FACTORS DETERMINING THE INTERPRETIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF ECOTOUR GUIDES IN SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL PARKS:

AN ENVIRONMENTAL INTERPRETATION MODEL

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
PH.D. TOURISM MANAGEMENT
in the
FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
at the
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

PROMOTER: PROFESSOR B.A. LUBBE

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis which I hereby submit for the degree Ph.D. in Tourism Management at the University of Pretoria is my own work and has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any other University.

Duduzile Lorraine Boemah

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the many who in diverse ways assisted me in the completion of this Ph.D. thesis.

- I wish to thank God who, above all, made it possible for me to finish this study.
- I owe a special debt of gratitude to my promoter, Prof. B.A. Lubbe for her consistent guidance, patience, forbearance and academic professionalism throughout this study.
- I am thankful to SANParks for allowing me to use their staff as research subjects: Special thanks go to all tourism/park managers/officials who participated in the interviews, and assisted me with ideas, not forgetting the head guides, and guides who, besides participating in the study, made me feel at home all the time, through their support, during my fieldwork.
- I am very thankful to Dr Fletcher and Ms Jacqui Sommerville for their tolerance and guidance during the development of the instruments and the statistical analysis.
- My sincere thanks to my colleagues at North West University, especially, my faculty, Faculty of Human and Social Science and my department for the words of encouragement and financial support. Dr Manyane, Prof Buscop and Ms Lekaota never stopped encouraging and praying for me.
- Cecily Kruger, for editing my thesis, I say a big thank you.
- I wish to thank my husband, Dr Kenneth K.K. Boemah and my two lovely children, Nokukhanya and Sibusiso whose unquestionable support and tolerance kept me going throughout my studies.
- I acknowledge both families (the Dlamini's and the Boemah's), friends, especially the ones who rallied around me during the trying moments; and many others who were with me in prayer.

DEDICATION

To my late mother, Evelyn Thembisile Dlamini and my late father Raphael Mahlasela Dlamini, who always wished and believed that one day I will accomplish such a feat.

ABSTRACT

It is generally accepted that interpretation plays a significant role in tourism. It can help to enrich visitors' experience and their cultural and environmental knowledge so that empathy towards conservation, heritage and culture can develop. However, there is a concern that much of the interpretation practised by the tourism industry is of poor quality. Its significance in ecotourism, cultural tourism, wildlife tourism, heritage and adventure tourism, and the concern about its quality gives rise to the need to examine how effective guides are in its delivery, what makes guides effective or ineffective and what continuing education and training they require for effective interpretive delivery. It is against this background that this study was done in order to investigate the interpretive effectiveness of tour guides in South African national parks.

The overall purpose of the study was to design a model for effective interpretation for tour guides operating in South African national parks. To accomplish this, an in-depth literature review was done, followed by an empirical investigation. From the literature, the concept of environmental and cultural interpretation was analysed and the constructs that form the theoretical framework for measuring interpretation identified. A conceptual model was formulated that indicates that the effectiveness of tour guides is related to park policies; knowledge and appropriate application of interpretive delivery techniques; management support, evaluation and tourists' feedback.

A mixed method research design was employed, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods. In-depth interviews were conducted with nominated officials in the parks to solicit their views on what they perceive as critical issues in the delivery of effective interpretation. Tour guides were surveyed to determine their perceptions of problems with interpretive delivery techniques and their continuing education and training needs in regard to interpretive delivery techniques. Tourists were surveyed to determine their perceptions about their general satisfaction as attributed to interpretation, and the extent to which tour guides applied the interpretive delivery techniques during interpretation. Purposive sampling and convenience sampling

techniques were used in this study. Data analysis on the qualitative interviews was done by summarising the content and categorising the statements made by the officials from certain which conclusions could be drawn. These interviews generated certain constructs and variables which were included in the survey instrument. Critical factors for effective interpretation, according to officials, were identified. These included communication skills, continuing education and training, knowledge of the area and a passion for the task. Quantitative data was analysed by ranking those factors which proved to be most problematic in effective interpretive delivery, the most important of which is addressing tourists by their names, using the five senses to enhance the experience, gaining the attention of the tourists, encouraging participation of tourists and presenting the content in a simple manner. Tour guides generally did not rate delivery techniques as being "serious" problems. It was taken into account that tour guides may be reluctant to state the level of a perceived problem in applying effective delivery techniques and to overcome this limitation, questions relating to the need for training in the same delivery techniques were included in the questionnaire. The results indicated a higher level of the need for training than the level of the perceived problem. Tourists were generally satisfied with the tour guides' interpretation although only a few were not satisfied with the interpretation of tour guides. However, to ensure sustainability, there is a need for continuing education and training in interpretive delivery techniques and interpretive content for tour guides.

This study makes a valuable contribution in regard to tourism, in both the academic and the professional (interpretive guiding) spheres. It provides clear guidelines for national parks to improve the quality of the visitor's experience and should contribute to the achievement of the goals of sustainability. It provides information that will assist officials in the national parks and those who provide professional development training for guides to better understand guides' need for further training skills in interpretation in South Africa, an issue which has not been adequately researched in this country. The study produced a model that could enhance interpretive delivery techniques of tour guides in South African national parks.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BBBEE   Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment

DEAT   Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

DET   Department of Tourism

DTI   Department of Trade and Industry

EROT   Enjoyable, Relevant, Organised and Thematic

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

NQF   National Qualification Framework

OECD   Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

RPL   Recognition of Prior Learning

SANParks   South African National Parks

SAQA   South African Qualifications Authority

SATOUR   South African Tourism

SPSS   Statistical Package for Social Sciences

THETA   Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Education and Training Authority

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND GENERAL BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that interpretation plays an important role in tourism, especially at cultural heritage sites and in the natural environment, as in national parks (Lück, 2003:1; Moscardo, 1999:7). Interpretation is an environmental education activity which examines and reveals in an attractive way the characteristics of an area, and its biophysical and cultural relationships, through direct experiences which generate enjoyment, sensitivity, knowledge and commitment to what is interpreted (Project Coordinating Unit, 2005:i).

Tour guides, who play vital roles in general tourism as well as in its more specific forms such as nature-based and heritage tourism (Dioko & Unakul, 2005:14), are regarded as key figures in the implementation of effective, quality interpretation (Ballantyne & Hughes, 2001; Christie & Mason, 2003; Markwell & Weiler, 1998:109; Weiler & Ham, 2000) in national parks. Hence the acute need for tour guides in both South Africa and abroad to deliver effective interpretation (Queiros, 2003a:93). This study focuses on the interpretive effectiveness of tour guides in the selected South African national parks.

As a major component of the tourist's experience, offered for instance in guided walks, tours, self-guided trails, ecotours, art galleries, fauna sanctuaries and zoos, interpretation creates or shapes the experience for the tourist (Ap & Wong, 2001; Moscardo, 1999:7). It can help to enrich visitors' experience and knowledge of the features of the site, as well as their awareness of inappropriate activities they should avoid. It is also used to enhance the enjoyment of a place, to convey symbolic meaning, and to facilitate attitudinal and behavioural change. Furthermore, it stimulates, facilitates and extends people's understanding of places so that empathy towards conservation,

heritage, culture and landscape can develop (Ballantyne & Hughes, 2001:2; Chou, Tsai & Wang, 2002:600; Hu, 2007:33; Kuo, 2002:94; Markwell & Weiler, 1998:109; Walker & Moscardo, 2006:105).

Interpretation, which a number of writers consider to be an integral part of "best practice" ecotourism (Newsome, Moore & Dowling, 2002:239), is also regarded as an important strategy in reaching the goals of sustainable tourism development (Moscardo, 1999:7; Tubb, 2003:478). While the concept of sustainability is a complex and contested one, there is general consensus that, for tourism, it involves at least three dimensions: the minimization or elimination of negative impacts; the provision of positive contributions to the destination and host community; and the provision of a quality experience for the participating tourists (Walker & Moscardo, 2006:105). Therefore, effective interpretation can contribute to the sustainability of tourism in many ways (Moscardo, 2000:12).

All the aspects of interpretation mentioned above therefore form the foundation for concluding that interpretation is significant, and should be widely adopted in protected areas such as national parks (Kuo, 2002:94). Tourist resorts have recognised the importance of interpretation in responding to the needs of nature-oriented tourists as well as protecting the attractions they wish to visit (Orams, 1996:84). As a result, there is an expanding literature on interpretation following a slow but increasing recognition of its significance (Newsome, Moore & Dowling, 2002: 239).

The significance of interpretation in ecotourism, cultural tourism, wildlife tourism, heritage tourism and adventure tourism, gives rise to the need to examine how effective guides are in interpretive delivery. In other words, one may ask what makes them effective or ineffective in interpretive delivery; and following on this, ask what continuing education and training they require specifically in interpretive delivery skills.

There is a strong view that in order to improve the effectiveness of interpretation at cultural and natural tour sites, it is essential for interpreters and educators to look

constantly at ways to determine quality, and to identify individual strengths and weaknesses around the underlying question of effectiveness (Medlin & Ham, in Cheng, 2005:17). Doing so helps to ascertain whether management goals with regard to interpretation are being met (Munro, Morrison-Saunders & Hughes, 2008:1). When it is evident that there is a strong preference for guide-delivered rather than sign-delivered interpretation, this raises issues about the extent to which parks' agencies should guide, influence or monitor the quality, content or mode of interpretive material that is delivered (Griffin & Vacaflores, 2004: 36).

This study addresses the concerns about interpretive effectiveness with the overall purpose of designing a model for effective interpretation by tour guides who are employed by SANParks and operate in national parks that have guided activities.

However, what constitutes quality interpretation has been a core of debate in the field of interpretive guiding (Tilden, 1977; Beck & Cable, 1998; Ham, 1992; Ham & Weiler, 2005; Veverka, 2005), because interpretation involves both communication and entertainment (Moscardo, 1999; Munro & Morrison-Saunders, 2008:1; Hu, 2007: 33). As a result, a number of writers such as Tilden (1977), Moscardo (1999:11), Ham (1992:8), Wearing and Neil (1999:62), and Weiler and Ham (2001), have come up with some rules for presenting effective interpretation that are drawn from relevant theories of learning and communication.

Basically, for the communicator (guide) to be effective during interpretation, she/he should organise and convey information in ways that capture and maintain (Ham & Weiler, 2005:43) the audience's attention, while at the same time entertaining and inspiring them. It is precisely the communicative manner in which guides convey the significance of cultural and natural resources that is crucial; and that makes all the difference to the tourists concerned (Queiros, 2003a:93; Hu, 2007:33), as it highlights the critical elements of the guides' knowledge and their effective application of interpretive delivery techniques .

There has been limited research on the roles and attributes of tour guides in general, and on the elements of effective nature tour guiding in particular (Ham & Weiler, 2005:31). Researchers have only to a limited extent drawn on guides' own experiences. Even the tour guiding literature rarely takes into account the guides' own "voices", in particular in regard to the client-guide relationship and the constraints placed upon guides in delivering a tour (Davidson & Black, 2007:30). McDonnell (2001) maintains that little has been written on the role of the tour guide in transferring cultural understanding, and Beeton (1998: 31) says that only limited research is available to assess how ecotourists feel about interpretation and learning about nature.

Likewise, Marion and Reid (2007:8) contend that there is little published research outside the United States of America on the broader topic of evaluating the effectiveness of park-related interpretation. The limited research in this field is further acknowledged by Armstrong and Weiler (2003:4), who indicate that there is no published research examining what factors are associated with the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of interpretation. Also, the few related studies that have been identified have also been conducted abroad and not in South Africa. For example:

- The research by Armstrong and Weiler (2003), which evaluated the content and delivery of interpretive experiences offered by a sample of licensed tour operators in Victorian National Parks, in Australia;
- The study conducted by Wearing, Edinborough, Hodgson and Frew (2008:1V) in Australia to review the role of interpretation in national parks and the links between effective interpretation and visitor satisfaction, and also to identify interpretation variables that could be used in a satisfaction survey and applied to various interpretation programmes; and
- The study by Ham and Weiler (2005:31) in Alaska and the Galapagos, which examined visitors' perspectives on the qualities essential in a good interpretive guide as well as on the guides' performance, and in particular the quality of the actual interpretive guiding.
- The study by Oschell (2009:17) that examined what predicts guided customers' perceptions of the communication in a rafting company (in America), used the

framework of relational competence, and not necessarily the EROT model which this study is using.

- The study by Ortiz (2007) that investigated what motivates visitors to come on a tour with ranger-led interpretive services in Yosemite National Park.

The existing research in ecotourism has been largely confined to examining tourists' views and evaluating guiding performance rather than guides' own perceptions of their roles and effectiveness (Ballantyne & Hughes, 2001:33). There is a call from authors in the field of guided interpretation for research that explores how guides view their role, and the range of techniques guides use to interpret the natural and cultural environment, what guides perceive as their strengths and weaknesses, as well as how familiar they are with the principles of best practice in guiding and interpretation (Davidson & Black, 2007:39; Ballantyne & Hughes, 2001:3).

This study heeds this call by going beyond tourists' perspectives on the quality of tour guiding to examine the tour guides' own perspectives regarding their own application of interpretive delivery techniques as well as those of park officials. The overall purpose of following this approach is to identify guides' continuing education and training needs in interpretive delivery in the context of selected parks of SANParks.

1.2 THE CONTEXT

The continuing and dramatic increase in both international and domestic travel poses significant opportunities for many managers of the globe's over 100 000 protected areas. Many of these areas hold promises and opportunities for visitors to learn about, appreciate and enjoy the cultural and natural heritage preserved within them (McCool, 2006:3) through interpretation. That is why many national parks and protected area agencies reflect the importance of interpretation in their organisational mission and vision statements, and most of these agencies have a clear understanding of the benefits of interpretation throughout their organisations at all levels of management

(Wearing, Archer, Moscardo and Schweinsberg in Wearing, Edinborough, Hodgson & Frew, 2008:1).

However, it would be naïve to consider it as a flawless field (Wearing & Neil, 1999:69). There is a problem in protected areas of guides who lack professional communication skills; who lack knowledge about the area; whose language skills need strengthening; and who are unable to convey scientific messages in a simple and interesting way (Carbone, 2006:57); all of these defects are attributed to guides' interpretive ineffectiveness. This problem of inefficiencies in the delivery of interpretation generates interest in the researcher to examine what the situation is in selected parks of SANParks where guided activities are provided for tourists.

The interest is further based on the fact that there was a time in SANParks when, for various reasons, skilled staff trickled away from the services of SANParks. Although in some cases the departing workers were replaced by staff of excellent quality, often there was no replacement or the replacements were of poor quality, a situation which may have had a negative influence on the interpretive guiding. The reasons for leaving SANParks varied from socio-political reasons to financial pressures that the organisation was facing (Braack, 2004:304).

The socio-political reasons were attributed to the economic and political transformation in South Africa in general since 1994. The transformation had very serious consequences for the South African national parks and the tourism industry as a whole. Before the new political dispensation in South Africa, the environmental legislation was so structured as to exclude local communities from decision-making as well as the chance of deriving economic benefits from nature conservation resources (Sebola & Fourie, 2007:33), while in the tourism industry there was limited integration of local communities and previously neglected groups into the industry (Magi, 2010:125).

Introducing transformation into South African national parks and the tourism sector was seen as a way of redressing the past socio-economic imbalances, to empower communities and to create opportunities for economic development, poverty alleviation and community participation. Various policies and strategies such as the White Paper on the Promotion and the Development of Tourism in South Africa (DEAT, 1996); the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Report (BBBEE) (DTI, 2004), and the Responsible Tourism Manual for South Africa (2002), were some of the initiatives used by government to ensure transformation in the tourism industry and in the national parks.

The Responsible Tourism Manual for South Africa (2002:51), for instance, stipulates that local guides should be employed and empowered wherever and whenever possible, for both cultural and nature-based tours. The South African Tourist Guide Bill stipulates that people are allowed to use indigenous knowledge, rather than formal education, as the basis for becoming a field guide. The Bill further states that the gap in tour guides' professionalism (knowledge, communication competence, etc.) should be filled by affording the previously disadvantaged individuals access to training opportunities as tourist guides (Spenceley, 2003:23). Hence the current approach is to employ black candidates with basic qualifications and potential and to provide on-the-job training (Braack, 2004:304). Moreover, in South Africa, the introduction of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) responds to the call for widening of access of many adults to education and training; many of whom were prevented from accessing education and training as a result of the past unjust educational policies. Thus people who have achieved learning through experience may be given access to education, not on the basis of preceding qualifications, but on the basis of what they can demonstrate in terms of their learning (Heyns, 2004:8).

In responding to transformation imperatives, SANParks commits to promoting a different concept of conservation; that is, one linked to issues of development and human needs. The key to the new concept of conservation is that it attempts to link the protection of

biodiversity to human benefits ranging from employment of local people to their access to the sustainable use of resources within the parks (Cock & Fig, 2002:135).

However, such stipulations in regard to the employment of blacks and/or women, especially in state-run projects, seem to raise concerns among guides about whether standards (particularly of knowledge and skills, but to a certain extent attitude as well) will not be compromised by "demographic transformation" (Paton, 2007:256). It is important to say that the strategy which has recently been finalised by the Department of Tourism is one way of responding to the urgent need to address such issues and concerns in South African tour guiding as well as to improve the performance of tour guiding and professionalism (Department of Tourism: 2009). One of the issues that is stated in the final draft of this strategy is the issue of quality assurance; evaluation in tour guiding and how tourist guides are monitored and managed; and hence the need to benchmark what other countries are doing regarding this issue (Department of Tourism, 2009:13).

Authors such as Knudson *et al.* (in Mason & Christie, 2003:26) and Pereira (2000:10) assert that good interpreters and tour guides usually develop slowly through careful study, experience gained from practice and continuing education and training because these help them to stay abreast of current trends in interpretation.

Formal education and training, coupled with the continuing education and training of tour guides, are the keys to delivering effective interpretation. In South Africa, the new political dispensation perceived that skills-based learning, literacy and adult education were key areas of neglect. An urgent remedy was called for, which included the establishment of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The SAQA Act (No 58 of 1995) establishes a National Qualification Framework (NQF) that affords national recognition for learning achievements in both formal and non-formal learning environments. This is based on the recognition that under apartheid many people were denied access to formal, accredited training, and that they need an opportunity to gain

important competencies and experiences through workplace training and through other non-formal avenues such as NGO-run training at community centres. The result of this was the creation of a series of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). The SETA for the Tourism and Hospitality Sector is the Tourism and Sports Education and Training Authority (THETA) (Kaplan, 2004:223; Paton, 2007:219). THETA, which caters for conservation and guiding *inter alia*, is responsible for ensuring that training programmes and qualifications are of a high standard throughout the country by accrediting education and training providers, monitoring the provision thereof and registering assessors (Department of Tourism, 2009:23). However, research on how successful these programmes are has been limited (Visser & Rogerson, 2004:210).

The unique and complex situation in South African tourism and in SANParks, as has been indicated in this section, may involve more dimensions in establishing, managing and evaluating effective interpretation in South Africa's protected areas such as those controlled by SANParks. These dimensions should be captured in the development of a model, or the adaptation of existing models, for effective interpretation for SANParks.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Tourism is one of South Africa's most important and fastest growing sectors. Protected areas, including national parks, are one of the major attractions for tourists that visit South Africa and they contribute to the growth of tourism in South African (Saayman & Saayman, 2010:1057; Turpie, 2003:35). For example, 4 374 739 people visited a SANParks protected area in 2008/2009, contributing ZAR664.14 million in revenue (Strickland-Munro, Moore & Freitag-Ronaldson, 2010:664).

In particular, tourism in national parks provides nature-based tourism, which comes with a variety of opportunities for tourists that include interpretation of natural and cultural phenomena (Orams, 1996:9; Staiff, Bushell & Kennedy, 2002:97), and makes communication competence essential in interpretation. Communication competence is essential for the interaction of guides and tourists in nature-based tourism in national

parks in particular, because it enables tour guides to fulfill the purpose of persuasion, education, resource protection strategies and entertainment (Goh, 2008:12; Hu, 2007:33; Oschell, 2009:8; Queiros, 2003a:93). Whether these purposes are achieved or not depends largely on the communication skills which the guides employ to interact with the tourists (Oschell, 2009:8).

However, the literature indicates that it often occurs that guides in protected areas lack the professional communication skills which could enhance the conveying of scientific messages in a simple and interesting way that matches the educational and interest level of visitors (Carbone, 2006:57), an indication that tour guides do not pay enough attention to interpretive techniques (Rabotić, 2010). This situation may arise as a result of the quality of tour guides that are employed in national parks. For instance, in the South African situation, tour guides join the industry from diverse educational backgrounds, and this has resulted in a concern that guides in South African protected areas need to improve their communication skills (Paton, 2007:218). This situation raises the question of how the performance of tour guides in South African National Parks is managed to ensure effectiveness and consistency.

Besides the concerns raised in the previous paragraphs, it is evident that there have always been concerns about the criteria used for employment as a tourist guide in South Africa even before the 1994 political transition. The mode of evaluation (oral examinations) that was used by South African Tourism (SATOUR) in terms of The Tourist Guide Act of 1981 was subjective and casual, and the majority of candidates passed as tourist guides without consideration of whether or not they were really capable (Smal, 1997:35). Such anomalies and concerns, which may have a negative impact on the delivery of interpretation, have generated interest about what determines interpretive effectiveness in ecotour guides, specifically in selected national parks in South Africa.

What constitutes effective interpretation has intensified into a serious debate in the field of interpretive guiding in national parks worldwide (Tilden, 1977; Beck & Cable, 1998;

Ham, 1992; Ham & Weiler, 2005); a clear indication of how important this topic is. In the South African national parks setting and in SANParks, it should be highlighted that there is very little research, if any, on ecotour guides' knowledge and the application of interpretive delivery techniques.

This study examines factors that determine the interpretive effectiveness of ecotour guides by looking at existing models in this regard as well as the policies or strategies that SANParks applies as a guideline for guides in their national parks. One study that can be regarded as foundational to effective interpretation is that of Ham (1992), termed the EROT model of interpretive communication (an acronym meaning that interpretation should be Enjoyable/pleasurable, Relevant and Organised, and should have a Theme). This model serves as the underlying approach for the measurement of guides' interpretive effectiveness in selected South African national parks that provide guided interpretive activities.

This model is preferred largely because:
- The model encompasses principles of "good practice" in personal interpretation for quality and effectiveness that have been widely adopted by researchers in the field of interpretation (such as Armstrong & Weiler, 2003; Beck & Cable, 1998; Ham, 1992) and interpretive trainers, including the National Association for Interpretation in its institutional training of interpreters and tour guides (Ham & Weiler, 2005:30);
- It has influenced interpreters' notion of what successful interpretation should entail; and
- It also highlights "qualities" which are essential for success in almost every personal interpretation programme (Knapp & Benton, 2004).

Apart from the EROT model there are various other models that conceptualise the roles of tour guides in nature-based tourism (Cohen, 1985; Pond, 1993; Weiler & Davis, 1993; Oschell, 2009), and these must also be considered in answering the following research questions:

- Do tour guides in SANParks effectively apply interpretive delivery techniques?
- Do tour guides in SANPArks recognise the need for continuing education and training in interpretive delivery techniques?
- What are the tour guides' continuing education and training needs in interpretive delivery techniques?
- What does management (park managers or tourism managers) perceive as issues critical to the delivery of effective interpretation?
- Does management (park managers or tourism managers) have any role in ensuring effective application of interpretive delivery techniques?
- What does management perceive as the training needs of tour guides in national parks of SANParks?

These research questions have guided the formulation of the overall aim of the study and the research objectives.

1.4 OVERALL AIM AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the study is to develop a conceptual model for effective interpretation by tour guides employed in South African national parks, based on their strengths and weaknesses in the delivery of interpretation and continuing education and training needs with regard to interpretive delivery techniques.

In order to realise the aim of the study, the following research objectives have been formulated.

Objective 1: To examine the place and nature of interpretation in national parks.

Objective 2: To identify the factors constituting effective interpretation for tour guides in South African national parks.

Objective 3: To determine whether tour guides appropriately apply interpretive delivery techniques.

Objective 4: To identify tour guides' continuing education and training needs regarding interpretive delivery techniques.

Objective 5: To assess the role of management within the context of South Africa's situation in supporting effective interpretation in SANParks national parks.

Objective 6: To conceptualise a model for effective interpretation for tour guides in SANParks' national parks.

1.5 HYPOTHESES

In order to appropriately guide the empirical stage of the research the hypotheses formulated for this study are:

H1: Within the South African context tour guides do not effectively apply interpretive techniques in national parks.

H2: Tour guides perceive the provision of continuing education and training in interpretive techniques as essential in improving their effectiveness in interpretive techniques.

H3: Perceived lack of support from management has a strong impact on tour guides' effective application of interpretive delivery techniques.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Literature study

The literature review was conducted by collecting data from primary and secondary sources. Literature was reviewed to develop the theoretical framework of the anticipated model for effective interpretation for ecotour guides in SANParks. The information that was gathered included the concept "interpretation", its role in nature-based tourism and quality assurance in tour guiding.

1.6.2 Empirical investigation

This research used a mixed-method approach. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were followed in conducting this research. Interviews, which were conducted in two phases (i.e. 1st phase and 2nd phase), were used as qualitative approach for six park officials/park managers from the six selected parks of SANParks which formed part of the study area.

The quantitative research method that was used was a survey involving tourists and tour guides who completed a structured questionnaire. One hundred and sixty-nine (n=169) tourists and forty-six (n=46) tour guides were selected through a convenience sampling technique.

1.6.3 Data analysis

The data collected from the interviews was analysed through the description, classification and connection of statements (Kitchin & Tate, 2000:231). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 17.0, (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias,1996:503) was used to analyse the quantitative data from the tourists and tour guides.

1.7 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is expected that this study will contribute towards tourism and interpretive guiding in various ways.

1.7.1 Significance in the academic world

The topic of "interpretation" is under-represented in tourism journals. Articles that specifically deal with interpretation in South Africa will be produced as a result of this thesis. The contents of the research papers (in a form of the discussions and the results

of empirical investigation) will provide a basis for academic debates and discussions on interpretive guiding, more especially because not much has been written on interpretive guiding in the South African national parks context.

Limited research has been conducted to investigate challenges facing ecotour guides, particularly their urgent professional development needs in regard to continuing training in skills for conducting effective interpretation both abroad and in South Africa. Notably, no South African study of this kind has been identified in the literature that focuses on interpretive delivery techniques. This study will provide information that will help academics to enhance academic continuing education and training programmes in tour guiding in South Africa.

This thesis will add to the existing body of knowledge on "interpretation in national parks" by providing a conceptual model for interpretation which can be used by academics to test its applicability in other national parks that are administered by other conservation and tourism authorities in South Africa. Given the uniqueness of the South African situation, research in this area is lacking. The provision of a South African model of interpretation drawn from existing literature and empirical results should contribute to filling this void in the literature.

