Towards sustainable development in Wildlife Tourism

An analysis of visitor demands and learning outcomes at South African wildlife sanctuaries

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Abstract (English)

The display of captive wildlife for leisure and tourism purposes has become a lucrative business around the globe, but is subject to increasing debates questioning its sustainable value and benefits for wildlife conservation and animal welfare. Growing concern addresses the involvement of wild animals for human entertainment and commercial tourism offers such as handling, leash-walking or petting the wildlife. Particular attention was drawn to South Africa, as relations between tourism-related lion sanctuaries and the canned hunting industry were exposed. Subsequent media coverage, growing awareness and increased animal-welfare concern on part of tourism stakeholders highlight the need for sustainable approaches and management practices in wildlife tourism operations.

The author of the study addressed the topic of wildlife tourism in face of current developments and focused the research on wildlife sanctuaries as a distinct type of captive wildlife attraction. Wildlife sanctuaries, encompassing multiple roles relating to wildlife conservation, animal welfare and public education, provide high potential in raising public awareness about wildlife-related topics and enhancing tourists' capacity for the long-term adoption of responsible attitudes and behavior. Visitor activities range from educational tours to more interactive activities, which constitute a common area of tension due to criticism evolved by conservation and animal welfare activists.

As the design of tourism products is highly influenced by public demand, the study focused on a demand-site analysis at South African wildlife sanctuaries by providing a broader understanding as well as increasing scientific evidence of visitor motivations, expectations and satisfaction patterns during wildlife tourism experiences. It was a further objective to examine the impact of knowledge transfer provided by wildlife sanctuaries as a base for evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs within different operational approaches. Due to conflicting debates, particular focus was set on visitors' quest for physical wildlife interaction, their concern for animal welfare as well as support towards facility restrictions and sustainable management practices. The study was approached from a quantitative and qualitative basis and contributed towards the growing body of academic literature relating to wildlife tourist demand patterns, which to date was mostly conducted site-specific for Australian wildlife settings. A quantitative visitor survey was applied as the main methodology for the empirical research and was handed out to 154 visitors on-site at three different wildlife sanctuaries in South Africa. Two research sites conformed their operations to a "no touching, no interaction" approach, whereas one facility offered physical interaction with the wildlife. Simultaneously, in-depth interviews were conducted with sanctuary managers and guides who were able to reflect long-term visitor demand.

The result analysis showed that all research facilities targeted both domestic and international visitors, who often reported to visit the sanctuary on grounds of geographical convenience or recommendations. Surveyed participants generally specified low levels of pre-knowledge about wildlife conservation and little specialization with refers to wildlife tourism activities. Visitor motivations were dominated by the general enjoyment of wildlife watching; components of recreation and socialization were of particular interest for families with children. A highly noticeable quest for learning and education was reported in both visitor motivations and expectations, alongside the high desire for a close-proximity encounter, predicted visibility of animals and naturalistic wildlife encounters. Basic requirements such as a high service standard and appropriate group size were further specified as a crucial component for visitor satisfaction. The quest for physical wildlife interaction was higher at the interactive wildlife facility and received lower importance ranks at the non-touching facilities, indicating that visitor demand is also influential in choosing appropriate travel destinations. However, entertainment and interaction-related aspects were perceived as least important in overall comparison of various visit features. Visitors at all three facilities reported high levels of satisfaction and were able to significantly enhance their knowledge about wildlife and conservation, which encouraged most participants to take further actions in supporting wildlife-related initiatives. Visitors at the interactive facility, however, were more likely to report conservation-related topics as the most distinct learning outcome of their visit, whereas participants at the non-touching facilities dominantly recalled factual information about the wildlife. It was shown that emotional feelings derived from touching a wild animal are a key factor in enhancing visitors' awareness about the threats of wildlife, if accompanied by effective education and interpretation. The promotion of a non-touching approach appeared to be more challenging, as several visitors suggested the inclusion of more wildlife interaction, even if prohibited by the facility. Visitors generally expressed a distinct concern for animal welfare and minimal-impact behavior, but faced conflict with their demands and self-serving preferences. Facility restrictions were accepted by the majority of participants, but only few participants expressed supportive attitudes towards sustainable management practices. The demand analysis served as a research-based approach to formulate recommendations for the management of sanctuaries, ensuring sustainable progress, long-term educational benefits as well as a balance of tourist satisfaction, wildlife conservation and animal welfare. Guidelines for the enhancement of educational programs were presented, as effectively conveyed education was identified as a key factor to strengthen visitor support towards minimal-impact practices. Aligned to visitor demand patterns, the author summarized suggestions for enjoyable wildlife tourism activities, which could serve as substitutes for physical wildlife interaction to encourage sustainable standards in the face of growing animal-welfare orientation and public criticism.

Abstract (German)

Die Zurschaustellung von Wildtieren im Tourismus hat sich zu einem populären und lukrativen Geschäft in vielen Reisedestinationen weltweit entwickelt, welches jedoch aufgrund fragwürdiger Haltungsbedingungen und meist nur bedingtem Nutzen für den Artenschutz zunehmende Kritik erfährt. Diese adressiert sich vorrangig an touristische Angebote, welche Interaktionen mit Wildtieren (streicheln, füttern, liebkosen) vorrangig zu Unterhaltungszwecken anbietet. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit in dieser Hinsicht erfuhr Südafrika, als Beziehungen zwischen touristischen Löwenfarmen und der Gatterjagd-Industrie an die Öffentlichkeit gerieten. Zunehmend negative mediale Berichterstattung und ein deutliche stärkere Berücksichtigung von Tier-und Artenschutz im Tourismus betonen die Notwendigkeit für nachhaltige und verantwortungsbewusste Managementansätze.

Die Autorin dieser Studie adressierte das Thema Wildtiertourismus in Hinblick auf aktuelle Debatten und fokussierte sich auf „WIdlife Sanctuaries“: einen bestimmten Einrichtungstyp für Tiere in Gefangenschaft, welcher verschiedene Funktionen betreffend Tier-Rehabilitierung, Artenschutz oder Tierschutz involvieren kann. Diese Einrichtungen bieten besonderes Potential hinsichtlich der Bildungsarbeit und der öffentlichen Aufklärung über Wildtiere und deren Bedrohungen. Touristische Aktivitäten umfassen Bildungstouren und Tierbeobachtungen, häufig erhalten Besucher die Möglichkeit für direkten Kontakt mit den Tieren, was jedoch anhaltende Spannungen zwischen Tierschützern und Einrichtungsbetreibern impliziert.

Da das Design von touristischen Produkten entscheidend von deren Nachfrage beeinflusst wird, fokussiert sich die Masterarbeit auf eine Nachfrageanalyse in verschiedenen Wildlife Sanctuaries in Südafrika. Ziel war es, ein umfassendes wissenschaftliches Verständnis von Besuchermotivationen, Erwartungen und deren Zufriedenheit mit verschiedenen Aspekten des Besuchs zu erlangen. Des Weiteren untersuchte die Autorin die Auswirkungen der Bildungsarbeit auf die Besucher und deren Wissensstand, als Basis für eine Evaluierung von verschiedenen Bildungsansätzen innerhalb der Sanctuaries. Im Kontext zunehmender Spannungen im Wildtiertourismus war es von spezieller Bedeutung die Nachfrage nach Wildtierinteraktionen zu untersuchen und einen Einblick in Besucherakzeptanz von Restriktionen und nachhaltigen Managementstrategien zu geben. Weiteres Ziel war es, das Bewusstsein von Besuchern bezüglich des Tierschutzes zu ermitteln. Für die empirische Forschung der Arbeit wurden sowohl quantitative und qualitative Forschungsmethoden angewendet. Hauptmethode bildete ein Besucherfragebogen, welcher an insgesamt 154 Personen in drei verschiedenen Sanctuaries ausgehändigt wurde. Zwei dieser Einrichtungen zeichneten sich durch ein Verbot von jeglichem physischen Kontakt zu den Tieren aus,

während eine Sanctuary das Anfassen der Tiere ermöglichte. Resultate aus den Fragebögen wurden mit Aussagen von Mitarbeitern dieser Einrichtungen verglichen, welche aus qualitativen Interviews gewonnen wurden.

Aus den Resultaten wurde ersichtlich dass die Einrichtungen ein attraktives Reiseziel für sowohl einheimische als auch internationale Besucher darstellen, welche die Einrichtung häufig aufgrund der für die Anreise günstigen Lage oder Empfehlungen besuchten. Generell zeichneten sich die Besucher durch ein geringes Vorwissen über Artenschutz sowie wenig Spezialisierung bezüglich ihrer Bedürfnisse und vorheriger Wildtier-Erfahrungen aus. Motivationen spiegelten häufig ein allgemeines Vergnügen an Wildtierbeobachtungen wieder, Erholung mit der Familie war von hoher Bedeutung für Besucher mit Kindern. Ein starkes Bedürfnis nach Bildung und Wissensvermittlung wurde sowohl in Besucher Motivationen als auch deren Erwartungen festgestellt. Sehr häufig wurde der Wunsch nach möglichst großer Nähe zu den Tieren, einer guten Sichtbarkeit und naturalistischen Erlebnissen geäußert. Eine hoher Service Standard und eine kleine Gruppengröße bildeten wichtige Komponenten für einen zufriedenstellenden Besuch. Im Vergleich zeigten Besucher der interaktiven Einrichtungen ein größeres Interesse für physischen Tierkontakt, welches aufzeigt, dass Erwartungen der Besucher auch eine beeinflussende Rolle in der Entscheidung für ein bestimmtes Reiseziel spielten. Insgesamt wurden jedoch interaktiven Wildtieraktivitäten zum Zwecke der Unterhaltung im Vergleich mit anderen Aspekten des Besuches am wenigsten Wichtigkeit zugeschrieben. Eine Mehrheit aller Besucher verzeichnete eine hohe Zufriedenheit nach dem Besuch und konnte den Wissensstand über Tier-und Artenschutz erheblich erhöhen, welches viele Besucher anregte, weitere Maßnahmen für den Schutz und Erhalt von Wildtieren zu unternehmen. Jedoch zeigte sich eine deutliche Diskrepanz in den einprägsamsten Lernerrungenschaften der Besucher. Während Besucher der interaktiven Einrichtung häufig Themen zum Artenschutz widergaben, berichteten Besucher der anderen Einrichtung vorrangig faktische Informationen über die Wildtiere. Es zeigte sich, dass physischer Kontakt zu den Tieren häufig sehr emotional für die Besucher ist und die Übermittlung von Bildung über Artenschutz vereinfachen kann. Unterstützung seitens der Besucher für ein komplettes Verbot von Tierinteraktionen stellte sich hingegen als eine Herausforderung dar, da einige Besucher den Wunsch für mehr Interaktionen äußerten, obwohl dies den Regelungen der Einrichtung widersprechen würde. Im Allgemeinen zeigten die Besucher ein hohes Bewusstsein für Tierschutz und nachhaltige Praktiken, waren jedoch häufig im Zwiespalt mit eigennützigen Präferenzen und Bedürfnissen. Zwar wurden Restriktionen der Einrichtung von der Besuchermehrheit akzeptiert, spezielle Befürwortung wurde jedoch nur von wenigen Personen ausgesprochen, Insgesamt diente die Nachfrageanalyse der Ableitung von Handlungsempfehlungen für das Management der Sanctuaries, welche im Sinne von

nachhaltiger Entwicklung langfristige Bildungseffektivität und ein ausgewogenes Gleichgewicht zwischen Besucherzufriedenheit, Tier-und Artenschutz ermöglichen sollen. Da Bildung als ein Schlüsselfaktor für die Akzeptanz und Befürwortung von nachhaltigen Praktiken identifiziert wurde, hat die Autorin Richtlinien für die Optimierung von Bildungsprogrammen zusammengetragen. In Hinblick auf identifizierte Besucherbedürfnisse wurden Vorschläge für die Integration von zufriedenstellenden Wildtieraktivitäten formuliert. Diese können als potentielle Alternativen für physische Wildtierinterkationen berücksichtigt werden, welches im Kontext aktueller Debatten und erhöhter Tierschutzorientierung im Tourismus sowohl die Implementierung von nachhaltigen Standards als auch die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der Einrichtungen begünstigt.

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List of Abbreviations

ABTA	Association of British Travel Agents
CACH	Campaign Against Canned Hunting
CRC	Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre
e.g.	exempli gratia (for the sake of an example)
et al.	and others
n.d.	no date
n.y.	no year
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PAWS	Performing Animal Welfare Society
SA	South Africa
SAASA	South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WGEA	INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing
WSPA	World Society for the Protection of Animals (now: World Animal Protection)

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(contained in an additional volume)

1. Introduction

Throughout the course of human history, people have interacted with animals in various ways for different purposes (Shani, 2009; Orams, 2002). Whether as a source of food, clothing or shelter, for scientific research or sport, the synergies between humans and animals can take many forms (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005). For millennia, particular species have been bred and tamed as domestic pets in a wide variety of cultures, respected as companions and seen as an integral part of human life and fascination (Orams, 2002). Many indigenous cultures honor the human-animal relationship as part of the interconnectedness of the natural and spiritual world, or rely on hunting as a source of food (Orams, 2002; Simoni, 2015). But compared to consumptive practices like hunting, which have existed for thousands of years, the idea of observing wild animals for recreation and tourism purposes has been a more recent phenomenon (Orams, 2002; Reynolds & Braithwaite, 2001). Whether in wild or captive settings, the range of opportunities for tourists to watch and interact with wildlife increased rapidly in various destinations world-wide (Orams, 2002), enabling wildlife tourism to become a significant part of a country's tourism identity.

1.1 Background: South African wildlife sanctuaries as research sites

Like many other countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, the Republic of South Africa is well-known for its species-rich wildlife diversity, which emerged as a major attraction for international tourists from all around the world (SA Venues.com, 2016). Wildlife tourism has become one of the leading tourism sectors in the country, with an estimated 50% of 12.1 million tourists incorporating wildlife experiences in their visit and providing a turnover of 104 billion Rand (Janovsky, 2015).

However, the biological variety and abundance of African wildlife is shrinking fast as human population grows and the spread of logging and agriculture encroaches on once wild and pristine landscapes (Earth Talk, n.d.). Additionally, wildlife crime such as illegal hunting is threatening the existence of large mammals and iconic species that are essential to South Africa's image as a top wildlife tourism destination (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2014). The population of the continent's biggest mammal, the African elephant, has declined by 97% in less than a century since the early 1900s (Ramsey, 2016). In case of the critically endangered black rhino, large-scale poaching resulted in a significant 96% decline from 65.000 individuals in 1970 to just 2.300 in 1993 (Save the Rhino International, 2016). The population of the world's fastest animal, the cheetah, dropped from 100.000 to 10.000 in a century, which resulted in its extinction in over 20 countries (Cheetah

Conservation Fund, 2016). Although increasing efforts in conservation and anti-poaching start to report success in some cases (e.g. conservation efforts in case of the black rhino, World Wide Fund for Nature, 2016), the rapid decline and extinction of African wildlife species remains a major challenge and jeopardizes the base of one of South Africa's most important tourism products (UNWTO, 2014).

To counteract this development and further obtain a protection of species against human exploitation, abuse, neglect and improper care (Monkeyland, n.y.), several captive wildlife facilities have been established all around the country since the early 1990s (Interviewee 1, 2016). These wildlife sites operate under different terms such as wildlife sanctuaries, wildlife parks, rehabilitation, education or awareness centers and focus on specific approaches relating to animal welfare, wildlife conservation and environmental education. Differentiating the respective sites is not always clear as definitions are blurred and many facilities share similar characteristics concerning the animal's display or their involvement in the tourism industry. As most of these sites do not receive governmental funding (Interviewee 5), they opened the doors to the public and offer wildlife encounters for visitors to ensure economically and financially viable operations. Over the years, they have become one of the most popular destinations for international eco-volunteers and further constitute a major tourist attraction targeting the domestic and international visitor market (South African Tourism, 2016).

For the present study, these types of captive wildlife attractions have been chosen as research sites due to their claimed important role in wildlife conservation, animal welfare, environmental education and tourist recreation. To determine the overall limitation of the study, the research sites are delimited to touristy, but non-zoo captive wildlife sites that focus on terrestrial wildlife species and incorporate a central educational element for the visitors. The term "wildlife" refers to any "non-domesticated animal", as defined by Reidinger & Miller (2013, p.4). Although the research field basically encompasses all specifications of the above mentioned wildlife attraction sites, the study will focus on the term "sanctuary" as it involves several variations and helps to facilitate the insight into the research topic. It adapts the definition of a wildlife sanctuary as a "*space exclusively set aside for the use of wild animals, which are protected when they roam or live in that area*" (Wisegeek, 2016), which is declared for the "*purpose of protecting, propagating or developing wildlife or its environment"'* (According to wildlife protection act 1972, Choudhary, 2016). In many cases, a sanctuary is created privately or by the government in order to protect endangered species or to establish a refuge for wild animals that have been injured, abused or abandoned (e.g. in circuses, zoos or in the exotic pet trade industry) (Performing Animal Welfare Society, 2016).

However, as mentioned above, the reasons for creating a wildlife sanctuary can differ: Several sanctuaries offer wildlife rehabilitation, where injured and abandoned wildlife is nursed back to health before its release into the wild or to a different location (Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation, 2016; Interviewee1, 2016; Mercer, 2016; Wisegeek, 2016). In this case, a high emphasis is set on wildlife conservation (Interviewee 1, 2016) in order to counteract the rapid decline of wildlife and protect species that face extinction in Africa and around the world. Other sanctuaries set a main focus on animal-welfare by providing a lifetime care for those animals that are not releasable into their natural habitat (Interviewee1, 2016; Mercer, 2016; Jukani, n.y.). A sanctuary may further be established for the purpose of maintaining biodiversity by preserving wildlife species, breeding species for ex-situ conservation or protecting animals within their natural habitat (PAWS, 2016; Wisegeek, 2016, Interviewee 1). The conservation of wildlife is of high importance in order to maintain natural resources in a sustainable attempt to ensure that those resources will be available for future generations (Yarrow, 2009). A consideration of animal welfare plays an essential role in ensuring that the individual animal is kept in a good condition and its intrinsic rights[1] are respected. It requires that animals are not treated cruelly or caused unnecessary pain and suffering, while considering the animal's physical and mental state as well as its abilities to fulfill natural needs and desires (Bousfield & Brown, 2010). Although animal welfare and wildlife conservation are considered as two distinct areas of animal protection, Rahman, Walker & Ricketts (2005) stated that an encompassment of both, the preservation of species populations and the welfare of individuals, is necessary to ensure that animals are protected and treated humanely.

Due to the increased need for wildlife conservation and growing environmental and animal welfare concerns, many captive wildlife facilities recognized a huge shift away from solely entertainment-related practices and gradually strived to become conservation centers by setting emphasis on conservation, education and scientific research (Hanson, 2002; Tribe, 2004¸ Mason, 2000; Catibog-Sinha, 2008; Tribe, 2011). In this regard, wildlife sanctuaries and related captive facilities are increasingly used as major educational platforms to create widespread awareness about the plight of wildlife species and inform the visitors about the need for wildlife conservation and animal-welfare, which is seen as an important approach towards conservation in general (Jukani, 2016; Interviewee 1, 2016; South African Tourism, 2016; Tribe, 2004; Ballantyne et al., 2007). If a wildlife facility is open to the public, visitors are able to directly contribute towards wildlife conservation through their entrance fees or voluntary donations. Sanctuaries mainly address same-day visitors (excursionists) who

[1] Referring to the "Five Freedoms" representing intrinsic rights of animals, which are frequently referenced by animal welfare professionals. These "Five Freedoms" are referenced in Appendix A (figure a1)

participate in a trip for general leisure, recreational or social purposes at a destination outside their usual environment, which does not involve an overnight stay at the respective wildlife facility (United Nations, 2010; Tourism Society). These include local residents on a day-trip as well as domestic and international tourists, who visit the sanctuaries for a few hours during greater tourism holidays.[2] Tourism-related activities often encompass educational tours through the enclosures; several facilities still offer entertainment-related and more interactive activities such as feeding, handling or petting the wildlife.

These activities, however, have become of growing concern in the tourism and conservation industry. Throughout the last years, highly controversial debates evolved about what exactly the mission of a wildlife sanctuary is and how the animals in care should be displayed to the public (Hartigan-Shea, 2014). Although some people state that physical interaction can be beneficial for both humans and wildlife (Dorfman, 2011; Bulbeck, 2005), critics question the conservational and educational value of interactive wildlife activities, which have become a popular and lucrative business in many tourist destinations around the world (Green & Giese, 2004; Beales, 2015; Born Free Foundation, n.y.). Especially in South Africa, increasing criticism has developed towards "wildlife petting farms" and their connection to the canned hunting industry (Campaign Against Canned Hunting, 2013). These debates also add to a general criticism towards captive animal-based attractions and the hence increasing demand for more naturalistic enclosures and encounters (Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005; Shani, 2009). Generally, the sustainable value of captive wildlife facilities as conservation centers and educational platforms is discussed in the focus of these debates. As stated by Reynolds & Braithwaite (2001, p.32), "*the values of conservation, animal welfare, visitor satisfaction, and economic profitability are often in conflict in wildlife tourism and tradeoffs are necessary, so some guiding principles for mitigating the conflicts are required."* In this regard, comprehensive research is needed into the touristic demand, educational aspects and product design to work out strategies that forward sustainable development in the wildlife tourism sector. This is even more important when considering potential negative impacts of tourism activities on displayed wildlife in captivity.

1.2 Aim of the thesis and research questions

Aim of the present study is to analyze visitor demand patterns and learning outcomes at South African wildlife sanctuaries within the context of current debates and discussions. It shall provide a broader understanding and increased scientific evidence of tourist's motivations, expectations and satisfaction levels during wildlife tourism experiences as well

[2] In the present thesis, the terms "visitor" and "tourist" are used similarly to describe persons visiting a wildlife sanctuary. A glossary of relevant terms is provided in Appendix A

as the impact of knowledge transfer provided by wildlife facilities. A reflection of relevant trends and debates is included as an integral part in the thesis, as it highlights the importance and topicality of the research field. Tourism as one of the world's largest industries is highly influenced by public demand (Festa 2014; Gupta, 2015), with consumers dictating the popularity of specific tourism products. Therefore, the identification of significant demand patterns and learning outcomes is critical for developing successful research-based strategies to improve the quality of captive wildlife facilities as sustainable tourist attractions. The analysis of learning outcomes will serve as a base for evaluating wildlife sanctuaries as educational centers aiming to create awareness about wildlife species, wildlife conservation and animal welfare.

The overall research question for the thesis is defined as following:

"What patterns can be identified in visitors' motivations, expectations and satisfaction levels at South African wildlife sanctuaries, what learning outcomes do visitors report after their visit and which implications can be derived for the management of these sites to ensure sustainable progress in the wildlife tourism industry?"

Due to the mentioned critical discussion about interactive wildlife encounters, it is also relevant to clarify if the quest for physical wildlife interaction and entertainment constitutes an essential component of the wildlife tourism experience, if visitors engage in responsible behavior and show acceptance towards facility restrictions (e.g. limited access the animals). To further specify the research question and address these topics in particular, the following sub-questions have been defined to be investigated by the study's empirical research:

Sub-questions:

Section A: Knowledge and participation levels:

A.1 What are visitors' existing levels of knowledge about wildlife conservation?

A.2 What are visitors' prior participation levels in wildlife tourism experiences?

Section B: Visitor motivations and expectations:

B.1 What motivates tourists to visit a wildlife sanctuary in South Africa?

B.2 What decisive factors influence the choice for a specific sanctuary?

B.3 What are desirable features during the visit?

Section C: Visitor engagement in responsible behavior:

C.1 Do visitors engage in responsible behavior?

C.2 What are visitors' perceptions of restrictions?

Section D: Visitor satisfaction:

D.1 How satisfied are visitors with their stay?

D.2 What management practices are favorable for them, what is being criticized?

Section E: Educational value of the visit:

E.1 To what extent do visitors enhance their knowledge about wildlife and conservation?

E.2 What is the most memorable learning outcome of the visit?

E.2 Does the visit encourage future support for wildlife conservation?

Section F: Demand patterns and learning outcomes in context of sustainability:

F.1 Do visitors support sustainable management practices?

F.2 How effective is the sanctuaries' approach in conveying an educational message to its visitors?

F.3 Is there evidence for animal welfare concern on part of the visitors?

Further objectives of the research are to determine factors (socio-demographics, entering attributes) that affect visitors demand and learning patterns as well as to identify correlations between these variables. In general, the study will provide a demand analysis as a research basis for further comprehensive studies on this subject as well as for related studies about product placement and development. In this way, the study contributes to a research-based approach to work out recommendations for the management of wildlife sanctuaries to implement approaches that ensure sustainable progress, long-term educational benefits as well as a balance of all components such as tourist satisfaction, wildlife conservation and animal welfare. The identification of desirable features and demand patterns will provide a scientific base for wildlife sanctuaries to optimize their tourism product and adapt their business operations to the current demand. The importance of this research is highlighted by Moscardo & Saltzer (2004, p.167) who stated that sustainable wildlife tourism requires an understanding of visitors so that "*programs can be designed to influence visitor behaviour and to support the enhancement of the quality of the experience for visitors.*" Sıvalıoğlu & Berköz (2012, p.938) further mention that "*understanding recreational user satisfaction provides managers with vital data for developing various services to meet expectations of visitors and make them satisfied with their visiting experience.*"

1.3 Structure of the thesis and research design

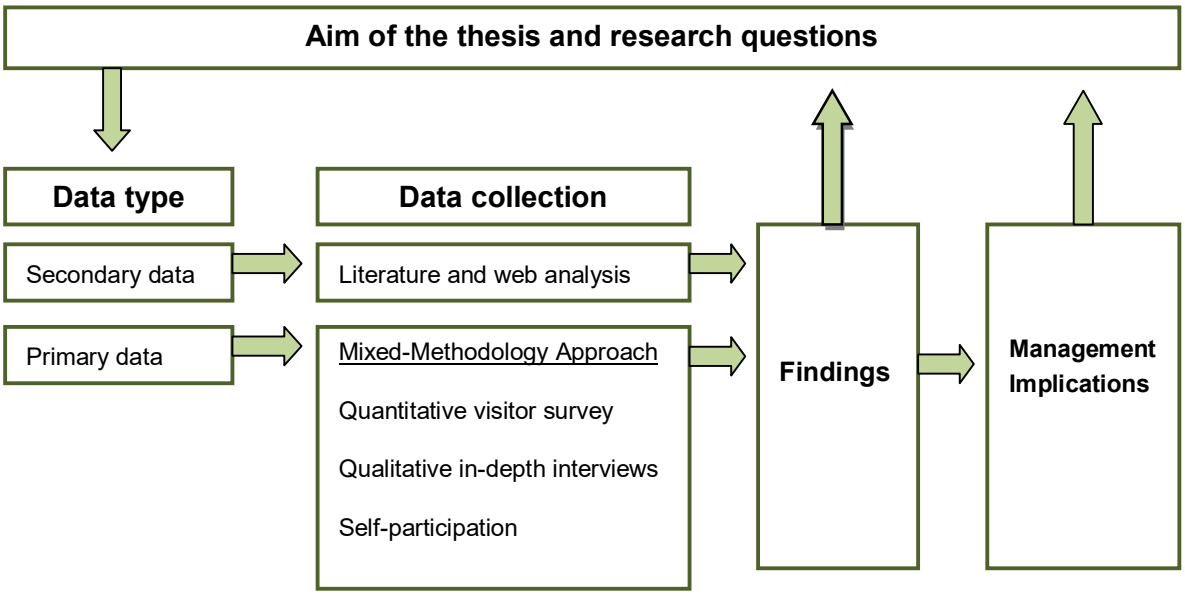
The content of the present study is structured into five super-ordinate parts, including the introduction to the topic and its background, the theoretical framework, the presentation of applied research methodologies as well as the analysis and discussion of empirical results, which will be followed by management implications.

As a base for the empirical research analysis, the theoretical framework serves to present an overview about the current state of knowledge with regard to the study's research subject. In the beginning, the term "Wildlife Tourism" will be defined and classification models as well as shared characteristics with broader forms of tourism will be presented. In this regard, insight will be given into the concept of sustainability and sustainable tourism, which create the base for the conceptual and content-related orientation of the study. Following, aspects of wildlife tourism economics and the demand site will be examined. Demand aspects encompass the definition and categorization models of wildlife tourists, general demand trends as well as an investigation of different variables relating to visitor motivations, expectations and satisfaction. In consideration of the study's research objectives, the importance and effectiveness of education in wildlife tourism will be discussed. Finally, the author addresses current developments and conflicting debates relating to animal welfare and wildlife conservation in tourism, which are of particular importance for topical reasons.

A mixed-methodology approach was applied for the empirical analyses of the defined research questions. Primary data was collected from quantitative visitor surveys, qualitative in-depth interviews with sanctuary managers and guides as well as through self-participation at the educational tours. For conducting the interviews and surveys, three different South African wildlife sanctuaries were selected as research sites. A detailed overview about the respective facilities, the applied research methodologies and their implementation into practice will be provided in chapter 3.

Aligned to the study's research questions, chapter 4 will present the obtained survey results, which will be interpreted and compared in reference to secondary literature and statements derived from the conducted interviews. The results will then be summarized in the concluding chapter. Based on the findings and practical examples in the wildlife tourism sector, further recommendations for the management of the respective facilities and the general wildlife tourism industry will be derived. For completing the thesis, limitations and future research directions will be given. A general overview about the study's research design is illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1: Study Research Design



1.4 Current state of research and research contribution

As wildlife tourism evolved as a substantial component of the tourism industry, it has attracted increasing academic and industrial attention during the past decades (Woods, 2002). A landmark contribution to the rapidly growing field of wildlife tourism, especially in regard to its underpinning foundations of science and conservation, is the literary work "Wildlife Tourism", written by the authors Newsome, Kingston and Moore in 2005. The work of several other authors (e.g. Shackley, 1996; Markwell, 2015; Moscardo & Saltzer, 2005; Moscardo & Saltzer, 2004; Higginbottom, 2004) additionally increased the body of knowledge by providing a broad overview about wildlife tourism interactions and the wildlife tourism market, including its trends, planning, management, impacts and challenges. On a conceptual basis, the article "*Towards a conceptual framework for wildlife tourism*" written by Reynolds & Braitwaite (2001) as well as research conducted by Duffus & Dearden (1990) provided integrated frameworks which illustrate major components of wildlife tourism as well as their relationships and linkages. In addition, a growing body of research has been conducted to identify and manage potential impacts on the environment and wildlife, which is closely linked to the topic of animal welfare and ethics in tourism (Fennell, 2013; Fennell, 2012; Shani & Pizam, 2007). Generally, an increasing concern and interest for sustainability and the implementation of sustainable management practices in wildlife tourism can be recognized (e.g. Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes, 2009; Higham & Carr, 2003). Alongside the increasing importance of wildlife attractions as conservation and education centers (Tribe, 2004), researchers have begun to demonstrate the educational impacts of wildlife tourism experiences on visitors' environmental knowledge and behavior as well as attitude changes and awareness about wildlife species and conservation (Ballantyne et al., 2007; Ballantyne,

Packer & Falk, 2011; Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes, 2009; Tisdell & Wilson, 2005; Ballantyne & Packer, 2010; Moscardo, Woods & Saltzer, 2004).

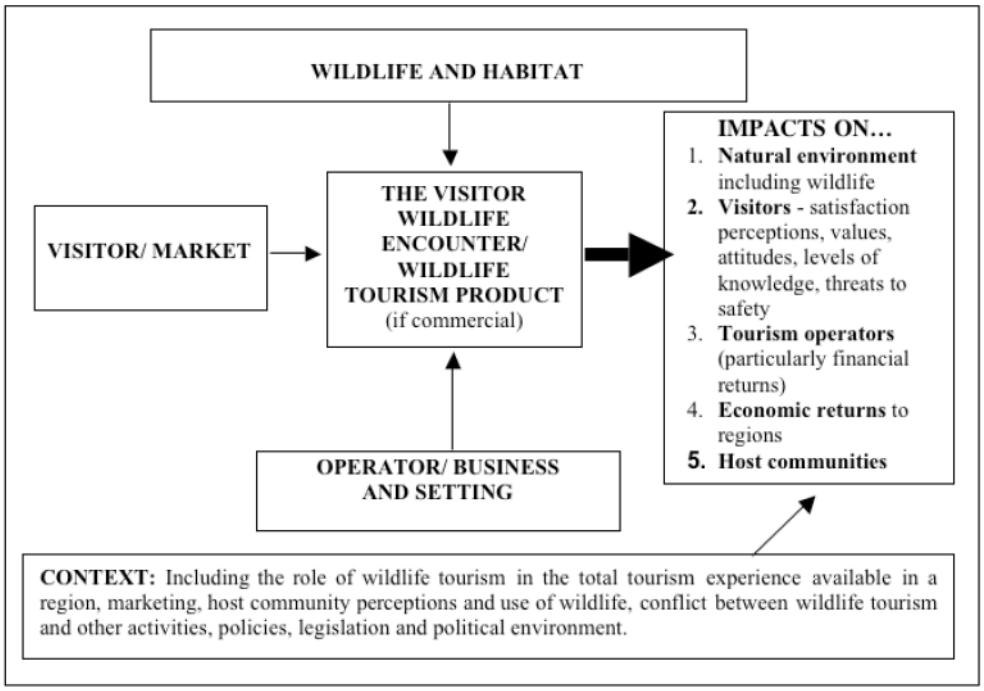
However, understanding the nature of visitors in terms of their motivations, expectations and satisfaction during wildlife encounters is often stated as an important, but insufficiently researched element in the wildlife tourism literature (Moscardo & Saltzer, 2005; Bresler, 2009; Pearce and Wilson, 1995; Moscardo & Saltzer, 2004). Tribe (2001) further points out a lack of information about visitors that are attracted by captive wildlife attractions. Nevertheless, a growing number of authors started addressing the demand side throughout the last years and contributed knowledge towards visitor profiles, motivations, desirable features and satisfaction levels in captive or semi-captive settings (e.g. Moscardo & Saltzer, 2005; Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2009). However, most of these studies are site-specific examples and are conducted in a limited regional context (mostly in Australia/ New Zealand) with the focus on particular species. As types of wildlife and perceptions of animals vary between different countries and cultures (Lawrence, 1985), few substantive generalizations can be made for the South African context. Bresler (2009) further mentions that wildlife tourism seems to generally lack information on the demand-side, especially for African destinations. A few studies can be found that investigate the experiences of wildlife tourists in wild African settings (Bresler, 2009 "*Experiencing Wildlife on Safari in Botswana",* Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2008 "*Travel motivations of tourists visiting Kruger National Park*"), but a major research gap can be identified in the knowledge about visitor demand at captive wildlife attractions in South Africa, which is of major importance in the light of the current debates and discussions. By answering the above defined research questions, the present study aims to specifically address this research gap and contribute research-based knowledge towards visitor demands at African wildlife destinations. Two particular research gaps identified by Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood (2001, p.11), the "*factors that contribute to satisfaction and dissatisfaction with currently available wildlife tourism opportunities*" as well as the "*understanding of how visitors react to management strategies and actions"* will specifically be discussed in the study.

Moreover, it is stated that further research is needed into the role of interpretation in wildlife tourism experiences, educational outcomes for the visitors as well as aspects of the visitor experience that are effective in achieving environmental learning and supportive behavior changes (Ballantyne, Packer & Falk, 2011; Moscardo,Woods & Greenwood, 2001). In summary, these suggestions were taken as a cause to conduct a demand analysis at South African wildlife sanctuaries with special regard to the educational value of the visit in progress of sustainable development in the wildlife tourism industry.

2. Theoretical Framework: Wildlife Tourism

As identified by the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre CRC (2009, p.2), "*the encounter between the visitor and the wildlife comprises the core of a wildlife tourism experience."* This experience or product is shaped by the interrelation of different elements relating to the natural resource base (wildlife and associated habitat), the visitor, the operator and host community, the setting and the economy as well as specific management actions set in place (Higginbottom, 2004; CRC, 2009) (figure 2). Although the study's research is focused on a demand side analysis, the theoretical framework will cover several elements referring to the broader research field of wildlife tourism, including its visitor market, economic value and wildlife tourism operators, as well as conflicting interactions between these components. Understanding these elements is crucial to acquire an overview about the study's research context as well as the inherent conflicts of sustainable wildlife tourism management that have to be addressed by providing research-based recommendations.

Figure 2: Interactions between components of the wildlife tourism experience
Source: Higginbottom (2004, p.6)



2.1 Definition, classification models and terms

According to Newsome, Dowling and Moore (2005, p.18, 19), wildlife tourism is defined as the following:

"Wildlife tourism is tourism undertaken to view and/ or encounter wildlife. It can take place in a range of settings, from captive, semi-captive, to in the wild, and it encompasses a variety of interactions from passive observation to feeding and or/ touching the species viewed."

As the definition points out, activities included under the label of wildlife tourism can be very broad and diverse. Destinations, environments and types of animals vary greatly during wildlife tourism experiences and encompass multiple roles that are ascribed to animals in the tourism industry.

