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## ANTECEDENTS OF ETHICAL VISITOR BEHAVIOUR: THE CASE OF A NATURAL WORLD HERITAGE SITE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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**Abstract:** Visitors to natural heritage sites are increasingly being encouraged to behave in a more ethical way to reduce the negative impacts of tourism on the host community and the environment. As such, several ways of encouraging visitors to behave ethically have been proposed in literature. Despite literature suggesting a wide range of ways of encouraging ethical behaviour in different tourism settings, relatively few studies have probed the significance of aspects of ethical tourism (ET) on ethical visitor behaviour (EVB). This paper proposes ET aspects outlined by Speed (2008) in the ET model as determinants of EVB. Based on a quantitative survey of 323 respondents who visited iSimangaliso Wetland Park (IWP) during the period in which the study was conducted, eleven aspects of ET were empirically confirmed and validated. Research results reveal that the ET aspects and their related guidelines inspire visitors to behave appropriately. Improved insight into the respondents' perceptions of ET aspects as determining factors of EVB may equip site managers with strategies of mitigating visitors' deviant behaviour.

**Keywords:** *ethical tourism, ethical visitor behaviour, iSimangaliso Wetland Park, visitor behaviour, world heritage site*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of tourism as an industry gave many people around the world, including South Africans, hope that their lives would improve markedly. As the tourism industry was envisioned to be a smokeless industry, it was hoped that it would contribute to the upliftment of the economic well-being of many societies (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2013). However, the sheer scope and scale at which the tourism industry grew in past decades saw it being linked to an array of social, economic, and environmental illnesses (Hall & Lew, 2009). The illnesses include, among others, cultural commodification, environmental pollution, overuse of natural resources, graffiti, and economic leakages (Albrecht, 2017). Some of these illnesses have been precipitated by visitors' inappropriate behaviours. Such behaviour and their associated negative impacts meant that a profound reflection on visitor behaviour at tourism sites was necessary.

To minimise the negative impacts of inapt visitor behaviour, there have been increased calls for those coming to create memorable experience with tourism resources to use them responsibly (Cozzio *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, a raft of interferences has been suggested to entice visitors to behave in more ethical ways. Some of the interventions include changing infrastructure (Kallbekken & Sælen, 2013), changing defaults (Dolnicar, Knežević Cvelbar & Grün, 2019), rewarding desired behaviour (Dolnicar *et al.*, 2020), leveraging social norms (Gössling, Araña & Aguiar-Quintana, 2019), and raising awareness of environmental benefits (Araña & León, 2016; León & Araña, 2020). However, it is not prudent for the interventions to convince visitors to be mindful and behave ethically. Most of the visitors to these sites are inherently pleasure-seekers whose motives are maximisation of personal values (hedonistic) and short-term goals of escaping daily monotony routines (Muzeza, Hermann & Khunou, 2018) rather than the long-term societal needs of preserving tourism resources (Páskova, 2012; Zelenka, 2012; Ganglmair-Wooliscroft & Wooliscroft, 2016). Considering this, destination authorities are required to fashion environments that are capable of seducing emotional empathy to trigger specific visitor ethical behaviour in the destinations visited.

To create tourism environments that are conducive to enticing ethical emotions and reducing visitor non-compliance, tourism practitioners and developers have invented diverse tourism frameworks that not only en-

courage EVB for the sake of tourism resources sustainability, but also allow economic linkages to promote local social upliftment (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2013). In this milieu, ET aspects, which include amongst others ecotourism<sup>1</sup>, sustainable<sup>2</sup>, and responsible<sup>3</sup>, are being executed with the motive of guiding EVB. Despite the potential of ET aspects and related principles in influencing EVB, empirical studies are yet to be conducted to confirm their stimulus in changing visitor behaviour. The potential reason being that the appropriateness of aspects ET as instruments of changing visitor behaviour is still a topic of scientific debate. To reduce scientific debate, the aim of this paper is to rationalise aspects of ET as determining factors of EVB and empirically prove their influence.

In South Africa, the tourism industry is going through an 'ethical transformation period' where aspects of ET are being promoted in different destinations (Spenceley, 2007). IWP is one destination where several aspects of ET have been partially implemented to protect tourism resources from being damaged by visitors and the local communities. As such, the wetland has become a hub of nature-based tourism<sup>4</sup> typologies (Gumede, 2009). Such tourism typologies are envisioned to inspire visitors to preserve the natural resources. Despite the role played by the ET aspects in preserving tourism resources in IWP, fundamental discussions about the tourism typologies as determinants of EVB in the context of South African world heritage site (WHS) have not yet taken place. Against this

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<sup>1</sup> Non-evasive tourism that promotes visitor to travel to natural areas and focuses primarily on learning about nature at first hand. This is tourism characterised by small-scale and environmentally sensitive tourism activities. It aims to improve the welfare of the local people.

<sup>2</sup> 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 the host communities. This is tourism which promotes long lasting development through encouraging organisations to take responsibility for their actions and their impact on the environment.

