) processes in order to make it a national standard. The NMSRT aligned with international ISO standards, consists of 41 criteria divided into four categories (www.Tourism.Gov.za):

- Economic criteria
- Social and cultural criteria
- Environmental criteria
- Sustainable operations and management

3.5 Challenges of Ecotourism

The development of a sustainability paradigm within tourism, as in other industries; faces barriers which inhibits its optimal application (Mahoney, 2006). Resistance to change always obstructs progression, even when the proposed transformations promise much needed improvements and subsequent benefits. Indeed, the popularity of sustainability has permeated into tourism as evidenced by the advent of concepts such as sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, ecotourism and others in recent decades. According to Haget (2009) sustainability is not easily adaptable to tourism. Though the compatibility of sustainability and that of the tourism business concern are not perfectly aligned; as discussed in the previous chapter, the same holds true with other industries. Assertions such as this do little to promote

sustainability within the industry in much the same way as the physical barriers discussed below.

The complexity of the concept. Ecotourism embraces various issues along with a complex web of stakeholders that must be addressed carefully in order to practice true sustainability (Yogi, 2010). Striking the precarious balance between environmental, social and the economic aspects necessary to achieve sustainability is no simple task. According to Honey (2009) the set of interconnected principles and theories whose full implementation presents multi-layered challenges that need deeper investigation and more rigorous analysis.

Misuse of the concept and term. Increased stakeholder pressure requires businesses to respond to the demand for more sustainable behaviour in the tourism industry (Font et al., 2012). This has created new markets of the 'environmentally conscious consumer' as a by-product of the sustainability movement (Han & Chan, 2013). The appeal of tourism businesses to be marketed as environmentally friendly enterprises is indeed enticing as this is associated with financial benefits and enhanced business image (Ogbeide, 2012). Having recognised this new market segment, some proprietors sought to advantage by falsely branding themselves as environmentally friendly and committing themselves half-heartedly to sustainability (Peattie & Crane, 2005).

No blueprint for ecotourism. Although in recent years a significant number of certification and accreditation systems (Strambach & Surmeier, 2013; Greenloons, 2010; Medina, 2005) have emerged in an effort to operationalize ecotourism, there is currently no clear set guideline for ecotourism (Yogi, 2010; 24). Yogi cites that the application of the broad and complex standards of ecotourism to the local context is a great challenge. This is further complicated by the need for effective enforcement and inspections.

Deficiency of implementation. This point follows from the previous challenge. The absence of a tried and tested plan for effectively translating the sustainability imperatives into practice severely limits the attainment of sustainable tourism goals. This results in great losses and frustration for tourism and ecotourism practitioners (Lewis, 2006). Moreover this propagated by a shortage in sufficiently qualified practitioners to effect the necessary changes.

High costs. The costs involved in the implementation of sustainable business practices are a concern. Business owners are often deterred from implementing requisite changes in line with sustainable business practices by the prohibitively high costs associated with such endeavours (Bohdanowicz & Martinac, 2003; Butler, 2008). Although the initial installation costs of so called first generation energy-saving and alternative technologies are high, potential future financial savings can be substantial depending on the extent of change (Raderbauer, 2011).

3.6 Threats to the Sustainability of the Ecotourism Industry

The tourism industry, recognised as the fastest growing industry in the world is plague much like any other industry with the inevitable risks that threaten its longevity. These risks manifest in many forms, with disastrous consequences for the industry if they are not recognised, identified and dealt with expediently (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). This is particularly true of developing countries whose dependence on this sector is far greater than that of more developed nations (Burns, 1999).

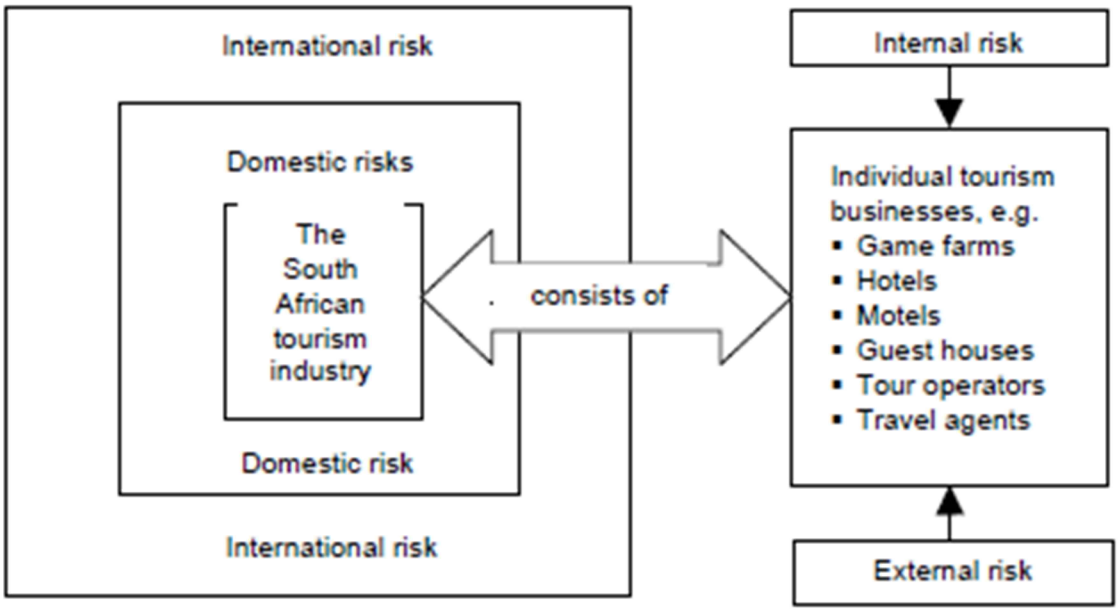


Fig 3.5 The Flow of Risks (Shaw, Saayman & Saayman, 2012; 192)

Devastating effects on the tourism industries of South Eastern Asian countries were felt for months and years after the infamous tsunami struck on the 26th of December 2004. So too were the tourism industries of countries on the South Eastern coast of Africa shaken by pirates and the looming threat of abduction (Bowden et al., 2010). The Mozambican tourism industry is still stifled by this, evidenced by much lower occupancy rates and flow of tourists to popular vacation spots. The extraordinarily high crime rate in South Africa continues to stave off would be tourists, whose potential economic contribution is great almost impossible to estimate.

Risk is defined as the probability that a hazard will turn into a disaster (Shaw, 2010; 4). Hazards and vulnerability as faced by enterprises separately are not dangerous. It is however when these two coincide that they become a risk i.e. probable that a disaster will occur. Kerzner (2001; 7) describes risk as constituting a lack of knowledge of foresight to events that have or may have adverse effects on the business.

Figure 3.5 depicts the macro and micro threats to the tourism industry within any country. The macro threats represented here by the international and domestic threats are superimposed on tourism businesses which have very little control or influence over these. Examples of these are international laws passed impacting the operations or consumption of tourism in the countries party to the agreements, domestic industry developments and that force businesses to adhere to set standards. The internal threats are those that are faced immediately by businesses within the tourism industry or within the businesses themselves. Managers and owners of tourism businesses have more leeway with these. Changes can be made within the business to respond or mitigate the effects of these. The external threats are exogenous to the tourism business at an individual level; an example of these would a change in the travel consumer perception of the business resulting in lower turn out and visitation rates. The onus lies on the business proprietor to change these perceptions to benefit the business.

RISK CATEGORY	**DESCRIPTION AND REFERENCE**
Natural Risks	**Natural disasters;** Morgan, Larkin, & Adams (2011), Shakya (2010),

	Shaw, Saayman, Saayman (2012). **Environmental factors and climate change;** Nepal (2011), Davies & Cahill (2000), Hopkins (2013), Nickerson, Becerra & Zumstein (2011), Sookram (2010).
Health and Safety Risks	**Safety and prevalence of communicable diseases;** Padilla, Guilamo-Ramos & Reyes (2010), Peattie, Clarke & Peattie (2005), Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty (2008), Page & Meyer (1996), Bentley, et al. (2001), Dimitrov (2009), **Crime;** Behrmann & Smith (2010), Ferreira (1999), Perry & Potgieter (2013)
Economic Risks	**Infrastructure development;** Seetanah et al. (2011), Crouch & Ritchie (2000) **Recession;** Poudyal, Paudel & Tarrant (2013), Ritchie, Molinar & Frechtling (2010), Guizzardi & Mazzocchi (2010), **Rising fuel and commiditiy prices;** Leigh (2011), Defeyyes (2008), Barda & Sardianou (2010)
Socio-Political Risks	**Xenophobia**; Matunhu (2008) **Political and social instability and terrorism;** Hall (1994), Poirier (1997) McIntosh & Wilmot (2011), Richter & Waugh (1986), Teye (1988), Assaker (2008).

Table 3.4 Risks to Tourism Industry

3.6.1 Natural Risks

The most devastating threats to any industry and to humanity itself are perhaps those posed by ‘acts of god’. The insidious nature of natural disasters and their ability to decimate everything in their path by reducing it to rubble is an imminent danger. In recent decades, the 2004 tsunami that struck the coasts of over 10 countries around the Indian Ocean took the lives of some 200 000 lives, and left over 800 000 homeless, was one of the worst in recorded history. The damage caused, to this date, plagues the tourism industry as it reels to recover. In response the WTO drew up the Phuket Action Plan, an initiative aimed at accelerating the recovery of tourism sectors in the most affected destinations (Goodwin, 2005). According to Ehmer and Heyman (2008) climate change poses a serious threat to the African continent specifically, thus imposing significant risk in the future. Studies featuring

the relationship between the weather and tourism can be traced back to as early as the early nineties. Research on climate change has increased in recent years, following greater public, awareness. Tourism studies have for the most part focused on economic factors and did not include climate variable in the modelling process (Hamilton & Tol, 2007). Due to the short term perspective of a majority of the studies, climate was taken to be a constant variable. While there is much evidence that indicates that climate will; change which humans have hastened, this information is still met with resistance and suspicion. This reluctance stifles the progression of the sustainability movement and weary policymakers and businesses cling to their profits failing to acknowledge that change is necessary.

In recent decades, researchers having recognised the imminence of climate change and the threats associated with this, have begun to include climatic variables and in some cases tourism climatic index (Sookram, 2010). One such land mark study on climate change and tourist demand employed temperature to estimate the effect of forecasted changes in temperature on the ski industry in Switzerland (Koenig & Abegg, 1997). The study found that under present conditions, with prevailing temperature and a snow line, there was an 85% chance that there would be snow to keep the industry functioning. It further revealed that with a 2% temperature increase 65% of all Swiss ski areas would be reliable. This would unequivocally affect the growth and operation of the sector in the industry.

Potential hazards often overlap and work in conjunction with other risks, which increases the resultant threat. For example the rainy season in Mpumalanga has health implications to its residents in the most affected areas. There is a positive correlation in the increase of communicable diseases such as Malaria and Cholera during the raining months. This threat has implications on the visitation and occupancy rates.

3.6.2 Health and Safety Risks

There are many factors that affect the where tourists choose to take their holidays. Some of these are directly correlated to the destination itself, such as seasonal climatic conditions, the occurrence of natural disasters and the prevalence of crime

and communicable diseases particular to the region. Threats are cause for perceived risks of physical harm, loss of life and belongings which decrease tourists' confidence in travel (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009).

The tourist experience can be unsatisfying and even regrettable for a number of reasons, when vacationers are faced with physical injury, it can cause considerable damage to the general appeal of a particular area (Peattie, Clarke & Peattie, 2005). These incidents are reviewed and for the purpose of this dissertation classified as health and safety risks. This category includes any hazard that presents a threat to a tourist's person or belongings as a result of deliberate or accidental events. The threat of the potential exposure to communicable diseases and safety risks faced by tourists inhibits the growth and development of tourism. Safety concerns surrounding particular tourist attractions and regions fuel negative perceptions and tarnish its reputation (Saayman & Saayman, 2012). This translates into lower occupancy rates and the frequency with which tourists visit these areas. Diseases such as Ebola, Yellow Fever, Malaria, Foot and Mouth and increasingly Bird Flu continue to plague and inhibit not only tourism but other industries as spheres in society (Saayman & Saayman, 2012). Malaria remains a serious threat in the province of Mpumalanga (Ngomane & de Jager, 2012).

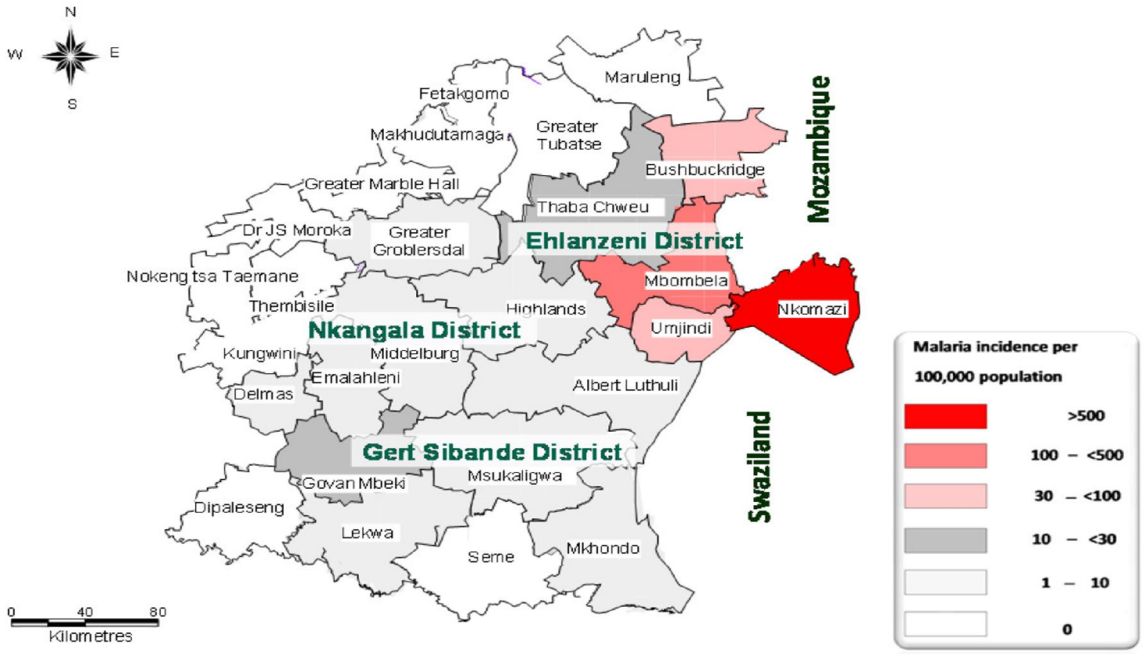


Fig 3.6 A map of Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. Incidence of Malaria (Ngomane & de Jager, 2012; 3).

According to the 2010 World Malaria Report[3], the global prevalence of the disease was at an estimated 225 million cases which resulted in 781 000 fatalities in 2009. Over 80% of these cases are estimated to have occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa. Studies suggest tourism areas are epicentres of demographic and social changes which are iteratively linked to HIV risk, such as transactional sex, elevated alcohol and substance use and internal migration (Padilla, et al., 2010; 70).

Figure 3.6 graphically illustrates the spatial distribution of the incidence of Malaria by district and municipal area in Mpumalanga between the years 2001 and 2009. The Ehlanzeni District is the most afflicted in the province with the Nkomazi municipality presenting the highest incidence of Malaria per 100 000 population.

The Global Business Coalition[4] (GBC) in its Best Practice Guidebook makes provisions on how the travel and tourism industry can do to fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria. The first step to addressing these threats and mitigating their insidious effects lies in identifying then properly managing these threats. The survival of any business and long-term sustainability depends on these initial first steps (Saayman & Saayman, 2012). Rather than simply making recommendations, The GBC provides guidelines any tourism business that can be adapted to manage the abovementioned risks (See Appendix H for complete guidelines). These involve the following steps:

1. Risk assessment
2. Management and employee input in the program development process
3. Conduct a comprehensive HIV/AIDS, TB or Malaria policy
4. Prevention and education activities to increase awareness and avoidance
5. Confidential testing and counselling support initiatives
6. Access to care, support and treatment for employees living with HIV/AIDS, TB or Malaria
7. Monitor and Evaluate for progress and improvements to be made

These guidelines can be adapted to deal with other pandemics and can be extended to include and other stakeholders such as patrons and the local community.

[3] World Health Organization: World Malaria Report 2010 Geneva, Switzerland; 2010.
[4] The GBC on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria is an alliance of more than 220 international organisations leading the private sector fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria. It has its headquarters in New York and offices in Johannesburg, Nairobi, Paris, Beijing, Moscow and Kyiv.

3.6.3 Economic Risks

Economic risks are inescapable and are a consequence of business within the free market system. Their impacts are universal and affect all spheres of society and industries albeit in different ways and severity. Economic threats to the tourism industry are well documented. These include any hazards that directly impact or related to an industry or business' economic wellbeing and ability to remain financially viable. This broad classification includes; fluctuating exchange rates (Suranovic, 2008; 504), infrastructural development (Seetanah et al, 2011), volatile inflation (Leigh, 2011) as well as business cycles (Ritchie, Molinar & Frechtling, 2010; Guizzardi & Mazzocchi, 2010). Any one of these can be perceived as risks to businesses depending on their severity and tenure. For example the persistence of recessions, which themselves bring about a litany of other problems is a factors that contains the risk of restricting the amount of tourism activity and visitation rates (Shaw, 2010). Although it is unclear how economic recessions affect the demand for national park or outdoor tourism recreational activities (Smeral, 2009), they are attributed, at least in part to the notable decrease in park visitation rates worldwide (Poudyal, Paudel & Tarrant, 2013).

A number of risks relating to tourism focus on external risks .i.e. those that are beyond the control of management (Shaw, Saayman & Saayman, 2012). Businesses within the industry also face internal risks. Among the most insidious is the lack of adequately trained personnel, which invariably creates a gap in the skills needed for identifying and managing the risks (Ozukan, 2009).

3.6.4 Socio-Political Risks

Social unrest, political instability and the risks these pose quite possibly represent the most insidious deterrents to tourists towards a country or region (Poirier, 1997). While natural and human-caused disasters can significantly impact the flow of tourism the threat accompanied by the dangers of terrorism, political turmoil tends to intimidate potential tourists more severely (Sonmez, 1998; 416). Studies have documented cases in many countries of the effects of political unrest on tourism (Poirier, 1997).

The complex nature of politically based and macro social risks make them cumbersome if not impossible to manoeuvre, especially when the businesses are located within the afflicted region. Entire industries can be put to a standstill as a result, with disastrous effects on local economies and the numerous people reliant on theme for employment.

If tourists perceive that a destination is likely to be a target of attack, they tend to avoid it (Floyd et al., 2003), with the exception of patrons who favour dark tourism, who actively seek out disaster areas and locations infamously associated with tragedy (Yuill, 2003).

3.7 Management of Risks

According to Valsamakis et al. (2004) risk management is an on-going process and is not to be seen as an individual event or activity. The institution of a well-planned management analysis monitoring and evaluation system is imperative for effectively averting potential risks and problems. Gray and Larson (2006; 209) developed a model for risk management (Figure 3.7) which illustrates the various steps to pre-empting and managing potential threats before they become hazards.

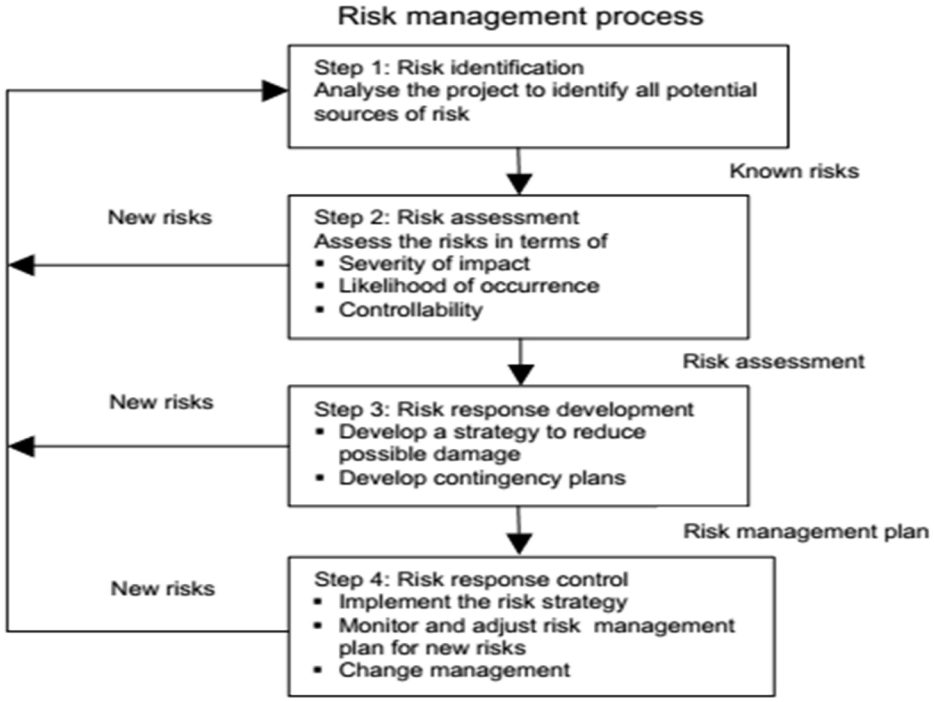


Fig 3.7 Risk Management Process (Gray & Larson, 2006; 209)

This continuous process begins with the identification of potential risks to the industry on the individual tourism business. This is followed by an assessment of the threats which involves conducting severity impact, likelihood estimation and controllability evaluation.

These steps are then followed by the development of appropriate responses to the stipulated risks. This stage comprises of strategies for mitigating possible damage in the event that the risk event occurs. Contingency plans are also important in ensuring that there are alternative action plans to be explored when necessary. The final step involves implementing the formulated risk strategy and monitoring for results. Continuous evaluations of the effectiveness or failures in the instituted systems will determine if changes need to be made.

3.8 Drivers of Change towards Sustainable Tourism

The literature that seeks to understand business involvement with responsible tourism focuses on exogenous pressures or "drivers of change" (Raviv, Becken & Hughey, 2013). "Drivers" refer to factors that coax businesses to take responsible action, even when there is no identifiable intrinsic need for them to do so (Okereke, 2007). It is prudent to evaluate these as once identified, they can be manipulated to advance the sustainable tourism. Four spheres of the drivers of change can be identified in the literature (Kasim, 2007; Claver-Cortes et al., 2007):

1. Stakeholder pressure is observed when stakeholders reject risks associated with the "business as usual approach" (Raviv, Becken & Hughey, 2013). Such risks according to Han, Hsu and Sheu (2010) arise when members of the public persistently demand responsible products and business practices. There is evidence of consumers guided by their good intentions demanding and sourcing sustainable and ethically produced products and in so doing creating a market or these goods (Han & Chan, 2013). Alas Font (2007) cites that the development of such pressure is slow.
2. Accrual of business environment pressures as responsible tourism principles become more common and the industry expectation. This includes organisations that will only affiliate with certified businesses to ensure a

minimum standard for the goods offered under their brand (Font, 2007). Increasingly organisations are required to be ISO certified or accredited with other regulatory bodies to foster commitments to quality, ethical and sustainable operations.

3. Regulatory pressure (Priego, Najerab & Font, 2011). The enactment and enforcement of environmental and social laws act as a stimulus to integrate health and safety management with environmental management. Laggard organisations i.e. those which refuse to change unless required to by law or industry standard can be forced into implementing responsible tourism practices by legislation. Regulation also deters contraventions of sustainable prates enacted in law by charging steep penalties for non-compliance (Raviv, Becken & Hughey, 2013).
4. Economic advantage is a particularly important driver; which occurs when the operating costs of the traditional business model increase and the current technological developments and implements enhance the efficiency and reduces costs (Becken, 2013).

Organisations are complex and dynamic. It follows that though they may be influenced by the same driver of change, they differ in their responses and the degree to which they implement the requisite changes in line with sustainable tourism practices.

3.9 Facilitating Challenges, Risks and Drivers for Responsible Tourism

The transition of sustainable tourism ideologies into functional practices that can be implemented efficiently requires analysis and reconciliation of its challenges, risk and drivers. The interactions of these core elements can be instrumental in understanding and integrating responsible tourism practices across the tourism industry.