Classification models and terms

Several authors offer a conceptualization and classification of wildlife tourism by specific key variables, which allow the location of wildlife sanctuaries in the broad range of wildlife tourism activities. However, as wildlife sanctuaries display different focus species and offer different kinds of enclosures and activities, their classification into present models can vary and often depend on the level of the animal's confinement. An overview about common classifications is given below.

Consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife activities

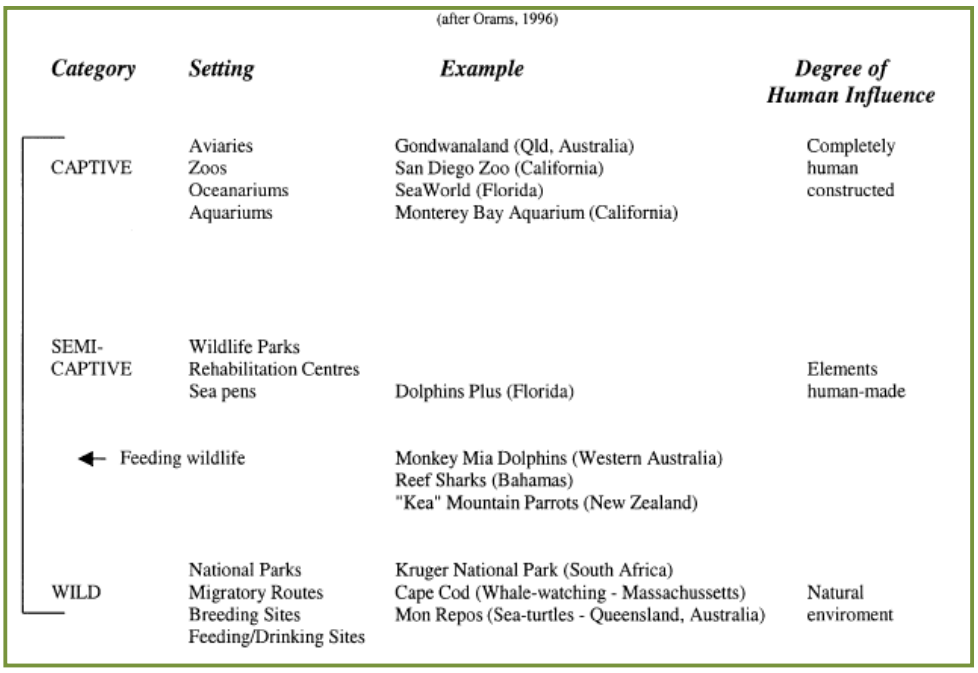
Duffus & Dearden (1990) distinguished between **a non-consumptive** and **consumptive** experience of wildlife. More passive wildlife activities such as viewing, photographing and feeding are typically referred to as non-consumptive, allowing a repeat "use" of the product (Bulbeck, 2005). They are termed as "non-consumptive wildlife-orientated recreation (NCWOR)", which is defined as a *"human recreational engagement with wildlife, wherein the focal organism is not purposefully removed or permanently affected by the engagement"* (Duffus & Dearden, 1990, p.215). Consumptive activities, in turn, include hunting or fishing, which involves the capture or kill of an animal (Duffus & Dearden, 1990; Care for the Wild International, 2012). As visiting a properly-managed wildlife sanctuary does not include an animal's kill or capture by the tourist for consumptive purposes, the research area is restricted to non-consumptive wildlife tourism experiences.

Wild-captive continuum

Mark Orams (1996) provided a model that categorizes tourist-wildlife interaction on a **captive**, **semi-captive** and **wild** scale, which ranges from zoos and aquariums to rehabilitation centers and national parks (figure 3). These different encounter sites are simplified by their naturalness and level of confinement. Wild or wilderness settings refer to the natural environment and living habitat of the animals whilst semi-captive settings include certain artificial features (Holpainen, 2012). Captive settings, on the other hand, describe fully man-made, artificial enclosures and normally include zoos, wildlife parks, animal sanctuaries, aviaries and aquaria as well as circuses and shows by mobile wildlife exhibitors (Holopainen, 2012; Higginbottom, 2004). According to this model, called the “Spectrum of Tourist-Wildlife Interaction Opportunities (SoTWIO), wildlife sanctuaries can be identified as captive or semi-captive environments, dependant on their degree of the animals’ confinement. According to Shettel-Neuber (1988), the general development of captive animal displays is often described referring to first, second and third- generation enclosures. From the middle of the 20th century, hard barred first-generation cages have been making way for more complex second- and third-generation enclosures, which display naturalistic, aesthetically pleasing surroundings with increased health and hygiene conditions, as a replicate of the animals’ natural habitat (Shettel-Neuber, 1988; Hosey, Melfi & Pankhurst, 2013; Shani & Pizam, 2011).

Although wildlife sanctuaries can resemble the character of zoo by providing completely human constructed enclosures and provisioning, they must be differentiated regarding their function and target group. Zoos typically host a diversity of wildlife, taking into consideration conservation needs and the potential for scientific research. Furthermore, zoos normally breed and trade their animals and display certain flagship species that are favored by the public (Hartigan-Shea, 2014; Moorhouse et al., 2015). Wildlife sanctuaries, in turn, only comprise certain focus species and focus on specific approaches such as animal rescue or rehabilitation. Additionally, zoos exhibit animals to the general public and attract local residents rather than international tourists (Moorhouse et al. 2015; Tribe, 2004). A further difference relates to the educational component during the visit. Whilst most of the time, zoo visitors walk independently through the enclosures, tours at wildlife sanctuaries are mostly accompanied by a guide, who provides interpretation of the animals and their behavior.

Figure 3: Spectrum of Tourist-Wildlife Interaction Opportunities.
Source: Orams (2002, p.283)



(after Orams, 1996)

Category	*Setting*	*Example*	*Degree of Human Influence*
CAPTIVE	Aviaries Zoos Oceanariums Aquariums	Gondwanaland (Qld, Australia) San Diego Zoo (California) SeaWorld (Florida) Monterey Bay Aquarium (California)	Completely human constructed
SEMI-CAPTIVE	Wildlife Parks Rehabilitation Centres Sea pens	Dolphins Plus (Florida)	Elements human-made
← Feeding wildlife		Monkey Mia Dolphins (Western Australia) Reef Sharks (Bahamas) "Kea" Mountain Parrots (New Zealand)	
WILD	National Parks Migratory Routes Breeding Sites Feeding/Drinking Sites	Kruger National Park (South Africa) Cape Cod (Whale-watching - Massachussetts) Mon Repos (Sea-turtles - Queensland, Australia)	Natural enviroment

Staged-authentic continuum

A different approach was taken by Bulbeck (2005), who locates wildlife encounter sites on a **staged-authentic continuum**. These sites range from traditional zoos and sanctuaries to open plain-type zoos and more “authentic” sites, where animals can be viewed in their natural environment, but often under the regulation of authorities. On the one end of the “authenticity” spectrum she places the city zoo, on the other end appears the “*totally unmediated experience of seeing an animal on a bush walk or while camping*” (Bulbeck, 2005, p.8). In this case, the notion of “authenticity” refers to whether the animal is living in its natural habitat and is therefore free to choose the encounter. According to Franklin (1999) cited by Bulbeck (2005), authentic animal encounters develop out of formerly unmediated experiences of animals and further include minimum mediation or physical barriers. Applying this model to the captive-wild continuum (Orams 1996), it is stated that wild encounter sites represent the “authentic” attractions, whereas semi-captive and captive sites are considered as “simulated natural” or “staged” (Bulbeck, 2005). In this regard, wildlife sanctuaries can be seen as staged or semi-authentic encounter sites, also dependant on their level of confinement, mediation or wildlife activity. Yet, it must be noted that the perception of “authenticity” is subjective and depends on the individual person as well as their cultural background and former experiences.

Further variables

The **principle type of encounter** (e.g. viewing, feeding, handling, killing), the **type of supplier** (none, private tourism operator, non-profit organization) as well as the **level of dispersion and infrastructure** constitute further variables that are used to integrate wildlife tourism activities in comprehensive, research-based classifications (Higginbottom, 2004). Wildlife activities can encompass attractions at fixed sites, tours, as well as experiences available in association with sophisticated infrastructure such as tarred roads and accommodation – or occur as unguided encounters by independent travelers (Higginbottom, 2004; Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005). Wildlife sanctuaries are considered as fixed sites that need to provide a certain level of infrastructure (e.g. access roads, pathways, visitor centers), if the facility is open to the public and activities are offered for the visitors.

2.2 Classification of wildlife tourism and sanctuaries in a broader tourism context

As indicated in the previous chapter, wildlife tourism encompasses a wide range of tourism forms and scales that involve the enjoyment of natural areas and wildlife (INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing, 2013). For this reason, wildlife tourism is frequently defined as a sub-set of nature based tourism which may involve the element of adventure travel and applies to some key characteristics of ecotourism such as sustainability, education and conservation support (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005; Reynolds & Braithwaite, 2001) (Figure a2, Appendix A). Reynolds & Braithwaite (2001) extended this classification by mentioning the further overlap with the consumptive use of wildlife, rural tourism as well as general human relationships with wildlife, which won't be further examined in the present study. The purpose of the following section is to summarize key features, concepts and principles of the segments nature-based tourism and ecotourism as well as their connecting and overlapping relationships to the field of wildlife tourism. Furthermore, the term "sustainability" as well as it's applicability to the respective tourism forms will be examined. A major focus will be set on the classification of wildlife sanctuaries, as a segment of wildlife tourism and the study's research and survey sites, into these broader tourism concepts.

2.2.1 Nature-based tourism

Nature-based tourism constitutes an important segment of the tourism industry and is frequently described as one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism market with a high potential for wildlife-based economic growth and the protection of bio-diverse environments (Christ et al., 2003; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009; Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005; Tisdell & Wilson, 2012).

According to Kuenzi & McNeely (2008), nature-based tourism shows an annual growth rate of 10-30 % and its share in the world travel market is estimated at 20%. Especially in developing countries and rural areas, its economic value creates a clear comparative advantage as a result of an often rich natural resource base (OECD, 2009). Fundamentally, it can be seen as a very diverse sector that includes all forms of tourism where "*relatively undisturbed natural environments form the primary attraction or setting"* (Buckley & Coghlan, 2012, p.2 referring to Buckley, 2009 and Newsome et al., 2002). Nature-based activities are directly dependent on the use of natural resources in a relatively undeveloped condition, such as the component of scenery, topography, vegetation and wildlife (Butler, 1992).

Since animals can be seen as a subset of nature, most wildlife tourism activities are considered as a subset of nature-based tourism, which includes the viewing of wildlife, but is more holistic in its embrace of the environment (Newsome, Dowling and Moore, 2005). Some authors, however, exclude zoos and other captive wildlife attractions from the field of nature-based tourism (Higginbottom, 2004), as the tourism focus is often set *on* rather than *in* nature (Burns, Moore & MacBeth, 2011). Yet, the exclusion of captive wildlife settings from nature-based tourism can't be regarded as universal, because wildlife sanctuaries and rehabilitation centers follow different approaches and provide different levels of confinement. Some indeed aim to conserve natural elements of the animal's habitat and offer guided tours through open and naturalistic enclosures. Additionally, Tisdell & Wilson (2012, p.27) stated that nature-based tourism *"may be undertaken in natural environments or in environments altered or modified by humans*" and include captive and non-captive animals. Coghlan & Buckley (2012) further explained that the nature-based experience is dependent on individual perceptions or constructions of nature and even caged enclosures can thus be regarded as a natural environment.

2.2.2 Ecotourism

According to Newsome, Dowling & Moore (2005, p.13), ecotourism can be described as a *"subset of natural area tourism and may combine elements of both, nature-based tourism and adventure travel*." This form of tourism, which itself has many classifications, is closely related to wildlife tourism and is often used in connection to other descriptive terms such as "responsible" or "ethical" tourism (Kutay, 1989), "environmental-friendly travel" (Borst,1990), "conservation" or "low-impact travel" (Honey, 1999) as well as "green" or "sustainable tourism" (Lane, 1990; Honey, 1999).

Ecotourism grew out of the global environmental movement in the late 1970s and emerged as an alternative concept to mass tourism and the overcrowded, unpleasant conditions in nature-based destinations as well as its adverse ecological and socio-cultural impacts (The

International Ecotourism Society, 2014; Leksakundilok, 2004; United Nations Environment Progamme, 2011; Valentine, 1992). It has seen massive growth since the early 1990s, growing 20–34% per year, and was growing triple the rate of the global tourism industry in 2004 (William, 2014; TIES, 2006). The term "ecotourism" took shape between the 1970s and mid 1980s, its origin has been attributed to Hector Ceballos–Lascurain (Leksakundilok, 2004), who defined ecotourism as following:

"*Traveling 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"* (Ceballos-Lascurain 1991 cited by Dawson, 2008, p.41).

Goodwin (1996, p.288) specified a later definition of ecotourism by mentioning features relating to sustainability and conservation:

"Low impact nature tourism which contributes to the maintenance of species and habitats either directly through a contribution to conservation and/or indirectly by providing revenue to the local community sufficient for local people to value, and therefore protect, their wildlife heritage area as a source of income."

Although there have been many definitions and associated ideas with the term "ecotourism", it's essential concept and key principles have been resilient for the most part (Leksakundilok, 2004). It is characterized by a number of features such as the educative element and conservation-supporting practice. It recognizes the intrinsic value of nature and furthermore involves the concept of sustainability, appropriate return to local communities as well as the long-term conservation of resources (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005). According to its fundamental key principles, ecotourism is *"nature-based, ecologically sustainable, environmentally educative, locally beneficial and generates tourist satisfaction"* (Newsome, Moore & Dowling, 2013, p.18). Compared to related tourism forms such as nature-based tourism, which are defined by features of the product or setting, ecotourism is defined by "*measures taken to improve either social or environmental outcomes*" (Buckley & Coghlan, 2012, p.1).

The opportunity to participate in wildlife-based experiences constitutes a central element of many ecotourism activities (Moscardo, 2013). However, many authors rather focus on the overlap between ecotourism and non-captive wildlife, as animals in captivity do not necessarily apply to ecotourism's criteria which include a natural setting and minimal impact on the environment (TerraMar Research, 2009; Moscardo, 2013, Cater & Cater, 2007).

Contrariwise, captive facilities such as wildlife sanctuaries and rehabilitation centers provide high educational potential to raise awareness and appreciation about wildlife species, conservation and environmental matters (see chapter 1.1). By extension, these activities can lead to visitor's long-term environmental awareness and positive actions for the environment, which in turn increase the longer-term sustainability of the tourist activity (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005). The potential for education and conservation at captive wildlife sites was also highlighted by Mason (2002), who suggested that these facilities can indeed be considered as ecotourism attractions. In the present study, visits to wildlife sanctuaries are regarded as ecotourism activities under the condition that the mission of conservation, education and awareness rising is effectively realized. The concept of ecotourism is considered to have the strongest ties to the research area of the study and therefore, understanding its principles is of crucial importance.

2.2.3 The concept of sustainability and sustainable tourism

A clear distinction must be made between the concepts of ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Ecotourism itself refers to a segment within the tourism industry which focuses on environmental sustainability, whereas sustainable tourism is not a discrete form of tourism, but should be applied to every type of tourism activity, operation and establishment, including conventional, alternative and niche segments (UNEP 2011; UNEP & UNTWO, 2005). Research and discussions about sustainable development have increased since the Brundtland Report 1987 proposed that intergenerational equity could not be achieved without a consideration of the environmental impacts of economic activities (Spenceley, 2005; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). In this report of the Brundtland Commission of the United Nations, sustainable development was defined as a "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (WCED, 1987, n.p.).

The concept of sustainability is furthermore based on the notion of the "triple bottom line" (Elkington, 1997), also known as the "three pillars of sustainability" which include the environmental, social and economic dimension. These are mentioned in the definition of Government of Western Australia (2003, p.4), which described sustainability as "*meeting the needs of current and future generations through integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity*."

Tourism can play a significant role in ensuring a sustainable development if its management fully embraces the principles of sustainability (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). According to UNEP & UNWTO (2005, p.12), sustainable tourism can be defined as *"tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the*

needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities." It provides guidelines, policies, management practices and programs that make optimal use of environmental resources and maintain essential ecological processes to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005; UNEP, 2011). On the demand site, sustainable tourism should provide highly satisfactory, meaningful tourism experiences and at the same time, promote sustainable practices and raise awareness about sustainability concerns (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). According to these sustainability principles, tourism forms like wildlife tourism or ecotourism, although they involve natural assets and wildlife, can't be assumed to be inherently sustainable. In recent years, ecotourism has been increasingly criticized for not being able to avoid unintended environmental or cultural impacts, especially when ecotourism destinations become more successful (EBSCO Sustainability Watch, 2009). Growing numbers of eco tourists eventually create the same demand on infrastructure as conventional tourists, thus risking the replication of mass tourism impacts (Shackley, 1996). Also wildlife tourism can't be seen as an inevitably environmentally friendly activity with minimal adverse impacts. Growing literature started documenting negative impacts on wildlife species and their habitat, which might be accidental or result from poor management or inappropriate visitor behavior (Shackley, 1996). It is therefore important that the managers of wildlife tourism experiences ensure that such experiences are educational in nature and are delivered within a framework that encompasses responsible tourism management including appropriate strategies, policies and practices (Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland, 2011; Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes, 2009; Higginbottom, 2004; Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005). According to Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland (2011, p.770), outcome of the emphasis on sustainable tourism has been an "*increasing demand from government, industry bodies and tourists to provide visitor experiences that foster understanding appreciation and conservation of the environment*", which will specifically be addressed in the present study. As the implementation of tourism activities sets increased pressure on the wildlife and their habitat, it becomes vital for the tourism industry to monitor its impacts. According to WGEA (2013, p.17), "*wildlife watching can only be sustainable if it contributes to the conservation and survival of the watched species and their habitats, provides benefits for local communities and community development, offers good quality tourism in line with market expectations, and is commercially viable*." As sustainable wildlife tourism depends on animals as a key resource of the tourism product, their health and welfare become fundamental to achieve long-term business success, customer satisfaction, biodiversity conservation and economic development (World Society for the Protection of Animals, n.y.). The topic of animal welfare must thus be considered as a crucial component in terms of sustainable tourism development.

2.3 The economic value of wildlife tourism

If managed in a sustainable attempt, wildlife tourism constitutes an effective way of securing economic benefits while supporting wildlife conservation and surrounding host communities (Shackley, 1996; Manfredo, 2002 cited by Higginbottom, 2004). By creating a demand for wild animals and generating monetary revenue, wildlife can be developed as a resource that is in the economic interest of landholders and commercial tourism operators to conserve. It can further increase income for local residents of wildlife areas and encompass a wide range of informal sector activities and goods such as handicrafts, beverages and food (Emerton, 1997). Although estimating a reliable global economic impact of wildlife tourism is difficult (due to the wide range of wildlife activities involved as well as multiplier effects and multiple-purpose journeys of tourists), it can generally be stated that it involves *"large number of participants and generates lots of money"* (Higginbottom, 2004, p. 7). One of the few attempts to estimate these global economic impacts has been made by Filion, Foley & Jacqemot (1994, p.239) for the year 1988, concluding that *"wildlife-related tourism appears to account for some 20 to 40 % of international tourism and national economic impacts ranging from US$ 47 billion to US$ 155 billion."* A more recent study conducted by CBI Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2015 estimated the global size of wildlife tourism at 12 million trips each year, with European tourists being one of the most important source markets. The monetary revenue generated from wildlife tourism varies according to specific species and in-between different visitor groups (Tisdell & Wilson, 2004). The industry is of particular importance for countries with high levels of biodiversity, as shown by the economic value of wildlife tourism reported for South Africa in chapter 1.1. Wildlife sanctuaries, as stakeholders within the wildlife tourism industry, are thus able to benefit local economies through employment creation and local crafting and can generate financial support for conservation and animal welfare-related initiatives (Interviewee 1, 2016).

2.4 Wildlife tourism demand

As a base for the study's empirical research and discussion of results, the following chapters provide a detailed theoretical overview about the demand site of wildlife tourism experiences.

2.4.1 Wildlife tourism as a reconnection with nature

"*Human relationships with natural environments change over time and differ between countries and demographic groups*", as noted by Buckley & Coghlan (2012, p.2). Especially in Western nations, a growing number of people are living an urban life accompanied by the

amenities and conveniences of a globalized world, leading to an increased disconnection from nature (Kuenzi & McNeely, 2008). As a result, many people travel in order to reconnect with the natural world, which has been claimed to be of fundamental importance to humans (Hendee & Roggenbuck, 1984). Growing environmental concern and increasing variations of environmental-based media such as nature documentaries, environmental magazines, websites and movies have contributed to this demand (Orams, 2002). A further contributing factor might be the decreasing number of opportunities to interact with nature, which resulted from the decline of high quality wilderness areas around the world. This rarity and fragileness of natural areas has thus evolved as a major attraction for tourists and let several protected areas world-wide become popular tourist destinations (Orams, 2002).

In former times, people were often intimately familiar with their local wildlife, but hardly aware of the unknown species that were found in other parts of the world. Nowadays, television and electronic media have become standard mediums for many people to experience the worlds' wildlife resources and biodiversity in ways that were impossible a generation ago. Although people from urban areas are physically out of touch with nature, they might be highly mentally connected to some aspects of wildlife and the threats that species are facing (Higginbottom, 2004). Bulbeck (2005, p.xx) stated that people imagine wild animals not as the "*ants, birds or frogs in their backyard, but as the lions on the savannah, penguins in the Antarctica, whales and dolphins in the Southern Ocean.*" "Wild" animals are considered to appear in a non-urban setting and therefore, many tourists travel great distances to gain first-hand experiences of wildlife and deepen their connection to nature. Tourism activities such as safari tours, but also visits at wildlife sanctuaries which enable visitors to witness, learn about and emotionally bond with local wildlife species, can satisfy this demand.

2.4.2 Defining and categorizing wildlife tourists

As the present study focuses on non-consumptive wildlife recreation, it adapts the definition provided by Duffus & Dearden (1990, p.221), describing wildlife tourists as "*individuals who engage in encounters with wild species for the purpose of non-consumptive recreation, most frequently to view, observe and often to photograph the organism.*" However, the authors outlined that tourists can't be considered as a homogeneous group of population, even if they are primarily motivated by the same stimulus such as wildlife viewing (Duffus & Dearden, 1990). Several published studies show conflicting results in defining basic characteristics of visitors that are attracted by specific wildlife activities or attractions. Boxall & McFarlane (1993), for example, reported that wildlife tourists tended to be older, whereas Pearce & Wilson (1995) describe wildlife tourists as being younger, more independent travelers who more likely travel further and have higher education levels and income. The study of

Moscardo & Saltzer (2005), on the other hand, showed an evenly distributed age range with a visitor's age ranging from 15 to 97 years.

Duffus & Dearden (1990) proposed the level of specialization as a core dimension for categorizing different visitors in wildlife situations. In the beginning, wildlife sites are dominantly attracted by exploratory users termed "wildlife specialists". These visitors are likely to have pre-knowledge about the site and require little infrastructure, management or interpretive facilities. As the popularity of the site and associated activities grow, less ambitious visitors will start dominating the group, which goes along with a higher demand for facility development, more mediation and an increasing pressure on the respective host area. At the end of this spectrum, the wildlife site is often dominated by general tourists, the so-called "wildlife generalists", who have little special interest in the site's attraction and are dependent on the development of supportive infrastructure (Duffus & Dearden, 1990). More accessible wildlife sites such as zoos and other captive attractions are considered to attract a greater percentage of those casual tourists, who partake in ecotourism activities as part of a broader holiday trip (Bulbeck 2005, Hvenegaard, 1994).

2.4.3 Current demand trends

The demand for interaction with nature has been argued to be fundamentally important to humans and travel to natural areas has significantly increased during the last decades (Hendee & Roggenbuck, 1984; Orams, 2002). Furthermore, tourists are becoming increasingly concerned with the sustainable aspects of tour operations and start seeking "greener" tourism products, as shown by the increasing demand for eco-tourism holidays and sustainable travel experiences (Moscardo & Saltzer, 2004; UNEP, 2011; Sustainable Tourism.net, 2014, Gupta, 2015). Simultaneously, the consumer's demand for tourism experiences that integrate education and learning (educational tourism) was increasing rapidly (Ritchie, Carr & Cooper, 2003), also highlighting the importance of captive wildlife attractions as educational platforms in the tourism industry.

According to Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood (2001), industry media often states that there is a still growing demand for wildlife tourism experiences, but there appears to be insufficient evidence for this trend when taking a look at actual visitor statistics. There have been contradictions and difficulties associated with the measurement of wildlife tourism growth, as wildlife activities vary a lot and often appear in combination with other touristic activities. Whereas some particular types of wildlife tourism show growth, others show declining or stable visitor numbers, indicating that there is a general lack of reliable and standardized defined data on the people participating in wildlife tourism activities (Woods, 2002, also see chapter 2.3). Woods (2002) furthermore stated that it is debatable whether people

increasingly desire wildlife encounters or simply have a greater accessibility of natural environments and commercial wildlife tours, which resulted in some figures showing a growth of wildlife tourism.

Regardless of the debate over growth and exact figures, an increasing demand for more naturalistic and authentic wildlife experiences could be identified as a major trend in the wildlife tourism literature (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005; Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005). Especially for the modern, sophisticated tourist, whose daily life is often removed from nature, but incorporates a greater concern about environmental matters and life quality, the quest for "real" and "authentic" experiences becomes a major part of the travel decision (Weidner, 2006; Yeoman, 2008). Similar to the approach taken by Bulbeck (2005, chapter 2.1), Reynolds & Braithwaite (2001) referred to authenticity in wildlife tourism as the estimated "honesty" of an attraction, which involves the degree of natural behavior displayed by the fauna as well as the naturalness of the surrounding environment. Rockloff & Hillman (2011, p.1) further stated that "*when connected to authenticity, ecotourism can be defined as the rarity of the experience, in natural and pristine global environments free from the plunder of human development*." Attributes such as "uniqueness", "closeness to nature and wildlife", "genuine emotional/spiritual connection", "experience of the pristine" as well as the contribution to conservation play a major role in relation to authentic ecotourism experiences, which also involve the encountering of wildlife. Referring to the CBI Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n.y.), the increased interest in authentic tourism experiences was identified as a major trend in the European outbound tourism market, alongside with the increasing concern for sustainability matters. This development further results in a greater search for more realistic wildlife encounters in the animal's natural habitat, with tourists increasingly moving away from captive or semi-captive facilities to viewing wildlife in the wild (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005). Bulbeck (2005, p.xxi) reflects this trend by stating that observing animals in cages is perceived as not the "real thing". However, watching wildlife in captive setting remains a popular leisure activity around the globe (Shani, 2009), an important segment of the wildlife tourism industry (Shackley, 1996) and constitutes an important attraction for an audience who otherwise could not afford a wildlife watching holiday in the wild (Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005). According to Stone, Tucker & Doman (2007), offering encounters with wildlife (in both non-captive and captive settings) as part of a travel itinerary often increases the likelihood of potential travelers to select a certain travel package. But even in captive settings, whose attraction is often related to entertainment, visitors increasingly desire more naturalistic enclosures and encounters (Shettel-Neuber, 1988). These encounters can be achieved when the captive wildlife is kept in a semi-natural or natural environment, where visitors are able to gain close access to the animals unrestricted by cages or visible barriers (Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005).

Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth (2005, p.75) further explained that the visitors' perception of "entertainment" changed over time from a focus on circus act style presentation and the "animal freak show" to a preference for more naturalistic and authentic representations of wildlife. As the notion of authenticity is furthermore seen as a social construct, which is interpreted differently by different people (Zehrer, 2010), captive settings can also be perceived as natural and authentic if planned and managed properly. According to Holopainen (2012) as well as Moscardo & Saltzer (2005), the setting does not necessarily need to be pristine and untouched to create the idea of "naturalness" for the visitors.

A further trend was identified by Manfredo, Teel & Bright (2003), stating that public values towards wildlife have changed dramatically over the latter half of the 20th century. *"There has been a gradual shift away from traditional wildlife values that emphasize the use and management of wildlife for human benefit. This trend is one of the most influential factors shaping wildlife management today"* (Manfredo, Teel & Bright, 2003, p.288). This is confirmed by MacQueen (2009) cited by Fennell (2012, p.9), who explained that "*animals are no longer viewed as just property to be used and abused without regard for welfare, and this shift represents one of the greatest changes in Western morality.*" Animal welfare becomes a growing concern in the tourism industry and raises increasing awareness amongst a greater number of tourists, who start placing more importance on responsible tourism products (Baran, 2015). Although these trends indicate a perfect base for sustainable development in wildlife tourism, they can't be generalized for all tourists participating in wildlife tourism activities. Contrary to the assumption of an increasing quest for authentic experiences, Bulbeck (2005, p.xxi) mentioned that not all tourists are in search of authenticity, referring to "Happy snappers" which are merely notching up another "must-see" site or just want to delete experiences from their bucket list. Also for tourists who visit animal encounter sites, but are not primarily attracted by the wildlife, authenticity is not always desired.

Unruh (2011) addressed the problem of sustainable consumer behavior and reported that even if consumers express more concern over environmental issues, many of them are for example not willing to pay more money for greener products; sustainability is rather seen as a baseline condition of a business. This is confirmed by Terlau & Hirsch (2015), who stated that a clear inconsistency between consumer's attitudes towards sustainable consumption and their actual purchase behavior can be observed.

2.4.4 The formation of motivation, expectation and satisfaction

As mentioned by Driver & Tocher (1970) cited by Duffus &Dearden (1990), wildlife tourists are engaged in a satisfaction seeking behavior, with the recreational activity constituting a means to an end or goal state. To achieve its expected results, tourists choose certain behaviors and think about products in terms of their positive and negative consequences, which can also be defined as benefits and risks (Bresler, 2009). According to Joubert & Mabunda (2007), consumers learn to choose products which contain attributes that are instrumental to achieve their desired consequences.

From the tourist perspective, taking part in touristic activities can be seen as a response to felt needs, which are applied to a specific holiday scenario (Gnoth, 1997). In this case, the generated motivation constitutes an important parameter in the formation of tourist expectations. These expectations, in turn, determine the performance perceptions of products, services and experiences during the holiday (Gnoth, 1997). Motivations, expectations as well as emotional experiences thus impact the tourist's behavior and satisfaction formation (Pizam & Mansfeld, 1999; Yu & Dean, 2001, Gnoth, 1997). Usually, visitors have clear expectations regarding the quality and type of a specific service or setting. To what degree their expectations are met after the visit will determine the visitor's overall satisfaction level in the end (Sıvalıoğlu & Berköz, 2012).

Tourist motivation can be defined as "*the global integrating network of biological and cultural forces which gives value and direction to travel choices, behavior, and experience*" (Pearce, Morrison & Rutledge, 1998 cited by Panwar, Kumar & Ray, 2016, p.227).

Generally, motivations are strongly influenced by internal and external forces, called the "push" and "pull" factors. Whereas push-factors determine the need for travel, pull factors affect the choice of a destination by considering its specific characteristics (Liên, 2010). According to Crompton (1979), seven socio-psychological travel motives (escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationship, facilitation of social interaction) as well as two cultural pull-motives (novelty and education) could be identified. These also correspond with motivational factors identified for wildlife tourists, which are often related to attributes such as learning and discovery, novelty, entertainment, recreation, social contact as well as the escape from routine (Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2008; Beh & Bruyere, 2007). Expectations, on the other hand, can be defined as the "*desired performance of a touristic attraction*" (Teas, 1994, p.134), which are created by the customer as a prior estimation before receiving the actual service. They are highly influenced by information provided via tourism advertisements, commercials, brochures, mass media or informal recommendations

from friends or relatives (Akama & Kieti, 2003). Tourist satisfaction is referred to a tourist's emotional state after experiencing a specific touristic product (Baker & Crompton, 2000) and is defined as a "*post-consumption evaluation process*" (Tsosa 2002, p.45).

If the general performance of a touristic attraction meets or exceeds the initial expectation, the tourist can be considered as satisfied (Akama & Kieti, 2003). It is stated that satisfied tourists are more likely to recommend the tourist destination; ensuring customer satisfaction can furthermore contribute to increased rates of tourist's patronage, loyalty and acquisition, which in turn helps to increase the number of tourists and financial revenues (Akama & Kieti, 2003).

In the study of tourist motivation and expectation, it must be considered that each traveler is different and is influenced by certain factors that determine the perception of a specific product. It is furthermore stated that in most situations, the tourist is unlikely to be influenced by a single factor, but by a combination of multiple factors when making travel decisions (Mahika, 2011). Kotler (1997) cited by Mahika (2011, p.18) defines and groups following influential factors:

- Psychological factors (perceptions, learnings, beliefs, attitudes)
- Personal factors (personality, self-image, wealth, lifestyle, occupation, age)
- Cultural factors (system of norms and values)
- Social factors (family, social classes and groups, political opinions)

According to Anderson and Hair (1972), expectations might further be created and strengthened by appealing marketing mixes, the customer's past experiences, opinions of friends and associates as well as product rating services.

2.4.4.1 Human attitudes towards animals and cultural differences

As indicated, participants in wildlife tourism approach animal encounters from a variety of different life backgrounds, motivations and expectations (Reynolds & Braithwaite, 2001). In addition to the previously mentioned influential factors, human attitudes towards animals can play a major part in determining how animal-based attractions are perceived by the tourist. Kellert (1984, p.179, 180) referred to Kellert (1976) and identified a typology of basic attitudes towards animals, which reflect fundamental differences in human values:

naturalistic (*primary interest in and affection for wildlife and outdoors*)

ecologistic (*primary concern for the environment as a system*)

humanistic (*primary interest in and strong affection for individual animals, principally pets*)

moralistic (*primary concern for the right and wrong treatment of animals*)

scientific (*primary interest in the physical attributes and biological functioning of animals*)

aesthetic (*primary interest in the artistic and symbolic characteristics of animals*)

utilitarian (*primary concern for the practical and material value of animals*)

dominionistic (*satisfaction derived from mastery and control over animals*)

negativistic (*active avoidance of animals due to dislike or fear*)

neutralistic attitude (*passive avoidance of animals due to indifference or lack of interest*)

However, it must be noted that individual persons may express the characteristics of different categories (or a combination thereof) at different times and under different conditions and circumstances.

Cultural differences

Perceptions of animals as well as their treatment and welfare vary within and between countries and are also highly determined by religious and cultural views and beliefs (Lawrence, 1985; Bracke, 2009). People's views of an animal's status, their value, their utilization and place in the world are deeply connected to their cultural environment, whose values are rooted back in ancient history and traditions (Rothfels, 2002; Lawrence, 1985). Therefore, many animals participate on different levels in a variety of co-relationships with humans, which are influenced by their cultural background (Passariello, 1999). Some African communities living in and around protected wildlife habitats, for example, can have important and long-standing relationships with these areas (Gandiwa, 2012), they might see wildlife as a threat for their livestock or are influenced by long traditions of hunting wildlife for food and slaughtering animals for ritual purposes. As human populations and demands increase throughout the African continent, human-wildlife conflicts are stated to grow (Browne-Nuñez & Jonker, 2008) and might lead to increasing tensed relationships between the local communities and wildlife species. Therefore, attitudes of African cultures towards wildlife and its assigned values can vary significantly from people of European nations, who don't have the chance to experience wildlife in their home country and might thus be interested in its conservation (Interviewee 6, 2016: Jukani). According to Bracke (2009, p.11), animal welfare in South Africa is stated to "not really be an issue" as the country has to deal with many other problems such as poverty in rural and urban areas, hunger, crime as well as social development issues. Macekura (2015) refers to a case study from Tanzania and reflects the problem that East Africans did not seem to care about preserving wildlife in the way that Europeans or Americans did. It was stated that conservationists felt the need to encourage Africans to take an interest in wildlife, especially when conservation profits are indirect and not evidently observable for the average population. To develop a commitment to protected areas and wildlife, it was mentioned that conservation must become of direct, personal interest to the African communities (Train, 1963 cited by Macekura, 2015).

Perceptions of animal welfare and conservation might also differ in many Buddhist countries across Asia, where wildlife attractions (e.g. bear, tiger and elephant farms) received huge criticism due to inhumane conditions and questionable training and taming practices (Ghosh, 2016; Tobias, 2012). According to Roger Lohanan (long-time animal activist in Thailand), this disregard of animal welfare might be explained by the mentality and ethical concept of animals and their welfare. "*We [Buddhists] are a truly generous people, but just like many Asian countries, we have our own ethical concept of animal welfare. We see animals as a living possession or an object which deserves only what we want to give them. And we think punishing animals is normal* (Roger Lohanan cited by Ghosh, 2016, n.p.)." Investigating different cultural perceptions and attitudes towards wildlife and conservation is of importance for the present study, as wildlife sanctuaries attract both domestic and international visitors whose motivations, interests and behavior might vary during their wildlife tourism experience.