1.7.2 Significance in the industry

This thesis will contribute to a better understanding of interpretive guiding in the South African context. It will provide research instruments (tourists' and guides' questionnaires) that can be used in the future to evaluate personal interpretation in national parks in South Africa. It should provide clear guidelines for national parks to improve the quality of the visitor's experience and should contribute to the achievement of the goals of sustainability.

It is envisaged that the results of this study will provide information that will assist officials in the national parks and those who provide professional development training

for guides to better understand guides' needs for further training skills in interpretation in South Africa, an issue which has not been adequately researched in this country.

1.8 DEFINITION AND CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS USED IN THIS RESEARCH

The following terms are key concepts in this study and are described in the following paragraphs to show the context in which they are used throughout the study.

1.8.1 Ecotour guide

The term ecotour guide is a relatively new term and has been derived from the term "ecotourism" (Black, 2007:317). An ecotour guide is defined as someone employed on a paid or voluntary basis who conducts paying or non-paying tours around an area or site of natural and/or cultural importance while utilising ecotourism and interpretation principles. In other words, s/he communicates and interprets the significance of the environment, promotes minimal impact practices, promotes the sustainability of the natural and cultural environment and motivates those tourists to consider their lives in relation to larger ecological or cultural concerns (Black, Ham & Weiler, 2001:149).

The term ecotour guide will be used interchangeably with tour guide, tourist guide and guide, based on Pond's (1993:17) view that synonyms for tour guide used within the tourism industry include tourist guide, local guide and city guide. Depending on the kind of employer, the term tour guide may include a wide range of guides such as government guides, business or industry guides, community guides and self-employed guides (Hu, 2007:24).

The meaning of "tour guide" in this research is the one given by the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (FEG), i.e. a person who guides groups or individual visitors from abroad or from the guide's own country around the buildings, sites and landscapes of a city or a region; to interpret, inspiringly and entertainingly, the cultural and natural heritage and environment in the language of the visitor's choice (Hu,

2007:24). Therefore, in this research, a guide is a site-based guide whose duties come to an end when the visitors leave the site (Hu, 2007:24).

1.8.2 Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism is defined as tourism that emphasises contemporary or past cultures or history (Weaver, 2008:19 & 309) as a primary component.

1.8.3 Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a form of tourism that fosters learning experiences in and an appreciation of the natural environment, or some component thereof, within its associated cultural context. In the context of best practice, ecotourism appears to be environmentally and socio-culturally sustainable, preferably in a way that enhances the natural and cultural base of the area concerned and promotes the viability of the operation. While the primary focus of ecotourism is on the natural environment, ecotourism definitions usually allow a secondary role for related cultural attractions (Weaver, 2008:11 & 310).

1.8.4 Effectiveness

It is common knowledge that effectiveness is the degree to which the purpose of a programme has been realised. In this study, effectiveness is measured against the knowledge and application of the interpretive delivery techniques that are based on the basic principles of effective interpretation, i.e. that interpretation should be enjoyable, relevant and organised, and have a theme (EROT).

1.8.5 Environment

The word "environment" refers to all external conditions and factors, living and non-living (chemicals and energy), that affect an organism or other specified system during its lifetime (Miller, 1995:A29). The meaning of the concept "environment" in this study is

adopted from the White Paper on Environmental Management Policy, which regards the environment in a broader sense that includes the natural environment as well as social and cultural aspects (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1997).

Therefore, environmental interpretation encompasses both the cultural and the natural aspects of interpretation.

1.8.6 Heritage

Heritage is a broad concept and includes the natural as well as the cultural environment. It encompasses landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments, as well as biodiversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences. It records and expresses the long processes of historical development forming the essence of diverse national, regional, indigenous and local identities, and is an integral part of modern life (International Council on Monuments and sites (ICOMOS), 1999).

In this study, cultural heritage refers to monuments, groups of buildings, or sites of historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological, or anthropological value, whereas natural heritage designates outstanding physical, biological and geological features, habitats of threatened plant or animal species and areas of value on scientific or aesthetic grounds or from the point of view of conservation (Richards, 2000:9-10).

1.8.7 Interpretation

In this study, interpretation is concerned with providing information to tourists in an educative, stimulating and entertaining manner about the places (natural and cultural) they visit, in order to promote the economic development, environmental quality and conservation and socio-cultural sustenance of such places (Hu, 2007:34). Both cultural and natural aspects of interpretation are referred to in this study.

1.8.8 National park

A national park is an extraordinary and unusual natural area that is managed by a nationally recognised conservation body for the specific purpose of protecting the ecological integrity and biodiversity of the area for the benefit of both present and future generations, and preventing overutilisation and excessive human encroachment. Furthermore, a national park is managed to enhance tourism, and visitors are allowed to make use of it for spiritual, scientific, cultural, recreative and educational opportunities and purposes (Du Toit, 2002:22; Osten in Lubbe, 2003:82).

1.8.9 Protected area

According to Lawton (2001:287), a protected area is defined by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) as an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means. He states furthermore that with their emphasis on preserving the natural environment, protected areas have obvious appeal to the ecotourism sector, which is based primarily on natural attractions.

1.8.10 Tourists and visitors

The words visitors, tourists, ecotourists and clients are used interchangeably in this study. They refer to people who travel away from their normal places of residence or work for leisure or to visit friends and family. This definition includes both people who stay away for the day only and people who stay away overnight (Weiler & Ham, 2001:551), regardless of whether they are local residents, domestic tourists or international visitors (Weiler & Ham, 2001:551). It also includes those who specifically visit national parks and heritage sites.

1.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in selected South African national parks (SANParks), with particular reference to interpretive delivery techniques of personal interpretation. Both natural and cultural aspects of interpretation are included, based on the fact that interpretation in SANParks focuses on both cultural and natural (environmental) heritage, as evident in the following statement on the SANParks Website (n.d.):

> National parks are often hotspots of cultural heritage and play a major role in reviving indigenous knowledge and oral history. Cultural sites draw tourism, but can also enhance SANParks relationship with communities outside the parks. Rock art, Iron Age sites, traditional sacred grounds or an old colonial building: Conservation and management of cultural heritage is an equal counterpart of nature conservation.

This study further investigates factors that determine the interpretive effectiveness of tour guides in personal interpretation, particularly in the guided activities (guided walks and drives). The study therefore does not concern itself directly with non-personal or "static" interpretation such as printed material, signs, exhibits, self-guided walks, pre-recorded tour commentaries on cassettes or videos, virtual tours, or other electronic media (Weiler & Ham, 2001:550).

1.10 THESIS STRUCTURE

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 provides the rationale for the study. It specifically discusses the background, statement of the problem, aim, objectives, methodology, the significance of the study, and definition of key concepts used in the study. This chapter lays the foundation for a better understanding of the related literature, which is discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 2 focuses on the place and nature of interpretation in nature-based and cultural tourism, with a view to putting interpretation in the clear context of tourism and highlighting its significance in tourism. Prior to the said discussion, is a brief explanation of the concept "interpretation" which is to give a better understanding of the concept as used throughout the document, and of its historical perspective to show how interpretation has evolved over the years. Furthermore, the roles of tourist guides in nature-based tourism are explained with further emphasis on their interpretive role. Finally, in this chapter, an explanation of the EROT model of interpretive communication is given as a significant part of the conceptual foundation of the study.

Chapter 3 gives a broad overview of management support and quality assurance systems for ecotour guides' interpretive effectiveness. The emphasis is placed on the role of continuing education and training as one of the quality assurance mechanisms. This chapter also explains the role of evaluation in ecotour guiding in nature-based tourism. Discussions in this chapter aim to highlight what can be done to enhance ecotour guides' interpretive effectiveness and how interpretation can be monitored and evaluated. This lays the foundation for the empirical investigation of the interpretive effectiveness of tour guides in interpretive delivery.

Chapter 4 describes the research methodology used that is deemed applicable to achieve the research objectives. The qualitative and quantitative methods that are used in this study are clearly delineated and motivated. This chapter further discusses the sampling methods, data collection and data analysis used in this study.

Chapter 5 gives an overview of the results of the empirical research, their analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 6 provides a discussion of the results, conclusions drawn from the results, a proposed model of interpretation, recommendations drawn in this study, contributions of the thesis, limitations of the study and the direction for future research.

1.11 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the rationale of this study by providing some background to the concept of interpretation and some of the studies already conducted on this concept. The background and the rationale as discussed in this chapter highlight the important role that tour guides play in interpretation, and problems with providing effective interpretation in tourism in national parks.

This chapter also highlights gaps in the research on this phenomenon and where previous studies have focused their attention. For instance, the literature states that research in guiding has been restricted to guides' performance as viewed by tourists, without further checking how tour guides perceive their own effectiveness and the factors that determine their effectiveness.

The statement of the problem that is presented in this chapter provides the foundation for formulating the aims and objectives of the study, with the overall objective being the construction of a model of environmental interpretation of tour guides operating in South African national parks. This chapter also outlines the hypotheses formulated in this study and the definition of the key concepts used throughout the study.

CHAPTER 2

THE PLACE AND NATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL

INTERPRETATION

IN NATURE-BASED TOURISM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a discussion of the concept "interpretation" and its historical perspective in order to provide a background on the role of interpretation in nature-based tourism. Following this a broad overview of tourism in national parks is provided, a discussion which culminates in highlighting the purposes of interpretation in nature-based tourism. The roles of tour guides in national parks are clarified with specific reference to their use of interpretation and the importance of communication competence in interpretive guiding. Finally, the chapter explains the EROT model of interpretive communication, which forms an important part of the conceptual foundation of the study.

2.2 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE TERM "INTERPRETATION"

As interpretation has grown in stature, in an effort to bring to it greater definition, purpose and direction, its meaning and processes have been increasingly examined (Cho, 2005:26).

Interpretation encompasses many possibilities in many different places and contexts and as a result the public is often confused about what interpretation is or what interpreters do (Beck & Cable, 2002:5). A number of definitions and outcomes for interpretive programmes by professionals and leaders in the guiding profession have

been offered over the last half-century (Newsome *et al.* 2002:239; Littlefair, 2003:29). Most people think of interpretation as the process through which a person translates from one language into another, for example, Spanish to English or English to Spanish. At its most basic level, interpretation is translating (Ham, 1992: 3). Interpretation is the translation of language or information from one source to another in order to facilitate comprehension and understanding. Environmental, natural history, heritage, and cultural interpretation are no different. These types of interpretation involve the translation of the language of the scientist, the voices of the past, and the significances of the place to create meanings and connections with the people of the present (Ward & Wilkinson, 2006:2).

According to Littlefair (2003:29) and Ham (1992:3) the first author to define interpretation formally was Freeman Tilden in 1957, a view shared by White, Virden and Cahill (2005:63), who regard Tilden as among the earliest to attempt a formal definition. Tilden was not a scientist, naturalist, historian or technician of any kind, rather a playwright and philosopher (Ham, 1992:3). Tilden (1977:8) defines interpretation as an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information. Tilden saw interpretation as an approach to communication which lays emphasis on the transfer of ideas and relationships, rather than on isolated facts and figures (Ham, 1992:3) the emphasis on communication is a view shared by Moscardo (1999:5), who says definitions of interpretation are about communicating but laying the emphasis on visitor enjoyment, on exciting curiosity and on contributing to conservation.

When viewing interpretation in this way, it must be understood as ordinary communication would be understood, that is, as a commonly used and simple communication model with its basic elements. These elements are the communication source, the encoder, the message, the channel, the decoder, and the communication receiver (Espinoza, 2006).

Although an environmental interpreter may use factual information to illustrate points and clarify meanings, it is concepts and ideas that they are first trying to communicate, not simply facts (Wearing & Neil, 1999:58). It is about communication and learning of ideas and concepts, and imparting an appreciation of the natural environment involved. Therefore meanings and relationships, as messages, should be well communicated to the receiver through appropriate means (Espinoza, 2006). That is why Civitarese, Legg and Zuefle (1997:10) view the following as an appropriate modern definition of environmental interpretation:

Interpretation is a communication activity designed to enhance the quality of the recreational experience of the visitor and to inspire greater appreciation of the resource in an enjoyable manner.

Since Tilden first published his definition in 1957, there have been many other people and organisations who have given their own definitions of interpretation in terms of its environmental and cultural focus. According to Ham (1992:3), environmental interpretation is about translating the technical language of natural science or a related field into terms and ideas that people who are not scientists can readily understand. This involves doing it in a way that is entertaining and interesting to these people.

Besides Ham's definition of interpretation, some other definitions emerged after Tilden's publication on interpretation (Littlefair, 2003:21):

- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services - It is the process of stimulating and encouraging an appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage and communicating nature conservation ideals and practices.
- Interpretation Australia Association - It is a means of communicating ideas and feelings, which help people, and enrich their understanding and appreciation of their world and their role within it.
- Society for Interpreting Britain's Heritage - It is the process of explaining to people the significance of the place or object they have come to see, so that they enjoy their visit more, understand their heritage and environment better, and develop a more caring attitude towards conservation.

Additionally, Weiler and Davis (1993:93) define environmental interpretation as an educational, illustrative and entertaining activity which aims at providing the visitor, through first-hand experiences, with an insight into the interrelationships of the various resources and systems comprising the natural environment by first-hand experiences. Weiler and Davis's definition is in line with that of Newsome *et al*. (2002:239) who in their definition subdivided interpretation into an educational, a recreational, and a conservation supporting factor as shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: The education-knowledge-awareness relationship embodied in interpretation
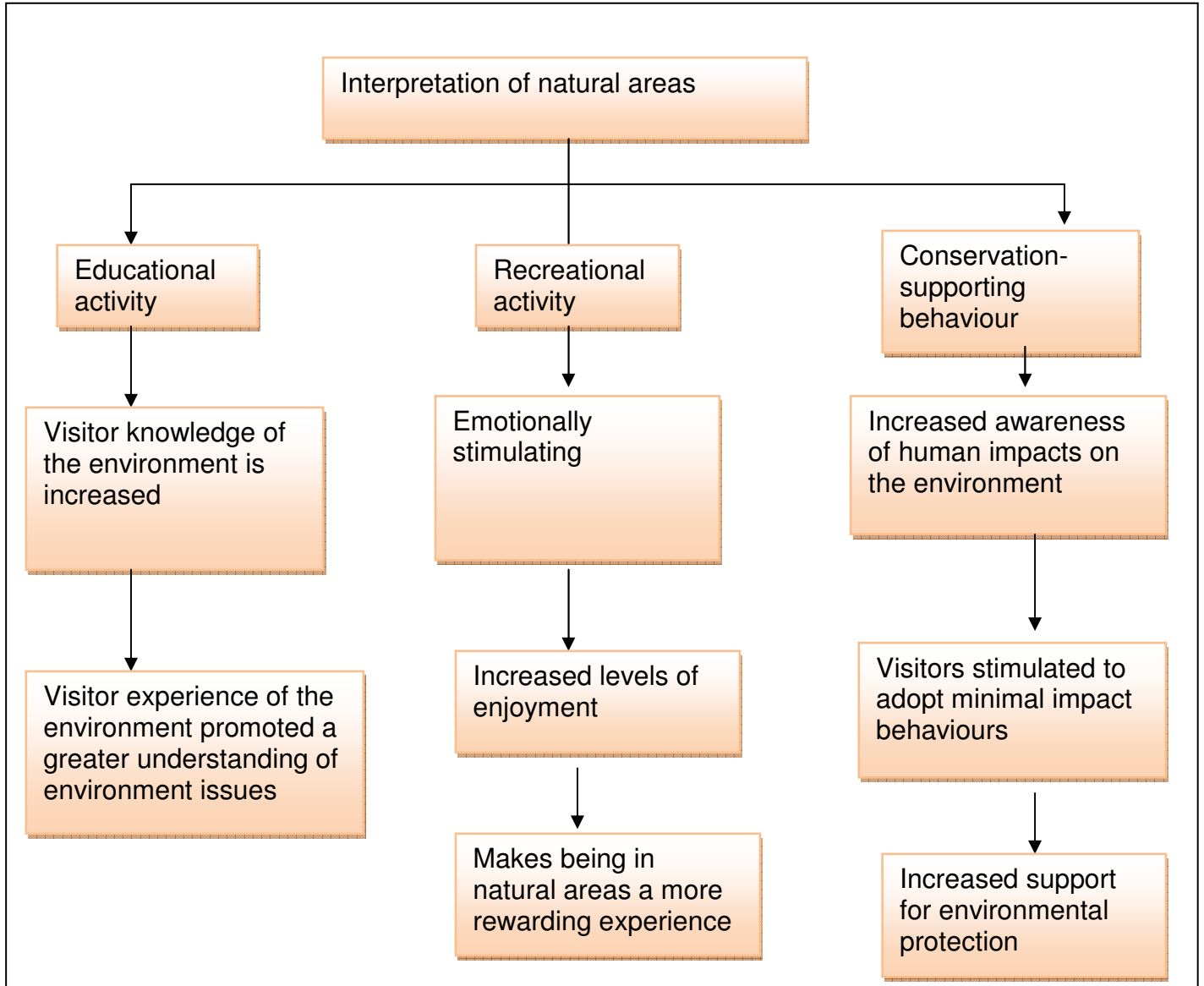
Source: Newsome *et al.* (2002:240).

Newsome, *et al.'s* (2002*)* model depicts the aims of interpretation as it occurs in natural areas. These aims are educational, recreational and conservational, meaning that interpretation involves educating visitors about the place so that their environmental

knowledge is increased, but at the same time ensuring that their recreational purpose is realised, while recognising the importance of the environment and its conservation. The recreational activity impacts upon visitors' emotions. It also enhances their enjoyment of the whole experience, making it valuable and worthwhile to them.

The conservation aspect aims at helping visitors to become aware of the impact of humans on the environment and therefore encourages them to adopt positive behaviour with minimal impact on the environment. Conservation activities are expected to help visitors to develop an interest in issues of environment and in turn to support environmental conservation.

The description of interpretation as given in the model of Newsome *et al.* (2002) explains interpretation in the light of its mission and contribution towards sustainable tourism. Looking at this model, it is evident that their definition and description does not differ much from those of other authors who include outcomes such as "appreciation of natural and cultural heritage", "convey conservation messages", "caring attitude towards nature", "appreciation of the world". However, Newsome *et al.* (2002:240) integrate these key expected outcomes and actions into a model depicting the relationship between them.

Interpretation can thus be summarised as an activity that aims to communicate to tourists, in a recreational context, cultural, historical and natural/environmental messages, in order to assist them to develop empathy towards the environment as well as conservation values. Interpretation is done with the purpose of simplifying scientific and technical language for tourists and broadening their knowledge (cultural, historical and environmental), thereby enhancing their tourism experience.

2.3 AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON INTERPRETATION IN NATIONAL PARKS

According to Pond (1993:71) the concept and practice of interpretation is rooted in the mission of the United States National Park Service (NPS) itself. Its creators believed that there were certain places regarded as so magnificent or significant as to oblige one generation to preserve them for the enjoyment of those to follow. The goal of interpretation was not merely to provide information, but rather to convey the magnificence of a place, pass on its legacy, inspire visitors, and ultimately convince them of the need to preserve parklands (Pond, 1993: 70).

Many regard the field of interpretation as having received its most dramatic boost in 1957 with the publication of Freeman Tilden's (1883-1980) *Interpreting our heritage,* widely regarded as the classic philosophical work on the subject (Beck & Cable, 2002:2; Pond, 1993: 70; Project Coordinating Unit, 2005:3). This publication was the result of Freeman Tilden being funded by a grant from the Old Dominion Foundation to the National Park Service to study and document the vital role that interpretation plays in national parks (Brochu & Merriman, 2002:13). Freeman Tilden assembled the developing ideas and principles that existed and were debated at the time into a publication specifically about interpretation (McArthur & Hall, 1996:89). His influence and impact on the field of interpretation is still strongly felt today. The first explicit use of the term interpretation and discussion of its meaning was by Tilden (Orams, 1996:44). Many people regard him as the father of modern interpretation (Ward & Wilkinson, 2006: 7).

However, many people consider the following quotation from John Muir (who was also the founder of the Sierra Club)[1] as the earliest reference to interpretive communication: (Wolfe, in Brochu & Merriman, 2002:11):

---

[1] The Club is the oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental organisation. It was founded on May 28, 1892. Its mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sierra_Club).

I will interpret the rocks; learn the language of flood, storm and the avalanche. I will acquaint myself with the glaciers and wild gardens, and get as near the heart of the world as I can.

Brochu and Merriman (2002:12) ascribe the commencement of the history of interpretation to Enos Mills (1870-1922), who was born in Fort Scott, Kansas, and started one of the first nature-guiding schools in the world. His nineteen books, which include the 1920 volume *Adventures of a nature guide*, provide a lasting legacy to the interpretative profession (Brochu & Merriman, 2002:12; Gross & Zimmerman, 2002:271) and it is in these books that most of his philosophical principles are presented (Beck & Cable, 2002:6; Gross & Zimmerman, 2002:271). Similarly, Beck and Cable (2002:6) are of the opinion that Mills was among the first to use the term "interpret" to describe his nature guiding at Long's Peak in Colorado's Rocky Mountains. McArthur & Hall (1996:89) confirm this view by stating that the initial flourish of the concept was largely stimulated by Mills, who worked as a nature guide between 1889 and 1922. According to Gross and Zimmerman (2002: 265), interpretation traces its origins back to John Muir and his protégé Enos Mills. Enos Mills is counted together with George Marsh, John Muir and Gifford Pinchot among those who "interpreted" the environment before the US National Parks were even created; they were regarded as naturalists and conservationists (Cho, 2005:26). Mills is considered one of the founders of the interpretive profession. His thoughts and observations regarding the profession still form the foundation of interpretive theory and practice today (Ward & Wilkinson, 2006:6).

Mills developed principles and techniques that laid the foundation for interpretation. He prompted guides to concentrate on inspiring visitors by communicating big ideas rather than masses of unrelated information. Mills was a keen advocate of monitoring visitors' behaviour and responding accordingly (McArthur & Hall, 1996:89).

So the "profession" of interpretation began over a century ago, and it has undergone different forms and periods of growth in different countries. For much of the time the most influential developments occurred in the United States (McArthur & Hall, 1996:89).

Mills, Muir and Tilden are considered pioneers of interpretation, each of them with a unique contribution towards the origin and development of interpretation.

Sam Ham's name often appears in the discussion on the historical development of interpretation. He published *Environmental interpretation: A practical guide for people with big ideas and small budgets* in 1992. This has become one of the most respected texts in the interpretive field.

Over the years, the process of interpretation has become the field of many communicators such as the tour guide, ecotour guide, museum guide (usually called docents), zoo guide, adventure guide, interpreter, volunteer, and instructor. As discussed in Chapter 1 (1.6.1), these terms overlap greatly and vary from region to region, country to country, between public and private sectors and even within the travel industry (Cho, 2005:31). Presently the development of the interpretive philosophy and techniques involves not only guides working in natural areas, but also those in the cultural, artistic, historical and social arenas that make up the heritage of a place, region or country and are worth conserving for future generations (Project Coordinating Unit, 2005:4).

According to Staiff, Bushell & Kennedy (2002:109) the long history of interpretation in protected areas within the USA often provides the model of interpretation. Undoubtedly, Tilden's work in the 1950s continues to inform interpretation praxis. Interpretation forms the basis of the tourism experience in protected areas, as including both communication and education. Hence Mason (2003:144) indicates that it is conventional to discuss the presentation of information to visitors in a tourism context by using the term "interpretation".

2.4 INTERPRETATION IN NATURE-BASED TOURISM

The search for knowledge has been a driving force behind travel for over 3000 years (McArthur & Hall, 1996:89). In more recent times general interest tourism that involves learning while travelling is showing some growth, hence the popularity of guided tours (Eagles, McCool & Haynes, 2002:14). This interest in life-long educational pursuits, catered for by interpretation, has become an increasingly powerful motivator for travel (at local, national and international levels) and has fuelled a boom in the provision of ecotourism and/or cultural tourism experiences (Eagles, McCool & Haynes, 2002:14).

The primary purpose of national parks and other protected areas is the protection of natural and cultural values with tourism being a secondary purpose that supports both economic development and tourists' motivations such as recreation, spiritual refreshment, landscape appreciation and learning (Cochrane, 2006:10; Eagles, McCool & Haynes, 2002:23). The next section focuses on tourism in national parks with the aim of explaining the place of interpretation in tourism in the context of national parks.

2.4.1 Tourism in national parks

In modern as well as earlier forms of tourism the importance of the natural environment as an attraction in its own right, and as a setting in which tourism experiences take place, is recognised. The natural environment has been, and continues to be, an important component of the attractiveness of many destinations (Markwell & Weiler, 1998: 98) and national parks have played a significant role as tourist attractions in many countries (Butler & Boyd, 2000:3).

The term "national park" is always associated with nature-based tourism. In some countries, parks make up the major set of tourist attractions and form the foundation of small but often important tourism industries. Moreover, as the world develops and

technology binds us closer, an increasing number of people seek to visit "undisturbed" natural areas as a form of escape and recuperation (Lubbe, 2003:82).

Although little empirical evidence exists, there is reason to believe that transformation of environmental values and beliefs has resulted in increasing visits to quiet environments that offer an illusion of naturalness (Philipsen, 1995:193). What makes national parks even more attractive to ecotourists is the presence of exceptional features such as:

- Outstanding natural scenery;
- Exceptional representation of a particular biome;
- Rare or unusual flora and/or fauna; and
- Rare and/or unusual geological features (Lawton, 2001:290).

That is why for decades national parks have been among the most popular and frequently visited tourist attractions around the world. Each year, millions of domestic and international tourists visit national parks for various interests and reasons (Wang & Mike, 2002: 31; Deng, King & Bauer, 2002:423; Ryan & Dewar, 1995:295).

In Southern Africa national parks and nature reserves have become one of the most important draw cards for tourism and are thus a major source of foreign exchange (Ferreira, 2006:166).

2.4.2 Tourism in South African national parks

In South Africa tourism in national parks is over three-quarters of a century old and has long been regarded as a mechanism to ensure the continued existence of conservation areas (Castley, Patton & Magome, 2009:403). South Africa has a well-established network of national parks (Kruger, 2004:3). The combination of natural and cultural features that are found in South Africa and specifically in the national parks has made South Africa one of the most popular ecotourism destinations in the world. Hence the

country receives tourists from both high income countries and the more affluent sectors of the domestic market (Naguran, 1999:39). Recent tourism statistics reveal that the total number of visitors to South Africa's national parks has increased substantially (Castley, Patton & Magome, 2009:403). Particularly in SANParks, the SANParks Annual Report of 2007/2008, revealed that the total number of visitors through SANParks gates had increased by 2.9 per cent from 4 587 815 in 2007 to 4 720 737 in 2008.