Analysis of responsible tourism values (personal and organisational), drivers and beliefs reveal distinct patterns or interactions as depicted in figure 3.8. Behavioural and subjective beliefs harboured at the organisation or personal level influence intentions to effect changes in line with sustainability.

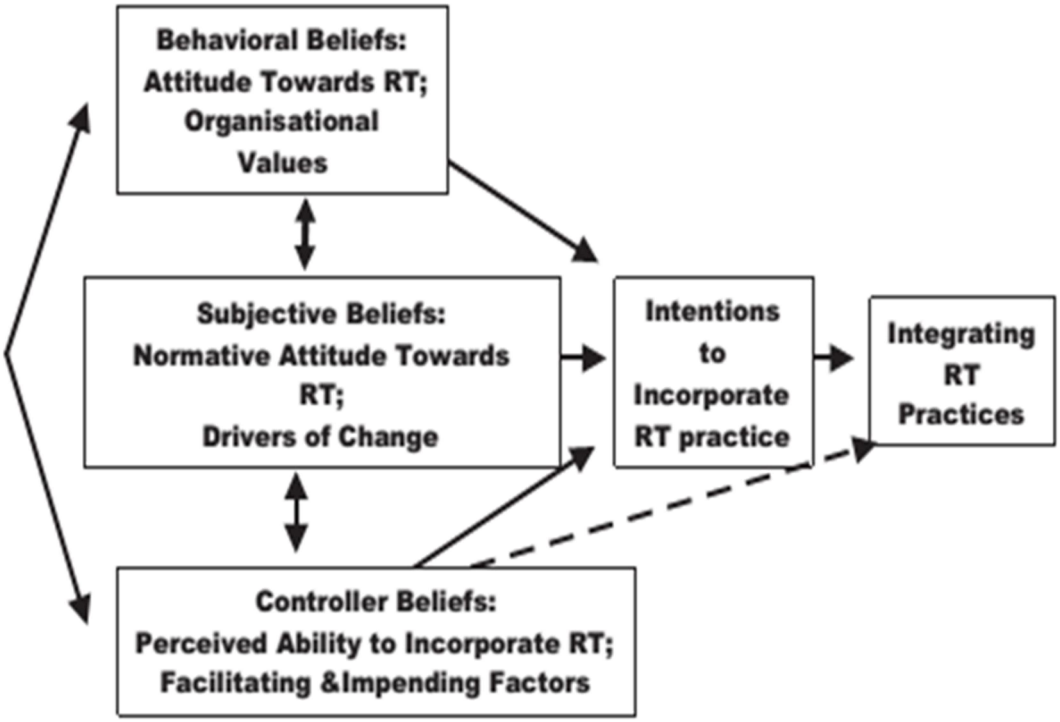


Figure 3.8 Integrating Values, Drivers and Barriers for Responsible Tourism (Raviv, Becken & Hughey, 2013; 13)

Businesses driven by altruistic ends tend to be less partial to external drivers, whereas those driven by competiveness are influenced more by them especially those associated with economic advantages (Raviv, Becken & Hughey, 2013; 11). It follows that intentions in turn affect the propensity to integrate the requisite changes necessary to achieve sustainability. This point emphasises the significance of the intent behind what the actions of key stakeholders and sustainability agents in their efforts to advance the sustainability movement.

It is important to note that good intentions alone in the face of adverse challenges and barriers are futile in moving organisations towards their sustainability goals. Consistent resistance against efforts to advance the sustainability agenda within tourism, lack of support both financial and functional greatly hinder the institution as well as the integration of sustainable business practices. Unfortunately, individual managers' predilection for change along with their personal intentions to make a difference is only the first steps of process towards the promotion of sustainable tourism within the industry. This on-going process requires a multi-stakeholder involvement significant strides are to be made.

3.10 Summary

This chapter set out to explore ecotourism; its constituents, related issues and the role it plays in achieving sustainable development within tourism. By so doing, the research rationale was framed firstly by reflecting on the relevant theory before the primary data collection ensued. The strides made by ecotourism in advancing the sustainability agenda in the industry is considerable and promises to elevate its sustainability status within the industry. According to McKercher (2010) ecotourism has suffered from exaggerated forecasts, which have collapsed owing to a crisis of confidence among academics. He postulates that at its conception, ecotourism heralded as a burgeoning sector, attracted much investment with emphasis on reaping social, environmental and economic rewards while paying little attention to the nuances of the ecotourism business model. Fortunately, these contentions are not supported evidentially, which indicates or at least suggest that ecotourism continues to grow steadily largely with little regard for academics reservations (Buckley, 2010).

The ecotourism and sustainability nexus is undeniable; with the former derived from the latter. The tourism industry needs to play a more active role in clearly defining sustainability in tourism (McKercher, 1999). Ecotourism entails a combination of conservation and tourism and the intricate economics related with it, to benefit local communities with a emphasis on sustainability (Myburgh & Saayman, 2002). Amidst theoretical tensions, and the imminent threats to the sustainability of the industry, ecotourism has been heralded as the solution to operationalizing and solving sustainability challenges (Welford, 2007; Tang, Robinson & Harvey, 2010).

Not many would refute ecotourism's importance in fostering sustainability within tourism. This despite the assertion by Jiang (2008) that based on the literature, no simple answer exists to the question of whether ecotourism contributes to sustainable development. Though the true extent its role in advancing sustainability may be unfamiliar, it is still beleived to be the answer to adressing the sustainability shortfalls within tourism.

The next chapter reviews the integration of the sustainability and ecotourism theory with a focus on the nexus between these ideologies in accordance with this thesis' objectives.

CHAPTER 4: EXPLORINGING THE SUSTAINABILITY AND ECOTOURISM NEXUS

"All is connected… No one thing can change by itself"
Aldo Leopold

4.1 Introduction

The impacts of tourism have in recent decades received increased attention in discourses and studies on related developments (Saarinen, 2006). The concept of sustainability is multifaceted, as evidenced by its applicability in numerous industries and facets of society. Its dynamism as an inclusive ideology that champions the perpetuity of social functions, business activities and maintaining the status quo is as much a limitation as it is an advantage. Different organisations within different industries have different sustainability needs making a single model for sustainability impractical for universal application. The growing need for sustainability is a result of the increased knowledge and concern about tourism and its impacts and environmental issues that have emerged in recent decades (Holden, 2003; 95). Although the standard accepted model for sustainability is premised on three fundamental principles or elements namely; the conscientious consideration of economic, social and environmental implication of the organisation as a result of its existence, these need to be reformatted and translated to suit specific industries, sectors or particular businesses if it is to be applicable in practice.

Sustainability thought within tourism is synonymous with what is often referred to as sustainable tourism which fosters the core principles of sustainability specifically translated for applicability within the industry. Ecotourism, a subset of the sustainable tourism paradigm is fast emerging as the answer to advancing sustainability within the industry. The ecotourism sustainability framework and recommendations that emerge from testing its application can help in guiding planning and management within the field and improve the capacity for ecotourism to make positive contributions to sustainability (Lambert, 2009).

This chapter examines the sustainability and ecotourism nexus by evaluating the relevant theory on how these two concepts are connected and the implications of this in practice.

4.2 Features of Ecotourism

Although there are no general rules that govern ecotourism as a branch of the sustainable tourism paradigm, many of its characteristics have been identified for its evaluation (Obenaus, 2005). Before a review of the relationship between ecotourism and sustainability can ensue, one firstly needs to further delineate ecotourism's parameters and distinguish it from other possible forms of responsible or sustainable tourism. An effective way of doing this by evaluating it characteristics which Patterson (2002; 2) identifies in tourism businesses that:

- Use impact techniques, features and systems within the business,
- Moderates visitation rates, either by limiting group size and/or the number of groups allowed in a season,
- Actively supports the work of conservation groups that conserve the area on which the experience is based,
- Orients customers on the region visited,
- Employs from local human resource pools and sources supplies locally,
- Recognises that nature is a central element to the tourist experience,
- Ensures that wildlife; flora and fauna is not disturbed, and
- Respects the privacy and culture of local people, their customs and beliefs.

Some authors propose requirements for ecotourism and stipulate criteria upon which these businesses can be distinguished from its mass tourism counterparts. Ceballos-Lascurain (1996; 28) presents one such framework and lists the following as conditions or ecotourism businesses:

- Promotion of positive environmental ethics and fosters "preferred behaviour in its participants,
- Does not degrade environmental and natural resources,
- Focuses on the intrinsic rather than extrinsic values,
- Oriented around the environment and benefits wildlife,
- Provides first-hand encounter with the natural environment,
- Actively involves local communities in the tourism process,

- Its levels of gratification are measured in terms of education and/or appreciation,
- Involves considerable preparation and demands in-depth knowledge on the part of both leaders and participants.

Having reviewed the basic characteristics of the ecotourism concern, it is evident that its core principles align with those of sustainability. Although the extent of this interaction may be debatable it is the first step in evaluating these two concepts.

4.3 Sustainable Tourism Development

The basic ideas and principle of sustainable development have been applied to tourism, but as a result of conceptual problems and disparities and the multidimensionality of both concepts (Sharpley, 2000; Lele, 1991), some scholars have stated that no exact definitions of sustainable tourism exist (Saarinen, 2006). Definitions that accentuate the needs of the industry and the proposed sustainable use of its resources do little to promote the sustainability agenda within the industry, by shifting the emphasis way from the other consideration or elements of sustainability (Hardy, Beeton & Pearson, 2002). The following definition by the World Tourism Organisation is often used to define sustainable tourism and illustrate this point:

> "*Tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future" (WTO, 2002; 20)*

Consequently, the conception of sustainable tourism is often understood as an ideology and point of view rather than an exact operational definition (Clarke, 1997). Although the concept of responsible tourism is often used as a specific form of tourism, its principles are similar to the general aims of sustainable tourism and as such these terms have been used interchangeably (Saarinen, 2014). According to Sharpley (2013; 385) "it is difficult, or even impossible to distinguish responsible tourism from the concept of sustainable tourism".

The relationship between sustainable development and ecotourism as a form of responsible tourism is intrinsically strong as sustainable tourism advocates for the

integration of social, environmental and economic considerations in order to meet both societal and environmental goals (Buchsbaum, 2004). The primary goals of sustainable development moderated by the need to preserve resources for future generational needs are centred on the integration of and holistic attainment of these three goals (Coetzee & Saayman, 2009). As such ecotourism has been identified as the best tool to achieving true sustainability in the industry if it is successful in addressing all three dimensions of sustainable development in an inclusive and balanced manner (Yogi, 2010). Wight captured the essence of this connection when he cited (1997, 77):

> *"Tourism as it relates to sustainable development is tourism which is developed so that the nature, scale, location and manner of development is appropriate and sustainable over time, and where the environment's ability to support other activities and the process is not impaired, since tourism cannot be isolated from other resources activities. At the heart of sustainable tourism is a set of implicit values related to striving to integrate ecological, social, cultural and economic goals"*

Wight's model of sustainable tourism values and principles as reviewed in chapter three illustrates the overlap between the fundamental goals of sustainable development and sustainable tourism or ecotourism. Figure 4.1 depicts an earlier version of this model and highlights the congruencies between the two concepts.

Sustainable development can be found at the heart of the confluence of the social, economic and the environmental goals. These are underlined by the quest for:

- Community Based Economies, whose benefits extend beyond those of the immediate organisation and involve other stakeholders, particularly the surrounding communities,
- The promotion of the idea that conservation should be achieved with equity. Conservation is an expensive undertaking often requiring steady capital injections to sustain preservation efforts. By expropriating other benefits both economical and societal and using tourism as vehicle to achieving this sustainable tourism can remain true to its core principles while ensuring long-term viability,

- The integration of environmental and economic goals. Involves using environmental and ecological resources to generate continuous revenue streams that can be used to sustain the other goals.

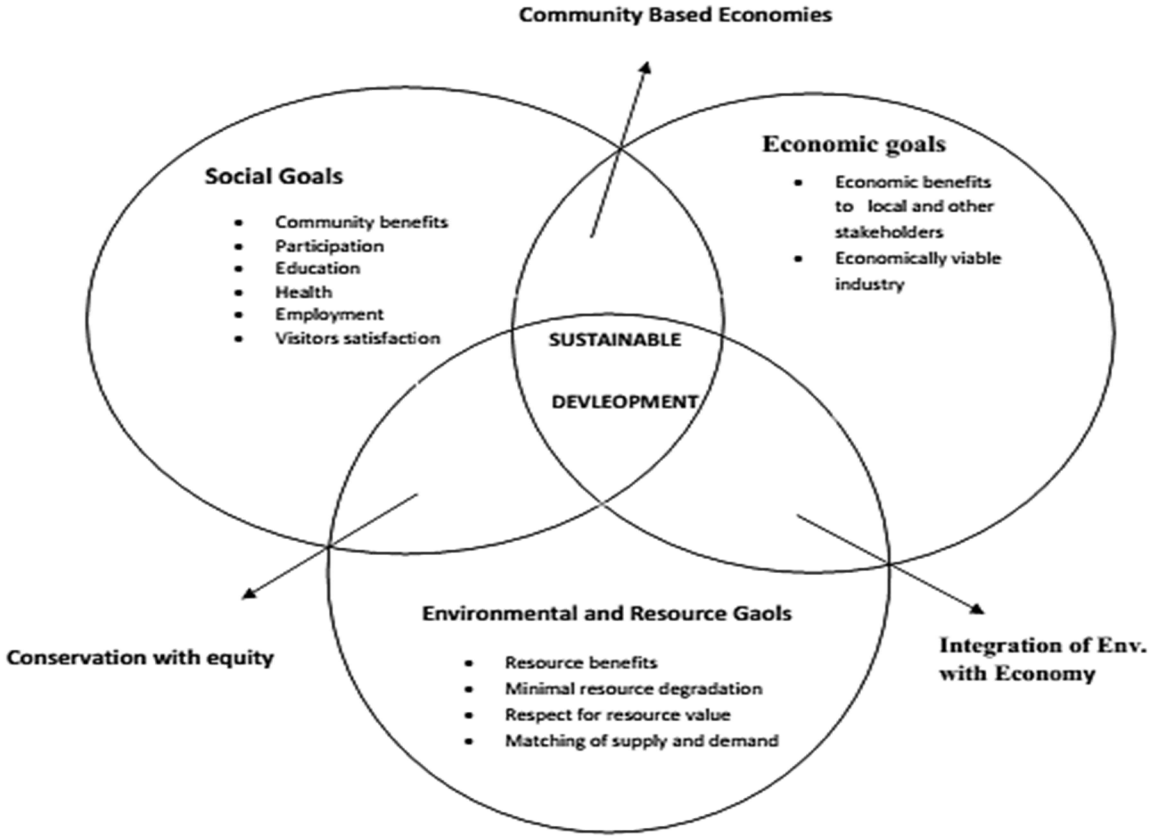


Fig 4.1 A model of Sustainable Tourism Values and Principles (Murphy & Price 2005)

Similarly, Bramwell et al., (1996) identify four fundamental principles of sustainable development and sustainable ecotourism development which are similar to those expressed in the figure 4.1. They cite the following philosophies as central to both concepts:

- Holistic and strategic planning,
- Conservation of essential ecological systems,
- Conservation of both human (cultural) and natural heritage and
- Long-term development and productivity for future generations

Sustainability is an overarching theme, a desired ideal reviewed here in the context of ecotourism for the purpose of examining tourism's ability to bring long-lasting

benefits within the industry. The ultimate goal of which is the attainment of sustainable levels of development, evidenced in increased standards of living, healthy ecosystems, viable economies and an overall enhanced wellbeing of people (Lambert, 2009; 22).

4.4 Dissertation Framework for Sustainable Ecotourism

This dissertation is built upon the framework illustrated in Figure 2.4. Adapted from Wight's model of Sustainable Tourism Values and Principles Model it examines how ecotourism businesses can achieve sustainability by aligning their core business values and principles with those of sustainability paradigm. This process is potentially hindered by the prevalence of risk that threatens the attainment of business sustainability goals. The nature and scope of these risks, as reviewed in chapter three are varied and their effects adverse.



Fig 4.2 Sustainable Ecotourism Model, Adapted from Wight's Sustainable Ecotourism Values and Principles Model (1993; 57)

Ecotourism is often viewed as an industry that principally places more emphasis on the economic dimension and the present context (Saarinen, 2014). This perceived economic focus of the industry is implied by Getz (1999; 24) in his definition of tourism as; “an area dominated by touristic activities or one that is organised for meeting the needs of visitors”. The implication of this statement is that the needs of customers and the industry are the leading guidelines in market driven activities like tourism. Although this tourism-centric view of the industry is understandable, as without an economically viable business to drive tourism goals, there would be no tourism. This view challenges the idea that idea of equity between the three elements of sustainability in tourism (Saarinen, 2014) as reviewed in chapter two.

The attainment of all three goals is hard to achieve, more so within tourism. Saarinen in support of this notion suggests that “in tourism the three pillars of sustainability are not often equal” (2014; 8). Financial efficacy is pivotal to the attainment environmental and social ends and is often cited as a key criterion in the governance of tourism and recreation in protected areas. The eminence of threats to ecotourism has the potential to hinder attempts to achieve sustainability as indicated the explanatory framework in Figure 4.2.

4.5 Summary

Often identified as a form of sustainable tourism, ecotourism is believed to be the answer to the sustainability challenges faced by the tourism (Tsaur, Lin & Lin, 2006). Moreover it is expected to contribute to conservation efforts and development of the industry while remaining true to the three fundamental elements of a sustainable enterprise. Despite this, there have been few practical assessments of the status of ecotourism partly because generally accepted and effective standardised, evaluative criteria have yet to be developed (Tsaur, Lin & Lin, 2006; Ross & Wall, 1999). Furthermore, closer inspection of the relationship between ecotourism and sustainability as complex concepts under constant development is warranted. This chapter aimed to evaluate this in the context of tourism.

The next chapter evaluates and reviews the research design and methodology adopted in the empirical study.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

"If a question is asked an answer will be forthcoming"
Jeffrey M Peterson

5.1 Introduction

The overarching aim of this research was always to assess the perceptions ecotourism managers have towards threats to the sustainability of ecotourism in order to reflect on the literature and answer the research questions posed at the inception of the study. The methodological approach was formulated in light of these objectives.

This chapter discusses the research design and the methodology employed in the study and observes its underlying rationale. It also examines the procedures under which the study was conducted and includes critical details about the participants, how data was collected and analysed.

5.2 Qualitative Research Design

Research design can be defined as the visualisation of data and the problems and intricacies that are correlated with the employment of raw data, as well as garnering of a sound understanding necessary for the management of the research endeavour (Leedy, 1997). It follows that a study's research design proportionately influences the quality and validity of its findings (McGarth & Bringberg, 1983). It is therefore imperative that the scope, objectives and strategic intent of any research undertaking be closely aligned with the appropriate methodological design. With this in mind a number of possible designs were assessed, their applicability, pros and cons reviewed and were evaluated against the objectives and strategic intent of the research in order to arrive at the selected research design.

This research employed a qualitative research methodology, firmly rooted in the interpretivist epistemological school of thought. Interpretivism is centred on the idea that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is constructed by social actors (Walsham, 1993; 9). This constructionist paradigm is based on the

belief that social actors constantly construct and reconstruct reality and peoples' perceptions of it (Wahyuni, 2012). It follows that people within their respective domains through their shared experiences, backgrounds and perceptions contribute to the continuous development of knowledge.

Given the wealth of knowledge and experience ecotourism managers have as a result of their day-to-day exposure to the industry, they have direct insight into the threats to its sustainability. The rationale for basing this study in this paradigm lies in the idea that the necessary information could be elicited from these stakeholders based on their experience within the sector. These can then be analysed and used to make recommendations on how the threats to sustainability of ecotourism can be moderated across the industry.

The scarcity of research into the experiences and perceptions of managers on sustainability means that a gap exists within the literature (Chendo, 2013). It is necessary to investigate what the managers of ecotourism businesses perceive as threats and how they respond to these through their capacities as managers. The investigative nature of interpretivism and its various tools enables researchers to make sense of phenomenon by gathering and examining the rich data and analysing it with the aim to better understand the world around us (See Appendix A for the empirical study timetable).

5.3 Mpumalanga, In context

Formerly known as the Eastern Transvaal, the province of Mpumalanga is located north-east of South Africa and boarders Swaziland and Mozambique. Translated from Isiswat; the predominant dilect in the province; Mpumalanga literally means "the place where the sun rises" and is affectionately referred to as the "province of the rising sun". Covering a geographic area of 76,495 square kilometers the province constitutes about 6.5% of the land in South Africa, which is divided into three districts namely; Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala, further sub-divided into 17 local municipalities (Mpumalanga Provincial Profile, 2009).

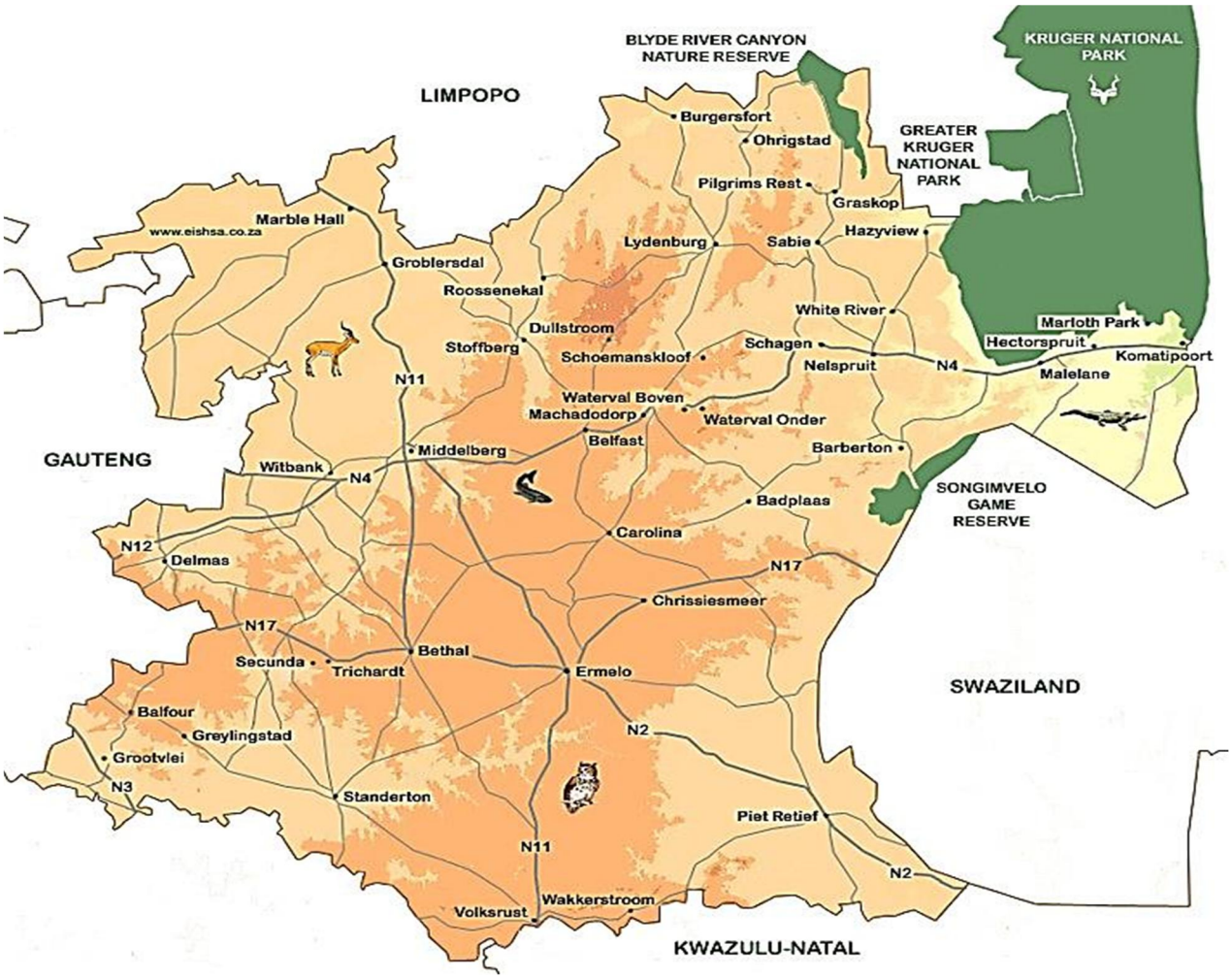


Fig 5.1 Map of Mpumalanga Provice (www.googlemaps.co.za)

The province of Mpumalanga's gross domestic product growth generally lags behind the national growth level and remains heavily reliant on the tourism, agriculture, mining and manufacturing industries. According to StatsSA evaluations, Mpumalanga's contribution (GPD contribution to national aggregates) ranked fifth among the nine provinces in recent years (StatSA, 2012).