2.4.4.2 Understanding visitor satisfaction with wildlife-based attractions

Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001, p.35, 36) provided a model to explain and predict tourist responses to wildlife tourism experiences. According to this model, six key quality factors are suggested to be intrinsic to capture the quality and richness of the wildlife encounter for the visitors. These include the **authenticity/naturalness**, the **intensity/excitement** as well as the **uniqueness** and **duration** (length of exposure to stimuli) of the experience, which can be applied to all forms of tourism experiences in general. The **popularity of the species** as well as the **species status** (in terms of being rare or endangered) specifically refers to wildlife tourism activities. The amount of **visitor control over the experience** (Sparks, 1994 cited by Reynolds & Braithwaite, 2001), the **condition of the setting** and the **educational component** can be identified as further determinants of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. According to Floyd & Gramann (1997) cited by Newsome, Dowling & Moore (2005), a clear link occurs between the wildlife setting and the tourist experience, a setting can either restrict or facilitate the attainment of a desired experience. Captive wildlife attractions provide an opportunity to experience a close encounter with wildlife which would otherwise not be possible due to the age or economic circumstances of the observer, or the endangered and rare status of the specie in the wild (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005). Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth (2005, p.76) state that "*captive wildlife tourism is a type of 'entertainment' based on a blend of experiencing 'wild' animals in a naturalized context while still being able to view them easily and perhaps get close and touch them akin to interacting with a domesticated animal*." Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland (2011) further mention that the close proximity of captive wildlife viewing experiences often enables visitors to observe the animals from a new or entirely different perspective. Newsome, Dowling & Moore (2005) present the idea that the feeling of safety and control can constitute an important means to

achieve a satisfactory experience for the tourist, because it allows the observation of wildlife in a comfortable and non-threatening way. Additionally, educational aspects of wildlife tourism experiences can constitute an important contributor to visitor satisfaction (Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland, 2011), alongside with the component of qualitative interpretation (Moscardo, Woods & Saltzer, 2004). Packer (2006) further outlined that many visitors value a learning experience that is enjoyable and incorporates potential transformative outcomes. As mentioned in chapter 1.4, a small but growing number of research studies have investigated tourist satisfaction with wildlife tourism experiences in specific regional contexts. Moscardo & Saltzer (2004, p.179) provided an overview about factors that have been found across several studies within different countries at both wild and captive settings, which are related to overall visitor satisfaction and enjoyment. These are defined as following:

- The variety of animals seen
- Particular features of the animals
- Close proximity to wildlife
- Seeing large, rare or new species
- The natural setting itself
- Being able to learn about the wildlife or the setting

Reynolds & Braithwaite (2001) referred to a report written by Prism Environmental Consulting Services (1988), suggesting that the predictability of a species location and activity as well as the ease of viewing constitute important features to achieve satisfactory wildlife tourism experiences for the tourists. This can be confirmed by Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth (2005), who stated that the removal of accessibility barriers such as the difficulty of viewing may enable the wildlife experience for a broader audience and improve the success of captive wildlife tourism facilities. According to Wolf & Croft (2012), visitor's satisfaction depends on both features of the wildlife (e.g. species richness, closeness of the observation, interesting behavior) as well as features of the tour such as service quality, group size, knowledgeable guides and the learning experience. Braithwaite, Reynolds & Pongracz (1996) further mention that overall satisfaction is influenced by tangible factors (service, facility design, number of involved people, weather) as well as by intangible quality modifiers such as the event duration, felt authenticity and exhilaration during the experience. As this chapter aims to provide a brief overview about the topic of wildlife tourist's motivation, expectations and satisfactory experiences, a further investigation of related studies will be undertaken in direct comparison to the outcomes of study's empirical research.

2.5 The importance and effectiveness of visitor education

Wildlife tourism, as a subset of ecotourism, implies a huge potential in ensuring sustainable development by educating visitors about the threats facing wildlife as well as the actions needed to protect the environment and maintain its biodiversity (Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland, 2011). Several authors (Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes, 2009; Ballantyne, Packer, Hughes, & Dierking, 2007; Lee & Moscardo, 2005; Tisdell & Wilson, 2005) confirmed that the educational component of wildlife tourism can have positive short- and long-term impacts on visitor's environmental learning and attitudes by developing a respect and appreciation for wildlife and nature; raising awareness of environmental issues; promoting environmentally sustainable attitudes and actions as well as enhancing tourist's capacity for the long-term adoption of sustainable living practices. These practices can, in turn, encourage visitors to make financial and non-financial contributions towards environmental and eco-conservation related programs (Powell & Ham, 2008), and provide income for the country that may be used for conservation efforts such as the ongoing protection and sustainable management of wildlife species and their habitat (Buckley, 2002).

Educational tours at wildlife sanctuaries are often accompanied by interpretation, which is defined as "*an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information"* (Tilden, 1977, p.8). It includes the use of signs, brochures, pamphlets, displays and exhibits in visitor centers as well as guides, who provide informative facts and explanations about the experienced wildlife and its behavior. It is seen as a useful tool to stimulate visitor's interest and learning, while encouraging pro-conservation attitudes, enjoyment and satisfaction (Moscardo, Woods & Saltzer, 2004). By explaining management strategies and safety messages, interpretation constitutes a crucial means in managing human-wildlife interactions and providing visitors with information on how to engage in minimal-impact behavior (Moscardo, 2003; Moscardo, Woods & Saltzer, 2004; Littlefair & Buckley 2008). According to Moscardo (2003), effective interpretation can contribute towards economic sustainability by enhancing the quality of the visitor experience and encouraging continued visitor interest. Managing visitor impacts can further contribute towards the quality of the environment itself and enhanced living conditions in surrounding host communities. A study conducted by Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes (2009) showed that effective interpretation can result in a significant reduction in potentially harmful behavior and concluded that educating tourists about possible negative impacts had encouraged voluntary compliance with behavior regulations.

According to Piaget (1972) cited by Moscardo, Woods & Saltzer (2004), the human learning process is characterized by the combination of two processes termed assimilation and accommodation. While assimilation fits new information into an existing framework of knowledge and experience, accommodation requires a change in the schema to fit in new information, which both requires an active mental processing on the part of the learner. To achieve active learning and attitude changes of visitors in wildlife tourism experiences, the operator has to ensure that the new information, including its validity and reliability, is accepted by the receiver (Moscardo, Woods & Saltzer, 2004).

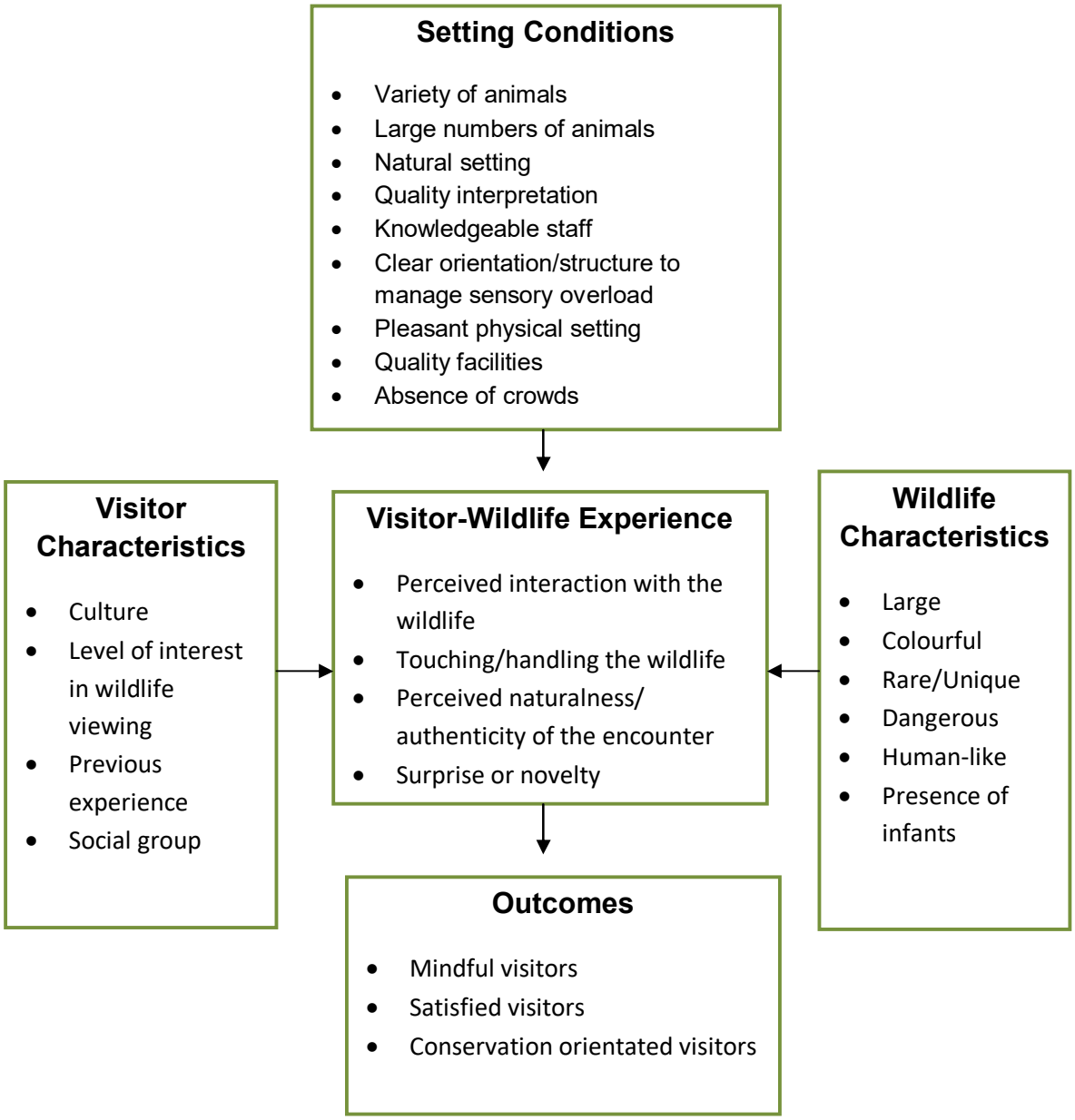
2.5.1 Emotional aspects of learning

Beside the cognitive aspects of environmental learning, Ballantyne et al. (2007) as well as Ballantyne & Packer (2009) stated that a growing body of research started to take greater account of the emotional domain as an influential factor for conservation learning experiences. According to Orams (1996) as well as Orams (1996), affective aspects during wildlife encounters are of particular importance, as humans tend to emotionally respond towards the viewing or interaction with wildlife. Ballantyne & Packer (2002) conducted research about school students on field trips to natural areas and revealed that the emotional engagement with wildlife was among the most powerful factors contributing to the achievement of environmental awareness and sustainable attitude changes. Research conducted by Myers, Saunders & Birjulin (2004) suggested that visitor's emotions vary depending on the wildlife species observed, the animal's level of activity and the emotional connection or empathy felt towards the encountered animal. Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood (2001) further mentioned that visitor satisfaction and emotional appeal might be influenced by the specie's rarity and size as well as its endangered or symbolic status. The important role of popular iconic "flagship" species as well as infant animals to evoke emotional responses on part of the visitors was further highlighted by Ballantyne et al. (2007).

2.5.2 The Mindfulness approach

The Mindfulness approach derives from social psychology (Langer, 1989) and provides a useful framework for understanding successful experiences and learning outcomes in wildlife tourism situations (Moscardo & Saltzer, 2004; Woods, 2002). Whereas Mindfulness describes a flexible state of mind in which the people are actively paying attention to the available information and reacting to new information and learning, Mindlessness describes a behavior that is predetermined by established rules, routines or scripts, where people only pay minimal attention to the environment and new information (Langer, 2000, Moscardo & Saltzer, 2004). Outcomes associated with Mindfulness include the perception of personal control, learning, excitement and satisfaction (Moscardo & Saltzer, 2004). Mindful visitors are more likely to be satisfied and appreciative with their experience; they pay a greater attention to the provided information, engage in minimal impact behavior and positively respond to management strategies and educational messages. Contrary, mindless visitors are more likely to report boredom as well as a lack of interest and dissatisfaction with the wildlife attraction and the experience (Moscardo & Saltzer, 2004; Moscardo, 1996). This framework indicates that there are several predictable factors, which can be included in the touristic product in order to encourage visitors to process the experience in a mindful manner, to achieve powerful learning outcomes and enjoy and remember their visit (Woods, 2002). According to Morscardo & Saltzer (2004, p.180), features associated with an active mental processing include the variety or change in an experience; personal control or choice; personal relevance and/or importance, the opportunities to interact with objects and people as well as multi-sensory experiences. Additionally, a number of other features can influence Mindfulness, which is shown in figure 4, the "*Mindfulness model of wildlife-based tourist experiences*". This model applies the mindfulness concept to wildlife tourism experiences and incorporates features associated with visitor satisfaction, which have been investigated by previous wildlife tourism research (Moscardo, 2006). The model contains five main sets of factors: The wildlife setting conditions, the visitor's and wildlife's characteristics, as well as the nature of the interaction between wildlife and visitors and its outcomes.

Figure 4: A mindfulness model of wildlife-based tourist experiences.
Source: Moscardo & Saltzer (2004, p.181)



2.6 Conflicting debates concerning wildlife sanctuaries

Despite their popularity amongst domestic and international visitors, animal-based attractions are facing persistent criticism and condemnation by animal rights and welfare advocates, both academics and activists (Shani, 2009). Although the increased focus on animal welfare issues has emerged in many parts of the world, considerable public and media interest addressed the case of South African wildlife parks and sanctuaries. The exploitation of wild animals for tourism purposes, a lack of animal welfare as well as a general debate over captive animal based attraction have been identified as major points of criticism, which have been exposed by the media attention. Many of these refer to a basic conflict derived from tensions between the tourism demand-side and requirements of conservation and animal welfare. As identified by Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood (2001), the most common problem seems to appear between tour operators (pressurized by tourist's demand) seeking greater access to wildlife and conservationists (aiming to avoid negative impacts) restricting access and increasing the distance between the wildlife and visitors. Further challenges occur between the economic profitability of certain wildlife interactions and moral questions derived from these encounters. The following chapters serve to provide an overview about the growing animal welfare concern in tourism as well as current and general conflicts relating to wildlife sanctuaries as the study's research sites.

2.6.1 Animal welfare concern in tourism

In recent years, growing numbers of opportunities to encounter and interact with wildlife made the concern for animal welfare increasingly relevant as pressures for more intense interactions with animals were demanded by the tourists (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2013). Around the globe, wildlife attractions have become more diversified with a wider range of environments, target species and types of commercialized activities (Higginbottom, 2004).

Although some of the first international animal welfare organizations such as the "World Society for the Protection of Animals" originated in the 1950's, a consideration of animal welfare issues in tourism only received high priority throughout the recent years (WSPA now: World Animal Protection, 2016; Fennell, 2013). This can be confirmed in examination of the proceedings of the World Organization for Animal Health's conferences in 2004 and 2008, where animals in the tourism industry were not considered as a topic for discussion (OIE, 2004; OIE, 2008; Fennell, 2013). But alongside a growing concern for responsible travel and the protection of animals in tourism (chapter 2.4.3), an increasing number of academic and grey literature started focusing on the potential impacts of human/wildlife interactions, providing guidelines, policies as well as best-practice examples in order to increase animal

welfare awareness amongst tourists and the general public (Association of British Travel Agents, 2013; WGEA, 2013; World Animal Protection, n.y.; Orams, 2002; Fennell, 2013; Higginbottom, 2004; UNEP and CMS, 2006; Bale, 2015). Especially the use of animals as actors and spectacles for the sake of human entertainment in various circuses, animal parks and arenas and the exposure of abusive animal attractions (e.g. captive orca performances at Sea World, tiger temples in Thailand, elephant trekking, bullfighting, ostrich riding, dancing bears, lion cub petting) resulted in growing public unease and forwarded a deeper examination of the topic. The heightened importance to the welfare and protection of animals in tourism also showed evidence at the largest and most respected award scheme for responsible tourism, the "World Responsible Tourism Awards", who has introduced a new award presented for the "Best Animal Welfare Initiative" in 2014 (ENDCAP, 2014).

2.6.2 Pros and cons of captive animal displays

Although captive wildlife attractions have already played important entertainment and recreation roles in ancient societies, an increasing number of arguments have been raised against the general practice of keeping wildlife in captivity for public displays and exhibits (Shani, 2009). Examples of such arguments include deficient health and hygiene conditions in many attractions around the world as well as cruel and inhumane training methods for animal performances (Shani, 2009). Furthermore, animal groups in captivity are often disrupted by separations, reintroductions or the mixing with unfamiliar individuals, which can result in social stress and aggression (Kleinhappel et al., 2016). The absence of natural social constellations, physical needs as well as adequate feeding and living conditions can lead to abnormal, invariant and repetitive behavior phenomenas (such as big cats pacing around the edge of an enclosure) and contribute to intense boredom, inactivity and the loss of natural behavior aspects (Lamont, 2015). Proponents of the animal movement, animal rights or animal liberation philosophies (e.g. Jamieson, 2006) often state that there is a moral presumption against the keeping of wild animals in captivity for display and human entertainment. As wild animals live in an environment of great complexity with much spatial and temporal variation (Hancocks, 2001), no captive environment can be seen as appropriate or suitable Therefore, it is claimed that captive wildlife attractions cannot be justified on any ground, regardless of the well-being of the exhibited animals (Jamieson, 2006; Young, 2003).

On the other hand, a series of arguments have been raised aiming to justify the existence of captive animal attractions by highlighting their positive roles in recreation, environmental education, wildlife conservation and scientific research (Hanson, 2002; Cherfas, 1984). These attractions can provide a pleasant setting for local visitors, tourists as well as for family

outings and can develop as an integral part of the social and cultural life in society. Additionally, a controlled and supervised environment ensures safety for the tourists and prevents the disruption of fauna and flora in its natural habitat (Shani, 2009). Further arguments highlight the opportunity for visitors to enrich their knowledge about wildlife species and conservation, witness animal behavior by themselves and develop a greater interest for their treatment and survival (Shani, 2009). In turn, opponents of captive enclosures argue that it is debatable whether wild animals are even needed in order to educate the public and that modern media such as TV programs, nature documentaries, internet websites or magazines offer a reasonable substitute for animal-based attractions (Shani, 2009; Jamieson, 2006). "*Couldn't most of the important educational objectives better be achieved by exhibiting empty cages with explanations of why they are empty*?" (Jamieson 2006, p.136). It is stated that visitors can get twisted and false perceptions of wildlife and its natural behavior, if it is mainly viewed in captive settings (Shani, 2009).

Further arguments discuss the conservational value of captive breeding programs termed *in-situ conservation*, which aim to ensure secure populations of wildlife species to be released back in the wild, should they ever become extinct (Fa, Funk & O'Connell, 2011; Draper & Jay, n.y.). Critics hold the belief that the most efficient strategy for the long-term protection of wildlife remains the preservation of natural populations in the wild *(in-situ conservation)* and that the effectiveness of captive breeding programs is limited (Fa, Funk & O'Connell, 2011; Draper & Jay, n.y.). As this practice is mostly attempted with relatively few individuals, who live in modified family constellations and the inability to choose their own breeding partners, it can result in inbreeding-problems such as weaker offspring which may be less able to survive in the wild (Draper & Jay, n.y.; Laidlaw, 2001; Interviewee 6, 2016: Jukani).

As demonstrated, there is a persistent debate over captive animal-based attractions, with conflicting arguments constantly raised by supporters and opponents (Shani, 2009). But it should be noted that the nature of animal-based attractions is not static and has evolved over the years, with a significant shift away from strictly entertainment and amusement providers to more environmentally responsible leisure centers, and evident improvements regarding animal welfare (Mason, 2000; Catibog-Sinha, 2008; Tribe, 2011). Furthermore, it is not always inevitable to hold wildlife captive as animals which are already habituated to humans would simply not be able to survive in the wild or would constitute a threat for human populations. Consequently, offering a safe haven and a lifetime retirement in captivity often constitutes the only option for sanctuary owners. Due to this reason, many sanctuaries implemented a no-breeding policy in order to prevent further numbers of wildlife species that grow up in captivity (Interviewee 5, 2016: Jukani, Interviewee 1, 2016: Monkeyland).

2.6.3 Physical human-wildlife interaction

Although captive animals in wildlife sanctuaries are mostly displayed to tourists for educational purposes, the inclusion of entertaining features such as animal performances and physical interaction (touching, feeding and petting) remains a common practice in South Africa and around the globe. According to Bulbeck (2005), many studies found out that, alongside the exotic mega-fauna (mostly large mammal species), settings with active animals and interaction offers are most favored by the public. Captive attractions provide the opportunity to experience close encounters with wildlife, where visitors can experience highly satisfactory feelings such as pleasure, curiosity, privilege and amazement (Schänzel &McIntosh, 2000). For the operators of these attractions, offering a diverse and broader range of products with interactive human-wildlife experiences can ensure additional financial profit as well as an increased attention from potential visitors. Especially the display of animal species that represent memorable aesthetic or characteristic attributes such as being big, beautiful, cuddly, cute, colorful, intelligent, interesting or funny (Moscardo &Saltzer, 2005), can play a major role in the attraction of visitors to these sites.

But around the globe, people increasingly argue about the impacts of physical human-wildlife interactions in attractions such as wildlife parks and sanctuaries. On the one hand, several studies have reported the importance of touch and physical wildlife interaction for humans. According to Curtin (2005, p.4), the desire for closeness and physical contact with wildlife seems to "*epitomize a soft, romantic yet typically anthropomorphic view of the animal kingdom*." By encouraging touch and providing an animal to care for, the interaction between human and wildlife can stimulate physical reactions that are stated to be very necessary and important to humans (Alan Beck cited by PAWSitive InterAction, 2002). In general, wildlife encounters can lead to significant positive or restorative effects, including a decrease in depression, stress level, loneliness as well as an increase in self-esteem and social interaction (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005), but can also satisfy the human's quest for adventure (Ghose, 2014). It is furthermore stated that appropriately managed wildlife interactions enable tourists to identify themselves or emotionally bond with individuals of species and to take interest in their treatment (Dorfman, 2011). According to Holopainen (2012), the interaction and bonding with animals is specifically sought after in order to gain the feeling of mutual understanding. Especially the connection to rare and endangered species can implicate positive effects by reminding humans to take concern about the natural world and the threats that these species are facing (Ghose, 2014). This is confirmed by Bulbeck (2005), who claimed that some tourists need to touch and hold animals first for arousing the interest to actually save them. Further arguments highlight the emotional benefit for the animals if they have a positive relationship towards humans, the habituation to people

and physical contact can moreover facilitate the medical treatment of the animals and benefit the safety of the attraction (Dorfman, 2011).

On the other hand, several critics argue that the attempts to have physical contact with wild animals can be intrusive and set wrong conservation messages for the public (Dorfman, 2011; Evans, 2015, CACH, 2013). Activities such as photo shoots, holding, petting and walking wild animals on a leash can cause stress for the animals, which are often subjected to inhumane methods in order to get sufficiently tamed for the public to handle (Evans, 2015; Dorfman, 2011). It is stated that excessive handling can cause diarrhea, a loss of fur or lead to a transmission of diseases between wildlife and humans, predator behavior further remains unpredictable and potential risks for the tourists can never be ruled out (Interviewee 1, 2016, Monkeyland; Interviewee 5, 2016, Jukani; CACH, 2013; Breytenbach, n.y.). The South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance (SAASA) advocates and promotes a complete "hands-off wildlife" approach, as animals are not able to express their feelings and potential stress while physically interacting with the tourists. Due to their opinion, it is important to convey the message that even in captive settings (such as wildlife sanctuaries); wild animals should be kept wild to the greatest possible extent and protected from human interference (SAASA, 2016). Displaying wild animals for physical interaction with humans is stated to counteract the mission of conservation by encouraging the public to keep wild animals in cages for the sake of human entertainment and superiority (Interviewee 1, 2016: Monkeyland). Mercer (2016) further explained that the handling of wild animals should require a degree of training and makes clear that *"animals should never be exploited for tourism purposes (Ln. 54-55)*" or monetary greed. As there are no policies determined by the South African government, it is the responsibility of the respective sites to decide whether physical interaction should be limited or prohibited.

Figure 5: Human-Wildlife Interaction

Image sources: https://lionexploitation.wordpress.com/2013/02/25/walking-with-lions/,; http://wanderingtrader.com/travel-blog/zambia-travel-blog/petting-walking-cheetahs-in-africa/; http://bucketlistlion.tumblr.com/

2.6.4 Canned hunting and its media coverage

As part of the previously mentioned debate, but as a discrete discussion in South Africa, touristic activities such as lion cub petting or lion walks face increasing public criticism.

Cub petting as a tourist attraction has become a large business with a high number of people visiting facilities in order to interact with big cat cubs, especially with young lions. Tourists are able to pet, cuddle or have their photographs taken with cubs, special programs furthermore allow volunteers to take care of, bottle feed or to hand raise these cats in exchange of a monetary contribution (CACH, 2013; Beales, 2015). These activities are mostly offered by wildlife parks, sanctuaries or rehabilitation centers with refers to rehabilitation or conservation, but are increasingly questioned and criticized because of their direct linkages to the fast-growing industry of "Canned Hunting" (Global White Lion Protection Trust, 2014; Barkham, 2013). Although the lack of a legal definition (Chris Mercer cited by CACH, 2013a), canned hunting can generally be described as the "*shooting of exotic animals on game farms or hunting ranches that are in the business of breeding or buying exotic animals so that hunters can pay to be guaranteed a kill*" (Big Cat Rescue, 2015, n.p.). It involves the breeding of animal species in captivity for hunting purposes in confined areas, which ensure that these animals have no or only little chance to escape the huntsman (Blood Lions, 2015). Over 160-200 canned hunting camps have been established in South Africa over the past 15 years (Global White Lion Protection Trust, 2014), holding about 7000 lions in captivity, compared to only 2000 lions left in the wild (Blood Lions, 2015a). It is estimated that the industry claims about 1000 lion lives a year (Global White Lion Protection Trust, 2014), which created a monetary revenue of approximately 70 Million US dollars in 2012 (Sharma, 2015).

Although this practice is widely regarded as unethical and directly linked to animal abuse, which is mostly unaccepted by society (National Council of SPCAs, 2016), canned hunting still remains a legal action in South Africa (Beales, 2015), supported by a lack of legislation, regulations and control (Blood Lions, 2015). Within this industry, the tourism sector is claimed to share the complicity by offering a major opportunity to externalize the rearing costs for the lions. Shortly after birth, lion cubs are taken from their mothers and get sold to touristic wildlife parks, where they grow up, get tamed and petted by tourists and volunteers. As soon as the lions reach their trophy hunting size, they are brought back to their original farms, where they end up being used for the canned hunting industry (CACH, 2013; Interviewee 5, 2016, Jukani).

As the petting of lion cubs constitutes a major attraction for tourists and implies financial benefit, some wildlife tourism attractions started to implement breeding programs, ensuring a secure and constant supply of cubs to be petted for the tourists. These practices are often

criticized with refers to “factory farming” and the exploitation of animals for commercial tourism purposes and financial profit, with no consideration of the lioness’ natural breeding cycle (CACH, 2013). Often, a lack of education, awareness and clarification concerning the future of the young animals result in visitors and volunteers unintentionally supporting these practices, falsely led to believe that they are contributing towards conservation and scientific research (Evans, 2015; Blood Lions, 2015). It is often stated that there is no future for captive bred lions other than the hunting or bone trade industry, as it is highly improbable for captive raised species, especially in close contact to humans, to get released and acquire the skills and abilities required in the wild (CACH, 2013; Blood Lions, 2015; Lewis-Balden, 2015; Owen, 2008).

Media coverage

Figure 6: Blood Lions Cover

Image source: https://raru.co.za/movies-tv/4167553-blood-lions-dvd

Due to the fact that South Africa has a long hunting tradition and animal welfare issues only play a minor role in SA government policies (“*Compassion for animals is un-African*” Jakob Zuma cited by CACH, 2013b), opponents of canned hunting focus on addressing source markets such as European organizations and tourism stakeholders in order to cut off funds for the canned hunting industry (Chris Mercer, 2016).

As canned hunting began to grow, numerous campaigns, foundations, animal activist groups and initiatives were launched in order to counteract this industry and create awareness amongst the public and involved stakeholders around the globe. After the release of the “Blood Lions” movie in July 2015 (figure 6), which exposed the realities about the flourishing predator breeding and canned lion hunting industry in South Africa, a world-wide medial interest and attention developed. The movie was screened by Discovery channel, Animal Planet and MSNBC in 185 countries and territories, its Facebook campaign has reached over 11 million people in 12 months (status: 27.07.2016). Online support by international influencers and celebrities resulted in further propaganda and critical screenings have been showed in several governmental institutions around the world, including European parliaments and the South African Tourism Department (Blood Lions, 2016).

A Google search for “Lion cub petting South Africa” or “Canned Hunting” reveals an increasing number of information, film material as well as magazine and news articles discussing the unethical practices behind this industry and encouraging the public to reject tourism offers such as lion works or cub petting (e.g. CACH, 2013; Evans, 2015). Alongside this development, a number of lion parks and wildlife sanctuaries have been exposed to their

involvement in the canned hunting industry, resulting in enormous negative publicity for the respective sites. Due to the negative media coverage and societal pressure, some of these attractions completely stopped their breeding programs and physical interaction offers with the lions (e.g. Seaview Predator Park, n.y.).

2.6.5 Response of the tourism industry

In response to the globally observable animal welfare movement in tourism and negative media coverage around the world, many tour operators and tourism organizations started to take significant steps in protecting the welfare of animals during their operations in wildlife tourism markets. A leading example is the Dutch Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (ANVR), a representative of more than 280 tour operators and affiliated members, which launched new animal welfare guidelines in 2016 as well as training for all members to discourage patronage of certain wildlife activities and proceed towards a sustainable, animal-welfare orientated tourism industry (World Animal Protection, 2016). All members are requested to implement ANVR's new guidelines in their business and are encouraged to create awareness about wildlife activities that are unacceptable due to animal welfare or conservation concerns (Reijnen, 2016). These "unacceptable" practices encompass almost all entertainment-related practices such as lion walks, elephant riding, animal fighting, canned and trophy hunting, animal performances as well as swimming with dolphins and whales (World Animal Protection, 2016). The overall ANVR guidelines are based on the "Global Guidance for Animals in Tourism" guidelines, which have been launched by the UK's largest tourism-related trade association ABTA in 2013 (World Animal Protection, 2016; ABTA, 2013). A further vanguard in animal welfare and protection is the German tourist enterprise TUI, which revised its product portfolio and stopped several programs including elephant rides, dolphin shows as well as photo shoots with parrots, iguanas or koalas in hotels (WeltN24, 2014). In the case of South Africa, the work of several campaigns and initiatives (e.g. the Campaign Against Canned Hunting) resulted in an increased ban of lion cub petting by volunteer organizations (e.g. Natucate, Praktikawelten, Projects Abroad, Wegweiser- Freiwilligenarbeit, Activity International) and tourism organizations (e.g. ANVR) (CACH, 2016). Yet, the topic remains a continuous debate as lion activities are still offered in the country, also risking to reflect negatively on South Africa's tourism industry as a whole (Traveller 24, 2016, CACH, 2016).

Conclusion

It has become clear that the segment of tourism-related wildlife attractions in South Africa is characterized by considerable debates about how to operate and ensure best possible animal welfare conditions, conservational benefits and satisfactory experiences for the tourists. Different approaches were drawn into the spotlight that are highly discussed by conservationists, animal welfare activists, tourism operators and the general public. In this context, the component of qualitative interpretation and visitor education has become of major importance for the respective sites in order to promote their different approaches, values and educational messages to the visitors.

On the basis of these conflicts and a comprehensive theoretical examination of the research area, the research objectives were determined for the present study (chapter 1.2). Demand patterns will be compared at different wildlife facilities promoting different operations and beliefs, enabling an investigation of visitor perceptions towards specific operational approaches and the derivation of further recommendations for the management of these sites. In overall summary, social, educational, and environmental aspects of sustainability will be examined of particular importance for the present paper, which also enhance the economic viability of the respective establishments.

3. Methodology

This chapter provides an overview about the study's research methodology and its detailed implementation into practice. A literature and web analysis was combined with quantitative and qualitative methods of empirical social research, which were applied at three selected research sites in South Africa.

3.1 Literature and web analysis

The theoretical framework of this thesis is based on a detailed analysis of secondary data, which is mainly drawn from academic literature such as textbooks, reports and journal articles as well as from web pages and newspaper articles published in the internet (relevant literature was given in chapter 1.4). According to Johnston (2014, p.620), "*the key to secondary data analysis is to apply theoretical knowledge and conceptual skills to utilize existing data to address the research questions.*" If undertaken appropriately, the literature and web review provides a cost-effective way of gaining a broad understanding of the research questions and context, a helpful tool in designing subsequent primary research and

a baseline to compare primary data collection results (Novak, 1996 cited by McCaston, 2005; School of Management and Languages, n.y.).

First of all, it was important to concretize and limit the research topic in terms of its temporal, technical and content-related feasibility. By means of specific keyword searches, a first content analysis of available literature and web information was conducted. In the following, library catalogues, databases, web pages and professional journals were systematically searched in order to compile relevant information for the theoretical base of the study (a similar approach has been described by Rosert, 2009). To facilitate the insights into the broad research field of wildlife tourism, a citation network through the “snowball” sampling technique was created. This sampling method starts with the collection of seed articles, from which further literature citations and references are extracted. These quoted publications, in turn, provide further references, which eventually produce a broad network of relevant literature built around the seed articles (Lecy & Beatty, 2012). In the course of the theoretical examination of the topic, the methodological approach and research design for the study was determined.

3.2 Selection of research sites

Empirical field research was conducted on-site at South African wildlife sanctuaries. To ensure a basis for comparability between the respective sites, the study is limited to land-based mammals such as big cats or monkeys. With the help of flyers, brochures and web research, a number of 12 facilities could be identified as potential partners for the research. To reduce transport costs and time from the author’s base in Cape Town, the facility search was mainly limited within South Africa’s Western, Northern and Eastern Cape. During the period from April to July 2016, managers of these wildlife facilities were contacted via email or personally either at the respective site or at the World Travel Market Africa from 06. - 08.04 in Cape Town. Generally, it could be observed that many sanctuaries were hesitant to support the research study or refused to cooperate at all. This may reflect the sensitivity of the research area, which was addressed in chapter 2.6. Especially those sanctuaries which offer interactive activities with big cats such as lions, may have faced negative publicity in the past and therefore avoid a deeper investigation of the topic.

From all cooperative facilities, Monkeyland Primate Sanctuary, Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary and the “Cheetah Outreach” have been chosen as the study’s research sites, which encompass different ways of animal display as well as different approaches concerning their tourism-related activities. A brief presentation about each research site will be given in the following table.

Table 1: Presentation of research sites

Monkeyland Primate Sanctuary	**Location:** Plettenberg Bay, South Africa The Monkeyland Primate Sanctuary is described as the world's first free-roaming, multi-species primate sanctuary, which covers an area of 12 h indigenous forest and provides a safe haven for over 500 monkeys of 18 different species. The facility focuses on monkey rescue and rehabilitation and aims to free previously caged monkeys into the forest area. 11 monkey species are able to roam freely through the forest and be approached by the visitors on walking pathways during guided educational tours. Monkeyland is part of the South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance (SAASA), which is certified by Fair Trade Tourism and winner of the Responsible Tourism Award in 2014. As all SAASA-sanctuaries, Monkeyland commits to a strict "no touching, no interaction" policy, which prohibits any physical contact between humans and the wildlife. (Monkeyland Primate Sanctuary, n.y.; Fair Trade Tourism, 2016)
Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary	**Location:** Plettenberg Bay, South Africa Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary provides a permanent retirement home for big cats and other iconic African wildlife species (e.g. lions, leopards, cheetahs, serval cats, wild dogs, zebras, snakes), which were rescued from zoos, circuses, the exotic pet trade or canned hunting industry. Along with its Fair Trade Tourism certified SAASA associate Monkeyland, Jukani commits to a strict "no touching, no interaction" policy and further prohibited the breeding of big cats in captivity. Visitors are able to join guided educational tours through the facility. (Fair Trade Tourism, 2016a; Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary, no year)
Cheetah Outreach	**Location:** Paardevlei, Somerset West Cheetah Outreach is an education and community-based program which was created to raise public awareness of the plight of the cheetah and to fundraise for its survival in the wild. In 2005, the facility implemented the Anatolian Shepherd Guard Dog program, which provides guarding dogs to South African farmers as a non-lethal method of protecting livestock from predators and reduces the conflict between farmers and cheetahs. The facility relies on volunteers and visitor fees as well as on donations and sponsorships in order to run the facility, raise awareness and fundraise for educational and conservation-related initiatives. Visitors are able to join educational tours through the facility and encounter (touch, stroke) several captive-raised ambassador species (cheetah adults and cubs, caracal, meerkats, bat-eared foxes etc.). (Cheetah Outreach, 2015)

Although the Cheetah Outreach does not define its facility as a "wildlife sanctuary" and differs in certain characteristics from the selected research sites in Plettenberg Bay (e.g. animals are captive-raised ambassador species for awareness-creation and are not rescued from wilderness areas), it was included in the research as all three wildlife facilities share certain attributes related to the tourism involvement and the educational component for the visitors (see chapter 1.1).

