



Who visits a nature based urban attraction and why? An exploratory study of the motivations to visit the Pretoria Zoo in South Africa

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Abstract

Urban tourism is one of the most dynamic types of tourism. The demand for travel to specifically cities, has greatly increased over the last few decades. Although much of the world's tourism activity occurs in urban areas of major cities such as Paris and London, it is only recently that urban tourism has been identified as a significant sector of tourism worthy of academic attention. The purpose of this study was to identify if the reason for the existence of zoological gardens (zoos) is the main reason why people visit them. The Pretoria zoo is the largest and only national zoo in South Africa and is classified as an urban attraction. The zoo is part of the National Research Foundation (NRF) which is a public entity that fosters research within the country. As part of the NRF, the NZG's focus is on the promotion of research; in addition to that the other main functions of the NZG include conservation and education. It is therefore important to establish whether tourist see zoos as inter-alia centres of conservation, education or is there another reason why tourist visit zoos. In order to determine the answer(s) to this question, a self-administered questionnaire was used as a research instrument. The questionnaire was distributed at the research site. A total of 400 completed responses were received and were included in the statistical analysis.

Keywords- visitor motivation, urban attraction, National Zoological Garden, NZG, zoo.

Introduction

Despite the economic crises in many countries, the number of people travelling the world has not decreased (Barquín, Moreno & Barquín, 2009:15; Kester, 2013:9). In 2014, international tourism demonstrated record numbers, growing 4.4% to reach 1.35 billion tourists crossing international borders during the year and consolidating the sector's fifth straight year of above-average growth despite many challenges (Sharpley & Telfer, 2014:11). The UNWTO recently updated their long-term outlook and their assessment of future tourism trends. They indicated that the number of international tourists worldwide is expected to increase by an average of 3.3% each year from 2010 to 2030 (Kester, 2016:9). This represents an increase each year of more than 43 million people travelling to different cities and countries, thus reaching an anticipated total of 1.8 billion by 2030 (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2014:1).

The main reason that people travel is because of the different attractions that places have to offer them as they seek some respite from the pressures of daily living, and these attractions are the most important contributor to the tourism system (Swarbrooke, 2003:3). Heneghan (2006:2) concurs with Swarbrooke (2003:3), stating that "without tourist attractions there would be no tourism and without tourism there would be no tourist attractions." Tourism amenities such as food, transport, accommodation and distribution agents would not be of such importance if there were no attractions luring tourists to a destination (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009:213). Attractions within destinations are what make the tourism economy function. Without them, there would be neither tourism, nor a tourism economy for they have a huge



drawing power and serve as catalysts and motivators for tourists to travel to places (UK Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2013).

Towns and cities (destinations) are now the central locations of tourism, offering diverse types of urban attractions and opportunities for leisure activities and entertainment (Spirou, 2011:1-2). Towns also offer diverse social and cultural activities in which tourists can engage (Hall & Page, 2009:3). In addition, destinations encompass meeting places, airports and conference centres which are required by travellers and tourists (Preston-Whyte & Scott, 2007:251).

The National Zoological Gardens located in central Pretoria, South Africa, receives approximately 600 000 visitors per year according to NRF (2014), a number which is said could be higher. It is, therefore, important to understand visitor motivation to ensure that the needs and expectations of visitors are met and to further conceptualize the phenomenon that is urban tourism. The management, planners, public sector administrators and other stakeholders involved in the development of new urban tourism attractions such as NZG are currently presented with a dearth of information on their unique market profile, which leads to the question: who visits a "nature reserve" at an urban setting and why?