The provinces' industires contribution to national figures are broken down per distirct in Table 5.1. The tourism industry is such that it is invaribly connected and works in conjunction with other sectors which makes it hard to delineate and quantify. It often involves activities under the jurisdiction of a number of departments at any given time such as transport, health, arts & culture, home affairs and others. Typical aggregates used to track activity in the sector include visitation figures and occupancy rates and the comparison of these between two reference points.

The Nkangala region, though the smallest of the three districts, is consistently the foremost contributor to the province's GPD. Much of the mining and utilities industries activities are based in this region; which is renound for its mineral rich soil. This is reflected by the the region's modest increased contribution the province's economy (of 1.6%, more than the other districts) from 37.7% to 39.3% in the fifteen year peiod.

The other two districts total contributions lags about 10% less than Nkangala didtrict, with fairly comparable negative growth figures in the years between 1996 and 2011. Gert Sibande and Ehlanzeni exhibited negative growth of -0.8% and -1.3% respectively in the fifteen year documented period.

Industry	Gert Sibande		Nkangala		Ehlanzeni	
	1996	2011	1996	2011	1996	2011
Agriculture[11]	41.7%	41.3%	23.9%	22.3%	34.4%	36.3%
Mining[12]	36.1%	24.3%	49.1%	66.7%	14.9%	9.0%
Manufacturing[13]	42.6%	54.3%	31.4%	26.0%	26.0%	19.7%
Utilities[14]	26.2%	25.3%	70.0%	71.7%	3.9%	3.0%
Construction[15]	24.8%	25.5%	30.4%	32.0%	44.8%	42.6%
Trade[16]	26.4%	24.3%	27.4%	29.6%	46.2%	46.1%
Transport[17]	27.2%	23.1%	33.6%	36.8%	39.2%	40.1%
Finance[18]	21.1%	21.2%	34.8%	36.4%	44.0%	42.4%
Community services[19]	22.4%	22.5%	32.2%	32.4%	45.4%	45.0%
Total	30.9%	30.1%	37.7%	39.3%	31.3%	30.6%

Table 5.1 Regional Contribution to Mpumalanga's Industries (constant 2005 prices) 1996-2011 (Mpumalanga Department of Finance, 2013)

Home to the world-renouned Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga features numerous tourist attractions. The tourism industry also plays an important role in the regional economy. According to the 2011 annual South African Tourism Report, Mpumalanga was the third most visited province by foreign travellers which made up 15.8% of total foreign arrivals in the country. There was a 1.7% rise from 14.1% to 15.8% foreign visitation level in 2010 (Mpumalanga Department of Finance, 2013). The total expenditure in the province during the 2011, amounted to approximately R11.3 billion which equated to 6.6% of total national tourism expenditure (Mpumalanga Department of Finance, 2013).

5.4 The Sample

According to McCracken (1988) the sample of interviewees should share critical similarities related to the research questions the investigation seeks to answer. It is however, important to include a variety of the managers of ecotourism businesses in order to garner a general sense of their perceptions regardless of the type of business they are affiliated with.

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used, with greater attention to the sample "purposely" selected for its potential to yield insight from the illuminative and rich data from participants (Patton, 2002; 40). The purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative studies and involves the selection of sample elements on the basis of characteristics or qualities that are theoretically relevant to the study (Silverman, 2005; 129). Although non-probability samples limit the generalizability of research findings they are often used in travel and tourism research as the costs involved in probability sampling techniques are too great and obtaining a complete list of the sample frame is not always possible (Black, 1993).

The selection of participants for the interviews was based on an iterative process that sought to maximise the depth and richness of data collected in light of the research objectives (Kuzel, 1999). The sample frame was made up of the managers of ecotourism businesses within the province of Mpumalanga and included a wide scope of ecotourism businesses.

Given the lack of consensus as to what ecotourism fundamentally encapsulates and the uncertainties surrounding the classification of ecotourism versus traditional tourism businesses, the sample unit needed to be clearly defined (Blamey, 2010). The following criteria were used to identify ecotourism outlets from which sample participants were selected:

- Tourism businesses that classified themselves as ecotourism outlets; in their names, signage, advertising and official documentation.
- Tourism businesses accredited for their strong eco/environmental focus by the Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) or other similar regulatory bodies.

- Tourism businesses actively engaged in environmental and social programmes, in line with sustainability guidelines.

A list of ecotourism businesses based in Mpumalanga was compiled through liaisons with the MPTA. A combination of this and other businesses classified as ecotourism outlets from the aforementioned criteria was used to compile a comprehensive list of ecotourism businesses in the province. It is from this list that the subjects were selected and their participation requested.

A number of issues affect the size of the sample in qualitative research; however the guiding principle is the concept of saturation (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Saturation is the point where new data and its sorting only confirms the themes and conclusions already reached, signalling completion of the data collection stage (Suter, 2012; 351). Any data collected beyond the saturation point will yield diminishing returns (Suter, 2012) and since samples for qualitative studies are habitually smaller than that of quantitative studies (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003) the number of interviewees was limited to 10.

While the saturation determines the majority of the qualitative sample size, other factors can dictate how quickly this is achieved in a study (Manson, 2010). The list below identifies these factors:

- The aim and objectives of the study. A small study with modest aims might achieve saturation quicker than a more extensive one that aims to describe a process that spans disciplines (Charmaz, 2006; 114).
- The scope and nature of the study and topic (Morse, 2000). The greater the range of the study or topic under investigation the longer it will take to reach a point of saturation of the data gathered.
- The heterogeneity of the population. Studies with greater variances in the sample population are likely to reach saturation much later than those with a homogenous population. This is largely due to the type of responses gathered; homogenous groups tend to hold similar opinions, experiences and perceptions unlike heterogeneous samples (Ritchie et al. 2003; 84)

- The expertise of the subjects interviewed (Jette, Grover & Keck, 2003). Interviews with experts within a particular field will yield data that is current and specific to the questions posed and thus saturation will be reached much sooner than discussions with laymen.

Qualitative samples though smaller than that of quantitative studies and notwithstanding the point of saturation, need to be large enough to assure that most (if not all) of the perception indicators that might be important are uncovered (Manson, 2010). It follows that if the sample is larger than is necessary; the resulting data becomes repetitive and superfluous (Bowen, 2008).

5.5 Data Collection

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were used to collect the study's primary data (See Appendix E for Interview Guide). In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves intensive individual discussions with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006; 3). In-depth interviewing is a useful tool as it allows for the exploration of people's subjective experiences, meaning-making, accounting-processes and the unspoken assumptions about life (Healey-Etten & Sharp, 2010; 157). Interviewing as the primary data collection technique is popular in travel and tourism studies which aim to explore under researched phenomenon and areas of research not easily expressed in quantitative illustrations and techniques (Uriely & Belhassen, 2006; Bao, Chen & Ma, 2013).

A number of factors influence the degree of structure or the type of instrument used in a qualitative research study. The first of which is the purpose of the study; if the study is of an exploratory nature i.e. attempts to discover or refine concepts, an open-minded protocol is often appropriate (Devers & Frankel, 2000). Semi-structured interviews are quite often the only data source for purely qualitative research projects (Adams, et al., 2002) with the participant/interviewee always as the unit of observation (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006). This is the most widely used interviewing format for qualitative research, and is organised around a set of predetermined

open-ended questions and other inquiries that emerge from the dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee (DiCicco & Crabtree, 315; 2006). The contribution interview research makes to knowledge is through the connection of the many 'truths' obtained from the interviewees (Warren & Karner, 2005). The aim of conducting the interviews was to obtain current and practical insight from respondents, beyond that of the literature review.

Prior to the data phase collection the nature, scope and objectives of the study were clearly delineated and conveyed to the chosen participants and any queries addressed. A participant information sheet (See Appendix B) containing this information was circulated to all potential interviewees.

Upon confirmation of the respondents' participation; where possible, liaison was maintained with participants. This allowed for the establishment of rapport, in order to build trust between the interviewee and researcher and aid in the elicitation of information and what they choose to share during the interview sessions (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006). The interviews were then scheduled; dates, times, venues of the individual sessions confirmed.

The following contingencies were made in the event an interviewee was unable to avail themselves for an interview:

- A provisional sample of five participants was set up to account for any potential withdrawals (from the study) by the managers.
- Alternative means/methods of conducting the interviews were explored, where a face-to-face interview was not possible. Two of the ten interviews were conducted via Skype™[5].

Growth in the literature on the use of the web as a primary tool for conducting research is evidence of its increasing popularity (James & Busher, 2006). Skype was used to conduct interviews in a study by Picard and Zuev (2014) which sought to explore contemporary Antarctic tourism practices. Electronic and web-based communication tools enable participants who might not otherwise be able take part

[5] Skype is a free video calling application.

in a study to do so (Bampton & Cowton, 2002), thereby increasing the span or reach of the research.

Before every interview commenced, the interviewees were provided with informed consent and audio recording consent forms (See Appendices C and D respectively) to read through, familiarise with and sign. All participants were compliant in this regard.

An interview questioning guide was used to direct the sessions (See Appendix E for Interview Guide). Although an interview guide is not a requirement for in-depth interviewing; which is designed to explore the experiences and the meaning attached to them (Granot, Brashear & Motta, 2012; 552), it was used to control the direction of the interview sessions. A series of open-ended questions were posed and different probes (verbal and non-verbal) were used to illicit more intuitive responses. Open-ended questions establish the area to be explored while allowing the interviewee to take any direction in the way they respond (Granot, Brashear & Motta, 2012). This approach was elected as it allows for richer data to be captured as opposed to a closed-ended inquiry (Myers & Newman, 2007).

The predetermined questions were only used as a guide. Questions that were not effective in eliciting the necessary information were dropped and new ones added where necessary depending on the direction of the individual interview sessions. Moreover, digressions were not discouraged, as departure from the planned itinerary can be very productive as they follow the interviewee's interest and knowledge (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002).

The Interviews ran on average 45-60 minutes per session. Anything longer than an hour can be perceived too long and anything shorter than 30 minutes, can be perceived as insufficient (Granot, Brashear & Motta, 2012; 550). Given that the purpose of the interviews is to allow the interviewees to reconstruct their experiences, put it into the context of their lives and reflect on its meaning in relation to the questions asked anything shorter than 45 minutes would be too short (Granot, Brashear & Motta, 2012).

Interviews were deliberately spaced; scheduled at least three days apart, in order to maintain the integrity of the individual interviewees' accounts and allow for

transcribing and preliminary data processing following each interview. Shortly after each recorded interview, they were transcribed and coded using ATLAS.ti[6].

5.6 Review of Interview Questions

The following section reflects on the interview questions, the general tone of the discussions and the style of retort the interviews sought to elicit (See table 5.2 for the interview breakdown). With this in mind it is perhaps prudent to mention that no two interviews were the same and thus, the questions and tenor of the interviews were guided by a number of factors. The interviews however were somewhat structured and served to guide and moderate the responses captured. The interview sessions were divided into three core sections, which aimed to provoke different retorts. These were preceded by general inquiry which comprised of an introduction to the study and reiteration of its rationale, biographical type questions and the signing of consent forms.

Section 1 Knowledge and attitude

This section set out to garner the level of knowledge and understanding the respondents had regarding key concepts to be to be later explored throughout the interview. Respondents were asked to define and distinguish between these.

Section 2 Managers autonomy and experience

This section focused on getting a better understanding of the individual interviewees' stance and perceptions of key terms examined in previous section. This was done by means of getting to know the interviewees' backgrounds within the industry, their experiences and interactions with sustainability, ecotourism/sustainable tourism practices.

Section 3 Threats to the sustainability if ecotourism.

Finally, this section sought to compile a list of what the interviewees identified as threats to the industry, how they respond or have responded to these in the past and determine the effectiveness of their responses.

[6] Atlas.ti is qualitative data analysis software (QDA).

SECTION	QUESTIONS	PROBES	RATIONALE/OBJECTIVES
Introduction	Does interviewee consent to interview?	Biographic inquiry	Inform interviewee about the purpose of conducting the interview and recording the session. Go over confidentiality issues
Section 1 **Knowledge and Attitudes towards Sustainability**	How do they define sustainability? How knowledgeable are they about it? What are their perceptions of it?	Reference to personal and professional life	Get personal insight into the questions posed
Section 2 **Autonomy and Experience**	What is their level of involvement in their respective current occupations? How long have they been involved in conservation ecotourism or sustainable tourism?	Based on their experience as past or current managers, what have been their experiences in relation to ecotourism and sustainability?	Get a sense of the interviewees' background in ecotourism and sustainable tourism
Section 3 **Threats to Sustainability of Ecotourism**	What are the current threats to ecotourism? How do they respond to these? Are they successful in addressing them?	Based on their experience as past or current managers, what are their experiences?	Help answer research questions. Explore parallels with the literature identify how the mangers have been successful in dealing with threats
End of Interview	Final comments		Concluding the interview

Table 5.2 Interview Breakdown

5.7 Data Analysis

There are two approaches to research namely inductive and deductive strategies. Inductive methods begin with evidence where the researcher already has some knowledge or sense of the research problem before undertaking the research endeavour. Deductive inquiry starts with a summary idea or a series of "educated guesses" i.e. hypotheses of what the researcher thinks might occur (Neuman, 2009) and is followed by the quantitative investigation to affirm or refute these. This study took an inductive approach to the research for the following reasons (Thomas, 2003; 1):

- To condense the extensive and verified raw data into a brief report,
- To establish links between the research objectives and the summary findings,
- To develop a model about the underlying perceptions of ecotourism managers and what they deem as threats to the sustainability of ecotourism based on the data gathered.

Qualitative studies typically use an inductive form analysis; where observation of particular cases and phenomenon may be generalised to a class of cases (Leedy, 1997; 107).

Qualitative data analysis is centred on the detection and the intricate tasks of defining, categorising, theorising, explaining, exploring and mapping of large amounts of scattered data into coherent usable information (Bryman & Burgess, 1994; 176). It involves dismantling, segmenting and reassembling data sets to form meaningful findings in order to draw inferences (Boeije, 2010). The qualitative technique of thematic or pattern coding was used in the analysis of the data corpus.

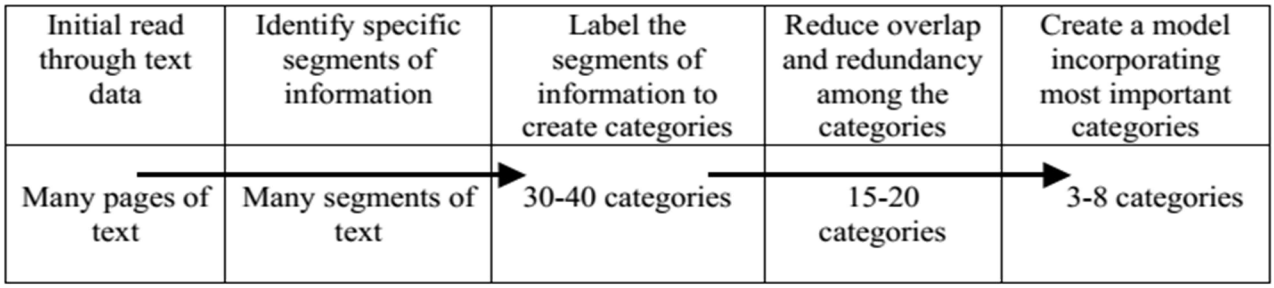


Figure 5.2 Coding Process in Inductive Analysis (Creswell, 2002; 266)

This process involved shifting, charting and the sorting of the data in accordance to key themes identified. Thematic analyses are conducted in a number of ways, in this sense it can be described more as a method rather than a methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To formalise this inductive coding process the following procedure was used to analyse the vast qualitative data as developed Creswell, depicted in Figure 5.2. This was used in conjunction with Thomas' (2004; 5) directive for analysing qualitative data and involved the following steps:

1. Preparation of raw data file. This involves formatting the raw data (such as font size, questions or interviewer comments) some data cleaning may also be required (Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

2. Initial reading of data and close reading of text to gain an understanding of the 'themes' and details in the text. Before actual analysis can commence, the researcher needs to have a firm understanding of the complete data set, to aid in the analysis process (Rice & Ezzy, 1999; 258).

3. Identification of specific segments of information and creation of categories. Identifying and defining of themes from the vast data set, lower level or specific categories derived from multiple readings of the raw data. Open order as well as in vivo codes are created from meaning units or actual phrases used in specific text segments (Huwang, 2008). A good code is one that captures the qualitative richness of the phenomenon under investigation (Boyatzis, 1998; 1).

4. Labelling segments of information then overlapping coding and uncoded text (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). The rules that underlie qualitative coding which are distinguishable from quantitative coding are that (a) one segment of data/text may be coded in more than one category; (b) a considerable size of the text/data may not be assigned to any category.

5. Corroborating and legitimisation coded themes by reducing overlaps and redundant categories or themes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Selection of appropriate quotes to convey the core themes of each category.

6. Creation of a model incorporating the most important categories and illustrate how the core themes interact with one another. This can be done by means

of a thematic map which graphically displays main and sub-themes and the interactions between these (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Due to the nature of the research questions the prevalence and the frequency at which themes appeared within the data was of crucial importance (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The final refinement of the themes was aimed at identifying the essence of what each theme encompassed and to identify how they interacted within the scope of the study.

5.8 Validating Accuracy of Findings

Qualitative research depends on the presentation of solid descriptive data, so that the researcher leads the reader to an understanding of the meaning of the experience under study (Stake, 1995). The purpose of this research was not infer the results generated; this is beyond the scope of the study, as a qualitative exploratory study it aimed to examine, analyse and present what the interviewed ecotourism managers perceived as the threats to the sustainability of their industry and reflect on how effective they are in their responses to these based on their experience.

There has been considerable discussion of how ‘quality’ can be demonstrated within qualitative studies (Roulston, 2010; Kelliher, 2005; Decrop, 1999). It is suggested by some authors that the concept of validity is a construct of the positivist paradigm (Tobin & Begley, 2003), and that the qualitative equivalent is demonstrated through the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of qualitative findings (Lincoln & Cuba, 1985). Although the terms validity and reliability are especially important in quantitative investigations, a system of verifying and legitimising qualitative findings has to be observed in every qualitative inquiry. Validity and reliability concerns are however not as formalised in qualitative research as they are in within the positivist paradigm. Qualitative research in tourism is often said to lack the tenets of ‘good’ science, due to positivism being the prevailing paradigm in many areas of tourism research and a general failure of qualitative researchers in explaining how and why the methods they use are sound (Decrop, 1999; 157).

The validity of qualitative research is often referred to as trustworthiness or credibility (Creswell, 2010; 346). Since qualitative approaches are often criticised because of their lack of credibility or rigor, both reliability and validity need to be closely evaluated because homogeneity of data and coefficients of determination cannot be computed (Decrop, 1999). Lincolnand and Guba (1985) developed criteria for qualitative inquiry analogous to the quantitative terminology:

1. Credibility (internal and external validity); How truthful are the findings?
2. Transferability (external validity); How applicable are the research findings to other settings?
3. Dependability (reliability); Are the results dependable?
4. Confirmability (objectivity); Do the findings reflective of the informants and inquiry?

Decrop (1999; 160) proposes that if we accept the principle that science is not a question of numbers but of reasoning, a qualitative study can be as sound as a quantitative one. He further cites that tourism researchers must not only be conscious of the criteria which make qualitative studies trustworthy but also need to also implement them of which triangulation can aid in doing.

A number of triangulating procedures were performed in order to enhance the credibility of the research findings. One such procedure that was performed to assess the trustworthiness of the data analysis process involved consistency checks; by having a research assistant and an independent third party autonomously use category descriptions to find texts that belong in those categories (Thomas, 2004). Credibility stakeholder were also performed; which involved consulting with people with specific interest to the research topic (ecotourism affiliates) and having them comment on the categories made or the interpretations thereof (Erlandson, et al., 1993). These exercises are done in order to mitigate the inevitability of the researchers' bias from infiltrating the tainting the results and is referred to as investigator triangulation.

Comparisons with previous research on the same or related topics were done in order to validate and corroborate the findings (Thomas, 2003). This process of data triangulation is a strategy for improving the validity of research or evaluation of

findings by using a variety of data sources (Mathison, 1988). Denzin (1978) cites three types of data triangulation; time, space and person; these are based on the idea that the richness of data can vary based the when and where data is collected and on whom it is collected from. Although this study was cross-sectional; occurred at only one point in time, the heterogeneous sample frame and dispersed geographical positioning of the interviewees were deemed wide-ranging enough by the researcher to obtain a broad data set from which comparisons would be made.

Theoretical Triangulation involves the use of multiple perspectives or theories in the same study to interpret a single set of data (Hussein, 2009). The elaborate literature review served this purpose; by reviewing the relevant theory and concepts under this dissertation. It is from this extensive collection of current and pertinent literature that the primary data was reviewed and analysed against.

5.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations according to Schram (2003; 137) are inherent in any study involving interaction with human participants and as such must be identified and taken cognisance of throughout the tenure of the study. Leentjens and Levenson (2013; 396) identify a number of ethical issues of particular concern when conducting research involving human participants. They assert that international standards for research be adhered to when conducting research in order to mitigate the potential negative effects and ramifications of these issues:

- The issue of coercion. Participants have the right to refuse to part take in any study and/or withdraw their participation at a later stage if they so see fit, these needs to be communicated effectively to the sample population. This is of particular concern where vulnerable categories are concerned.
- The sample participants need to do so, on their own accord. Participation to a study must always be voluntary and the researcher can only invite sample subjects to take part the study.
- Recruitment methods and privacy issues. Efforts and procedures of recruiting participants have to be ethical and non-invasive.

- Appropriate compensation for participation. The issue of compensating participants is a contentious one as it improperly increases the incentive to participate (Leentjens & Levenson, 2013). This can result in a distortion of the findings if the research subjects participate purely for personal benefit.

The empirical research conducted in this dissertation was done in full cognisance and compliance of the abovementioned concerns and ethical rules provided for by the University of Witwatersrand guidelines for human (non-medical) research. An application for ethical clearance was made and upon approval, an ethical clearance certificate with a research protocol number was issued (see Appendix I) as well as approval by the Faculty of Higher Degrees Committee (see Appendix J) after which point data collection began.

Consent forms were presented to all participants to read and provide their consent by signing (See Appendix C and D for Informed Consent and Audio Recording Consent Forms respectively). The consent forms stipulated that any identifying information provided by the respondent would be kept confidential and would not be published in the final report or shared with any unauthorised parties. This especially concerned the interview participants' involvement, since the interview sessions were recorded. The interviewees were further informed that all tapes and recorded material will be stored in a password protected computer and would only be handled and reviewed by the researcher and the research assistant.

Conveying the participants' intentions was also an ethical consideration of concern. The researcher also made a continuous and conscientious effort to convey the interviewees' responses as candidly and accurately as possible. Often researchers fail to recognise that there are layers to interpretation even within one language. The language used to conduct research as the medium of communication and the subsequent interpretation of the responses from the empirical inquiry (i.e. English as used in this thesis) has implications on the validity of the findings (Berger, 1966). This is due largely to the fact that people have different frames of reference, and it is their frames of reference that mould their thinking and shape our understanding (Mezirow, 1997). Steps were taken as mentioned in researcher triangulation section to guard against this.

5.10 Reflection on Data Collection

For the most part the data collection phase was without major problems. The sample when contacted was keen to participate in the study when invited and showed considerable interest in the research topic. This was reflected in their responses to the questions asked in the interviews, which were always perceptive.