3.3 Mixed methodology approach

To conduct a demand analysis and address the study's research questions, primary data have been collected from the visitors. Given visitor statements and statistical analysis results should be reflected and complemented by interviews with sanctuary managers and guides, who are in close contact to the visitors and reflect their preferences over a longer period of time. For this purpose, a mix methodology approach through the combination of quantitative and qualitative research was chosen. The integration of quantitative and qualitative methods has become increasingly common in recent years, as it constitutes a means to offset the weaknesses of each single method and emphasize on the connection of both their strengths (Bryman, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Although advocates of the "incompatibility theses" argue that qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, including their associated methods, are incompatible and should not be mixed (Howe, 1988; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), Creswell (2014, p.4) states that a combination of both approaches "*provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone."* It benefits the present study as it provides a way to integrate quantitative and qualitative data, which could be used to check the accuracy (validity) of each database. According to Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004), the mixed method approach is seen as a creative form of research, which legitimates the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting the researcher's choices. For the present study, the author focused on the convergent parallel mixed methods model, where both forms of data are collected at the same time in order to integrate all information in the interpretation of the overall results (Creswell, 2014).

3.3.1 Quantitative method

Questionnaire-based surveys was adapted as the main method for the present study, as the identification of demand patterns requires a large quantity of visitor data, which can best be collected through a quantitative research tool (Kelley et al.2003.). Such surveys are a commonly used technique to collect primary data and gain information about individual's attitudes, opinions and behavior patterns in leisure and tourism research (Veal, 2006 cited by Raderbauer, 2011). Quantitative research reaches a larger sample size than qualitative research (Dawson, 2002), it further provides quantifiable data, which is statistically reliable if the research is designed and conducted properly (Nykiel, 2007; Search for Common Ground & UKaid, n.y.). The use of surveys further provides an efficient way of data-collection, as they can be distributed in large numbers at once and involve only little administrative time (Wallace Foundation, n.y.). Additionally, its results are often considered to be projectable to a

larger population (Nykiel, 2007). The collection of numerical visitor data moreover facilitates the comparison of a large number of participants as well as the investigation of relationships between specific variables. With regard to wildlife sanctuaries as research sites, the use of a quantitative method was considered as the best option to ensure the highest possible amount of participants. Especially during visitor peaks, the flow of visitors can be very fast, with visitors spending only little time at a specific location. Therefore, it was assumed that visitors are more likely willing to participate in a quantitative, written survey rather than, for example, a longer qualitative interview. Due to these conditions, it had to be ensured that the survey's completion time does not exceed a time of ten minutes in average.

3.3.1.1 Questionnaire piloting, design and sampling

By compiling a questionnaire, it must be ensured that all necessary information is covered in order to answer adequately to the study's objectives and research questions. The process of elaborating the specific survey questions determines a structure that allows the researcher to use an original scheme when analyzing the required data (Mirela-Cristina, 2013). For the present study, a written self-administered questionnaire with the combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions was created for the visitors. The self-completion by the participants intended to avoid interviewer bias, which could lead to socially desirable responding in the presence of the interviewer (Steenkamp, Jong & Baumgartner, 2009). It further offered visitors the opportunity to complete the survey in their own individual time and at an individually chosen location. However, possible disadvantages of this method include a higher incidence of skipped questions or incorrectly filled-out surveys (Wallace Foundation, n.y.).

Piloting

To check if the questionnaire is obtaining the required results and to correct potential weaknesses, misunderstandings and inadequacies (Dawson, 2002; Gebre, 2015), the survey was pilot-tested with 10 participants at Monkeyland Primate Sanctuary on 16.06.2016 before the actual data collection commenced. During preliminary planning, it was considered to divide the questionnaire into two parts referring to visitor responses before and after the sanctuary visit in order to gain an adequate reflection of visitor's expectations prior to their wildlife experience. The pilot test showed that this method can't be realized as the visitor flow was too fast and the tour's ending location varied from the starting point. As a result, the identification of individual participants proved to be difficult and many visitors left the facility before completing the second questionnaire part. Due to these circumstances, the survey layout was adjusted for the overall research, providing only one part with questions referring to statements before and after the visit as well as specifically related to expectations. Further

improvements concerning the questions, their design, adequacy and comprehension were implemented after piloting.

Questionnaire design

The revised questionnaire contained an introduction and 17 main questions, with some of them including further sub-questions and Linkert rating-scales. The majority of survey questions were designed as close-ended (multiple-choice), which require the participants to choose from a limited number of responses predetermined by the author (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). As these questions expose all participants to the same response categories, they allow a standardized quantitative statistical analysis and can easily be scanned into a statistical computer program (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Dawson, 2002). The principle of standardization is seen as very important in quantitative research as it ensures maximum comparability of responses (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). For designing these questions, variables were derived from detailed literature review and similar content-related studies (e.g. Moscardo & Saltzer, 2005; Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes, 2009; Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005).

The questionnaire further contained open-ended questions and respond categories, which in turn provide more detailed information for exploratory, qualitative research. They include the possibility of discovering individual, spontaneous and flexible responses and thus avoid bias that may result from suggesting pre-determined categories (Reja et al,2003). Open questions are often used when possible answers are unknown and can therefore provide richer data and a useful insight into a topic (Kelley et al., 2003). However, the number of open-ended questions has been limited in the survey, as these tend to be difficult to code, analyze and interpret (Brown, 2001), especially when referring to a larger sample of respondents. Furthermore, open questions are more time consuming for the respondents to answer and thus more likely to be skipped (Brown, 2001). Two survey questions further contained a matrix, where respondents indicate their level of agreement or importance to several target features and statements on a 5 point Linkert scale. Due to the reduction of text and coverage of several aspects in one question, a time saving effect for the completion of the survey could be achieved (Theobald, 2014). The Linkert scale furthermore provided the advantage of collecting easily quantifiable responses, which can be applied to the computation of mathematical analysis (LaMarca, 2011). It was decided to include an odd number of response categories in order to accommodate neutral or undecided feelings of participants (LaMarca, 2011). The overall questionnaire was designed by following the rules for questionnaire construction, layout, content and format identified by Sarantakos (2013). It contained 6 main sections (including the introduction), whose question content, rationale and

design will be explained in detail in table 2 (p.48). The actual questionnaire can be found in Appendix F. It was designed in both English and German.

Sampling

The sampling method generally applied to all visitors (over 18 years[3], volunteers excluded) attendant at the respective wildlife sites during the research period at the facility's opening hours. A convenience sampling approach was chosen for the present study, as the sample selection was based on the visitor's available time and willingness to participate in the survey. Due to the high visitor flow at the respective sites, the author was moreover unable to approach and survey all visitors at the same time. Convenience sampling (also known as availability sampling) represents a specific type of non-probability sampling, which relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available and accessible to partake in the research study (Dudovskiy, n.y.; Altinay, Paraskevas & Jang, 2016). It simplifies the data collection in short time duration and represents a popular sampling method in hospitality and tourism research (Dudovskiy, n.y.; University of Guelph, 2016). Yet, this method limits the representativeness of the selected sample, which is vulnerable to selection bias and influenced beyond the researcher's control (Altinay, Paraskevas & Jang, 2016; Dudovskiy, n.y.). A criterion sampling was further applied at Cheetah Outreach, where visitors are able to freely choose between different tour options. To ensure comparability between participant responses, only those visitors who joined the educational tour and participated at a physical wildlife encounter were surveyed.

[3] the survey was restricted to visitors over 18 years to ensure a certain level of maturity for reflecting on the survey questions, children were further excluded due to potential comprehension difficulties and existing regulations for conducting interviews with children (ESOMAR, 1999)

Table 2: Quantitative Questionnaire Design

Section	Question Content and Rationale	Question Design
Introduction	Provides an overview about the research topic and ensures confidentiality and anonymity of data	
Socio-demographics	This section includes questions relating to the participant's socio-demographics and travel behavior characteristics in order to define the survey's target audience and identify potential decisive factors that influence the respective research variables	Closed questions with a different number of RC + Open categories
Entering attributes	**Level of experience in wildlife tourism**: Indicates the respondent's participation in wildlife tourism activities prior to the visit	Closed, 5 RC
	Level of pre-knowledge about wildlife conservation: Indicates the respondent's knowledge level, helps to identify "generalists" and "specialists", allows a comparison to the post-visit evaluation of enhanced knowledge	Closed, 4 RC
	Motivation: Investigation of participant's general motivation to visit a wildlife sanctuary, roughly aligned to the travel motives identified by Crompton 1970, also includes wildlife-related factors (enjoying viewing wildlife, close view on animals, physical wildlife interaction, seeing a specific species)	8 Closed + 1 open "other" RC, maximum of 3 choices allowed
	Pre-research: Identifies the level of pre-research done by the respondent to inform him-/herself about the sanctuary → constitutes an essential factor in the formation of expectations	Closed, 3 RC
	Choice for a sanctuary: Identifies the facility's USP and influential core factors for people's decision to visit a sanctuary	Open
Desirable Features	Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 18 features during a visit at a wildlife attraction according to their expectations. These features covered different topics such as service/facilities, physical interaction/entertainment, wildlife enclosures as well as visibility/proximity to wildlife species. These features play a crucial role in the formation of visitor's expectation and satisfaction.	Five-point Linkert scale + 1 open category
Responsible behavior and restrictions	Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement to 4 statements concerning their perception of restrictions (e.g. access barriers), their consideration of responsible certifications as well as their interest in asking questions about the animals and their background. A further question encouraged the respondent to think of appropriate replacements in case restrictions would limit the access to the animals.	Five-point Linkert scale + 1 open question
Post-visit evaluation	**Satisfaction:** Questions included a measurement of visitor's satisfaction levels with the overall experience as well as the excitement and naturalness of the stay → indicates to what extent the visit met the respondent's prior expectations	Five-point Linkert scale
	Favored and criticized features: Respondents were encouraged to comment on what they enjoyed most and less about their visit → indicates what is important for them to mention and provides qualitative data for the formulation of further recommendations and management action plans	Open
	Educational Component: Questions included an evaluation of enhanced and memorable knowledge about animals and wildlife conservation during the visit as well as the respondent's willingness to support wildlife conservation in the future *All survey questions were furthermore used to answer the more embracing research questions in Section F*	Closed (5 RC) and open

3.3.1.2 Data collection and analysis

For conducting the survey, it was decided to approach the visitors after the conclusion of their tour in order to hand out the printed questionnaire for self-completion. Facilities such as a restaurant/café, tables and benches as well as visitor waiting areas within the sanctuary property increased the visitor's willingness to participate, as these provided a convenient possibility to sit down and fill out the survey. The author ensured to be accessible as a contact person in case further explanations are required by the participants.

The survey was conducted at both Monkeyland Primate Sactuary and Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary from 16. - 23. June 2016 in Plettenberg Bay, with 4 days spent respectively at each site. The research at Cheetah Outreach was conducted during 02. - 03. September 2016 in Paardevlei, Somerset West (table 3). The time gap in-between the field research occurred as a result of visa-related problems as well as the difficulties to acquire partners for the empirical research.

Table 3: Data Collection

Juni 2016			September 2016	
16.		1.		Monkeyland Sanctuary
17.		2.		
18.		3.		Jukani Sanctuary
19.		4.		
20.		5.		Cheetah Outreach
21.		6.		
22.		7.		
23.		8.		

During the research period, data of 154 completed questionnaires were collected. A nearly equal amount of surveys were realized at each research site (Monkeyland: n=53; Jukani: n=48; Cheetah Outreach: n=53) to ensure data comparability. Numbers of survey participants have been compared with daily visitor numbers at the respective facilities and showed that the samples covered between 14 and 29%[4] of the day visitors during the research period. However, no indication was given by the facilities about the percentage share of visitors under 18, which were excluded from the present research. These numbers thus represent rough assessments and provide limited insight into the representativeness of the sample size. According to Janssen (2016), it is of importance that a representative study resembles the basic population in terms of its structure, composition and relevant

[4] Visitor statistics are referenced in Appendix C11, C12

characteristics. For this reason, basic demographics of the survey participants will be compared to accessible demographical statistics in order to determine the representativeness of the research sample. This topic will be addressed in chapter 4.2.1 of the results and discussions.

Data analysis

All valid questionnaires were coded, computed and analyzed using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Statistical analyses methods used were frequencies, cross-tabulations as well the Chi-Square test, the Mann-Whitney-U test and the Spearman correlation coefficient. In general, non-parametric tests were applied as these do not rely on parameter estimates and require less precise assumptions about the level of data measurement, probability distribution and the homogeneity of variance (Lehmkuhl, 1996; Leerkes & Howell, n.y.). Table 4 provides a brief overview about the used methods and their explanation.

Table 4: Statistical Analyses

Univariate Analysis	**Frequency distribution**	A tabular summary of data showing the number (frequency) of observations in each of several non-overlapping categories or classes.
Bivariate Analysis	**Cross-tabulation**	A tabular summary of data for two variables. The classes for one variable are represented by the rows; the classes for the other variable are represented by the columns.
	Chi-Square test	determines whether two variables are independent or related
	Spearman correlation[5]	measures the strength and direction of association between two ranked variables
	Mann-Whitney U test	is used to compare differences between two independent groups when the dependent variable is either ordinal or continuous, but not normally distributed

Source: Anderson et al., 2014; Lehmkul, 1996; Lund Research Ltd, 2013.

3.3.2 Qualitative research

In comparison to quantitative research, qualitative data is obtained from a relatively small group of respondents and not analyzed through statistical techniques (Nykiel, 2007). The qualitative approach, as a complement to the quantitative survey, is seen of high value for the present study, as it provides an in-depth understanding of the research objectives and

[5] All Spearman correlation analysis were validated by the Kendall rank correlation coefficient, which is considered as an alternative test method to measure associations between two ranked variables

helps to examine people's experiences, beliefs and attitudes in detail (Hennik, Hutter & Bailey, 2011).

Within qualitative research, interviews are amongst the most familiar strategies for collecting qualitative data and constitute a central resource for social science (Edwards & Holland, 2013; Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The present research focuses on the in-depth interviewing technique, which involves "*conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation"* (Boyce & Neale, 2006:p.3). This approach is particularly suitable for providing context to other data and offering a more complete picture of the defined research problem (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Applied to the present study, qualitative interviews were conducted to get an overview about tourist demand patterns from the perspectives of sanctuary managers and guides, who are able to provide valuable information about relevant demand patterns and long-term trends. According to Nykiel (2007), in-depth interviews are conducted one-on-one and usually last between thirty minutes to an hour. Based on the degree of structuring and design, in-depth interviews may appear as structured, loosely structured (semi-structured) or unstructured (Nykiel 2007).

3.3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

A semi-structured interview approach was applied as most appropriate for the present study. In this type of interview, the researcher collects specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in similar interviews with different participants. Therefore, the same topics have to be roughly addressed and covered within all conducted interviews (Dawson, 2002). During the interview process, the researcher relies on a prepared list of topics and open-ended questions, but considers the interviewees' ideas and opinions on the topic for the interview to remain flexible (Zorn, 2008; Dawson, 2002). The interviewer also has the opportunity to probe participant's responses and encourage them to provide further details or clarification during the interview (Harris & Brown, 2010). Key questions were formulated for all interviews and related to different aspects such as general information about the facility, visitor profiles and preferences, cultural differences as well as visitor's responses to education and restrictions. Questions and discussed topics varied depending on the working position of the interview partner as well as the information the author already gained during previous interviews, tour participation or through informative brochures and signage. Depending on the conversation, certain thematic aspects have been investigated more in-depth and new topics or questions arose during the talk. Questions relating to general information about the wildlife tourism industry were further addressed during some conversations in order to gain background information about the research topic complementary to the literature and web review. The following thematic sections give an

overview about selected key questions. A complete list of all transcribed interviews can be found in Appendix C.

Section 1: General information about the facility

- Please tell me something about your facility
- What is the mission of a sanctuary?
- What is the main focus of your facility?
- What restrictions/ policies did you implement concerning the wildlife encounters?
- Why did you decide to adhere to a specific approach (e.g. no touching of wildlife or vice versa – why is wildlife interaction important for the facility?)
- Did you recognize a significant increase or decline of visitors during the last years (or general trends in the wildlife tourism market)? What could be potential reasons?

Section 2: Visitor profiles

- Could you define the target group of your facility?
- Do you observe specific socio-demographic patterns (concerning gender, age, nationality etc.)?

Section 3: Visitor preferences and attitudes

- Why do you think tourists choose to visit your sanctuary?
- What are the most preferred (booked) tourist offers and activities?
- What praise/criticism do you receive from the visitors?
- Do you recognize any cultural differences in visitor's perceptions of animals and their behavior during the visit?
- How critical and animal-welfare orientated are the visitors? Do they ask about the animal's background?
- Did you recognize any trends/shifts in visitor's attitudes throughout the last years?

Section 4: Visitor responses to education, interpretation and restriction

- How would you estimate the visitor's interest in education and learning?
- How do you covey your educational message (what methods are the most effective)?
- What are the most frequently asked questions during the tours?
- How do visitors react to your restrictions (e.g. no touching limited access to animals)?
- How do visitors respond to your educational message?

3.3.2.2 Interview realization and self-participation at tours

Qualitative interviews were conducted simultaneously with visitor surveys (see chapter 3.3.1.2) during the on-site visits at the respective wildlife attractions. Interviewed site managers and service employees were selected due to their availability during the research period. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and lasted about 30 minutes in average. The conversations were either recorded through a recording device or (in case recording was refused by the participant) immediately transcribed through written notes. Table 5 provides an overview about the interview partners of each research site as well as their working

position and the interview date. A further interview was conducted with Chris Mercer, co-founder of CACH (Campaign Against Canned Hunting) on 09.06.2016 via Skype to acquire an overview about captive wildlife facilities and their connection to the canned hunting industry in South Africa.

Table 5: Interview partners

Research site	Interview partner	Working position	Date
Monkeyland	Interviewee 1	Marketing executive, manager	21.06.2016
	Interviewee 2	Previous guide, restaurant	17.06.2016
	Interviewee 3	Receptionist, curio shop	16.06.2016
	Interviewee 4	Volunteer, casual staff, guide	20.06.2016
Jukani	Interviewee 5	Site manager	20.06.2016
	Interviewee 6	Tour guide	20.06.2016
	Interviewee 7	Tour guide	19.06.2016
Cheetah Outreach	Interviewee 8	Voluntary animal handler, tour guide	02.09.2016
	Interviewee 9	Fundraising coordinator, facility assistant	03.09.2016
Campaign	**Interview partner**	**Working position**	**Date**
CACH	Chris Mercer	Co-founder of CACH	09.06.2016

During post-processing, recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed together with the written interview notes, based on the qualitative content analysis by Philipp Mayring. During this procedure, the researcher formulates selective criteria derived from theoretical background and research questions, which determine the aspects of textual material taken into account (Mayring, 2000; Mayring, 2002).

Self- participation at tours

In order to gain personal insight into social, operational, educational and environmental aspects of the touristic products offered by the selected wildlife attraction sites, the author joined several tours at each operator during the period of the on-site visits. It was the author's objective to identify specific tour features and to observe which educational messages are promoted and delivered to the visitors. The author's participation in the touristic activities constituted an essential element in the study's qualitative research methodology, as it helps to provide a better reflection of the survey outcomes and to identify conclusive differences between the three research sites.

4. Results and Discussion

The following chapters present the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and their interpretation within the context of literature reviews. In order to provide a more in-depth understanding and explanation of the results and findings, data and related literature will be discussed in thematic sub chapters. Statistical testing procedures were applied to identify interrelations between different variables of the survey.

4.1 Facility characteristics

In the beginning, the research sites will be analyzed regarding their tour features and schedules, their wildlife encounter restrictions and promoted educational messages, which were investigated by personal observation, web research and qualitative interviews. Analyzing these features is of central importance in order to provide an appropriate reflection of learning outcomes at the respective wildlife facilities and desired features mentioned by the visitors within the evaluation of their visit.

Tour features, schedules and rates

Figure 7: Monkeyland Forest

Image source:
http://www.nmbt.co.za/competition/win_entry_to_monkeyland_birds_of_eden_and_jukani_for_5_people.html

At **Monkeyland Primate Sanctuary**, visitors are received at the visitor center and led through a curio shop and restaurant (Blue Monkey Cafe) to meet the multilingual tour guides at the entrance of the forest. The size of visitor groups varies between 5 and 20 (average 15) people, who are compiled depending on their first language or present visitor volume in the waiting area. The sanctuary displays an informative video about its work and mission in the visitor center, which is not part of the tour and can be watched voluntarily by the visitors. Guided tours last about an hour in average and can be offered every 20 minutes depending on the demand. During the educational tours, visitors are guided through the forest on different walking pathways and can be freely approached by the primates. Further tour components include the visit of monkey rehabilitation cages within the forest as well as a walk on Africa's longest suspension bridge (128 m). The reliability of monkey sightings as well as sightings of various monkey species depend on the daytime and can't always be ensured as only a small forest area is accessible

for the visitors. The forest itself provides the impression of a natural monkey habitat, but is surrounded by fences and can therefore be defined as a semi-captive wildlife setting.

Figure 8: Jukani

Image source:
http://showme.co.za/plett/showme-cares/children-youth/jukani-wildlife-sanctuary-outing/

At Jukani Wildlife sanctuary, guided tours depart from the reception area every 15 to 20 minutes and last around one and a half hours. Visitor groups are guided through the facility and stop at each caged enclosure to receive informative facts about the displayed species. Some enclosures provide elevated patios along the cage to enable a simplified view on the animals. As most wildlife enclosures offer various hiding opportunities for the animals and are not approached from each side, visibility of the wildlife species (especially of shy cats such as tigers) can't be ensured. Current rates (Sep. 2016) include R 190 (adult) and R 95 (child) for a single ticket and remain the same for all SAASA-sanctuaries including Monkeyland Primate Sanctuary, Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary and Birds of Eden. SAASA further promotes a three sanctuary-hopper ticket for R 400 (adult) and R 200 per child. All SAASA-sanctuaries are opened from 9.00am to 5.00 every day of the week, including Sundays and public holidays (Monkeyland Primate Sanctuary, n.y).

Figure 9: Cheetah Outreach

Image source:
http://wesharepics.site/imagecgkl-cheetah-outreach.asp

The **Cheetah Outreach** facility is open to the public from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm at every day of the year. It charges an entry fee of R10 on weekdays and R5 on weekends as well as on public and school holidays (Cheetah Outreach, 2015, Sep 2016). Visitors are able to choose and combine several activities including unguided walks through the facility, guided educational tours (which are included in the entrance fee) as well as physical encounters with several ambassador species. Guided tours start with the display of an informative movie at the visitor center and proceed with a walk to the respective enclosures. Physical wildlife encounters are offered between 10.00 am to 13.00 and 14.00 to 17.00 and get charged an additional fee depending on the species (e.g. R 140 per adult for an adult cheetah encounter, status: Sep. 2016). Prior to the cheetah encounter, visitors take a seat in front of the enclosure and get briefed about safety and behavior-related instructions. Groups of 4 people enter the cheetah enclosure and are able to separately stroke the cheetah in the company of experienced animal handlers. The facility furthermore provides a look-out mezzanine to overlook several

wildlife enclosures. The enclosures of smaller animals (caracals, bat-eared foxes, serval cat) provide numerous hiding opportunities, which hinder a constant visibility of the animals. As visitors are able to freely choose their desired activities, visitor numbers and constellations at tours and encounters vary constantly. Due to the fact that the Cheetah Outreach program relies on international volunteers to a great extent, a variety of tasks (reception, educational tours, wildlife encounters) is conducted by the volunteers depending on their experience and training. During the time of the author's on-site research, no cheetah cubs have been available at the facility.

Concerning the rates, educational tours appear to be much cheaper at Cheetah Outreach than at Monkeyland and Jukani, but most visits are combined with animal encounters which are charged extra and eventually create (approximately) the same costs at all three research sites. In overall comparison to similar wildlife facilities in South Africa (e.g. Tenikwa Wildlife and Rehabilitation Centre, 2015; Cango Wildlife Ranch, 2013; Ann van Dyk Cheetah Centre, 2016; Moholoholo Rehabilitation Centre, 2011), it can be stated that the three research sites are located within the average price framework of South African wildlife sanctuaries.

Wildlife encounter restrictions

As mentioned in table 1, SAASA-associates **Monkeyland** and **Jukani** adhere to a strict "no touching – no interaction" policy, which also applies to all staff members who have to sign a contract containing a specific clause in that regard (Monkeyland, n.y.). Facility managers and employees promote the belief that wildlife belongs to the wild, should be respected in their intrinsic rights and not be exploited for monetary greed or human entertainment. As the wild animal's reaction towards humans remains unpredictable and physical contact can furthermore cause a transmission of diseases to the animals, keeping the distance between wildlife and visitors is seen of great importance (Interviewee 1, 2016, Monkeyland; Interviewee 5, 2016, Jukani). "*The message should be very strict that wildlife belongs to the wild and it always needs to be wildlife"* (Interviewee 1, 2016: Ln. 153-154, Monkeyland). *"Wild animals do not need to be petted or stroked and played with by human beings. That's just a thing that we as humans like to do – it makes us feel special – but there is nothing good about it for the animals"* (Interviewee 1, 2016: Ln. 14-17, Monkeyland).

At **Cheetah Outreach**, cheetah encounters constitute an integral part of the operation to ensure income for the facility and funds for conservation-related programs (e.g. the Anatolian Shepherd project). However, physical interaction is limited and conforms to the mood and well-being of the animal. "*We make the encounters as long as the cats are happy to get attention. We don't want to make it unpleasant for the animals, which are our priority"* (Interviewee 9, 2016: Ln.18-20, Cheetah Outreach). Physical encounters do often not exceed

a few minutes and visitors are only allowed to touch the cheetah at the back or side of its body whilst the animal is in a laying or seating position. The touching of other body parts as well as further displays of affection (hugging, cuddling) is prohibited by the facility. It is further stated that wildlife encounters will get stopped in case the animal indicates that it wishes to move away from the guests (Interviewee 8, 2016, Cheetah Outreach). Moreover, visitors are not authorized to take their own pictures during the animal encounters, cameras and mobile phones are forwarded to animal back-up handlers or photographers who take the pictures for the visitors.

Educational message

Both **Monkeyland** and **Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary** are focused on wildlife conservation education (Monkeyland, n.y.; Jukani, n.y.) and follow the mission of leaving their guests with a greater understanding of the world's wildlife and the threats that species are facing. Their aim is to educate the public about the adverse effects of keeping wild animals as pets and teach visitors about the rapid decline of natural habitats caused by human logging, mining, agriculture and settlements (SAASA, 2016).

Figure 10: Monkeyland Signage

Image source:
http://www.monkeyland.co.za/

Therefore, the sanctuaries communicate the "*need for healthy natural habitats; and recognition of the animals need for independence of people, their natural environment and its component resources*" (SAASA, 2016, n.p.). A major focus is set on emphasizing the fact that there is no conservation value in the humanization of wild animals and that the "pet, play and pay" practice can result in negative consequences for the animals (SAASA, 2016). Central in this regard is explaining the necessity of a "no touching – no interaction" approach as a sustainable management practice. In both sanctuaries, tour guides provide various informative facts on the wildlife species and further emphasize animal-welfare and conservation-related topics. At Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary, tour guides moreover explain the necessity of a "no breeding" policy in order to prevent further wildlife species from growing up in captivity.

As an education and conservation facility, **Cheetah Outreach** emphasizes respect and pride towards South Africa's indigenous fauna, especially towards the cheetah species (Cheetah Outreach, 2015). During the tours and encounters, volunteers and staff members provide information about the cheetah itself as well as its endangered status and plight in the wild. A main focus is set on educating the public about the shepherd dog program which helps to reduce conflicts between cheetahs and farmers and thus contributes to the cheetah's survival in the wild. During the cheetah encounters, it is further explained why restrictions for

physical interaction are necessary in terms of the animal's welfare and well-being. Educational tours further include informative facts about smaller displayed species such as caracals and serval cats as well as their threats in the wild.

4.2 Visitor characteristics and demand

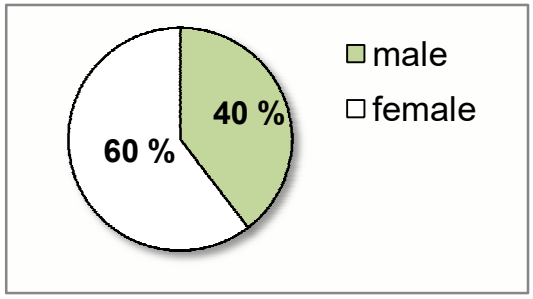
A detailed analysis of visitor characteristics and demand patterns will be provided in the following chapters.

4.2.1 Visitor profiles

The present section serves to present the demographical data (gender, age, educational level and nationality) as well as the travel behavior characteristics (tourist profiles, travelling budget and accompanying children) of the survey participants. These results will be compared to previous studies and general visitor statistics of the respective sites in order to determine the representativeness of the sample demographics. In most cases, the data analysis refers to the overall research sample (n=154), noticeable differences between the three research facilities will be highlighted.

Gender

Figure 11: Gender distribution (in %, n=154)

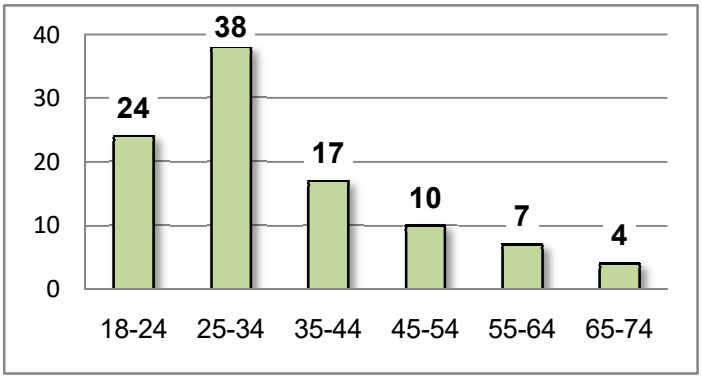


The research sample (n=154) represents an asymmetrical distribution of 60% female and 40% male survey participants (figure 11). Females have been the predominant participants at all three research sites, the most significant difference in gender distribution occurred at Monkeyland with nearly double the number of female (n=35) compared to male (n=18) participants (Appendix E, table e1). This distribution seems representative for the respective facilities, as it was noted by Jonck (2016, SAASA, n.p.): "*I do notice more females visiting us on a daily basis.*" A previous study conducted at Cheetah Outreach revealed a similar distribution of 61.5% females versus 36.9% males (1.6% did not specify) (Lozano-Martinez, 2015). The same pattern could be reflected by Moscardo (2008), who analyzed the demographics of 860 survey participants at captive wildlife settings in Australia and New Zealand and identified a gender distribution of 60% female and 40% male respondents. According to previous studies, women are often more concerned with animal protection and more inclined to develop stronger emotional attachments and loving feelings towards animals

(Kellert & Berry, 1987; Krausman & Leopold, 2013). These attitudes could thus lead to a greater interest in the respective wildlife sites and result in higher visitation rates by females.

Age

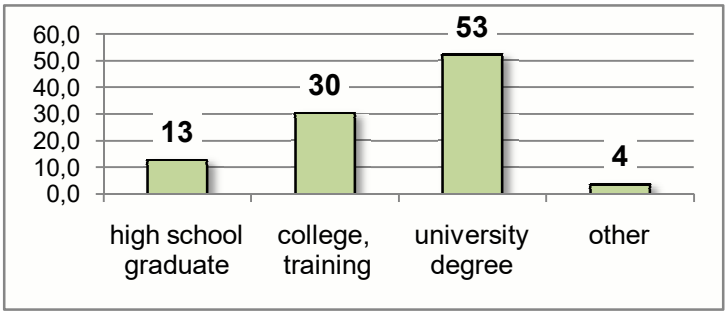
Figure 12: Age distribution (in %, n=154)



As shown in Figure 12, all age cohorts ranging from 18-74 years have been represented in the study's research sample. The analysis demonstrates that the overall sample is dominated by the younger age groups 25-34 (38%) and 18-24 (24%), followed by the group 35-44 (17%). It is furthermore shown that the number of represented participants is steadily declining with increasing age from 35-74 years, the majority of survey participants can thus be identified as young adults[6]. These age groups were predominant at each research site, the most significant difference between younger and older age cohorts appeared at Cheetah Outreach, with 72% of the survey participants being aged between 18-34 years (Appendix E, table e2). This pattern roughly conforms to Lozano-Martinez 2015, who examined visitor demographics at Cheetah Outreach and recorded a dominance of younger age groups, as 47.5% of the visitors were aged in their 20's. Various studies conducted in Australia and New Zealand reported similar findings, as they identified younger age groups to be predominantly represented in their research samples (Fredline & Faulkner, 2001, Pearce and Wilson 1995; Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood, 2001). At Jukani, older age groups (35-74 years) have been represented most frequently (48%) in overall ratio (Appendix E, table e2).

Highest level of education

Figure 13: Highest level of education (in %, n=154)



Participant responses to their highest educational degree were limited to the three highest categories named "high school graduate" (13%), "college, training" (30%) and "university degree" (53%) as well as the category

[6] based on the definition of "young adults" as "people between 18 and 35 years of age" (Canada Regional Office, Church of the Nazarene, 2016)

"others" (4%). Further pre-determined categories such as "no schooling completed" and "middle school graduate" have not been ticked by any participant. In overall summary (figure 13) as well as in separate examination of each wildlife facility (Appendix E, table e3), the group of university graduates accounted for the largest part of the research sample, which indicates a high educational level for the majority of survey participants. The category "college, training" was ticked second most frequently at all respective sites, followed by the high school graduate. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Lozano-Martinez (2015) for Cheetah Outreach, as the clear majority (80.4%) of surveyed participants specified that they had a university degree (44.3% undergraduate, 36.1% postgraduate, 1.6% didn't specify). The present results further reveal that the high educational level was reflected within nearly all age groups, as the majority of participants of 5 age groups (except the group 55-64) specified a university degree as their highest educational attainment (Appendix E, table e4). A high number of participants with tertiary education was reflected in several previous studies (Boxall & McFarlane, 1993; Pearce & Wilson, 1995). According to Tisdell & Wilson (2012), the demand for wildlife tourism tends to rise with the tourist's level of education, which might be an important influencing factor for an increased interest in wildlife and conservation matters. Ivanovic et al. (2009) further state that more educated people generally develop a greater tendency to travel and broaden their horizon, which could serve a further explanation for the high number of well-educated travelers in the present sample.

Families with children

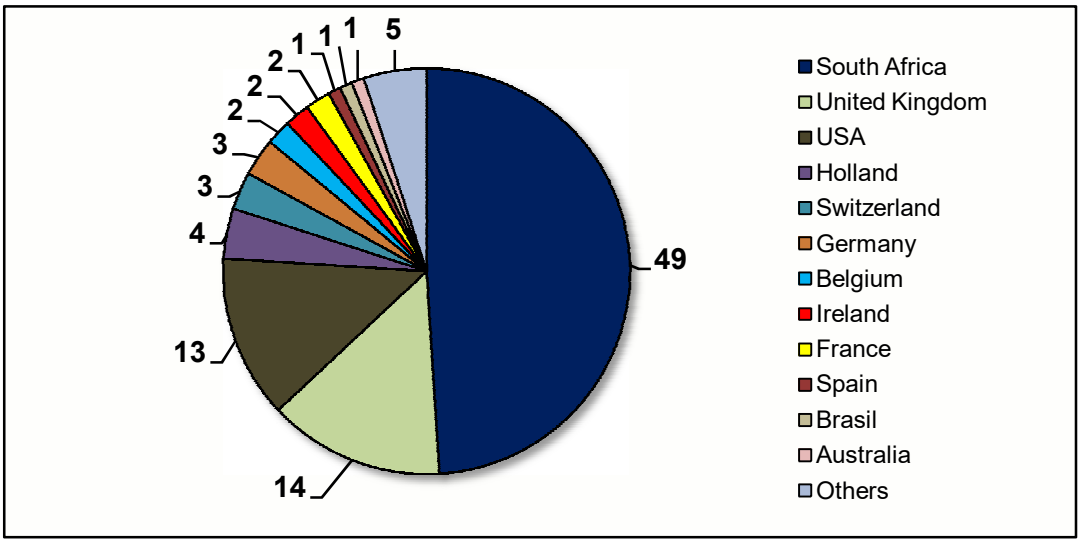
Wild animals have long been central attribute in children's fascination and curiosity and are often represented in children's stories, toys, clothing or furnishings. On this account, many wildlife facilities such as zoos or wildlife parks target families with children as a substantial market of their business, which is reflected by Shani (2009, p.40): "*Animal-based attractions play important entertainment and recreation roles, especially for families with children*." According to Turley (2001), the family group is seen as the preferred social unit for spending leisure time and the presence of children is considered to have notable influence of the demand for specific recreational experiences. This pattern is consistent with statements of several interview partners from Monkeyland and Jukani, who stated that families with children constitute one of the most predominant target groups at the respective wildlife sites (Interviewee 7, 2016, Jukani; Interviewee 3, 2016, Monkeyland; Interviewee 2, 2016, Monkeyland). Contrary to these statements, the statistics of the study's research sample showed that only the minority of survey participants (26%) travelled with children, whereas the distinct majority (74%) did not (Appendix E, table e5). These findings may not be representative for general visitor statistics as they mainly occurred as a consequence of families with children not having the time or patience to complete a survey after their visit. However, they reveal that the highest percentage of families with children was found at

Monkeyland (43%) (Appendix E, table e6). This result might be attributed to the unique character of the facility as a free-roaming multi-species sanctuary, which enables a close proximity to several monkey species and can be of particular pleasure and interest for children. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of families with children were found to be South African residents (Appendix E, table e7).