Literature review

For decades, cities and urban areas throughout the world have played an important role in the tourism industry (Ashworth & Page, 2011:2). According to Karski (1990:15-17) urban tourism is a phenomenon that can be traced back to the ancient Mesopotamian and the Sumerian eras. The distinction between then and now is that in the past, only the rich people could afford the diversity of things to do and see in the cities (Karski 1990:15-17). An urban activity that attracted the rich was the 18th and 19th century Grand Tour of Europe. The Grand Tour was a period of overseas travel generally undertaken by wealthy gentlemen to finish off their education. This was popular from the mid-17th century until the end of the 18th century when the Napoleonic Wars stopped much of the foreign travel. At that time, cities such as Canterbury in England were very popular for pilgrimages (Williams & Lew, 2014). It was such attractive activities that publicised many cities throughout the world. Although urban tourism has existed since the 14th century, research on urban tourism has been fragmented and not recognised as a separate field of study from other forms of tourism (Karski, 1990:16). It was not until the late 1970s that research was conducted on urban tourism as a separate field of study (Karski, 1990:16).

The emergence of urban tourism as described in the study by Ashworth (1989) began in 1970 during the time when tourism was a defence approach in the cities. Due to the poor economic conditions after the 1970s, tourism began to be viewed as an important urban function because it brought money to most towns and cities (Ashworth, 1989). In cities around the UK and the United States of America (USA) tourism was a way of boosting their economies after the economic decline (Ismail, Baum & Kokranikkal, 2006:212). Therefore, tourism and urban regeneration became important activities and received much attention especially in Western cities (Law, 1996:3). Tourism was viewed as a way of managing the change and transition of city functions and subsequently was extended to become the main sector of the city's economy (Law, 1996:3).

Ashworth (1989:33) and Hall and Page (2014:220) argue that regardless of its economic and social magnitude, urban tourism research has been severely neglected, while perceived mainly as the origin of tourist flows. This neglect maybe because most attention is given to holiday tourism and its end point in seaside resort (Law, 2002). Ashworth (1989:33) expresses that "a double neglect has occurred thus because those interested in the study of tourism have tended to neglect the urban context in which much of it is set, while those interested in urban studies have been equally neglectful of the importance of the tourist function in cities." Since



most tourists are from urban areas or cities, failure to consider city tourism as an activity hinders the development of tourism as a subject of serious study (Ashworth & Page, 2011:5).

Even though urban tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in Africa, most of the research is focused on the tourist and cities in the Northern Hemisphere (Cornellisen, 2006:11; Christie, Fernandes, Messerli & Twining-Ward, 2013:20). A large segment of Africa's economy is derived from tourism that takes place in cities, and city/urban tourism is an integral part of the development of the tourism industry in Africa (Rogerson & Visser, 2005:65).

South Africa is one of the many African countries such as Egypt and Kenya that is developing as a desired tourist destination, with urban tourism becoming the central point in the overall tourism product group (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014:189). Similar to most African countries, nature-based tourism plays a major role in the international tourist's choice of tourism, however, urban tourism has been seen to play a vital role in attracting tourists (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014:194). Unlike international tourists, regional tourists are more fascinated by urban areas, with Johannesburg being the shopping mecca (Rogerson, 2012:194). - 46 -

Urban tourism is a recent concept in South Africa since it has been mostly non-existent in the academic world (Rogerson & Visser, 2007:17). The reasons according to Rogerson and Visser (2011b:78) are:

- Tourism was not taken seriously as a national developmental priority until the 1990s.
- During apartheid in South Africa, urban tourism was limited due to the constrained movement of black people into the country's prominent cities.
- Most tourists usually choose nature-based tourism, which has received more promotion.
- Since the dawn of democracy, the South African government has focused more on eradicating poverty in rural areas, with less attention being paid to urban areas.

After apartheid ended in 1994, South Africa appeared as a new destination with a great deal of free movement around the prominent cities, thus also increasing domestic tourism (Rogerson & Visser, 2011b:78). As a method of encouraging Local Economic Development (LED), many strategies regarding tourism were implemented by local governments. With the increase in competition and urban entrepreneurialism in South Africa's leading cities, the government began analysing the potential of tourism within the urban areas (Murillo, Vaya, Romani & Surinach, 2011:4).