<sup>3</sup> This is tourism which minimises the socio-economic and environmental impacts while enhancing the economic wellbeing of the host communities. A tourism which holds individuals accountable for their choice and impact on society and environment. It has slightly wider focus and broader outcomes which include assigning responsibility for action to various stakeholders. It can include urban destinations.

<sup>4</sup> Any form of tourism which uses natural resources in a wild and underdeveloped form. It promotes travelling to natural areas or wildlife. It implies a scientific, aesthetic, or philosophical approach to travel. It is restrictive nature in travelling to underdeveloped world

background, the question to be addressed in this paper is whether aspects of ET may be regarded as determining factors of EVB in IWP.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review of this paper is made up of an ephemeral study area synopsis, exploration of ET, probing of an EVB paradigm and formulation of antecedents of EVB based on ET model.

### 2.1. OVERVIEW OF IWP

The IWP is one of South Africa's WHS to be listed in the world heritage register in 1999. Located in the uMkhanyakude District Municipality in the north-eastern part of the KwaZulu-Natal Province, IWP hosts unique fauna and flora, and other tourism attributes which serve as the main visitor drawcards. The wetland park comprises coastal forests, Lake St Lucia, Maphelane, Cape Vidal and the eastern shores of St Lucia, Charters Creek and the western shores of St Lucia, St Lucia's False Bay, Lake Sibaya, coral reefs at Sodwana Bay, uMkhuze and Kosi Bay, collectively known as the Ten Jewels of iSimangaliso. Such tourism features make IWP to stand above the rest as the most visited attraction in the municipality, if not in the province.

### 2.2. ETHICAL TOURISM

ET is a more encompassing concept connoting a wide variety of alternative tourism forms which adopts different values from various tourism types and ensures that all decision-making with all stakeholders about environmental, social, and economic issues is socially responsible (Love-lock & Lovelock, 2013). Lohmann and Netto (2017) further suggest that ET is not a sustainable and responsible form of tourism, but the value of tourism which is found in different forms of tourism which include, among others, sustainable, responsible, ecotourism, and many others. The authors note that ET encourages those experiencing the tourism products to apply principles of good behaviour (justice, fairness, and equality) in their interactions with one another, society, the environ-

ment, and other life forms. As such, ET greatly represents the demand-side as people are seen as playing an important role in a quest for social change (Del Chiappa, Grappi & Romani, 2016; Lee, Jan, & Yang, 2013). Unlike the other tourism frameworks (e.g., responsible, and sustainable) which strive more to regulate the service providers and are reactive frameworks, ET is a proactive framework which attempts to correct human behaviour (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2013; Tolkach *et al.*, 2017) through raising visitors awareness about their fundamental duties towards the indigenous people, the clients, and the business.

Speed's (2008) ET model is useful in delineating different ambits of ET tourism and associated tourism typologies. Hitherto, three interlocking themed ethical ambits are represented as part of the broader concept of ET; the key ethical ambits in ET are economic, social, and environmental tourism. Within the model, Speed (2008) further provided clarity by delineating the different aspects of ET in each of the three ambits. Within the environmental tourism ambit, Speed (2008) included green<sup>5</sup>, eco, nature-based, low impact<sup>6</sup> and environmentally-friendly tourism<sup>7</sup> while economically responsible, sustainable and Fair-Trade Tourism<sup>8</sup> were encircled in the economic tourism ambit. The tourism typologies in the environmental tourism ambit attempt to protect the environment while those in the economic ambit ensure that residents benefit from tourism. Speed (2008) further encircled intelligent<sup>9</sup>, appropriate<sup>10</sup>, and

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<sup>5</sup> It refers to travel experience of travellers where they enjoy ecological humanism in the tourism form with the smallest impact on the environment pursuant to the spirit of energy saving and carbon reduction. This is tourism which encourages visitors to use service providers who adopt green practices. This is tourism which encourages tourist to choose accommodation facilities that adopt green practice.

<sup>6</sup> Tourism that benefits local community, respect wildlife, local people, and their culture. This is tourism which is generous allowing any travel that does not deplete or disrupt the rural and natural small amenities of the local community.

<sup>7</sup> Tourism that promotes responsible travel that preserves natural environments. This is tourism which is permissive with regards to the areas visited and the number of visitors but encourage proper use of tourism resources.

<sup>8</sup> Tourism which promotes fair trade by companies and the visitors. Tourism which does not allow employees exploitation.

<sup>9</sup> Tourism which meets the need of visitors and promote intensive use of resources. This is tourism which encourages the use of ICT in using and accessing tourism resources.

<sup>10</sup> Tourism which promotes activities and development which do not jeopardize a society or culture. Any form of tourism which is considered proper in a specific area.

community-based tourism<sup>11</sup> in the social tourism ambit. While these typologies might share much in common and scholars often interchange them, there are thin margins of disparities, and hence they were used separately in this study.

### 2.3. EVB PARADIGM

Despite still finding traction in the tourism research mainstream, an EVB paradigm may be observed as a multifaceted concept that encompasses good conduct by visitors at the tourism destination in which they interact with the host community and tourism employees (Hannam & Ateljevic, 2008). It denotes responsible and fair actions by visitors that result from a change in thinking, allowing critical reflection on the environmental, economic, and sociocultural aspects of tourism (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2013; Lee, *et al.*, 2017; Dias *et al.*, 2021).