The only oversight that threatened completion of the interviews in the time allotted for data collection was the scheduling (See Appendix A for the Empirical Study's Timetable). The interviews were set to take place at a time which coincided with one of the busiest seasons in tourism (i.e. last quarter of the year). This mistake was a result of the administrative issues that needed to be dealt with before any data collection could legitimately commence. Firstly, the researcher had to present a research proposal to the research committee of the school of Economic and Business Sciences. Once the research proposal was approved, the amended proposal was then submitted to the university's Human Research Ethics Committee for further approval. After some the research proposal was approved by the research ethics committee and an ethics clearance certificate was issued (on the 4th of November). Data collection phase started officially on the 5th of November 2013. This stage of the research consequently coincided with the busiest time of the tourism annual business timetable. A number of interviews once confirmed and arranged, had to be rescheduled to accommodate the managers' commitments. This however did not deter the researcher or the managers from conducting the interviews and the managers in acquiescing and availing themselves for an interview, when it was possible.

5.11 Summary

This chapter defined and delineated the research design and methodology used in this study. The qualitative strategy and method of gathering data was administered with in-depth one on one interviews with the managers of ecotourism businesses based in Mpumalanga. The study took an inductive approach to the analysis of the data which involved the identification and coding of emergent themes. The resulting data was then used to discuss and reflect upon the study's objectives.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS

"An approximate answer to the right problem is worth a good deal more than an exact answer to an approximate problem"
John Tukey

6.1 Introduction

The key results from the primary data collected are presented in this chapter and evaluated in relation to the literature review. The preliminary analysed data is presented according to themes identified within the data and the literature. This is done by means of actual illustrations used in the analysis process, showing how the raw data sets were refined into useful information.

The results presented here are derived directly from the data gathered from the in-depth interviews conducted. The volume of data captured from each of the interview sessions was extensive and necessitated intricate reviews, data sorting, as well as the identification of salient cues within the data. Interpretive codes were created using gerunds and where possible, quotes were used to support the illustrated arguments. This included the detection of emergent themes that recurred throughout the data. The recognition of contrasting or even contradictory pieces of information was also an important step in this process; these were also identified and taken into cognisance. This information is important in the qualitative paradigm as it highlights different perspectives and adds to overall knowledge of the topic under investigation.

Preliminary processing of the data occurred at two levels namely; vertical and horizontal analysis. The data was initially read and processed in individual units or per interview transcript, then processed vertically (through the whole data sets) according to the themes detected. Thorough reviews also aided in assessing the potential for quotable quotes within the responses which are referenced in the results, discussions and concluding chapters. These horizontal and vertical processing activities were epistemologically important as they promoted rigorous evaluation and analysis of the complete data corpus. The findings were then discussed in light of the broader academic literature. This chapter is divided in five sections; a review of the sample participants, an analysis of the auxiliary themes, an

examination of the definitions of key concepts and a presentation of the identified threats. Finally, the thematic map depicting all the themes and how these interact concludes this chapter.

6.2 Sample Review

A total of 10 participants of current managers of ecotourism businesses were interviewed. All the interviewees and their current companies of employment were based in Mpumalanga and dispersed around the province. The sample frame was not restricted to any division or sector within ecotourism and ranged from managers employed by conservations agencies, hospitality businesses, resorts and other ecotourism related businesses.

Six out of the ten people interviewed were male and four were female[7]. The age of interviewees ranged from 29 to 56 with a mean age of 40.5. The interviewees reported to have been collectively and actively employed in tourism, ecotourism or conservation related fields for an approximated average of 18.2 years. The shortest employment period in the abovementioned fields was 6 and the longest was 37. The multi-facet nature of ecotourism and its classifications necessitated the inclusion of the managers of Mpumalanga based conservation and alternative tourism organisations that had a focus on ecotourism principles, into the sample.

6.3 Auxiliary Themes

The themes reviewed here, both in vivo (taken from transcribed excerpts) and open-order themes (derived from phrases used in the transcripts, the literature, the dissertation title, and from the research questions) are classified as auxiliary to the central themes discussed in sections to follow. The auxiliary themes are important as they give context to central themes and help in understanding how these influence the manner in which the managers' perceptions and predilections are framed.

[7] Historically more men than women were and continue to be employed in the tourism sector in Mpumalanga (Monakhisi, 2008). According to The National Growth Path of South Africa, tourism alone has the potential to create 275 000 jobs by 2015. Female unemployment rate in province (at 32% in 2010) was higher than that of males (25.5%), a trend that appears to be continuing (Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path, 2011).

6.3.1 Knowledge and Education

All interviewed persons exhibited incredible insight and were very knowledgeable about sustainability ecotourism and conservation. This is due largely to the fact that all participants had related qualifications and training, which was a prerequisite for their respective current occupations they held during the time the interviews were conducted. The interviewees reported to hold the qualifications listed below, with the number of managers in possession of the respective qualification indicated in brackets:

- Environmental Management; BSc and National Diploma (2)
- Tourism Management; BTech and MCom (2)
- Conservation Management; BSc and BA (2)
- Business Management/ Human Resources Management; BCom (2)
- BSc Biology, Honours degree in Botany (1)
- Tour Guide Certificate (1)

Additionally, four out of the ten respondents reported to have attended sustainability, ecotourism or conservation courses, seminars or conferences in the past six-twelve months and that they did so periodically. It was noted that for the majority of the respondents, the attendance of conferences or courses related to sustainability and tourism is quite common, and is in many instances encouraged or required by their current employing organisations. This exposure to current research and exhibitions on how to improve overall business operations while taking cognisance of social and environmental impacts of tourism businesses fosters Kaizen; a culture of continuous improvement within ecotourism.

6.3.2 Autonomy and Experience

The elected methodological approach this research adopted was based on the objective of garnering information from mid to relatively high levels of management who had substantial operational and functional experience. The rationale behind this was that it is this group that is most knowledgeable about the threats faced by the industry and is tasked with addressing these in their day to day operations. The

participants affirmed this assertion, demonstrated by their substantial knowledge of administrative as well operational issues. Unsurprisingly, the managers' insights extended beyond the confines of their respective employing organisations.

Given that autonomy is a function of organisational level or job position (Hall, 2006), all respondents had some level of independence over the completion of tasks in their respective positions as managers. The level of autonomy varied and differed from one manager to another and was due to a number of factors, largely due to the type of business they were employed by. The following extracts express the managers' thoughts relating to their level of autonomy within their current occupations:

> …"there is always more one can do, but you can't always do it due to organisational policies and procedures that have to be followed. They are not easy to manoeuvre around" (Interviewee No. 7)
>
> --
>
> …"It depends on the business or agency and I think it also matters if they are privately owned versus state funded organisations" (Interviewee No. 9)

The employees of government and conservational organisations reported to have less influence over the manner in which work was completed and cited protocols and extensive policies as reasons for this. The levels of bureaucracy within state owned organisations are notoriously restrictive, compared to their privately owned counterparts. This makes it difficult for functional managers to use their discretion and to effect changes or implement strategies timeously aimed at advancing sustainability objectives.

Two of the ten managers indicated that, they were not always employed within the tourism, ecotourism or conservational fields. Their knowledge of business, management and administrative experience are key factors in their mobility and adaptability which enables them to work in various industries. These along with their reported "need to make a difference" were central to them joining the tourism industry and/or the conservational fields.

The level of experience also varied greatly among the respondents. This relates both to the number of years working in their current positions as well as their experience in ecotourism or sustainable tourism. Unsurprisingly, the amount of experience was directly correlated to the age of the respondents i.e. older participants hand more experience than their younger counterparts. This pertains to “experience within tourism, ecotourism or the conservational fields” and not general work, administrative or management experience. Respondents that joined the industry at a later stage in their careers also had less experience than their cohorts.

6.3.3 Perceptions

Research suggests that the relationship between tourism and conservation is complex and dynamic (Njole, 2011; Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011). The perceptions of the many stakeholders that drive the process of sustainable tourism on the environment and ecological concerns are equally confounding (Imran, Alam & Beaumont, 2014). These are a function of a number of factors which makes deciphering people’s perceptions a particularly cumbersome endeavour.

For the theme labelled *Perceptions*, related subthemes were identified some of which have been alluded to in the discussion above. These were classified as *Knowledge & Education, Experience, Autonomy* and *Affinity to Nature*. The subthemes were found to have influence over the managers’ perceptions which in turn had a bearing on their *Understanding of Sustainability*.

An understanding of the managers’ acuities relating to sustainability is important. As these greatly or at least partly influence managers “sustainability output” and performance, either positively or negatively (Chendo, 2013). The general assumption that managers of ecotourism firms have a positive regard for sustainability within ecotourism is perhaps a fair one to make (Raderbauer, 2011). Given the strategic intent of ecotourism and its directed focus on ecological, environmental and social considerations, the various stakeholders involved can be said to have some affinity or resonance with these concerns. This assertion was verified, at least were the interviewed managers were concerned; as all the respondents reflected on how they

felt a responsibility towards protecting and maintaining the environment even prior to their involvement in the industry.

These reflections pointed towards a positive sensitivity to ecotourism and its sustainability. Table 6.1 illustrates the coded data for the theme *Affinity to Nature*.

Theme:	Interviewee No.	Quotes and Key Points	Preliminary Codes
Affinity to Nature	1	…"Will always be a key player in the planning of protected areas".	Commitment to the environment
	2	"I am passionate about it [nature, conservation and preservation]"…	Commitment to the environment
	3	"I grew up next to the Kruger National Park, my family and I would go there every chance we got. It was then when realised I wanted to become an conservationist" .	Familial background, Early interest
	4	"I got into conservation by chance, but once I did, it felt right I, I don't see myself doing anything else"	Vocation
	5	"My parent(s) [mother & aunt] worked in conservation, I guess it runs in the family"	Familial background
	6	…"It's hard for me to imagine doing anything else"	Vocation
	7	…"had many pets when I was young. My mother was (is) a veterinary nurse, I used to help during weekends and holidays. I thought I would be a vet, I became a biologist instead.	Familial background, Early interest
	8	I want to help in changing how people from where I come from view and interact with the world around them.	Raise awareness
	9	"It doesn't feel like a job, I love waking up surrounded by this [tranquil surroundings] and the feeling that I am in some small way helping in preserving it".	Vocation
	10	…"the same way everyone else who does this feels; it's a privilege, it's a vocation.	Vocation

Table 6.1 Thematic Coding Table: Affinity to Nature

The identified and derivative codes for the theme; *Managers' Affinity to Nature* can be summated as follows:

i. A commitment to the environment,
ii. Familial background (parental involvement in sustainable tourism and conservational fields),
iii. An early interest in sustainable living and conservation,
iv. A view of ones' occupation as a vocation and
v. The intent to bring awareness to the community about sustainability, conservation and responsible tourism.

6.4 Definitions of Sustainability, Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism

6.4.1 Defining Sustainability

There are countless definitions of the terms sustainability and sustainable development (Bartlett, 2012). This is partly due to the evolution of the concept and its dynamic and multi-faceted nature. Although there is much contention surrounding its definition, their core principles remain largely unchanged i.e. long-term viability and strong consideration of the ecological/environmental, social and economic aspects (Chendo, 2013). Although the respondents offered different definitions of sustainability, a common understanding ran throughout all the definitions they supplied. The various definitions reported similarly alluded to the abovementioned features of the concept. Certain terms/codes appeared recurrently throughout the discussions, as tabulated below (Table 6.2).

	Interviewee No.	Quotes and Key Points	Preliminary Codes
Theme: Sustainability definition	1	…"Any action or activity that can continue in perpetuity by remaining self-sufficient in terms of its operations and economic viability"	Long-term orientation, self-sufficiency, economic viability
	2	…"preserve the environment while allowing for development	Conservation

		and growth to society's current and future needs".	
	3	"It implies carefully planned development, equitable and maintainable use and distribution of resources while ensuring integrity of the natural world".	Planned development, Equitable resource distribution and utilisation
	4	…"conciliation of development and conservation within every sphere of society"	Tourism development, Conservation
	5	"The ability to remain economically viable in the future while staying true to ecological and socio-cultural components of the sustainable business model"	TBL* cultural focus
	6	…"striving towards common goals that maximise positive impacts and mitigating the negatives ones on all stakeholders involved and the world around us".	Optimal resource utilisation, Mitigate adverse effects
	7	"Consideration of the triple bottom line to advance organisational goals"…	TBL, long-term orientation
	8	…"Holistic view of the enterprise that takes a long-term perspective… by balancing the economic, environmental and social elements"…	TBL
	9	"Simply involves anything that takes into account and promotes maintainable growth by using resources efficiently to support the business current and future needs".	Optimal resource utilisation, Economic viability, Long-term orientation
	10	"Meeting organisational goals by closely managing environmental and natural resources and ensuring that these are available and intact for future generations. It also weighs social and ecological goals against businesses economic goal to maximise profit"	TBL, Long-term orientation

*Triple Bottom Line

Table 6.2 Thematic Coding Table: Defining Sustainability

Sustainability was repeatedly defined with reference to the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) ideology that is achieved with the consideration of the economic, environmental and social implications of the business concern. Other cited aspects of sustainability central to it definition were; a long-term perspective view of the organisation, self-sufficiency, equitable and optimal resource distribution and utilisation, and a focus on mitigating organisational externalities.

6.4.2 Elements of Sustainability

The literature provides for three key elements or principles that must work in unison if true sustainability is to be achieved (Huang, 2011). Following from the definition of sustainability these are typically referred to as Environmental/ecological, Socio-Cultural and Economic considerations or some variation of these. Table 6.3 illustrates what the respondents cited as elements of sustainability. Respondents repeatedly cited or referred to the TBL (Triple Bottom Line) when describing the key components of sustainability.

	Interviewee No.	Quotes and Key Points	Preliminary Codes
Theme: Elements of Sustainability	1	"Viability, self-sufficient, balance".	Viability, Self-sufficiency, Balance
	2	"Conservation, education and the creation of awareness"	Conservation, Education
	3	"Social, environmental and economic considerations of the business concern"	TBL
	4	"The environment, social facilitation and financial viability of the business"	TBL
	5	"Education, social, environmental and economy"	Education, Social and environmental considerations
	6	"Financial aspect and practical and operational feasibility"	Financial consideration and Business functionality

	7	"The environment and economic consideration"	Environment and Economic considerations
	8	Ecology, the environment, community and financial consideration	TBL
	9	"Long-term viability of socio-economic, cultural and environmental consideration	TBL, Long-term orientation
	10	"Long-term self-sufficiency, and economic and environmental viability"	Self-sufficiency, Economic and environmental considerations, Long-term orientation

Table 6.3 Thematic Coding Table: Elements of Sustainability

A number of synonyms for the core principles of sustainability were used repeatedly, although some elements were omitted in some responses. It was again noted that the nature of the respondents' employing organisations influenced their omissions and or points of emphasis. For example, those employed by conservation agencies stressed conservation, ecological and environmental considerations. Conservation often involves restricting and controlling access to natural resources which invariably inhibits access to potential financial gains (Desai, 2012). Whereas those employed by for-profit ecotourism businesses, routinely highlighted the importance of the financial viability of the business and its operations in promoting and observing the other elements.

A cross reference of the elements of sustainability as cited by the managers against those in the literature indicates a common understanding of the premise of sustainability. The codes listed in the table above (Table 6.3) can be categorised according to the three elements of sustainability or TBL. "Conservation" is an environmental concern. "Education" is a social consideration aimed at bringing awareness to sustainability and conservation issues and economic element comprises of concerns about the functionality of the business, its self-sufficiency and the financial wellbeing.

6.4.3 Defining Sustainable Tourism and Ecotourism

Tourism is a complex system that consists of numerous stakeholders and is often characterised by discord arising from the shared use of resources and conflicting views on how the industry should be developed and managed (Kuvan & Akan, 2012). Sustainable tourism planning can be achieved if the views of key stakeholders in tourism development are understood and incorporated in the development process of the industry (Byrd, Bosley & Dronberger, 2009; Yasarata, et al., 2010). This step begins with a common understanding of the fundamental meaning of aspects of these concepts. The terms sustainable tourism and ecotourism were used synonymously as reflected in the responses below tabulated in 6.4. Indeed when asked to define "ecotourism" the majority responded by making explicit or tacit references to the term "sustainable tourism". Only after further probing did the respondents elaborate.

Theme: Sustainable Tourism/Ecotourism Definition	Interviewee No.	Quotes and Key Points	Preliminary Codes
	1	"Any tourism activity that is based on the natural environment forming the main focus area".	Nature-based tourism
	2	"Development of tourism industry whose impact is assessed as acceptable for the environment, society and future stakeholders"	Tourism development, feasibility assessment
	3	"Tourism with particular emphasis on sustainability and the importance of the environment"…	Environmental consideration
	4	"it is a form of tourism that integrates sustainability throughout the industry by mitigating the impact on society and the environment".	Social consideration, Environmental consideration, Integration
	5	"It is a form of tourism that is sensitive to the needs of future	Long-term view, Education, Stakeholder

		generations. It is multifaceted, and involves engaging local communities, educating people and advancing promoting a more sustainable form of tourism".	involvement
	6	"Eco-centric tourism. They may be traditional in the services they offer but the delivery and processes behind this is more sustainable and sensitive to the environment"	Eco-centric tourism, Sustainable processes, Environmental consideration
	7	"It is any form of tourism that champions the preservation of natural and cultural resources, such as certain areas' associated heritage and consideration of social issues, or at least the impact had on surrounding community"	Conservation-focused, Cultural consideration, Social consideration, Stakeholder involvement
	8	…traditional tourism business model, but with emphasis on the sustainability of the ecosystem, the environment on which the business is based and operates".	Environmental consideration
	9	"A balanced perspective of tourism. It takes economic, ecological, environmental and community-based values into equal consideration to ensure long-term viability of the business"	Long-term view, TBL
	10	…"education focused tourism that is centred on stakeholder and community involvement which is aimed at enlightening people on conservation. It does this all the while ensuring that	Stakeholder involvement, Education-based, Conservation, Economic consideration

		the business remains profitable to support key objectives"	

Table 6.4 Thematic Coding Table: Sustainable Tourism/Ecotourism Definition

There was some consensus over the definition of these concepts although again the emphasis of the core elements varied from one manager to another. The following codes were used to denote key points in the description of ecotourism:

i. Nature-based tourism,
ii. An emphasis on the environment and conservation,
iii. An emphasis on the importance of society and culture,
iv. An integrated, holistic approach to tourism,
v. An emphasis on stakeholder involvement,
vi. A focus on education,
vii. A reliance on sustainable processes, practices and procedures and
viii. A long term perspective view of the tourism business.

6.5 Threats to Sustainability of Ecotourism

There are various definitions of risk and threat; though these can be distinguished linguistically they were used interchangeably, in this study as they are used in practice. These are concerned ultimately with the future and what may occur, known as risk events (Shaw, 2010). Risk events may have positive or negative impacts on tourism and may be of a domestic or international in their imminence.

An analysis of the transcripts revealed a number of threats cited or alluded to by respondents. The threats ranged from those internal and external to the business concern. Table 6.5 illustrates extracts of what the managers cited as threats to ecotourism.

	Interviewee No.	**Quotes and Key Points**	**Preliminary Codes**

Theme: Threats to Sustainability of Ecotourism	1	...” attract tourism investors, fill vacant posts, allocate dedicated operational budgets, and become more effective in management”.	Ineffective management; poor financial and HR management
	2	…”lack of adequate support from supervisors and management. Limited powers in our responses to potential problems…”	Limited autonomy, Lack of organisational support
	3	…”the budgets are often very limited, which severely inhibits the ways we can make the business more sustainable or eco-friendly”.	Financial limitations
	4	“There is a lack of trained personnel. There is also a shortage in the skilled persons required for such jobs [conservationists, ecotourism practitioners, etc.]. It’s a catch 22, the money needed to hire specialists is also very limited …”	Poor HR management, Limited financial resources
	5	…”increase in competition in recent years has made it very difficult. We have even had to downsize”…	Increased competition, Limited resources
	6	…seasonality and limited revenues associated with this especially with the competition levels being as they are. I also think negative perceptions of this region [Mbombela district] are a problem… [crime, malaria, seasonal floods].	Limited revenues, Increased Competition, Negative perceptions, Health and safety risks
	7	…”the usual ones we can’t always control; the prevalence of communicable diseases and the stigma and perceptions relating to these. Others are internal to the business… include unwillingness to change systems and operations. I suppose people don’t feel there’s a need for it”	Health and safety risks, Negative perceptions of the region, Resistance to change
	8	…“as a small and relatively new venture there are threats that every new business operation faces, [proper management,	Start-up business costs, Inefficient business management

		branding and positioning and steady revenue stream]. Inability to run business at full capacity such as coordinating staff, resources and reservations"	
	9	…"initial capital outlay is high. Installation of energy efficient systems is quite high despite the future possible savings. "There's only so much one person can do…"	High transition costs, Lack of organisational support
	10	…"there is no clear distinction between an ecotourism enterprise and other tourism businesses, so customers get confused. There are also no set standards for ecotourism, so its trial and error which is an expensive exercise"	Theoretical shortfalls, Limited resources

Table 6.5 Thematic Coding Table: Threats to Sustainability of Ecotourism

The threats tabulated in 6.5 can be classified as either macro/micro and internal or external to the industry or ecotourism business concern. The managers noted mainly domestic risks as these posed an immediate threat to the ecotourism business. The proceeding discussion explicates these threats and what they comprise of.

6.5.1 Description of Threats

Macro-Threats:

Theoretical Shortfalls

Ecotourism and sustainable tourism based activities have in recent decades attracted much attention from tourism theorists, practitioners and policymakers alike. This despite consistent failures within tourism literature to effectively translate these concepts to the theory of its parental paradigm sustainable development (Sharpley, 2000). As it stands there is still much contention over the very definitions of these concepts. Furthermore, the absence of solid connections between fundamental theoretical underpinnings and models for operationalization make it particularly

difficult to translate in practice. The essence of this was expressed astutely by one respondent (Interviewee No. 3) when he stated that; "*there are no set standards for ecotourism, so its trial and error which is an expensive exercise*". The costs associated with implementing something which is not guaranteed to yield results cannot be justified.

Resistance to Change

The ability of organisations to adapt to change can be a source of competitive advantage. Unfortunately, resistance is often experience when faced with the inevitability of change. The managers re-counted occasions when proposed change in the spirit of sustainability was resisted by key stakeholders. As quoted by one of the respondents (Interviewee No. 7); *…"people don't feel there's a need for change*", such sentiments do very little to advance sustainability efforts within organisations. Moreover the cost implications of change in any form, dissuades stakeholders from implementation. One respondent (Interviewee No. 5) stated that "*We just don't know the total cost of it [the transition towards ecotourism], until we do, little can be done".* Resistance to change is not just due to complacency but also a lack to knowledge regarding various factors surrounding it, such as the extent of the change, cost implications, mechanisms of its implementation, monitoring and analysis.

Health and Safety Risks

A number of health and safety related risks were reported. These included risks that were a direct result of the geographical positioning of the business, for example those situated in areas with high incidences of Malaria especially during the raining season, reported it as a threat. The perceptions associated with regions known to be high risk areas suffer negative public perceptions which affect tourism businesses in these areas. Instances of communicable diseases in the region were also identified as imminent threats. This was expressed by two interviewees who stated that;

> "I also think negative perceptions of this region [Mbombela district] are a problem [of its associated health and safety risks]" (Interviewee No. 6)

--

> "Unfortunately, the peak season coincidentally coincides with the rainy season which comes with a host of potential health risks"… (Interviewee No. 7)

The high crime rate was repeatedly mentioned, and was noted to repel patrons, directly affecting profit margins. This despite decreases in offensive crimes namely carjacking, robbery, contact related crime and assault in the province experienced in the period 2012-2013[8] (SA National Crime Statistics, 2012/2013).

Micro-Threats

Internal Business Related Threats

Internal business threats include financial, operational or general risks experienced by the individual ecotourism firm. These are different from one ecotourism establishment to another and can in most cases be addressed by efficient management ensuring that there are sufficient resources to sustain the business. According to Ozukan (2009; 193) providing human resources for the tourism industry is not easy, although unemployment level is high, there is a shortage in sufficiently qualified people.