Nationality and tourist profiles

The overall research sample represented an almost equal distribution of South Africans (49%) and non-South Africans (51%). The origin of international visitors varied greatly and covered 19 countries from 6 different continents. Most frequently recorded international visitors were from United Kingdom (14%), USA (13%) as well other European countries such as Holland (4%), Switzerland (3%) and Germany (3%) (figure 14). In both Monkeyland and Jukani, South Africans accounted for more than half of all the survey participants (55% and 63%). At Cheetah Outreach, the author recorded 31% South Africans and the overall highest percentage of international visitors (69%), including the highest numbers of British and American participants (Appendix E, table e8). Out of all South Africans (n=75), English constituted the most frequent first language (57%), which was followed by Afrikaans (37%). Only 4 participants at Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary indicated their first language as Zulu or Tswana (Appendix E, table e9). The majority of all participants (90%) stated that the sanctuary visit is combined with further tourism attractions in South Africa, illustrating that the target sample is highly dominated by domestic (44%) and international (56%) tourists, who visited the wildlife facility as part of a greater holiday trip (Appendix E, table e10,e11).

Figure 14: Visitor distribution by country (in %, n=153)



Others (< 1% participant each): Luxembourg, Slovakia, Canada, Austria, New Zealand, Congo, India

Only 10% of the overall respondent sample planned their visit as a single day-trip without the combination of further tourism activities, most of them being South African residents (14 out of 15) (Appendix E, table e12). Those participants were most frequently found at Cheetah Outreach (Appendix E, table e13), which indicates the facility's higher attractiveness for local day-trippers from the surrounding areas. The overall findings further illustrate an overwhelming majority of first visitor-participants (89%) compared to only 11% of repeat visitors (Appendix E, table e14), who mainly came from South Africa (Appendix E, table e15). This finding could derive from the high numbers of international visitors and domestic holiday makers, who might live in great distance to the respective wildlife site and are thus not able to visit the facilities more frequently.

The high percentage of British and American visitors in the present sample is reflective for the overall visitor statistics of South Africa, as the UK is stated to be South Africa's largest overseas tourism source market, followed by the United States (South African Tourism, 2014). 11 out 18 represented countries have been European, which further highlights Europe as the major source market in terms of international tourist arrivals (South Africa received ~1,4 million arrivals from Europe in 2015) (South African Tourism, 2016a). At Monkeyland, the participant sample (55% SA, 45% Non-SA visitors) conforms to a great extent to the facilities overall visitor statistics. "*We normally have 50/50 % of international and domestic visitors, overseas tourist mainly come from Europe like the UK or Germany"* (Interviewee 3, 2016: Ln. 2-3, Monkeyland). However, it was further remarked that South Africans are most frequently reported during national holiday seasons, whereas international visitors are slightly predominant out of these seasons (Interviewee 2, 2016, Monkeyland; Interviewee 7, 2016, Jukani). Although the on-site research period did not coincide with South African holiday times, South Africans still accounted for more than half of all participants at both Monkeyland and Jukani. This distribution could be explained by the fact that June is considered as low tourist season in South Africa, which is characterized by cold and rainy weather conditions along the country's coastline. The nationality distribution of Cheetah Outreach (31% SA/ 69% Non-SA) was identical to the study conducted by Lozano-Martinez at the same facility in 2015. This previous study identified a distribution of 30.3% South African residents and 68.9% Non-South Africans, which were mainly from North America (52.9%) and Europe (22.4%). In general, the nationality distribution identified in the present sample confirms that wildlife sanctuaries represent attractive travel destinations for both domestic and international target markets in comparison to zoos, which are stated to dominantly exhibit their animals to local residents (Moorhouse et al. 2015; Tribe, 2004).

Travelling Budget

Survey questions relating to the participant's direct income are usually considered as sensitive and tend to produce comparatively higher non-response rates and measurement errors (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). It further proves difficult to compare financial data of different nationalities, as salary levels and currency strengths vary between different countries. To ensure reasonably comparable income data of the survey's participants, the questionnaire contained a question relating to an estimate of the respondent's travelling budget *(What budget are you normally able to put aside for holidays and tourism activities?)*. Pre-determined categories included rough budget estimations (high, moderate, low budget) as well as more unspecific choices such as "it depends"; in case respondents are not willing or able to specify their budget. In total, 118 out of 153 survey participants indicated their travel budget as either "high", "low" or "moderate". In-between these three categories, a "moderate budget" was most frequently chosen (59%) by the participants, the categories "high budget" (21%) and "low budget" (20%) were almost equally represented in the sample (Appendix E, table e16). The dominance of a moderate budget was reflected at all three research sites (Appendix E, table e17). No noticeable association was identified between the variable of age, education and the participants' travelling budget (Appendix E, table e18, e19). The analyses however showed that international visitors accounted for the majority of the "high budget" tourists (76%), whereas South Africans were more present in the "low budget" cohort (59%) (Appendix E, table e20). This finding is not surprising, as international tourists have to pay for the flight ticket to South Africa as well as holiday expenses in the country, which requires a certain amount of budget.

In summary, all three wildlife sites can be seen as attractive travel destination for visitors of each budget group, predominantly for those who are able to spend a moderate budget on tourism activities. The presence of low-budget tourists further highlights the role of captive wildlife facilities more affordable travel destinations for those visitors who might not be able to afford a wildlife watching holiday in the wild (see chapter 2.4.3).

Representativeness of visitor demographics

In conclusion, it can be stated that most visitor demographics identified for the present research sample are representative for the facilities' overall visitor statistics which could be assessed for the research. However, exceptions to this are families with children, which were less present in the study sample. Due to self-observation by the author, it was further recognized that South African visitors were dominated by Caucasians at all three research sites. Similarly, a high number of Caucasian South African residents participated in the survey, who indicated their first language as either English or Afrikaans. Potential reasons for

this biased cultural distribution will be discussed in chapter 4.2.6, which specifically addresses cultural differences in the perception of animals and wildlife conservation.

4.2.2 Visitors' entering attributes

The following chapters serve to present entering attributes of the participants, which provide additional insights to visitor profiles, their level of specialization regarding wildlife tourism experiences as well as comprehensive information about their motivations.

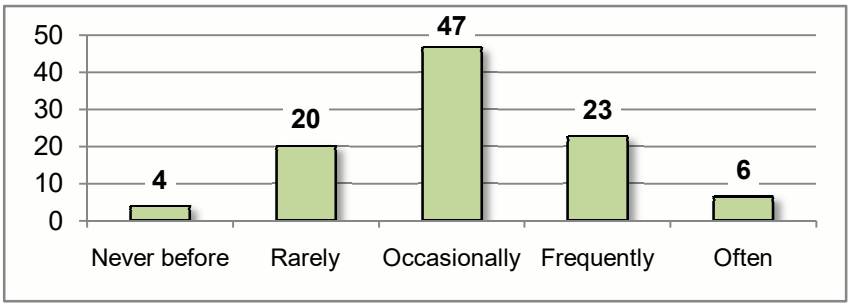
4.2.2.1 Experience and knowledge levels in wildlife tourism

In the present section, visitors' level of participation in wildlife tourism experiences as well as their existing knowledge about wildlife and conservation and the wildlife facility will be addressed. These analyses refer to research questions A.1 and A.2 defined in chapter 1.2.

Level of participation in wildlife tourism activities

To identify participant's level of participation in wildlife tourism activities, the questionnaire contained the following question "*How often do you usually take part in wildlife tourism activities (visiting wildlife parks, sanctuaries, national parks etc.)*?" to be answered on a five category-scale ranging from "never before" to "often". Outcomes show that the category "occasionally" was predominantly chosen by the participants (47%), which is further reflected by separate investigation of all three research sites (Appendix E, table e21).

Figure 15: Level of participation in wildlife tourism (in %, n=154)



The overall sample represented a nearly equal distribution of the categories "rarely" (20%) and frequently (23%) as well as relatively low percentages for the category "never before" (4%) and "often" (6%) (figure 15). These findings indicate that the research sample was dominated by visitors who had general experiences with wildlife tourism activities; a further 29% had advanced experiences as they chose the category "frequently" or "often". It can be stated that the majority of participants considered wildlife tourism activities as either a casual or important part during their leisure and holiday time. Past experiences moreover constitute an important determinant of consumer's expectations

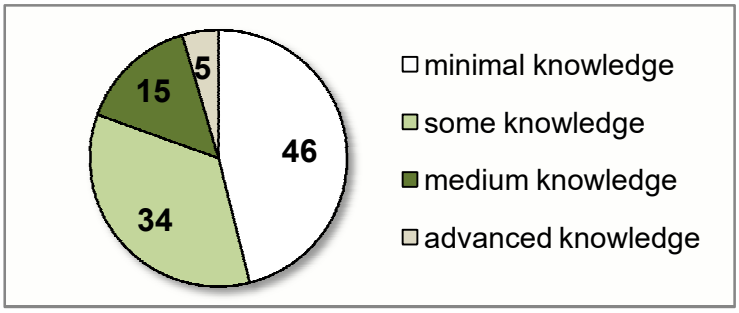
and perceptions towards a particular product (Anderson & Hair, 1972, see chapter 2.4.4) and will be considered in the investigation of further variables.

Statistical analysis showed that there is a weak[7] positive correlation between the respondent's age and their participation in wildlife tourism activities (r_s= 0,186, p=0,021, n=154), which proved to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) (Appendix E, table e22). The Mann-Whitney U test further revealed that females indicated a higher participation level than males (p=0,040, n=154) (Appendix E, table e23), which supports the assumption that females are more likely to visit wildlife attraction sites and can be confirmed by the asymmetrical gender distribution identified in chapter 4.2.1 The results further demonstrate that there was no considerable relationship between the participant's travel budget and their engagement in wildlife tourism activities in general (Appendix E, figure e24), which indicates that the available budget did not constitute a crucial factor for the wildlife tourism participation level in the present research sample. As the questionnaire referred to all wildlife tourism activities in general (including captive and wild settings), the cost factor might be more influential with regard to specific wildlife tourism activities (e.g. more expensive safari holidays in the wild) which requires an investigation by further studies.

Level of knowledge about wildlife conservation

As the educational value of wildlife sanctuaries is included as a major part in the thesis, a further survey question was formulated to identify the participant's level of knowledge about wildlife conservation prior to their visit. Outcomes show that the majority of participants (46%) indicated their knowledge as minimal, followed by 34% who stated that they have done "some" research on wildlife conservation whilst 15% have actively searched for information about the topic.

Figure 16: Level of knowledge about wildlife conservation (in%, n=154)



Only 5% of the overall research sample reported advanced knowledge about wildlife conservation or their active involvement in conservation related projects (figure 16). The same rank order was reflected at both Monkeyland and Cheetah Outreach, where the "minimal knowledge" category was chosen most frequently. The two highest knowledge categories were represented by the

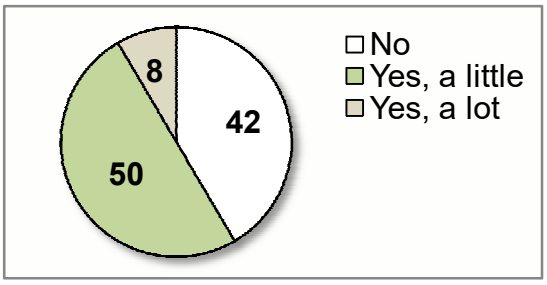
[7] The strength of association is based on the effect size measurement provided by Cohen 1988 (Appendix D, table d1)

minority of participants at each wildlife site (Jukani: 29%, Monkeyland: 8%, Cheetah Outreach: 23%) (Appendix E, table e25). Yet, the highest number of visitors with advanced knowledge was found at Jukani (n=5), visitors who specified a medium knowledge were dominantly present at Jukani (n=9) and Cheetah Outreach (n=11).

The Spearman correlation coefficient test revealed a nearly inexistent (non-significant) correlation between the participant's highest educational level and their knowledge about wildlife conservation (r_s= - 0,016, p=0,845, n=154) (Appendix E, table e26). This finding might be derived from the fact that the research sample represented high levels of education in general (see x) or could indicate that knowledge about wildlife conservation was rather connected to personal interest than to official educational attainments. The statistical analysis further revealed a weak positive correlation between the participants' general participation in wildlife tourism and their knowledge about wildlife conservation (r_s= 0,180, p=0,025, n=154) which is proved to be statistically significant (p < 0.05) (Appendix E, table e27). Although wildlife attractions are widely considered as major educational platforms to create awareness about animals and wildlife conservation, a high participation rate does not automatically go along with a higher level of topic-related knowledge, as shown in the present research sample. Vice-versa, the research results show that knowledge about animals and wildlife conservation can be attained without personal participation in wildlife tourism experiences, which highlights the importance of further knowledge transfer channels such as environmental-based media (see chapter 2.4.1). The Mann-Whitney U test surprisingly revealed that males showed a significantly higher level of knowledge than females (p=0,018, Appendix E, table e28), even if females were more frequently participating in wildlife tourism activities. This finding conforms to a study conducted by Kellert & Berry (1987), which found out that male participants had significantly higher knowledge scores of animal-related issues than females.

Pre-knowledge about the facility

Figure 17: Pre-knowledge about the facility (in%, n=154)



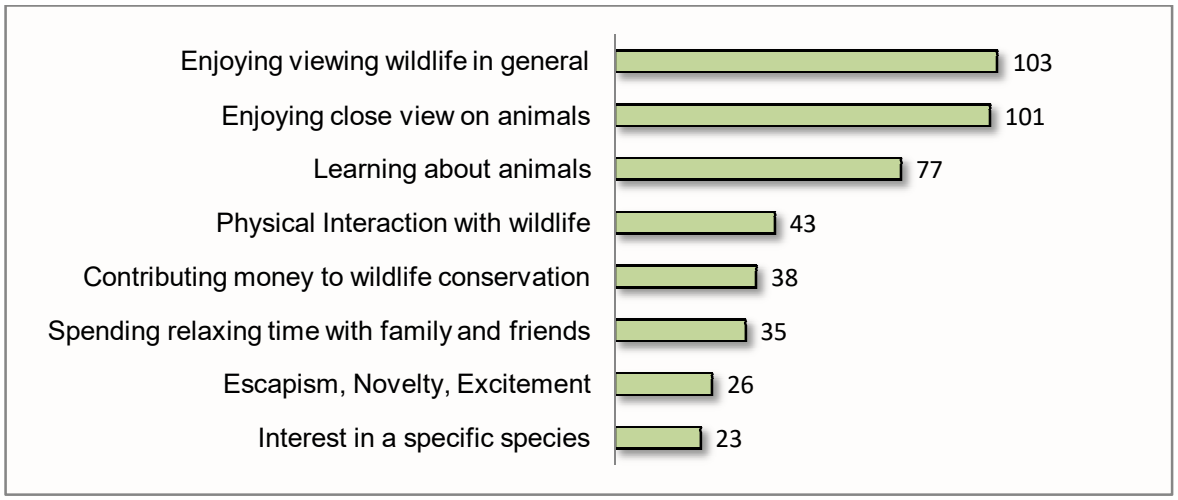
A further survey question addressed the participant's information search about the respective wildlife facility prior to the visit. Half of the participants (50%) indicated that they have done a "little" research on the facility and further 42% stated that they didn't get informed at all. A clear minority of participants (8%) indicated to do "a lot" of pre-research about their travel

destination, as shown in figure 17. “Yes, a lot” was the least frequently chosen category at all three research sites (Jukani: n=5, Monkeyland: n=3, Cheetah Outreach: N=5) (Appendix E, table e29). The Spearman correlation coefficient test showed a weak positive correlation between the participant’s pre-knowledge about wildlife conservation and their level of information search about the sanctuary (r_s= 0,289, p=0,000, n=154), which is significant at the 0,01 level (Appendix E, table e30). This finding indicates that a greater knowledge about wildlife conservation can thus increase the interest in getting more informed about the sanctuary prior to the visit. The participant’s pre-knowledge about the wildlife tourism product, acquired by promotional communications or personal acquaintances, are considered as a central determinant of visitor expectations prior to their visit as well as their satisfaction levels at the end.

4.2.2.2 Visitor motivations

The investigation of visitor’s motivations to visit wildlife tourism sites is included as a major component in the present thesis and refers to the research question B.1 defined in chapter 1.2. As mentioned in chapter 2.4.4, individual motivations constitute important parameters in the formation of tourist expectations and their overall satisfaction levels in the end. Visitors participating in the survey were asked to pick up to three most important motivational factors out of eight pre-determined response categories with the option to also indicate a factor that was not already mentioned in the survey. The survey question referred to the participant’s general motivations for visiting a wildlife sanctuary in order to examine general preferences and expectations independent from the sanctuary’s operational approach. For this reason, the aspect of “physical wildlife interaction” was included as a response category, even though it is not offered by all wildlife facilities. The following bar chart (figure 18) represents the overall counts of each motivational category at all three research sites. It shows that the personal enjoyment of wildlife watching as well as the possibility to experience a close proximity to the animals constituted predominant motivational factors in the present research sample. These are followed by the motivation to learn about the animals and the quest for physical wildlife interaction.

Figure 18: Visitor motivations (counts, n=446)



The response category “contributing money to wildlife conservation” has been included as the most altruistic motivational factor, which is directly linked to wildlife conservation support. This category reached nearly equal scores with the socialization and recreation component (“Spending relaxing time with family and friends”). Motivations related to escapism, novelty and excitement (“Escaping from daily routine to make exciting experiences”) as well as the interest in seeing a specific species represented the least frequently chosen motivations. Participants travelling with children further commented to the category “others” and indicated the child-friendliness of the facility as well as the ability to “expose my children to wildlife” as important encouragements for visiting a wildlife tourism attraction. These findings suggest that the motivation for a family trip is often related to the enjoyment of the children, which is confirmed by Garrett (2014), who investigated motivational factors for zoo visits.

The Chi-Square test was used to identify relevant associations between the sanctuaries, socio-demographic visitor data (gender, age, accompanying children), their knowledge and participation levels (as independent variables) and dominant motivations for visiting a wildlife sanctuary (dependant variables). Significant associations (at the 0.05 and 0.01 level) are listed in table b1, which can be found in Appendix B. The Phi φ and Cramer’s V value (effect size measurement) as well as expected counts/counts (indication of effect direction) were taken into account for data interpretation. It was identified that certain visitor groups are driven by different characteristic motivations, as the analyses revealed moderate associations for three out of the eight motivational factors. The results show that the motivation “spending relaxing time with family and friends” was favored by middle-aged adults as well as by adults who visited the facility with their children. Middle-aged adults as well as visitors with higher knowledge about conservation or higher participation levels in wildlife tourism activities were more likely to choose the category “contributing money to wildlife conservation” as one of their dominant motivational reasons. This confirms findings

from previous studies, which suggest that greater experience and interest in wildlife viewing is associated with stronger conservation attitudes and greater participation in conservation-related activities (Moscardo, 2008). Participants with less knowledge about wildlife conservation, however, were more likely to desire a close view on the displayed animals.

Significant differences in visitor motivation further occurred at the three different research sites. The motivation to learn about the animals was most frequently chosen at Jukani and least frequently at Cheetah Outreach. The quest for recreational time with family and friends was most present at Monkeyland, where the highest number of families with children was recorded. Not surprisingly, the motivation to physically interact with animals was predominant at Cheetah Outreach, followed by Monkeyland and Jukani. Additionally, it was investigated that the majority of participants (31 out of 43) who were motivated by physical interaction did not choose the possibility to learn about the animals as a further motivation for their visit (χ^2=11,648[a], p=0,001, phi= -0,275, n=154). There appears evidence that visitors at non-touching facilities generally placed greater importance on education, whereas at the touching-facility, the quest for interaction slightly pre-dominated educational motives.

In summary, wildlife-related motivations (wildlife watching, close proximity, learning) have been more present in the research sample compared to social, restorative or excitement-related factors. Contrary to these findings, Packer & Ballantyne (2012) stated that visitors at captive wildlife settings place greater importance on the social, restorative and entertainment-oriented component, whereas the quest for education appears to be more characteristic for visitors at non-captive sites. Several studies relating to zoo visitor motivations confirm that reasons relating to entertainment and recreation, such as spending time with family and friends, were higher ranked than educational motives (Tribe, 2004). These contradictions to the present study could provide evidence of the unique status of the selected wildlife sanctuaries as education and awareness centers in comparison to more leisure-orientated captive attractions such as zoos or aquaria. Yet, it must be noted that social and recreational motivations were typically chosen by adults with children, who were underrepresented in the research sample. A different distribution of motivations might have occurred if higher numbers of adults with children were involved in the sample. Most of the reviewed wildlife tourism literature referring to captive settings (e.g. Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes, 2009; Moscardo & Saltzer, 2005; Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005) does not specifically investigate visitor motivations, but focuses on particular setting features that contribute to overall visitor satisfaction. In this regard, the present thesis contributes to the basic scientific understanding of visitor motivations which helps to give an indication about relevant push-and pull factors in this wildlife tourism sector. It provides evidence that wildlife visitors differ in terms of their motivations as well as the benefits sought from the experience.

4.2.2.3 Choice for a specific wildlife sanctuary

The influence of decisive factors on choosing a sanctuary site has been identified as one of the sub-questions of the research (see chapter 1.2, B.2) and was therefore addressed in the study's questionnaire. The participants were asked to indicate their main reason for choosing the specific wildlife attraction, the question was created open-ended in order to receive individual responses and investigate what was mentioned as most relevant by the participants. Examples of relevant aspects were provided in brackets (ticket price, close distance, recommendation, specific offer/approach) to indicate potential response choices.

The results (n=81) show that most comments referred to the close distance of the wildlife attraction to holiday accommodations or residences of visitors (e.g. "*close proximity to Plettenberg Bay where I am staying*"; "*near to relatives*"; "*close to hotel*"). As identified in chapter 4.2.1, the majority of participants visited the wildlife sites along a route of a greater holiday or leisure trip, which was reflected in several comments ("*en route from Stellenbosch to Oudtshoorn*"; "*passed by*"; "*popular on Garden Route*"). Second most frequently given comments belong to the category 'recommendations' by family and friends as well as hotels and tourism operators, which were mentioned as a central influential factor for the travel decision (e.g. „*good recommendation from friends*"; "*recommended by hotel*"; "*recommendation by family*"; "*encouraged by tour organizer*"). Good rankings at Trip Advisor had much influence according to several participants. Other important factors mentioned were a professional or attractive web presence and the scope of advertisement of the facility. The affection for a specific species as well as the desire for a physical encounter was mentioned by eight participants at Cheetah Outreach (e.g. "*I love cats, so I was excited to see the cheetahs*"; "*I wanted to have an encounter with a big cat and to see a beautiful species such as the cheetah*"; "*up close viewing with a cheetah"; "wanted to have a cheetah encounter"; "we love cheetahs"; "ability to touch the animals"*). The experience of close proximity to wildlife was highlighted as a further important reason in both Cheetah Outreach and Monkeyland (e.g. "*ability to be in close proximity with the animals*"; "*experience a close proximity to wildlife*").

The analysis of the comments further revealed that the general ticket price only played a minor role in the decision for a certain sanctuary, as it was only mentioned by two participants. This finding might be explained by the fact that the chosen research sites do not vary greatly in price from similar wildlife attractions in the country, therefore the consideration of costs does not need to be very crucial in the decision-making process (chapter 4.1). Several participants at Monkeyland and Jukani, however, indicated that the special deal (R400 for all three SAASA-sanctuaries, mentioned chapter 4.1) as well as discount-offers in

the internet (2 for 1-ticket) encouraged their travel choice. Only few comments were related to the possibility of learning about specific animals and wildlife conservation, or to a specific sanctuary approach (e.g. "*It was en route of our trip and the fact that all the animals were rescued motivated me to come and support the sanctuary*"). As shown in chapter 4.3.2, the child-friendliness of the facility was mentioned as an additional relevant factor for families with children. The results also indicate that in many cases, a combination of multiple reasons was influencing the travel decision (e.g. "*recommendation, close distance to where we staying and special discount offer*").

The given results indicate that the choice for a specific wildlife sanctuary was often convenience-driven, as the geographical proximity to the facility as well as its location on a specific travel route were mentioned most often as the decisive factor for the choice. In comparison to nature reserves and national parks, captive settings such as wildlife sanctuaries do usually not require plenty of land and can therefore be established in more urbanized areas. This facilitates the access to the respective sites, making them a popular destination for local day-trippers as well as a convenient stopover for holiday-makers in the country. Furthermore, word-of-mouth advertisement (recommendations from friends and relatives), discount-specials as well as the promotion through hotels and tourism operators can have significant effects on the acquisition of visitors. There is much evidence that these reasons played a more central role for the respondents than features related to the sanctuary itself (e.g. its mission, its approach, its species). As mentioned in chapter 4.3.2, most participants were motivated by the general enjoyment of watching wildlife in close proximity, rather than encountering a specific species. As this attitude doesn't require specialized settings, geographical proximity as well as promising recommendations can have a greater effect on the travel choice rather than the character of the sanctuary. Special interest in an animal species was only mentioned at Cheetah Outreach and might be related to the fact that the facility offers a more physical and emotionally bonding encounter, which can be very appealing for cheetah enthusiasts.

However, these findings are only representative for 53% of all surveyed participants; the low response rate might be explained by the finding that participants were often influenced by a combination of different aspects, which could lead to indecisiveness on part of the respondent to specify a specific reason for the visit. As demonstrated in the current and previous chapter, associations were found between the motivation given by the participants and the chosen type of facility. Tourists that demand physical wildlife interaction tended to choose appropriate destinations, which was also evident for families with children, who required suitable and child-friendly activities. In turn, the demand for interaction was less evident at the non-touching facilities, but a higher motivation for education was reported. It is

therefore assumed that additional to the convenience-based factors, specific visitor motivations had a noticeable influence on some participants, who aligned their preferences to the travel destination. Therefore, the advertised characteristics and offers of the facilities indeed needed to be suitable.

4.2.2.4 Visitor level of specialization

Many published studies (e.g. Duffus & Deardan, 1990) introduced the variable of specialization as a core dimension for categorizing and describing different visitors in various wildlife tourism situations (Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood, 2001). Based on this classification, participation and knowledge levels as well as motivational factors were taken into account to give insight about the degree of specialization in the present target sample.

Applying the visitor category scheme of Duffus and Dearden (1990) (see chapter 2.3.2), the present research sample was dominated by so-called “wildlife generalists”, as shown by the visitor data analysis. The majority of participants indicated to occasionally partake in wildlife tourism activities and mostly reflected low to medium levels of pre-knowledge about wildlife conservation and the facility itself. In most cases, the visit derived from a general motivation to watch wildlife in close proximity and to learn about animals in general. Furthermore, the facility’s geographical location as a convenience-based factor was mentioned by several participants as most influential for the travel choice. In addition, an overwhelming majority of participants did not visit the wildlife facility as an exclusive travel destination, but combined the visit with several other touristic attractions in the country. According to Shackley (1996), the desire to see wildlife varies in intensity from the specialist to those tourists who are just generally interested in animals, and are satisfied with a relatively superficial encounter with a species and the sense of discovery associated with that experience. Wildlife specialists, in turn, are more likely to have pre-knowledge about the site, high levels of involvement in wildlife activities and use a wide range of information sources to inform themselves about the facility and wildlife (Duffus & Dearden, 1990; Moscardo & Saltzer, 2005; Higginbottom & Scott, 2004). In the present research sample, visitors who are high in previous experience and knowledge were only represented by the minority of participants (see chapters x). More specialized interests (e.g. seeing a specific species, contributing money to wildlife conservation) received comparatively lower ranks in terms of overall motivations and were mentioned in lower frequencies as a decisive factor for choosing a specific sanctuary. This pattern confirms results from various wildlife tourism studies in Australia, which were discussed by Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood (2001, p.28): “*Highly specialized wildlife activity participants tend to be a minority group.”* All three research sites showed mature levels of supportive infrastructure as well as interpretive mediation, which cater the demands of wildlife generalists and might no longer fulfill the expectations of the more specialized

tourist groups (see chapter 2.3.2), who are displaced to other, less developed wildlife tourism sites (Duffus & Dearden, 1990). The data analysis further confirmed the assumption of Bulbeck (2005) and Hvenegaard (1994), who mentioned that more accessible captive sites attract a greater percentage of casual tourists, who partake in ecotourism activities as part of a broader holiday trip (see chapter 2.3.2).

4.2.3 Visitor expectations: Desired features during a wildlife tourism experience

The identification of desired features during a wildlife sanctuary visit was defined as a central question in the present thesis (chapter 1.2, B.3) as it enables the author to investigate visitor expectations as well as to define decisive factors relating to overall visitor satisfaction. As it was not feasible to collect visitor data before and after the visit (chapter 3.3.1.1), the questionnaire specifically addressed visitor expectations and provided 17 features to be rated on a five-point Linkert scale (in regard to their importance, ranging from “not important” to “very important”). Responses are presented in table 6 (p.74), three levels of endorsement were introduced to facilitate the interpretation of the data: Rated “very important” (5) or “important” (4) by most participants (70-100% of the overall respondents), by some participants (30-70%) and by few participants (0-30%).

Out of all 17 aspects to be rated, the one the respondents considered more important than any other aspect was the ability to see wildlife behaving naturally and undisturbed. This item received the highest ratings (4 and 5) by 89% of respondents, followed by the quest for learning, interpretation and the ability to ask questions (86%) as well as to have minimal impacts on the animals (82%). Simplified visibility of the animals and being in close proximity to them can also be identified as major features that are desired by the visitors, combined with further tour-related attributes such as a small group size and a high service standard. Naturalistic enclosures with hiding spaces for the animals were further considered as an aspect of major importance. Reasonably priced tickets, taking pictures of animals, accurate pre-visit information as well as educational facilities received higher ratings by fewer, but still over 50% of the participants. Features relating to animal interaction and entertainment were considered as least important in overall comparison.

Table 6: Respondents' importance rating of various aspects during a visit. In decreasing order of importance. Source: own representation based on Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes, 2009, p.10)

A: Rated "very important" or "important" by most participants	% 4+5
Seeing wildlife behaving naturally and undisturbed	89%
Interpretation, Learning, Ability to ask questions	86%
Have minimal impact on animals	82%
Wildlife that is easy to see	77%
Potential to get close to wildlife	73%
Small Group Size	73%
Naturalistic enclosures with hiding spaces for animals	73%
High Service standard	71%

B: Rated "very important" or "important" by some participants	% 4+5
Reasonably priced tickets	69%
Taking pictures of animals	66%
Accurate pre-visit information on website and flyers	59%
Educational facilities	52%
Have visible barriers to feel safe	45%
Taking close-up photographs with animals	44%
Interesting, exciting animals behavior	43%
Interactions with animals	38%

C: Rated "very important" or "important" by few participants	% 4+5
Entertainment facilities	16%

These rankings are partially consistent with previous studies which examined desirable features during different wildlife tourism experiences. Moscardo & Saltzer (2005) presented the preferences of over 4900 surveyed visitors at several wild and captive wildlife settings in Australia and New Zealand (Appendix B, table b2). Features such as "seeing wildlife behaving naturally" and "being able to get close to wildlife" received high importance ranks from the participants, which is also reflected in the rankings of the present study. A further accordance could be found concerning the quest for animal interaction (being able to touch, handle wildlife), which received comparatively low importance ranks in both studies. Differences occurred regarding the learning component as well as the desire to easily see wildlife, which showed much higher ranks in the present study than in the research

conducted by Moscardo & Salzer (2005). Based on the same features, Moscardo (2008) further compared visitor preferences at captive and non-captive wildlife sites in Australia and New Zealand (Appendix B, table b3). The results showed that the feature “seeing wildlife in a natural environment” received higher ranks at non-captive sites, but was also perceived as important by 46% of the captive site visitors. The demand for interesting wildlife information, knowledgeable guides (learning) and a simplified visibility was highly evident at captive settings, which was also noticed in the present research sample. A strong educational emphasis was further identified as a major reason for visitor satisfaction in a study relating to captive wildlife tourism in Western Australia (Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005) (Appendix B, table b4). Yet, the close proximity to wildlife and the display of natural behavior was considered as less important compared to the present study.

The rankings (figure x) furthermore highlight a high rank for the “minimal impact on animals” aspect, which was also shown in a visitor study to a conservation park for nesting marine turtles in Queensland (Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes, 2009). In this study, having a minimal impact on turtles received the highest importance rank (5) by most participants (88%), features such as learning and knowledgeable staff as well as the ability to get close to turtles were also located in the highest rank category, whose importance is also reflected in the present study (Appendix B, table b5). In the following, similar content-related features will be summarized to subordinate categories, which will be analyzed and discussed in more detail within the individual sub-chapters.

Close proximity and visibility of animals

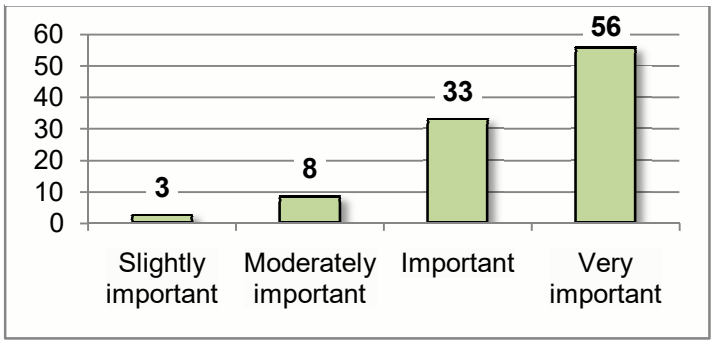
As shown in table 6, there appears evidence that visitors to the respective wildlife sanctuaries had strong expectations to easily view and get close to the displayed animals, whose importance was confirmed by various wildlife tourism studies. The importance of close proximity to wildlife was furthermore highlighted in chapter 4.2.2.2f, as it was identified as a major motivation for visiting wildlife tourism attractions. This finding highlights the role of captive wildlife attractions as tourism destinations which enable a close encounter with wild animals as well as proximate and reliable observations, which might be more difficult to experience in the wild (see chapter 2.4.4.2). According to Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood (2001), wildlife tourism demand is significantly related to the rarity of species and the removal of accessibility barriers (such as difficulty of viewing) can constitute a helpful means to offer wildlife experiences for a broader public audience (Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005). The visibility of animals in the wild often remains unpredictable and requires a longer time of patience, therefore captive enclosures can constitute a pleasant alternative to gain first-hand experiences of the desired wildlife, if its visibility is simplified. The importance of these

features was evident at all three research sites, as high importance ratings (important, very important) were always chosen by the majority of participants (Appendix E, table e31, e32).

At Cheetah Outreach, the highest percentage of respondents (42%) rated the feature "potential to get close to wildlife" as very important, which indicates that the facility attracts a high number of visitors who have an increased interest in a close-proximity encounter. The Spearman correlation coefficient revealed a weak negative correlation between the participant's experience level in wildlife tourism and their desire to get close to wildlife (r_s= -2,44, p= 0,002, n=154) and easily see them (r_s= -2,83, p=0,000, n=154), which are both statistically significant (Appendix E, table e33 and e34). This association shows that the quest for reliable and close-up wildlife encounters is sometimes attributed to the visitor's lower experience level in wildlife tourism, which is comprehensible as more experienced visitors might have already experienced a variety of encounters in the past.

Naturalistic representations of wildlife

Figure 19: Feature rating "Seeing wildlife behaving naturally and undisturbed" (in %, n=154)



The findings further revealed a strong desire for naturalistic representations of wildlife, as shown by the high ratings of the features "Seeing wildlife behaving naturally and undisturbed" (89%) as well as "naturalistic enclosures with hiding spaces for the animals" (73%). The quest for natural and undisturbed wildlife behavior received the highest importance rank in overall comparison and was rated as "very important" by 56% of all respondents (figure 19) as well as by the majority of participants at each respective wildlife site (Appendix E, table e35). These ratings were consistent with a study conducted by Wolf & Croft (2012), whose survey respondents best enjoyed undisturbed animal behavior and did not wish to witness or cause alert or flight reactions. These preferences conform to several demand trends identified in the wildlife tourism literature, which have been mentioned in the theoretical framework in chapter 2.4.3. It has been stated that wildlife tourists increasingly desire naturalistic and authentic wildlife encounters, which is attended by the display of naturalistic replicates of the wildlife's natural habitat, even in captive settings. The quest for authenticity is often related to the degree of natural behavior patterns displayed by the fauna, which was seen of major importance in the present research sample. The strong desire for naturalistic enclosures could further explain the comparatively lower rank of the feature "have visible barriers to feel safe", as shown in

table 6. Although the feeling of safety and control can constitute an important means to achieve a satisfactory experience for the visitor (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005, see chapter 2.4.4.2), this was not evident for the majority (55%) of participants.