It seems that several EVB-related studies have been presented in the domain of tourism, including those analysing EVB attitudes (e.g., Scarpato *et al.*, 2014; Adongo *et al.*, 2018). Some studies explain ethical practice in general (e.g., Vaske *et al.*, 2015; Ziegler *et al.*, 2018; Dolnicar, Juvan, & Grun, 2020) while others probe behavioural ethics (e.g., Lee *et al.*, 2017; Tolkach *et al.*, 2017). Ganglmair-Wooliscroft and Wooliscroft (2017) and Slocum and Curtis (2016) investigated ethical behaviour of tourists in different set-ups. Vaske *et al.* (2015) focused on understanding the determinants of environmental EVB, whereas Dolnicar, Juvan and Grün (2020) identified some personal characteristics of tourists practising environmentally ethical behaviour. Ziegler *et al.* (2018) conducted a study to enhance a deeper understanding of the reasons why determinants of pro-environmental behaviour do not always trigger the desired behaviour.

Given the depth of research on issues related to EVB, it is surprising to note that only a small number of studies have been devoted to assessing on-site EVB determinants (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2013; Malone,

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<sup>11</sup> This is tourism that is wholly owned and managed by the community and fosters the maximization of benefits. Alternatively, communities may not own the resources on which their establishment is based but are responsible for its management and the aim is to widen the benefits for the local community in which visitors travel to connect with local community.

McCabe & Smith, 2014; Scarpatto *et al.*, 2014; Adongo *et al.*, 2018). As such, there is a lack of studies assessing the application of aspects of ET as determinants of EVB. While it is the intent of this study to assess the determinants of EVB at IWP, it is important to note that the aspects of ET cannot unanimously compel visitors to engage in EVB, but they may only create an environment and situations that might remind visitors to engage in EVB.

#### 2.4. ANTECEDENTS OF EVB

As highlighted in the previous section, researchers have used various factors as antecedents of EVB. Some scholars have used socio-psychological factors while other have used socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, and educational level as a justification (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). However, there is lack of empirical studies that investigate aspects of ET as determinants of EVB. Therefore, this study proposes aspects of ET in Speed (2008) ET model as determinants of EVB, and measure their influence on visitors in a specific context. This is substantiated by Shamsub (2010), who suggests that aspects of ET might be capable of shaping visitors' awareness of sustainability.

Within Speed's (2008) ET model, nature-based, eco, environmentally-friendly, green, and low impact tourism are considered as tourism typologies which emphasise environmental protection. While the aspects of ET appear similar in the environmental context, in this paper nature-based tourism slightly differs from environmentally-friendly tourism with regard to its restrictive nature in travelling to underdeveloped world to enjoy natural resources, while the latter is permissive with regards to the areas visited and the number of visitors but encourage proper use of tourism resources (Spenceley, 2012). These two typologies are built on the ethical premises that visitors are encouraged not only to enjoy nature, but also are allowed to engage responsibly with the environmental identities (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008). Complementing the environmental ethical underpinnings, Lovelock and Lovelock (2013) observe that nature-based and environmentally-friendly tourism have the potential of sensitising visitors to their fundamental duties towards the environment. These ET facets may make visitors aware of the environmental changes emanating from their practices. Upon realisation, some visitors might stop indulging in behaviours that could have a negative effect on the environment

(Musgrave *et al.*, 2019). Ramchandani *et al.* (2017) also maintain that nature-based tourism may increase visitors' knowledge of the environment since it encourages them to learn about nature at first hand, which might change their behaviour as they start analysing its pros and cons. Based on the principles, the study proposes nature-based and environmentally-friendly tourism as factors determining EVB.

While green tourism may be closely aligned to nature-based and environmentally-friendly tourism, it refers to tourism or recreational activities undertaken in natural areas (Hansen, 2014). Unlike nature-based and environmentally friendly, the main purpose of green tourism is to generate economic benefits while minimising harmful effects on the environment. While it sounds like ecotourism at first hand, green tourism is mostly a supply-side initiative which encourages visitors to stay in environmentally-friendly accommodations. Regrettably, green tourism is perceived as a tag often used by hotel managers to advertise themselves even though they are yet to implement justifiable practices (Poudel & Nyaupane, 2017; Stronza, Hunt & Fitzgerald, 2019). Despite hotel managers "greenwashing" in the context of green tourism, there is no doubt that the guidelines may be perceived as integral in promoting responsible manner and sustainable lifestyles. Manaktola and Jauhar (2007) substantiate this view noting that an organisation that implements green practices could bring about a green attitude in those using tourism resources. Hansen (2014) also suggests that green tourism educates visitors to use recycling bins, save water and support preservation efforts. This study therefore proposes green tourism as instrumental in determining EVB.