> "There is a lack of trained personnel. There is also a shortage in the skilled persons required for such jobs [Conservationists and tourism/ecotourism practitioners]"… (Interviewee No. 8)

> "It's a catch twenty-two; the money needed to hire specialists is also very limited" (Interviewee No. 4)

This lack of qualified workforce inhibits growth of the industry (Shaw, Saayman & Saayman, 2012). Inefficient human resources management is a catalyst for most internal challenges that involve people within organisations. Poor management also undermines the business' attempts to advance it sustainability objectives. The

[8] See Appendix G for South Africa's Crime Statistics

monetary reserves necessary for promoting the sustainability agenda are too often inadequate and severely inhibit the business' ability to put in place the requisite sustainable systems.

According to McKercher (2010; 22) general hopes surrounding ecotourism is unrealistic which persuades entrepreneurs into undercapitalised star-ups. The result of which is an influx of poorly conceived ecotourism businesses that have little chance for survival.

Levels of Competition

Strife competition within ecotourism and general tourism in within the province was noted a threat to the sustainability of ecotourism at a micro level to the individual ecotourism business. The classification or reclassification of traditional tourism businesses into ecotourism concerns posed additional competition to the already saturated market. This puts a strain on the profit margins caused by the heightened competition for the limited numbers of vacationers and travellers. This posed a threat only to ecotourism businesses that derived their revenues from this market. The rise in the demand for nature-based activities has attracted investors who seek to profit from this burgeoning market (Pegas & Castley, 2014). This was expressed by two managers who stated:

> …"increase in competition in recent years has made it very difficult. We even had to downsize" (Interviewee No. 6)

> …"seasonality and limited revenues associated with this especially with the competition levels being as they are" (Interviewee No. 5)

6.5.2 Management of Threats

Shaw, Saayman and Saayman's (2012; 192) model for the flow of risks (see Figure 3.4) in the South African tourism industry identifies international and domestic as macro risks. International risks are especially problematic as tourism practitioners

and proprietors usually have very limited, if any control over these. It was observed that interviewees reported mostly internal threats. This was perhaps due to the perception that they at least have the power to respond to these. The scope of international risks to the macro South African tourism industry was beyond the managers' scope of control. The assumption here is that if higher-level stakeholders such as national legislators and policy makers were interviewed these would have received more attention.

Any subsequent actions taken to mitigate the potential adverse effects posed by the various threats identified by the respondents are dependent on information gathered from risk assessments. The risk management process not only covers risk identification but also includes risk assessments, risk response development and suitable risk control strategy (Shaw, 2010). These may be commissioned by the employing organisations in accordance with their strategic objectives or independently spearheaded by the managers themselves depending on their span of control within the organisation. Gray and Larson (2006; 209) provide a risk management model that can be used to identify new risk before they become hazards and present a framework for dealing with them (See Figure 3.6).

The respondents were unanimous in their assertion that much more can be done to advance sustainability within tourism and particularly ecotourism. To varying degrees it was generally believed that thought the managers of these establishments are ideally placed they have limited discretionary powers in managing latent threats faced by the firms they represent. They reiterated and cited instances where proposed changes directed at "greening" elements and processes of their associated businesses were denied implementation and even consideration.

> "It's not always easy to do what you and everyone knows needs to be done" (Interviewee No. 9)
>
> --
>
> "I had more sway over what could be done in my previous job, here not many people want to effect the necessary changes"… (Interviewee No. 1)
>
> --

> “Funding has always been a limitation, but we can’t just do nothing” (Interviewee No. 3)

The lack of financial resources necessary to action proposed changes was the most cited reason or barrier. Particular instances where “green” programs were successfully implemented were; championed by the manager proposing the change, well received and supported by colleagues and management, sufficient budgets allocated and the necessary skilled personnel were available to apply them. Half-hearted commitments to promoting sustainable business practices without the necessary support and financial backing undermines the process.

6.6 Thematic Causal Map

The data presented above is depicted below in the form of a Bayesian network or causal map. A Bayesian network is a graphical model that encodes relationships among various variables of interest (Nadkarni & Shenoy, 2004). Numerous variables were identified within the data, development of the causal map was important in beginning to decipher the interactions between them and the implications of these. Causal maps have several advantages for data analysis (Speigelhalter et al., 1993);

- Appropriate for situations where data entries are missing,
- Useful in modelling causal relationships to gain an understanding about problem domains and to predict the consequences of interventions,
- Useful in modelling uncertainty in in a domain and
- Especially appropriate to problems that require diagnosis of problems from a variety of input data.

Causal maps follow personal construct theory, which provide a basis for representing multiple perspectives (Chaib-draa, 2002). The elicitation of qualitative knowledge is critical in constructing causal maps as humans find it easier to handle qualitative rather than quantitative data (Pearl, 1988). The inferences made in causal maps are more sensitive to the qualitative structure than the quantitative probabilities associated with the structure (Nadkarni & Shenoy, 2004) and consequently, most

effective causal maps are those that combine the qualitative structure with expert knowledge.

Using a semi-structured, open-minded interview framework with various probes to elicit information, the researcher was able derive a causal map from the data gathered. The interviews began with broad questions; how the managers defined ecotourism and sustainability, their background and experience in tourism and so on (as elaborated in chapter five). Subsequent probes were based on the responses and general tenor of the interviews. The inquiry continued till themes were identified within the interviews at which point causal maps of each respondent was constructed in situ. The managers' narratives were helpful in drawing the connections between the themes. Particular attention was drawn to responses that contained the phrases; 'because', 'so', 'if-then', which described relationships between sets of information and themes within the data.

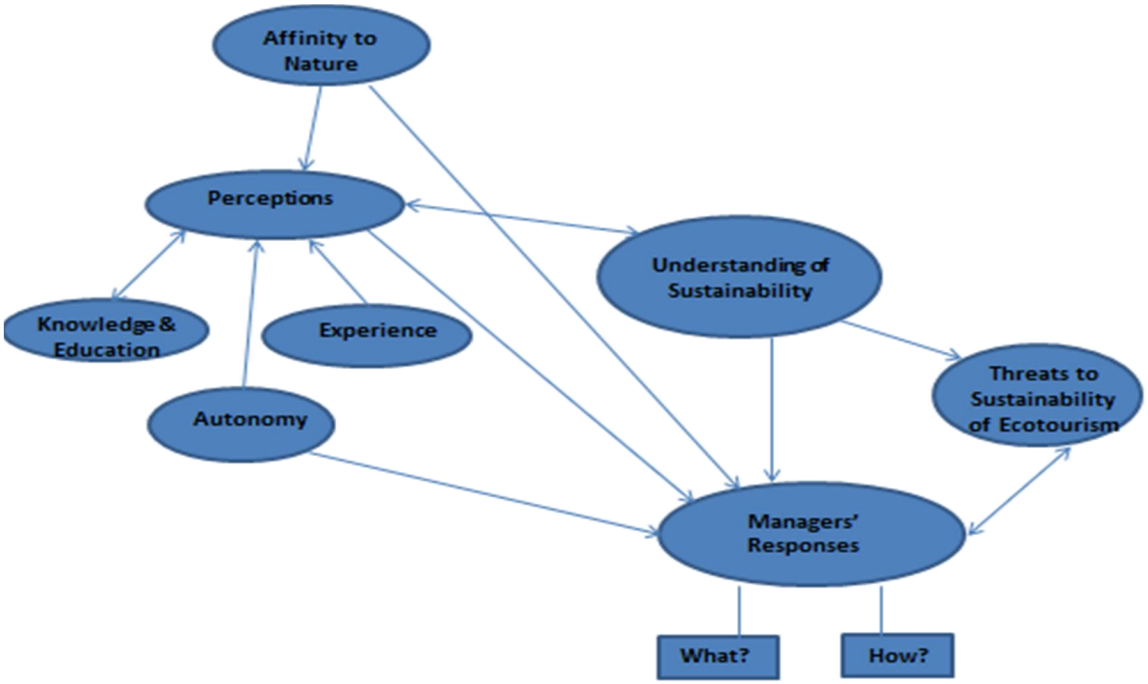


Fig 6.1 Final Thematic Causal Map

As indicated in the previous sections, for the purpose of this study, perceptions were presented as a function of; the managers' affinity to nature, their autonomy within their current respective positions, their knowledge, education and work experience in conservation, sustainable tourism or ecotourism. The perceptions were also affected by the managers' understanding of sustainability which in turn influenced what they

perceived and reported as threats to the sustainability of ecotourism as depicted in Figure 6.1.

The thematic map illustrates the various themes identified in the empirical study, their interactions and the way in which they invariably influence managers' dispositions towards sustainability and responses (how) to perceived threats (what). The managers' affinity to nature and the environment was found to be a central factor across all interviewees and the way they perceived sustainability and their actions in response to the identified threats. Consistent with the literature, the managers' experience, autonomy and levels of autonomy were also found to be factors that influenced managers' perceptions as depicted in the hematic map. Perceptions in turn influenced the 'understanding of sustainability'. It was found that managers with favourable associations of nature, who held autonomous positions, with considerable knowledge and experience within sustainable tourism exhibited a heightened understanding of sustainability and ecotourism and expressed a greater desire to addressing the industry's sustainability challenges.

6.7 Summary

The preparation and arrangement of the data into more comprehensible sets of data aided in the discussion of the results. Moreover the delineation of themes, subthemes and their corresponding codes derived from actual quotes assisted in outlining the connections within the data and literature. Finally, the depiction of the thematic map enabled the researcher to visualise how the organised information sets interacted and could be used in answering the research questions and was instrumental in understanding the relationship between different themes and the implications of these. The relationships between the different themes illustrated in the thematic map are accompanied with a narrative for what the managers perceived as threats to ecotourism and their corresponding responses is supplied in the next chapter. In the next chapter the information presented here is discussed in relation to the literature, the research questions and the study's objectives. The key findings are reviewed and the research questions this dissertation set out to explore are answered.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

"The aim of argument or of discussion should not be victory, but progress"
Joseph Joubert

In this chapter the results from the primary data collected and presented in chapter six are discussed. This was done using the literature to validate the findings, as well as to draw comparisons and to identify any disparities. The discussions began with how the interviewees defined the key concepts in this study i.e. sustainability, sustainable tourism and ecotourism. This is followed by an analysis of their perceptions and attitude towards these concepts. Inquiry aimed at; garnering levels of the managers' autonomy within their respective occupations, their levels of experience and knowledge of sustainability and ecotourism ensued. The last section comprises of a discussion on what the interviewees reported as threats the sustainability of ecotourism and their attempts in responding to these in their capacities as change agents for sustainable tourism.

7.1 Reflection on Key Findings

7.1.1 Understanding of Sustainability, Ecotourism/Sustainable Tourism

Fredericks, Garstea & Monforte, (2008; 51) cited in a similar study that in varying degrees, tourism practitioners and key stakeholders recognise how a shared understanding and cooperative approach to sustainability can lead to the creation of common goals that has the potential to maximise the positive impacts of tourism and minimise the negative impacts for all involved. This idea was shared among the interviewed managers. Consensus surrounding the fundamental meaning of sustainability is important, if it is to be fully translated and operationalized throughout the industry (Blamey, 1997). The intricate process of implementing sustainability begins by clearly defining the concept and its constituents.

The interviewees expressed a common and coherent understanding of sustainability, and sustainable tourism/ecotourism which were in line with the literature. To varying degrees, the managers recognised how a common understanding and cooperative

approach to sustainability can lead to the creation of collective goals that would maximise the positive impacts of tourism and minimise the negative impacts for concerned stakeholders. A content analysis of the definitions of sustainability supplied by respondents highlighted the following themes and variables as key to the concept, namely; long-term orientation or view of the enterprise, self-sufficiency, conservation-concentrated, educational emphasis, socio-cultural and strong-reference to nature and the environment. Consistent with the findings, the literature alludes to social, environmental and economic considerations as key dimensions of sustainability (Bartlett, 2012; Reid & Petocz; Smith & Sharicz, 2011).

The essence of this was captured in a definition supplied by one manager, who stated that sustainability involved:

> "Any action or activity that can continue in perpetuity by remaining self-sufficient in terms of is operations and economic viability" (Interviewee No. 1)

Although there was a general consensus as to what sustainability meant as well as its constituents, there were divergent views from two managers regarding emphasis of one or some considerations over the others. Repeatedly, the managers reiterated the importance of environmental considerations as to suggest superiority of this element over the other considerations. This is reflected in the following quotes;

> "Meeting organisational goals by closely managing environmental and natural resources and ensuring that these are available for future generations" (Interviewee No. 10)

> "It implies carefully planned development, equitable and maintainable use and distribution of resources while ensuring integrity of the natural world" (Interviewee No. 3)

It was however noted that these managers were affiliated with a conservation agency and an ecotourism establishment with a strong reliance on the environment as part of their business model. Their affiliations with these organisations explained their insistence on the significance of environmental considerations. The vast

majority of the managers highlighted the importance of a cohesive and holistic perspective view of the ecotourism business model; with equal consideration of all three elements. These sentiments are captured in the following quotes;

> …"it involves a holistic view of the enterprise that takes a long-term perspective. By balancing the economic, environmental and social elements"… (Interviewee No. 8)
>
> ---
>
> "The ability to remain economically viable in the future while staying true to ecological and socio-cultural components of the sustainable business model" (Interviewee No. 5)

Yacob, Radam and Samdin (2011; 63) summarise ecotourism as encapsulated in the following five foci; nature based activities, ecological sustainability, environmental education, benefit to locals and the satisfaction of visitors. Hall and Boyd (2005) make reference to sound environmental management and economic opportunities for industry and local communities as additional elements of ecotourism. In a study by Fennell (2001; 416) comprising a review of 85 definitions of ecotourism, the most cited variables included; reference to where ecotourism occurs, conservation, culture, benefits to locals and education. Though there were some variances in the definitions supplied, the vast majority correspond with those stated in other related studies (Blamey, 1997; Fennell, 2001; Donohoe & Needham, 2006; Desai, 2010). The following variables were identified in this study and were particular to the ecotourism managers;

i. Nature based tourism,
ii. Adoption of a holistic view of the ecotourism business,
iii. Multi-stakeholder involvement (local communities, regulators, clients/patrons)
iv. Conservation based tourism and
v. Tourism with a focus on education and bringing awareness to environmental and ecological causes.

The terms ecotourism and sustainable tourism were used interchangeably and were so define. The managers made no distinction between the two, beyond indicating that ecotourism was a form of sustainable tourism with and same sustainability directive. The emphasis of the definitions was related to the managers themselves, their professional background and the organisations they were affiliated with. For example managers employed or allied with conservation firms accentuated the importance of conservation and consideration for ecology and the environment. The managers of for-profit ecotourism concerns stressed economic, socio-cultural aspects and interactions with the community. It is apparent that the well documented tension between the various aspects of sustainability in the literature (Young & Tilley, 2006; Smith & Sharicz, 2011; De Paula & Cavalcanti, 2000) exists in practice. The economic consideration of the ecotourism business concern continues to take precedence and was perceived as crucial to sustaining the business and supporting commitments to environmental and social goals.

7.1.2 Ecotourism Managers' Dispositions towards Sustainability

A number of discernible themes on corporate sustainability and the individual can be identified in the literature. Tang, Robinson and Harvey (2011; 1374) identify four key themes that independently bring a different perspective to how personal commitment shapes organisational performance and the individual:

1. The individuals' personal value systems,
2. The individual narrative in relation to sustainability and sustainable tourism,
3. The presence of environmental champions; who promote sustainability practices and
4. Organisations' corporate social performance.

In line with the literature, the above mentioned themes were consistent with and identified within the data. The managers' dispositions towards ecotourism principles and sustainability were found to be influenced by their personal belief systems towards the environment and further affected by their careers and direct involvement with ecological, environmental and to varying degrees social concerns. This was

encapsulated in one particular interview when the manager stated that he could not envision himself doing anything else, when asked about his career in the industry.

Their personal narratives; how and why they came to work in ecotourism, sustainable tourism or conservation was also a significant factor.

> …"I grew up next to the Kruger National Park, my family and I would go there every chance we got. It was then that I realised that I wanted to become a conservationist" (Interviewee No. 3)
>
> ---
>
> "My mother was a veterinary nurse; I used to help during weekends and holidays. I thought I would become a vet, I became a biologist instead" (Interviewee No. 7)
>
> ---
>
> "It doesn't feel like a job, I love waking up surrounded by this [gesturing to the tranquil surroundings] and the feeling that I am in a small way helping in preserving it" (Interviewee No. 9)

It is easy to see how sentiments such as these can predispose managers towards valuing and promoting the sustainability of their industry, evidenced in the way they conduct their work.

It was evident that the respondents were driven by altruistic values, and entered the sustainable tourism/ecotourism industry for reasons that reflected their passion for the environment, their search of lifestyle change and their commitment "to doing the right thing" (Raviv, Becken & Hughey, 2013; 12). This is the result of a number of factors as reviewed in the previous chapter; that in turn influenced and determined the managers' motivations, value systems and perceptions.

Numerous studies suggest that people with attachments to the natural environment develop a sense of identity with the environment which can lead to pro-environment behaviour (Cheng & Monroe, 2012; Halpenny, 2010). Moreover studies also indicate that perceptions, attitudes and participation towards protected areas are highly

correlated and can greatly affect stakeholders' intent to engage in conservation activities (Imran, Alam & Beaumont, 2012).

A common feature across all the managers interviewed was their affinity to the environment, conservation and to ensuring the sustainability of the natural environment. It was noted how the managers in their respective areas of employment described their occupations as "vocations" and felt responsible for playing their part in promoting sustainability within ecotourism. This despite some resistance from key stakeholders towards instituting the changes necessary for achieving desirable levels of sustainability within the industry.

7.2 Reflection on Research Questions

7.2.1 Threats to Sustainability of Ecotourism

The overriding purpose of this study; closely moderated by the research questions was to uncover what ecotourism managers perceive as threats to their industry and how effective they are in responding to them. This section addresses these key questions by answering them using the literature and information from the interviews with the managers.

Threats manifest in different ways and come in many forms. From a macro-perspective, potential threats to the sustainability of ecotourism and the tourism industry can be classified broadly as international and domestic threats (Shaw, 2010). Domestic threats occur within the confines of a country or region and include threats internal and external to a particular industry and its business units.

The threats mentioned recurrently by the interviewees were categorised as and fell within the realm of domestic threats and were mostly internal to the ecotourism establishment. The respondents regarded these threats as more imminent, due to the presumption that these were more prevalent and manageable. It was noted that there was a sense that the managers within their respective placements felt that they could aid in abating these. Even though they expressed that they felt overwhelmed by forces stifling their efforts to introduce and implement sustainable business practices in response to the risks as stated below.

> "Others are internal to the business… include unwillingness to change systems and operations. I suppose people don't feel there's a need or change" (Interviewee No. 7)

What do the managers of ecotourism businesses in Mpumalanga perceive as threats to the sustainability of ecotourism?

The answer to this question is not a simple one. For one, the multifaceted nature of ecotourism means that when asked this question would solicit vastly different responses depending on who the respondents were. This was further complicated by the fact that the sample was not limited to certain businesses or activities within ecotourism and spanned across multiple and unrelated ventures. This meant that what some perceived as risks was not even on the periphery of what others deemed as possible threats to the sustainability of ecotourism. This was believed to be an artefact of the heterogeneous sample. However there were some risks that were universally perceived as imminent threats to ecotourism regardless of the managers' organisational affiliations.

The nature of the risks identified varied greatly and ranged from financial, managerial and cultural (organisational culture). Unsurprisingly, the managers reported that they had some trouble fully translating ecotourism values using the traditional business model as a vehicle for instituting change. They cited that the disconnection between the traditional business model; that strives to maximise profit, and the ecotourism model; that combines economic, social and environmental objectives was difficult to reconcile. Wight's (1993; 57) model for sustainable ecotourism values and principles defines the sustainable ecotourism concern as one that;

- Takes a long-term view of the enterprise,
- Is operated ethically and morally in relation with the physical environment and all stakeholders and
- Functions as an enlightened juristic person; one that takes cognisance of the social, environmental and economic implications of the ecotourism business's existence.

In this way the ecotourism business model can be viewed as a form of hybrid enterprise, one which attempts to combine a number of sometimes contradictory values. This makes the translation of all ecotourism business objectives a particularly complex task, a sentiment shared by the interviewed managers.

It was generally agreed that lack of financial resources, ineffective management and a shortage of suitably qualified personnel was a huge limitation to advancing sustainability within the industry. The lack of support and resistance from key stakeholders stifled potential advancements (Desai, 2010; Ikonen, 2012). The illustration below presents the threats identified by the managers categorised as macro/micro and internal/external threats respectively.

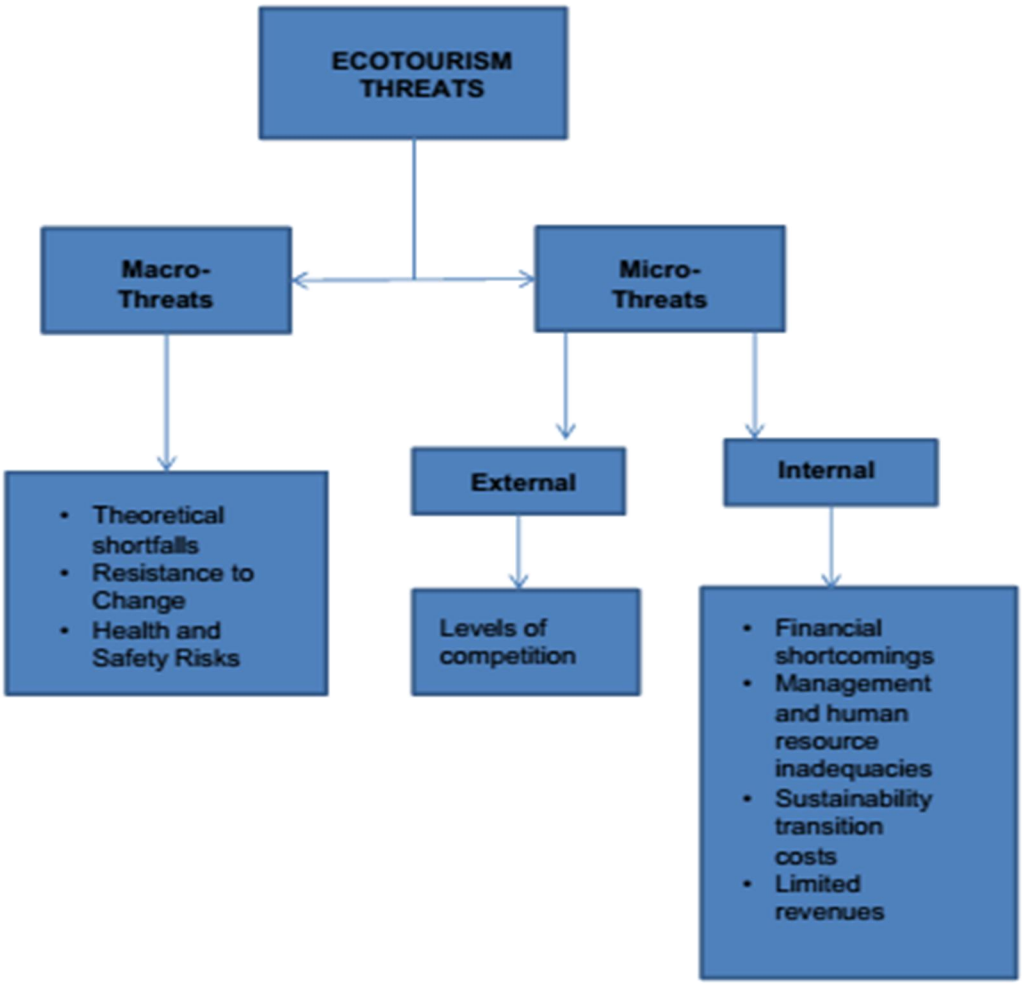


Figure 7.1 Threats to Ecotourism

7.2.2 Management of Threats

According to the South African National Parks (2013) the domestic demand for nature-based activities is rising. With just under five million visitors to South African national parks between the 2012 and 2013, this lucrative market is expected to grow within the next decade (Pegas & Castley, 2014).