Parks and protected areas in South Africa can be divided into different categories, which are: national, provincial, local and private sector parks, as shown in the following diagram (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Categories and levels of parks in South Africa
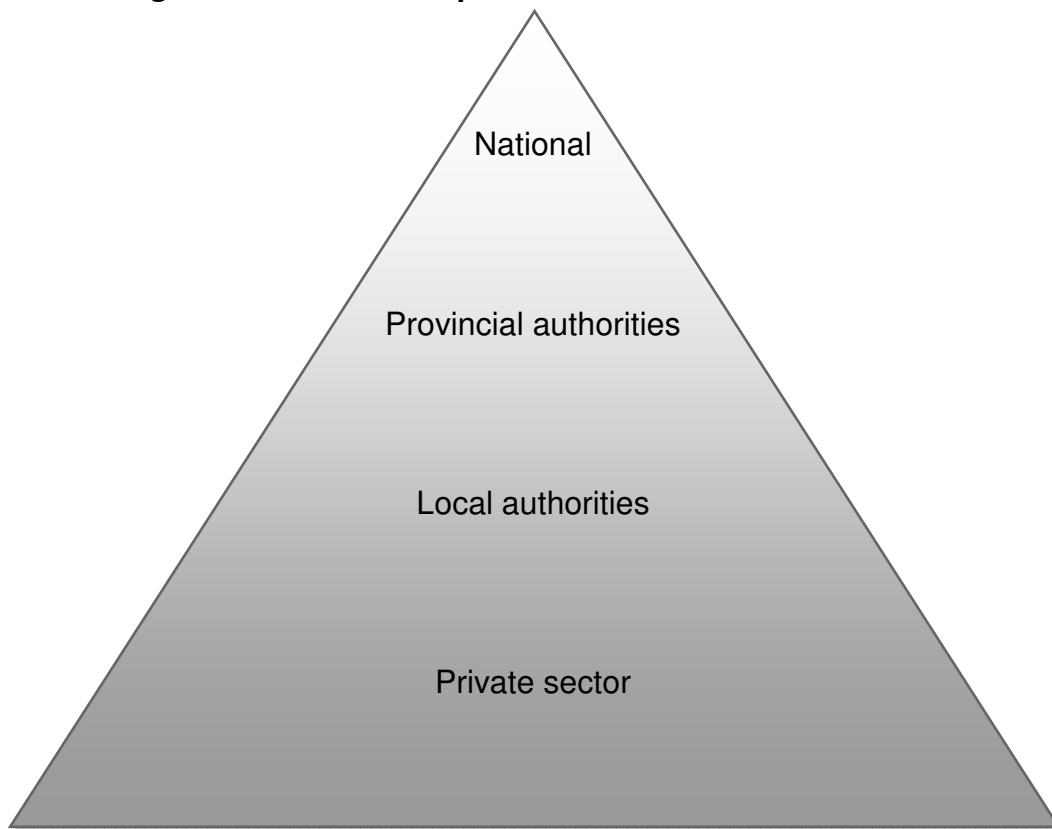
 Source: Myburgh & Saayman (1999:260).

At the top level in the diagram are the national parks. These are managed by what was called South African National Parks (SANP) and is now known as SANParks (the study site), a government-funded institution (Myburgh & Saayman, 1999:261).SANParks is a parastatal organisation that administers 22 parks, as shown in Figure 2.3 below.

Figure 2.3: Map showing national parks of SANParks
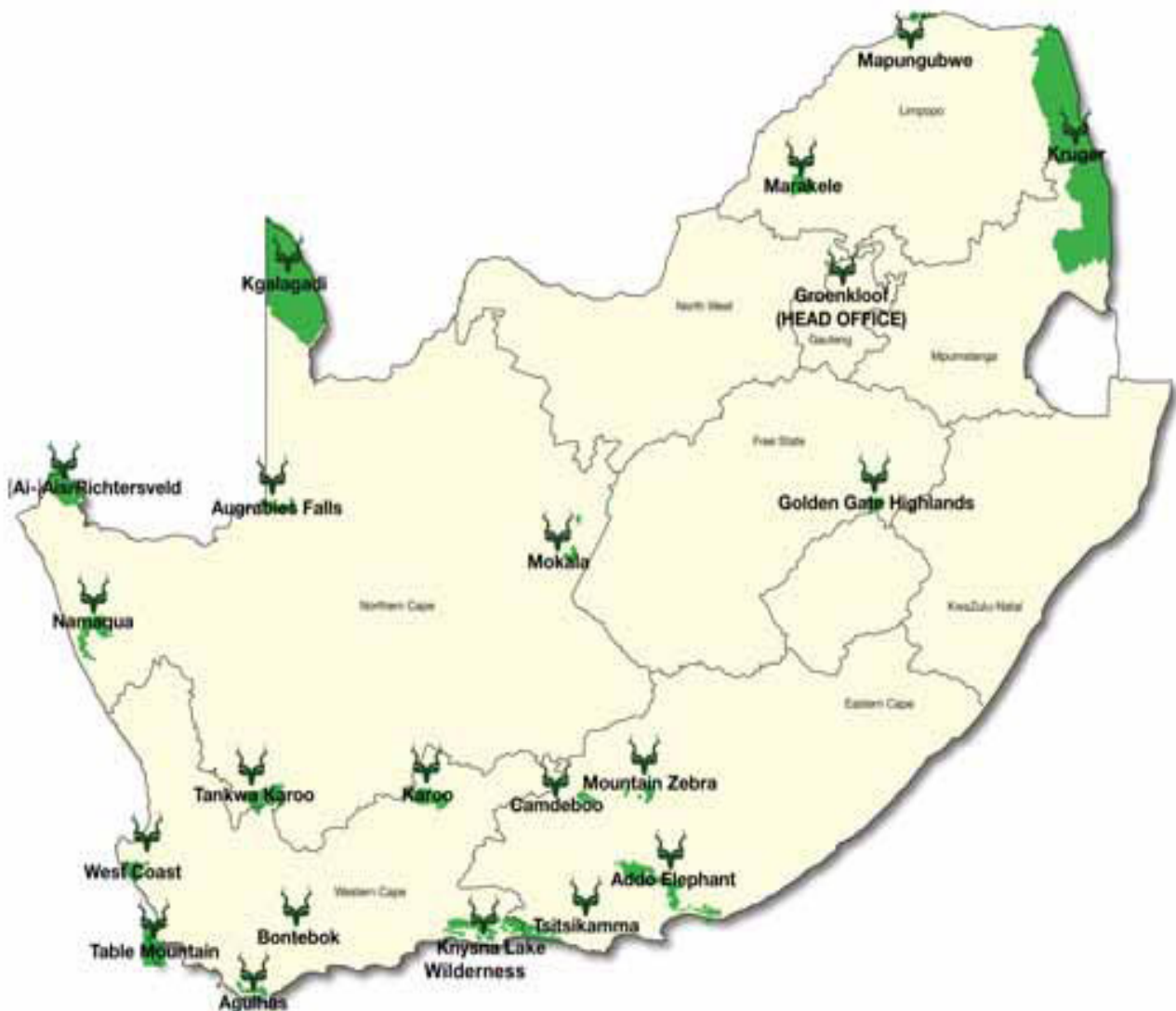
Source: SANParks Annual Report (2008).

Finances accruing from tourism revenue are re-circulated within the organisation, but the central government still subsidises some mainstream activities (Higgs, 2004:21). Examples of well known parks at national level include the Kruger National Park in the Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces, and Addo Elephant Park in the Eastern Cape Province (Myburgh & Saayman, 1999:261).

Following the category of national parks are those that are regarded as provincial parks, as most of the provinces in South Africa have their own reserves and parks which they manage. Pilanesberg and Madikwe are typical examples of provincial parks, and are managed by the North West Province. A number of local authorities have their own reserves, as shown at the third level, and at the lowest level of the pyramid are those that are privately owned (Myburgh & Saayman, 1999:261). There are thousands of private game reserves in South Africa, each with its own mix of wildlife conservation and tourism. These reserves tend to provide high-cost visitor services, while leaving the more inexpensive operations to the national and provincial park services (Eagles, McCool & Haynes, 2002:37).

Although the primary purpose of national parks and other protected areas is to protect natural and cultural resources and values, a secondary purpose is often tourism, encompassing both economic development and tourists' motivations such as recreation, spiritual refreshment, landscape appreciation and learning (Cochrane, 2006:10) as explained in the other sections of this thesis. All national parks and protected areas in South Africa allow some level of visitor use for tourism purposes. This can vary from just a few to millions of visitors per year (Reinius & Fredman, 2007:35) and it is worth mentioning that most national parks have become popular tourist attractions for both domestic and international tourists. The combination of natural and cultural features that are abundant in South Africa has made South Africa one of the most popular ecotourism destinations in the world. Specifically as regards the cultural heritage aspect of tourism, 37% of international tourism is culturally motivated, and the demand is estimated to be growing at 15% annually (World Tourism Organisation, in Richards,

2009:9). In support of this, a Conservation International and National Geographic Traveller 2004 press release (in Pinter, 2005:9), indicates that 700 million people travel internationally each year while supporting the heritage tourism industry. By the year 2020, the number is expected to approach 1.4 billion. Veverka (2000:8) asserts that interpretation of the site's story and message is the main reason visitors go to heritage sites, and a key element in the development of any heritage tourism site. This means that sites where cultural interpretation is provided can never reach their true success potential without having relevant interpretive plans, programmes, services, media, and staff for the site (Veverka, 2000:8). Interpretive programmes and services can help increase site visitation, increase repeat visitation, increase and improve community support, and bring a variety of other benefits to the heritage sites through the use of this powerful communication strategy (Veverka, 2000:8). McDonnell (2001) asserts that interpretation of information can give tourists new insights and understandings of the culture of the area they visit. To use the contemporary jargon of the media, according to McDonnell (2001), tour guides are the "spin-doctors" of tourism, as it is through their interpretation of facts that tourists form impressions and understanding of the host culture. For example, World Heritage Sites should have information available about the significance and (if relevant) the chronological development of the site in a format that can be understood in different languages. According to Shackley (1998:7), this is almost never done, and most World Heritage Sites, particularly those in developing countries or where tourism and visitor management policies are poorly developed, have a very basic level of on-site interpretation (or none at all).

The global trend that identifies tourists as being interested in local culture is now an established part of the South African tourist equation. When one looks at South Africa before the first democratic elections of 1994, the statistics show that 30% of visitors came to South Africa for its scenic beauty while 26 per cent came for the wildlife. After 1994, 27% came to see the "new South Africa" and the number of tourists coming with a cultural or socio-cultural motivation had risen to 46% (Lubbe, 2003:96). Thus, domestic and international tourism is viewed as being among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange, providing a personal experience, not only of that which has survived from the

past, but of the contemporary life and society of others. The growth in cultural tourism has also led to a number of people producing cultural products and experiences for cultural tourism consumption. The cultural tourist now has a dazzling array of old and new attractions to choose from, all vying to provide a "unique" cultural experience for this growing market. Tourists' interest in cultural heritage in SANParks is evident in Mapungubwe National Park and World Heritage Site, which sold 4 348 beds within a year (the twelve months ending on 31 March 2008), an increase over the previous year, when 3 657 beds were sold (SANParks, 2008). Presently, interpretive visitor centres are being built inside Mapungubwe National Park (Carruthers, 2006:3).

The interest of tourists in visiting national parks in South Africa has meant that national parks have to ensure that they offer a competitive tourism product to guarantee their continued existence, while still meeting conservation and social objectives. Some of the approaches which SANParks has used to enhance tourism competitiveness are to diversify the tourism product. Product diversification meant the unbundling of rigid and restrictive rules that limited the ability of the visitor to interact with the park environment, hence the introduction of activities in some parks such as guided drives at various times of the night and day and guided walks into wilderness areas (Castley, Patton, & Magome, 2009:403). The opening up of such guided activities calls for the intensification of face-to-face interpretation by ecotour guides as a way of minimising the tourists' impact on the environment while enhancing their experience of the national park, and therefore enhances the need for an interpretation model in order to guide and ensure quality.

In SANParks (SANParks, 2008:3), the view is held that guided activities contribute to the objectives of enhancing SANParks' reputation by:
• Creating a unique, holistic and meaningful tourists' experience; and
• Developing awareness of ecology, natural wonders and cultural heritage.

The following section briefly expands on how interpretation fits into the national parks as a strategy to enhance the quality of the experience for tourists and as a tool that can

assist in the management of visitors and their environmental impact in the national parks.

2.4.3 The management of visitors and their environmental impact

Tourists are sometimes identified as causing destruction (Deng, King & Bauer, 2002:423). Destinations are under increasing pressure of environmental degradation, natural resource depletion and species extinction as a result of the development of tourism (Staiff *et al.* 2002:97; Butler & Boyd, 2000:3). Some authors such as Deng, King and Bauer (2002:423) are of the view that part of the destruction is specifically caused by tourists. This continually causes considerable anxiety to protected area managers and conservation agencies, which makes the relationship between tourism and protected areas difficult (Staiff *et al.*, 2002:97; Butler & Boyd, 2000:3). For instance, protected area managers face a difficult task in balancing the need for conservation of the resource with their secondary directive of allowing access and opportunities for recreation (Black & Crabtree, 2007:144; Marion & Reid, 2007:5; Mason, 2003:110). According to Burton (1995:102) widespread impacts caused by the presence of tourists themselves include the following:

- Impacts on soil and water from chemical pollution (e.g. from oil, soap) and added substances (from faeces, urine, fire ashes, food waste): These impacts may be spread (in water) beyond the immediate site of tourist activity but are generally greatest at tourist sites (e.g. campsites, trails, etc.).
- The most widespread and, ecologically potentially the most serious impact, is the possible introduction of non-native weed species and pests into an untouched ecosystem (e.g. on tyres, boots, in horse/pack animal dung and feed, etc.). These can spread throughout the ecosystem far beyond the sites to which tourists have access, and may have major ecological effects.
- Fires – tourists can start wildfires that can have widespread devastating effects.
- Impacts on the behaviour of animals and birds – the presence of people can disturb animals' feeding and breeding behaviour. Persistent disturbance could possibly threaten the viability of an animal or bird population.

- Trampling by human feet can kill vegetation, cause soil compaction and/or soil erosion (and kill corals in the marine environment).

Consequently, there is often frequent and vocal opposition to the continuance, and particularly the expansion, of tourism (Butler & Boyd, 2000:3) in protected areas. Kuo (2002:87) is of the view that the concept of sound tourism development and management postulates that the potential conflicts between tourism activities and resource protection can be resolved by maintaining a balance between the needs of resources and visitors. Therefore the management of visitor activities is just as important as the management of resources, and that is where interpretation fits in as one of the intervention strategies. It is one of the management tools that endeavours to minimise environmental impacts of eco-tourists (Skanavis & Giannoulis, 2010:50).

A major impact on environmental awareness strategies has been made by the development of interpretive programmes based in parks and protected areas (Ham, Sutherland and Meganck, 1993:232), because educating tourists is seen as a major mechanism for managing protected areas (Lück, 2003:945). The effective use of interpretation as a management tool has become an important topic for protected area managers and tourism operators dependent on natural areas such as nature parks and cultural sites for tourism (Littlefair, 2003:6; Mason & Christie, 2003:26). Such interpretive communication strategies can contribute to visitor management by influencing where visitors go, informing visitors about appropriate behaviours, and developing visitors' concern (Finucane & Dowling, 1995:17; Mason, 2003:110; Moscardo, 1999:14; Skanavis & Giannoulis, 2010:50). Thus, it is essential to design the interpretive experiences in such a way that they challenge and/or extend visitors' existing environmental conceptions (Ballantyne, Parker & Beckmann, 1998:15).

McArthur and Hall (1996:104) are of the opinion that high-quality interpretation can directly and indirectly increase the effectiveness and accountability of heritage management. Direct outcomes can be achieved by influencing visitor decisions and behaviour while at the heritage site. Indirect outcomes can be achieved by presenting

different values and issues for further thought and discussion. For instance, the overriding message of the study conducted by Stewart, Hayward and Devlin (1998:265), to interpretative planners, providers and researchers, was that if interpretation is well executed, it could have a cumulative effect of encouraging the desired development of empathy for conservation, heritage, culture and landscape. Marion and Reid (2007:23) wrote a research paper to assess the efficacy of low impact visitor education based on a review of existing research in a recreational setting. They concluded that most studies found that educational interventions were effective in increasing visitor knowledge and altering visitor behaviours.

The overall results of the study conducted by Tubb (2003:477) suggest that interpretation, if carefully designed, is capable of contributing to the goals of sustainable tourism development by achieving restructuring of knowledge and the resulting behavioural intentions of visitors (Tubb, 2003:477). Tubb (2003:477) found that interpretation added to visitors' knowledge of the site and that this increase in knowledge encouraged visitors to see how they could change their behaviour to be more respectful of the environment. This indicates that there is indeed scope for interpretation to help modify the behaviour of tourists through increased knowledge and awareness (Ham & Krumpe, 1996; Littlefair, 2003:28; Tubb, 2003:477). When used effectively, interpretation can be persuasive. It can prompt people to make changes in their thinking and behaviour (Youngentob & Hostetler, 2005). The success of the tour guides' interaction depends on how the guides communicate with the tourists, and that calls for communication competency of tour guides.

The role of interpretation in educating the tourists in nature-based tourism for the conservation and management of natural heritage is not the only driving force for the development of effective interpretation in protected areas. Another such driving force is the visitors' interest in interpretation to enhance their experience and satisfaction (Skanavis & Giannoulis, 2010:50), this is explained in the following section.

2.4.4 Enhancing tourists' experience/satisfaction in nature-based tourism through interpretation

Providing information and alternative options; providing information to encourage safety and comfort; and creating the actual experience are the three main ways that interpretation can contribute to the quality of visitors' experience (Moscardo, 1999:8).

Tourists are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their demands. Their sophistication is not only concerned with the luxuriousness of the various establishments they use, but is based especially on having a meaningful experience which incorporates, among other things, learning and understanding about flora and fauna, ecosystems and nature in general, as well as its conservation, and the role of the visitor (Eagles, McCool & Haynes, 2002:109). This interest in learning calls for greater emphasis to be placed on communication and interpretation as integral parts of visitor experience available at various tourists sites (Moscardo,1999:11), including national parks.

It is frequently assumed that those who visit national parks are ecotourists. This calls for more research to ascertain if a majority of national parks' visitors really are ecotourists, who go to national parks to experience various elements of nature and scenery. Also prominent are ecotourists who are interested in learning from exposure to local cultures (Wight, 2001:96). The demands for learning by tourists are evident in the results of the study that was conducted by Chin, Moore, Wallington and Dowling (2000:31) in Bako National Park (Borneo) which showed that 90% of the respondents (tourists) were interested in learning about nature.

Actually, many of those who work in the government-sponsored national parks are of the view that the educative component of the visitor experience still represents a primary motivation for their work as interpreters, and indeed as custodians, of a country's culture (Ryan & Dewar, 1995:295; Wearing, Archer, Moscardo & Schweinsberg, 2007:13).

However, with regard to education in national parks, Pearce (2005:174) raises a concern about the fact that assessment of travellers in this realm is quite limited. He goes on to wonder how much travellers learn about the environments and the cultures they visit.

Variety in the types of tourists that visit national parks is evident from the research that was conducted by Cochrane (2006:12). Cochrane (2006:12) identified "elite", "backpacker plus" and "mass" as some types of international tourists who visit national parks. In analysing preferences for experiences, Cochrane (2006:12) found that "elites" are interested in good communication; the "backpacker plus" genuinely desire to learn about culture and nature, and require good information; and the "mass" like superficial aspects of local culture and enjoy natural scenery and wildlife if easy to see.

It is evident in Cochrane's (2006:12) findings that communication and interpretation form an essential component in national parks in satisfying tourists' needs and expectations, although the ability of parks to satisfy tourists' needs through fulfilling their needs and expectations is still debatable. One of the reasons is that measurement of satisfaction has been difficult and controversial in the recreation research literature, and has raised a number of questions (McCool, 2006:5). In particular Ham (2002:5) suggests that the question of how interpretation can best contribute to enriching their experience is complex.

It is worth noting Ham and Weiler's assertion (2007:6) that previous research on tourist satisfaction indicated that tourists' experiences and levels of satisfaction have been found to vary with their background characteristics, such as their own past travel experience and background knowledge. Tourists' countries of origin, nationality, and culture have also been associated with differences in satisfaction levels.

Despite these concerns, some research has shown that there is a link between the quality of guiding and tourist satisfaction (Weiler & Ham, 2001:551) and some have gone further to recognise the role that interpretation plays in the tourists' experience

(Armstrong & Weiler, 2002; Beck & Cable, 1998; Lew, Hall & Timothy, 2008:21; Weiler & Ham, 2001). These studies have shown that useful and timely information is central to any visitors' experience, and has a determining effect on their degree of satisfaction (Ham, 2002:5).

There is little research that has been conducted to directly document or precisely quantifies the influence that the interpretive dimensions of the experience have on tourist satisfaction (Ham & Weiler, 2007:5). Griffin and Vacaflores (2004:33) found that one of the specific factors that had been identified as major factors influencing the quality of visitor experience was interpretation. Therefore, enhancing the visitor experience may be the primary and most important goal of interpretation in the tourism situation (Ham, Housego & Weiler, 2005:7). From the visitors' perspective, interpretation is a means of adding value to their experience because most sights become a bit more interesting when one knows a little more about them (Wearing & Neil, 1999:58).

Very little research has been undertaken on visitor satisfaction in less developed countries, and given the apparent differences in sociodemographic characteristics and levels of travel experience; there is a conspicuous gap with regard to comparisons between international and domestic tourists in these countries. Also, there does not appear to be any published research exploring differences in satisfaction with interpretive versus non-interpretive elements of the experience in the context of protected areas in less developed countries (Weiler & Ham, 2004:3).

An examination of the impact of interpretive signs on visitor knowledge at the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk in Western Australia found significant increases in visitor knowledge and satisfaction as a result of reading trail-side signs (Hughes & Morrison-Saunders, 2002). Research conducted by Moscardo (1998:5) in the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway (in Australia), to find out if visitors were more satisfied with the Skyrail experience because of the interpretation, indicated that visitors who experienced any of the three interpretive components were significantly more satisfied with their experience than those who simply rode on the cableway.

In summarising the value of interpretation in nature-based tourism, Wearing and Neil (1999:62-67), highlight four key areas of potential benefits. These are promotional, recreational, educational and management/conservation benefits, as shown in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Potential benefits of interpretation

Promotional benefits	Explanation of benefits
Diversity of subjects that can be promoted.	Interpretation can promote values, sites, land tenures, management objectives and practices, and the corporate mission of the managing authority.
A subtle and sophisticated form of promotion.	Interpretation can weave promotion into a story without making it sound too promotional and self-centred.
Added dimensions for follow-on promotion.	Interpretation can provide on-going advisory services to reinforce and expand initial ideas.
The recreational benefits of interpretation	**Explanation benefits**
Value added to the visitor experience.	Interpretation is an added activity to those typically expected. For example, interpretation signs enhance a walking track just as interpretive guides are preferred over one that merely points out significant attractions as they come into view.
Making the experience more enjoyable.	Interpretation that is stimulating and connects with emotions tends to make the experience more enjoyable.
Enhance a sense of meaning to recreational activity.	Interpretation provides a greater sense of meaning to activities such as sightseeing.
The educational benefits of interpretation	**Explanation of benefits**
Opportunity for learning.	Interpretation generates learning experiences for visitors that increase their knowledge and understanding of the environment.
Opportunity for self-discovery.	Interpretation generates experiences for visitors to gain a clearer understanding of their role within their environment, and this aids in self-discovery and self-actualization.
Conservation and protected area management benefits of interpretation.	**Explanation of benefits**
Stimulation of an environmental consciousness and broad-based conservation ethic.	Interpretation stimulates thoughts of personal responsibility for using resources and contributes to improvements in quality of life.
Raise awareness of regulations and codes designed to minimise impacts.	Interpretation programmes such as minimal impact campaigns can subtly present requirements for changed visitor behaviour in a way that is non-confrontational.
Stimulation of behavioural change to minimise personal impacts upon the environment.	Interpretation presents ideas for people to adopt.
Support for protected areas.	Interpretation presents the value of protected areas from a range of perspectives.
Support for protected area management organisations.	Interpretation presents the challenges for management in a candid way that exposes the constraints facing protected area management agencies.

Source: Wearing and Neil (1999:62-67).

To conclude this section, it is important to reiterate that an ecotour guide's ability to interpret appropriately and effectively is crucial. The next paragraph (2.5) deals with the interpretive roles of tour guides in national parks.

2.5 INTERPRETIVE ROLES OF TOUR GUIDES IN NATIONAL PARKS

Guiding ranks among the world's oldest professions because of the early excursions that had to be undertaken many thousands of years ago, not necessarily for pleasure but out of necessity, such as to gather food, or escape harsh weather. Travellers at the time needed a guide just to offer geographic direction. Later, enterprising travelling traders (circa 5000 BC) also needed guides for safety against thieves (Pond, 1993:2; Queiros, 2003b). Eventually, in the classical era (from 2000 BC) travel for pleasure started to become popular (Queiros, 2003b:13).

Guiding is an important sector of the tourism system and tour guides play a special role in the tourism industry (Hu, 2007:18) as key front-line players (Ap & Wong, 2001; Weaver, 2006:186). Their position and role in the industry make them indispensable, because they work for supply-side stakeholders (such as attractions, travel operators/agents, governments, public organisations, private corporations, or for themselves independently), within all sectors of the tourism industry, and are at the same time linked to the demand side (tourists) (Hu, 2007:18). Hence Weaver (2006:186) describes tour guiding as a facilitating tourism sector.

The tour guide's role has been the focus of scholarly discussion and analysis for several years (Ham & Weiler, 2005:31). According to Weiler and Davis (1993:91); Ham and Weiler (2005:31) and Pond (1993:67), Cohen's (1985) model is often cited as a basis for examining the roles of the tour guide. Cohen (1985:7) recognised and analysed the traditional roles of guides, labelling these roles as "pathfinding" and "mentoring", applicable to all tour guides.

As pathfinders, tour guides select the route and the attractions and make them accessible to tourists. They typically point out objects of interest without giving elaborate explanations. Hence Cohen (1985:7) further indicates that pathfinders lead geographically through an unknown environment and also lead socially, in a setting which followers (visitors) do not have access to without them. As mentors, tourist guides become personal tutors and even spiritual advisors.

In his further analysis of the role of tour guides Cohen (1985) renamed these two roles and called the pathfinder role the "leadership sphere" and the mentor role the "mediatory sphere", to be more relevant to modern guiding. The leadership role, as one of the principal components of the guide's role, involves being instrumental in ensuring that the tour is completed without problems (smoothly) through directing, accessing and controlling during the tour. The social component in the leadership sphere entails ensuring that tension during the tour is well managed, there is integration in a group and visitors are kept in high morale and are assisted to understand the activities (animation) (Cohen, 1985:14). The mediatory sphere, as one of the principal components of the guide's role, involves an interactional component and a communicative component (Cohen, 1985:15).The interactional component refers to the function of a tour guide as a middleman between his or her party and the local population, sites and tourists' facilities. The communicative component refers to the guides' role of communicating destination-related information to tourists (Huang, Hsu & Chan, 2010:6).