The coastal cities of Durban and Cape Town were the first to be viewed as potential areas for the development of urban tourism due to their additional seaside appeal (Booyens & Visser, 2010:378). These two cities were previously only viewed as leisure destinations, however, after 1995, tourism became the focal point for local development planning (Wager, 1995:426). In addition to the motivation by the government in encouraging tourism to be used as a method of promoting LED, the national government also concurred with urban tourism which afforded new commissions to the local sphere of management to manage and promote urban areas as tourist attractions (SA, Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism, 2012).

LED was made mandatory in the 1996 constitution and later, in the 1998 White Paper on Local Government (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014:189). With this decree in place, urban managers in South Africa as well as policymakers have come to recognise urban tourism development as a way of promoting their local economies (Nel & Rogerson, 2005:4-5).

Focusing on urban tourism is beneficial because it provides opportunities through international tourists that would not be attainable through regional or domestic tourists only (Rogerson & Visser, 2011a:84). These opportunities include the expansion of different urban attractions. In this regard, different local economic developments that are led by urban tourism can be



investigated in South African cities such as Durban, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pretoria in the same way as they are investigated in European cities,

Research design, sample and sampling method

This research adopted a quantitative research approach. The NZG receives around 600 000 visitors annually (NRF, 2014), this served as the population for this study. Therefore, 400 questionnaires were distributed at the zoo and were deemed as an appropriate sample size. From these distributed questionnaires, a total of 400 were returned and used in the data analysis. Thus a 100% response rate was achieved.

The researcher ensured that there is informed consent from participants before they take part in the study. This was done by providing potential participants an information sheet with information regarding the study. The researcher chose to include respondents at the NZG who were willing to participate in this specific study. They were informed that they have the right to choose not to participate and withdraw from the research study at any time. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity the personal identity and details of the participants were not required. The study pursued measures to avoid exposing participants to any physical, psychological, legal or any other forms of harm. The research instrument was distributed to the respondents by means of self-completion questionnaires. The researcher distributed the questionnaires herself over the festive holidays (December 2016 to January 2017). The questionnaires were distributed every day of the week except Christmas day (25 December 2016) and New Year's Day (1st of January 2017). Surveys were conducted amongst the recreation areas at the NZG such as open spaces, restaurants, children's play areas and at the exit points. One person per group was invited to participate in the study.

Instrument

The questionnaire used for this study was developed by the researcher based on previous studies. These studies included works by Shaw (2011) determining public perception of conservation work by zoos in the United Kingdom (UK) and Hughes, Packer and Ballantyne (2011) that addressed the environmental awareness, interests and motives of botanic gardens respondents. Additional research performed by Falk, *et al.*, (2007) and Ballantyne, Packer and Sutherland (2011) served as an added framework for the refinement of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into the following two sections:

Section 1: The demographic characteristics of the respondents. This section of the questionnaire enquired about personal details of the respondent such as age (year in which they were born), gender and education. The aim of this section was to create a demographic profile of respondents to identify whether different demographic groups visit the zoo.

Section 2: measured the respondent motivations. This section was based on the reason why people travel to the zoo. By establishing the main aim why people come to the zoo it will also help in determining if people are interested in environmental education. A five-point Likert Scale was used, 1 = not important, 2 = slightly important, 3 = important, 4 = very important and 5 = extremely important.

Information drawn from both Sections 1 and 2 formed the basis of this article. To ensure that the questionnaire was valid, a pilot study was undertaken within the study environment of the researchers. This was done to ensure that the questions were understandable and in determining the time that the questionnaire took to complete. From the feedback received, amendments were made to the questionnaire before it was distributed.



Research findings

The findings of the study are discussed in two sections. The first section provides an analysis of the basic demographic profile of respondents and the second section provides a description of the motivating factors for visitation.