Although the risks associated with uncertainty are inevitable aspects of the sustainability agenda, they are often neglected in the sustainability discourse (Krysiak, 2009). Sustainability management has in the past been portrayed as a one-dimensional exercise (Gardberg & Fombrum, 2006). This study found that managers had different motivations, perceptions and approaches to sustainability. Mirroring findings from Tang, Robinson and Harvey (2011; 1387), discussions with the managers revealed that not all managers derived the same satisfaction from sustainability nor did they display a natural disposition for certain roles.

Environmental behaviour is a complex issue and is determined by a multitude of factors (Jansson, Marell & Nordlund, 2010). Factors such as economic benefit, governance structure and the level of awareness and information; influence intentions to engage in pro-environmental behaviour (Imran, Alam & Beaumont, 2014; 297). The managers as agents of their respective employing organisations are guided by their employment contracts, organisational goals and personal principles and moral compasses. There is therefore and additional factor that plays an important role in the manner in which managers effect sustainable thought through their span of control.

> “There is a lack of support from supervisors and management”… (Interviewee No. 2)
>
> ---
>
> …“levels of bureaucracy within the business are often very limiting in the way managers effect changes in line with a sustainable tourism ideology and practices” (Interviewee No. 8)

It follows that any proposed or resulting action is either promoted or stifled by businesses and their bureaucracies, in their pursuit of other more pressing or imminent goals.

How effective are ecotourism business managers in dealing with these threats?

The management of risks and threats involves an on-going process and extends beyond individual actions aimed at abating or addressing said hazards (Valsamakis et al., 2004). It follows that risk management is a multi-stakeholder undertaking with key core activities involving various parties within and external to the enterprise. Gary and Larson's (2006; 209) model of the risk management process identifies and illustrates four stages in this intricate process (See Fig 3.5), which requires the input and expertise of not only the immediate supervising manager (Krysiak, 2009). A number of the interviewees reported to have presently or in the past (in their current of previous employing organisations) been tasked with risk/sustainability management, holistic undertakings that require organisation-wide involvement and commitment. They cited their keenness, expertise and interest in the fields (sustainability and ecotourism) as reasons for their assignment to these tasks. Success or failure in instituting and implementing processes aimed at mitigating the effects of identified risks and sustainability programs within the business was noted to be heavily reliant on the level of business commitment and support. The commitment to fostering organisational cultures that pre-empt sustainability needs and challenges and responds accordingly requires organisation wide participation.

The limited autonomy and span of control afforded to managers by their organisations of employment and affiliation inhibits their ability to effect the changes deemed necessary to advance the businesses' sustainability.

> …"limited powers in our responses to possible problems is a huge limitation" (Interviewee No. 2)

Posner and Schmidt's (1993) model for environmental intrapreneurship, illustrates how ability, perceived ability, motivation and desirability affect the successful identification of sustainable opportunities within the organisation. Sharma (2000)

asserts similarly that employees bring critical ideas to the greening of organisations that can increase businesses sustainability. Their efficacy in addressing any identified risks or problems that threaten the sustainability of the firm is consequently retarded by organisational restrictions. Moreover, as explained in the previous section lack of support from upper tiers of management, cohorts and insufficient financial and functional resources undermine attempts to advance organisational sustainability.

> …"the budgets are often very limited, which severely inhibits the ways we can make the business more sustainable or eco-friendly" (Interviewee No. 9)
>
> ---
>
> "There is a lack of trained personnel. There is also a shortage in skilled persons required for such jobs [conservationists, ecotourism practitioners]. It's a catch twenty two, the money needed to hire specialists is also very limited…" (Interviewee No. 4)

Hostager (1998) postulates that the alignment of organisational and individual values is a crucial element to the greening process. The corporate culture and education in creating consistent narratives on sustainability that managers and employees can align with also need evaluation (Anderson & Bateman, 2000). According to Tang, Robinson and Harvey (2011) managers' responses and approaches to their management of sustainability differ. The managers' subsequent limited responses vary in its effectiveness to pre-empt, mitigate, avoid and manage identified risks.

Getz (1986) suggested that there are several approaches for tourism planning; the most recommended being stakeholder involvement (Priskin, 2003). The participation of key stakeholders in the process of transforming and implementing sustainable ecotourism practices has many benefits. An enhanced understanding of the industry is imperative in implementing plans and desired outcomes for tourism destinations (Backman et al., 2001) and has a direct bearing on managers' effectiveness on dealing with sustainability challenges faced by ecotourism.

7.3 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the key findings of the empirical study and use these to answer the research questions. Due to the general nature of the questions, answering them involved reflecting upon other aspects uncovered in the interview sessions. This was done by identifying and reviewing salient aspects surrounding the key issues evaluated in the interviews. Corporate sustainability at the level of the individual remains an under-searched area of scholarly inquiry. This chapter sought to illuminate the manner in which sustainability within ecotourism is viewed by the managers at a meso-level. The resulting findings were extensive; to further condense these would indeed prove difficult. However, the essence of the research findings is captured in the following key annotations.

Ecotourism is a form of sustainable tourism developed in natural areas and is premised on the appreciation of nature, local culture and communities and includes conservation measures and ensures the active involvement, generating benefits for the local population (Sambotin, et al., 2001).

Threats to the sustainability of ecotourism present in many forms, and can be categorised as either internal or external to the individual ecotourism firm. These may be domestic or foreign in their imminence, depending on their range. The interviewees reflected mostly on domestic and internal threats, due to their imminence and perception that these were within their span of control.

The effective management of these risks requires adequate financial and organisational backing as well as support from key stakeholders to aid in the implementation of sustainable tourism business practices.

The amount of responsibility afforded to key stakeholders, i.e. those that have insight into the workings of the industry and various risks that threaten not only the financial sustainability of the ecotourism business concern but its social and environmental implications, greatly affects the industry's disposition towards sustainability.

The proceeding chapter concludes the dissertation with reflective annotations on the study's objectives, the limitations of the research and the implication the findings from this research have on policymakers and ecotourism practitioners.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

"It's more fun to arrive at a conclusion than to justify it"
Malcolm Forbes

The research presented in the preceding chapters portrays a complex picture of ecotourism; the perceptions of its stakeholders, the various threats to its sustainability and its role in promoting social, environmental as well as economic ends. Indeed ecotourism remains an abstract concept, one that eludes many of those who attempt to apply it in practice. Honey cites that much like the golden toad; "genuine ecotourism is hard to find" (1999; 5). This chapter presents a summary of the findings by; reflecting on the study's objectives and describing the implications of the research to both ecotourism practitioners and policymakers. Recommendations for future research within the field with particular emphasis on ecotourism managers are made in an attempt to make some contribution to the literature and aid in the continuous generation of knowledge. The chapter culminates with final annotations from the author.

8.1 Reflection on the Study's Objectives

The study made the following contributions which have direct implications on addressing the sustainability needs faced by ecotourism:

1. The investigation highlighted the perceptions of ecotourism managers on threats that jeopardise the long-term viability of the sector,
2. It garnered a general understanding of how ecotourism managers defined ecotourism, sustainability and sustainable tourism,
3. Highlighted congruencies and divergences between the understandings of these concepts, which in turn affect the way the managers perceived and respond to the perceived threats,
4. Presented its findings, based on the literature and research from the empirical study; possible ways of addressing the different threats that portend the sustainability of ecotourism.

The identification and classification of the threats discussed was the first step in unravelling the sustainability issues surrounding ecotourism. It follows that a problem undiscovered cannot be resolved.

The primary research revealed that the interviewed ecotourism business managers held positive attitudes towards sustainability as a perspective to business and the sustainable tourism movement. This was despite feelings of futility and a general sense that they have limited control and influence over the progression and trajectory of sustainability within the industry. This perhaps was an artefact of the sample itself, which the researcher noted and accepted. By reviewing the identified threats as well as heeding the managers' personal recommendations on how to deal with these based on their wealth of experience, policymakers and interested parties alike can begin the process of addressing shortfalls within the industry from the bottom up. Government, conservation agencies and the proprietors of ecotourism businesses can initiate programs, policies and amenities that foster the principle of sustainability within their respective domains tailored to fit the business' individual sustainability needs and targets.

8.2 Implications of the Study and Research Findings

This study has important policy and stakeholder implications for not only the sustainability of ecotourism, but also for tourism as an industry. The results presented in this report can be used as a template for reviewing the sustainability of the ecotourism concerns by assessing and managing the imminent threats as perceived by frontline management. It is hoped that this research will illuminate and express the managers concerns regarding sustainable tourism as well as the trajectory and rate at which the industry is moving towards achieving its sustainability goals.

Key stakeholders such as proprietors of ecotourism businesses, policy makers and regulators can perhaps begin to appreciate the managers' insight and knowledge into the issues facing the industry and heed their advice and recommendations to advance the sustainability agenda further within the industry.

8.2.1 Implications for Ecotourism Practitioners

The recognition of the significance and consideration of the sustainability of ecotourism.

According to Epler-Wood (2010) the founder of the International Ecotourism Society, ecotourism has become a powerful market force, ranging from 5% to 10% of the global travel market. The role of ecotourism in the promotion of nature-based tourism activities, environmental conservation and generation of tourism-related benefits to local communities in ecotourism destinations (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012) warrants closer evaluations and in a move to preserve and enable the development of this sector to continue. Jamal, Borges and Stronza (2008) assert that ecotourism's purpose and evaluation is lacking in the very spirit that enthused its proponents about its potential. Simply accepting the significance, in terms of its contribution to global economies, environmental and societal causes, will do little to promote the longevity of this sector. "The idea of sustainability is important for sustainability today and especially for its future" (Saarinen, 2014; 9). It is only by closely evaluating and monitoring potential threats to the industry that proactive and conscientious efforts to ensure its sustainability can be made.

The institution of frameworks and systems that enable pre-emption of potential threats responds accordingly and monitors the success or failures in addressing these.

The research highlighted a number of threats as perceived by the ecotourism managers interviewed. The breadth and the nature of the threats reported call for different responses in their management. At the individual managerial or business level, the managers have very limited control in the way macro or industry-wide threats can be managed. Attempts to direct and make impactful contribution in the management of these, requires conciliated efforts on the part of the ecotourism businesses nationwide. The management of micro, internal and generally business-specific threats fortunately is more flexible. These can be managed by hiring and appointing qualified practitioners with experience particularly in the management of sustainable tourism or ecotourism businesses. One thing is true of all organisations,

and it is that its greatest resource lies within its workforce. Flow-over threats; such as financial mismanagement, human resource and management inadequacies and poor management of increased completion that arise as a direct result of a lack of qualified or experienced personnel can all be redressed by hiring the right people.

The election of dedicated teams or 'sustainability champions' within the business to spearhead sustainability initiatives and programs.

Achim Steiner, Secretary General for the United Nations Environment Programme stated that as we move towards a more resource efficient and green economy; business and industry will be a key driving force in advancing the sustainability movement (UNEP, 2012). Designated parties tasked with implementing programs within organisations aimed at improving its sustainability performance can be effective in ensuring that sustainability targets are not only met but monitored to achieve optimal results. The alignment of personal and organisational values of managers reduces dissonance and improves sustainability performance (Hostager et al., 1998; Starik & Rands, 1995). Some scholars propose that the value of individuals' has the potential to influence organisational social and environmental responsiveness. Prakash (2000) suggests that this is expressed mainly through managerial discretion or autonomy and Hemingway and Maclagan (2004) argue that it manifests in;

- Decision-making (by providing managers with the autonomy to discern and choose between more or less important ecological/environmental or sociological issues),
- Motivation (involving passionate ecocentric individuals with to champion ecological programs, tasks and responses), and
- Leadership (where top management is receptive to ecological reforms which are aligned to their personal values)

By aligning ecotourism managers' value systems with those of the organisation regarding sustainability and responsible tourism practices, the ecotourism enterprise would be better positioned to achieving its sustainability goals. As reviewed in chapters six and seven, ecotourism managers have strong affinity towards

environmental and ecological causes and share an inherent desire to protect and conserve the integrity and wellbeing of environmental and social systems. This sentiment was articulated by one interviewee who cited “I love waking up surrounded by this [tranquil surroundings] and the feeling that I am in some small way helping in preserving it”. Qualified, experienced and passionate people such as the managers interviewed perhaps represent the ideal talent pool from which ‘sustainability champions’ and dedicated teams can drafted to promote the sustainability agenda.

The promotion of a culture of continuous learning within the organisation.

It was clear from consultations with the ecotourism managers that education was an important factor in ensuring efficacy in the work they do. Flexibility and adaptability are also essential features for organisations to remain sustainable and viable now more than ever. Organisations launch change initiatives sometimes simultaneously on a regular basis (Tang, Robinson & Harvey, 2011). Although the lessons learnt from the implementation of different culture change programs may prove useful, a shift towards a culture of sustainability presents unique challenges (Bertels, 2010). Most cultural change initiatives are internally focused while sustainability is part of a broader societal agenda that extends beyond the organisation. According to Bertels (2010) the organisational transition towards sustainability may sometimes require paradigm-breaking approaches or business models. The following steps are listed in a report by Coalition on Civil Society Resource Mobilisation (2012; 97) on the critical perspectives on sustainability for guiding organisations towards integrating sustainability changes:

- Creating and sharing a clear vision and purpose,
- Knowing and sharing their place in the market,
- Create a ‘learning organisation’,
- Align structures and resources with sustainability vision and
- Manage and adapt business model to change.

Reflection on these steps may be enlightening for ecotourism managers and set the course for effective sustainability programs within the business. Bertels (2012, 8) proposes the following framework to help business proprietors and managers in

implementing a portfolio approach to embedding sustainability in their organisational culture. The framework assembles the practices that help build and support sustainability into four categories; fostering commitment, clarifying expectations, building momentum for change and instilling capacity for change (Bertels, 2010).

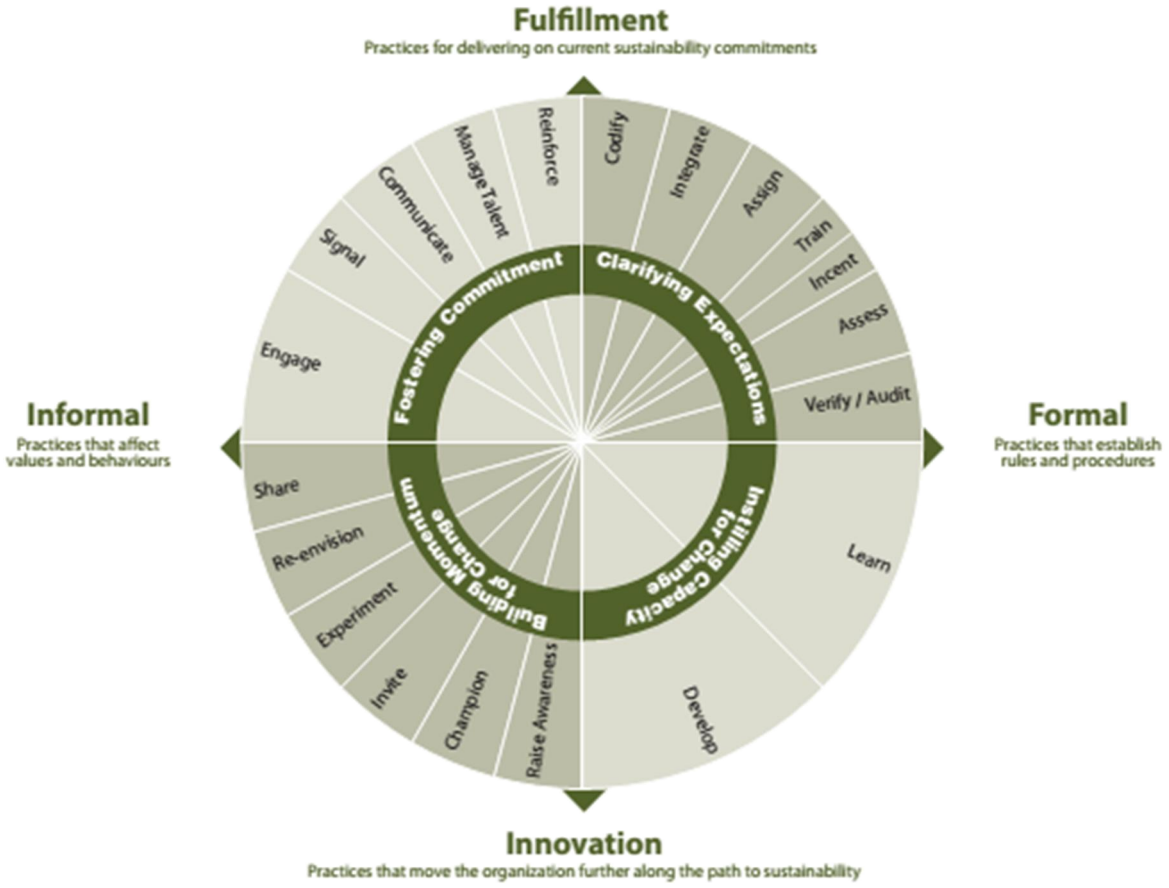


Fig 8.1 Portfolio Approach to Embedding Sustainability in Organisational Culture (Bertels, 2010)

The ability of an organisation to lean, unlearn and relearn is a source of much competitive advantage, as it enables organisations to be proactive in their responses any changes within the industries. At a micro level, the sustainability agent or team guided by the business mandate to move the business towards a more sustainable operation can use the framework to direct the transition. This can be done by firstly; defining sustainability objectives and clarifying expectations, implementing systems and policies to enable the necessary change to occur, building momentum for change and fostering the organisation-wide commitment. As societal demands on the social and environmental commitments and output from organisations continue

to mount, there is increasing pressure on the private sector to respond accordingly. Notwithstanding, compliance programs and superficial public relations campaigns aimed at improving the public standing of organisations in respect of their social and environmental output, commitments to the sustainability movement is important in advancing the sustainability agenda within the corporate sphere.

The initiation of and maintenance of on-going discourses with other stakeholders regarding the advancement of the sustainability agenda.

Tourism is a complex system comprising of a number of stakeholders. The resulting relationships and interactions are often characterised by discord arising from the shared use of resources and conflicting views on how the industry should be developed and managed (Kuvan & Akan, 2012). This conflict is propagated by the inclusion of concepts such as sustainability, sustainable or responsible tourism which confound an already multifaceted and complex system. Scholars assert that sustainable tourism planning can be achieved if the views of key stakeholders in tourism development are understood and incorporated in the development process of the industry (Hardy 2005; Byrd, Bosley & Dronberger, 2009; Yasarata, Altinay, Burns & Okumus, 2010).

Policymakers, regulators and even the proprietors of ecotourism businesses may not be fully aware of the challenges faced by ecotourism. Effective communication between interested parties and key stakeholders will enable the sharing and discussion of ideas, concerns and suggestions and may help in the creation of alliances and strengthening partnerships among stakeholders (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2013). Needless to say, if any consensus if to be achieved regarding the trajectory sustainability as it is implemented within the industry platforms where this conversation can be initiated needs to be created. Strides towards commonly held understandings of what sustainable tourism, what this encompasses and means can only be made if key stakeholders are allowed to engage in on-going dialogues in this regard. This research highlighted the need for a platform for the ecotourism and tourism outlets based in the province to share their concerns and recommendations to explore possible ways of dealing with the myriad of challenges faced by the individual tourism concern within the context of the broader industry.

8.2.2 Implications for Policymakers

The recognition of the importance of the managers of ecotourism businesses as key stakeholders to the promotion of sustainability within the industry.

According to the Mpumalanga Tourism Growth Strategy, Mpumalanga has the potential to become a premier international and domestic destination if it can translate its resource base into a significant tourism industry (2011).

Despite this research into the role of the managers of ecotourism businesses and their perceptions of threats to the sustainability of the industry is lacking. It follows that the importance of these key stakeholders is not appreciated both within their businesses and the tourism industry. Indeed the results indicated that the managers felt in many instances futile as change managers for sustainability as evidenced by their lack of autonomy and control. By understanding the critical role played by ecotourism managers, given their insight into particular challenges and nuances of the industry, policymakers can begin to understand the pivotal role they can play in addressing said challenges and advancing the sustainability agenda within the industry.

Reflection upon the risks identified in the study, in an effort to combat threats to the sustainability of the industry.

The South African tourism industry, government, individual proprietors and managers of tourism businesses are futile to international risks to the domestic tourism industry (Shaw, 2010). It is however imperative that all players be cognisant of these threats and understand how these can affect the domestic industry at a macro as well as at micro level. Shaw cites that without the knowledge of the possible occurrence of international risk events and understanding the impact they have on the country of occurrence, the South African tourism industry will not be able to exploit the opportunities presented or implement countermeasures in the event of a potential negative impact (2010; 195).

It is also prudent that policy makers understand the plight faced by ecotourism businesses in their fight to remain economically viable to ensure their perpetuity.

Indeed the tourism industry is made up of the collection of individual tourism establishments and to neglect to consider the sustainability of these is s disservice to the industry.

The provision of business support to ecotourism businesses within the region.

Ecotourism is important source of employment to the local communities as well as in helping in the conservation of the regions' ecological and environmental resources. However, due to a lack of capital, adequate acumen and the knowledge on how to manage and successfully operate an organisation that takes cognisance of not only its economic goals but the social and environmental objectives, ecotourism has not achieved optimal operational levels. Support can be in form of business incubation services made to new businesses as they get established, provision of specialised management support, the generation of a registry of ecotourism practitioners, conservationists, biologists, rangers and other specialists; available to all ecotourism businesses in the region for easy access to these professionals. By making these facilities available, policymakers can help in sustaining these businesses and in turn aid in helping achieve their economic, social and environmental objectives, much to the benefit of the region.

8.3 Limitations

A key limitation in this research was posed by the lack of funding which had implications on access to the sample. The geographic dispersion of the participants put a financial burden on the researcher to bear the sizable cost of the commute to and from the various locations around the province. This meant that the data collection process took up more time than initially scheduled. In instances where it was not possible to conduct face-to-face meetings electronic interviews were conducted by means of video-calling. It was helpful to explore this as an alternative means of collecting the data and proved both economical and effective.

Another limitation was the result of the researchers' oversight in the scheduling of the data collection phase. The failure to anticipate that the last quarter of the year in

tourism is the industry's peak season meant that most of the managers were not available for interviews due to added workloads and their occupational commitments. As a result interviews had to be rescheduled repeatedly when the managers were not available for an interview. This has implications on the study's timetable when certain milestones could not be honoured. Fortunately, eventually all the interviews were conducted albeit much later than scheduled.

The last limitation was posed by a shortage of research on the perceptions of the managers of ecotourism business as agents of sustainability on the threats to the sustainability of the sector. A review of the literature on ecotourism in South Africa is equally sparse as far as the managers of ecotourism establishments are concerned. The literature on ecotourism focuses on market segmentation, ecological impacts of wildlife viewing, and community-based ecotourism, with minimal attention on critical areas such as quality control, the industry and the external environment (Weaver & Lawton, 2007). For the purposes of this dissertation, similar and related studies on sustainable tourism and the involvement of various stakeholders were used to compare and corroborate this study's findings. The absence of extensive research into the perceptions of the managers of ecotourism businesses as key stakeholders, and their dispositions towards sustainability was both a limitation and an opportunity account for this hiatus in the literature.