Cohen (1985) further differentiated guides' responsibilities within each of these spheres and came out with "inner-directed" and "outer-directed" responsibilities of guides (figure 2.4). The inner-directed role has to do with the guides' accountability within the group (i.e. to facilitate learning and enjoyment of individual tourists and to nurture and manage interaction between them), and the outer-directed role involves using resources outside the tour group to satisfy the tourists' needs (i.e. facilitate and mediate interaction between tourists and host communities). Cohen (1985) explained these roles by using a 2x2 matrix (Cohen, 1985:9-10) as indicated in figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: A schematic representation of the principal components of the tourist guide's role

	Outer-directed	Inner-directed
(A) Leadership sphere	(1) Instrumental	(2) Social
(B) Mediatory sphere	(3) Interactional	(4) Communicative

Source: Cohen (1985:10).

However, Weiler and Davis (1993: 97) updated Cohen's model of the main components of the tourist guide's role (leadership and mediatory) by adding environmental responsibility as part of the guide's role in nature-based tourism, as shown in Figure 2.5.

In modifying Cohen's model (1985), Weiler and Davis (1993:93) included resource management as a third focus, with the understanding that tour guides in ecotourism need to focus on the environment as one of their roles. Resource management as a focus entails that a guide should be a motivator, meaning that a guide has to influence the tourists' behaviour. Inclusion of resource management also entails that the role of a tour guide is to interpret the environment. Being an environmental interpreter (which is the focus of this thesis) involves increasing the tourists' appreciation and understanding of the environment. The tour management, experience management and resource management dimensions are useful additions to the literature to help explain the roles of the guide in the nature-based tourism industry (Black, 2007:318).

Figure 2.5: Guide's role: Environmental interpreter

	OUTER-DIRECTED (Resource from outside the tour group)	INNER-DIRECTED (Resource from inside the tour group)
Tour Management (focus on group)	'organiser'	'entertainer'
Experience Management (focus on individual)	'group leader'	'teacher'
Resource Management (focus on environment)	'motivator'	'environmental interpreter'

Source: Weiler and Davis (1993: 97).

Ecotour guides are therefore expected to play the third role that is, being interpreters. They are expected to communicate and interpret the significance of the environment, promote minimal impact practices, ensure the sustainability of the natural and cultural environment, and motivate those tourists to consider their own lives in relation to larger ecological or cultural concerns (Black, Ham & Weiler, 2001:149). The importance of this interpretive role is also seen in a review by Black and Weiler (2005:26) of some of the key published literature focussing on the roles of tour guides. All twelve of the studies reviewed, identified the role of interpreter.

In South Africa, it is believed that guides can play a significant educational role with reference to the awareness, protection, conservation and promoting of tourism (Smal, 1997:7). In SANParks, one of the key tourism objectives is to develop and grow a sustainable nature-based tourism business (SANParks, 2008:13). The emphasis on sustainability means protection and conservation of responsible and sustainable tourism in SANParks' tourism ventures and activities. This undoubtedly guides all the tourism

activities in SANParks, including personal interpretation or guided interpretation (as in game drives), and non-personal interpretation or self-guided interpretation (as at visitor centres, displays and exhibits, publications and self-guided trails). It is important to state that great progress has been made by the People and Conservation (P&C) division of SANParks in the area of environmental education and youth development through the implementation of various programmes (SANParks, 2008:34).

The success of the tour guides' interaction depends on how tour guides communicate with the tourists, and that calls for the guides to have communication competency.

2.6 COMMUNICATION COMPETENCY OF TOUR GUIDES

As it has been said in the previous sections, interpretation in national parks is an approach to conservation communication, and is therefore about the need to communicate technical information to non-technical audiences (tourists) (Manohar, Noor Azlin, Azyyati & Azman (2005:6). The emphasis on communication means that communication competency of tour guides is essential if the guides are to carry out their duties effectively in national parks. Competency refers to possession of the required skills and knowledge necessary to perform the task (Goh, 2008:12). Communication competency is essential for the interaction of guides and tourists in nature-based tourism because of the transfer of information that can serve the important purposes of persuasion, education, resource protection strategies, entertainment and safety (Oschell, 2009:8). Communication competence is also important in retaining the interest of tourists and reinforcing predispositions not to stray from marked paths (Ryan & Dewar, 1995:301), and also for visitors to be well informed and satisfied (Rabotić, 2010).

The understanding of the basic of communication by the guides can maximise the retention, comprehension, and understanding of the messages to tourists in a nature-based setting. As suggested in paragraph 2.2 communication begins with a communicator (interpreter). The message is the second step in the communication

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process and the interpreter then translates (third step) the message into appropriate language or communication medium. After the actual communication of the message, the visitor then receives the message (fourth step) and filters it (fifth step). After filtering, there is a feedback process (sixth step) for communication back to the interpreter (Ward & Wilkinson, 2006:32). All these processes are important in communication. Also important during the process is the message content, personal style and delivery. These are all the characteristics that have an impact on the visitor's perceptions of the guide's credibility (Ward & Wilkinson, 2006:35).

To conclude this section, it is important to highlight that tour guiding is complex, and the complexity varies depending on the environment, topic and type of tour conducted. In interpretive guiding such as in nature-based tourism, the complexity is as a result of the emphasis on the key role of tour guides' communication skills for effective interpretation. That is why there have been a number of authors who have provided conceptual models for effective interpretation (Wearing *et al*. 2008:5) such as Moscardo (1999); Ham (1992) and Veverka (2005). For instance Veverka's (2005) model of interpretation shows how the total communication process works, and becomes the basis for developing a philosophy and strategy for interpretive planning. According to Veverka (2005) the following are components of interpretive communication:

- The message - What message is conveyed to the tourist?
- Specific objectives - What are these messages aiming to fulfil? That involves the interpretive techniques that can be used to present the messages.
- Visitor analysis -The understanding of how visitors learn (involves visitor analysis).
- Managerial realities - What are the implementation and operational considerations which may have some influence on interpretive programme (e.g. costs, staff needs and material needs)?
- Agency policies and goals for interpretation.
- Programme or service demands from the public.
- Management issues.
- Available budget for programmes or services.

- Political pressures for certain programmes.

Veverka's (2005) model clearly brings out the interdependence of many components for the success of interpretation, some of which are realised and discussed in this study, such as interpretive techniques, staff needs (which could be continuing education and training, tourists' needs and interests and the organisation's policies).

This study builds on the EROT model of interpretive communication by Ham (1992) as its conceptual foundation. The motivation for using this model has already been given in Chapter 1 (refer to 1.3).

2.7 THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION: EROT MODEL OF INTERPRETIVE COMMUNICATION

There are a number of qualities that have been identified and recognised in the literature on effective interpretation (Davidson & Black, 2007; Ham,1992; Ham,2003; McArthur & Hall, 1996; Moscardo,1999; Wearing & Neil, 1999; Weiler & Ham, 2001; Tilden, 1977:9), and these qualities have also been used as the framework upon which interpretive activities can be built (Kuo, 2002:99). The aim of this section is to explain Ham's EROT model of interpretive communication, as referred to in paragraph 1.3, and the suggested activities that are built into it. Ham (1992) suggests that effective interpretive communication must be Enjoyable, Relevant, well Organised and have a Theme.

2.7.1 Interpretation must be enjoyable

Tourists expect to be entertained during interpretation. One of the crucial qualities of interpretation is entertainment, even if this is not necessarily interpretation's main goal. It should always be remembered that tourists are non-captive (audiences who, if not entertained, could easily "switch their minds off", away from the interpretive experience

(Ham, 1992:8; Weiler & Ham 2001:555). Captive audiences are part of the formal setting in an interpretive activity. Ecotour guides have to make sure that they use strategies that will make tourists "have fun". One way of doing this is to provide varied experiences during interpretation.

Ecotour guides in national parks should provide varied experiences during interpretation because interpretation entails active involvement and the engagement of first-hand experiences. Getting actively involved, and "doing" rather than just passively listening to straightforward instruction, makes the interpretive activity easier to appreciate and more enjoyable. The inclusion of a variety of experiences helps to attract and maintain tourists' attention (Griffin & Vacaflores, 2004:38). Providing varied experiences is a way to personalise and give visitors a sense of control over the experience. This is because human beings have a tendency to pay attention to differences and change in an environment rather than to monotonous experiences. Repetition makes visitors quickly lose attention, and without attention it is difficult to create successful communication (Moscardo, 1998:8).

It is important for ecotour guides to use clear explanations, humour, analogies, metaphors, give opportunities to ask questions, encourage participation and interaction amongst tourists, encourage use of the five senses, and provide variety (Griffin & Vacaflores, 2004:38; Moscardo, 1998:8; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006:487). Humour is always an effective tool which is happily received by tourists. It is generally known that it is not easy to transmit great ideas in a jovial manner, but it is advisable for the guide to use humour, at least on a small scale and with subtlety (Project Coordinating Unit, 2005:8). Encouraging the use of the senses is an approach that is likely to bring the interpretive experience "alive" and make it more enjoyable and satisfying. This can be done by providing opportunities for visitors to make use of hearing, touch, smell and taste (Armstrong & Weiler, 2003:28; Markwell & Weiler, 1998:106). For example, the visitors may be invited to listen to birdsong or the sound of a stream (Project Coordinating Unit, 2005:7).

2.7.2 Interpretation must be relevant

For interpretation to be relevant, it is essential for ecotour guides to present information that is meaningful and personal to the tourists. When information is meaningful, tourists are able to make a connection with what they already know, and they relate to what they know and care about. It is easy for tourists to ignore information that seems unimportant to them, even if they understood it well (Ham, 1992:13).

Griffin and Vacaflores (2004:37) and Moscardo (1999:69) confirm this by stating that research shows that people can only assimilate new information if they can relate it to something they already know. They believe that the use of analogies and metaphors, comparisons, simple explanations, personification, anecdotes, self-referencing, skilful questioning, labelling and even humour are all effective means of making interpretation more relevant and meaningful to the individual. This helps to bridge the gap between the familiar and the unfamiliar. For instance, visitors generally like to learn about a particular area or wildlife situation and develop some understanding of how it relates to them. They are also interested to learn why natural environments are important and what human beings could do to preserve what still exists (Newsome *et al.*, 2002:240-244).

Tourists pay special attention to those things that the guide relates to their areas of interest and personalities (Weiler & Ham, 2001:554). The result of the study conducted by Ham and Weiler (2005:41) also indicated that low-quality guiding, from the passenger's perspective, occurs when the guide, among others things, fails to make the information he or she presents relevant to the passengers.

2.7.3 Interpretation must be well organised

Information should be presented in such a way that is easy to follow. A tourist who is seeking pleasure (non-captive) will switch attention if he/she has to work too hard to follow a train of thought (Ham, 1992:19; Weiler & Ham, 2001:555). Therefore,

interpretation by ecotour guides in national parks should be presented in a way that is easy to follow (Ham, 1992:19). For interpretation to be effective, it should be presented in such a way that information is made clear, and in a logical manner that flows from a well-structured introduction to the body and conclusion (Griffin & Vacaflores, 2004:38).

2.7.4 Interpretation must have a theme

Using a theme is one of the methods most commonly put forward as critical to effective interpretation (Moscardo, 1999; Ham, 1992). Themes provide both an organisational framework and a foundation for visitors' understanding of knowledge and recall of information. Visitors are able to follow a presentation that is thematic and enhances their attention. It is therefore important that tourist guides present interpretation that has a theme. The theme should be specific, attractive, stimulate interest and maintain visitors' attention, and should enable visitors to make connections to their own experience (Griffin & Vacaflores, 2004:38).

Interpretation is thematic if it has a major point. A theme is different from a topic. The difference is that the topic is merely the subject matter of the presentation, whereas the theme is the main point or message that a communicator is trying to convey about that topic. A theme is a whole idea, an inference or connection that the mind makes, and is usually expressed in one sentence (Ham, 2003:5; Ham, 1992:21). It is the way to express the essence of the message that should be imparted to the visitors (Ham, Housego & Weiler, 2005:13; Weiler and Ham, 2002:556).

There is an understanding that visitors forget most or all of the facts presented to them. But if the conclusion they draw from all the facts is meaningful and important, it will provoke them to thought and they will continue to think about that conclusion even when the facts that supported it are long gone from their memories. Therefore in thematic interpretation it is the thinking that matters most, not the facts. Thinking is what leads the visitor to attach meanings to the thing and the place being interpreted (Ham, Housego & Weiler, 2005:4).

In the study conducted by Armstrong and Weiler (2003) among 20 sampled tour operators in Victorian National Parks in Australia, it was found that some operations were exemplary in terms of Ham's EROT model (enjoyment, relevancy, organisation and a theme) while others were not. The results of their study indicated that many guides were successful at gaining and maintaining their audiences' attention and managed to convey technical material. These guides used interactivity successfully and encouraged the clients to use at least three of their five senses. Use of eye contact and names to personalise the delivery was successful and the flow of and logical sequencing of material was generally good, particularly in relation to the introduction and body of the presentation. However, the guides were less successful in entertaining the audience, the thematic interpretation approach was generally not successfully applied, and the conclusions were poorly delivered.

2.8 CONCLUSION

The literature indicates that diverse definitions of interpretation have been given by various authors. What emerges from the literature is that, even if the definitions of interpretation seem to differ, it is evident that most of them see interpretation as communication with an intention to enhance tourists' experience and environmental and cultural conservation (through the minimisation of the tourists' environmental impact).

The literature also indicates that there are different perspectives on the history of interpretation. However, what comes out clearly is the fact that most authors are in agreement that Freeman Tilden is regarded as the person who gave the first professional definition of interpretation; thus they regard him as the father of interpretation.

Much as interpretation has become popular in other types of tour guiding, the same is true of ecotour guiding in the nature-based tourism in national parks. Interest in interpretation in nature-based tourism has grown, and this is due to the concerns raised regarding the environmental impact of tourists as well as to the tourists' own interest in

learning. In SANParks, interpretation which is provided specifically through guided activities is seen as a way of fulfilling SANParks' conservation and its tourism objectives. Therefore one of the key roles of ecotour guides in SANParks is interpretation. Ecotour guides need to be competent in communication in order to fulfil the interpretive role of conveying conservation messages while, at the same time, entertaining the tourist. Many authors such as Moscardo (1999) and Ham (1992) have made suggestions about what can enable ecotour guides to be effective in interpretive guiding. This study uses the EROT model of interpretive communication as its conceptual foundation. This model proposes that the characteristics of effective interpretation are enjoyment, relevance, organisation and a theme.

Evidence suggests that some ecotour guides may not be adequately performing all their roles as recommended and expected (Black, 2007:316). This inadequacy reinforces the need to consider the development and implementation of quality assurance and regulatory mechanisms that might address some of the problems (Black & Weiler, 2005:25). A further question for consideration in national parks is how to assess interpretation and maintain quality, which leads us to the role of evaluation in interpretation.

The following chapter (Chapter 3) deals with the question of what kind of measures national parks can use to in ensure quality in interpretive guiding, and the role of evaluation in assessing its quality.

CHAPTER 3

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS FOR ECOTOUR GUIDES' INTERPRETIVE EFFECTIVENESS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The implementation of effective interpretation in nature-based tourism is not without its problems and it is for this reason that appropriate monitoring and evaluation measures should be taken by the management of protected areas in order to ensure quality (Wearing & Neil, 1999:69). This chapter aims to give a broad overview of some of the quality assurance mechanisms that are used to minimise the challenges in tour guiding, and specifically in interpretive guiding in the context of national parks in South Africa, and to discuss management support to ensure quality in interpretive guiding.

Quality assurance mechanisms such as professional associations, codes of conduct, certification, licensing and training are explained. This chapter gives more details of training, particularly, of continuing education and training as one of the quality assurance mechanisms. A discussion of continuing education and training in ecotour guiding is preceded by a brief history of continuing education and training, in order to highlight the underlying basic reasons for the emergence of continuing education and training throughout the world. Then follows a brief explanation of the quality assurance mechanisms that are employed in tour guiding, with special attention to those used in tour guiding in South Africa, the aim being to give guidance on what can be done to ensure quality in interpretive guiding in national parks. This chapter ends by explaining the role of evaluation in ecotour guiding, with the intention of revealing what can be done to assess quality in interpretive guiding in national parks.

To begin with, a brief explanation will be given of constraints that are encountered in interpretive guiding in nature-based tourism.

3.2 DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROVISION OF EFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION IN NATURE-BASED TOURISM

Constraints in the delivery of quality interpretation by tour guides in nature-based tourism have been highlighted in the literature. It is necessary here to begin by stating that the difficulties explained in this section are not the only difficulties that tour guides face in being effective in interpretation. However, it is the common difficulties that are overviewed in this section, with suggestions on how they may be overcome. Highlighting these constraints reveals the need for more managerial support for guides, where interpretive guided activities are provided (Chowdhary & Prakash, 2008:293).

One of the constraints is the lack of planning of interpretation. Planning is one of the key considerations of interpretation. This helps a tour guide to be well organised and confident in his/her approach and content. McArthur & Hall (1996:92) are of the view that while the art of delivering interpretation has been around long enough for some very clever techniques to have developed, there has been considerable resistance to more formal planning of interpretation by tour guides. Furthermore, time and resource constraints have forced more interpretive planning to be somewhat ad hoc. The findings of the study that was conducted by Manohar, *et al.* (2005:12) at Malaysian Recreation Forests, indicate that one of the problems that staff complained about is being burdened by routine maintenance chores that occupied most of their time, and thus reduced their time for interpretive contacts with the visitors. They seemed to have a good understanding of what was needed for good interpretation, but surprisingly, that their superiors might not share their views on the benefits of interpretation.

It is crucial to understand the professional environmental interpretation and education capabilities that are needed for each different level of park interpreters (Chou, Tsai & Wang (2002). Therefore the relevant park manager or protected area manager should remain centrally involved in guide training (Wallace, 1993:75). However, in certain instances, a lack of training or inadequate training in guiding, and particularly in continuing education and training has been identified as a constraint in the provision of quality interpretation. The literature indicates that there is little incentive for practising guides to actively upgrade their interpretive skills or qualifications or to try to improve the quality of their tours (Weiler & Ham, 2001:559). Despite the evidence that interpretation is key to delivering a quality guided ecotourism experience, neither tour operators nor tour guides are likely to initiate dramatic changes in the amount of time or financial resources they allocate to improving the interpretive competence of their guides. In some instances, tour guides argue that theory or academic work has little value for them (Pond, 1993), a perception which may discourage them from up-grading their interpretive qualifications.

In some cases, there is inappropriate and insufficient infrastructure for training and continuous learning for tourist guides. This is evident from the research conducted by Chowdhary and Prakash (2008:293) to examine challenges facing tourist guides in India. Specifically, tourist guides mentioned the following:

- There are insufficient numbers and varieties of training courses / seminars / conferences for the guides who want to learn more as tourist guides;
- The duration of the training programmes are too long;
- Content is often not relevant and does not add value from the point of view of tourists guides;
- There are few options in terms of location and timing of the courses;
- There is no provision for internship/on-the-job training for trainees without previous work experience;
- There is no identified system/content provider that offers authentic information on destinations and monuments;
- There are inadequate facilities for learning foreign languages; and

- There is a paucity of resource centres (such as libraries) offering information on travel, tourism, hospitality and related industries.

Some of the difficulties and factors that contribute to ineffective interpretation and the solutions are explained by Kuo (2002:99) in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Factors that need to be considered for a successful interpretation programme and the techniques proposed to tackle the difficulties

Factors that need to be considered for a successful visitor interpretation	Difficulties	Techniques to tackle the difficulties
Visitors are non-captive.	Visitors are not forced to pay attention to interpretation; they are not prepared to be 'taught'; they expect leisure and fun experience.	Entertaining and thematically organised interpretation, with information that relates to their life and concerns, to capture and retain visitors' attention.
The features and the locations of resources.	The shyness, mobility, nocturnal and hibernating activities, etc. of wildlife; geographical location might be remote and difficult to reach; and historical buildings may already suffer from high tourism pressure, etc.	Visitor safety and comfort concerns should be addressed in interpretation. Appropriate visitor activity should be communicated to visitors in order to sustain long-term tourism development.
Sufficient and accurate knowledge of resources and the possible human impacts upon them.	A lack of knowledge will result in unsatisfactory interpretation contents.	Detailed research into resources at the site, and evaluate human impacts cautiously.
Well-trained staff to manage visitor activity and deliver interpretation.	High percentage of seasonal employees and high cost of human resource training.	Applying various media to deliver interpretation information in order to prolong the opening time while personal interpretation is not available.
Be aware not to over interpret.	Interpretation may be perceived as instructive or preaching to the converted; and interpretation signs to be a visual intrusion, which leads to a diminution of visitor enjoyment.	Carefully select interpretation contents to reveal the value of the resources and encourage visitors to adopt more responsible behaviour to contribute to resource conservation.

Source: Kuo (2002:99).

Table 3.1 underscores the importance of the following for successful interpretation in nature-based tourism.

- The importance of knowing and applying interpretive delivery technique in a proper manner, bearing in mind that tourists are "noncaptive".
- The importance of appropriate communication for tourists' safety;
- The importance of knowledge about the park (conservation/cultural aspects); and
- The importance of employing well-trained tour guides.

In order to achieve what is stressed in Table 3.1, it is apparent that the role of management in enhancing effective interpretation is crucial, as explained in the following section (3.3).

3.3 THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT IN ENHANCING EFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION

Management in any organisation is key to the fulfilment of its objectives. Management in this section refers to park management, i.e. park managers and tourism managers.

National park managers/managements have traditionally provided information and interpretive services for park visitors, ranging from basic signage and brochures to sophisticated displays and guided activities (Hockings, 1994:17).

According to Buckley (2004:7), until recently commercial tour operators were not significant stakeholders in protected area management, and in most of the world this is still the case. This is contrary to the claim that nature-based tour operators are important mouthpieces for protected area agencies through the messages they deliver to their clients (Armstrong & Weiler, 2002:104).

If promotion of a conservation ethic through interpretation is an appropriate and necessary role for commercial ecotour operators and their guides, it is imperative that such operators should be required to provide quality interpretation (Markwell & Weiler, 1998:106). Operators and protected area managers must ensure furthermore that the

tour itinerary and operating conditions are conducive to excellent interpretation (Weiler & Ham, 2001:558). This calls for cooperation and understanding between these two groups (park managers and tour operators) for the benefit of tourists and the sustainability of the tourist destinations concerned. Tour operators licensed to operate in protected areas are a potential vehicle for delivering messages to visitors about minimal-impact behaviour, heritage values, conservation and protected area management (Armstrong & Weiler, 2002:194).

Sharing a similar sentiment, Choegyal, in Wearing and Neil (1999:55), asserts that ecotour operators in wilderness and other protected areas must assume responsibility for minimising the impact of their operations on the destination region. Furthermore, according to Budeanu (2005), tour operators can use their influence to trigger positive changes in attitudes and practices regarding sustainable tourism.

According to Ham and Weiler (2002:35), for the most part tourism operators see interpretation as a means of adding value to wildlife tourism, while managers of protected areas appreciate its value in both managing on-site visitor behaviour and contributing to long-term wildlife conservation.

However, Weiler *et al*., in Weiler and Ham (2001:551), state that many operators have little idea what interpretation is. Weiler and Ham (2001:551) assert that many operators have no idea whether their clients' understanding and appreciation of nature and culture are enhanced as a result of their guided tour experience. Since most tour operators in Australia and elsewhere have only a rudimentary understanding of interpretation, it is unlikely that they will recruit guides for their expertise as interpreters, or increase their pay if they upgrade their interpretive skills or qualifications (Weiler & Ham, 2001:559). In Taiwan, according to Chou, Tsai and Wang (2002:599), many negative effects that occur due to the operators' and consumers' ignorance of the fragility of nature and/or misconception of the real essence of ecotourism.

3.4 ENHANCING TOUR GUIDES' INTERPRETIVE EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

3.4.1 Broad overview of the quality assurance mechanisms

An indication has been given in the previous chapters of challenges that are encountered in the employment of interpretation for visitors to protected areas (Staiff *et al.*, 2002:98). It is evident that some ecotour guides may not be performing all the interpretive roles as expected. To assist in improving guides' performance, and to raise guiding standards, a number of quality assurance mechanisms can be used (Black, 2007:316). Appropriate management of quality in tour guiding is very important for tour guides to be able to provide a quality tourist experience. Certainly, for any market that makes extensive use of tour guides, sustainable quality assurance in tour guiding is arguably a high priority focus (Huang & Weiler, 2010:847).

Several management mechanisms have been developed to guide, regulate, monitor or even control tour guides and their guiding performance, but there are great variations across the world in the strategies employed as the standards and qualifications required (Hu, 2007:45). However, little research has been directed to the mechanisms used to regulate and control the quality of tour guiding and their implication for sustainable tourism (Huang & Weiler, 2010:847).

In the literature, some of the mechanisms that can be used to improve guiding standards include support from professional associations, codes of conduct, awards for excellence, formal training programmes, licensing and professional associations (Black, 2007:321), evaluation (Black, 2007:321; Munro *et al.*, 2008:2; Ward & Wilkinson, 2006:223), and on-the-site inspections (Ap & Wong, 2001:559). Some countries such as Australia and China use them already (Huang & Weiler, 2010:846; Maunder & McIntyre, 2006:34). The possible outcomes of implementing some or all of these mechanisms are improved individual guide performance, improved industry-wide performance, and an

enhanced visitor experience (Black & Weiler, 2005:27). While tour guiding and interpretation can prove to be significant in the tourism sector and promote sustainable tourism, little research has been directed to the mechanisms used to regulate and control the quality of tour guiding (Huang & Weiler, 2010:847).

3.4.1.1 Professional associations and codes of conduct

Professional associations and codes of conduct were the earliest forms of quality control (Weiler & Ham, 2001:559) used to enhance quality for nature-based guides (Maunder & McIntyre, 2006:34). Professional associations have the greatest potential to facilitate guides' fulfilling their various roles by providing professional support as well as a number of benefits that can assist in improving guiding standards. One unfortunate aspect of professional associations is that their influence is generally limited to their members, and is largely non-enforceable, often depending on the enthusiasm and interest of their members (Black & Weiler, 2005:29; Hu, 2007:45).

However professional associations are often instrumental in introducing or supporting other mechanisms such as codes of conduct, awards of excellence, training, and certification programmes. Through these mechanisms, either individually or in combination, a professional association may contribute to improving professional standards and performance (Black & Weiler, 2005:28).

Codes of conduct are a set of expectations, behaviours or rules written by industry members, government or non-government organisations (Jurdana, 2009:272). They can also play a part in ensuring quality and professionalism in tour guiding; consequently numerous behavioural guidelines have been developed for nature-based tourism (Weiler & Ham, 2001:559) in many countries, including South Africa. Hu (2007:45), however, argues that codes of conduct can be used as a tool for awareness-raising rather than quality control.