Respondents demographic characteristics

Based on the results presented in the below table, respondents were between the ages of 16–74 (average age, 30 years) years old, with a standard deviation of 9.26. The youngest respondent was 16 and the oldest was 74. Respondents were primarily from Pretoria followed by other places around Gauteng and the fewest respondents came from outside the country. Respondents were primarily repeat visitors (69%) who were educated, as they predominantly have an undergraduate qualification in the form of a diploma or degree. In terms of transportation, more respondents used their own transport to visit the zoo.

Table 1. Visitor demographic

CATEGORY	PROFILE	Percentage
Gender	Male	47%
	Female	53%
Education*	Diploma/degree	40%
	Matric	22%
	Certificate	18%
	Postgraduate	13%
	No Schooling	5%
Place of residence	Pretoria	51%
	Johannesburg	24%
	Other areas in Gauteng	14%
	Other provinces	8%
	Other country	3%
Mode of transport	Personal car	51%
	Minibus taxi	32%
	Metered taxi	4%
	Bus	5%
	Gautrain/Gautrain bus	4%
	Walked on foot	3%
Frequencies of visit	1st time	31%
	Repeat visit	69%
Age group	16–30years	63%
	31–50 years	21%
	50–70 years	9%
	70+ years	5%

*percentage rounded to the nearest whole number

These findings partially indicated a change in the profile of respondents to the NZG compared to a previous study by Saayman and Slabbert (2004). In the study by Saayman and Slabbert (2004) the respondents were primarily, repeat visitors and in terms of age they were in the age category of 30–39. However, as with the study of Hermann and du Plessis (2014:1167), the respondents were still mainly of females, predominantly local (Pretoria & Johannesburg) and many of them were relatively well-educated with either a diploma or a degree. The majority of the visitors were repeat visitors. Table 1 is representative of these results.

Motivator results

Descriptive motivator results

This section presents the descriptive statistics represented by frequencies, median, standard deviation and mean of the participants' responses relating to the motivational factors that were sourced from previous research in protected areas namely; Saayman and Slabbert (2004), Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008), Kruger and Saayman (2010), Ballantyne, Packer and Sutherland (2011), Shaw (2011), Hermann, Du Plessis and Coetzee (2013) and Hermann and Du Plessis (2014). Participants were asked to rate the motivation factors on how they influenced their decision to visit the zoo by indicating whether the factors were not important at all (1) and extremely important (5). Table 2 provides a descriptive indication of the results of this section. The variables were treated as continuous, only the mean and the standard deviation will be indicated on the table below.

Table 2. Frequencies of respondent motivation

Reason for visiting the NZG		Mean	1 st Quintiles	3 rd Quintiles	Standard deviation
1	To get away from my daily routine	3.76	3.00	5.00	1.20
2	To relax	4.01	3.00	5.00	0.99
3	It is a safe place to visit	3.92	3.00	5.00	0.94
4	To spend time with family/friends	4.08	4.00	5.00	0.94
5	For the benefit of my children	3.73	3.00	5.00	1.25
6	To learn about endangered animals	4.06	4.00	5.00	1.94
7	To see exotic animal species	4.07	3.00	5.00	0.93
8	To spend time outdoors	3.67	3.00	4.00	1.05
9	For photography	3.15	2.00	4.00	1.35
10	It is value for money	3.24	2.00	4.00	1.37
11	It is part of my lifestyle	3.20	2.00	4.00	1.22
12	To connect with nature	3.49	3.00	4.00	1.13
13	To have a picnic	3.37	3.00	4.00	1.27
14	It is close to where I live	3.02	2.00	4.00	1.31
15	To improve my health	3.04	2.00	4.00	1.33
16	To learn about dangerous animals	3.77	3.00	5.00	1.15
17	The experience reminds me of my childhood	3.36	3.00	4.00	1.29
18	To learn about nature and conservation	3.75	3.00	5.00	1.05
19	To teach my children the value of conservation	3.71	3.00	5.00	1.17
20	To experience something unique	4.10	4.00	5.00	0.91
21	To have my curiosity aroused	4.00	3.00	5.00	0.93
22	To strengthen my relationships with my friends/family	4.16	4.00	5.00	1.00

From the descriptive results above (Table 2) the motivator statements achieved varied results. The least popular motivation to visit the NZG was because it was close to where one lived (3.02). The five main reasons for visiting the NZG as identified by respondents were:



- To strengthen my relationships with my friends/family 4.16.
- To experience something unique 4.10.
- To spend time with family/friends 4.08.
- To see exotic animal species 4.07.
- To learn about endangered animals 4.06.