8.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The recommendations made here are based on research findings, the experiences and impressions gained while conducting the research as well as from the limitations encountered in the process. The compilation of this dissertation has been both insightful and trying at times but all the while fulfilling. The extended conversations with the frontline managers interviewed broadened the scope of the research problem beyond those initially set out and anticipated. This had implications on the direction of research and the manner in which the research questions were answered and invariably the way the final report was drafted. The following recommendations are made for any future research on the sustainability of ecotourism, specifically on the managers of these businesses:

- The issue of funding presents a particular though not uncommon obstacle when conducting research in this field. The time and cost considerations are great, especially when numerous trips need to be made to designated geographically diapered locations from where the data will be collected; where the interviews are to be conducted or questionnaire disseminated. Securing funding prior to the commencement of this exercise would be exceedingly helpful. Cost mitigating tools can also be explored, in a move to make the process more economical for the researcher. These may include but not limited to; making use of telephonic or electronic, web-based means such as Skype (video calling) for conducting interviews. The use of and aid offered by research assistants can also help in shortening this phase of the research which can be a rather lengthy, cumbersome and expensive exercise.
- The problem of getting access to the sample respondents cannot be understated. Attempts to get in contact with the sample proved more problematic than expected. The use of email as a means of communicating with interested parties proved disappointingly futile, with very low response rates. The sample population was more responsive and receptive when called personally and informed of the study and their participation requested. Moreover, quite a number of the sample unit ecotourism businesses had no operating email addresses. They supplied only telephone and fax numbers on their business websites as a means of communication between the organisation and interested parties. Often in instances when email addresses for inquiries were supplied, mails to these failed to go through and indicated that the address was not in use.
- The last recommendation pertains to the scheduling of the primary data collection. The administrative issues such as getting the necessary permission from the university's or organisations' relevant departments, ethical clearance from the corresponding committees, and the time needed for this must to be taken into account during the planning stages of the thesis. The researcher must carefully align the data collection stages; questionnaire dissemination or interviewing phases with less busy periods if possible. Failing to do this might inadvertently have the data collection stage coincide with peak seasons in the industry. Such an oversight may depress

response rates even further, due to added workloads and the sample units' increased work obligations during these periods. It is prudent to select appropriate periods and allocate sufficient time (more that thought necessary) for this critical stage of the research process.

8.5 Conclusion

The significance of tourism in its many forms having established itself as a key industry in the global economy cannot be understated. The contributions made by the industry especially those forms that champion sustainability such as sustainable tourism and ecotourism extend from the overall stimulation of local and global economies, to the promotion of social and environmental goals. As such, tourism has considerable influence on the world's sustainable development. The increased popularity and regard for sustainability have brought to the forefront certain sectors within tourism heralded as the answer to addressing tourism's sustainability shortfalls. Ecotourism having emerged as one such sector with promise of a paradigm sensitive to economic, social and ecological concerns is imperative to ensuring the longevity of the industry.

This study set out to explore the threats to the sustainability of ecotourism and assess ecotourism managers' efficacy in addressing them. The strategic focus of this investigation was directed at ascertaining and unravelling what the managers of different ecotourism businesses observed and perceived as threats. The sampling of and discourses with frontline management, who have day to day interactions and experience with various mechanisms in the industry, produced extensive and insightful results. As the vanguards to the workings of various ecotourism business concerns, they were able to provide specific and conscientious accounts from their vast experience in the industry which was central to achieving this dissertations' strategic intent.

The threats identified by the managers as imminent and central to sustaining the long-term viability of the sector were mostly those internal to the ecotourism businesses the managers represented. These were in the realm of domestic threats which are believed to pose more risks to the sustainability of the sector.

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Appendix A: Empirical Study Timetable

	RESEARCH DESIGN	PILOT STUDY	SAMPLING	ADMINSTRATIVE ISSUES	DATA COLLECTION	DATA ANALYSIS
1 Jun- 31 Jun	Drafting of interview questioning guide and protocol					
1 Jul- 15 Jul		Test interviews conducted. Necessary amendments made				
16 Jul- 31 Aug			Apply sampling procedures, compile sample list and send invitations			
1 Sep - 4 Nov				**14 September:** Panel Presentation **16 September:** Faculty of higher degrees committee dissertation title approval granted **18 September:** Application for ethical clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee **4 November:** Ethical clearance certificate issued to researcher by ethics committee	Stage 1: Email sample population an brief describing the study and requesting their participation Stage 2: Confirm participants to be interviewed. Email participant information sheet and consent forms to confirmed respondents.	
5 Nov- 30 Dec					Stage 3: Set interviews dates, venues and mode of interview (i.e. face-face, via Skype, etc.) Stage 4: Conduct interviews	Preliminary analysis of interview data occurs concurrently with the data collection.

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

My Name is Mandla Mokoena; I am a Master of Commerce student at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am currently conducting research for my dissertation entitled: **Insights into Perceptions on Threats to the Sustainability of Ecotourism: A Study of Mpumalanga-Based Ecotourism Managers.**

I would like to invite you to take part in this study, by availing yourself for an interview. I am interested in learning about what you perceive to be threats to ecotourism based on your experience as a manager of an ecotourism based business, as well as how you respond to these.

The interview would take place at a location, date and time convenient to you. Each session will typically take anything between 35 to 45 minutes. The first part of each session will involve a biographical type inquiry i.e. age, gender, education, etc. This will be followed by a number of opened-ended questions on ecotourism, sustainability and your experience and opinions of these. Questions relating to your perceptions of the threats to the sustainability of ecotourism will be asked, as well as how you have responded or are responding to these.

What will happen if you choose to participate in the research?

- All information given will be treated in confidence. Anonymity is guaranteed.
- You will be requested to read a short brief outlining the purpose and nature of research and offer consent to your participation.
- No identifying information i.e. names, contact details, etc. will be mentioned in the final report.
- This study is for academic purposes only.
- Should you have any queries, comments or complaints please do not hesitate to relay these to me on the contact details provided below.
- A copy of the final report can be provided to you if requested upon completion of the study.

What will happen if you choose not to participate in the research?

- Participation in the research is purely voluntary.
- There will be no consequence if you choose not to participate in the study
- You may withdraw your participation in this study at any point before completion of the final report.

The study was approved unconditionally by the Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Protocol Number: H13/10/11). Should you have any queries relating to the research, please feel free to contact me on 083 691 0641, mandla.r.mokoena@gmail.com or mandla.mokoena@students.wits.ac.za . Alternatively you may contact my supervisor Robert Venter on 084 580 7587 or Robert.venter@wits.ac.za. You may additionally direct any requests for copies of the results to me, on the abovementioned contact details.

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

My name is Mandla Mokoena and I am a Master of Commerce student at the University of the Witatersrand. I am currently conducting research in fulfilment of a Masters degree course for my dissertation entitled ***Insights into Perceptions on Threats to the Sustainability of Ecotourism: A Study of Mpumalanga-Based Ecotourism Managers***

The study aims to garner the perceptions ecotourism business managers have towards sustainability and threats to the sustainability of the industry. This is a regional study to be conducted in the province of Mpumalanga.

Please take note of the following stipulations with regards to your participation in the study, as required by the University of Witwatersrand, Guidelines for Non-Medical Human Research:

- **Your participation is entirely voluntary,**
- **You are at liberty not to answer any question that you are not comfortable with,**
- **You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.**

All records from data collected will be kept confidential will only be available to the members of the research team. The anonimity of all participants is guaranteed. Please print your name and sign below to show that you fully understand the nature of your participation in the study:

PARTICIPANT NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

I can be contacted along with my supervisor Robert Venter, at the listings below should you have any queries or comments.

School of Business Sciences: University of the Witwatersrand

Telephone (office hours only): 011 717 8090

E-mail: Mandla.Mokoena@students.wits.ac.za or Robert.Venter@wits.ac.za

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. Complementary copies of the final report will be available on request upon its completion.

Appendix D: Audio Recording Consent Form



This consent form relates to your participation in the the study entitled*: **Insights into Perceptions on Threats to the Sustainability of Ecotourism: A Study of Mpumalanga-Based Ecotourism Managers,*** conducted by Mandla Mokoena, a postgraduate student at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

This study involves the audio recording of the responses of participants for the entire duration of the interview with the researcher. Neither, your name nor any other identifying information mentioned during the interview will be pulished in the final repot or made public. Only the research team will be permitted to listen to the recordings and view the transcripts derived.

The tapes will be transcribed by the researcher with the aid of a research assistant, where necessary to ensure that the respondents' true intentions and answers are captured for analysis. The recorded interview sessions will be permanently erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy and analysed for the research report. Transcripts of the interview will not be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. No identifying information (name, contact details, place of emplyment, etc.) will be used in final report or any written products resulting from the study.

By signing this form, I am allowing the researcher to audio record tape me as part of the aforementioned research topic. I also understand that this consent for recording is effective for the duration of the research project and am aware that I may request to be excluded from the study at anytime prior to the completion of the study.

I acknowledge that I have read, understand and consent to the contents of this form.

Participant Name	**Signature**	**Date**
Researchers' Name	**Signature**	**Date**

Appendix E: Interview Guide

Insights into Perceptions on Threats to the Sustainability of Ecotourism: A Study of Mpumalanga-Based Ecotourism Managers

Place or interview _____ Date of interview _____ Interview No. _____

Personal Profile

Name: _____

Age: _____

Sex: _____

Length of employment in ecotourism/ tourism: _____

Academic Level:

Introduction

- Thank you for the possibility to interview
- Read and discuss consent form
- Establish timeframe for interview
- Go over biographic questions

Section 1 Knowledge and Attitude towards sustainability and ecotourism

1. How do you define sustainability?
   What are the key elements of it?

   Do you think there is a difference from a traditional tourism business and an ecotourism business?

   How do you differentiate the two?

2. How knowledgeable are you about sustainability?

   Have you attended any ecotourism or sustainability seminar or conferences in the past?.

   How often do you attend these?

   Do you find that these are helpful at all?

   Do you have any sustainability/ecotourism or equivalent qualification?

   What is your highest qualification?

In what field is your qualification based in?

Do you plan on getting such (sustainability, ecotourism, etc.) a qualification at all?

Do you think getting such a qualification will improve your performance at all?

3. How important do you think sustainable ecotourism is?

Why do you think it is important?

Do you think it yields any benefits at all?

What are they? (Please give me examples)

What are the costs associated with it?

4. Does it matter to you if the business/company you work for is sustainable?

Why? Why not?

Does this in any way affect the likelihood of you want to work for that particular organisation? Why?

5. How many other tourism and/or ecotourism businesses have you worked for?

Do you think they were sustainable? Why?

Section 2 Managers Autonomy and Experience

6. How involved are you in ensuring that the business/company you work for is operated sustainably?

How involved were you (in your previous business occupation) in ensuring that the business was operated sustainably?

What do you think makes your business sustainable compared to other traditional tourism businesses?

Do you think it's worthwhile?

What factors influences your decision to operate the business more sustainably?

Have you taken initiative in attempting to make the business more sustainable (presently of in the past)?

Do you find that there is a resistance towards sustainability (from colleagues and management)?

(If yes) Why do you think so?

Are you currently engaged in any community development/upliftment programs?

What are these and what do they entail?

Are you currently engaged in any environmental protection or conservation efforts?

What are these and that do these entail?

Section 3 Threats to Sustainability of Ecotourism

7. What from your experience do you think are the challenges facing the ecotourism/tourism?

Which of these do you think are the most imminent? Why?

Which of these have you as a manager had to address?

How did you deal with them?

Were you successful in doing so?

How did you know how to respond?

Did you get any support? (Colleagues, management, consultants)

How did you respond, what processes, procedures or systems did you implement?

8. Have you (previously or currently) initiated programs with sustainability in thought?

What did you implement/are implementing?

How were/are these being perceived by others?

Have they been successful/are they yielding any benefits?

Would you implement or advise the implementation of these in the future?

--Thank you for your participation--

Appendix F: Millennium Development Goals

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) The goals and targets are based on the UN Millennium Declaration, and the UN General Assembly has approved them as part of the Secretary General's road map towards implementing the declaration. UNDP worked with other UN departments, funds and programmes, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Organization for Economic Cooperation Development to identify over 40 quantifiable indicators to assess progress.	
Goals and Targets	Indicators
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	
Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	1. Proportion of population below $1 per day (PPP-values) 2. Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty] 3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	4. Prevalence of underweight children (under-five years of age) 5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	
Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education 7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	
Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015	9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education 10. Ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 year olds 11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector 12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	
Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	13. Under-five mortality rate 14. Infant mortality rate 15. Proportion of 1 year old children immunised against measles
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	
Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and	16. Maternal mortality ratio 17. Proportion of births attended by skilled

2015, the maternal mortality ratio	health personnel
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	
Target 7: Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS	**18.** HIV prevalence among 15-24 year old pregnant women **19.** Contraceptive prevalence rate **20.** Number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS
Target 8: Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	**21.** Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria **22.** Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures **23.** Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis **24.** Proportion of TB cases detected and cured under DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short Course)
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	
Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	**25.** Proportion of land area covered by forest **26.** Land area protected to maintain biological diversity **27.** GDP per unit of energy use (as proxy for energy efficiency) **28.** Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) [Plus two figures of global atmospheric pollution: ozone depletion and the accumulation of global warming gases]
Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water	**29.** Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source
Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	**30.** Proportion of people with access to improved sanitation **31.** Proportion of people with access to secure tenure [Urban/rural disaggregation of several of the above indicators may be relevant for monitoring improvement in the lives of slum dwellers]

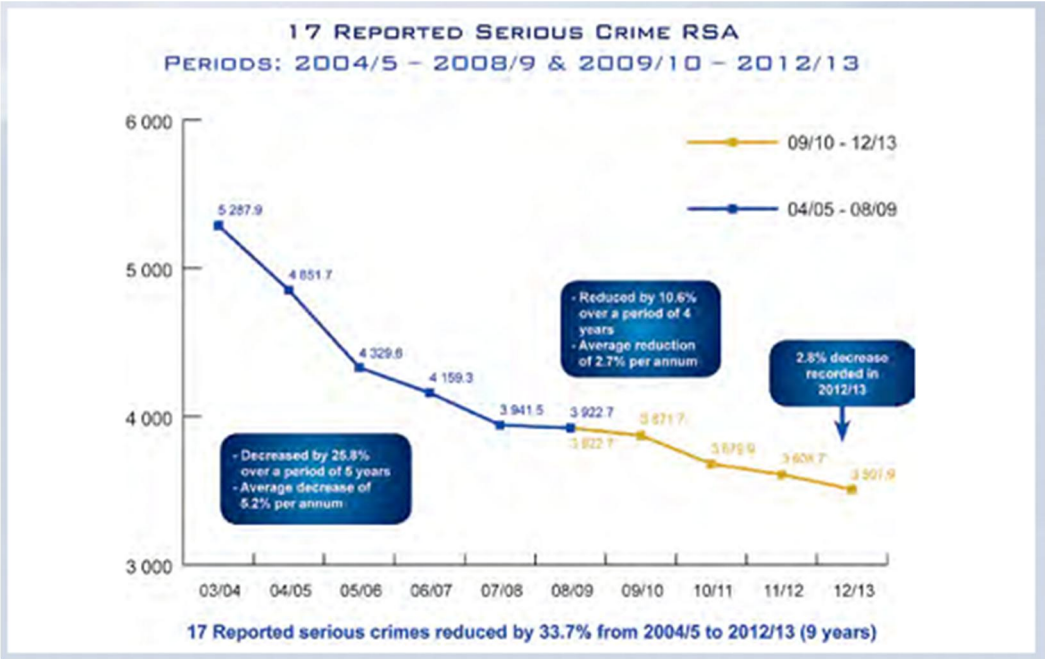
Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development*	
Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally	*Some of the indicators listed below will be monitored separately for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked countries and small island developing states.* *Official Development Assistance* 32. Net ODA as percentage of DAC donors' GNI [targets of 0.7% in total and 0.15% for LDCs] 33. Proportion of ODA to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation) 34. Proportion of ODA that is untied 35. Proportion of ODA for environment in small island developing states 36. Proportion of ODA for transport sector in land-locked countries
Target 13: Address the Special Needs of the Least Developed Countries Includes: tariff and quota free access for LDC exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction	*Market Access* 37. Proportion of exports (by value and excluding arms) admitted free of duties and quotas 38. Average tariffs and quotas on agricultural products and textiles and clothing 39. Domestic and export agricultural subsidies in OECD countries 40. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity
Target 14: Address the Special Needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states (through Barbados Programme and 22nd General Assembly provisions)	*Debt Sustainability* 41. Proportion of official bilateral HIPC debt cancelled 42. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services 43. Proportion of ODA provided as debt relief 44. Number of countries reaching HIPC decision and completion points
Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term	

Target 16: In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth	**45.** Unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds
Target 17: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries	**46.** Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis
Target 18: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications	**47.** Telephone lines per 1000 people **48.** Personal computers per 1000 people *Other Indicators TBD*

* *The selection of indicators for Goals 7 and 8 is subject to further refinement*

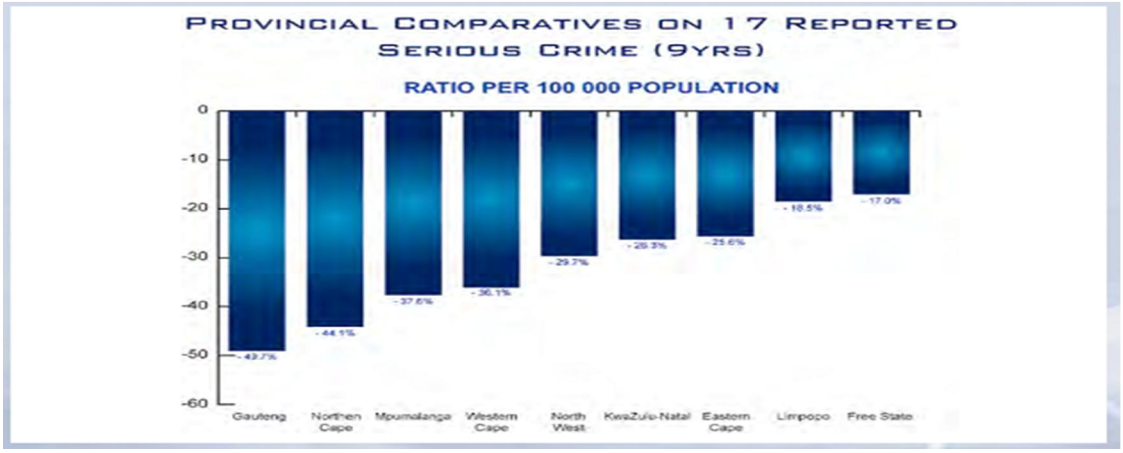
Appendix G: South Africa's National Crime Statistics 2012/2013

Graph 1: 17 Reported Serious Crime RSA



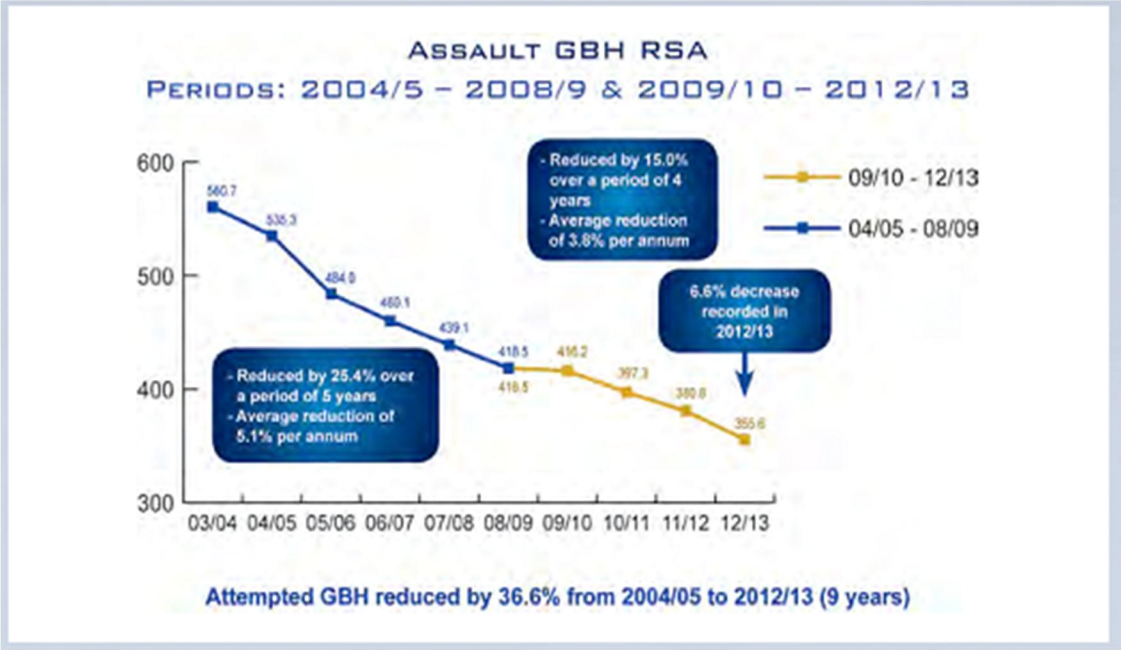
During the 2012/13 financial year, 10 out of 17 crimes here have shown a reduction, the remaining have increased. There was a marked decrease in the reported secret crimes between the period between 2004-2013.

Graph 2: Provincial Comparatives on17 Reported Serous Crime



This graph illustrates the provincial comparatives of serious crime in South Africa. Mpumalanga was ranked third in the country with 37.8%.

Graph 3: Contact Crime RSA



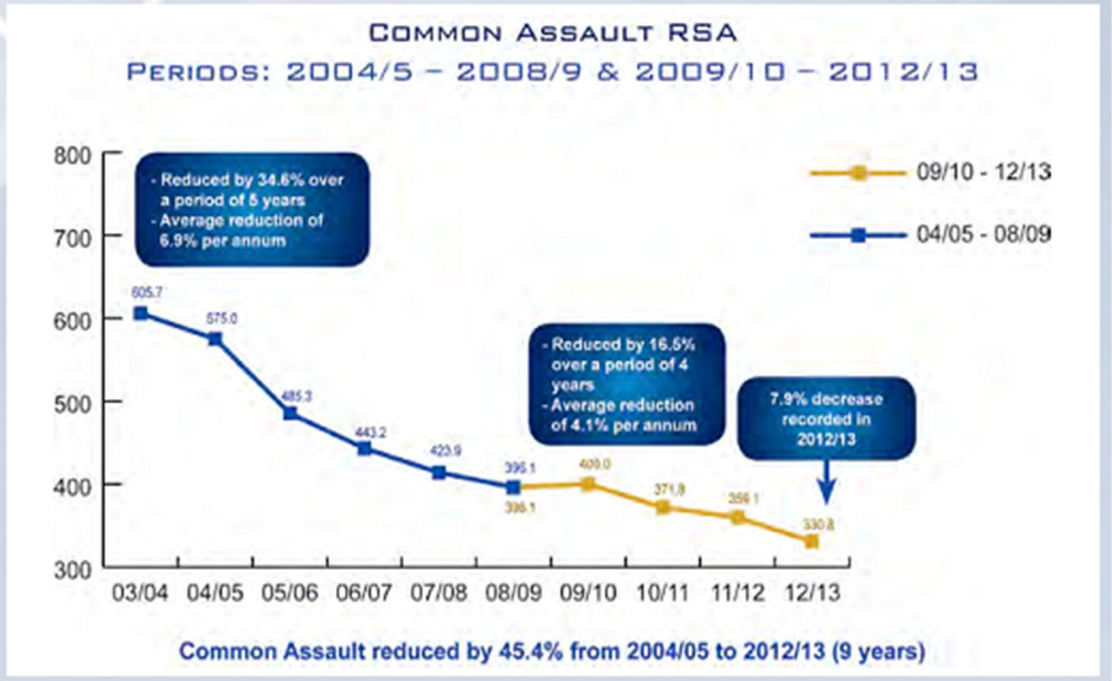
As shown in the graph above (Graph 3), over the past four years, assault has reduced by 15% with the highest contributing province; Mpumalanga (at 39.4%). Contact crimes such as assault, robbery and carjacking's are highlighted in this report as they pose the greatest threats to tourists who vacation to high risk regions.

Table 1: Assault with the Intent to Cause Grievous Bodily Harm: 2009/10-2012/13

RATIO PER 100 000 OF THE POPULATION							
Province	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	% Inc or Decr 08/09 - 12/13	% Inc or Decr 11/12 - 12/13
Eastern Cape	477.7	485.0	456.8	430.6	423.2	- 11.4%	- 1.7%
Free State	552.0	542.5	546.6	546.4	559.8	1.4%	2.5%
Gauteng	461.9	466.1	416.4	382.7	327.3	- 29.1%	- 14.5%
KwaZulu-Natal	298.0	295.6	287.3	273.7	279.3	- 6.3%	2.0%
Limpopo	250.6	254.8	237.8	264.7	252.3	0.7%	- 4.7%
Mpumalanga	475.3	439.8	399.0	358.8	288.0	- 39.4%	- 19.7%
North West	430.9	421.9	439.9	437.4	401.7	- 6.8%	- 8.2%
Northern Cape	884.7	830.7	815.5	768.8	752.7	- 14.9%	- 2.1%
Western Cape	438.7	449.2	473.3	467.4	415.3	- 5.3%	- 11.1%
RSA	**418.5**	**416.2**	**397.3**	**380.8**	**355.6**	**- 15.0%**	**- 6.6%**

Common assault also reduced by 45.5% over 9 years; 16.5% during the past 4 years; and 7.9% during the past financial year (2012/2013). Mpumalanga exhibited a significant decrease of 19.7% from the 2008/9 baseline (475300 to 288000).