3.4.1.2 Professional certification and licensing and individual awards for excellence

Certification in the tourism industry is a fairly recent phenomenon, originating in the development of certification schemes that measured tourism quality standards. (Black & Weiler, 2005:31). Countries like Australia and the United States of America use professional certification and licensing as a tool to enhance quality assurance for nature-based tour guides (Maunder & McIntyre, 2006:34).

The terms certification and accreditation are frequently used interchangeably and are applied differently in different parts of the world. They are used as a means of assisting tourism industry members to act responsibly. They involve an agency or an organization evaluating and recognising a programme of study or recognising an institution as meeting certain predetermined standards or qualifications. Certification requires the testing of each individual to determine his/her mastery of a specific body of knowledge (Mahony, 2007:394), but the requirements of a professional certification programmes vary, depending on a number of factors including the aims of the programme concerned, forms of assessment and levels of certification. Most tour guide certification programmes are based on generic core competencies that are in turn based on analysis of the roles that guides are meant to perform (Black & Weiler, 2005:31).

With licensing, a certificate or document gives the holder official permission to undertake an activity (Jurdana, 2009). This is one of the mechanisms that may improve guides' performance. Many countries around the world require a person to be licensed in order license to practise as a guide. The advantages of licensing are that it enforces, through law or regulation, a minimum standard that must be met by all tour guides, and it provides an element of consumer protection. The skills, knowledge and understanding that a guide must have before she/he obtains a license vary from country to country (Black & Weiler, 2005:32).

Individual awards of excellence target the individual and focus on recognising and rewarding excellence in guiding. They are recognised by the United Nations as a way of implementing environmental codes of conduct in the tourism industry (Black & Weiler, 2005:29).

3.4.1.3 Training

Training may be an effective mechanism for enhancing a wide range of guides' roles and achieving at least minimum standards of performance, to ensure professionalism and competence (Hu, 2007:45).

To begin with, it is important to indicate that the type of training that this section deals with is "continuing education and training". It is for this reason that a brief explanation of continuing education and training is given below.

In the past, the standard training format was "front-end loaded", meaning that people were trained at the beginning of their working lives for a particular job and rarely received any further training. That trend has changed in the modern world and training has moved from "front-end" models towards the notion of "continuous development", which perceives training as a process that takes place throughout life (Carter, 1989:225). The notion of continuous development is also becoming popular because learning acquired during early full-time education has increasingly been accepted as inadequate to serve vocational needs, and is also considered to require periodic updates (Reid & Barrington, 1997:15). Apart from training people that are new to the industry, a continual process of training the experienced people is needed (Lan, 2000:32).

Adult and continuing education has arisen in response to particular needs of employees worldwide, including tourism employees. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2002) defines the concept of continuing education and training as including all kinds of general and job-related education and training that are

organised, financed or sponsored by authorities, provided by employers or self-financed. This definition by the OECD encompasses training and education, vocational and non-vocational, study for qualifications and for its own sake, outside expressly educational institutions as well as within (Tight, 1996: 20). However, a leading motivation for continuing education is to keep up to date with developments in knowledge and skills (Cervero, 1989:519).

Training is a vital investment in staff in any protected area organisation. It should be strategically planned in order to provide a meaningful learning experience for new or current employees. Training and development should be focused on developing the individual employee's fundamental competencies, so that he or she can perform current and future jobs to the highest standard. The outcome of training should be the development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes of protected area personnel (Eagles, McCool & Haynes, 2002:149).Training must be implemented continuously to maintain the same level of trainees' motivation on the job. Training activities provide opportunities for trainees to improve their performance on current and future jobs (Lan, 2000:31). This view on continuous training is shared by Eagles, McCool and Haynes (2002:149) who assert that training is not only necessary at the beginning of an employment contract, but must accompany the job throughout. They further assert that developing employees' skills not only helps to improve performance but also increases the likelihood that jobs remain interesting and challenging.

In this study continuing education and training are considered to involve the upgrading of the skills and knowledge of interpretation, as well as the attitudes to interpretation, of those who are already working as tour guides in national parks.

Some guides receive formal training before they are hired to be tour guides, but some receive on-the-job training. Whatever the case may be, the role of continuing education should be considered essential in the further development of knowledge and skills for tour guides. It is an excellent means of increasing interpreter effectiveness, particularly for inexperienced or untrained personnel (Roggenbuck, Williams & Robinski, 1992:43,

in citing Hodgson). However, training content and methods should be informed by literature on what constitutes good or best practice in ecotour guiding, as well as adult training literature (Ham & Weiler, 2000:4).

Training of guides helps to raise standards and improve the quality of the tourism product and thus the competitive advantage of regions and destinations (Black, Ham & Weiler, 2001:151). Training enables tour guides to do their job competently; they often need extensive training to provide them with the necessary skills (Weiler & Ham, 2000).

Ecotour training in particular, enables guides to apply the appropriate techniques to the various settings they may work in, so as to ensure the satisfaction of the tourists with the respective eco-experience. These techniques should aim at maximising learning about nature as well as helping to motivate ecotourists towards environmentally friendly behaviour (Haig & McIntyre, 2002:45; Goh, 2008:10; Skanavis & Giannoulis, 2010:59). Good guide training and good interpretive materials can have the effect of greatly expanding the number of what are considered desirable visitor sites, and thereby lessen the pressure on overused sites (Wallace, 1993:75). Most importantly, training is essential in developing countries because local people can become excellent nature guides, and can thus competently fulfil the demanding roles of tour guides as interpreters through training (Kimmel, 1999; Black, Ham & Weiler, 2001:147; Goh, 2008:10). Training of local people to be interpretive guides is important because it helps to achieve not only ecological sustainability but also economic sustainability (Skanavis & Giannoulis, 2010:51). There is a perception that most of the local guides have lived in their regions for a long time and may therefore have extensive practical knowledge of the local natural environment and local traditions (Goh, 2008:10). The gaps between what local guides know and can do, and what they need to know and do, define their training needs. A significant gap that outside trainers can fill is to deliver interpretive guiding knowledge and skills (Weiler & Ham, 2002:54).

Training has the capacity to increase a guide's awareness of environmental and socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism. This awareness may enable the guide to assist in the

management of protected areas by promoting minimal-impact behaviour and helping to enforce park regulations. Once trained, guides may encourage conservation action among both tourists and the local community (Black, Ham & Weiler, 2001:150). Furthermore, Black, Ham and Weiler.(2001) assert that tour guides specially trained in heritage tourism can help both visitors and local residents in conservation, preservation, and proper interpretation of the sites, ensuring that such interpretative activities promote respect for and appreciation of the sites' authenticity and historical significance.

In the study conducted by Roggenbuck, Williams and Robinski (1992:41) to assess the effectiveness of a National Park Service training workshop designed to increase commercial river guides' knowledge of the natural and cultural history of the New River Gorge National River, and to increase the quality of the interpretation the guides provided, customers reported that guides who had attended a training session spent more time discussing the river's natural and cultural history than guides who had not, and that this had a positive impact on knowledge of the area and trip enjoyment.

It is also assumed by Mason and Christie (2003:29) that the right sort of training can help to prepare guides who can satisfy their customers' basic needs while at the same time offering them the opportunity to change the way they think and act. Thus they may become "mindful" tourists, who develop a better understanding about, and positive attitudes towards, a location.

The benefits of training in ecotour guiding therefore emphasise the need for tour guides in general to be exposed to continuing professional development, such as in-service training, that will directly address, for instance, the gaps in their training and their professional needs in the field. However, Kimmel (1999:41) in his article on "Ecotourism as Environmental Learning", states that the quality of interpretation varies widely, but that disparity in quality is not necessarily directly related to qualifications.

Furthermore, Aiello (1998:60) in summarising lessons learnt in the process of developing, implementing and evaluating an interpretive training programme for staff in

a specific reef tour operation, indicates that there are major constraints in the development of a single standard training package to suit all types of staff across a destination region. It seems that the development of modules which can be used as part of an operation or a site-specific training programme may be a more efficient approach. Also staffs in interpretive guiding need help not just with the content, but also with the methods of interpretation. Weiler and Ham (2002:54) are of the opinion that in order for training to meet the needs of a country or region and contribute to sustainable development, the impetus for training must originate in the host country. They believe that this is true of any kind of human capacity building, and in the context of tour guiding there needs to be recognition from the various in-country stakeholders that guides are key players in meeting the needs of visitors, operators, host communities and protected area managers.

In an effort to develop a tour guide training programme for Tortuguero National Park (Costa Rica), Jacobson and Robles (1992:702) obtained input from groups involved with, and affected by, ecotourism and the potential tour guide programme in Tortuguero. They assert that participation by these groups – residents, hotel owners, resource managers, and the tourists themselves – was essential for the long-term sustainability of the industry and the natural resource base, in order to integrate economic development with the conservation of Tortuguero's natural resources. They came up with a model of target audiences and goals related to Tortuguero's ecotourism guide programme. In their model, the targeted audiences are resource managers (park managers and scientists), the community sector (hoteliers and tour guides) and tourists (domestic and international). The goals which they suggested for the ecotourism guide programme are:

- Natural resource conservation;
- Sustainable development;
- Community environmental education; and
- Tourists' environmental education.

The lesson learned from the research that was conducted by Ham and Weiler (2000:8) to outline the design, delivery and evaluation of Panama's first tour guide training programmes was *inter alia* that delivering cost-effective guide training is an important sustainable development strategy. It emerged from the research that one of the challenges of interpretive guide training is making it affordable to those who have the most to gain from it.

It is necessary, for nature-based tourism, to determine what skills are needed by practising guides in general and for interpretation, in order to cater for relevant interpretive training as well as continuing education and training (Chou, Tsai & Wang: 2002).

3.4.2 Quality assurance and the South African situation

The tourism industry in South Africa is guided by a range of different tourism standards that include codes of conduct, independently reviewed certification, and awards schemes (Mahony, 2007:397). However, it is inevitable that the issue of quality in tour guiding in South Africa cannot be discussed without associating it with the history of politics, with transformation in the tourism and conservation sectors, and tour guiding in particular, playing a central role. The percentage increase of women and blacks in the nature guiding industry can be directly attributed to the process of transformation (Paton, 2007:230).

According to Paton (2007:246), in 2007 the majority of nature guides were still white and male, although they were probably already a declining majority. Paton (2007:246) indicates that it is difficult to obtain empirical evidence about this because an ongoing demographic analysis including information on nature guides had not been done anywhere in the country at that time.

In South Africa, the need for quality assurance in tour guiding is recognised because tour guiding is a very critical component of the tourism value chain in South Africa.

Moreover, there is evidence that there is illegal guiding conducted by unregistered tour guides. Such practices have a negative impact on South African tourism as a result of inaccurate information and sub-standard service provided by illegal tour guides (Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism, 2008:1). The need to ensure quality in guiding in South Africa is reflected in the recent "strategy to professionalise tourist guiding" that was developed by the Department of Tourism (DET, 2009). This report, which was based on in-depth research on the current status of the tourist guiding sector in South Africa, includes a critical analysis of the quality of current education, training and development in the sector.

3.4.2.1 Training

South African needs in terms of training are vastly different from those of the rest of the world because of the unique composition of diverse cultures (Smal, 1997:27) and also because of South Africa's political history of discrimination. For instance, Braack (2004:305) asserts that there is a relative dearth of appropriately skilled blacks to recruit from because black people were deprived of quality jobs for decades and centuries, and had no incentives to train for wildlife positions.

The South African White Paper on tourism Development and Promotion (DEAT, 1996) attests to this by identifying "Lack of expertise and training" as some of the problem areas in South African tourism. Thus, the skill-based learning, literacy and adult education are regarded as key areas of neglect (Paton, 2007:218). It is important to say that individuals with outstanding guiding skills were in demand in South Africa as early as in the 1980's (Paton, 2007:233-234).

Thus, training and skills development in South Africa has a dual mandate: redressing the past and assuring quality in tourism, specifically in tour guiding. The creation of a series of Sector Education and Training Authorities (known as SETA's) in March 2000 was the fulfillment of this mandate (Kaplan, 2004:224). The SETAs have to facilitate development and implementation of aspects such as the Recognition of Prior Learning

(RPL) process for the workforce in their sectors, and assure the quality of the processes (Heyns, 2004:19). The SETA for the Tourism and Hospitality Sector and Sport Education and Training Authority is known as THETA. THETA which was established by the Skills Development Act (No 97 of 1998) (Kaplan, 2004:224) was tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that training programmes and qualifications are of a high standard throughout the country by accrediting education and training providers, monitoring provision and registering assessors (Paton, 2007:219). Currently the Training Framework has only two qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and these are:

- National Certificate in Tourism: Guiding (NQF 2); and
- National Certificate in Tourism: Guiding (NQF 4). (DEAT, 2009:23).

Interpretation is reflected in the training. For instance, in the exit level outcomes for National Certificate: Tourism Guiding, NQF 4, it is indicated that at the end of the programme learners should:

- Conduct, reflect on and improve a guided experience within a specific area that entertains and educates tourists by interpreting cultural and natural environments; and
- Present authentic, balanced interpretation of general aspects of South African Society as well as specific sites and resources.
- (Government Gazette, 2004:53).

SANParks' participation in THETA is recognised. For instance, THETA granted SANParks a total of 139 learnerships, and consequently 86 unemployed and 53 employed learners were enrolled in three programmes, one of which was a "Certificate Programme in Tourism Guiding" (SANParks, 2008:42).

3.4.2.2 Registration and licensing

In South Africa tourist guiding is regulated by the Tourism Second Amendment Act, No. 70 of 2000. In terms of this Act, the Minister appoints a National Registrar of Tourist Guides whose responsibilities include facilitating the growth and development of the tourist guiding sector; and improving and maintaining standards in the tourist guiding sector. This Act stipulates that any person who wishes to be registered as a tourist guide must apply to a provincial registrar. The provincial registrar registers a tourist guide once she/he is satisfied that the applicant complies with the competence for registration as a tourist guide in terms of the Act (Government Gazette, 2000). All nine provinces have registrars who have the role of dissemination of information about tourists' guides, establishing associations of tourist guides and providing any other information to promote and develop the tourist guiding sector (Seti, 2006:2).

After registration as a tourist guide, a badge is received. The badge has to be displayed at all times while guiding. Tourist guides are also issued with an identification card, which indicates for which province the tourist guide is qualified (Van der Merwe, 2003:9).

One of the requirements for a tour guide to be registered as such by a provincial registrar and to operate in specific areas is that they have to have certain qualifications and knowledge. Prospective tour guides must complete the National Certificate in Tourism: Guiding at Level 2 and/or 4 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (Van der Merwe, 2003:9).

3.4.2.3 Awards and professional organisations

SANParks has over the past three financial years formalised the process of recognising all staff inputs at national level through the Chief Executive Award. The award is now

fully entrenched within the organisation, and all sectors of SANParks activities participate (SANParks, 2008:47), including guides. This is one way of recognising excellence in guiding in SANParks. Some field guides and senior guides in some parks such as Marakele National Parks and Mapungubwe National Park and World Heritage Site have won the awards (Park managers, Pers. Com.2011). In South Africa, including SANParks, guides are not compelled to be members of an association, hence one of the recommendations of the research on the current status of the tourists guiding sector in South Africa (Department of Tourism, 2009:6) is that tour guides should be compelled to be members of an association.

3.4.2.4 Code of conduct

In South Africa, the application for tour guides must be accompanied among others by a declaration to comply with laws and regulations applicable to tourists' guides, including the tourist guide of conduct and ethics (Government Gazette, 2000). According to the Tourism Act no 70, 2000, a draft code of conduct and ethics must be drafted by the National Registrar, after consultation with the registrars, tour guide trainers and THETA. The final code of conduct and ethics must be forwarded to the provincial registrars, to be signed by all registered guides in South Africa as confirmation of their commitment to abide by the code. This applies to all types of tour guides in South Africa, including those in the national parks.

To conclude this section about quality assurance measures in tour guiding, it is important to highlight that it is advisable to use a combination of all the measures that are recommended for quality assurance in tour guiding. However, the other concern in tour guiding is "how is quality of interpretation assessed?" This concern leads to the following discussion on the role of evaluation in interpretation. It is important to note that not much research has been conducted on the topic of quality assurance in tour guiding in South Africa, but there is evidence that concerns regarding quality, not necessarily

interpretive quality, are always there and some measures have been taken to assure quality.

3.5 EVALUATION OF INTERPRETATION

Monitoring and evaluation are essential components of any management process, for without these components, managers may not have adequate knowledge about progress towards the objectives they have set themselves (Eagles, McCool & Haynes, 2002:151). A need for the adoption of effective monitoring and evaluation of the service performance of tour guides, and specifically an evaluation system for the periodical measuring of interpretive effectiveness, has been realised (Ap & Wong, 2001:559; 1977; Kimmel, 1999; Tsang, Yeung & Cheung, 2011:136).

Evaluation is a fundamental and essential tool for ensuring and improving programme quality. It involves identifying the important elements of an activity such as a tour. Evaluation establishes if expectations about the programme are fulfilled during the activity, so that appropriate reinforcement or changes are executed if necessary (Wheeler, 2005:1). Evaluation is the key to the survival and development of interpretation, although sometimes it can be a controversial issue for national parks (Ortiz, 2007:19). It is a challenging and sensitive issue, more especially since it may bring an element of discomfort to those who receive feedback when their performance is evaluated (Wheeler, 2005:1). It provides the measurement and assessment of whether or not goals and objectives are met. It sets the direction and helps establish what interpretation should do. It is a crucial and a worthwhile procedure in that it can produce constructive and reliable feedback that can assist in improving management decisions about how best to accomplish interpretive objectives and promote effectiveness (Munro *et al.*, 2008:2; Ward & Wilkinson, 2006:223).

Evaluation of an interpreter can be done by the audience (tourists), supervisor or manager, peer (colleague), expert (a professional evaluator), or the interpreter (self-evaluation). Evaluation of the interpreter should consist of verbal and non-verbal communication techniques and skills, interpersonal interactions with the audience (tourists), and expertise in and ability to address visitor needs and meet programme goals and objectives (Ward & Wilkinson, 2006:226). A self-evaluation is a simple and informal method. Interpreters (tour guides) do self-assessment by reflecting on their performance after an interpretive activity. Most people are comfortable with self-assessment but they often do not do it regularly. With frequent encouragement, self-evaluation can be made a regular habit (Wheeler, 2005:2). Peer evaluation can also be used. This involves observation and assessment by other tour guides who accompany a tour (Wheeler, 2005:2). This type of evaluation is useful on many levels and is highly recommended. It can assist in increasing overall effectiveness and building programmes. An evaluation that is conducted by a supervisor or manager is very beneficial. It can provide insights into the programme's effectiveness, the interpreter's skills and abilities, the audience's reactions, and how well the programme meets agency and programme goals and objectives. The feedback received from supervisors should be used to help improve the guide's interpretive techniques, skills, and abilities (Ward & Wilkinson, 2006:228).

Audience (tourists) evaluation identifies significant strengths and weaknesses in tour guides strictly from the audience's perspective (Wheeler, 2005:6). This type of evaluation is effective because it indicates if programme goals are being met, if the needs of the tourists are met, if the programme itself is effective, and what the level of tourists' satisfaction is.

Expert evaluation is a further method that is one of the most objective forms of evaluation. The advantage of using expert evaluators is that they are neutral and are often more able to recognise problems or issues that may be overlooked by peers and

supervisors. The disadvantage of using expert evaluation is that it can be costly and time consuming (Ward & Wilkinson, 2006:229).

A general problem is that most heritage sites have neither the time nor money to conduct extensive and consistent audience evaluation, even if it would be acceptable to management and visitors (Ryan & Dewar, 1995:295). In some cases evaluation of interpretation programmes is sporadic in natural resource management organisations. The sporadic evaluation of interpretation may be because of the apparent diversity of evaluative techniques and the subsequent complexity of selecting and applying evaluation to an interpretive programme (Munro *et al.*, 2008:3). That is why Mc Donough (1986:104) emphasised that interpreters have to assess more carefully the methods of evaluation they intend using. This should involve more training in the use of evaluative methods.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Many authors in the literature have shown concerns about the quality of interpretation in nature-based tourism. Some have suggested the use of quality assurance mechanisms such as a professional certificate, awards, licensing, codes of conduct or training, as some of the responsive strategies to the problems of interpretive guiding. Some of these have been used in the South African situation, and specifically in SANParks. Besides concerns about ensuring quality, there is a dire need for the assessment of the quality of interpretation. That is why there is a strong belief that evaluation of interpretation should be done in national parks, an exercise which can help to expose the existing problems and decide how they can best be tackled.

The following chapter (Chapter 4) provides details of the methods used to conduct this study.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents details of the research design and methodology used as well as an explanation and justification of how they were employed in this research. The methodology, as the core of the research design, is the tool used to accomplish part of the study, and specifically to obtain and analyse the relevant data (Thomas, 2006:357). To provide a brief context for the research design and methodology, a brief overview is given of the previous chapters (Chapters 2 and 3) that provided the theoretical framework on interpretation in national parks.

In Chapter 2, the focus was on the nature and place of interpretation in nature-based and cultural tourism destinations, with special reference to national parks. This chapter explained the role of interpretation in national parks and the interpretive roles of ecotour guides, as well as the conceptual foundation of this thesis, which is the "EROT model of interpretive communication" in order to give a picture of how interpretation in nature-based tourism is understood. A large proportion of the exposition in Chapter 2 assisted to fulfil Objective 1, while some sections (EROT model) assisted to fulfill Objective 2. Objective 1 aims:

- To examine the place and nature of interpretation in national parks.

In Chapter 3, a broad overview of some management support and quality assurance systems for tour guides' effectiveness was given. The quality assurance mechanisms that are used in tour guiding, such as professional associations, codes of conduct, certification, licensing and training, with special emphasis on continuing education and training for ecotour guides in nature-based tourism, were presented. The discussion further highlighted some of these mechanisms as they are used in the South African context. A brief discussion on management support for effective interpretation was also

given. Discussing quality assurance mechanisms helped to elucidate what can be done in managing tour guides' effectiveness in interpretive guiding. This chapter also explained the role of evaluation in ecotour guiding, with the intention of revealing what can be done to assess the quality of interpretive guiding in national parks. All the discussions in Chapter 3 aimed to fulfil the second objective, which is:

- To identify the factors constituting effective interpretation.

Various means were used to access the literature for Chapters 2 and 3. These included the following:

- The libraries of the University of Pretoria, North West University and the University of South Africa were used to collect information from books and periodicals;
- The inter-library loan facility of the North West University was used to access books from other universities in South Africa; and
- Databases such as EBSCO, Hospitality and Tourism Index and JSTOR were used to access journal articles and local and international theses and dissertations.

Reviewing the literature assisted the researcher to develop the theoretical framework of the envisaged model for effective interpretation for tour guides operating in SANParks, thereby highlighting the need for its further development through the empirical investigation, hence this chapter (Chapter 4).

This chapter (Chapter 4) presents discussion and clarification of the design and methods that were used in this research, such as the sampling methods, data collection, and data analysis to investigate empirically the 3rd, 4th, and 5th objectives and to test the formulated hypotheses, as indicated below:

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- Objective 3: To determine whether tour guides appropriately apply interpretive delivery techniques.

  H1: Within the South African context, tour guides do not effectively apply interpretive techniques in national parks.

- Objective 4: To identify tour guides' continuing education and training needs regarding interpretive delivery techniques.

  H2: Tour guides perceive the provision of continuing education and training in interpretive techniques as essential in improving their effectiveness in interpretive techniques**.**

- Objective 5: To assess the role of management within the context of South Africa's situation in supporting effective interpretation in SANParks national parks.

  H3: Perceived lack of support from management has a strong impact on tour guides' effective application of interpretive delivery techniques.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research is descriptive, i.e. the research describes phenomena as they exist, by identifying and obtaining information on the characteristics of a particular problem or issue (Hussey & Hussey, 1997:10-11).

Descriptive research is common in the leisure and tourism field because of the changing nature of the phenomena being studied (Veal, 2006:3), such as the tourists' and tour guides' views. It is non-experimental research because variables are not manipulated by the researcher and are instead studied as they exist (Belli, 2009:60; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996:115; Martin & Bridgmon, 2009:37).

The type of non-experimental research that was used in this study is cross-sectional, the design which is most commonly used in the social sciences. This design is best

suited to studies that intend to find out the prevalence of a phenomenon, situation, problem, attitude or issue, by taking a cross-section of the population. This approach is useful in obtaining an overall picture as it stands at the time of the study (Kitchin & Tate, 2000:93; Hussey & Hussey, 1997:59) so that there will not be the problem of chronological changes (Hussey & Hussey, 1997:59). The data is collected just once, over a short period of time, before being analysed and reported (Hussey & Hussey, 1997:59; Kitchin & Tate, 2000:93).

In this study the quantitative data was collected at six points in time during the period from May 2009 to April 2010, at the six parks that were selected (refer to Figure 4.1). These six parks, as stated in Chapter 1, were the Addo Elephant National Park (Eastern Cape Province), Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (Northern Cape Province), Table Mountain National Park (Western Cape Province), Marakele National Park (Limpopo Province), Mapungubwe National Park (Limpopo Province), and Kruger National Park (Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces).

Figure 4.1: Map showing the six selected national parks

Source: SANParks (2008).

The aim of collecting the quantitative data in these national parks was to gather information from tour guides on their perspectives on interpretation, especially their application of interpretive delivery techniques, their continuing education and training needs regarding interpretation, and the role of management in ensuring effective interpretation. While the tour guides were the focus of this study, the inclusion of other tourism players such as tourists and park authorities, who either influence or are influenced by the tour guides' activities (Hu, 2007:52), was however found essential. Hence information was gathered from tourists concerning their feelings about interpretation as offered by tour guides, i.e. the guides' interpretive delivery skills and, the contribution the guides made towards their satisfaction at that particular time. Information was also gathered from park officials in order to obtain their perspectives on interpretation in their parks, and to establish their role in making interpretation more effective.

The initial intention of the researcher was to include private operators and private guides (if any) that operate in the six selected parks. Several attempts were therefore made both telephonically and electronically to solicit their participation in the study but all was to no avail. They simply did not cooperate. A number of them even called on the researcher to refrain from talking to their tourists and tour guides.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used, on the basis of Neuman's view (2003) that a scientific research method is not one single thing, but a combination of ideas, rules, techniques and approaches that the scientific community uses to arrive at valid and objective results. Hence in this study the researcher used a combination of approaches and methods, i.e. mixed method research. In mixed method research, the researcher uses a mixture or combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, approaches or concepts in a single research study. This modus operandi helps to improve the quality of the research because different approaches have different strengths and weaknesses (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:51).