Conflicting rankings were identified with regard to the feature “naturalistic enclosures with hiding spaces for animals” and the desire to easily see wildlife, which both received high importance ranks by most participants. As stated by Croke (1997) cited by Woods (2002), naturalistic enclosures involve the problem that they allow the animals to hide from the view of the public which are seeking to watch them. As the ease of viewing was highly desired by the participants, this preference can be seen as contradictory to the desire for naturalistic animal enclosures. The analysis further revealed a high concern for the well-being of the animal as “having minimal impact on animals” received high importance ranks by 82% of the participants. At the same time, visitors expressed a strong desire to get in close proximity to the wildlife, which could result in adverse impacts for the animals, such as increased stress or noise disruption.

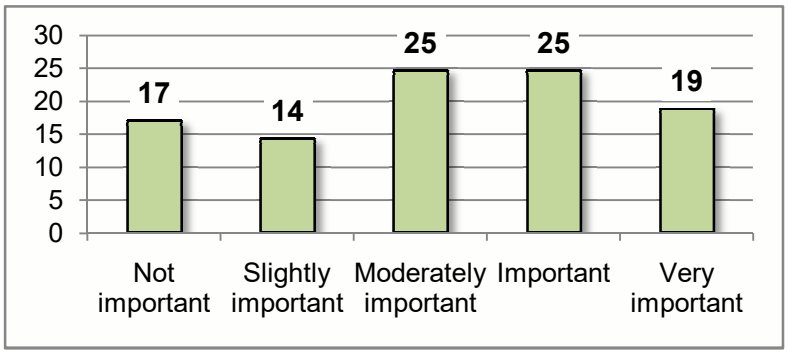
Educational aspect

The high importance rank of the features „Interpretation, learning, ability to ask questions“ (86%) is consistent with the findings relating to the visitor’s motivational factors, which have been identified in chapter 4.2.2.2. The findings provide evidence that the educational aspects, including imparted knowledge and qualitative interpretation, played a central role in visitor expectations and further highlight the role of wildlife sanctuaries as education and awareness centers. Although visitors at Cheetah Outreach were less likely to choose learning as a central motivation, the results reveal nearly equal importance ranking for the educational component at all three research sites. The results however showed that the feature “educational facilities (displays, exhibits)” received a significantly lower rank compared to the general learning experience (table 6). A higher number of participants rated “not important” and “slightly important” for the feature “educational exhibits” (16%) compared to the feature “Interpretation, learning, ability to ask questions” (3%) (Appendix E, table e36). This pattern was also reflected in the study conducted by Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes (2009), where the features “Visitor Centre displays and exhibits” as well as “Audiovisual presentations” received comparatively lower rates than the ability to ask questions and the availability of knowledgeable guides. There appears evidence that the overall learning experience, which is directly related to the tours and animal encounters, is perceived as more important than the sole, more impersonal education through informative media and exhibits. Yet, the inclusion of educational facilities was still considered as generally important by 52% of the visitors and can be seen as an enriching complement for the overall educational experience.

Photographing wildlife

According to Newsome, Dowling & Moore (2005), one of the most popular activities associated with wildlife tourism is the observation and photography of animals, which can be considered as closely intertwined events. Taking pictures of animals helps to document the experience and provides the tourist with the means by which they can authenticate their experiences, promote their achievements to others and recall the events at any time in the future (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005). In many instances, the desire for a greater proximity to the animals is also driven be the quest for a close-up photograph, which was noted by Valentine & Birtles (2004). Due to the development of social network systems in the internet, tourists have moreover become more capable and willing to share the pictures of their experiences with the digital world (Cong et al., 2014). Many wildlife facilities thus offer close contact and photo sessions with animals to enable the tourists to get close-up pictures or "selfies" with the desired species. In the present research sample, the general activity of taking pictures of the animals received high importance ranks by two thirds of the participants (66%, table 6), indicating that this activity was considered as crucial component for the majority of visitors. The Mann-Whitney U test revealed no significant difference between males and females in terms of their quest for photography (p=0,575, n=154) (Appendix E, table e37).

Figure 20: Feature rating „Taking close-up photographs with animals" (in %, n=154)



Taking close-up photographs with animals, on the other hand, accorded significantly lower ranks in overall comparison. Figure 20 illustrates that the participant's responses were reasonably distributed between all five response categories. However, the quest for close-up photography was predominantly evident at Cheetah Outreach, whereas participants at Jukani chose the "not important" category most often (Appendix E, table e38). No significant association could be identified between the quest for close-up "selfies" and socio-demographic factors such as gender or age (Appendix E, table e39, e40). In summary, it can be stated that most participants desired to take pictures of the animals, but less participants were keen on shooting a close-up "selfie". This pattern was primarily a characteristic for the non-touching facilities.

Additional Tour and Service Features

Additional tour and service-related components have to be considered as potential factors influencing visitor satisfaction during the visit. The analysis revealed that 73% of the participants perceived a small group size as either important or very important for a satisfactory wildlife tourism experience. The group size can have significant impacts on visitor satisfaction and learning during the wildlife tourism experience, as stated in previous studies. Newsome, Dowling & Moore (2005) cited Higginbottom (2003), who pointed out that delivering an educational message works best with small group sizes during guided tours. It is further stated that smaller groups are more likely to achieve "*greater visitor satisfaction through reduced crowding and more effective interpretation*" (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005, p.210). Also Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth (2005) identified a strong desire for smaller groups, as they identified an inverse correlation between group size and mean satisfaction ranking in their research sample. These findings indicate that the majority of survey participants expected a highly personal wildlife tourism experience through smaller visitor groups and little interference from other group members.

Table 6 further illustrates that most participants perceived a high service standard as a crucial element during their wildlife tourism experience, which has to be considered as a basic factor to fulfill visitor expectations during their visit. Features such as the helpfulness and friendliness of staff, sufficient staff members, the ease of booking process, efficient tour organization as well as the provision of clean facilities (parking, toilet facilities, seating) can enhance the service level of the facility and thus contribute to overall visitor satisfaction. This can be confirmed by Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood (2001) who identified the level and quality of service and facilities as an important determinant for visitor satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

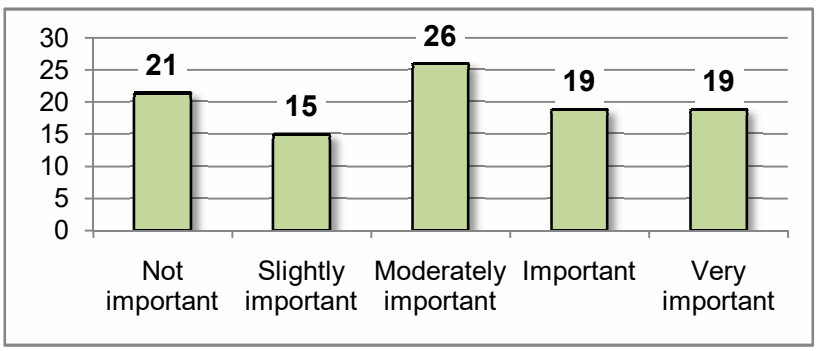
In this regard, the respondents were also asked to rank the importance of accurate pre-visit information about the facility on website and flyers. This feature received a moderate rank in overall comparison (table 6), about 41% of respondents ranked it as moderately, slightly or not important. This moderate interest in pre-visit information is also reflected in chapter 4.2.2.1, as the majority of respondents indicted to have searched for no (42%) or only little (50%) facility-information prior to their visit. The lack of effort to obtain information about the facility might be attributed to the fact that the choice for a site was sometimes influenced by its geographical location rather than specific facility characteristics. It was moreover investigated that many respondents followed the recommendations of others and might not feel the need to personally search for further information about their travel destination. Although the costs were not often mentioned as a reason for choosing a specific wildlife

sanctuary, a reasonably priced ticket was perceived as generally important by 69% of the participants, primarily by those who specified a low budget for their holidays (78%) (Appendix E, table e41).

Animal interaction and entertainment

With regard to the previously mentioned debates and discussions about animal welfare and wildlife conservation (chapter 2.6), examining the quest for physical wildlife interaction and entertainment was defined as an important element of the present thesis. Contrary findings were presented in previous literature: Bulbeck (2005) referred to several studies conducted around 1988 and pointed out that interactive wildlife encounters were most favored by the public. Similarly, the involvement of interactive wildlife activities is often considered as a lucrative business (Born Free Foundation, n.y.) and the feeding of wildlife is stated to be a popular means by which tourism operators can facilitate close and bonding interactions with wildlife (Orams, 2002). Contrariwise, the study conducted by Moscardo & Saltzer (2005) at Australian captive and wild settings revealed that being able to touch or handle wildlife was rated as the least important feature by the participants. However, only few attempts have been made in academic literature to specifically measure the quest for physical contact to wildlife, the above-mentioned studies represent site-specific examples which can't inherently be generalized for the South African context. The evolved debates suggest that interactive wildlife activities have been a popular leisure and tourism activity in recent decades, and thus were highly demanded by the tourists. Consequently, research into this topic becomes of crucial importance. In the present study, 28% of the surveyed participants specified interaction with wildlife as a dominant motivation for visiting a wildlife sanctuary, over a third (38%) of all respondents ranked this feature as either important or very important during a wildlife tourism experience. Yet, it received the second lowest importance rank in overall comparison of various wildlife tourism features and opinions were equally divided between high importance and low importance ranks (figure 21).

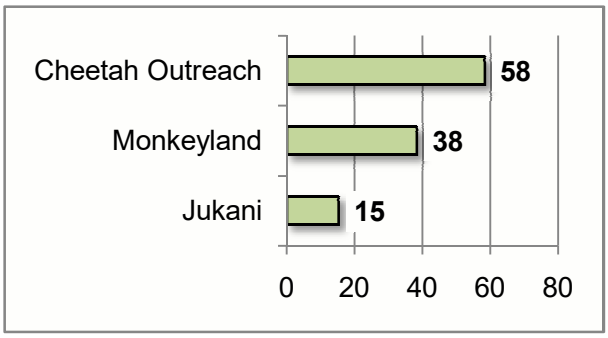
Figure 21: Feature rating „Interaction with animals" (in %, n=154)



Significant associations were found between the quest for interaction and the variable of age as well as knowledge and participation levels in wildlife tourism.

The Spearman correlation analyses showed that those visitors who desired physical interaction were slightly younger (r_s= - 0,211, p=0,009, n=154), less experienced in wildlife tourism activities (r_s= -0,205 p=0,011, n=154), and less knowledgeable about wildlife conservation (r_s= -0,179 p=0,026, n=154) (Appendix E, table e42, e43, e44). This is confirmed by Higham (1998), who suggested that the expectation of interacting with wildlife is a typical characteristic of less experienced wildlife tourists. A lack of knowledge about wildlife conservation could further contribute to a lack of the visitor's awareness about potential adverse impacts on the displayed wildlife. Similar to the findings relating to visitor motivations, visitor perceptions of wildlife interaction varied between the more interactive facility and the two non-touching sanctuaries.

Figure 22: Quest for wildlife interaction at research sites (in % per site, n=154)



At Cheetah Outreach, 58% of the respective research sample rated physical wildlife interaction as either important or very important. These visitors were less present at Monkeyland (38%) and least at Jukani (15%) (figure 22), where the animals are watched through fenced cages and physical contact is strictly prohibited (Appendix E, table e45). Based on the data recorded, it can be presumed that the touching facilities are prone to visitors who place a greater importance on touching, as their demand can directly cater the visitor's demand. As shown in chapter 4.2.2.3, participants at Cheetah Outreach most often specified a special desire for a cheetah encounter as a determining factor for their travel decision. Also Interviewee 8 (2016: Cheetah Outreach) confirmed that the physical encounters with adult and cub cheetahs are the most favored activities at Cheetah Outreach. It could also be assumed that the feature would have received a generally higher importance ranking if more interactive facilities were included as research sites. However, although all of the surveyed participants at Cheetah Outreach took part in the physical animal encounter, the results revealed that 42% did not perceive animal interaction as important, but still participated in the activity. Similar behavioral patterns were recognized by Moscardo & Saltzer (2005), who stated that only 7% of their surveyed visitors included wildlife interaction as one of their three most important setting features, but a higher number of 22% reported actually doing so during the visit. At the non-touching facilities, the demand for wildlife interaction was also evident, but appeared to be lower in overall comparison, especially at Jukani. Yet, no specific indication was given that the non-touching sanctuaries were specifically chosen because of their compliance to certain animal-welfare standards or policies.

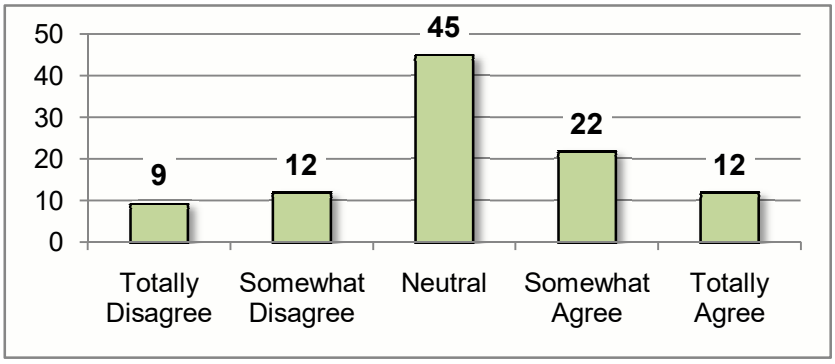
The results however indicated that even those visitors desiring an interaction with the wildlife species expected the encounter to be in accordance with the animal's welfare and well-being. This is proved as the majority of participants (43 out of 58) who ranked animal interaction as important also assigned a high importance to the feature "minimal impact on animals". The feature "Entertainment facilities (animal performances, children amusement)" received the lowest importance rank in overall comparison, but was of particular interest for families with children, as shown by the Mann-Whitney U test (p=0,007, n=153) (Appendix E, table e46). This was confirmed by interviewee 2 (2016: Monkeyland), who mentioned that especially for children, entertainment constitutes an important component of the experience, as they enjoy watching the monkeys playing and getting entertained by their behavior.

In overall summary, the results provide evidence that the demand for authentic and naturalistic wildlife encounters predominated the quest for animal interaction and entertainment. Features such as taking close-up pictures with animals, witnessing exciting animal behavior as well as physical interaction and entertainment facilities were located on the bottom of the overall importance ranking. This pattern conforms to the trend identified in chapters 1.1 and 2.4.3 – it was stated that captive wildlife attractions are shifting away from strictly entertainment and amusement providers to more environmentally responsible leisure centers, alongside with an increasing visitor demand for more naturalistic representations of wildlife. Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth (2005, p.76) further suggested that captive wildlife tourism can be seen as "*type of 'entertainment' based on a blend of experiencing 'wild' animals in a naturalized context while still being able to view them easily and perhaps get close and touch them akin to interacting with a domesticated animal."*

4.2.4 Responsible behavior and perceptions of restrictions

Further survey questions were designed to give insight into visitors' engagement into responsible behavior and their perception of facility restrictions (Research questions C.1, C.2).

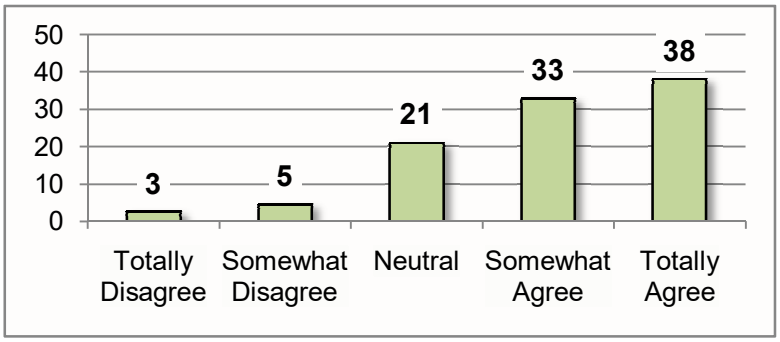
Figure 23: Statement rating: Consideration of responsible certifications (in %, n=151)



The previous chapter revealed a high quest among the visitors for minimal-impact operations and animal-welfare orientated enclosures. Although most participants

showed an evident concern for taking part in responsible wildlife tourism activities, they generally placed minor importance on specific certifications or awards of the facility. This is shown in figure 23, which illustrates their level of agreement to the following statement: *"For choosing a wildlife sanctuary to visit, I do research on awards and certifications of the facility, because it helps me to make the right decision*." The majority of respondents indicated a neutral opinion to this statement (45%), whereas 21% specified a higher level of disagreement. Only 34% of the overall research sample indicated to place higher importance on responsible certifications during their travel decisions. This pattern is reflected at all three research sites, no relevant associations could be identified between the respondent's level of agreement and variables such as gender, age, first/repeat, level of knowledge and experience in wildlife tourism activities. In case of Monkeyland and Jukani, the findings imply that specific trade-marks such as "Fair Trade Tourism" might still be too unknown within the wildlife tourism industry to have a measurable influence on the acquisition of potential visitors.

Figure 24: Statement rating: Questions during the tour (in %, n=152)



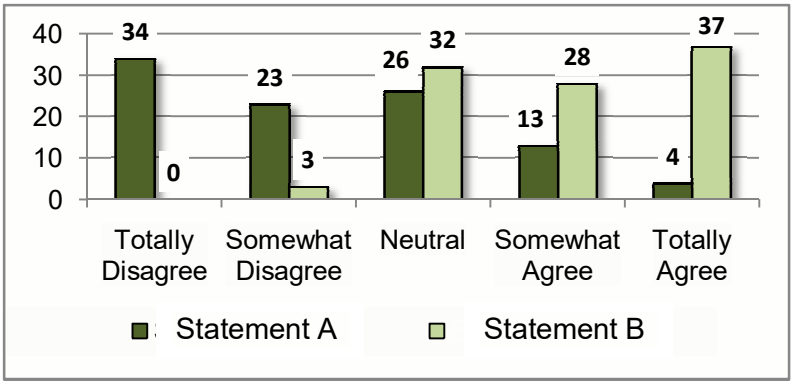
Higher agreement levels were recorded for the statement "*During the tour I ask a lot of questions about the animals, their background and wildlife conservation*." As illustrated in figure 24, over two-thirds of the participants (71%) indicated to ask various questions during the tours, which further highlights the strong overall interest in education, interpretation and learning (identified in chapter 4.2.2.2; 4.2.3). Several guides from all three research sites were asked about the most popular questions they receive during the tours. This question was relevant in order to investigate the topics that are most often addressed by the visitors. According to Interviewee 2 (2016: Ln. 16-21, Monkeyland), "*People are quite interested in the monkeys. Most questions refer to the park itself, how our concept started and of course they ask a lot about the monkeys. People are really fascinated by the different species interacting with each other. Monkey related questions about their behavior etc. appear more often than questions about conservation. But some people also ask about where the monkeys come from and why they are here."* At Jukani, it was stated that many visitors address conservation-related topics such as the background of the big cats and the reasons why they had to end up in a wildlife sanctuary. They are moreover interested in learning specific facts about the animals and often show great appreciation for the overall sanctuary concept (Interviewee 7, 2016,

Jukani). Interviewee 8 (2016, Cheetah Outreach) recognized increased ethical concern on the part of the visitors, as questions about the animals' welfare start to appear more frequently. He further explained that the awareness about canned hunting is growing as visitors increasingly ask "*if the cheetahs get drugged or if they also get sold to canned hunting farms (Ln. 64-65)*", which will be followed by his negation.

All three facilities implemented their own company-related policies and restrictions concerning the human-wildlife encounter (see chapter 4.1). These are considered as crucial measures to ensure the animal's welfare and obtain best possible conservation-related and educational outcomes (in subjective perspective of each facility). However, there is a widespread belief that visitors are likely to perceive restrictions (e.g. limited access) as detracting from their wildlife tourism experience (Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood, 2001), which could lead to conflicts between visitor expectation and satisfaction. To address this topic and investigate visitor responses to restrictions, the study participants were asked to specify their level of agreement to the following statements:

(A) I see restrictions (e.g. limited access to the animals) as a detraction of my experience.
(B) Restrictions wouldn't bother me (or less) if I fully understood their necessity.

Figure 25: Statement rating: Perception of restrictions (in %)



The results for both statements are presented in direct comparison in figure 25. Statement A received high disagreement-levels by more than half of the participants (57%), whereas 26% indicated a neutral opinion and only 17% specified to "somewhat agree" or "totally agree". Contrary to the statement of Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood (2001), the results reveal that more than half of the participants did not perceive facility restrictions as a detraction from their experience. For statement B, only those persons who indicated agreement as well as neutral opinions to statement A were taken into account. A tendency is shown that visitors who expressed neutral or negative feelings about restrictions were more likely to accept restrictions if their necessity is explained properly, as the clear majority (65%) specified agreement to statement B. That can be confirmed by Moscardo & Saltzer (2004, p.178): "*The limited research evidence available suggests that when limitations are supported by appropriate interpretation, visitors will adhere to restrictions to their activities.*" The participants of the

present study were asked to provide ideas for an enjoyable replacement in case facility restrictions limit the access to the displayed animals. Out of the 45 recorded answers, 12 respondents from all three research sites expressed support towards restrictions and pointed out that replacements are not needed:

"*Restrictions are completely understandable*"
"Necessary restrictions would not impact my experience"
"*The safety of the animal comes first, so I would rather enjoy it if the animal is enjoying him/herself*"
"*Just being able to see them is amazing*"
"I have no problem with restrictions if they are necessary for the animal's well-being. Just happy to observe"

As demonstrated, some visitors were happy to conform to restrictions if the well-being and safety of the animal was ensured. Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes (2009) conducted a study at a turtle conservation park in Queensland and also found out that many tourists are willing to forego both proximity and photography in favor of the animal's protection. Participants in the present study furthermore recommended to provide detailed information about the restrictions (*"Just ensure that decent information is given"; "explain restrictions"),* which highlights the importance of appropriate interpretation mentioned in the previous passage. Additionally, one participant suggested to inform the visitors about ways to actively get involved in conservation support (*"Be educated on ways to help - more information on conservation that the public could be actively be involved in"*). The Spearman correlation test showed a weak negative correlation between the participant's level of agreement to statement A and their experiences in previous wildlife tourism activities (r_s= - 0,193, p= 0,018, n=150) as well as weak positive association with their perceived importance of wildlife interaction (r_s= 0,179, p= 0,029, n=150) (Appendix E, table e47, e48). Thus, the results show a slight tendency that visitors with higher experience in wildlife tourism activities are less bothered by restrictions, whereas visitors who place greater importance on wildlife interaction are more likely to perceive restrictions as a detraction from their experience. The highest percentage of visitors who perceive restrictions as detraction appeared at Jukani (27%) (Appendix E, table e49).

4.2.5 Visitor satisfaction and visit evaluation

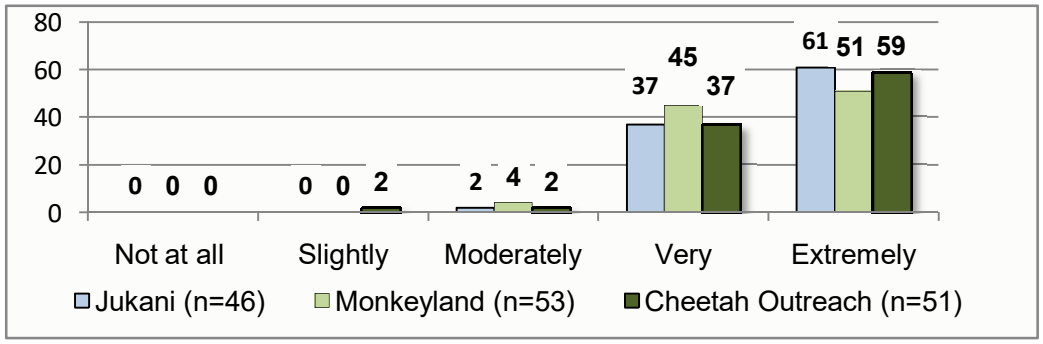
The following section serves to present the visitors' evaluation of their experience, including overall satisfaction levels, most favorable features and criticism as well as visitor suggestions for optimizing the quality and sustainability of the respective facility (Research questions D.1 and D.2, chapter 1.2). This information was used to determine the degree to which the

facilities were able to serve visitor demand, which indicates additional preferences and demand patterns on part of the visitors.

Satisfaction levels and perceptions of naturalness/excitement

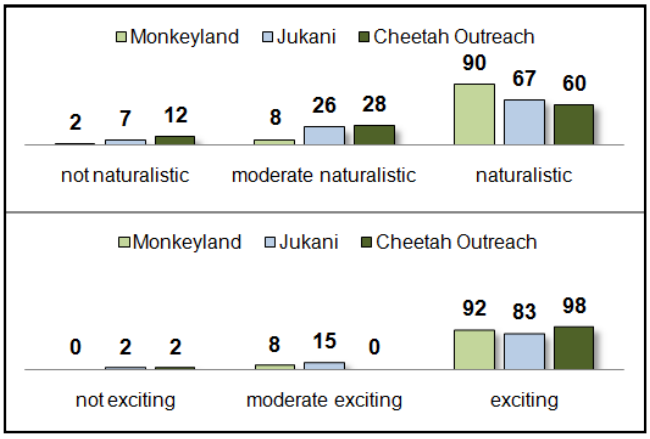
All participants were asked to rate their general satisfaction level with the visit on a 5-point Linkert scale from "not at all" to "extremely". The results show that the overall satisfaction level (n=150) was very high, with the majority of respondents giving a rating of "extremely satisfied" (56%), followed by 40% of "very satisfied" visitors. Only 3% specified their satisfaction as "moderately" and 1% as "slightly" (Appendix E, table e50). The following diagram (figure 26) illustrates the high satisfaction level recorded at all three research sites.

Figure 26: Satisfaction level at research sites (in % per site, n=150)



This finding is consistent with various wildlife tourism studies, as satisfaction levels appeared to be very high in many captive and wild settings (Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005; Moscardo & Saltzer, 2005). This is outlined by Moscardo & Saltzer (2004, p.178): "*A small but growing number of research studies have investigated satisfaction with wildlife tourism opportunities. In most cases overall satisfaction levels are high […]*"

Figure 27: Perceived naturalness/excitement at research sites (in % per site, n=149)



The participants were further asked to rate how naturalistic and exciting the animal encounters were perceived during the visit (using the same 5-point Linkert scale). The results for each wildlife facility are presented in figure 27; the responses were summarized into three categories to facilitate the data interpretation.[8] It becomes clear that Monkeyland was

[8] Note: The "not naturalistic/exciting" category includes all participants who rated these features as "not at all" or "slightly", category "moderate naturalistic/exciting" represents all participants who chose "moderately" and category "naturalistic/exciting" summarizes all responses for "very" or "extremely"

perceived as the most naturalistic setting compared to Jukani and Cheetah Outreach. Vice versa, the Cheetah Outreach received higher response rates for being not naturalistic, followed by Jukani. This pattern is comprehensible as the free-roaming forest in Monkeyland provides an impression of an un-caged and semi-captive environment and resembles the natural habitat of the monkeys, whereas animals at Jukani and Cheetah Outreach are watched through fenced enclosures. Yet, the results show that the majority of all participants at all three research sites perceived the encounters as naturalistic, irrespective of the enclosure design. This finding supports the belief of Holopainen (2012) and Moscardo & Saltzer (2004), who stated that a wildlife setting does not necessarily need to be pristine and untouched to convey the idea of "naturalness" to the visitors and captive settings can thus be perceived as natural if planned and managed properly. The notion of authenticity and naturalness is therefore strongly tied to individual sanctuary concepts and subjective perceptions of the visitors.

The results moreover outline that encounters at all three research sites were experienced as exciting by the overwhelming majority of participants. Yet, at Jukani, exiting encounters were reported to a slightly lesser extent. The Spearman correlation coefficient revealed a medium association between the naturalness ranking of the wildlife encounter and the visitor's overall satisfaction level (r_s= 0,354, p= 0,000, n=149), which proved to be statistically significant (Appendix E, table e51). According to this analysis, visitors tended to be slightly more satisfied with their overall visit if the wildlife encounter was perceived as naturalistic. This is not surprising, as authenticity and naturalness were found to play a crucial role in the visitor expectations.

Most favored visit features

Participant's most enjoyed features at the respective wildlife tourism sites were derived from the open-ended question "*What did you enjoy most about your visit?*" To facilitate the qualitative data interpretation, the comments were summarized into content-related clusters, whose rankings (in counts) are presented for each research site in table 7 (p.90). It became clear that most comments matched visitors' motivations and expectations, which have been identified in previous chapters. Several comments related to the educational experience, close proximity to the wildlife or naturalistic-looking enclosures. The enjoyment about a close proximity and natural, un-caged, free-roaming environment was most present at Monkeyland. In recalling their wildlife tourism experience, many visitors expressed pleasure about the natural facility-design, attended by the knowledge-transfer through informative tour guides:

"*Being able to see the animals roam free in their natural environment, not having to watch the animals through cages, being able to learn and walk around in their natural environment and watch them close up.*"

"The experience of being in close proximity with the animals as well as being educated by the pleasant and informative tour guide, being surrounded by a canopy forest."

Beside other features such as the friendliness of the guide or the variety of monkey species seen, the good condition of the facility as well as the fact that the monkeys are rescued made lasting impressions on some visitors:

The friendly and well-trained tour guide, the good condition in which the Monkeyland is in a whole, the beautiful monkeys, animals protected and kept in Monkeyland"

"The monkeys being able to move around like they are free, and the fact that they are saved, rescued monkeys."

At Jukani, the educational experience (in general as well as the knowledge of guides) was most often mentioned as the dominant reason for visitor satisfaction. This pattern is consistent with the findings relating to visitor motivations, as Jukani received a high number of visitors who indicated learning as a central motivation for their visit. Although the animals were only watched through fenced enclosures, several participants referred to a "natural habitat" and enjoyed to witness the animals in close proximity.

"Seeing the animals close up in a natural environment, very informative guide, lovely animals and environment."; "Very up close with the animals. Closest I have ever been to a lion."; "The enclosures are very big, extremely clean and natural."

Many participants further highlighted the good condition of the animals and enclosures and showed contentment with not having any impact on them. These statements reflect the strong desire for seeing wildlife behaving naturally as well as to have minimal impacts on the animals, which was identified in chapter 4.2.3. The comparison of all three wildlife facilities showed that these topics were most often mentioned at Jukani.

"*I love that the animals are given space, I am far happier to see no animals because it is able to hide away than one that is pacing and stressed out, my guide was absolutely wonderful too*."

"Xola was a very informative tour guide. Very friendly as well. I liked seeing the healthy animals in their natural habitat with low impact from human interaction."; "Seeing the animals undisturbed and content."

The quest for witnessing healthy and well-cared animals also reflected by Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood (2001, p.iii): "*There is also evidence that visitors to captive settings have strong expectations that animals will appear to be well cared for, and kept in clean and spacious enclosures*."

At Cheetah Outreach, the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that the physical encounter with the cheetahs or smaller animals was the most remarkable component of the visit. In some cases, special attributes of the animals such as being "beautiful" or a "wild creature" were highlighted ("*Standing next to such a beautiful animal*"). Several participants

specifically referred to the educational component, including the conservational message, in their memories of the experience:

"Learning about the holistic approach being taken to conservation and active attempts to deal proactively with causes and symptoms."; "Very knowledgeable and friendly staff."; "Meeting the cheetah and understanding the conservation program."; "Touching the cheetah, and knowledge of saving them from extinction."

The enjoyment aroused by the knowledge, friendliness and passion of staff members further produced vivid memories for some participants:

"The knowledge of the instructors, everyone was so friendly, meerkats were so beautiful at the meerkat encounter, the obvious passion of everyone involved - everyone seemed to love all the animals."

Many similar features were mentioned at all three research sites. Comments relating to learning and education, however, were more present at Jukani. At the other two facilities, certain highlights (e.g. free-roaming monkeys, cheetah encounter) pre-dominated the educational part. More participants at Jukani were concerned with the impacts of their visit and emphasized the evidence for animal welfare as an important contributor to their satisfaction. This finding could be indicative for a stronger conservation-attitude on part of the Jukani visitors, which also matches their lower importance ranking for physical wildlife interaction.

The results also reveal that additional features such as attributes of staff (knowledgeable, friendly, passionate), the variety of animals seen, the condition of animals and enclosures as well as certain animal attributes (e.g. rare, endangered, beautiful) can highly contribute to visitor satisfaction. These findings as well as the high quest for witnessing animals in their natural habitat are evident in several studies within the wildlife tourism literature (Moscardo & Saltzer, 2005; Moscardo & Saltzer, 2004; Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood, 2001; Moscardo, 2008; Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes, 2005; Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005). The high enthusiasm about the physical wildlife encounter at Cheetah Outreach is reflected by Bulbeck (2005, p.37) who mentioned that "*touching, feeding and interacting with animals were found in many studies to be the most exhilarating experiences alongside getting to a close proximity to an animal*." Furthermore, two participants expressed enjoyment about the interesting discussions with the guide (Jukani) as well as having the challenge to find the monkeys in the forest (Monkeyland), which can be added as further desirable features during wildlife tourism experiences. In general, several aspects that contribute to visitor satisfaction with wildlife-based attractions identified in the theoretical examination of the research field (chapter 2.4.4.2) were reflected during the analysis of the empirical research. Most of them were also represented by the Mindfulness model (chapter 2.5.2) and thus help to achieve mindful processing and thoughtful experience reflection on part of the visitors.

Table 7: Most enjoyable visit features (counts, n=138)[9]

Jukani		Monkeyland		Cheetah Outreach	
Knowledgeable guide	16	Close proximity	16	Physical wildlife interaction	29
Education	14	Natural habitat	11	Education	12
Close proximity	10	Knowledgeable guide	8	Close proximity	6
Conditions of animals, enclosure	7	Free roaming monkeys	8	Friendliness of guide	5
Friendliness of guide	6	Education	7	Knowledgeable guide	4
Natural habitat	4	Friendliness of guide	5	Attributes of animals	3
Minimal impact on animals	3	Variety of species	4	Seeing rare, endangered species	1
Seeing rare, endangered species	2	Conditions of animals	2	Conditions of animals	1
Animal attributes	2	Attributes of animals	1	Seeing a variety of animals	1
Small group size	2	Minimal impacts on animals	1		
Discussion with guide	1	Having to find the monkeys	2		

Criticism

Out of all 154 surveyed participants, 34 visitors (22%) expressed criticism about their experience at the respective wildlife facility. Similar to table 7, the comments were coded depending on their content (table 8, p.92). At Jukani, where the enclosures provide various hiding opportunities for the wildlife, most comments related to the fact that not all desired animals were visible during the tour. This circumstance was also criticized by two respondents at Cheetah Outreach. For all of these five participants, the feature "wildlife that is easy to see" was ranked as important or very important, which is representative for the majority of participants in the present research sample. The limited visibility of animals thus didn't conform to their general expectation about the wildlife encounter. Contrariwise, four of these participants also ascribed a high importance to naturalistic enclosures with hiding spaces for the animals. Although two participants criticized the limited visibility, they mentioned it's understandability in the same comment:

"Sometimes hard to see the animals (but understandable.)"; "Some of the animals could not be seen - but this can be understandable given the weather etc."

As identified in chapter 4.2.3, taking pictures of animals was considered as an important component for the majority of participants. Therefore, fenced enclosures can hinder good quality pictures, as mentioned by two visitors at Jukani:

"Fences prevent good photos."; "Difficult to take photos without fencing in the shots."

[9] All content-related features are listed separately, counts do not sum up to 138 as several visitors specified a combination of various features

One visitor moreover stated that he would have desired more interaction with the animals (touching) and one participant expressed consternation about the sad stories about canned hunting, which impacted the experience. At Monkeyland, most criticism related to the disturbance of other people during the tour, especially from children or noisy visitors:

"Loud people disturbing the tour and scaring the monkeys."; "The little kids during the tour screaming and throwing stuff (Something the parents should look after)."

Some visitors reported that the big group size had distracted the enjoyment of the experience, which conforms to visitor expectations for a smaller group size, which was discussed in chapter 4.2.3. Further criticism evolved about the rushed tour, which didn't allow enough time to fully appreciate the experience:

"When the tour moved too fast without having the time to take it in."; "Not staying at a spot long enough to appreciate the animals."

At both Monkeyland and Cheetah Outreach, two participants complained about a lack of knowledge transfer during the visit. It was further shown that some visitors, who felt concern about the well-being and welfare of the animals, were likely to become detracted from their enjoyment during the experience. At Cheetah Outreach, two visitors expressed concern about too small cages for the animals; one participant further described his experience as being "*too unnaturalistic, zoo-like*", especially due to the enclosures and tamed animals on display. These findings reveal that more "zoo-like" features such as small cages as well as tamed animals can hinder the visitor's perception of naturalness, which was highly requested by the majority of participants. This conforms to earlier findings, which showed that Cheetah Outreach and Jukani were perceived as less naturalistic compared to the free-roaming forest at Monkeyland.