Many scholars seem adamant to use ecotourism as a manner of green tourism. However, in this article ecotourism refers to responsible travel to natural areas preserving the environment and improving the well-being of local people (TIES, 2011). Unlike green tourism, ecotourism is all about going out into the natural world as opposed to cities and is more about what you do than where you stay. The characteristics of ecotourism are: to reduce, educate, preserve, and generate, which means it has a greater chance of creating a larger community-conscientious traveller. From a conservationist viewpoint, one would argue that the guiding principles of ecotourism could encourage visitors to provide incentives to local communities and landowners to preserve fauna and flora (Spenceley, 2012). Stronza *et al.* (2019) note that ecotourism could encourage visitors to learn about nature, which would help them to adopt EVB.



Chaminuka *et al.* (2012) further suggest that ecotourism principles could provide opportunities for visitors to engage with host communities through community tours, with the added benefit of purchasing products such as curios and handcrafts. In so doing, ecotourism has the potential to sway visitors' minds positively resulting in EVB.

Low impact tourism refers to any travel that does not deplete or disrupt the rural and natural small amenities of the local community (Speed, 2008). Low impact tourism is not restrictive to the natural resources but promotes less impact on the society, the economy, and the natural environment. Low impact tourism guidelines may encourage visitors to use the land but to avoid disturbing natural landscapes, the loss of vegetation and its modification. Spenceley and Goodwin (2007) maintain that low impact tourism is based on the premise that visitors should travel in smaller groups, stay in accommodations which have a smaller impact on the natural environment, and participate in outdoor activities in the natural environment. Thus, the guidelines of low impact tourism may not only drive visitors to use resources responsibly, but also to avoid disturbing natural landscapes or irresponsibly modifying them. Thus, the study's presupposition is that low impact tourism influence visitors to behave ethically.

In the social tourism ambit of Speed's (2008) ET model, community-based tourism, intelligent and appropriate tourism are the tourism typologies that are presumed to provide value to the society. Social tourism gives the opportunity of being tourists to members of the society who for various reasons are unable to meet tourist needs by their own means —. Ndlovu (2016) and Dixey (2020) refer to community-based tourism as tourism that is planned, developed, owned, and managed by the community, for the community, and directed by cooperative decision-making. Community-based tourism promotes mutually beneficial exchange between hosts and guests. Despite being like other tourism frameworks in its aim to preserve natural and cultural heritage while improving socio-economic conditions for the local community, Ndlovu (2016) indicates that community-based tourism is distinctive in prioritizing locals to have control and power in directing tourism development. Community-based tourism encourages the participation in tourism activities of persons who are economically weak or otherwise disadvantaged (Minnaert, Maitland & Miller, 2011). Such ideologies may encourage visitors to increase the benefits to the local community (Zhu, 2018), and host communities to participate in social tourism making them feel less excluded from the

society. which is ethical and humanitarian. Based on such principles, this study suggests community-based tourism as a determining factor of EVB.

Other aspects of Speed's (2008) ET social tourism ambit are intelligent and appropriate tourism. Intelligent tourism, also known as 'smart tourism', provide tourism in destinations by facilitating access to tourism and hospitality products, services, space and experience through information and communication technology (ICT) tools. This tourism avoids mass tourism as people may use ICT tools to access and use tourism resources. Unlike intelligent tourism, appropriate tourism is a 'progressive or soft' tourism form that is appropriate to specific areas and responds to individual situations. It is a tourism that may encourage visitors to leave smaller carbon footprints on the environment. Giampiccoli and Saayman (2017a) observe that intelligent and appropriate tourism guiding principles may perhaps encourage visitors to reduce their carbon footprint on the environment. Based on these observations, the paper proposes intelligent and appropriate tourism as capable of influencing visitors to behave ethically.

Lastly, sustainable, economically responsible, and Fair-Trade Tourism are types of tourism in the economic ambit of Speed's (2008) ET model. Sustainable and economically responsible tourism are both built on the premise of the "triple bottom line." The former, however, requires companies and organisations to take responsibility for their actions and their impact on the environment (Hattingh & Kock, 2013; Kapera, 2018) while the latter attempts to hold individuals accountable for their choice and impact on society and environment (van Zyl, 2015). In contrast, Fair-Trade Tourism is a concept of visiting a place as a tourist and trying to make only positive impacts on the society and the economy. It ensures employees are paid good wages, fair share of tourism money with the local communities, and that human rights are respected (Speed, 2008; Spenceley, 2012). Fair-Trade Tourism is a form of tourism that encourages visitors to optimally distribute tourism benefits to affected residents.

The principles and guidelines of the three economically inclined ethical forms of tourism has the potential of encouraging visitors to consider the current and future economic and social impacts of their actions (Hattingh & Kock, 2013; Kapera, 2018). Manzoor, Asif and Rehaman (2019) note that the guidelines of sustainable tourism encourage visitors to consider the needs of local industries, the environment, and the host community. Boluk (2011a; 2011b) explains that the guidelines of organisations such as Fair Trade in Tourism may encourage visitors to

address the imbalance in trade through supporting the rights of the indigenous local communities who are involved in the tourism industry. These guidelines may encourage visitors to enhance local communities' participation as equal stakeholders and beneficiaries in tourism development (Speed, 2008). Thus, the paper presumes that sustainable, responsible, and Fair-Trade Tourism are determining factors of EVB.