The main findings below have identified three new motivators that have come to light since the Hermann (2014) study, namely to strengthen relationships with friends/family; to experience something unique; and to spend time with family/friends. Learning about the endangered animals or appreciating endangered species was common in both this study as well as that of Van der Merwe *et al's* (2009) and Hermann's (2013) study.

In order to generate a clearer description of these motivator factors an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the 22 respondent motivation statements as described in Table 2. A pattern matrix utilising the principal axis factoring extraction method and orthogonal varimax rotation method was used on the different variables. Bartlett's test of specificity indicated that the factors yielded p-values of < 0.0000 which indicated that the correlation structure was valid for factor analysis of the data collected. The KMO statistics for this factor analysis was 0.895 which indicates superb results.

Factor analysis results on motivator variables

The factor analysis described in the pattern matrix in Table 3 indicates six main motivator factors for respondents to the NZG. These six factors accounted for 57% of total variance. These factors were measured on a Likert Scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represented *extremely unimportant*, while 5 represented *extremely important*. These factors included *F1: Childhood and conservation; F2: Uniqueness; F3: Escape; F4: Animals; F5 Lifestyle; and F6: Relationship building.*

Table 3. Factor analysis: respondent motivations

Travel motivation	Components					
	Conservation	Uniqueness	Routine	Animals	Lifestyle	Relationship building
Mean values	3.38	4.05	3.94	3.96	3.34	3.72
Reliability Coefficient (α)	0.7180	0.768	0.709	0.627	0.534	0.564
It is close to where I live	0.4998					
To improve my health	0.7502					
The experience reminds me of my childhood	0.5874					
To learn about nature and conservation	0.5840					
To teach my children the value of conservation	0.6412					
To experience something unique		0.8121				
To have my curiosity aroused		0.8548				
To get away from my daily routine			0.7605			
To relax			0.7634			
It is a safe place to visit			0.71			
To spend time with family/friends			0.4325			
To learn about endangered animals				0.7711		
To see exotic animal species				0.7386		
To learn about dangerous animals				0.4002		
To spend time outdoors					0.6318	
For photography					0.7752	
It is part of my lifestyle					0.4826	
For the benefit of my children						0.5481
It is value for money						0.5381
To have a picnic						0.5820
To strengthen my relationships with my friends/family						0.4125

Factor 1: Childhood and conservation

The factor of childhood and conservation, with a mean value of 3.38, relates to the heritage features of the NZG. These included: it is close to where I live; to improve my health; the experience reminds me of my childhood; to learn about nature and conservation; and to teach my children the value of conservation. This factor may be considered a newly identified motivator factor for the NZG, as the previous studies by Saayman and Slabbert (2004), Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008), Kruger and Saayman (2010), Ballantyne, Packer and Sutherland (2011), Shaw (2011), Hermann, Du Plessis and Coetzee (2013), Hermann (2013) and Hermann and Du Plessis (2014) did not identify these motivators as being overly significant.



Factor 2: Uniqueness

This factor received the highest mean (4.05) and is thus the main motivator for respondents to the NZG. This factor included the themes of respondents wanting to experience something unique, and to have their curiosity aroused. Looking at the previous studies that were conducted by Saayman and Slabbert (2004), Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008), Kruger and Saayman (2010), Ballantyne, Packer and Sutherland (2011), Shaw (2011), Hermann, Du Plessis and Coetzee (2013), Hermann (2013) and Hermann and Du Plessis (2014) this was never a factor on its own. These themes were always associated with other themes thus making up a different name factor.