Although aware of the facility restrictions, one person mentioned the desire to interact more closely with the cheetah as a critical point: *"I unrealistically wanted to hug it".* The mentioned criticism at Cheetah Outreach is partly confirmed by the statement of Interviewee 9 (2016: Cheetah Outreach): *"Most criticism that we receive is about not seeing all desired animals, the limited ability to interact with the cheetah or complaints about our volunteers (Ln. 35-36)*."

Not surprisingly, the result analyses indicated a slightly lower satisfaction level for those participants who mentioned criticism about their experience. However, in 30 out of 34 cases, the visitor's complaint did not impact the general high satisfaction level with the visit (very or extremely satisfied) (Appendix E, table e52). It seemed that visitors were able to draw enjoyment from different features, which weren't part of their prior anticipation.

Table 8: Criticism (counts, n=34)

Jukani		Monkeyland		Cheetah Outreach	
Not being able to see all animals	3	Disturbance of other people during the tour	6	Not being able to see all animals	2
Difficulty to take photos	2	Tour is too rushed	4	Small enclosures for animals	2
More interaction desired	1	Big group size	3	Lightening in projector room	2
Sad stories about canned hunting	1	Lack of education	2	More interaction desired	1
		Over-priced	1	Not naturalistic	1
		Muddy pathways	1	Lack of education	1
				Lack of time during encounter	1
				No cheetah cubs	1

Ideas for improvement and restriction replacements

The present chapter represents the visitor's ideas for improvement that were given at each research facility. It was recognized that their content highly overlapped with the recorded responses for survey question 14 (*If restrictions would limit your opportunity to interact with the animals or get close to them – what would in your opinion be a good replacement for an enjoyable experience?).* For this reason, all comments were summarized, clustered and listed in table b6 (Appendix B)[10]. Useful information was given to optimize the quality of the respective wildlife facilities and reveal additional features that were desired by the participants. Moreover, the comments provide valuable ideas for enjoyable activities as substitutes for limited access and restricted animal interaction.

Most improvement proposals referred to the criticism mentioned by the survey participants. Several visitors at Jukani and Cheetah Outreach indicated to desire additional viewing areas such as more elevated towers which allow a freely view into the enclosures. This was of particular importance in case wire fences hindered the opportunity to take high quality pictures of the animals. Some visitors mentioned the idea of driving through the enclosures or a providing a visitor walking bridge/tunnel within the cages. It was recognized that many participants required more media presentations as well as additional signage during their experience. If not provided by the facility, it was suggested to display an introductory film prior to the tour and show additional pictures, glass screens or videos of the animals and the facility objectives. The inclusion of more educational information in general was mentioned by five participants at Monkeyland and Cheetah Outreach. At Monkeyland, several participants recommended to limit the group size and offer special tours solely for families

[10] In case of question 14, comments already mentioned in chapter 4.5 were excluded

with children. It was further desired to have variable tour options such as private tours in order to experience a more personal encounter with the monkeys. As some visitors expressed criticism about too rushed tours at Monkeyland, it was suggested to plan more breaks to appreciate the experience and be able to take more pictures. As Jukani was perceived as less exciting in overall comparison, some participants recommended to align the tours to the animal's feeding times, so that visitors are able to witness their eating behavior. More excitement-relating activities were also suggested at Cheetah Outreach, such as watching the cheetahs hunt or interacting with cheetah cubs. Further proposals included a café with light meals (Cheetah Outreach) as well as to provide an insight into animal care or rehabilitation (Monkeyland).

Even though the prohibited animal interaction (Monkeyland, Jukani) as well as the limited ability to interact with the cheetahs (Cheetah Outreach) was not often mentioned as a point of criticism, a review of the survey results for improvement ideas revealed that more visitors actually desired a more interactive encounter with the animals. At Jukani, seven participants suggested to include physical wildlife interaction in the tourism product, even if this action would strictly oppose the mission that the sanctuary is trying to accomplish ("*having more animals to see and engage with"; "being able to touch or interact with animals where possible*"). Also at Monkeyland, four participants suggested to provide an interactive cage for closer interaction, or to offer the petting or feeding of monkeys as an activity. As already discussed in chapter 4.2.2.2, some participants at the non-touching facilities were also driven by the demand for animal interaction, which became evident during the analysis of the open comments. This obvious gap between visitor expectations and the actual tourism offer might appear as a consequence of some visitors not doing sufficient pre-research on the facility or primarily chose the sanctuary because of geographical proximity, as identified in chapter 4.2.2.3. This is also reflected by the statement of Interviewee 3 (2016, Monkeyland):

"*Some people don't search for any information prior to their visit and they don't know about our policy when they come here (Ln.11-12).*"; "*I remember a visitor coming to Monkeyland and she said that she only came here to touch the monkeys. After we explained to her that she is not allowed to touch them, she went home again (Ln.14-16).*"

It was further noticed that some participants revealed their wish for more interaction, but at the same time, required that this activity must conform to the safety and well-being of the animals.

"Perhaps some of the animals could be trained to interact peacefully with humans."; "Physically touching the animals - safely of course."

The same relation between the importance ranking for physical wildlife interaction and the ranking for having minimal impacts on animals has been observed in chapter 4.2.3. There also appeared evidence about contradicting specifications indicated by the visitors. Out of all

12 participants who expressed their desire for interaction in the ideas for improvement, only four reported a high level of agreement for the statement "*I see restrictions (e.g. limited access to the animals) as a detraction of my experience*." and three indicated a neutral opinion. Three participants further disagreed and therefore showed their contentment with restrictions, but at the same time, mentioned the desire to include more interaction, even if not permitted by the facility.

4.2.6 Cultural differences in visitor demand

As mentioned in the theoretical framework (chapter 2.4.4.1), perceptions of animals as well as their welfare and plights vary between countries and are highly determined by religious and cultural beliefs. In the present research sample, visitors from 19 different countries were represented, mostly from South Africa, America and the United Kingdom. To ensure appropriate statistical testing between nationality data and further variables of the survey, the participants were summarized into main nationality categories including South Africa, America and Europe. Other nationalities were considered as negligible, as these were too few in number to obtain significant demand patterns or tendencies. A series of analyses (Chi-Square test) were conducted to profile and compare different geographic and cultural markets. The statistical tests revealed that only few differences occurred in the entering attributes, desired visit features, restriction perceptions and satisfaction levels of different nationalities. Not surprisingly, South Africans received higher scores for the motivation "spending relaxing time with family and friends", as these were most frequently travelling with children (chapter 4.2.1). Significant differences were further identified for the motivation to have physical wildlife interaction during the visit. In overall comparison, this pull-factor was most evident for Americans, followed by Europeans and at last, South Africans. This high desire for wildlife interaction expressed by Americans was also reflected in its importance-ranking, as 67% of them chose the option "important" or "very important". Moreover, the test results showed that a high service quality was dominantly important for South Africans and of less importance for Europeans and Americans (Appendix B, table b8).

Cultural differences were also addressed during the in-depth interviews with managers and guides, who were able to give a more detailed reflection of visitor behavior over a longer period of time. Interviewee 2 (2016, Monkeyland, Ln.7-10) confirmed that visitor preferences often depend on the culture and background of the visitors and pointed out certain demand patterns that were observed for Indian visitors:

"*Most Indians, for example, set a high focus on entertainment, activity and interaction. They have a lot of monkeys in India, so they are not satisfied by only watching the monkeys; they need something special to add value to the experience."*

Interviewee 1 (2016, Monkeyland) supported that statement by mentioning that Monkeyland and Jukani recognize an absence of Indian visitors, which could be explained by the “no touching “approach promoted by the facilities. A higher quest for touching animals among Asian visitors was also reflected at a study conducted by Moscardo & Saltzer (2005).

At Cheetah Outreach, however, Indians were stated to have a lot of respect for the cheetahs, as these are much respected species in the country (Interviewee 8, 2016, Cheetah Outreach). However, a cultural shift was highly recognized with regard to Eastern European visitors as well as with visitors from the Middle East (e.g. Saudi-Arabia). Interviewee 8 (2016, Cheetah Outreach) explained that many Saudi-Arabians perceive animals as belongings and are more interested in having a photo with the cheetah than in any conservation efforts. This is demonstrated by the fact that they often ask how much the cheetahs cost, because cheetahs are often kept as pets in the Arab Emirates. The gender aspect was mentioned as a further challenge that often occurred due to cultural differences. It was stated that many Saudi Arabians don’t listen to female volunteers and sometimes show a lack of respect, which is problematic as the industry is very female-biased.

Differences in the perception of animals and wildlife conservation between European and South African visitors were often highlighted by employees of Monkeyland and Jukani:

“*South Africans are very close to our wildlife but they are very far from understanding the animals’ needs. I think we are very spoiled and we are too used to them. In Europe, where you don’t have lots of wild animals anymore, people are more aware about the animals’ threats and they are more interested in conserving them. (Interviewee 6, 2016: Ln. 22-25, Jukani)*”

This was confirmed by Interviewee 7 (2016,Jukani, Ln.26-35), who further addressed particular differences between the different cultures of South Africa:

“*I realized that most visitors who come from overseas, they more understand our mission than local people do. Overseas people are more into nature and they are more interested in animals and animal welfare. In South Africa, unfortunately, people don’t really care about that topic and don’t support it, especially our black cultures. So we try a lot to change the minds of South Africans and also bring school groups in order to create awareness about what we do. We as guides represent the black people and have to show them that we have to protect our heritage. A lot of tourists come to our country to experience our beautiful nature and therefore, we have to protect it. Actually, we are rich people because we have a rich nature.”*

Interviewee 2 (2016, Monkeyland, Ln.10-13) confirmed that perceptions of wildlife as well as visitor preferences are often attributed to their environment and experiences with the animal species itself:

"*People who have never seen monkeys before also act differently of course. They more appreciate the sole view of the animals. South Africans, who have monkeys in their backyard that might steal their food, also have different relationships to the animals."*

From the qualitative research analysis it can be concluded that the visitors' cultural background and previous experience with wildlife species are significant factors that influence their behavior and preferences. However, none of the mentioned patterns could be confirmed by the quantitative analysis. In fact, South Africans were most likely to give reflective responses about animal welfare and conservation in terms of their praise and criticism mentioned about the facility. Whereas European visitors recorded a more divided opinion about wildlife interaction, South Africans also tended to perceive this activity as less important. The increased awareness about canned hunting in the country as well as the exposure of unethical practices at certain wildlife sanctuaries might have contributed to the awareness of South African residents about their wildlife and conservation-related practices in general. However, contrary to these assumptions, South Africans were higher in number to reveal their desire for interaction in further open comments, which indicates existing bias between their demand and the rationality of environmental awareness.

Furthermore, it must be noted that the South African sample was dominated by Caucasian visitors and no significant statements can be made for other cultures such as Zulu, Tswana or Xhosa. In the present study, Zulu and Tswana visitors (n=4) showed no significant differences in comparison to the overall South African sample. However, the author recognized a noticeable absence of other South African cultures at all research facilities (chapter 4.2.1), which has been seen as an indicator for a lack of interest and awareness about the topic of wildlife conservation by Interviewee 7. Although all wildlife facilities seemed to be affordable for low-budget tourists, varying living standards in-between different nationalities imply that affordability can also be taken into account as an explanation for a lower participation rate. No mention was made by guides or managers about American visitors and their comparatively higher desire for wildlife interaction, which was noticed in the present study. These results suggest that further in-depth research is needed to investigate the American culture with regard to wildlife tourism experiences and the quest for wildlife interaction.

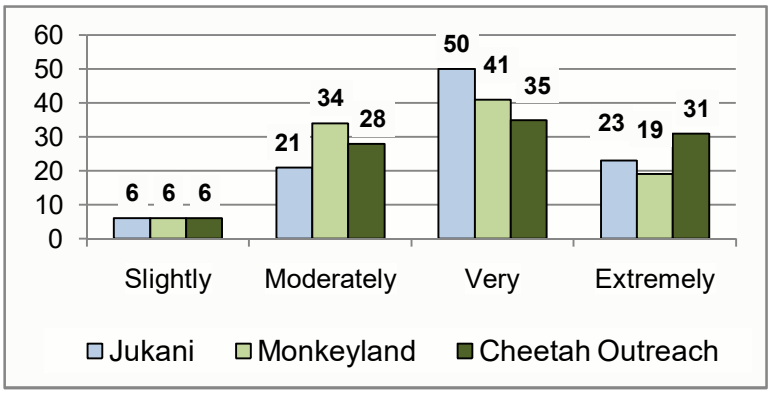
4.3 Educational value of the visit: Learning outcomes

In the following chapters, the author examines the impact of educational programs at the respective wildlife facilities by investigating learning outcomes of the visitors (Research Questions E.1, E.2, E.3, chapter 1.2).

4.3.1 Knowledge enhancement and learning achievements

The surveyed participants were asked to indicate if the visit increased their knowledge about animals and wildlife conservation on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “not at all” to “extremely”. The overall learning outcomes were generally high, with 24% choosing the option “extremely” (5) and 42% the option “very” (4) (Appendix E, table e53). This pattern was reflected at each wildlife facility, as more than half of each participant sample specified the category 4 or 5. These options were most frequently chosen at Jukani (73%), where visitors also dominantly focused on the educational component during their experience.

Figure 28: Knowledge enhancement at research sites (in %, n=150)

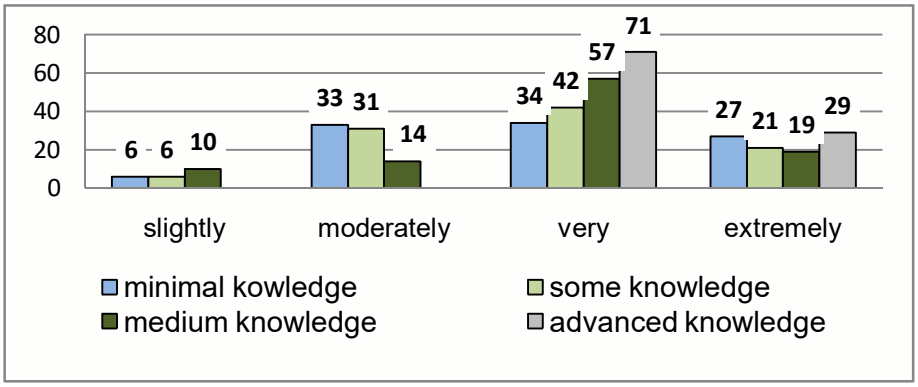


At Cheetah Outreach, those participants accounted for 66% of the sample and the option “extremely” was chosen most often. In overall comparison, visitors at Monkeyland showed the lowest learning effects (figure 28). This finding also matches comments of some Monkeyland participants who complained about a lack of education during the tour. Based on own observation by the author, it can be stated that the knowledge transfer at Monkeyland was generally very high, but sometimes varied depending on the guide. Monkey encounters moreover remained unpredictable and visitors and guides easily got distracted by the sighting of monkeys and their playful behavior. At this facility, the highest number of families was recorded, who often got distracted by the behavior of the children. Corresponding to these observations, distractive behavior by other group members was noticeably evident in criticism mentioned about the Monkeyland facility (chapter 4.2.5).

The level of learning outcome was further compared to the knowledge levels that were indicated by the participants prior to their visit. According to the Spearman correlation test, no significant correlation could be identified between the participant’s pre-visit level of knowledge and their learning outcomes after the visit (r_s =0,051, p=0,536, n=152) (Appendix E, table e54). As mentioned in chapter 4.2.2.1, existing knowledge levels of participants were found to be generally low, resulting in biased data which does not serve for an appropriate comparison. Figure 29 however demonstrates that all visitors with advanced knowledge indicated high learning outcomes after their visit, who were most present at Jukani. Also 76% of the participants with medium knowledge, who were most present at Cheetah Outreach, chose the options “very” or “extremely”. It becomes clear that these wildlife facilities, even if

primarily targeting wildlife generalists, are still able to enhance knowledge levels of more specialized and knowledgeable visitor groups and thus provide a high educational value for all target markets. The majority (over 60%) of visitors with minimal and some knowledge about wildlife conservation also specified a high learning effect, about 40 % indicated only moderate or slightly increased knowledge.

Figure 29: Knowledge enhancement compared to pre-visit knowledge levels (in%, n=150)

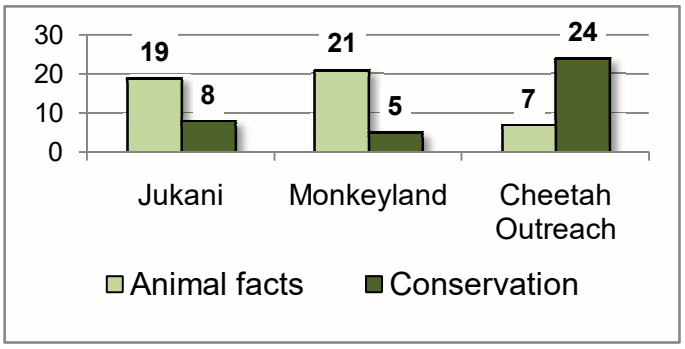


No significant differences were identified between the variable gender, age, children, first/repeat visitors, the level of experience in wildlife tourism activities and the acquired knowledge after the visit. Statistical analyses revealed the significant weak tendency that visitors who placed higher importance on learning during their experience were more likely to enhance their knowledge to a greater extent (r_s = 0,244, p=0,003, n=152) (Appendix E, table e55). These visitors also indicated a higher agreement to the statement "*During the tour I ask a lot of questions about the animals and wildlife conservation*", which demonstrates their active involvement in knowledge acquirement (r_s =0,331, p=0,000, n=152) (Appendix E, table a56). Those visitors whose entering motivations were strongly related to education also indicated slightly higher learning outcomes after their experience (Appendix E, table e57).

This is confirmed by Ballantyne et al. (2007), who pointed out that visitors' involvement in learning is a matter of their own choice; therefore motivations relating to learning aspects are expected to impact their receptiveness to conservation messages during the experience. The Spearman correlation coefficient further revealed a medium association (r_s=0,338, p=0,000, n=149) between the overall satisfaction level and knowledge outcomes of the participants, which proved to be significant at the 0.01 level (Appendix E, table e58). This finding provides evidence that visitors with higher satisfaction levels reported to increase their knowledge level to a greater extent. The Chi-Square test confirmed that visitors who indicated criticism about their experience were more likely to report slightly lower learning outcomes (x2: 9,280[a] ,p=0,026) (Appendix E, table e59). This is confirmed by Moscardo & Saltzer (2005), who identified the learning outcome to be significantly related to visitor's overall satisfaction level during wildlife tourism experiences.

Most memorable learning outcomes

Figure 30: Learning outcomes at research sites (counts, n=84)



To evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies and provide a more in-depth understanding of visitor learning outcomes and responses to educational messages, the surveyed participants were asked to give an indication about their most memorable learning achievement acquired during the visit (open-ended question). The responses (n=84) were re-coded into two main categories: (1) facts about animal and/or it behavior as well as (2) statements assigned to topics such as conservation, animal welfare or attitude changes derived from the visit (figure 30). Species-related comments were predominantly mentioned at Jukani and Monkeyland and more frequently recorded compared to conservation-related matters. Several participants expressed surprise about specific facts that were not known before:

"Hyenas are bigger than expected, very surprising."; "I have learnt that black and white limas have as many as 6 babies and build nests. I did not know that"; "That lions, tigers, leopards and jaguars are all panthers because they roar."

13 participants were able to recall the information they had been given about human impacts on wildlife, the educational mission of the sanctuary and practical things they could do to make a positive difference:

"The guide informed us about how bad interaction is"; "That breeding can cause problems."; "That we need to make more of an effort to protect endangered animal."; "Not have monkeys as pets, they are wild and cute animals."; "The necessity of facilities to give animals a second chance to survive and live their lives without danger, being protected."; "The impact of zoos and other captivity on the animals."

At Cheetah Outreach, an overwhelming majority of respondents (24 out of 31) displayed evidence that they had reflected on or cognitively processed the conservation message that was conveyed by the facility. Several comments were given about the endangered status of the cheetah and the importance of the Anatolian Shepherd program for its survival:

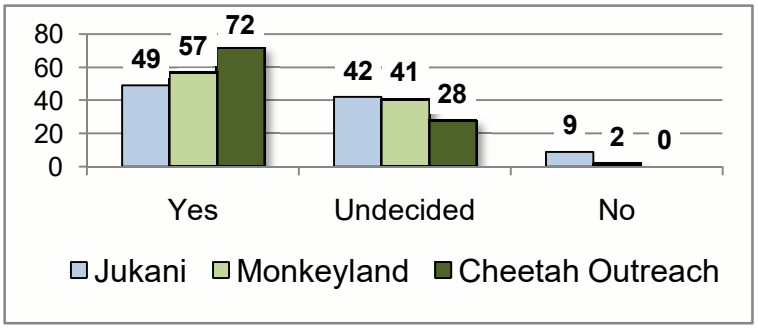
"Only 6600 cheetahs left."; "The cheetahs are becoming endangered."; "The importance of saving the cheetah from extinction."; "How important conservation work is."; "The partnership between the cheetah outreach and farmers to minimize the big cat killings – great initiative."

In comparison to the other two research sites, these comments dominated species-related facts such as "*the speed of cheetahs*" or "*the difference between male and female cheetahs*".

Yet, it must be noted that also those visitors who referred to species-related facts as their most memorable learning outcome might reflected on the conservational message, however, factual information was recalled as their most distinct memory. Generally, it is assumed that most memorable knowledge achievements are able to create a more powerful impact on visitors' long-term attitudes and thus result in noticeable changes towards pro-environmental behavior.

4.3.2 Encouragement for further conservation support

Figure 31: Encouragement for conservation support (in%, n=143)



The third measure to analyze learning outcomes was a rating-scale asking the visitors to indicate if they would take any concrete action to support wildlife conservation after the visit. The overall results revealed that 60% of participants felt encouraged to support wildlife conservation (visitors that indicated to already support were excluded from the sample) (Appendix E, table e60). At each research site, the majority of all respondents chose the categories "Yes" or "Rather Yes", followed by those visitors who were undecided and only few participants who won't get involved in further conservation actions.[11] As shown in figure 31, the willingness to support wildlife conservation was most present at Cheetah Outreach (72%), where conservation learning was highly evident. It was identified that the participant's willingness to support conservation was slightly increasing if he or she was more satisfied with the visit (r_s= - 0,224, p=0,007, n=142) and specified higher learning outcomes after the tour (r_s= -0,179, p=0,032, n=143) (Appendix E, table e61, e62).

62 participants further reported about their concrete plans to support conservation or animal welfare-related programs in the future. (Appendix B, table b7). Monetary donations were mentioned most frequently, followed by support through volunteering. Promoting the sanctuary itself or planning repeat visits were also specified by ten participants. Several visitors expressed the desire to create more awareness about wildlife and conservation-related topics that have been learned during the visit:

[11] The response categories „Rather Yes" and "Yes" as well "Rather No" and "No" were summarized to facilitate data interpretation

"*Teach/help with education programs of how to treat animals", "Create more public awareness, especially regarding the importance of endangered species*", "*Teaching my children and family, friends what I've learnt during the visit.*"

Some visitors felt encouraged to support and assist in conservation-related organizations or programs such as anti-poaching initiatives, the WWF or get active in general pro-environmental behavior *("Be involved with preservation, regeneration of environment as this is essential to all life on earth").*

Two respondents recalled the conservational message and mission of the wildlife facility and mentioned to draw consequences as a result of participating in the tour:

"*I will notify you guys if I see ill-treated animals*", "*I will stop going to circuses and start donating money towards wildlife sanctuaries*", "*I will support the banning of captured and abused animals, and will help to set them free through rehabilitation*".

Further general conservation-related actions were mentioned such as the planning of more visits to learn about animals and wildlife conservation. The importance of Social Media for awareness-creation was highlighted by three participants:

"*I will post on Social Media and spread the word*", "*I will help to stop people from poaching wildlife, Social media will be a good start*".

Six participants furthermore indicated that more information is required on how practical support could be realized *("Not sure what is needed, I would help anyway I can", "I need information about how to help").*

4.4 Evaluation of demand and learning patterns in context of sustainability

In the context of sustainable progress, the present section aims to discuss the obtained empirical results with regard to visitor support for sustainable management practices and the effectiveness of operational approaches concerning education and awareness-creation. Furthermore, visitor concern for animal welfare will be examined. These topics have been addressed within the research questions F.1, F.2, F.3 (chapter 1.2) and encompass a more comprehensive and embracing review of the collected visitor information.

4.4.1 Support for sustainable management practices and educational effectiveness of different operational approaches

The results provide evidence that all three wildlife facilities take an instrumental role in promoting wildlife and conservation learning among their visitors. As most visitors assigned high importance to education during their experience, the visit provided a valuable foundation to reflect thoughtfully on potential impacts of wildlife encounters and strengthen pro-

conservation attitudes. These findings conform to earlier remarks about the importance of education and interpretation during wildlife tourism experiences (chapter 2.5). Wildlife tourism implies a huge potential in ensuring sustainable development by providing education about threats facing wildlife as well as important measures to counteract adverse developments. Responses drawn from the survey confirm that all facilities succeeded in enhancing knowledge levels of their visitors, who felt encouraged to make financial and non-financial contributions towards the facility itself as well as to general eco-conservation related programs and initiatives. These practices, in turn, help to provide income for conservation and animal-welfare related efforts of the facility, forward its word-of-mouth advertisement and facilitate awareness creation and the spreading of knowledge among a greater public audience. The provision of engaging and effective learning experiences can further influence the long-term environmental behavior of the visitors by increasing the respect and appreciation for wildlife and nature and build the capacity for the long-term adoption of sustainable living practices (see chapter 2.5). Noticeable learning outcomes at captive wildlife facilities such as wildlife and theme-parks were identified in several wildlife tourism studies (Packer & Ballantyne, 2012; Moscardo, 2008). Also the potential of zoos as educational centers is increasingly emphasized (Carr, Cohen, 2011; Tribe, 2004). However, contradictory findings are found relating to the educational effectiveness of zoos. Previous research revealed little evidence that zoo facilities are very successful in educating the public about wildlife. This finding again emphasizes the unique educational role of wildlife sanctuaries in comparison to more-leisure orientated facilities such as zoos.

As part of the educational effort, all three wildlife facilities claimed their accomplishment to safeguard the welfare of the displayed animals by restricting certain intrusive activities, which were realized in different intensity by the respective facilities. As shown by the survey results, visitors generally reflected fortunate attitudes towards sustainable management practices, as more than half of all participants expressed contentment with facility restrictions (chapter 4.2.4). Further 65% of those visitors who felt distracted by certain management actions claimed to be more understanding if appropriate interpretation and explanation is provided. Optimism was also expressed by managers and guides of both Monkeyland and Jukani, who indicated that most visitors are receptive to the conservation message given and leave the sanctuary with a better understanding of what the facility is trying to accomplish:

“I think, 98 % of the people do understand the necessity of this policy. We realize that they start to understand more if you properly explain why touching is forbidden and then, they are happy by not touching them.” (Interviewee 7, 2016, Ln.13-15, Jukani)

“90 % of the time people do understand and they accept that they are not allowed to touch monkeys. I think back in their mind they still want to touch them, but when we are 10 minutes into the tour and they can enjoy the close-up view of the animals, they mostly are very satisfied even without touching them [...] I think, 80 % of the visitors change their mind sets after a visit at Monkeyland. Of course, we have to bring the message across the way it should be. The guide has to be convincing, persuasive and truthful. (Interviewee 2, 2016, Ln. 23-30, Monkeyland)

In some cases, persuasive communication resulted in positive attitude changes, which were followed by practical actions on part of the visitors:

"Some people, who for example have monkeys as pets, they even confess that they realized how bad this is after visiting Monkeyland. We even had the case that people give their pet-monkeys back because they realized that they are doing wrong" (Interviewee 2, 2016, Ln. 30-33, Monkeyland)

As a counterpoint, it was stated that these assumptions always include exceptions and not all visitors are reflecting on the conservation message and are thus not willing to change their mindsets after the visit:

"Of course, there are always people who still ask to touch a lion and would never change their minds." (Interviewee 6, 2016:Ln.36-37, Jukani)

The same pattern was reflected by Interviewee 8 (2016, Cheetah Outreach), who confirmed that the vast majority of visitors do understand and accept the conservation message at Cheetah Outreach. However, it was recognized that some visitors are primarily interested in the encounter and taking the picture with the cheetah, and are less understanding about certain restrictions:

"About once-in a month we receive guests who are complaining that they want more interaction with the cheetahs, e.g. they want to cuddle or stroke the face, although we explain that this is not possible to ensure guest safety and animal welfare during the encounters. If people went to a different facility before where they had more interaction, they are usually disappointed when coming here as we are very respectful towards our animals. If the cheetahs get up and walk away, we take them away from the visitors. (Interviewee 8, 2016, Ln. 49-55, Cheetah Outreach)"

Similar patterns were identified from the survey results. In accordance to the statements of sanctuary managers and guides, the majority of surveyed participants showed acceptance with the sanctuary restrictions, as these were not often criticized and did not significantly impact the overall high satisfaction level. However, some visitors mainly at Monkeyland and Jukani indicated a lack of understanding and education about the sanctuary mission, as the quest for more interaction was expressed even after participating in the educational tour. Additionally, significant differences in learning outcomes were identified at the three research sites, which follow different approaches in accomplishing their mission. Whereas more visitors at Monkeyland and Jukani reflected factual information about the animals and their behavior, conservation awareness was dominantly reported at Cheetah Outreach, alongside a slightly greater willingness to support conservation after the visit. No significant correlations were identified between the report of conservation-related learning and entering attributes of the participants. In fact, visitors with minimal and advanced pre-knowledge about conservation as well as different participation levels and motivations were able to reflect on conservation or animal-welfare related topics after their visit (Appendix E, table x63, x64).

Thus, the observed differences will be discussed in reference to the sanctuary approach, which will be evaluated in terms of its educational value and effectiveness.

Jukani and Monkeyland

Best pre-conditions for educational receptiveness were shown at Jukani, as the limited access to the animals implied a greater focus on education, visitors moreover specified prior educational motives, reflected positively on the learning experience and were thus able to enhance their knowledge about wildlife and conservation to a great extent. However, the open-ended question revealed that the content of the interpretation program at Jukani and Monkeyland might not have placed sufficient emphasis on conservation or animal welfare-related issues to become memorable learning achievements after the visit. During self-participation at the tours, the author noticed that the communicated message varied between the guides and knowledge was sometimes conveyed in detracting moments (Monkeyland). Although most visitors showed a general acceptance of restrictions, it also remains questionable if this acceptance automatically implied a supportive attitude on part of the visitors, which will result in long-term pro-environmental behavior and actions. Only a minority of participants specifically stated to be supportive and reflective towards the sanctuary's management practices.

It could be remarked that visitors at the non-touching facilities already specified comparatively lower importance rating for wildlife interaction and several visitors at Jukani reflected enhanced conservation attitudes and concern for animal welfare. Therefore it might be possible that the promotion of a non-interaction approach did not cause significant influence on already existing attitudes. On the other hand, it must be taken into consideration that the questionnaire was handed out after the visit, which might has affected visitor responses to the question about visit expectations. In case the guide was strongly emphasizing the adverse impacts of wildlife interaction, visitors could already be influenced in their attitude or responded in a manner that will be viewed favorably by the sanctuary management.

Yet, responses to the open-ended questions showed no significant indication that knowledge related to wildlife interaction or animal welfare was perceived as memorable for a high number of visitors. Similarly, the survey results were not able to reveal evidence that those visitors who still indicated a high importance for animal interaction in the survey changed their mindsets after the visit and kept the educational message as a base for long-lasting attitude changes, which contradicts the assumption of Interviewee 2. Also general aspects of conservation, such as the threats of species, were less frequently mentioned compared to

factual information reflected about certain wildlife species and their behavior. Those participants who desired more interaction or excitement during their tour might have become distracted by their unfulfilled demand and therefore less receptive to the educational message promoted by the facility.

Cheetah Outreach

According to statements provided by facility employees, the emotional affinity derived from the physical encounter with the cheetah could explain the higher conservation learning scores and willingness for long-term support at Cheetah Outreach. Interviewee 9 (2016, Cheetah Outreach) referred to her own experience and mentioned that many visitors increasingly donate to their trust after touching a cheetah, which might not happen if the facility would prohibit interaction at all. She further specified that the encounter sometimes resulted in highly emotional reactions of the visitors such as crying. Also Interviewee 8 (2016: Cheetah Outreach) expressed a supportive attitude towards animal interaction, as it constitutes a helpful tool for the visitors to better understand the conservation message and remember the impressionable, emotional experience. Thus, there appears evidence that an emotional bonding experience combined with the reception of effectively conveyed education can result in powerful learning outcomes on part of the visitors. This also conforms to the increasing importance ascribed to emotional aspects during learning experiences, which was examined in chapter 2.5.1. Bulbeck (2005) emphasized the importance of touching an animal for many tourists as a base for developing an actual interest in saving the species. These findings correspond to the mindfulness model (chapter 2.5.2), which involves wildlife interaction as a factor related to mindfulness and rewarding wildlife tourism experiences.

Furthermore, the endangered status of the cheetah might have contributed to its emotional appeal, which can also be confirmed by Moscardo, Woods & Greenwood (2001). Compared to the non-touching facilities, visitors at Cheetah Outreach showed less desire to partake in more interaction with the animals. For those visitors interested in physical wildlife interaction, getting to touch the animal, even if more intense interaction was prohibited, was thus more likely to forward the acceptance of restrictions than a complete “no-touching” approach. The focus on one particular wildlife species might also be a factor forwarding the process of reflecting about the animal’s threats and conservation-related concerns. As it facilitates the bonding to the animal, acquired knowledge about its endangered status might remain more powerful in visitors’ memories. At Jukani, where the focus lies more widespread on several indigenous and non-indigenous wildlife species, the conservation information might be to all-embracing to create long-lasting memories on part of the visitors. In overall evaluation, the educational model of Cheetah Outreach was identified as highly successful in obtaining its

mission. Although entering attributes and visit evaluations revealed a high focus on the actual encounter rather than educational motives, increased conservation awareness was remarked as a distinct outcome of the visit.

In summary, the study provides evidence that conservation learning is facilitated by providing a bonding, emotional wildlife experience and aligning the educational message to a particular focal species. In turn, promoting an approach that includes prohibition and requires disclaim on part of the visitors proved to be more challenging. In this regard, effectively conveyed education and interpretation as well as the creation of emotional human-wildlife connections were identified as key factors to strengthen visitor acceptance of sustainable management strategies and encourage supportive behavior. Furthermore, the receptiveness towards education proved to be higher if anticipated features were met during the experience, such as the desire for interaction or a simplified visibility of the animals. To achieve best possible educational outcomes on part of the visitors, sanctuary managers thus face the challenge to meet visitor expectations whilst not jeopardizing their overall mission and adherence to certain animal welfare and conservation-related standards.

4.4.2 Evidence for animal welfare concern

A growing concern for animal welfare in tourism was evident among major demand trends identified in the wildlife tourism literature (chapter 2.4.3). Corresponding to this trend, the survey results revealed promising approaches on part of the visitors which are indicative for a demand-side driven by concern for the animal's welfare and safety during the encounter. This is demonstrated by the high importance assigned to naturalistic features during the wildlife tourism experience, involving naturalistic-looking enclosures, the observation of natural, undisturbed animal behavior as well as the requirement to not cause any adverse impacts on the encountered wildlife. Even for those visitors who indicated the desire for physical wildlife interaction, the demand for minimal-impact behavior was highly evident. In turn, features relating to entertainment and interaction, the most common area of debate and tension within the tourism and animal welfare industry, received lower importance ranks in overall comparison to other aspects of the visit. The review of the qualitative comments revealed that some participants mentioned animal-welfare matters as either a positive influence on their experience or expressed consternation about certain features, such as the small enclosures for the wildlife. Furthermore, some visitors specifically highlighted their contentment with not being an interference to the animal's safety and natural behavior. The conducted interviews with sanctuary managers and guides confirmed the trend of an increasing orientation towards animal welfare on part of the visitors, which is reflected in visitor questions during the tour and noticed especially throughout the last years. In this

regard, Social Media was often emphasized as an important tool for awareness creation among the public.

"A lot of them are responsible travelers, especially foreign visitors from Europe. People are becoming more conservation-orientated, but that happened only during the last years. When I started at Monkeyland 10 years ago it wasn't like that, but a lot has changed throughout the course of the last 10 years. Worth of mouth was always a good marketing strategy for us to make people aware of our mission and about what we do. Now, there is also Social Media which is a great opportunity to positively influence people and create awareness about conservation." (Interviewee 2, 2016: Ln. 36-43, Monkeyland)

"The Social Media aspect is very high due to the huge concerns and lots of awareness creation. This was very different prior to 2005, but the tourism industry is getting very animal welfare focused because of the growing concerns about zoos and entertaining animal attractions." (Interviewee 8, 2016: Ln. 67-70, Cheetah Outreach)

Additionally, Interviewee 9 (2016, Cheetah Outreach) reported on the increasing animal-welfare orientation on the part of tourism operators, which started to require the facility's compliance with certain animal welfare standards. These concerns are highly influenced by the canned hunting debate, which was examined in chapter 2.6.4.