4.3 QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Interviews with selected individual park managers/officials were used as a qualitative method in this study. The word qualitative implies that there is an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:10). Qualitative methods help to check whether unexpected variables would emerge during qualitative data collection that could be integrated into the quantitative method of data collection (Muijs, 2004:9). Using qualitative methods enables researchers to explore a problem in depth. These are the informal conversational interview, the interview guide approach and the standardised open-ended interview (Johnson and Christensen, 2008:208). In this study, the researcher used the standardised open-ended interview. The use of this kind of interview was appropriate because the intention of the researcher was to focus on particular themes. Interviews allow the researcher to produce a rich and varied data set in a less formal setting. They also allow a more thorough examination of experiences, feelings or opinions that closed questions could never hope to capture, and therefore allow the researcher (interviewer) to make a true assessment of what the respondents really believe (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:275; Kitchin & Tate, 2000:213). The researcher also preferred a standardised open-ended interview in order to avoid variations in the questions and to remain focused. In the standardised open-ended interview the questions are all written out, and the interviewer reads the questions exactly as written and in the same order to all interviewees (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:209). The open-ended nature of the interview schedule was preferred because it allowed the researcher to probe and to be able to go into more depth.

Furthermore, Oppenheim, as cited in Kitchin and Tate (2000:213), suggests that the interview is really a precursor to a larger questionnaire survey, with the interview providing the basis for the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. Used together with such a questionnaire, the interview provides a pilot study for formulating relevant questions.

Interviews with selected individual park managers/officials were done in two phases. The first phase of the interview specifically solicited information on issues in interpretation such as its quality, its purpose and the training needs of the guides in this regard. The outcome of the first-phase interviews was intended to be used for the development of the quantitative instruments and to gather information on the management's views on interpretation by SANParks' tour guides in their parks and their role in ensuring effective interpretation. The second phase of the interviews was used as a follow-up session to clarify certain issues, including those that had emerged from the first- phase interviews (refer to Table 4.1).

In qualitative research the issue of sampling has little significance, as the main aim of most qualitative enquiries is either to explore or to describe the diversity in a situation, phenomenon or issue (Kumar, 2005:165). However, in this research a purposive sample was used to select six park officials who were based at six of the study sites, Marakele, Kruger, Table Mountain, Mapungubwe, Kgalagadi and Addo, as shown in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1. A purposive sampling technique is based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, its elements and the aims of the research. The researcher makes his/her judgement on who should participate on the basis of the participants' relevance to the topic. Thus the primary consideration in purposive sampling is the judgement of the researcher as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study (Kumar, 2005:179).

The rationale for using a purposive sampling, as stated by Sarantakos (1997:152) and Kumar (2005:179) was also driven by one of the aims of the study: to solicit information on the role of park management in enhancing effective interpretation. It was the researcher's judgement in conjunction and in consultation with SANParks (during the application to conduct interviews with SANParks) which made purposive sampling the best option, as compared with the other types of non-probability sampling methods such as accidental, quota and snowball sampling methods.

One-page standardised open-ended interview schedules for the first and the second phases (see Appendices C and D) were designed by the researcher for interviews with the park officials of all six selected sites. The first-phase interview schedule was based on:

- The literature survey, in order to construct the structured open-ended questions; and
- The principles that should be adhered to in designing an interview schedule.

The content of the interview schedule revolved around the following themes:

- The understanding of and the purpose of interpretation;
- The requirements for tour guides who do environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in SANParks;
- What needs to be done in order to enhance/promote effective interpretation in their national parks; and
- The critical elements in effective delivery of cultural and environmental interpretation.

Five telephone interviews were held with five of the six park officials and a personal interview was conducted with one (see Table 4.1) during the first phase, and all second-phase interviews were telephonic. The primary reason for conducting telephone interviews was ease of access to the interviewees, who were in geographically diverse locations , as well as that it was more cost-effective than driving to all the respective parks (distances shown in Figure 4.1).

However, the researcher found it useful to conduct one face-to-face personal interview, prior to the telephone interviews, with a park official of the biggest park. This provided an opportunity to form an overall picture of interpretation in SANParks. The greatest value of face-to-face interviewing lies in the depth of information and the detail that can be obtained, which far exceeds the information secured from telephone interviews (Cooper & Schindler, 2001:298).

The second-phase interview aimed to solicit information on issues such as:

- Transformation issues on employment of tour guides; and
- Monitoring and evaluation of guides' interpretive performance.

Official logistical procedures for interviews, such as making an appointment, were followed before the interviews were conducted. It is essential to make an appointment and to check later whether it is still convenient, because the schedules of busy people are often subject to unpredictable changes (Table 4.1) (Gillham, 2005:104). Appointments were fixed before the interviews were held because of the busy schedules of the park officials and were later confirmed and changed accordingly in certain instances. It was during the fixing of appointments that the researcher had an opportunity to clarify again the purpose of the interview and what was expected of the interviewee, to ask again for their consent and cooperation, and also to indicate how long the interview was likely to be. This was necessary, regardless of the correspondence received from the officials about this study and the contract agreements which had been signed earlier by both interviewee and interviewer (the researcher). Copies of the interview schedule were also sent electronically to the participants during the first phase of interviews. According to Gillham (2005:104), it is often helpful to send some written material such as a copy of the interview schedule, so that the researcher does not have to recite a long question. In this case, an interview schedule was sent so that the interviewees would be able to follow the questions without any hesitation or confusion.

The interviews took an average of 40 minutes each. The researcher wrote down the respondents' responses verbatim because no requests or arrangements had been made for tape-recording (which might not have been satisfactory when recorded over the telephone). According to Veal (2006:200), note-taking is acceptable when tape-recording is not possible.

Table 4.1: Types of interviews conducted with park officials (first-phase and second-phase)

Name of park	Number of Interviewees/ park officials and form of interview	Interview date (1st phase)	Interview date (2nd phase) (All telephone interviews)
Kruger National Park	1; Face-to-face interview	21 May 2009	13 May 2011
Table Mountain National Park	1; Telephone interview	29 May 2009	26 May 2011
Mapungubwe National Park	1; Telephone interview	1 June 2009	11 May 2011
Addo Elephant National Park	1; Telephone interview	12 June 2009	23 May 2011
Marakele National Park	1; Telephone interview	18 June 2009	17 May 2011
Kgalagadi Trans-Frontier Conservation Park	1; Telephone interview	11 August 2009	16 May 2011

In concluding this section, it should be reiterated that these interviews were conducted in this study to gain a broader understanding of the nature of interpretation in the parks, to investigate the role of management in enhancing effective interpretation, to determine what needs to be done to promote effective interpretation, to monitor tour guides' effectiveness, and to confirm the relevance of topics and themes that would be part of the quantitative process.

Section 4.4 provides the details of how the quantitative approach was used in this study.

4.4 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

This section explains how and why quantitative research was conducted in this study. The quantitative approach was used for the following reasons:

- To seek quantitative answers which qualitative, non-numerical methods may not provide, such as the number of tourists and tour guides involved, the extent to which guides effectively apply interpretive delivery techniques and the extent of the need for training in interpretation;

- To establish relationships between variables which could only be accurately studied using quantitative methods, such as the application and knowledge of interpretive delivery techniques in relation to the length of experience of tour guides; and

- To test the hypotheses of this study that could be appropriately tested by using the quantitative approach (Muijs, 2004:7).

4.5 SURVEY RESEARCH

The quantitative research method used in this study was a survey. Survey research is used when the researcher intends to describe relevant characteristics, opinions, attitudes or previous experience of individuals, groups, or organisations by collecting information from a sample (Berends & Zottola, 2009:90; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:184). The aim is to learn more about the large population by surveying a sample of that population; hence it might be called a descriptive survey (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:184). The survey strategy is usually associated with the deductive approach. Research becomes deductive when the researcher develops a theory and hypothesis/hypotheses and designs a research strategy to test them (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007: 138).

This survey research involved two groups: tourists and tour guides. Tourists' opinions about the application of tour guides' interpretive delivery, as well as their general satisfaction as attributed to interpretation, were sought. The research also entailed

describing the characteristics and opinions of tour guides with regard to their experience of the application of interpretive delivery techniques, that is, the problems they encountered and their perceived needs for training in interpretive delivery techniques.

In describing the opinions and characteristics of the tourists and tour guides, it became essential to follow appropriate sampling techniques.

4.5.1 Sampling

4.5.1.1 The relevant target population

Only about twelve of the twenty-two national parks of SANParks provide interpretive guided activities (Park managers, pers. com.,2011). Of the twelve parks, six were selected to represent the parks that provide interpretive guided activities. The target population comprised all the guides working in the six selected parks (see Table 4.1, and Figure 4.1), that is, about 120 guides, and the accessible tourists who participated in the guided activities of the six selected parks during the duration of the fieldwork.

It is essential to mention that the motivation to select SANParks as the study area was enhanced by the fact that parks under the authority of SANParks are distributed across many provinces of South Africa (Figure 2.3), as opposed to some other conservation and tourism authorities which are only provincially based. Furthermore, SANParks, through the network of its national parks, constitutes almost 62% of the South Africa's formal protected areas (Castley, Patton & Magome, 2009:403). It is regarded as the highest conservation authority in South Africa (Brynard & Malan, 2002:107).

Non-probability sampling was used. It is acceptable to use non-probability because it may become imperative for the researcher to use non-probability sampling techniques in a situation where the number of elements in the population is either unknown or cannot be individually identified (Kumar, 2005; 177). For the said reasons, non-probability sampling was applied in this study.

The convenience (accidental) sampling technique, which is a non-probability technique, was used in this study. This type of sampling technique relies on conveniently available subjects (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996:184), and is used due to practical constraints. It may also be used when the researcher envisages that it would be either impossible or unfeasible to select the kinds of probability sampling (Babbie, 1992:230; Johnson & Christensen, 2008:238). As a result, only people who are available, volunteers or those who can be easily recruited and are willing to participate may form part of a sample (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:238).

The convenience (accidental) sampling technique was used in the six parks, Kruger, Marakele, Table Mountain, Kgalagadi, Mapungubwe and Addo, to select tour guides because of the following:

- Only the researcher herself distributed copies of the questionnaire to the guides, and that involved a lot of travelling time to parks (and their different camps) that are very far from each other. Under certain circumstances this strategy is an excellent means of obtaining information quickly and inexpensively.
- It was only possible and convenient to access tour guides when they were in their administration building waiting to begin their guided activities or immediately after a guided tour. The researcher was therefore obliged to involve only those who were available at that time. Thus some of the tour guides were not present when copies of the questionnaire were discussed and/or distributed.

A convenience sampling technique was also used to approach the tourists. This was imperative because of the fact that tourists are not always willing to participate in surveys. In most cases they are reluctant to do this because they find it burdensome to take part, when they have come to relax at leisure. Refusal to respond is the most common reason for non-response (Welman, 2005:73). Therefore, only those who were willing to complete the questionnaire formed part of the sample.

Sample size for tour guides: Of the 98 (n=98) questionnaires that were distributed to tour guides, 46 (n=46) questionnaires were completed and returned. This represents a response rate of about 47% (46.93%). The distribution of the number of questionnaires returned by tour guides is shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Tour guides who participated in the study

Name of park	Number of copies of questionnaire returned
Kruger National Park	27
Marakele National Park	5
Kgalagadi Trans-Frontier Conservation Park	0
Mapungubwe National Park	2
Addo Elephant National Park	6
Table Mountain National Park	6
Total	**46**

It is important to highlight the low response/no response from the tour guides in some cases as shown in Table 4.2. This was not surprising when considering that, given today's increasingly fast-paced culture and the growing demands and expectations which employees are faced with, tour guides may be less willing to commit themselves to a voluntary activity such as completing a survey (Sax, Gilmartin & Bryant, 2003:423). Additionally, with regard to tourists, it is important to highlight that it is difficult to construct with confidence a representative sample of visitors at a tourist destination such as a resort (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill, 1993:55). Out of the 1 000 (n=1000) questionnaires given to tourists, 169 (n=169) tourist questionnaires were completed and returned in usable form. This represents a response rate of about 17% (n=16.9%). According to Van Dou (2004:145), non-response is a major disadvantage of using a questionnaire, and there is a view that non-response has increased in recent years (Sax, Gilmartin, & Bryant, 2003:411). The recipients may simply decide not to

respond to the questionnaire. Since tourists tend to be transient travellers it is difficult to do follow-ups, which could help to maximise the response rate.

It was deemed necessary to establish the number of tourists who join the guided activities in the six national parks. Getting specific numbers of tourists who join guided activities that are conducted by SANParks' tour guides or private tour guides was a problem, because in many instances, the numbers of those who enter the gates of national parks and those who specifically join the guided activities are not categorised. However, some park managers provided the researcher with some rough estimates electronically. For instance, at Addo Elephant National Park, about 27 204 tourists join the SANParks' guides' game drive per year, whereas at Mapungubwe National Park, of the estimated 260 000 tourists who visit the park per year, it is about 4 176 tourists who may have joined the guided activities. In some of the parks, it was established that there were no private tour operators or private guides, whereas in some others there are private tour operators and tour guides. The following are some of the responses that were received about private guides/private tour operators:

"There are no private tour operators with open vehicles in the park, we do get however once in a blue moon the Overland which comes in. The only Safari companies which do visit the park regularly are -------, but we do not have the numbers about their tourists"

"We do not have private tour operators in our park, there are regulations about the type of vehicles that they should use. One or two companies around have shown interest, but their vehicles do not comply with our requirements"

"Unfortunately we do not have any stats on outside operators or concessionaires"

4.5.2 Data collection

It is always advisable to choose the data collection methods that are appropriate to the research questions and objectives (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007: 356). Questionnaires, which may be described as a data collection instrument that each research participant fills out, were used to collect the quantitative data (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:170) (see Appendices A & B). Questionnaires are the type of instrument most commonly used in surveys.

4.5.2.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires can be used for descriptive or explanatory research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007: 356). It became appropriate to use a questionnaire in this study because of the descriptive nature of the study. Despite the descriptive nature of this study, what motivated the researcher to use a questionnaire was the fact that using a questionnaire is less expensive because the researcher saves time and human and financial resources; and it offers greater anonymity, as there is no face-to-face interaction between respondents. This helps to increase the likelihood of obtaining accurate information in the case of sensitive questions (Kumar, 2005:131).

Questionnaires are commonly used in tourism research when soliciting opinions and gathering information on issues such as the type of interpretation that is provided and the application of interpretive delivery techniques. For instance, Madin and Fenton (2004:126) used a questionnaire to assess visitors' knowledge and understanding of the primary topic areas emphasised in interpretive programme activities. So did Frauman and Norman (2004: 382), to develop a further understanding of the construct of mindfulness and its application in managing visitors to natural, cultural or historically based tourism destinations. According to Ham and Weiler (2003:23), questionnaire surveys are the most widely used methods for measuring learning in interpretive settings.

4.5.2.2 Questionnaire design

Both the guides' and the tourists' instruments were self-designed in English by the researcher. Designing a questionnaire is a complex procedure that involves a great many considerations (McBurney & White, 2004:238); hence the researcher formulated the questionnaires by making use of the following:

- Literature review (issues raised in the literature). Issues raised that emanated from the literature include the following:

  - The meaning of interpretation as communication to tourists with the aim of enhancing their experience through entertaining and educating them (Chapter 2);

  - Guides' training needs and the role of management in ensuring effective interpretation through training (Chapter 3);

  - Effective interpretation and Ham's EROT model of effective interpretation (Chapter 2); and

  - The role of guides in enhancing tourists' overall experience, satisfaction and knowledge (Chapter 2).

- Modified portions of various questionnaires that were previously used in interpretive research, such as the one in Armstrong and Weiler's (2003: 45-46) section on delivery in their instrument. These portions were considered to be integrated because they related well to the objectives of this study regarding the application of interpretive delivery techniques in nature-based tourism. Despite that, the researcher found these extracted portions relevant to testing the applicability of Ham's EROT model.

- Some matters which emanated from the interviews.

- Principles that should be adhered to in designing a questionnaire; and

- The team of the Department of Statistics, in correctly structuring the questionnaire from a technical point of view.

The following discussions explain the format and the content of the questionnaires.

4.5.2.3 Format and content of the questionnaire for tour guides (see Appendix A)

This questionnaire, which included both closed-ended and open-ended precoded questions, was designed to gather information on the knowledge which tour guides have of interpretive delivery, on whether the guides effectively apply interpretive techniques during interpretation, on guides' continuing education and training needs in regard to interpretation and on how they perceive the role of management in ensuring the effective application of interpretation.

The scales of measurement that were used in the questionnaire included the rating, and categorisation scales. Rating questions are often used to collect opinion data. Most frequently the Likert-style rating scale is used, in which the respondents are asked to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement or series of statements (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:179; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:372). The scales used in the questionnaire provided for nominal, ordinal and interval data.

The six–page questionnaire for tour guides comprised Sections A, B, C and D. Part of Section B was derived and summarised from Armstrong and Weiler's (2003:43-46) instrument.

- **Section A** - Biographic data: This first part of the questionnaire was designed to gather information on the general background of the guides. It comprised twelve questions (Question 1 – Question 12) where participants were responding to particular questions from the fixed lists.

- **Section B** - Factors that affect interpretive delivery: This part of the questionnaire aimed at soliciting information from guides on how effective they are in the interpretive delivery techniques, as well as their continuing education and training needs in regard to interpretive delivery techniques. This section included twelve items (Questions 13.1 – 13.12), and the respondents were asked to reflect on each item using a 5-point Likert-type scale to measure their problems in applying

interpretive delivery techniques as well as their continuing education and training needs in interpretation, where 1 = there was no problem at all and 5 = there was a big problem, in applying interpretive delivery techniques. Similarly, regarding their training needs, respondents were required to indicate 1 on the scale if there was no need for training on a particular aspect, up to 5 if they felt there was a great need for training on a particular aspect. This section further required respondents to rank interpretive delivery techniques in order of importance from 1 to 5 (Question 14). Respondents were also required to indicate any other type of training which they felt they needed to improve their interpretive delivery (Question 15).

- **Section C** – Other concerns with regard to effective interpretive delivery: This section required the respondents to indicate on a 5-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they felt that the other listed aspects had any negative effect on the quality of their delivery, by indicating 1= when they strongly agreed that it had, and 5 = when they strongly disagreed (Questions 16.1 – 16.7).

- **Section D** further solicited information on upgrading training courses which they had attended on interpretive guiding since they started working as guides (Question 17, 17.1), and the reasons for not attending if they had not attended (17.2.1 – 17.2.6).

Table 4.3: Questionnaire for tour guides: construction summary

Section	Topic	Number of questions	Scale type
A	Biographical and demographic aspects of tour guides	Q1 – Q12	Information, multiple choice and open ended
B	Factors that affect effective interpretive delivery (problems and training needs in the specific aspects)	Q13.1 – Q13.12	Likert scale
	Opinions on the relative importance of the interpretive delivery techniques	Q14.1 – Q14.5	Rating
	Opinions regarding any other training needs to improve delivery techniques	Q15	Open-ended
C	Concerns about negative attributes that affect tour guides' quality of interpretive delivery	Q16.1 – Q16.7	Likert scale
D	Information on previous participation in an upgrading courses	Q17.1	Yes/No
	Reasons for not participating in an upgrading course	Q17.2	Checklist

4.5.2.4 Format and content of the questionnaire for tourists (see Appendix B)

This was a one-page questionnaire. The researcher decided on a one-page instrument as a way of encouraging tourists to complete it, especially because tourists are not always eager to complete questionnaires. The rating and the ranking were used as measurement scales, and the scales provided the nominal and the ordinal data.

The construction of this instrument was as follows:

- **Introductory remarks** explained the purpose of the survey.

- **Questions 1- 3** formed a section on sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, including age, gender and nationality.

- **Question 4.1- 4.3** was a Likert-type scale that required respondents to indicate how they felt about their interpretive experience, their satisfaction with the way the tour guide interpreted and their experience regarding environmental or cultural knowledge, where 1 indicated very much and 5 not at all.

- **Question 5.1 - 5.12** had items which required the respondents to indicate how often guides performed particular activities (according to EROT model of interpretation), where 1 was for never and 5 was for always. These listed activities/items are central to what constitutes quality interpretation, according to the literature.

4.5.3 Procedures

4.5.3.1 Permission to conduct the study

The research followed the procedure that is normally used to seek permission to conduct research within an organisation (SANParks). The research panel committee of the organisation met several times to scrutinise the proposal and to give comments and suggestions on various aspects of the study such as the focus of the study, the study sites, participants, aims and ethical considerations. After several meetings, the committee granted permission to conduct the research at SANParks (see Appendix G).

4.5.3.2 Ethical considerations

The researcher followed appropriate University of Pretoria procedures to apply for ethical clearance of research through the University's Ethics Committee. Besides the University procedure, the researcher had to comply with SANParks' ethical procedure

(through SANParks' research committee), which was incorporated into the application for approval.

These committees (SANParks' and the University of Pretoria's Ethics Committees) looked at the research proposal/application and reviewed and approved the ethical standards of the research, such as confidentiality, anonymity and consent of the participants. In complying with the procedures of both committees, the researcher duly included space for the respondents' signatures to indicate voluntary participation in the study (in the case of the guides' questionnaire), and declarations in the questionnaires that the participation was voluntary (in the case of both tourists' and guides' questionnaires). With regard specifically to the interviews, over and above complying with the University's and SANParks' requirements, the researcher made telephone calls to further explain the purpose of the interviews and of the research, and to obtain the consent the researcher sent the interview schedules electronically to the interviewees.

4.5.3.3 Pilot study

The questionnaires (for both guides and tourists) were pretested with five tourists and three tour guides, as well as with officials dealing with research in national parks that were not part of the study. The pretesting was done in order to examine both the effectiveness and the sensitivity of the questions, and the following questions formed the main considerations during the pilot study:

- How clear and understandable are the questions to the respondents?
- How applicable are the questions to the respondents?
- If sensitive issues were involved, were questions so phrased that tourists and guides could answer willingly without feeling offended?

The questionnaires were accordingly modified where necessary. For instance, "other" was included as a third option in Question 6, and "as far as possible" was added to Question 13.7 in the guides' questionnaire (see Appendix A). "Where applicable" was included in Question 5.7 of the tourists' questionnaire (see Appendix B).

4.5.4 Administering of the final questionnaire

Self-administered questionnaires were used. Such questionnaires are usually completed by the respondents (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:356). Self-administered questionnaires are generally cheaper and quicker than interview surveys. They are also especially appropriate if a questionnaire contains sensitive questions, when it is more convenient for the respondents to respond to anonymous self-administered questions (Babbie, 1992:277). The following section describes how the self-administered questionnaires were conveyed to the tourists and tour guides in this study.

4.5.4.1 Questionnaire for tourists

A delivery (drop-off) method was used to deliver a one-page questionnaire to tourists. It took approximately 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The procedure was such that tourists collected the questionnaires when they were collecting the park's indemnity forms at the reception desk, or they received questionnaires from the guide immediately after the guided activity. Tourists were given two options for returning the questionnaires: they either left them at the reception area or gave them to the guide immediately upon completion of the guided tour.

Tourists were assured of complete anonymity and confidentiality and no contact details were required. The tourists did not have to give the name of the guide, and that helped to avoid bias and ensure no interference on the part of the guide. To increase the response rate, tourists were asked to complete the questionnaire immediately after the activity before they dispersed. It should however be mentioned that some tourists were not interested in completing the questionnaires, hence the low response rate to the tourists' questionnaire. According to Muijs (2004:43), the non-response will not matter if there is certainty that those who have not responded are very similar to the respondents on all relevant variables, and would therefore have answered the survey in a similar

manner if they had participated. The researcher assumed that this was the case in the survey of the tourists and that therefore the views of the tourists represented the reality and could be used for generalisation. This therefore means that this study used the exit survey of tourists, bearing in mind that some studies have used both pre- and post-visit samples for interpretive research (Tubb, 2003:481).

This study only used an exit survey, mainly because the focus was not on testing the knowledge and behaviour of the tourists before and after, but on how effective the guides were in their delivery techniques, whereas most of the studies that have used both pre- and post-visit surveys, such as Chou, Tsai & Wang (2002), aimed at testing knowledge and behavioural changes.

4.5.4.2 Questionnaire for tour guides

The researcher used two methods, i.e. dropping off questionnaires or administering them to a group, depending on the circumstances. For example, in a situation where guides would not be available because they were busy with guided activities for tourists, the researcher used a drop-off. But if some guides were not engaged with tourists at a particular time, the researcher would proceed to administer them individually. However, as far as possible, the researcher made sure that the tour guides completed their questionnaires when the researcher was available at the site to help explain when the respondents wanted further clarification. That therefore helped to increase the response rate of the guides' questionnaires. Being present at the sites enabled the researcher to meet with the coordinators of the guided activities, such as head guides, in order to negotiate for assistance with the distribution of the tourists' questionnaires that would take place later after their guided activities.

It was possible in certain camps and parks for the researcher to personally administer the questionnaire to a group of guides. According to McBurney and White (2004:245), group administration is a very efficient use of time and money and has a very high response rate. In this research, administering to a group enhanced the response rate of

the guides' questionnaires because the researcher collected them immediately. It was also possible to collect from those whom the researcher had engaged individually. In rare instances, the researcher allowed and requested the others that she had not met to submit the forms later (after a day or two) or to post them.

4.5.4.3 Covering letter

A covering letter was used to introduce the questionnaire to the respondents (see Appendix A). The purpose of the covering letter was to:

- Inform the respondents about the purpose of the study;
- Indicate why it was important for the respondents to complete the questionnaires as genuinely as they could; and
- Assure the respondents that there were no right or wrong answers, that they would not be identified and that their answers would be treated confidentially.

4.6   DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

4.6.1 Qualitative data analysis

Statements that were made by the six officials of the parks during the interviews were used as the sample for analysis. In analysing the qualitative data, the researcher used the method described and recommended by Kitchin and Tate (2000:231). This method involves description, classification and connection of statements. The description stage involves the portrayal of data in a form that can be easily interpreted. The classification stage involves "breaking up" the data into constituent parts and then placing them in similar categories or classes. It is during this stage that factors that are important or more salient are identified in order to derive commonalities and divergences. The last stage, connection, involves identifying and understanding the relationships and associations between different classes (Kitchin & Tate, 2000:231).

This method was found suitable for the analysis of the interview responses because it provided an opportunity to scrutinise data from all the respondents before selecting the aspects that could form part of the quantitative instruments.

4.6.2 Quantitative data analysis

The responses of the tourists and the tour guides generated quantitative data collected through the use of the questionnaires. The quantitative data analysis was done with the help of the Department of Statistics of the University of Pretoria, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0.

Data from the questionnaires which was already coded was entered into a statistical package for the analysis. Error checking was done because errors can and do occur, especially when large and complex data sets are involved. These errors could occur in typing, repetition or recording (Kitchin & Tate, 2000:73).

The SPSS version 17.0 analysed the quantitative data using both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques. Descriptive statistics are used to organise, summarise, describe and compare quantitative information in meaningful ways (Salkind, 2008:8; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:433). Inferential statistics are used to draw conclusions about populations to determine the probability that results are not due to random chance (Belli, 2009:75; Salkind, 2008:163).

In this study, descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, measures of central tendency and dispersion (mean, mode and median) were used to describe, summarise and compare data that was obtained from the tourists and from the tour guides. The inferential statistics were used to draw conclusions beyond the descriptive data and to test the hypotheses that were formulated for this study (Lapan & Quartaroli, 2009:75) (see 1.5 & 5.1).