Factor 3: Escape

The motivator factor of escape was identified, which included the motivator themes of: to get away from my daily routine; to relax; it is a safe place to visit; and to spend time with family/friends. This factor scored a mean of 3.94, which is the second highest mean. This factor was also identified by Saayman and Slabbert (2004), Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008), Kruger and Saayman (2010), Ballantyne, Packer and Sutherland (2011), Shaw (2011), Hermann, Du Plessis and Coetzee (2013), Hermann (2013), Nicolaides (2014) and Hermann and Du Plessis (2014), as a major motivator for respondent motivation to national parks in South Africa.

Factor 4: Animals

The motivator factor of animals was identified, which included the motivator themes of: to learn about endangered animals; to see exotic animal species; and to learn about dangerous animals. This factor scored a mean of 3.96, which is the second highest mean. This factor was also identified by Saayman and Slabbert (2004), Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008), Kruger and Saayman (2010), Ballantyne, Packer and Sutherland (2011), Shaw (2011), Hermann, Du Plessis and Coetzee (2013), Hermann (2013) and Hermann and Du Plessis (2014) as a major motivator for respondent motivation to national parks in South Africa.

Factor 5: Lifestyle

The motivator factor of routine was identified, which included the motivator themes of: to spend time outdoors; photography; and it is part of my lifestyle. However, it scored the lowest mean, namely of 3.34. This factor was also identified by Saayman and Slabbert (2004), Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008), Kruger and Saayman (2010), Ballantyne, Packer and Sutherland (2011), Shaw (2011), Hermann, Du Plessis and Coetzee (2013), Hermann (2013) and Hermann and Du Plessis (2014) in their studies on respondent motivation to national parks in South Africa.

Factor 6: Relationship building

The final factor that was identified as a main motivator included themes related to respondents spending time with their families. It scored a mean of 3.72. The main themes identified within this factor included: for the benefit of my children; it is value for money; to have a picnic; and to strengthen my relationships with my friends/family. This factor was also identified by Saayman and Slabbert (2004), Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008), Kruger and Saayman (2010), Ballantyne, Packer and Sutherland (2011), Shaw (2011), Hermann, Du Plessis and Coetzee (2013), Hermann (2013) and Hermann and Du Plessis (2014) in their studies on respondent motivation to national parks in South Africa.

The tables above (Table 2 and 3) indicate that the main motivator for the people to come to the zoo was to experience something unique and to have their curiosity aroused.

Implications

Urban tourism is a phenomenon that can trace back its roots to the Mesopotamian (5000-3500 BCE) and the Sumerian (4000 BCE) eras, however, it has always been fragmented and not recognised as a separate field of study from other forms of tourism. A double neglect of urban



tourism has thus occurred because those interested in the study of tourism have tended to neglect the urban context in which much of it is set, while those interested in urban studies have been equally neglectful of the importance of the tourist function in cities. Thus, the primary objectives of this study was to identify who visits a nature based urban attraction and what motivates this visitation. Firstly, in terms of demographics, it was found that visitors to the NZG are predominantly in the age bracket of 16–74 with an average age of 30 years, originate primarily from Pretoria with a minor proportion of international visitors and they are primarily repeat visitors who are moderately educated, as they hold an undergraduate diploma or degree well educated. The findings, therefore, suggest that the NZG management may need to relook their marketing strategy should they wish to appeal more to a localized South African market.

In terms of main motivations, the results indicated five main groups of visitor motivations based on visitors' primary reasons to visit the NZG. The five highest rated specific reasons for visitors visiting the NZG are in chronological order, from highest to lowest: *to strengthen my relationships with my friends/family; to experience something unique; to spend time with family/friends; to see exotic animal species; and to learn about endangered animals*. The travel motive of *strengthen my relationships with my friends/family; to see exotic animal species and to learn about endangered animals*, support previous studies conducted by Saayman and Slabbert (2004), Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008), Kruger and Saayman (2010), Ballantyne, Packer and Sutherland (2011), Shaw (2011), Hermann, Du Plessis and Coetzee (2013), Hermann (2013) and Hermann and Du Plessis (2014). It is important to note that visitors go to the zoo to spend more time with their family and friends. The demographic results indicated that most people visiting the site are from urban areas, therefore the “natural open space” provided by the zoo is widely enjoyed. This has served as challenge for the management of the zoo as the place is mostly regarded as a recreation attraction than an educational facility.