While the aforesaid aspects of ET may be determining factors of EVB, the role of socio-demographic variables (e.g., gender, education level, travel frequency and age) should not be undervalued (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2017). Teng, Ma and Jing (2021) found that gender disparities impacted ethical behaviour as males and females had different reasons for visiting destinations. Age and past experiences have been identified as driving forces of EVB. Dolnicar (2017) contends that age is a predictor of pro-environmental behaviour as older visitors may have more knowledge of ET. The difference in tourist attitude with regard to behaviour is well documented in literature. Shamsub (2010) observes that a better educated tourist would be more likely to perceive aspects of ET as being important. Thus, environmental knowledge resulting from a higher educational level may evoke a greater environmental awareness, which may eventually lead to positive and ethical behaviour.

There is also a theory that EVB may be affected by the social upbringing of a tourist. International tourists tend to replicate their usual leisure behavioural patterns in foreign destinations, which may cause clashes with residents. This view is substantiated by Shamsub (2010), who observes that international tourists to Thailand have been noted to misbehave by walking bare-chested, which is considered inappropriate behaviour by locals. There is also evidence that suggests that "group effect" may have an impact on EVB, as studies have revealed that members of tour groups are likely to behave less ethically than independent tourists (Shamsub, 2010). This may be attributable to the fact that group members tend to be more dependent on tour guides and group norms, and this makes them susceptible to overlooking local codes of conduct.

Another determinant of EVB may be the proximity of the attraction to the host community. According to Carr *et al.* (2002), a shorter distance might mean that visitors are familiar with the destination. As such, as the distance increases from the place of origin, the tendency for tourists to behave passively also increases. This also applies to the frequency of visits. The more frequently tourists visit an area, the better they understand the local codes of conduct and the greater the possibility of them behaving

ethically, as they would have become familiar with the local culture, traditions, and way of life.

Whereas the above socio-demographic factors may play a role in influencing EVB, this study aimed to verify on-site determinants of EVB. While some studies look at determinants such as attitude, the presuppositions of this paper were that aspects of ET could be vital to determine factors of EVB as they create environments that remind visitors to engage in responsible behaviour.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. DATA COLLECTION AND THE SAMPLE

This study made use of a descriptive approach to obtain a better understanding of respondents' perceptions of the proposed determinants of EVB at IWP. A survey research design was applied using structured questionnaires distributed manually and explained to the respondents by the researcher at the main ports of exit from the park. 323 questionnaires were distributed to respondents. The respondents were purposively and conveniently selected. Before going to the field, the survey questionnaire was presented to some tourism experts and respondents to check its precision and accuracy, and later pilot tested. A total of 323 questionnaires were returned, thereby providing an 85% response rate.

#### 3.2. Research instrument for measuring the antecedents of EVB

To measure the perceptions of visitors on the proposed determinant of EVB, a questionnaire was designed to integrate the aspects of ET outlined by Speed (2008) in the ET model, namely: environmentally-friendly, eco, economically responsible, sustainable, nature, community, intelligent, appropriate, green, Fair Trade, low impact and community-based tourism. To enhance respondents to get a better understanding of the typologies and turn them into variables, definitions were developed based on literature reviewed and were included in the research instruments. Accordingly, eleven items proposed as on-site determining factors were measured on a five-point Likert type scale with scales of 1 = *extremely unimportant* to 5 = *extremely important* ). The respondents were asked to choose between the five positions based on their perceived level of importance of the determining factors. Ten demographic variables were added to the assessment, namely gender, age, marital status, educational

level, patterns of travel, visitor category, frequency of visits, paying option, and travel purpose.

### 3.3. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

To analyse the data obtained, frequency and descriptive statistics were used that indicated general tendencies which were used to interpret data. Inferential statistics were also applied through an analysis of variance (ANOVA). The ANOVA allowed the researchers to determine whether there were any significant relationships between independent and dependent variables.

## 4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

A frequency analysis was performed to examine the characteristics of collected data from the sample population. This was followed by a descriptive analysis to check the mean scores.

### 4.1. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Frequency analysis was performed to examine demographic characteristics. Table 1 shows the demographics analysis.

The results shown in Table 1 indicate that domestic visitors made up a substantial portion of the respondents. However, this could be attributed to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions. Regarding gender, the respondents were equally distributed, while the age groups between 18 and 50 were the most frequent. Most respondents were married and claimed to have obtained a matric certificate. Fifty percent of respondents were travelling with their family members. A large portion of respondents were repeat visitors, with 32% of respondents claiming to have visited the park twice. Ninety-three percent of respondents claimed to have paid to enter the park, and 63% of respondents claimed to have visited the park either for pleasure or simply to relax.