Graph 4: Common Assault RSA



During the past 4 years, there was a marked decrease of 16.5% and the following highest contributing provinces can be mentioned; Mpumalanga (36.4), Gauteng (35.4%) and North West (25.2%). The rest of the provinces also experienced a decrease, except for the Western Cape which had a slight increase of 0.1%.

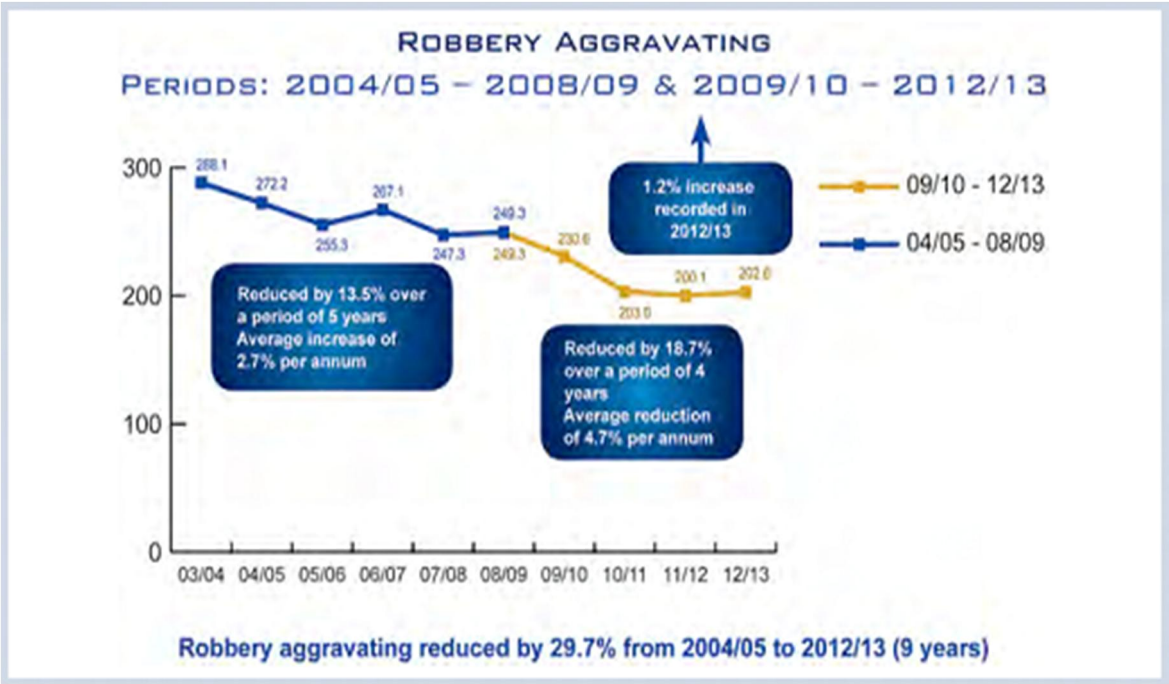
Table 2: Common Assault: 2009/10-2012/13

RATIO PER 100 000 OF THE POPULATION							
Province	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	% Inc or Decr 08/09 - 12/13	% Inc or Decr 11/12 - 12/13
Eastern Cape	256.8	260.4	246.0	223.9	216.6	- 15.7%	- 3.3%
Free State	681.3	655.2	634.9	655.5	644.6	- 5.4%	- 1.7%
Gauteng	560.6	559.8	486.8	434.5	362.0	- 35.4%	- 16.7%
KwaZulu-Natal	295.9	315.6	303.1	295.6	291.6	- 1.5%	- 1.4%
Limpopo	184.9	171.0	149.3	189.4	176.0	- 4.8%	- 7.1%
Mpumalanga	320.1	310.6	285.8	253.4	203.6	- 36.4%	- 19.7%
North West	272.6	257.7	243.2	235.7	204.0	- 25.2%	- 13.4%
Northern Cape	497.9	485.7	461.9	462.9	425.4	- 14.6%	- 8.1%
Western Cape	602.1	642.3	637.0	653.4	603.0	0.1%	- 7.7%
RSA	**396.1**	**400.0**	**371.8**	**359.1**	**330.8**	**- 16.5%**	**- 7.9%**

Some of the contributing factors to the decrease in Assault and Common Assault include: swift detections and effective arrests, including refusal of withdrawal of case

dockets before court at police station level, and the continued closure of illegal liquor outlets and liquor confiscations.

Graph 5: Robbery Aggravating RSA



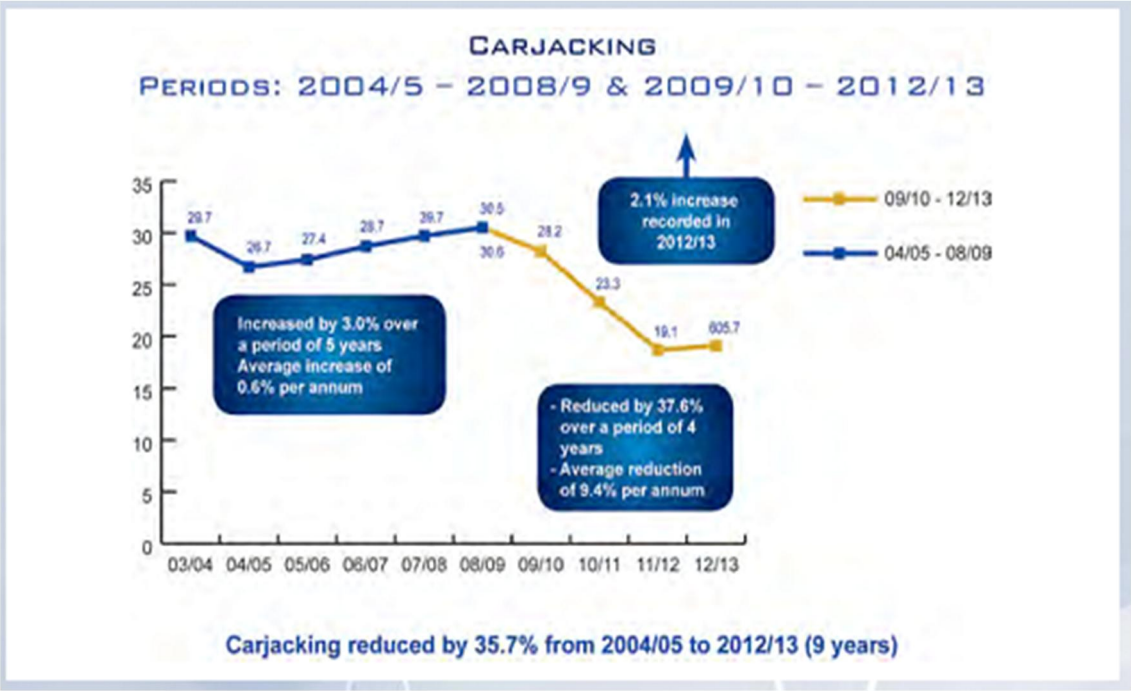
During the past 4 years this category crime decreased by 18.7%, an average of 4.7% per annum. The contributing provinces to the reduction include Gauteng (41.3%), Mpumalanga (33.6%), KwaZulu-Natal (24.6%).

Table 3: Robbery with Aggravating Circumstances: 2009/10-2012/13

RATIO PER 100 000 OF THE POPULATION							
Province	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	% Inc or Decr 08/09 - 12/13	% Inc or Decr 11/12 - 12/13
Eastern Cape	149.2	145.5	154.9	183.4	179.0	20.0%	- 2.4%
Free State	179.4	171.2	171.8	193.9	211.4	17.8%	9.0%
Gauteng	490.6	449.0	357.9	311.8	287.8	- 41.3%	- 7.7%
KwaZulu-Natal	255.9	222.4	183.9	170.7	193.0	- 24.6%	13.1%
Limpopo	53.4	56.8	50.8	66.2	72.2	35.2%	9.1%
Mpumalanga	193.6	183.3	153.4	156.4	128.5	- 33.6%	- 17.8%
North West	163.3	157.1	158.7	165.4	149.2	- 8.6%	- 9.8%
Northern Cape	108.3	90.4	80.7	88.4	107.6	- 0.6%	21.7%
Western Cape	241.9	234.1	234.5	260.7	283.5	17.2%	8.7%
RSA	**249.3**	**230.6**	**203.0**	**200.1**	**202.6**	**- 18.7%**	**1.2%**

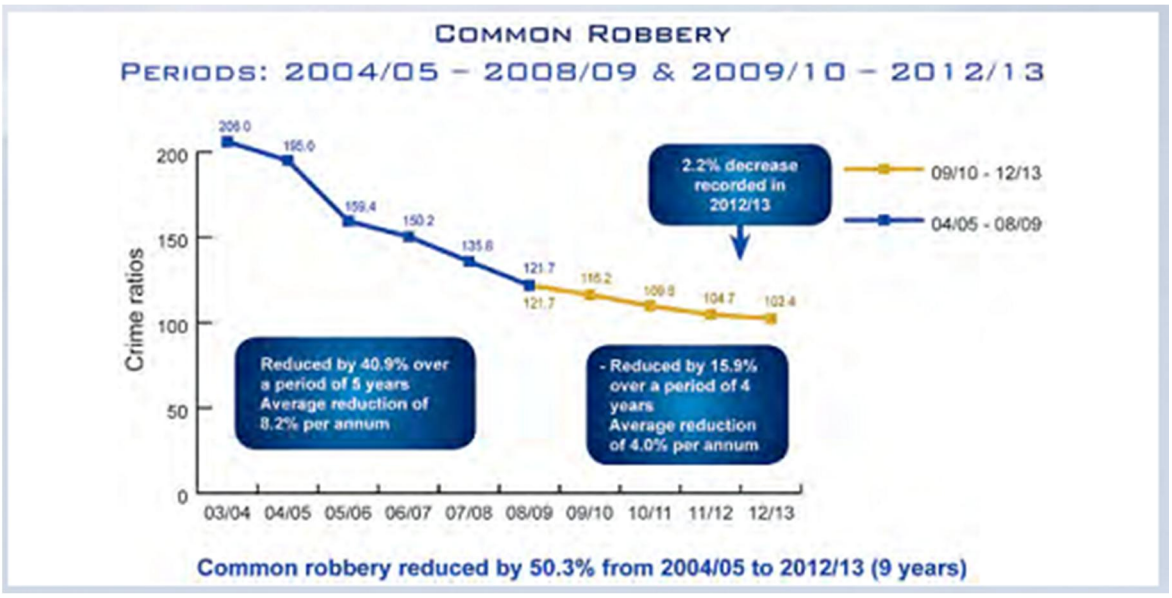
Some of the identified contributing factors that most crime in this category include: robberies that occur in the streets; informal settlements where informal businesses is conducted; targeting foreign-owned spaza shops that have penetrated villages; the effect of proximity to borders; and highways also facilitates truck and car hijacking and targeted robbery of entities.

Graph 6: Carjacking



There was a steep decrease in carjacking between 2009 to 2012. The provinces that have experienced a decrease in this crime include Mpumalanga (67.8%). Gauteng (45.8%), KwaZulu Natal (41.6%), Limpopo (24.7%) and North West (11.9%). The highest increase was the Northern Cape at 290.6%.

Graph 7: Common Robbery RSA



The provinces that contributed to the overall reduction of this crime by 15.9% over the past 4 years include 8 provinces, namely: Gauteng (36.8%), Mpumalanga (36.0%), North West (24.2%), Eastern Cape (23.0%), Free State (20.3%), Northern

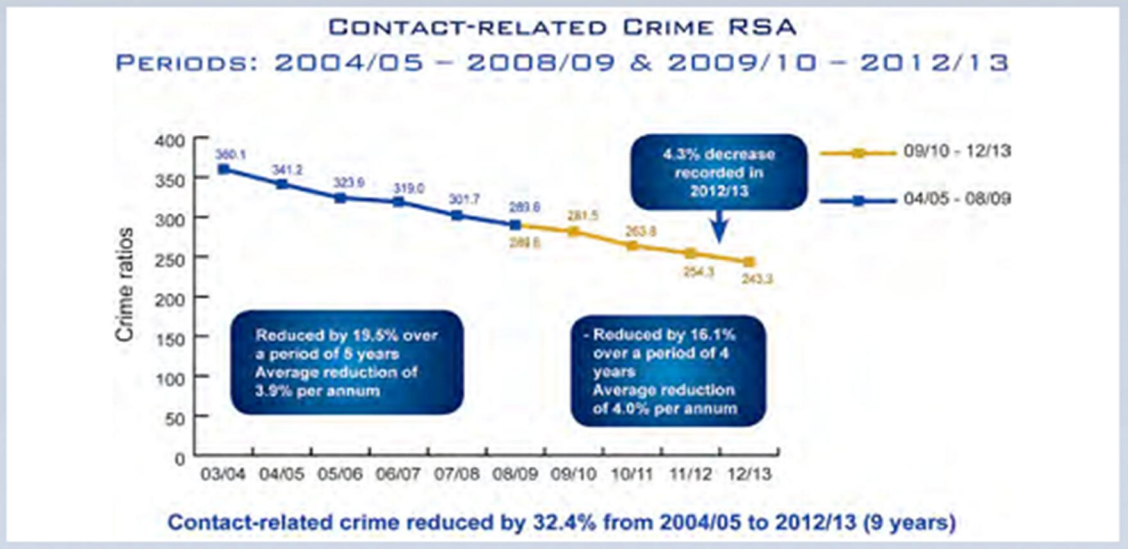
Cape (19.6%), KwaZulu-Natal (6.4%) and Limpopo (12.7%).The Western Cape was the only province that has experienced an increase of 31.2%. During the reporting year, there was an overall decrease of 2.2% which was realized through the performance of the following provinces: Mpumalanga (15.6%), Gauteng (11.7%), North West (10.2%) and Limpopo (10.0%). The highest increase was KwaZulu-Natal at 12.6%.

Table 4: Common Robbery: 2009/10-2012/13

RATIO PER 100 000 OF THE POPULATION							
Province	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	% Inc or Decr 08/09 - 12/13	% Inc or Decr 11/12 - 12/13
Eastern Cape	90.6	81.1	82.5	72.1	69.8	- 23.0%	- 3.2%
Free State	123.6	102.5	99.0	97.4	98.5	- 20.3%	1.1%
Gauteng	197.2	190.9	162.7	141.3	124.7	- 36.8%	- 11.7%
KwaZulu-Natal	84.9	76.4	68.8	70.6	79.5	- 6.4%	12.6%
Limpopo	63.2	62.9	57.5	68.3	61.5	- 2.7%	- 10.0%
Mpumalanga	121.9	110.0	98.0	92.4	78.0	- 36.0%	- 15.6%
North West	90.2	87.2	85.6	76.2	68.4	- 24.2%	- 10.2%
Northern Cape	115.7	117.2	106.5	86.6	93.0	- 19.6%	7.4%
Western Cape	160.4	176.8	199.1	210.3	210.5	31.2%	0.1%
RSA	**121.7**	**116.7**	**109.8**	**104.7**	**102.4**	**- 15.9%**	**- 2.2%**

Mpumalanga exhibited the highest decrease in the incidence of common robbery of 15.6% in the period 2012-2013 from the 2008/9 baseline.

Graph 8: Contact-Related Crime RSA



Contact-related crime includes Arson and Malicious Damage to Property (or Malicious Injury to Property). This category of crime has reduced by 32.4% over 9

years; 16.1% during the past 4 years and 4.3% during the past financial year (2012/13).

Table 5: Contact-Related Crime Ratios (9 Years)

RATIO PER 100 000 POPULATION											
Province	2003/4 Baseline	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	% Inc/ Decr 03/04 - 12/13
Eastern Cape	242.9	240.6	235.0	247.6	233.7	223.2	215.0	216.0	205.1	209.1	- 13.9%
Free State	391.3	379.6	363.4	340.5	339.9	354.5	329.2	324.1	337.8	338.4	- 13.5%
Gauteng	546.1	516.8	495.6	480.3	457.2	434.6	434.3	381.0	344.4	299.3	- 45.2%
KwaZulu-Natal	236.3	221.6	206.3	196.7	182.7	173.6	172.2	166.4	154.0	162.1	- 31.4%
Limpopo	162.9	162.6	159.1	154.8	138.0	135.5	128.2	116.5	137.3	135.7	- 16.7%
Mpumalanga	269.7	275.0	270.3	266.7	249.7	260.5	243.6	210.4	189.4	160.4	- 40.5%
North West	295.4	259.3	242.9	224.1	228.4	224.1	216.3	215.5	215.4	193.3	- 34.5%
Northern Cape	473.2	440.5	367.8	338.5	325.4	305.4	285.2	269.3	273.3	287.6	- 39.2%
Western Cape	733.4	670.0	613.3	628.7	577.1	487.6	467.2	458.8	474.4	439.0	- 40.1%
RSA	**360.1**	**341.2**	**323.9**	**319.0**	**301.7**	**289.8**	**281.5**	**263.8**	**254.3**	**243.3**	**- 32.4%**

The table indicates that, during the past 9 years, the overall reduction of 32.4% was contributed to by all the Provinces. The highest contributing provinces were: Gauteng (45.2%), Mpumalanga (40.5%) and Western Cape (40.1%).

Appendix H: GBC's Guidelines to Fighting HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria

A healthy workforce and employee base should be the top priority of every company in the travel and tourism industry. Workplace programs are those that address an employee's experience in their work environment and put in place measures and policies that allow employees to work and contribute productively to society.

SOME KEY ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

1. Risk Assessment Companies should assess the level of risk HIV/AIDS, TB and/or malaria pose to their workforce. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are a number of risk factors unique to the travel and tourism industry that should be considered (young, mobile workforce, access to the sex industry, etc.), along with local prevalence rates. In addition, the company can carry out a survey of employee knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria.

2. Management and employee input in the program development process. An inclusive approach, that takes into account both management and employee perspectives, concerns and questions are recommended. This will ensure buy-in from the important stakeholders and the eventual beneficiaries of the workplace program, and will contribute to long term program success.

Typical Management Questions:

° What is the extent (prevalence) of these pandemics in the workforce?

° How are these pandemics affecting worker productivity?

° How are changes in worker productivity affecting business costs?

° What will investments in prevention and care cost the company?

° What benefits can be expected from investments in prevention and care?

° Do prevention programs work?

Typical Employee Questions:

° Will the company respect my privacy if I seek information or services?

° Will the company use test results to fire me or deny me benefits?

° How can we as employees contribute to and strengthen company workplace programs and policies?

° What role will our union(s) play in program design and implementation?

3. A Comprehensive HIV/AIDS, TB or Malaria policy. A company policy that officially articulates the company's position on employee rights and provisions regarding the three diseases is very important. The policy should include: Statements against stigma and discrimination in the workplace based on his/her either real or perceived health status, confidentiality of medical records, and availability and access to prevention, education, care and treatment. Employees should also be ensured of access to health and pension benefits and continuation of employment regardless of disease status. The company policy should be developed with input from key stakeholders, communicated to employees and to customers on a regular basis, and revised as necessary.

4. Prevention and education activities to increase awareness and avoidance. Access to knowledge is central to any disease prevention effort. Companies should educate their employees about the risks, means of transmission, and ways to protect themselves and their families from HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria. All education programs should be tailored to meet the needs of the target population and be created in a culturally appropriate and gender sensitive manner. To deepen the impact of education activities, it is recommended that the input of persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), as well those living with TB or malaria, are included in the development of educational programs. Employees should also be encouraged to bring all educational information back to their families and communities, in order to disseminate knowledge even further.

5. Confidential testing and counselling support initiatives. Companies can implement programs offering voluntary tests, counselling and care of employees and their closest relatives. Counselling and testing initiatives are more difficult to implement due to the sensitive nature of testing and the need for confidentiality. Care and support is crucial for the workplace when responding to these three diseases and to foster an open, accepting, and supportive environment for workers to disclose their status and seek treatment.

6. Access to care, support, and treatment for employees living with HIV/AIDS, TB, or malaria. Companies should provide HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria treatment, care and support for infected employees and their families, either through on-site or off-site provision of services. Costs should be subsidized to as great an extent as possible by the company.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation. Routine monitoring and evaluation of workplace programs is critical to identify both program successes and areas for improvement. GBC has developed an interactive course on this topic that is available to all GBC members upon request.

Appendix I: Ethical Clearance Certificate

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Mokoena

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER H13/10/11**
PROJECT TITLE	Insights into ecotourism managers' perceptions on threats to the sustainability of ecotourism: An exploratory South African, Mpumalanga-Based study
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr MM Mokoena
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Economic & Business Sciences
DATE CONSIDERED	18/10/2013
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	03/11/2015

DATE 04/11/2013 **CHAIRPERSON** (Professor T Milani)

cc: Supervisor : Mr R Venter

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10003, 10th Floor, Senate House, University

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Mokoena
Signature

10 / 11 / 2013
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix J: Faculty of Higher Degrees Committee Title Approval

Faculty of Commerce, Law & Management
Private Bag 3 Wits, 2050
Fax: 0270865536132
Tel: 02711 7178007

Reference: Ms Sibongile Dhladhla
E-mail: Sibongile.Dhladhla@wits.ac.za

16 October 2013
Person No: 0706264E
PAG

Mr MR Mokoena
P O Box 2296
1242
South Africa

Dear Mr Mokoena

Master of Commerce: Approval of Title

We have pleasure in advising that your proposal entitled *Insights into perceptions of threats to the sustainability of ecotourism: a study of Mpumalanga-based ecotourism managers* has been approved. Please note that any amendments to this title have to be endorsed by the Faculty's higher degrees committee and formally approved.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marike Bosman
Faculty Registrar
Faculty of Commerce, Law & Management

Appendix K: Researchers' Description

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

NAME	POSITION
Mokoena, Mandla Richard	Master of Commerce Candidate, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (2013)
SUDENT NUMBER 0706264E	

EDUCATION

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE	MM/YY	FIELD OF STUDY
University of the Witwatersrand; Johannesburg South Africa	Bachelor of Commerce	11/2011	Marketing and Management
University of the Witwatersrand; Johannesburg South Africa	Honours	11/2012	Management Sciences

Research Statement

The goal of the proposed research is to investigate what ecotourism business managers as the vanguards of the sustainability movement within the tourism industry; perceive as threats to ecotourism and its longevity; and to determine how they respond to these threats through their personal capacities as managers. In an age where accountability can no longer be evaded, sustainability and its principles are fast becoming a global standard. Considerations beyond the bottom line have taken on increased significance. Ecotourism has emerged as a form of sustainable tourism, and is anticipated to boost conservation efforts and economic development and to significantly improve the standards of living of the inhabitants of surrounding communities. If ecotourism is to be successful in accomplishing these, the factors that could potentially inhibit or stifle its progress need to be evaluated. It is worthwhile to assess these from the vantage point of the managers of ecotourism businesses, who have to deal with these on a daily basis and as such a have accumulated a wealth of knowledge through their experience.

Honours

2012 **Palgrave Macmillan Book Prize;** awarded to the student with the Highest Overall Mark for the Honours Degree in Business Sciences across the Management and Human Resource Management Divisions, School of Economic and Business Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand.

2012 **Oxford University Press Book Prize**; awarded to the student with the Highest Mark for the Honours Degree in Business Sciences within the Management Division, School of Economic and Business Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand.

2012 **HB Rwigema Memorial Prize**; awarded to the student who achieves the Highest Overall Mark in the Honours Research Paper in the Management and Human Resources Management Divisions, School of Economic and Business Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand. For research project entitled:

"An Exploratory Study of the Ethics of Street Trade and Analysis of the Legitimacy of the Informal Economy of South Africa"