"Due to the concerns about canned hunting regarding animal welfare, a growing number of tour operators want us to fill in various questionnaires before bringing guests to us in order to confirm that we conform to certain ethical standards, especially international tourism companies." (Interviewee 9, 2016: Ln.30-33, Cheetah Outreach)

However, certain contradictory visitor statements run a continuous thread through the findings of the present study. On the one hand, visitors expressed high expectations for witnessing the animals undisturbed from any human interference, including the display of natural behavior patterns and the ability to hide from spectators. On the other hand, they revealed the desire for a close proximity, ease of viewing and in some cases, the quest for physical wildlife interaction. Similar contradictions were identified by analyzing the responses for the open-ended questions, as some statements didn't match the responses to further questions of the survey. As mentioned in chapter 4.2.5, some visitors criticized limited visibility of the animals, but assigned a high importance to naturalistic enclosures and hiding spaces at the same time. In equal measure, some respondents mentioned more interactive activities even if prohibited by the facility, but simultaneously required its compliance to the animal's welfare. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, restrictions to safeguard the animals' protection were generally accepted, but supportive attitudes and learning outcomes related to animal welfare or wildlife conservation were specified by only few participants in case of Monkeyland and Jukani.

These contradictions indicate that visitors faced conflict between the urge to satisfy their personal, more self-serving needs and at the same time, to comply their actions to more responsible, animal-welfare orientated behavior during the visit. It seems that many visitors

showed a general awareness about minimal-impact behavior and sought to participate in sustainably managed wildlife tourism holidays, but were not yet ready to forego their personal demands in favor of ensuring the animal's welfare to the greatest possible extent. Furthermore, none of the visitors reported a reflection on potential adverse impacts of human wildlife-interaction at Cheetah Outreach, even if minimal-impact behavior was regarded as highly important. Exhilaration about the encounter was most frequently recalled as the most enjoyable experience during the visit, even by those participants who didn't specify a high importance to wildlife interaction in general. It seems that the visit encouraged supportive attitudes towards wildlife interaction, which in turn risks an increased ignorance towards potential adversities discussed about the topic. Similar challenges were addressed by Markwell (2015, p.15) who stated that "*many tourists, perhaps through a combination of naivety or lack of awareness, are ignorant of the "back story" of how these animals came to be in captivity, or how they are treated in captivity, and are simply happy to have the opportunity to encounter these animals and be photographed with them. For others, who are aware of the controversy surrounding these "photo-prop" animals, the encounter is perhaps so surreal or liminal – outside the boundaries of everyday life – that they surrender to it, even if their enjoyment may sometimes be tinged with guilt*."

The observed discrepancies between visitors' intention to adjust their behavior towards more responsible actions whilst also satisfying their personal demands represent typical challenges commonly reported in regard to sustainable tourism and sustainable consumption behavior. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, Terlau & Hirsch confirm a clear inconsistency between the consumer's attitudes towards sustainable consumption and their actual purchase behavior observed. The present study demonstrates that successfully managed sustainable approaches in wildlife tourism require appropriate substitutes and effective educational programs in case sacrifices are demanded from the tourists. Discrepancies in visitor attitudes were not often reported in similar wildlife tourism literature or did not receive particular attention, but are of critical importance to the management of the respective sites.

4.5 Conclusion

Purpose of the study was to identify demand patterns relating to visitor motivations, expectations and satisfaction levels during visits at South African wildlife sanctuaries. In the face of current debates questioning the educational and conservational value of certain wildlife activities, common areas of tension such as animal interaction and entertainment received particular attention by the study. Further objective was to examine visitor learning outcomes and obtain an evaluation of wildlife sanctuaries as educational platforms within the

wildlife tourism industry. In this regard, a quantitative visitor survey and qualitative in-depth interviews with sanctuary employees have been applied as empirical research tools. Three facilities characterized by different approaches and animal display were chosen as research sites and examined in direct comparison.

In overall conclusion, the analysis revealed evident demand patterns reflected by the participant sample as well as factors that affect visitor expectation, motivation and satisfaction. Wildlife generalists constituted the main target market at all three research sites, which is characteristic of wildlife attractions that display mature levels of supportive visitor infrastructure. This is demonstrated as entering attributes such as prior experiences in wildlife tourism, pre-knowledge about wildlife conservation as well as visit motivations revealed a low level of specialization on part of the visitors. A majority of visitors expressed a general enjoyment for wildlife watching and several participants visited the facility on grounds of geographical convenience as part of a greater holiday trip. Motivations relating to social interaction and recreation were most important for families with children.

The survey results revealed a considerable quest for learning and education in both entering motivations and desired visit features, implying a huge potential for knowledge transfer and receptiveness towards promoted educational messages. Beside the educational component, visitor expectations were strongly influenced by the desire for a close-proximity encounter, predicted visibility of animals and naturalistic wildlife tourism experiences. These demand patterns highlight the increased importance of captive wildlife tourism as a subset of broader tourism concepts such as nature-based tourism and ecotourism, which involve elements such as natural environments and public education.

A high service standard and appropriate group size as basic requirements were further mentioned as a crucial component of a satisfying experience. In addition, visitors showed an evident interest for minimizing potential adverse effects on the displayed wildlife. Corresponding to the tourism offer, visitors at Cheetah Outreach assigned a higher importance to wildlife interaction and close-up photography, the option to physically encounter a cheetah was evidently mentioned as a decisive factor for the travel choice. This quest was less evident at the non-touching facilities, which indicates that visitor preferences were also influential in choosing appropriate travel destinations. In overall comparison of various visit features, entertainment and interaction-related aspects were perceived as least important. High satisfaction levels were reported at all three wildlife sites, most enjoyed visit features reflected prior expectations and emphasized certain highlighting aspects of the facility. Critical points were specified by 23 % of all participants and provided indication for existent discrepancies between visitor anticipation and actual experience. However, general high satisfaction levels were not significantly impacted by reported criticism. A majority of

visitors reported high learning outcomes about wildlife and conservation after the visit and was encouraged to take further actions to support the respective facility as well as wildlife conservation in general. Visitors at Cheetah Outreach, however, were more likely to report conservation-related topics as the most distinct learning outcome of their visit, whereas participants at the non-touching facilities dominantly recalled factual information about the wildlife. It was evident that the encompassment of education and emotionally bonding wildlife encounters represented an effective approach to enhance visitors' awareness about wildlife conservation. The promotion of a non-touching approach, which is followed by Jukani and Monkeyland, appeared to be more challenging, as it requires disclaim on part of those visitors who desire more close interaction with the wildlife. Although the majority of participants showed contentment with facility restrictions, only few participants reported supportive attitudes towards sustainable management actions. The survey result revealed that several participants suggested the inclusion of more interactive wildlife activities, even if prohibited by the facility. However, effectively conveyed education was identified as a key factor to improve visitor acceptance and raise support towards animal-welfare orientated restrictions. In general, the majority of surveyed visitors showed an evident quest for animal-welfare orientated experiences, but were torn between the rational awareness about conservational needs and the emotional desire for more self-serving experiences, even if potentially harmful for the encountered animals. These conflicts represent commonly reported challenges within the development of sustainable tourism and often resulted in contradicting visitor specifications during the analysis of certain research objectives.

The study represents a pioneering research-based approach to conduct a demand analysis at African captive wildlife settings taking into account current tensions within the wildlife tourism industry. Supported by the quantitative and qualitative analysis results, supplemented with facts about present conflicts and trends, the author is able to provide an overview about management implications as well as recommendations for sustainable wildlife tourism management (see chapter 5). The study contributed data that enhance scientific knowledge about visitors in terms of motivations, expectations and satisfaction during wildlife tourism experiences. Several findings could be confirmed relating to desired visit features and visitor satisfaction, which were reported in previous wildlife tourism literature, but mostly site-specific for Australian wildlife tourism settings. Results further reflected general demand trends such as the quest for naturalistic experiences, which increasingly predominates the demand for entertainment-related features, as well as a distinct concern for animal welfare and demand for educational tourism activities. Therefore, the study supports findings of other cited authors and presents comparable results for South African sanctuary settings. Existing literature deficiencies in examining visitor motivations at captive settings, the quest for physical wildlife interaction and visitor responses to

sustainable management practices were specifically addressed by the research. Valuable insights were further given into cultural differences at African captive wildlife settings. A unique approach was taken in contrasting non-touching and more interactive facilities, which were evaluated regarding their effectiveness in conveying educational messages to the visitors. The study thus contributed to the academic body of knowledge with regard to visitor learning outcomes at wildlife tourism settings.

5. Management Implications

The conducted demand analyses allowed a research-based approach to define recommendations for the management of wildlife sanctuaries, which will be presented in the following section. A preface about pressures and impacts on the industry sector will be given to provide the overall context for practical management options.

5.1 The impact of public awareness and education on wildlife tourism development

Due to growing public criticism, negative media coverage and the exposure of questionable practices in the wildlife tourism industry, tourism and volunteering operators started to take significant steps in protecting the welfare of animals and aligning their operations to stricter standards and policies (see chapter 2.6.5). This development already had a noticeable impact on wildlife facilities such as the Cheetah Outreach, as some tour operators stopped their cooperation due to the physical interaction offered by the facility. In a long-term perspective, growing pressure from outside stakeholders provides huge potential to convince and assist facilities in adapting responsible practices and accomplishing a general shift towards sustainable standards in wildlife tourism. Mercer (2016) ascribes a key role to wildlife sanctuaries in educating tourism operators to revise their product portfolio, inform their clients and encourage them to spend their money on responsible products. Interviewee 1 (2016, Monkeyland) further emphasized the importance of international pressure on the South African wildlife tourism market, as governmental regulations concerning wildlife conservation and animal welfare are inadequate and result in operators being eager to push the boundaries within their operations. Recent debates further highlighted the important role of TripAdvisor.com as the world's largest online tourist review website in educating tourists about wildlife cruelty and influencing responsible travel decisions. A study conducted by Moorhouse et al. (2015) revealed that 80% of tourists leaving a review on TripAdvisor are unaware of the cruelty inflicted on the encountered wildlife, so that attractions judged as clearly inhuman often receive good ratings on the platform. There appears evidence that most travelers do not recognize or respond to signs of negative welfare at certain wildlife

tourist attractions, leading to a misconception about the quality of life for the animals displayed at the respective facilities (World Animal Protection, n.y. a). As a result, urgent need for regulation, in the form of accreditation, certification schemes or policy instruments (inspections, sanctions) was emphasized (Moorhouse et al., 2005). The London-based animal welfare group “World Animal Protection” launched a protest campaign and called to ban the promotion and profiting of inhumane wildlife attractions. Similar to TripAdvisor’s GreenLeaders scheme which awards eco-friendly accommodation companies, it was demanded to provide an endorsement called “WildlifeLeaders” of the best wildlife tourism attractions, which facilitates the search for venues that conform to high animal welfare and conservation standards (World Animal Protection, n.y. a). In response to several petitions and growing disapproval of their practices, TripAdvisor announced its commitment to launch several industry-leading actions by 2017, including changes to its policy and the ban of ticket sales to wildlife attractions that are widely accepted as cruel to wild animals (TripAdvisor, 2016). In cooperation with accredited conservation organizations, tourism experts and animal welfare groups, TripAdvisor further plans to introduce an educational portal to inform tourists on animal welfare practices and the conservation implications of various wildlife tourist attractions (TripAdvisor, 2016). The content of the portal will integrate numerous opinions from experts in the fields of sustainable tourism, wildlife conservation, and animal welfare as well as from zoological and marine sciences. Although questionable facilities will still be listed for reviews, all animal attractions will be linked to the educational portal, assisting travelers to write more informed reviews about their experience and to be conscious about existing opinions on conservation implications and benefits of certain tourist attractions (TripAdvisor, 2016). As outlined in chapter 4.2.2.3, TripAdvisor as well as recommendations from tourism operators and hotels were mentioned as a major influential source by several participants. It is thus recommended to observe current advertising, educational and environmental certification practices and consider these trends when operating a wildlife tourism business.

Due to the tensions caused by public criticism about conservation approaches and a subsequent rethinking about standards, policies and management practices in the tourism sector, it is of outmost important to develop management strategies that foster sustainable progress and educational benefits based on a comprehensive research basis. The present study provides insights into demand patterns as a basis to further work on strategies and guidelines toward a balance between commercial, social and environmental interests.

5.2 Optimization of educational programs

Several wildlife sanctuaries across South Africa conform their operation to restrictive policies and promote a "non touching, no interaction" approach to counteract the use of wildlife species for commercial exploitation. In face of the canned hunting practice, whose economic value still outweighs ethical concerns of stakeholders, evoking responsible decisions on part of the tourists is considered as a major approach to achieve powerful influences on the controversial industry. According to Interviewee 1 (2016: Ln.150-151, Monkeyland), many tourists still lack awareness about certain wildlife tourism practices and are thus not able to make more responsible travel decisions. "*Most people just don't have a clue or never had a second thought about it [referring to wildlife interaction]. They are not exposed to it and most of them don't know much about wildlife*."

The present study identified a distinct concern for animal welfare on part of the visitors as well as a high quest for education and interpretation. These are crucial pre-conditions for visitors to accept sustainable management practices encountered during the visit. Growing moral pressure exerted by tourism stakeholders additionally leads to increased awareness towards "non-touching" approaches, their educational effect and impact on awareness creation thus become of greater importance. However, conducted research at Monkeyland and Jukani revealed that educational and interpretive techniques often need to be improved to encourage supportive attitudes and achieve transformative outcomes on part of the visitors. In review of ideas given by the participants as well as referenced wildlife tourism literature, recommendations for the enhancement of the educational program will be summarized. Most implications also apply to Cheetah Outreach and provide valuable guidelines for the industry as a whole.

Guidelines for optimizing education, interpretation and awareness creation:

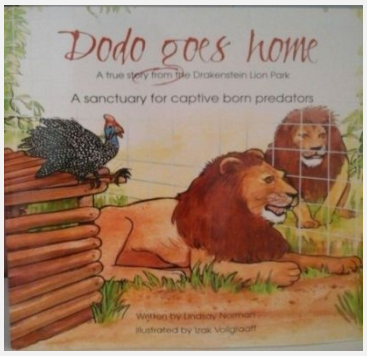
- Provide introductory audio-visual presentations about the facility, its mission and wildlife prior to the tour. Offer visitors the opportunity to reflect on the educational message before watching the wildlife (particularly at Monkeyland, where distractive monkey behavior can lower visitor's receptiveness for education)
- Use interpretive media (displays, signage, interactive models, videos), not only representing factual information about the wildlife, but also addressing conservation-related topics
- Provide information about the dangers faced by the observed animals with regard to human actions, relate to current debates (e.g. canned hunting). Give examples of how visitors' everyday behaviors can impact wildlife both positively and negatively (Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland, 2011)

- Design effective interpretation that helps visitors to generalize the impact of their wildlife encounter beyond the specific animal species observed, extend the vision beyond the specific sanctuary, convey the educational message interconnected with different aspects of life (Ballantyne & Packer, 2009)
- Clearly communicate the reasons behind particular management actions with regard to the animal's protection. Potentially present scandalizing/shocking media displaying human impacts on wildlife, include statements from veterinaries, well-known conservationists, provide background story of each animal
- However, keep a balance between positive and negative coverage of the topic. Do not promote a "non-touching" approach as associated with disclaim and prior negative feelings. Use interpretive commentaries to emphasize the animal's privilege to display their natural behavior and live in a natural environment. Reinforce a sense of wonder, awe and excitement on part of the visitors. Encourage visitors to use their imaginations to enter the animal's world, experience empathy and emotional feelings and identify with individual animals and their threats. "*Build on this sense of good-will" by enlisting tourists' assistance as conservation partners wherever possible, rather than enforcing rules and regulations to control tourist behavior*" (Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes, 2009, p.13). Encourage emotionally bonding wildlife experiences through interpretation and communication.
- Initiate conversations and discussions between guides and visitors during and after the tour (What is their opinion about wildlife interaction, are they aware of current debates and tensions, did the visit changed certain attitudes, will they support wildlife conservation in the future?)
- Enhance persuasive communication: encourage active, detailed, cognitive and mindful processing of information to achieve transformative experiences. According to Moscardo, Woods & Saltzer (2004, p.243), favorable aspects of persuasive communication include:
    - Coverage or inclusion of topics of personal relevance or importance to the audience
    - Asking the audience questions to encourage them to search for answers in the information available
    - Introducing novelty or surprise
    - Providing the audience with choices and decisions
    - Using active mental and physical participation to encourage search for information
    - Having a variety in presentations
    - Connecting new information to information the audience already knows

- Set aside a time and space for visitors to reflect on the meaning of the experience and to interact with companions or family members (Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland, 2011, p.19).
- Give examples of practical and achievable things that visitors can do to contribute to the welfare of the animals being observed, wildlife conservation in general, dependant on the individual's nationality and local environment (Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland, 2011)

Overcome visitor's "action paralysis" by providing positive messages that demonstrate that their actions *can* have an influence on conservation and animal-welfare problems (Ballantyne & Packer, 2009)

- Provide resources that visitors can access after the visit to follow up particular interests, extend their learning and maintain their motivation to act (Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland, 2011, p.19)
- Design handouts summarizing educational information about the visit, leave space for visitors to note their own remarks that can be reflected after the visit
- Employ international volunteers with different cultural backgrounds to convey the sanctuary mission to visitor groups with relating backgrounds and perceptions of animals (as indicated in chapter 4.2.6, Xhosa or Zulu guides can be used as representatives for their own distinct culture in the country, same approaches can be realized for e.g. Asian, Middle Eastern cultures)
- Set uniform standards for guides to convey information about certain aspects of conservation, evaluate the performance of guides over long-term time periods
- Design interpretive experiences fitted to families with children, convey educational messages in child-friendly language, create media (brochures, booklets, videos) applicable to children (see example A)



Example A: " Dodo goes home"

Children's book sold to visitors at Drakenstein Lion Park, Paarl, South Africa, displaying the story of a mistreated lion which was rescued from a zoo and receives a lifetime-care at the sanctuary. Written in child-friendly language and including colorful illustrations, the book presents an example of how conservation messages can be promoted to children.
(Image source: own photograph 2016)

5.3 Implementation of enjoyable replacements and approaches for restrictions

It is evident from the study results that there was still a bias between visitor awareness on necessary restrictions to ensure animal welfare and sustainability; and the desire for predicted visibility, close proximity or more intensive interaction. Several ideas for improvement were given by the participants to optimize the tourism product and overcome these conflicts by providing enjoyable substitutes in case sanctuary policies or enclosures restrict certain aspects of the wildlife tourism experience. As identified in chapter 4.3.1, meeting visitor expectations and reducing criticism constitute critical measures to increase visitor receptiveness and supportive behavior towards promoted educational messages.

An educational program combined with physical wildlife interaction was identified as a successful operational model, if implemented in similar characteristics to the Cheetah Outreach. However, interactive wildlife facilities face growing criticism within the tourism industry and increased ethical concern on part of cooperating tourism operators. It is thus recommended to consider following presented measures as potential replacements for physical wildlife interaction to encourage sustainable standards and avoid competitive disadvantages within the tourism industry. In fact, not all participants visiting Cheetah Outreach ascribed a high importance to a physical encounter and might thus be highly receptive towards appropriate alternatives. Additionally, several sanctuaries have been popular and economically viable even before offering wildlife interaction, as pointed out by Interviewee 1 (2016, Monkeyland). Depending on the facilities' financial, technical and spatial capabilities, particular measures might not be realizable for the short term, but can be considered as encouragements for long-term business operations and perspectives. Yet, the design of additional features requires responsibility on part of the facilities to not jeopardize the animal's welfare in favor of tourist satisfaction or monetary benefits. Gathering external opinions from veterinaries and conservationists might be helpful to decide if specific activities can be realized within certain responsible standards.

Participant suggestions, own observations and proposals from published studies were taken into account to summarize favorable aspects that were strongly aligned to visitor expectations patterns identified in the research. It must be ensured that these features are integrated within a framework of effective interpretation, education and the reinforcement of emotional feelings on part of the visitors, which can support them in overcoming discrepancies within their attitudes and behavior. Aspects of the Mindfulness model (chapter 2.5.2) can be taken into consideration as a useful basis to design rewarding wildlife tourism experiences.

Suggestions for introducing alternative wildlife tourism activities:

- Provide additional viewing areas which allow the public to take photos not hindered by wire fences and facilitate the visibility of the animals. Examples: high stands/look-out mezzanine, elevated towers, bridges over the enclosures (favorable if naturalistic enclosures provide several hiding spaces for the animals, in case animals are shy)
- Allow visitors to witness animals from different perspectives, provide close-up encounters without compromising the animal's well-being and intruding their space. Examples: glass screens at enclosures, fenced visitor tunnels through enclosures.

Example B: Walking tunnels and elevated bridges already constitute an integral part of the enclosure design at Tenikwa Wildlife Awareness Centre in Plettenberg Bay (Image source: own photograph 2016)

- Use photographs, models and illustrations visualizing specific animals in case these are hidden or display inactive behavior. Modern audiovisual equipment can further be employed to reduce frustration in these situations and display footage of the animals. Interpretation can also draw visitor attention to other evidences of the animals such as tracks, nibbled fruit or droppings (Moscardo, Woods & Saltzer, 2004). Provide binoculars for the visitors in case animals can only be seen from a far distance.
- Use interactive computers and technologies for remote viewing of wildlife. Remote viewing involves the use of cameras to broadcast images of different wildlife behavior back to the visitor centre. Such technology allows visitors to see animals in a way not otherwise possible and constitutes a convenient method for a large number of visitors to watch wildlife without causing any impact (Moscardo, Woods & Saltzer, 2004)
- Offer a variety of tours at the facility, e.g. private tours, species- focused tours, photographic tours, special tours at feeding times, tours for families with children, tours custom-tailored to wildlife generalists and more specialized visitor groups. If feasible, provide tours at evening/night-time to observe nocturnal wildlife behavior (e.g. special night tours once in a week)
- If animal enrichment (sensory stimulation, activity encouragement) is provided by the facility, special tours could be designed to observe active animals behavior, visitors could actively be involved in the preparation of enrichment material (clothes, bed sheets, stuffed animals, paper maché balloons) and the creation of new enrichment ideas and toys, which could be implemented as a bonding experience between the visitors and wildlife.

Example C: Panthera Africa offers enrichment tours for the tourists as well as team-building workshops, where participants are hands-on involved in the animals' enrichment program. The workshops include the making of toys, building of natural structures and creation of enrichment through different smells, textures and objects. These ideas will then be implemented into practice and observed by the participants (Panthera Africa, 2016).

(Imagesource:http://pantheraafrica.co.za/index.php/what-we-do/enrichment-program)

- Improve visitor management by controlling tour constellations and sound limit during the visit, provide personal, individual experiences through smaller visitor groups.
- Provide insights in different aspects of the facility (e.g. veterinary work, rehabilitation)
- Design interpretive experiences that incorporate multiple senses (sight, sound, smell), reinforce emotional and bonding feelings towards the displayed animals

Open-range experiences by foot and game drive vehicles

As identified in the present study, the free-roaming enclosure at Monkeyland was perceived as highly naturalistic, which significantly contributed to visitor satisfaction at the respective facility. Similar to the approach of Monkeyland, several wildlife sanctuaries and parks world-wide implemented guided visitor tours through open-range, semi-captive enclosures, realized by foot or 4x4 game drive vehicles. Within certain bounds of safety, these practices allow animals to freely approach the visitors and can be used to enhance visitor's sense of privilege (Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland, 2011) whilst ensuring a certain predictability of sights within confined, but naturalistic-looking enclosures. It further challenges visitors to spot animals themselves, which can be involved as an enjoyable activity during the tour by evoking the impression of being on a game drive in the wild. Additionally, this practice would enhance photo opportunities for the visitors, which was found to be a pleasant feature for the surveyed participants. Following examples exemplify how certain approaches are realized within different facilities offering wildlife encounters as tourist experiences. However, their implementation into practice requires spatial and financial resources on part of the facilities as well as pre-conditions on part of the animals (habituation to vehicles and walking visitors, safe behavior and roaming) and might not be suitable for the management of any wildlife site. The examples provide suggestions for the general industry to adopt certain approaches or develop further ideas to be realized within respective management plans.

Example D: At the Ann van Dyk Cheetah Centre in Pretoria, visitors get driven through cheetah and wild dog enclosures in 4x4 safari vehicles. Several stops during the tour allow time for education and interpretation by the guides; highlights include watching the cheetahs during feeding time. (Image source: own photograph 2015)

Example E: Tenikwa Wildlife Center in Plettenberg Bay provides guided walking tours through cheetah, serval cat and caracal enclosures. The animals can be approached to a certain distance and be photographed without wire fences. Yet, the enclosures allow animals to hide from the public and interaction is prohibited. (Image source: http://tenikwa.com/wildlife-centre-facilities/)

(Image source: http://1080.plus/Volunteers_at_Orana_Wildlife_Park_Christchurch/VtiyRukiOzQ.video)

Example F: A unique approach was taken by Orana Wildlife Park in New Zealand, whose advertisements and pictures received huge media attention and gave voice to growing frustration with traditional zoo practices and the keeping of animals in small enclosures (Schweig, 2015). Contrary to traditional arrangements of caged animals being surrounded by visitors, tourists are driven around in moving caged vehicles to view the free roaming carnivores (Evans, 2013). This role reversal enables close-proximity encounters with wildlife whilst providing a measure to bypass physical interaction and providing freedom for the animals to approach the vehicle on their own behalf.

In reference to the present study, guided walking tours through the enclosures could be of particular importance for Cheetah Outreach, where most animals are already habituated to human contact and presence. These walks could enhance visitor's perception and subsequent satisfaction about the naturalness and authenticity of the habitat by providing enclosures that replicate the cheetah's natural environment. In case of Jukani, which was perceived as less exciting in overall comparison, the employment of effective measures to improve visitor enjoyment during the experience could be of competitive advantage.

Establishing sanctuaries as part of game reserves and wilderness areas

Integrating wildlife sanctuaries as part of greater protected areas designated as game reserves, national parks or wilderness areas provide possibilities to realize sanctuary operations within natural conditions and environments suitable for the displayed wildlife. As demonstrated in previous chapters, wildlife tourists are increasingly driven by the demand for naturalistic and authentic wildlife encounters, where wildlife can be witnessed in its natural habitat. In regard to animals that don't pose threat to human visitors, free-roaming areas/zones could be established for specific purposes (rehabilitation, ex-situ conservation), integrating a tourism component that allows visitors to enter specific areas under control of

certain authorities and regulations. In case of more dangerous animals such as large carnivores, captive displays could be integrated in greater protected areas, allowing the public to safely access these animals as part of a game drive or walk through the preserved natural environment.

Example G: Okutala Lodge situated in Namibia is a private lodge which focuses on rehabilitation and the release of animals within their natural habitat in the Etosha national park. Guests of the lodge are able to experience close-up encounters with several wildlife species such as giraffes, join educational tours and assist in rehabilitation work. (Okutala, 2016) (Image source: http://okutala.com/gallery/)

Image sources:

http://www.nationalpark-bayerischer-wald.de/zu_gast/einrichtungen/npz_lusen/tier_freigelaende/

http://www.sehenswerter-bayerischer-wald.de/tierfreigel%C3%A4nde-neuschoenau-tierfreigehege.html

Example H: The Bavarian Forest National Park – a Laboratory for the Implementation of „Wilderness“ in Central Europe (Gissibl, 2014)

Together with the adjacent Bohemian Forest National Park in the Czech Republic, the Bavarian Forest National Park preserves the largest area of continuous forest in Central Europe (Gissibl, 2014). For the protection of animal species sensitive to disturbance, conservationists implemented core zones by restricting the right of access and designed networks of visitor pathways to ensure that large areas valuable for species protection are kept free from human disturbance (Nationalparkverwaltung Bayerischer Wald, 2015). Several indigenous, but endangered or vulnerable wildlife species such as lynx or capercailzie as well as regionally extinct predators such as brown bears or wolfs are kept in spacious open-air enclosures (200 ha) and aviaries in the Lusen animal sanctuary, which is accessible for the public. Accompanied by an interpretive program about the animal's way of life and ecologic importance for the area, visitors are able to witness over 40 indigenous species in their natural habitat, which are usually difficult to spot in the dense forest (Nationalparkverwaltung Bayerischer Wald, 2016).

5.4 Use of Social Media for awareness creation

As demonstrated by the research analyses, Social Media was recognized as a crucial tool to create awareness about wildlife-related topics and draw the public's attention to certain concerns and tensions within the wildlife tourism sector. Information has become more easily accessible and the electronic word of mouth, a way to review travel destinations and experiences, became increasingly popular and important (Cong et al., 2014; Albarq, 2014). The study revealed evidence that Social Media already affected the public and increased

animal welfare concerns on part of the tourists (see statement Interviewee 8, chapter 4.4.2). It is thus recommended that wildlife sanctuary managers introduce and enhance web-based technologies and social networking as important tools to maintain contact with visitors and encourage them to follow their posts after returning home (Ballantyne & Packer, 2010).

Post-visit action resources (e.g. Social Media posts, email-newsletters) can encourage visitors to further reflect their wildlife tourism experience (both cognitively and affectively), model behavior responses and emphasize positive impacts of such responses (Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland, 2011). Reviews, opinions and complaints provided via internet can be usefully integrated in the feedback management of the respective site and offer valuable suggestions for quality optimization. Social Media can be used as an educational tool benefitting overall conservation goals if informative messages are represented in marketing-suitable languages which are attractively conveyed to the followers. In this regard, it is recommended to implement an appealing mix of sanctuary and wildlife-related posts (e.g. interesting facts about the species, fascinating photographs), combined with conservation-related topics, practical information of how to support wildlife conservation and the take-up of current, relevant developments (e.g. canned hunting industry). Furthermore, wildlife tourists should be encouraged to do more pre-research on their travel destinations, place greater importance on responsible certifications and consider credible travel reviews as a relevant source for making the right decision about their wildlife tourism destination choice. It is moreover important to forward the spread of educational messages by motivating the readers to actively like, comment and share the published Social Media posts. In general, different marketing channels and strategies could be employed to serve particular nationality markets, where messages could be promoted depending on different cultural perceptions and beliefs. In accordance to the findings of chapter 4.2.2.3, the promotion of price specials and discounts could be implemented as a further profitable measure to attract visitors to the respective facilities.

5.5 Introduction and adoption of responsible certification schemes

As outlined in chapter 5.1, the tourism industry is making significant progress in improving global standards of animal welfare and conservation measures at wildlife-based attractions. Yet, the industry is lacking a worldwide accreditation or certification scheme to set uniform standards in terms of ethical and sustainable practices at wildlife-related establishments. Promising approaches are provided by the comprehensive WASP Ethical sanctuaries list (WASP, n.y.), the ABTA (2013) animal welfare guidelines as well as by animal categories of highly reputable ethical travel awards (e.g. World Responsible Tourism Award), indicating best-practice establishments in the responsible wildlife tourism industry. Furthermore,

awarding programs through online platforms such as TripAdvisor imply huge potential in drawing public attention to ethical concerns in the wildlife tourism sector and influencing tourist decisions on a global level. Further potential is provided by the South African organization “Fair Trade Tourism”, offering a certification program which endorses various tourism establishments that meet stringed sustainability criteria based on ethical business practices, fair wages and working conditions, equitable distribution of benefits as well as their respect towards human rights, culture and environment (Fair Trade Tourism, 2016b). Currently, the three SAASA-sanctuaries located in Plettenberg Bay (Monkeyland, Jukani, Birds of Eden) represent the only wildlife establishments certified by Fair Trade Tourism, whose management finalized an extensive review of criteria in June 2016, considering potential exploitation of children and captive-held wildlife within the “voluntourism” sector (Fair Trade Tourism, 2016c). Fair Trade Tourism, embracing several criteria concerning economic, social and ecological impacts of tourism businesses, can provide further encouragement for wildlife attractions to extent responsible principles not only to the animals in care, but to several aspects of sustainable tourism such as community empowerment, reduced water and energy consumption, responsible food sourcing as well as the enhancement of working conditions and management practices. Although in the present study, participants showed only moderate consideration of certifications as influencing factors for the travel decision, the evident shift towards ethical management practices in wildlife tourism implies promising conditions for certification schemes to grow in importance and receive increased attention from the tourists. In summary, influential measures taken by multiple stakeholders within the wildlife tourism industry could create a powerful basis to evoke increased governmental attention and regulatory changes on a national and international level.

6. Limitations of the study and future research directions

While the research has provided valuable insight into visitor demand patterns at South African wildlife sanctuaries, the study was subject to several limitations. A certain degree of sampling bias could not be avoided as the chosen method of convenience sampling (see Chapter 3.3.1.1) did not achieve to appropriately reflect the number of families present at the respective facility. As the questionnaire was available in English and German, the results only apply to English and German speaking wildlife tourists and are further limited to persons aged 18 years and above. Furthermore, the study was conducted at selected wildlife facilities in South Africa at certain points in time, so caution must be employed when generalizing the results to different wildlife tourism settings and seasons. In general, the findings are most accurate for the research sample at the time-point and location the study was realized. It is

further acknowledged that the study might be subject to certain bias derived from a one-time measurement of data collection. As it was not feasible to conduct the survey twice at pre and post visit times, question categories relating to visitor motivations and expectations had to be incorporated into post visit survey questionnaires (see chapter 3.3.1.1). In case of Monkeyland and Jukani, awareness-creation about negative impacts of human-wildlife interaction could have driven visitors to respond in favorable manner toward the sanctuaries, which may not fully reflect pre-visit attitudes. Although measures (self-administration of the survey) were employed to avoid social desirability bias, it must still be considered as a confounding variable in the present study. It cannot be ruled out that visitors felt pressurized to respond accordingly to social norms and current animal welfare concerns which are increasingly discussed in public media. This might have caused an over-reporting of responsible and animal-welfare orientated behavior in the study. However, data comparison with qualitative interviews, academic literature and press articles contributes to the author's confidence in the findings which reveal fortunate conditions for the development of a sustainable wildlife tourism industry. Further limitations derived from the time restriction of the survey that limited in-depth investigations of certain topics. Additionally, no long-term data was collected to provide evidence about long-term educational outcomes and visitor's attitude changes. Further quantitative and qualitative research is needed to generalize the present findings and contribute to the research-based knowledge about wildlife tourism demand in South Africa and internationally. It is suggested to extend the research to various wildlife facilities and if feasible, provide pre and post visit questionnaires at different time points during different holiday seasons, taking into consideration that visitor nationality distributions can vary depending on the research period. Especially for wildlife facilities offering physical wildlife interaction, research participation could provide transparency about the business and increase tourists' trustfulness towards their operations. Further studies are required to develop reliable and valid measures of short and longer-term visitor learning outcomes, to identify features and techniques that increase long-term learning and environmental behavior changes as well as positive impacts for the conservation and animal welfare-related industry (Ballantyne, Packer & Falk, year). As the outcome of learning experiences is notoriously difficult to measure, especially in relation to long-term attitude changes and purely self-report measures, conservation learning research must employ multiple measures to access a range of potential learning outcomes and behaviors and attempt to achieve data validity through triangulation (Ballantyne & Packer, 2009). Moreover, in-depth research should be conducted to focus on special visitor groups (e.g. families with children, children, different nationalities) as well as visitor responses to different operational approaches. On the supply-side, wildlife sanctuaries could conduct long-term studies to investigate visitor satisfaction in respect to introduced innovative features (chapter 5.3) as

well as interpretive techniques added to the wildlife tourism experience. In face of current debates and discussions, it would be of particular interest to explore if physical wildlife interaction could successfully be substituted through certain activities without significantly impacting tourist satisfaction. In a greater perspective, research into sustainable wildlife tourism certification schemes applicable for the international standard would be valuable in achieving transparency about the industry.

In conclusion, the study was conducted as a contribution towards the academic knowledge about wildlife tourism and its long-term sustainable progress. Recommendations for the design of educational programs and sustainable wildlife tourism experiences should be used as a research-based foundation to balance the needs of the tourism industry with conservation and animal welfare requirements. It should encourage future research to be concerned with aspects of sustainable wildlife tourism and provide directions for long-term beneficial stakeholder relationships.

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Interviewee 4 (2016) Interview with Nadja Pilz on 20.06.2016. Monkeyland Primate Sanctuary, Plettenberg Bay (Transcription available in Appendix C, Interview C4)

Interviewee 5 (2016) Interview with Nadja Pilz on 20.06.2016. Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary, Plettenberg Bay (Transcription available in Appendix C, Interview C5)

Interviewee 6 (2016) Interview with Nadja Pilz on 20.06.2016. Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary, Plettenberg Bay (Transcription available in Appendix C, Interview C6)

Interviewee 7 (2016) Interview with Nadja Pilz on 19.06.2016 . Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary, Plettenberg Bay (Transcription available in Appendix C, Interview C7)

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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that the work presented here is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and the result of my own investigations, except as acknowledged, and has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for a degree at this or any other University

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