Table 1. Respondent profile

Category	Demographic profile	
	Variables	Freq (%)
Visitor types	Domestic	199 (62)
	International	124 (38)
Gender	Male	162 (50)
	Female	157 (49)
	Other	4 (1)
Age	18-30 years	73 (23)
	31-40 years	114 (35)
	41-50 years	100 (31)
	51-60 years	31 (10)
	61 years and above	5 (1)
Marital status	Single	84 (26)
	Living with partner	86 (27)
	Married	121 (37)
	Divorced	18 (6)
	Widow/widower	12 (4)
	Other	2 (1)
Educational level	Below Grade 12	33 (10)
	Grade 12 (Matric)	125 (39)
	Three-year diploma/degree (NQF5 & 6)	70 (22)
	Four-year degree (NQF7)	64 (20)
	Postgraduate degree (NQF8-10)	31 (9)
Travel partners	Alone	51 (16)
	With family members	162 (50)
	With spouse/partner	56 (17)
	With friends	52 (16)
	With strangers	2 (1)
Visitor category	First-timer	53 (16)
	Repeat visitor	270 (84)

*(Continues)*

Table 1. Respondent profile (*continued*)

Category	Demographic profile	
	Variables	Freq (%)
Frequency of visits per year	Once	77 (29)
	Twice	86 (32)
	Three times	64 (24)
	Four times	24 (9)
	Five times or more	19 (7)
Paying option	Paying visitor	300 (93)
	Non-paying visitor	19 (6)
	Other	4 (1)
Travel purpose	Pleasure	124 (38)
	Educational	28 (9)
	Relaxation	81 (25)
	Family gathering	51 (16)
	Business	25 (8)
	Transit	14 (4)

#### 4.2. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

In the questionnaire, the respondents were requested to indicate the degree of importance they attached to 11 aspects of ET as the on-site determining factors in their ethical behaviour. The descriptive findings regarding how respondents perceived the aspects of ET as on-site determining factors of EVB are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 shows that the respondents rated the 11 proposed on-site determinants of EVB highly, with all scoring means ranging from moderately important (3) to important (4). With reference to the descriptive statistics of the on-site determinants, the results showed that “sustainable tourism” had the highest mean at 4.16, indicating that respondents’ perceptions were high regarding how they perceived sustainable tourism guidelines as persuasive factors of EVB. The on-site determinant “nature-based tourism” had a mean score of 4.13, meaning that respondents perceived “nature-based tourism” guidelines as playing role in them engag-

Table 2. On-site determinants of EVB

Determinants of EVB in tourism	Extremely unimportant	Unimportant	Moderately important	Important	Extremely important	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach Alpha
	Percentages of importance							
Sustainable tourism	1.6	4.0	17.7	29.7	47.0	4.16	0.960	0.872
Nature-based tourism	1.2	5.9	17.0	30.0	45.9	4.13	0.980	0.873
Low-impact tourism	1.6	4.0	19.6	29.8	45.2	4.13	0.966	0.873
Environmentally friendly tourism	0.9	4.3	17.3	35.7	41.8	4.13	0.913	0.874
Ecotourism	2.1	3.4	17.0	36.0	41.5	4.11	0.952	0.872
Green tourism	1.9	3.4	18.6	34.4	41.7	4.10	0.948	0.869
Community tourism	1.2	3.7	20.7	38.1	36.3	4.04	0.911	0.869
Responsible tourism	0.6	4.6	20.1	39.6	35.1	4.03	0.890	0.870
Fair Trade Tourism	2.8	3.0	26.3	33.7	24.2	3.63	1.070	0.887
Appropriate tourism	2.5	10.2	27.6	43.0	16.7	3.61	0.963	0.877
Intelligent tourism	5.0	8.6	24.2	31.3	30.9	3.75	1.132	0.879

ing in EVB. Low-impact tourism was rated highly by respondents with a mean score of 4.13, indicating that a high percentage of respondents perceived low-impact tourism guidelines as being important in determining their ethical behaviour. The on-site determinant “environmentally friendly tourism” achieved a mean score of 4.13, indicating respondents’ positive perceptions of environmentally friendly tourism guidelines as a determining factor. The on-site determinant “ecotourism” obtained a mean score of 4.11, indicating that respondents valued the guideline of ecotourism as a determining factor of EVB. Cronbach’s Alpha was used to measure the reliability of the study terms as variables. A variable is reliable when it achieves a score of 0.70 and above (Gursoy *et al.*, 2015). The Cronbach’s Alpha for individual variables is shown in Table 1. Based on these results, the aspects of ET that represented on-site determinants of EVB are reliable, as the test scale ranges from 0.869 to 0.887. The 11 EVB determinants were also tested to determine their average reliability.



The overall average test scale was 0.8835, which is positive, meaning that the determinants were reliable.

#### 4.3. ANOVA ANALYSIS

After the descriptive analysis of the determinants, the study performed an inferential test through a series of ANOVAs aimed at determining whether the socio-demographic factors had a significant influence on visitors' perceptions of on-site determinants. Table 3 provides a summary of the ANOVA results.

An ANOVA analysis indicated that some demographic factors had a significant impact on the respondents' perception of the importance of the determinants of EVB while others had no significant impact. Statistically significant differences were found in five demographic factors, namely age, marital status, educational level, travel purpose, and frequency of visits. The demographics with a statistically difference are the ones to be discussed in this paper.