Conclusion and recommendations

The South African National Zoological Gardens (better known as the Pretoria Zoo or NZG) was begun in 1899 as a branch of the Transvaal Museum (Muller, Saayman & Van der Merwe, 1995). The NZG is the largest and only national zoo in South Africa accommodating over 209 mammals, 202 birds, 190 fishes, 4 invertebrates, 93 reptiles and 7 amphibian species (NZG, 2012). The zoo is part of the National Research Foundation (NRF) which is a public entity that fosters research within the country. As part of the NRF, the NZG's focus is on the promotion of research; in addition to that the other main functions of the NZG include conservation and education (Hermann & Du Plessis, 2014). In as much as its main aim is to promote research and education most people still see zoos as places of entertainment and relaxation, therefore it is important for the zoo to be aware of who visits and why they visit in order to enhance the effective management of visitors. Through a literature study, it was found that those interested in the study of tourism have tended to neglect the urban context in which much of it is set, while those interested in urban studies have been equally neglectful of the importance of the tourist function in cities.

With reference to the demographic's findings of this study, it is recommended that the NZG should investigate the possibility of launching a loyalty programme for return visitors with the added benefits of family discounts or group discounts, since tourists generally travel in groups of six (Hermann & Du Plessis, 2014:1167).

In terms of visitor motives, the NZG attracts predominantly local visitors residing very close to the location of the zoo. These visitors are primarily motivated by the need to strengthen relationships with family and friends. The NZG is, therefore, a site for family and friends to meet and get together in their leisure time. Education and the need to experience nature are secondary objectives. It is, therefore, essential for the NZG to advance the effectiveness of its



main mandate, namely: education, conservation and research. Local visitors visit the NZG to enhance relationships with family and friends. The NZG, therefore, could investigate the possibility of enhancing the means of education and conservation to these visitors. This could be done firstly, by providing interactive education facilities at the NZG where parents and children can engage together; secondly, by providing education amenities near leisure facilities such as picnic areas and the cafeteria; thirdly, the NZG could investigate the possibility of evenly distributing leisure amenities throughout the NZG as this may compel visitors to explore areas of the property where visitor numbers are low.

As part of signage, the zoo provides the visitors with maps that guide them in their moving around the zoo. This is a great idea, however, the paper used is not recyclable and some visitors tend to throw them on the ground as they move about the zoo. They (the zoo) can always ask visitors to bring back the maps on their way out and whoever does that gets a coupon discount on their next visit to the zoo. This will not only ensure that the maps do not end up as litter but will also at the same time reduce the number of trees cut down. Another way of showing directions, instead of paper maps, the zoo can simply place large direction boards at strategic places as well as between exhibits and also always ensure that they are still in good visible condition. As the saying goes “a picture says a thousand words”, the zoo can also educate visitors via pictographic. The pictographs can be put strategically in places such as behind restroom doors, and at the entrance so that when the people are busy queuing to pay, they can also read such information.

With almost everyone using a smart phone in this digital era, the zoo can also use it to educate the people. There is WIFI in the zoo, meaning that the zoo can easily track the patterns of the visitors.

Finally, the study revealed a need for further study into whether the demographic profile of visitors has an impact on visitor motivators.

Limitations

This study experienced some limitations of which the major limitation related to the visitors. Most of the visitors were at the zoo to relax and some of them felt to complete a questionnaire was an invasion of their space. The other limitation faced was that the contact person at the zoo was not always available due to public holidays, therefore, entrance to the zoo was sometimes a problem as the researcher had to go back home and return the next day when the contact person was there.

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