4.6.3 Inferential statistics for hypothesis testing

Statistical inference is a process of coming up with conclusions about a population based on the data that describe the sample (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:211). The process assists the researcher to confirm or reject predictions or hypotheses made in the research (Field, 2005:24). It allows the researcher to make probabilistic statements about whether a particular supposition is true or false (hypothesis testing), the relationships between two or more variables, and the characteristics of the population from which a sample is drawn (Shaw & Wheeler, 1994:65), thus helping the researcher to rule out the possibility that the results from the sample size could have been obtained by chance (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:211).

Inferential statistical tests can be subdivided into two groups, parametric and non-parametric (Kitchin & Tate, 2000:109). Both parametric (such as the t-test) and non-parametric (such as the chi-square test) tests were used in this study to examine the extent to which the hypotheses were significant. Parametric tests make parametric assumptions, assumptions concerning the characteristics of the underlying populations that the samples come from. These include the assumptions that populations are normally distributed and samples come from distributions with equal variance. However, non-parametric tests may be used if the requirements for parametric tests might not be met, e.g. if the data is not interval, if the parametric assumptions might not be valid, and if the assumptions of parametric tests are not met. In that case, it is appropriate to employ a non-parametric test which does not make the interval assumption about the scale of measurement or any assumptions about the underlying distributions (Hinton, 1995:204). Inasmuch as non-parametric tests do not follow the same rules that are followed by parametric tests, they are, however, just as valuable (Salkind, 2008:263). For instance, some non-parametric statistics are appropriate for data that are ordinal rather than interval in nature, and others may be useful when a population is highly skewed in one direction or the other (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:257).

Depending on the type of data, the way in which significance is tested using non-parametric and parametric statistics answers one or more of the following questions:

- Is the association statistically significant?
- Are the differences statistically significant?
- What is the strength of the relationship, and is it statistically significant?
- Are the predicted values statistically significant? (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:441).

In this research, the chi-square was used to test for significant relationships and differences between variables and the independent t-tests were used to test whether two groups (categories) were different (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:442). The tests are described below.

4.6.3.1 Chi square

The chi-square test, which is a commonly used non-parametric test, was used in relation to cross-tabulations of variables. A chi-square test was computed to test associations between two nominal variables. The chi-square test assists in finding out how likely it is that the two variables are associated. It is based on a comparison of the observed values in the table with what might be expected if the two distributions were entirely independent. The conclusion is drawn on the basis that, if the probability is 0.05 or less, it means there is a 95% certainty that the relationship between variables could not have occurred by chance only (Huizingh, 2007:250; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:444). Therefore, there is a statistically significant relationship (null hypothesis is rejected) (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:441).

In this research, the conclusions as to whether null hypotheses were rejected or accepted were drawn by using the values of Fisher's Exact Test. Fisher's Exact Test is mainly used for very small samples (Huizingh, 2007:251; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:274) for the following questions:

- Question 4.2 (I was generally satisfied with the way the guide presented: yes/no) with Question 4.1 (I enjoyed my experience), Question 4.3 (The experience from the guide has increased my knowledge), Question 2 (Gender), and Question 3 (Nationality).

The standardised residuals were computed to determine which cells were over-represented or under-represented in the actual sample, compared with the expected frequency. In the case where the standardised residual had a positive value (+), this meant that the cell was over-represented (meaning that there were more subjects in this category than were expected), whereas the standardised residual that had a negative value (-) meant the cell was under-represented (meaning that there were fewer subjects in this category than expected) (University of Texas, n.d.).

4.6.3.2 Independent t-test

A two-tailed test was chosen instead of a one-tailed test because the statistical hypotheses that were drawn for this study were non-directional as opposed to directional hypotheses. In a non-directional research hypothesis, the difference between groups is reflected but the direction of the difference is not specified (Salkind, 2008:126).

A t-test is used to examine differences between groups on one or more variables (Salkind, 2008:166). Therefore the t-test compares the mean values of different groups of the sample using a measure of the spread of the scores (Lee,Lee & Lings, 2008:356). The basic idea of the t-test is that, if the likelihood of any difference between these two groups occurring by chance alone is low, this will be represented by a large t-statistic ($p<0.05$) and the result would be statistically significant (Lee, Lee & Lings, 2008:356; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:447).

In this study, the Levene's Test results for equality of variance (which assumes that the variances in two groups are equal) were considered in the analysis. The results are

significant when p≤0.05: then the null hypothesis is not correct and variances are significantly different. If Levene's test is non-significant (p>0.05), then the null hypothesis is accepted (Field, 2005:301; Lee, *et al.*, 2008:357). Levene's Test was used to assess the following in the items for the tour guides:

- The relationship between problems that tour guides encounter with regard to interpretive delivery techniques and the needs of tour guides in connection with interpretive delivery techniques (Questions 13.1-13.12).

- The relationship between the academic qualifications (Question 3) and training needs in interpretive delivery techniques and problems with interpretive delivery techniques (Questions 13.1-13.12).

- The relationship between the question "Have you ever attended any upgrading training course on interpretive guiding since you started working as a guide?" (Question 17), and problems with interpretive delivery techniques (Questions 13.1-13.12).

When comparing two samples, or a sample and a population, the aim of hypothesis testing is to determine whether the observed differences are due to chance factors or sampling variability, or whether they are due to the action of a certain independent variable on a dependent one (Bless & Kathuria, 1993:128).

4.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

The concepts of validity and reliability are multifaceted. The variety of types of validity and reliability lends itself to several ways in which they can be addressed (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:105). Despite these complications and dimensions in validity and reliability, these concepts still remain a crucial part of methodology (Mellenbergh, 1999:325).

One way of ensuring the validity of tourists' and tour guides' instruments in this study was to do a pilot study (see section 4.5.3.3). The discussions and input during the pilot study aimed at ensuring the validity of the instruments. Furthermore, according to Mellenbergh (1999:325), in empirical studies, substantive hypotheses and theories are

investigated, and a study is said to be valid if the statements on the investigated hypotheses and theories can be justified by the empirical results of the study. Therefore, another way of ensuring validity in this study was to justify hypotheses and the theories of the study using both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Importantly, the validity of this study was further enhanced by the interview process that the researcher conducted with the officials (see Table 4.1).

The sound research procedures that were used by the researcher were intended to ensure validity, on the basis of the views of Hussey and Hussey (1997:57) that research errors and misleading measurements could undermine validity. The literature review also assisted the researcher with the formulation of items, concepts and constructs to ensure relevance and validity. With regard to the validity and the reliability in the qualitative research, it should be highlighted that the concepts of reliability and validity are viewed differently by qualitative researchers. They strongly believe that these terms as defined in quantitative terms may not apply to the qualitative paradigm (Golafshani, 2003:600). However, the validity and reliability of the interviews was enhanced by making further clarifications during the interview (first and second phases), in order to avoid misunderstandings on the part of the interviewees about what was asked.

Reliability refers to the consistency or dependability of a measure (Belli, 2009:62). There are various ways in which the researcher may ensure reliability. For instance, Babbie (1992:131) asserts that one way of handling the problem is to use measures that have proven their reliability in previous research. In this research, the literature survey assisted the researcher with solid information on appropriate measures that had been successful in conducting similar research.

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research design and methodology that were used during the study. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used, as explained in this chapter. Clarifications were made on the rationale for using qualitative and quantitative methods.

The sampling techniques and size, data collection methods, procedures and data analysis were discussed, with clarification of the rationale for using each of the methods in both the qualitative and the quantitative approaches. This section concluded by providing a brief discussion on the reliability and validity of results.

The following chapter (Chapter 5) focuses on the results of the empirical investigation.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter (Chapter 4) gave an explanation of the research methods that were used to achieve the objectives of this study. The aim of this chapter is to present and describe the analysis of the data. The first section (5.2) focuses on the qualitative analysis, the purpose of which is to analyse data collected during the first and the second phases of open-ended interviews. The first phase of open-ended interviews focused on knowledgeable participants' views on what they perceive as critical issues in the delivery of effective interpretation; on the role they play in ensuring effective application of interpretive delivery techniques; and on what they perceive as the training needs of tour guides in interpretation, contributing to the formation of the constructs of the environmental interpretation model proposed in this study. The second phase of open-ended interviews was used as a follow-up session to clarify certain issues, including those that had emerged from the first- phase interview.

The second section (5.3) focuses on the quantitative analysis from which data was derived: on the characteristics of tour guides, tour guides' problems in the application of interpretive delivery techniques and the extent of their training needs in interpretive delivery techniques, and factors that impede the quality of tour guides' interpretive delivery as well as tourists' views on tour guides' application of interpretive delivery techniques. The hypotheses of the study are reintroduced in this chapter for purposes of discussion on whether they were confirmed or rejected by the findings:

H1: Within the South African context tour guides do not effectively apply interpretive techniques in national parks.

H2: Tour guides perceive the provision of continuing education and training in interpretive techniques as essential in improving their effectiveness in interpretive techniques.

H3: Perceived lack of support from management has a strong impact on tour guides' effective application of interpretive delivery techniques.

5.2 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Six interviews were conducted, with two park managers, two tourism managers and two nominated officials in the park and the extracts of the responses from the interviewees are shown in Appendix E. The summarised version of the interview responses is shown in Tables 5.1 to 5.7 and the main points that were made follow in the section below (refer to Appendix E for extracts from the interview responses).

5.2.1 The primary purpose of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation

Table 5.1 shows responses to the question "What do you see as the primary purpose of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation?" (Question 1).

Table 5.1: Respondents' views on the primary purpose of interpretation

Question 1 What do you see as the primary purpose of environmental and cultural heritage?	*Respondents*	A	B	C	D	E	F
Responses							
Cultural and environmental conservation		1	1	1	1	1	1
Tourists' knowledge (cultural and environmental)		1	1	1	1		
Enhance the overall experience		1				1	

The participants had a common understanding of the purpose of interpretation in national parks. All six respondents viewed the purpose of interpretation as being conservation of the natural and cultural environments (Table 6.1). Statements such as, "It adds value to the preservation of indigenous knowledge and the environment"; "Is to ensure that we conserve our environment. We are a conservation body therefore

environmental conservation is our mandate", were some of the statements uttered by the respondents.

Four of the respondents indicated that the purpose of interpretation is also to help tourists develop environmental and cultural knowledge. That was evident in statements such as, "We capitalise on it as education to visitors so that they could know our past history"; "To instil conservation values".

Two of the respondents saw the purpose of interpretation as to enhance tourists' experience as well. A statement made by one respondent was, "It adds value to the tourists' experience".

The description of what interpretation is as perceived by the park officials is in line with how it is in the literature on interpretation in national parks (refer to 2.2) and also the results of the study by Ham and Weiler (2003:35) which indicated that managers of the protected areas appreciate the value of interpretation, and see it as a tool to manage the tourists' behaviour and as a conservation tool.

5.2.2 Minimum requirements for tour guides to operate in the parks

Table 5.2: Respondents' views on the minimum requirements for tour guides to operate

Question 2 What are the minimum requirements for tour guides to operate in the park?	Respondents	A	B	C	D	E	F
Responses							
Formal qualification/ in guiding NQF2 or NQF4 in a recognized institution		1	1	1	1	1	1
Official registration.		1				1	1
Knowledge of the park area.		1	1		1		
Firearm competency						1	1
Passing of test based on local manual					1		

As shown in Table 5.2, the results of the interviews indicated that all six respondents held the view that guides need to have a formal qualification at NQF Level 2 or NQF Level 4, obtained from a recognised institution of learning. In terms of the Tourism Second Amendment Act, No. 70 of 2000, potential guides in South Africa have to register with the provincial registrar (refer to 3.4.2.2 and Appendix F). The park managers'/tourism managers' responses confirmed that in South Africa, guides are not allowed to practise as tour guides unless they have undergone a process of registration, and it has been approved.

Three of the respondents felt that one of the requirements should be that guides should be very knowledgeable about the park area where they operate. Knowledge of the park encompasses content such as aspects of environmental conservation and/or cultural heritage. It emerged from one of the participants that it is a requirement in their park that guides thoroughly read and understand the contents of the manual of information about the local area and are tested on it. This is one of the strategies for quality assurance that is used in the participant's park, with the understanding that knowing the manual would enhance guides' knowledge about the local area.

Two of the respondents pointed out that firearm competency is also one of the requirements for tour guides to operate in the park. Understandably so, because of the dangerous animals which guides and tourists may come across during the process of interpretation.

Further responses that emerged during the second phase of the interviews about employment of qualified guides were as follows:

- "We always stick to employing only those who qualify---they have to have the minimum of NQF2 in tour guiding and a driver's licence. Fortunately, we have never had a situation when we had to take an unqualified person since I came to this park".
- "We are not obliged by any policy to employ a person who is not qualified. Anyway, adverts are mostly internal. Remember, field guiding is a specialised field, you cannot just employ a person who does not qualify. There are special requirements such as handling a rifle, NQF2 and so on. Locals are usually considered for jobs like cleaning/house keeping".

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- "The human resource department handles employment and they have to comply with the employment equity policy. First preference should be given to the local people. But it is very difficult to get suitably qualified people around our park communities-------and then we find ourselves employing not so much suitable people. But if it is like that, we do our own in-house training".
- "We have to comply with the employment equity plan, but at the moment, it is very difficult to get female guides who qualify".
- "We comply with the employment equity policy, we do not have to employ those that do not qualify".
- "It is difficult to get field guides here, they come and go to other tour companies and jobs. We do some training in guiding, especially because I am a qualified assessor myself, if we find ourselves employing field guides who don't have a satisfying qualification".

SANParks use national transformation employment policies as stipulated by the South African Government. It is evident from some of the responses that it is sometimes a challenge to strictly comply with these policies, e.g. giving the first preferences to the females and the members of the surrounding communities.

The comment about the shortage of female tour guides confirm the results of the quantitative analysis which showed that there were more males than females (Figure 5.2 – see section 5.3). The interview responses further indicate that SANParks' principle is to employ tour guides who meet the minimum requirement in tour guiding, a mechanism of quality assurance.

What emerged from the interviews was that SANParks is careful to employ tour guides that qualify.

5.2.3 Programmes/actions that ensure continued effective environmental and cultural heritage interpretation by tour guides

A question was asked to establish what programmes/actions they have in their parks to ensure effective continued environmental and cultural heritage interpretive training of tour guides. The summary of the responses is shown in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3: Respondents' views on programmes/actions to ensure continued effective interpretation

Question 3 What programmes/actions do you have in the park to ensure continued effective environmental and cultural heritage interpretation by tour guides?	Respondents	A	B	C	D	E	F
Responses							
Training process exists		1	1	1		1	1
Encourage guides to improve their qualification					1		
Evaluation programme							1

It emerged from five of the respondents that there was training (in various forms) in their parks that was intended to help guides re-skill themselves. For instance, one of the five respondents indicated that the local manual that guides read and are tested on is continuously updated, and that therefore guides constantly have to go through it.

Another type of training that was mentioned by one respondent was what she called "general orientation training of the park". This general orientation training encompasses *inter alia* policies that guides have to comply with in the park.

One of the respondents indicated that guides have to participate in a refresher course before they can start operating. One of the respondents mentioned that, as a manager, he meets regularly with the skills development officer to identify guides' general training needs, and that they then organise a relevant workshop based on the identified needs.

This respondent further mentioned that they had been funded by the Provincial Department of Economic Development and Tourism in their park. The funding had been used to train guides in mountaineering skills, customer care and First Aid, Level 2. The responses about some forms of training in the national parks showed that SANParks undoubtedly recognises the need to upgrade the tour guides' competence.

Only one respondent mentioned that, "encouraging guides to improve their qualification", was an action that he used to ensure continued effective interpretation in the park. Another stated that, in his parks, guides were continuously evaluated through what he called "evaluation programmes" with the aim of ensuring their effectiveness in interpretation.

Further clarification was sought during the second phase of the interviews. A specific question that was asked was:

- What measures do you use to monitor and evaluate the interpretive performance of tour guides?

The following are some of the responses:

- "We have a system in place which we use as soon as they are employed (when they are new). We join their game drives so that we observe how they do. If there are problems, we fix the problems accordingly. But besides, before they operate, in the park, they have to write an examination based on our manual on official guiding. They have to get not less than 75% before they start operating. This does not apply to only our field guides. We have a lot of Bed and Breakfast lodges around our park who bring their tourists to our parks. We don't allow their guides to do so unless they have written and passed our examination. We also join their game drives to make sure that they interpret according to our expectation. They are allowed to operate provided we are satisfied with their performance. We do not want outside field guides to misinterpret our park---------Some time ago we tried to use a questionnaire from the tourists. It was problematic to us and a challenge because in most cases tourists are in a rush to go somewhere/ or to join another activity after our 2hour game drive. They do not bother to complete the questionnaires. We realise that we do not have control over them (tourists). Sometimes they return them and sometimes not."

- "There is no performance appraisal system at the level of field guiding in place. We depend on the feedback from the tourists in a form of a questionnaire. They

indicate their compliments or complaints. Then the head guide or the relevant manager has to act accordingly if tourists were not satisfied during the guided activity. ----It is helpful because it gives an indication of how a field guide performs**".**

- "Questionnaires are distributed to tourists to comment about their experience, issues with the field guides. I also give a questionnaire to field guides, on monthly basis where they indicate their guiding problems. If there are shortcomings that have indicated by the tourists, I discuss those issues with a particular field guide, and a field guide indicates problems that he/she has with guiding, I act by giving an in-house training. I am a qualified THETA assessor myself. I do an in-house training using my manual which has information on guiding (game drives and walks). Sometimes I participate in SANParks forum. That is where tourists indicate their compliments and complaints on our website when they are gone. We believe this helps because tourists will be in a position to answer when they are free back home, not under pressure".

- "We use what we call forums on our website. We use this because we believe that sometimes tourists do not have time to evaluate guides immediately after a guided drive. As far as I am concerned, feedback from the tourists is effective".

- "No measures at the moment. In the past we used to use a general SANParks feedback form. The form was not necessarily about guiding, but it was just a standard form which included questions about accommodation as well. Yes, I have got a problem with it because it is too general. It does not give you specific information about guiding. We need to have regular and quarterly assessment.

- "Guides are supposed to be monitored through the use of SANParks evaluation forms that are completed by the tourists. But that is usually a problem because tourists are always in a hurry after the guided activity. But SANParks has introduced a feedback mechanism in a form of an e-mail for both compliments and problems that tourists may have experienced during their stay at the parks. They write about anything. The form is accessible in the SANParks website. There are forums- that enable people to be openly frank about occurrences (on website)".

- "-------I do not have any problem with this mechanism (feedback from the tourists). This feedback goes straight to the head office and to relevant sections including the section for guided activities in case there was a complaint or compliment about the guide. It is effective at ground. The supervisor has to ensure that whatever problem that may have occurred is fixed and does not occur again."

The above responses indicate that although all these parks belong to SANParks, there is no uniformity in the measures that they use for monitoring and evaluation of interpretive guiding. Diverse opinions emerged about the effective use of tourists' questionnaires. It became evident that using this mechanism is problematic. The fact that the form is not specifically about guiding (it is a general form), may not give a clear

indication about interpretive guiding. What emerged as an ideal mechanism is the one of observing tour guides when they interpret to tourists. However, that may require resources such enough personnel (manpower) and time to do observations.

Questions about other mechanisms for quality assurance, such as affiliation to the guides' association, rewarding tour guides for excellent performance and a code of conduct for tour guides as identified in the literature, were asked. With regard to the awards, the park officials said that SANParks has a general system of recognising the staff members who do well with their jobs, such as "Kudu awards". Some guides have won the awards e.g. at Marakele National Park and Addo. Concerning the affiliation of guides to guides' associations, all interviewees indicated that some tour guides are members, some not. Some of the responses were,

- "Field guide association – It depends on an individual person. It is not compulsory. One of the guides is affiliated"

- "Guides association – In the past most people were members of FGASA, and that enabled them to qualify to practice as field guides. But in the new dispensation, they just have to register with DET (Formerly called DEAT) and comply with the requirements".

- "I am not aware of any of the guides who is a member of a professional association for guides".

They said the situation about affiliation to guides' association is now different from the past (before 1994) when membership was "somehow" associated with a "licence to practise as a guide". That is why in the past many tour guides were affiliated to guides' associations such as the Field Guide Association of South Africa (FGASA), before it became one of the THETA-accredited training providers. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's (DEAT) /Department of Tourism registration (refer to Appendix F) is adequate as far as many park officials are concerned. Tour guides have to abide by the code of conduct stipulated by the DEAT/DET (refer to Appendix F). The SANParks code of conduct for guides is drawn from the DEAT's code of conduct.

5.2.4 Critical factors for effective interpretation

The respondents were asked to indicate what they see as critical for effective interpretation. The responses are shown in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: Respondents' views on what they see as critical for effective interpretation

Question 4 What do you see as critical for effective interpretation?	Respondents	A	B	C	D	E	F
Responses							
Communication skills		1	1		1	1	
Continuing education and training				1		1	1
Knowledge of the area of operation			1			1	
Passion for interpretation			1			1	
Knowledge of interpretation		1					
Self-reading							1

In responding to the question, "What do you see as critical for effective interpretation?"(Question 4), four of the respondents felt that good communication skills are important. It was not surprising to receive that response, especially because interpretation is about communicating well with the tourists. One of the four respondents who mentioned communication as being crucial for effective interpretation perceived communication as encompassing self-confidence, interpersonal relation skills, self-esteem and outspokenness. In emphasising these characteristics he said, "Introverts cannot make it in this career….a guide should be a people's person".

Three of the respondents viewed continuing education and training as critical for effective interpretation. The need for continuing education and training was evident in statements such as, "We need to arrange sessions for re-training them, once they are registered with the province". The role of the provincial government in training guides

was also highlighted by two of the respondents, with statements such as, "Even now, the Provincial Department of Tourism assists with, for instance, re-skilling them in various aspects related to tourism".

Two of the respondents felt that knowledge of the area of operation is crucial for effective interpretation. Knowledge of the area of operation forms part of the content of interpretation, including conservation themes and cultural heritage themes.

Besides the above-mentioned attributes of effective interpretation, one respondent viewed a passion for interpretation as also crucial for effective interpretation, and another one mentioned knowledge of interpretation as crucial. It also emerged from one respondent that it is important that guides develop the habit of regularly reading on their own, in order to broaden their knowledge that could enhance interpretation.

5.2.5 Skills current guides need to develop in order to provide quality interpretation in national parks

The interview participants were asked to mention "What skills they think current guides need to develop in order to provide quality interpretation at natural and cultural heritage sites?" The responses are shown in the table below.

Table 5.5: Respondents' views on guides' needs for quality interpretation

Question 5 What skills do you think current guides need to develop in order to provide quality interpretation at natural and cultural heritage sites?	Respondents	A	B	C	D	E	F
Responses							
Communication skills		1	1		1	1	
Language				1			
Safety skills					1		
Knowledge and application of Interpretive techniques		1				1	
Research skills							1

As shown in Table 5.5, four of the respondents mentioned that current guides needed more training in communication skills. Two of the respondents specifically mentioned knowledge and the application of interpretive techniques as skills that currently need to be provided for guides. In emphasising interpretive techniques, they said, "Guides need skills of interpreting topics that may not be of interest to tourists such as soil and grass.-----Therefore, field guides need skills of interpreting such topics or aspects in such a way that the tourists end up thinking that it was indeed worthwhile to be part of the interpretive experience". One specifically mentioned that overseas tourists are usually interested only in seeing the "big five". They may lose interest if they do not see them. Therefore, field guides need skills to draw them into an interpretive experience, and gain and maintain their attention during the moments when they are not seeing the animals.

Guides should do a lot of research and reading on their own in order to be effective in interpretation, according to one respondent. That requires them to have research skills.

Another respondent also felt that guides need to learn languages other than English, because sometimes they receive tourists who do not understand the English language. Specifically, this respondent said, "The focus should not be on English only, what about visitors of different languages, e.g. Xhosa. They should cater for different cultural

groups". One respondent held the opinion that guides need to be knowledgeable about legislative requirements and one mentioned safety skills as also needed for guides.

5.2.6 The responsibility for improving the interpretive competence of tour guides

Question 6 of the interview asked "In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to improve the interpretive competence of tour guides?"

Table 5.6: Respondents' views on whose responsibility it is to improve the interpretive competence of tour guides

Question 6 In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to improve the interpretive competence of tour guides?	*Respondents*	A	B	C	D	E	F
Responses							
SANParks/direct supervisor		1	1	1	1	1	1
Guides themselves		1	1		1	1	1

As shown in Table 5.6, six respondents indicated that it is the responsibility of both guides and management to ensure the improvement of guides in interpretive competencies. The respondents went further to indicate that if guides are not good in interpretation, that would have a negative impact on the parks'/organizations' image. Therefore, inasmuch as the guides' initiative is expected and important, it is also essential that the organisation ensures guides' interpretive competency. Five of the respondents further held the view that it is important for guides themselves to take responsibility for improving their competence.

5.2.7 Factors that could improve the quality of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in national parks

The last question (Question 7) asked during the interview was, "What specifically do you think should be done to improve the quality of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in natural and heritage sites?" The results are shown in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Respondents' views on what should be done to improve the quality of interpretation

Question 7 What specifically do you think should be done to improve the quality of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in natural and heritage sites?	*Respondents*	A	B	C	D	E	F
Responses							
Continuing education and training			1		1	1	
Availability of interpretation literature/information			1		1		
Interpretation strategy/plan			1				
Develop communication skills							1
Develop indigenous knowledge		1					
Employment of properly trained guides					1		
Introduction of provincial exchange programmes							1

As shown in Table 5.7, three of the respondents asserted that the role of retraining ("continuing education") of guides should not be underestimated. To them continuing education and training will always help guides to keep abreast of developments in interpretation.

Two of the respondents mentioned that there should be a way of making sure that there is available literature or information on interpretation that could be used by guides from

time to time. The problem of inadequate material on interpretation emerged clearly during the interview.

One respondent mentioned that there should be an interpretive strategy or plan which, in her case, was currently being put together for the park she worked in. One respondent felt that the strategy of employing properly trained guides would help to improve the quality of interpretation in national parks. During the second phase of the interviews, it emerged from the interviews that most park officials are not aware of any interpretive strategy plan. Some talked about their own manuals (locally oriented) instead, when the researcher probed about the interpretive delivery strategy that they use. The other strategies that were suggested by the participants were: to develop indigenous knowledge (1 respondent); develop communication skills (1 respondent); employ properly trained guides (1 respondent); and introduce provincial exchange programmes for guides (1 respondent). A provincial exchange programme for guides, according to this respondent, would mean arrangements by park managers in various provinces to allow guides to exchange with guides from parks of other provinces, in order to share ideas and learn from each other.