Respondents perceived the EVB determinants differently based on their age groups ( $p = 0.0005$ ). Significant differences were found between the age groups 18-30 years and 31-40 years ( $p = 0.0005$ ), and 18-30 years and 41-50 years ( $p = 0.0157$ ). A Dunn's pairwise comparison test indicated that the age group 31-40 years rated the importance of EVB determinants higher (rank sum = 21 117) than the age group 18-30 years (rank sum = 9 003). The ratings of respondents aged 31-40 were higher than those aged 18-30 years. The differences in rank sum also testify to the same difference between the age groups 41-50 years (rank sum = 16 522) and 18-30 years (rank sum = 9 003). This might be explained by the fact that the older the respondents are, the more important they deem the determinants of EVB. Dolnicar (2017) substantiates these results, noting that older people are better educated and are more likely to perceive aspects of ET as having an important influence on their behaviour.

Marital status provided significant differences regarding the determinants of EVB ( $p = 0.0014$ ). From the Dunn's pairwise comparison test, it was established that the single respondents' perceptions of the EVB determinants were different from those of the married respondents ( $p = 0.0049$ ). This was shown by the rank sums of married respondents, which were higher (22 694) than those of the single respondents (11 961). Thus,

Table 3. ANOVA analysis of the importance of EVB determinants

Importance of EVB determinants									
Demographic factors	N	Rank sum	<i>P Asymp. sig (2-tailed)</i>	Demographic factors	N	Rank sum	<i>t-value</i>	<i>P Asymp. sig (2-tailed)</i>	
Visitor type									
Domestic	199	43849.5	0.187	0.8521	First timer	270	43849.5	0.176	0.8607
International	124	8476.5			Repeat visitor	53	8476.5		
Gender									
Male	162	27973.0	4.359	0.1131	Paying	300	48786.5	4.363	0.113
Female	157	23807.0			Non-paying	19	2577.5		
Other	4	546			Other	4	962.0		
Age									
18-30 years	73	9003.0	19.916	0.0005	Alone	51	7527.5	6.071	0.1939
31-40 years	114	21117.5			Family members	162	26586.0		
41-50 years	100	16522.5			With spouse/partner	56	10179.0		
51-60 years	31	4953.5							
61 years and above	5	729.5			With friends	52	7596.0		
					With strangers	2	437.5		

(Continues)

Table 3. ANOVA analysis of the importance of EVB determinants (continued)

Importance of EVB determinants								
Demographic factors	N	Rank sum	<i>P Asymp. sig (2-tailed)</i>	Demographic factors	N	Rank sum	<i>t-value</i>	<i>P Asymp. sig (2-tailed)</i>
Marital status								
Single	84	11961.5	19.711	Pleasure	124	21627.0	18.963	0.0020
Living with partner	86	13740.0		Educational	28	4463.0		
Married	121	22694.5		Relation	81	14777.5		
Divorced	18	2161.5		Family gathering	51	6224.5		
Widower/ widow	12	1648.5		Business	29	3304.0		
Repeat visitor	53	8476.5		Transit	14	1930.0		
Frequency of visits								
Once	77	10442.5	13.443	Below Grade 12	33	3893.0	9.790	0.0441
Twice	86	11411.0		Grade 12 (matric)	125	19945.5		
Three times	64	9569.0		Three-year diploma (NQF 5 & 6)	70	12348.5		
Four times	24	2094.0		Four-year degree (NQF 7)	64	10874.0		
Five times or more	19	3068.0		Postgraduate (NQF8-10)	31	5265.0		

married couples had a stronger association with EVB when compared to other groups.

Statistically significant differences were also revealed in the ratings of the importance of EVB determinants based on the level of education ( $p = 0.0441$ ). From the Dunn's pairwise comparison test, it was established that the ratings by respondents whose education level was below Grade 10 differed significantly from those respondents who held a three-year diploma or degree ( $p = 0.0149$ ). Respondents with an education level below Grade 10 considered the EVB determinant as less important (rank sum = 3 893) than the respondents who held a three-year diploma (rank sum = 12 348). This meant that respondents who had higher education levels rated the variables higher in terms of importance, which gives the impression that education plays a significant role in the EVB of respondents in the study. The results validate Shamsub's (2010) observation that the better educated tourists are, the more likely they are to perceive aspects of ET as important in influencing their behaviour than those who are less educated.

There were statistically significant differences in the respondents' perception of the importance of the EVB determinants based on the number or frequency of their visits to IWP ( $p = 0.0098$ ). Through the Dunn's pairwise comparison test, it was established that respondents who had visited the park twice ranked the determinants higher than those who had visited it only once. This suggests that the number of visits might have exposed the respondents to different determinants over time. This is confirmed in the literature. Carr *et al.* (2002), for instance, observed that the more often tourists visit an area, the better they comprehend the local codes of conduct and the higher the likelihood that they perceive EVB determinants as important, as they would have become familiar with the local culture, traditions, and way of life.

There were statistically significant differences in the ratings of respondents of the determinants of EVB based on the reason why they had travelled to the study area ( $p = 0.0020$ ). A Dunn's pairwise comparison test indicated that there were significant differences between the perceptions of those who had travelled for family gatherings and those whose reason was pleasure ( $p = 0.0052$ ), and those who had travelled for family gatherings and for relaxation ( $p = 0.0022$ ).

## 5. DISCUSSION

The demographic findings of this study revealed some similarities to previous studies as well as some disparities. Regarding visitor types and payment options, the study's findings concur with the earlier finding by Govender (2013) that the eastern shore of the IWP was a domestic visitor-dominated area and that most visitors paid to access the IWP. Although the Covid-19 pandemics had an influence on visitor movement, the IWP seems to appeal to a predominantly domestic market. In terms of gender, this study revealed an almost equal distribution between male and female respondents, which is contrary to the earlier findings by Gumede (2009), which showed that IWP was a female-dominated destination. The study revealed that most respondents were married or living with partners. These findings contradict the findings by Gumede (2009) that revealed that most of the visitors to the IWP were single. The discrepancies between the findings validate the arguments by Arkedius, Granbom and Neuberg (2020), Rosa and Collado (2019), Lee, Jan, and Yang (2013) and Lee, Jan, and Huang (2015) that tourism is an industry characterised by ever-changing visitor patterns.

The results of this study validated aspects of ET as determining factors of EVB. Firstly, the environmentally inclined aspects of ET (nature, environmentally-friendly, eco-friendly, low-impact and green tourism) exert a significant positive influence on EVB with means ranging from 4.13 to 4.10. The findings support the views by Manaktola and Jauhar (2007), Hansen (2014), Stronza *et al.* (2019), Poudel and Nyaupane (2017), and Chaminuka *et al.* (2012) that the environmentally inclined aspects of ET play a significant role in swaying visitors to become pro-environmentalists. In other words, the environmentally friendly buildings sway visitors' mindfulness and behaviour in a positive direction. It is when practising environmental tourism that visitors become aware of the need to change their behaviour as they start to analyse the pros and cons of these and to compare it with pro-environmental behaviour.

Secondly, the implementation of socially inclined aspects of ET (community, appropriate and intelligent tourism) has a significant influence on EVB, with all the proposed determinants attaining a mean range from 3.61 to 4.04. These results support the findings of Speed (2008), Spenceley (2012), Giampiccoli and Saayman (2017b), Diallo *et al.* (2015) and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft and Wooliscroft (2017) that community-based tourism inspires visitors to invest in local projects and

devote time to the implementation of projects which could uplift the local community.

Thirdly, the implementation of economically inclined aspects of ET (responsible, sustainable and Fair-Trade Tourism) has a positive impact on EVB, with all the proposed determinants attaining a mean range from 3.63 to 4.16. This supports Boluk's (2011a; 2011b) claim that economic tourism persuades visitors to play a role in providing for the needs of host communities and lowering inequality and poverty levels, accelerating economic growth, and addressing the needs of the future generations. Speed (2008) also observes that Fair Trade Tourism addresses the imbalance in trade through supporting the rights of host communities.

In terms of the relationship between demographic variables and EVB, the study found that most respondents were generally positively inclined in terms of practising EVB. However, older, married, higher educated visitors were more inclined to act ethically when compared to other groups. Additionally, those visiting IWP for reasons of family gatherings and those whose motive was for pleasure, as well as those visitors who were repeat visitors, had a higher inclination towards EVB. The IWP management should therefore strive to promote EVB so that those groups that are less inclined to practise EVB are educated and encouraged to do so. This could be done by means of engaging younger and lower educated visitors through appropriate social media platforms, and interactive information and educational mediums.

## **6. STUDY IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

In response to the emerging popularity of ethical practices across the business world, this study assessed the on-site determinants of EVB at IWP. Then, using the data from respondents at IWP, the study empirically tested the concepts hypothesised as determinants, showing that the aspects of ET are important site-specific determinants of EVB at IWP. This is attributed to the fact that the guidelines of the above mentioned aspects of ET might inspire visitors to behave ethically. The study clarified the unique characteristics of respondents at IWP. Visitors at IWP are likely to be influenced by sociodemographic factors such as gender, visitor types, age, educational level, and travel purposes.

The findings show that heritage authorities should intensify their implementation of the aspects of ET, as these aspects could influence

visitors to behave ethically. There is a need to capitalise more on the nature-based attractions that are often visited by visitors who are motivated by the short-term goals of escaping daily routines to promote ET and EVB. The study also contributed by identifying the demographic factors that have the greatest impact on EVB. Thus, in view of the above conclusion, the study recommends that heritage authorities should focus more on implementing the aspects of ET to encourage visitors to behave ethically. The study should thus be used as a baseline for encouraging EVB at tourism sites in general and at heritage sites in particular. Since the study focused on IWP in South Africa and used a mono-quantitative method, it is recommended that future studies replicate the study in other geographic regions, among different populations, and by using different methods to mutually validate the results.

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