5.2.7.1 Section summary

The overall analysis of qualitative interpretation as shown in the above section reflects that managers recognise the purpose of interpretation as promoting the conservation of environmental and cultural heritage, developing tourists' environmental and cultural knowledge, and enhancing tourists' experience. The divergent responses in certain instances during the interview revealed that these parks differ considerably, a view that is shared by Saayman and Saayman (2010:1037).

The following are aspects of interpretive guiding which emerge most frequently from the interview analysis:

- Communication skills;

- Continuing education and training;

- Interpretive content;

- Knowledge of interpretation (techniques and content);

- Evaluation of tour guides (using tourists' feedback form); and

- The fact that there is training in interpretive guiding in most parks.

In summary the role of continuing education and the evaluation of tour guides were highlighted as a way of ensuring quality interpretation. Furthermore, it is the view of managers that SANParks, the direct supervisors, should be responsible for improving the interpretive competence of guides, although it was emphasised that guides should also take the initiative to upgrade their own knowledge themselves. The need to develop communication skills was explicitly stated. The importance of knowledge of interpretive techniques and the content of what is being interpreted also emerged directly from the discussion during the interview. However the aspect of encouragement from park managers/tourism managers to improve qualifications also emerged, although more subtly.

The constructs that were drawn from the interview analysis (1st phase) are illustrated in Figure 5.1.

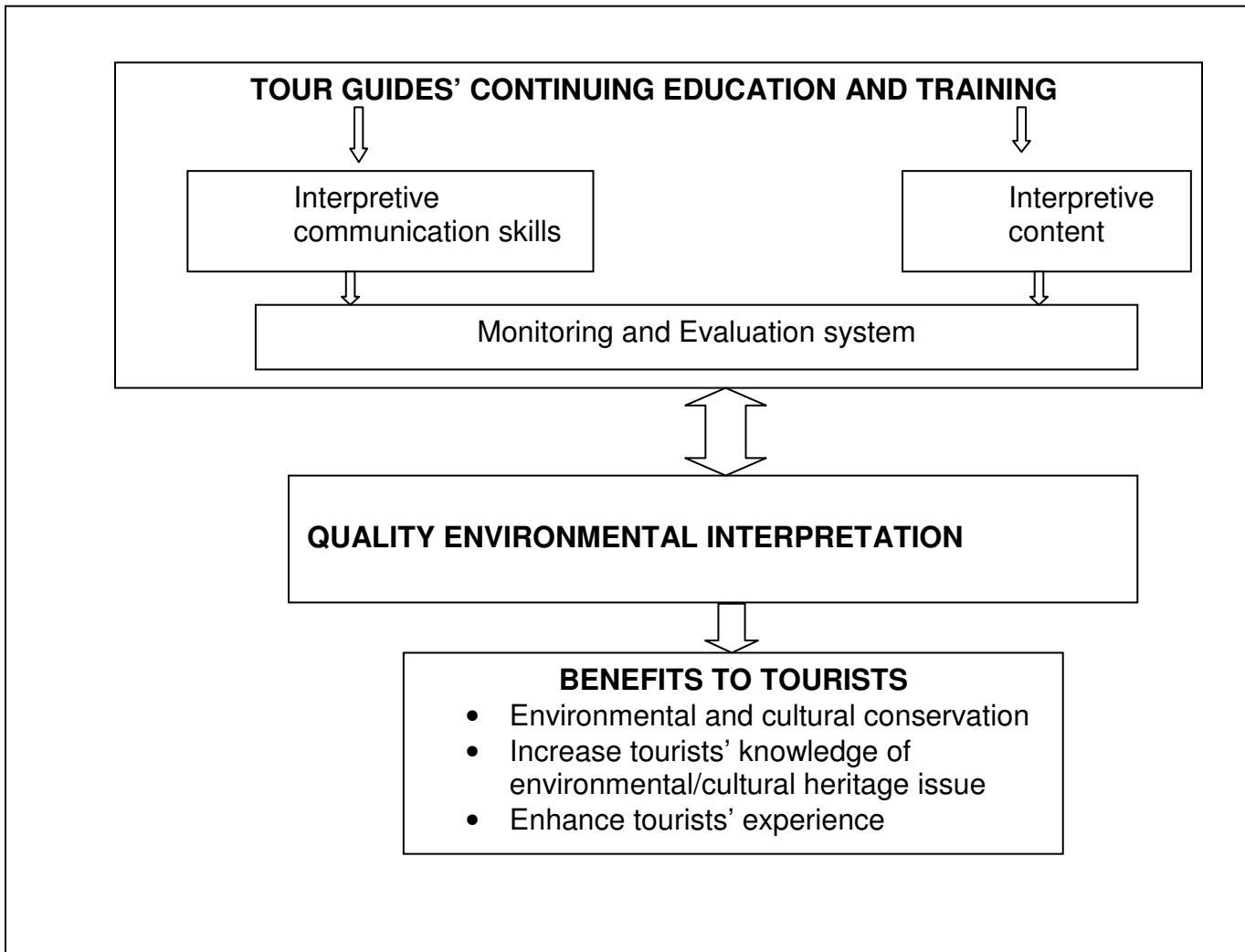**Figure 5.1: Constructs underlying the delivery of effective interpretation**

TOUR GUIDES' CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Interpretive communication skills

Interpretive content

Monitoring and Evaluation system

QUALITY ENVIRONMENTAL INTERPRETATION

BENEFITS TO TOURISTS
- Environmental and cultural conservation
- Increase tourists' knowledge of environmental/cultural heritage issue
- Enhance tourists' experience

Figure 5.1 shows that continuing education and training, in aspects such as interpretive content and techniques and interpretive communication skills, should always be available in order to ensure quality interpretation. Hence the arrows in Figure 5.1 indicate that training in these aspects of interpretation will always contribute to quality interpretation, further that quality should be monitored and evaluated, and that quality interpretation contributes to environmental and cultural conservation, increases tourists' cultural and environmental knowledge, and enriches/enhances tourists' experience.

The constructs identified through the interviews were incorporated into the tour guides' questionnaires, as indicated in Table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8: Interview responses and questionnaire development (see Appendices A & E)

Interview responses	Questionnaires	Motivation
	Tourists' questionnaire	
Responses to question 1	Q4.1;4.2 and Q4.3	To establish empirically if the purpose of interpretation (to enhance tourists' experience, increase environmental/ cultural knowledge) as mentioned during the interview is realised.
Responses to question 4	Q5	To establish the application of interpretive delivery techniques.
	Tour guides' questionnaire	
Responses to question 2	Q9 and Q11	To ascertain the type of interpretive training that guides receive.
Responses to question 3	Q17 and Q12	To ascertain if they have attended any course to upgrade their interpretive guiding skills. To establish the type of evaluation system that is used by tour guides.
Responses to question 4	Q13	To determine the extent to which guides apply interpretive techniques and if they need training in them.
Responses to question 5	Q13 and Q15	To compare if the results from the qualitative interviews on training needs and concerns are similar to those from the guides' questionnaires.
Responses to questions 6 and 7	Q13 and Q17	To identify issues relating to upgrading interpretive skills.

5.3 PRESENTATION OF QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

This section provides the analysis and the interpretation of data that was collected through questionnaires from tour guides and from tourists. The first part of this section (5.3.1) describes the analysis and presentation of data that was collected from tour guides and the second part (5.3.2) focuses on the analysis and the presentation of data that was collected from tourists. Both the descriptive data analysis and inferential analysis are presented in this section.

5.3.1 Data analysis for tour guides

The structure of the questionnaire (see Appendix A), which was described in Chapter 4, encompassed the following sections:

- Tour guides' application of interpretive delivery techniques;
- Tour guides' needs for continuing education and training;
- Constraints that hinder application of effective interpretation; and
- Management support for quality interpretation.

This section begins by presenting the profile of the tour guides. The analysis of the profile of the tour guides provides an overview and general understanding of the characteristics of the participants.

5.3.1.1 Biographical and demographic aspects

There were 46 (n=46) tour guides who completed and returned questionnaires; and they were all employed by SANParks. No tour operators or guides from other organisations responded.

Figure 5.2: Gender distribution of the respondents
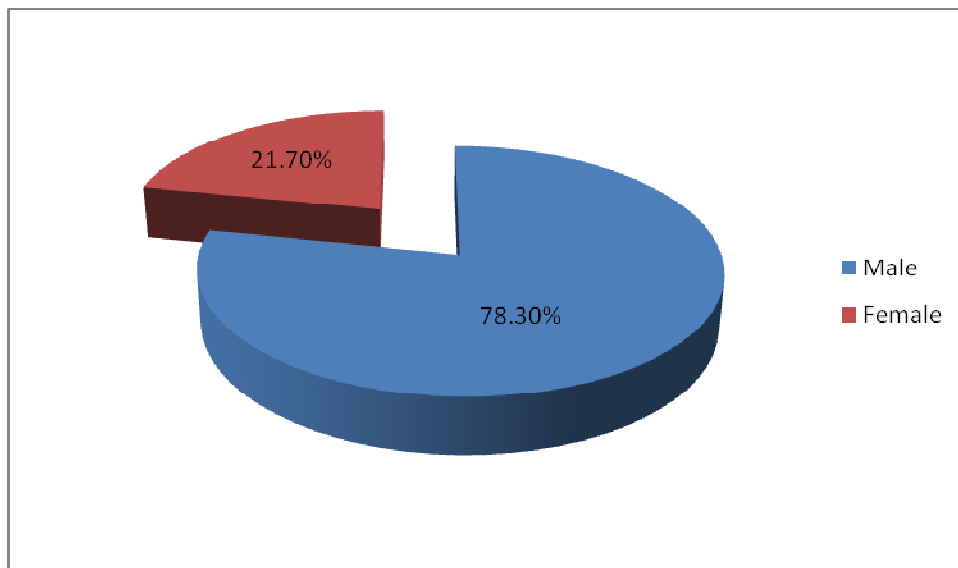
Most respondents were male. The respondents' ages ranged from 22 to 45 years. This seems to suggest that tour guiding in SANParks is still male-dominated despite SANParks' efforts to comply with the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 (SANParks, 2008:42). These results showing a minority of females in SANParks further confirm the observation by Paton (2007:246), who states that by 2007 the majority of nature guides were male. The nature of the guiding career in national parks, i.e. exposure to dangerous animals, may be a reason that the profession does not attract many women. The interview responses even revealed the need for tour guides to be competent in handling a firearm.

Figure 5.3: Tour guides' highest academic qualification
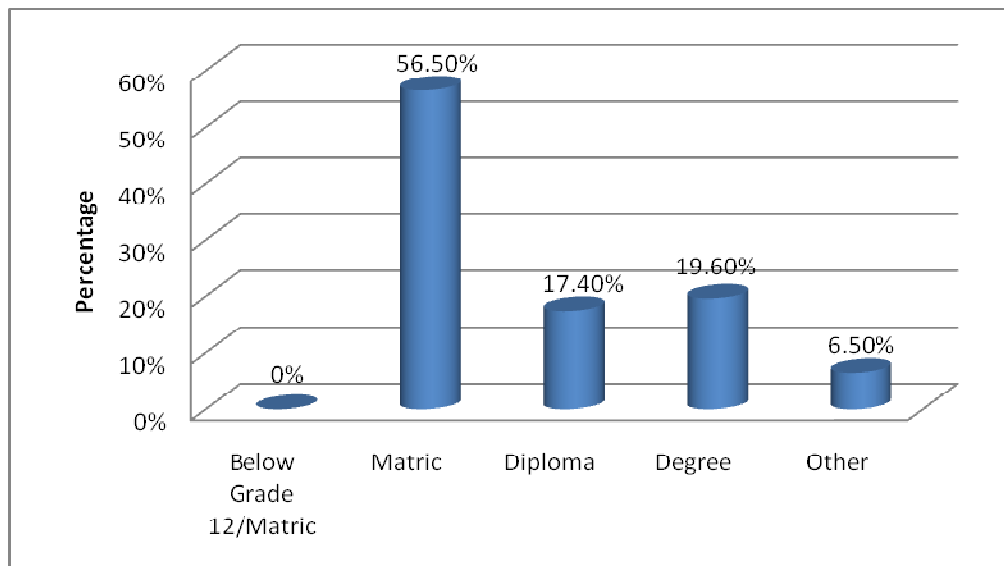
The results show that the majority of tour guides (57% n=26) have matriculation (high school certificate) as their highest academic qualification; 17% (n=8) have diplomas and 20% (n=9) have degrees (Figure 5.3). Those with university degrees mentioned degrees such as Bachelor of Environmental Science (B.Sc), Bachelor of Tourism Management and Bachelor of Technology in nature conservation (B.Tech.). An indication should be given that the degrees and diplomas acquired by some others (17.40% and 19.60%) may not specifically relate to interpretive guiding, e.g. B.Sc. in Environmental Management and Diploma in Tourism.

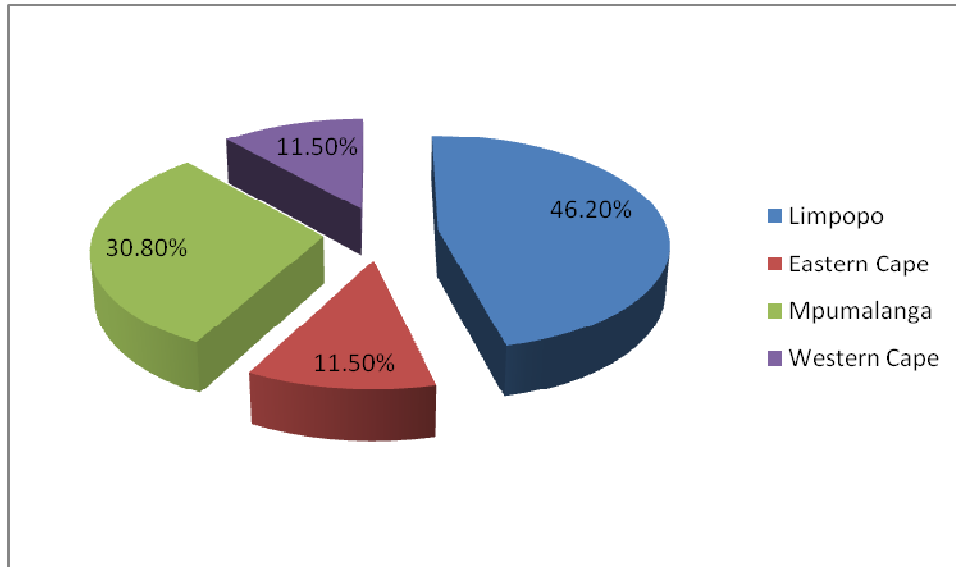**Figure 5.4: Provinces from which tour guides operated**

Figure 5.4 shows the provinces in which the guides operated: Limpopo Province had the highest percentage, 46% (n=24), followed by Mpumalanga Province with 31% (n=16). This is attributed to the fact that the Kruger National Park, the largest national park in South Africa falling under the authority of SANParks, extends over both provinces (Limpopo and Mpumalanga), unlike the other parks which are situated in only one province.

Figure 5.5: Employment status of tour guides
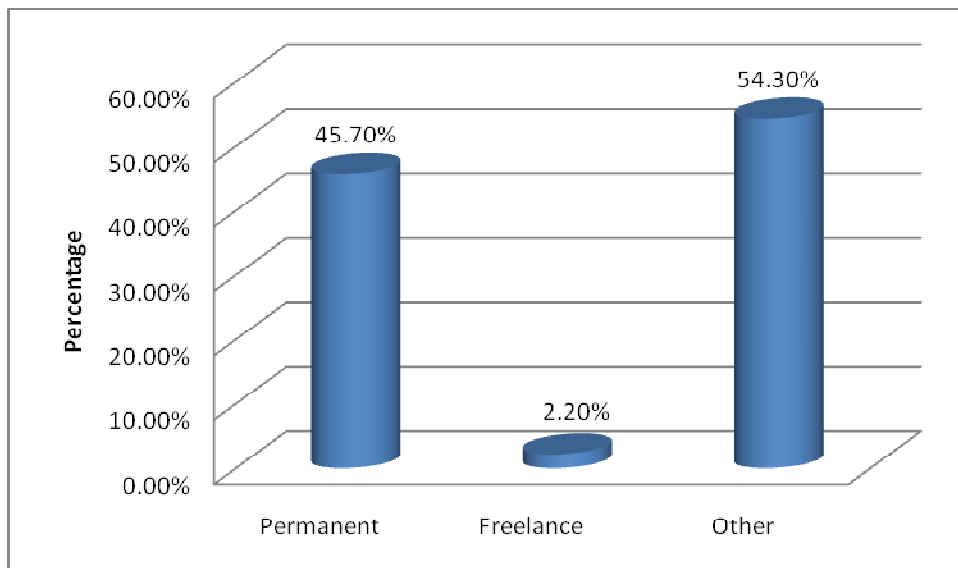
Only 45% (n=21) of the tour guides were permanently employed (Figure 5.5). The majority of the tour guides (53% n=25) indicated that they were employed on a contract basis (such as a fixed contact). Only one guide indicated that she/he worked as a freelance or independent guide.

Figure 5.6: Experience as a tour guide
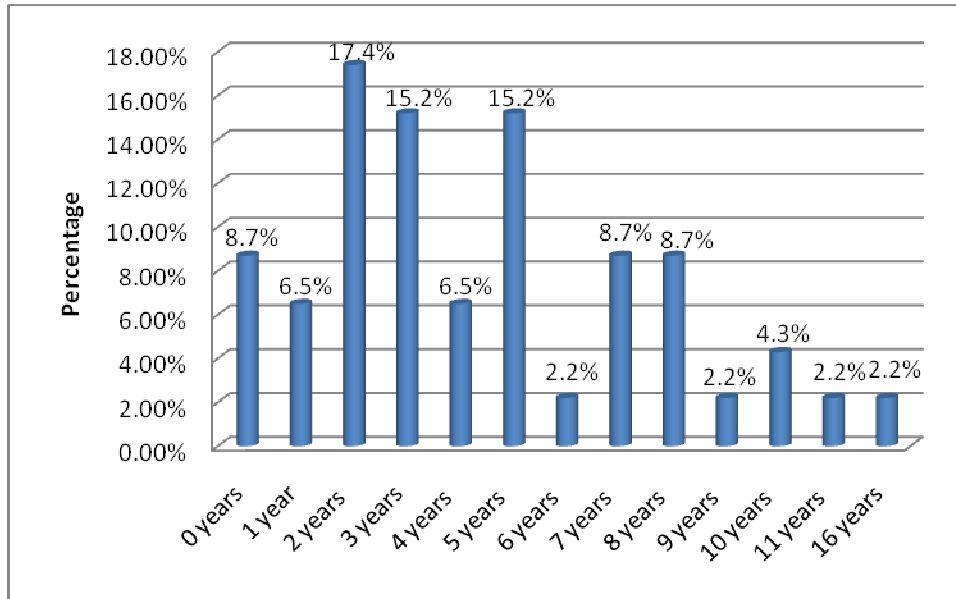
The experience of tour guides ranged from less than a year to 16 years (Figure 5.6). One person (2%) had sixteen years' experience, and 9% (n=4) had less than a year's experience as guides. The majority of the tour guides in SANParks are fairly experienced (it is only about 15.2% of the tour guides that have less than two years' experience). This good experience is in line with Knudson, Cable and Beck's (1995) opinion that effective interpretation is a result of experience gained over time.

5.3.1.2 Interpretive activities

Guides were asked to indicate the interpretive activities in which they were involved, and the results are shown below in Figure 5.7 and Table 5.9.

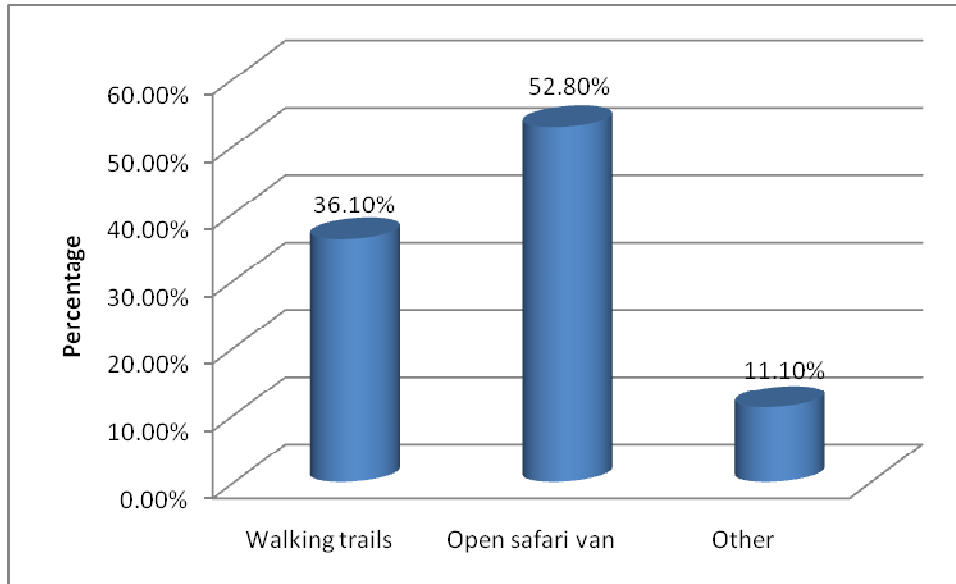**Figure 5.7: Guides' types of interpretive activities in the parks**

**Table 5.9: Guides' types of interpretive activities in the parks**

Type of interpretive activity	Frequency	Percentage of tour guides in respective activity	Percentage of cases
Open safari van	38	(52.8)	82.6
Walking trails	26	(36.1)	56.5
Other	8	(11.1)	17.4
Total	72	100	156.5

* Some respondents gave more than one answer

The results as shown in Table 5.9 indicate that the guides are multiskilled and are able to provide a variety of interpretive activities. For example, they work on open safari vans (52.8%), walking trails (36.1%), and in other types of interpretive activities like mountain bike trails, as well as providing general information at a front desk (11%). These results also indicate that SANParks have managed to provide diversity in guided activities for tourists.

5.3.1.3 Training in interpretation

Figure 5.8: Interpretation training obtained as a guide
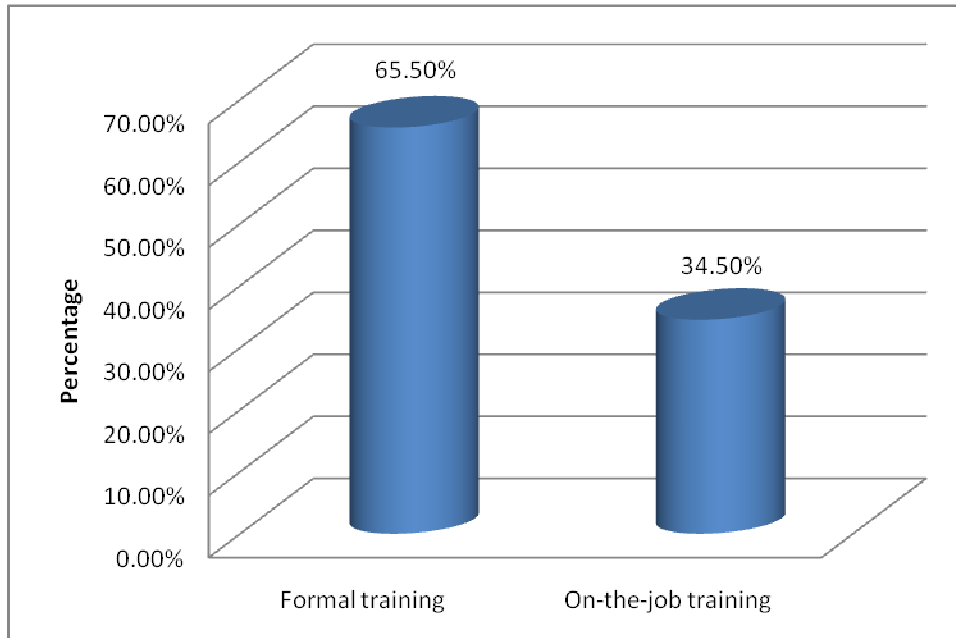
The type of interpretation-specific training of guides was also ascertained. The majority of guides had received formal training in interpretation (65.5%) before they started working as tour guides, and 34.5% had on-the-job training, as shown in Figure 5.8. The majority of the tour guides who had formal training had reached NQF 4 (57% n=26) as opposed to 11% (n=6) of those who had NQF 2 (THETA-accredited certificates). Certificate programmes that they had done for formal training were e.g. the National Certificate in Tourism-Guiding, and a Field Naturalist Course.

The tour guides also indicated where they had obtained their qualifications. Various institutions were listed, including Energy Guides, Nature College, African Global Skills Academy, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Boland College, Tourism World (formerly called People Management Solution), Ekukhanyeni Environment College, Limpopo Field Guiding Academy, FGASA (Field Guide Association of South Africa, which operates as a training provider as well), and INTEC. This variety of names seems to suggest that there are a fair number of training institutions for tour guides in South

Africa. It is a requirement in South Africa that the tour guiding training providers should be THETA-accredited. Insistence on THETA accreditation by the South African government is one mechanism for assuring quality in guiding.

The acquisition by tour guides of formal training in guiding and conservation through THETA-accredited institutions seems to indicate that the provision in South Africa of policies such as RPL, as well as the establishment of sectoral education and training authorities (SETAs) such as THETA, opens up opportunities for both on-the job training and formal training in guiding. Acquisition of THETA certificates in South Africa assists tour guides, particularly inexperienced or untrained personnel, to increase their knowledge of interpretive guiding. In fact, the SETAs, of which THETA is one, were established by the new South African government for the purpose of exposing a majority of the South Africans who were unable to access formal education before (because of the previous government policies before 1994) to further education and training (refer to section 1.2).

It was noted in the responses that some of the tour guides with diplomas and degrees as their highest qualifications had obtained THETA-accredited certificates. Some of the respondents with university degrees may have had good content knowledge (such as conservation aspects), but may have not been trained as tour guides, hence the necessity to acquire a THETA-accredited certificate as well.

The tour guides that had on-the-job training (34.50%) (Figure 5.7) were asked to clarify what formed part of their on-job-training. The majority of them indicated that their on-the-job-training was through apprenticeship (19.1% n=17), followed by those who indicated lecture sessions by a tutor (18% n=16) and lecture materials (18% n=16). The others included mentoring (14.6% n=13), tour manuals (13.5% n=12), tests (13.5% n=12) and other methods (3.4% n=3). These findings about giving opportunities to tour guides who are employed by SANParks and who had on the-job-training is contrary to the findings of the study by Chowdhary and Prakash (2008:293), which indicated that in

India tour guides pointed out that there was no provision for on-the-job training for those without previous experience.

5.3.1.4 Evaluation of guided tours

Evaluation as a crucial aspect of the survival and development of interpretation has been stressed by many authors such as Munro & Morrison-Saunders, 2008:2; Ward & Wilkinson, 2006:223). However, an indication has been made about the fact that it is a procedure that is commonly neglected in interpretation (Ryan & Dewar, 1995:295). The respondents were asked about the methods they use to evaluate their interpretive guided activity and the results are shown in Figure 5.9 and Table 5.10.

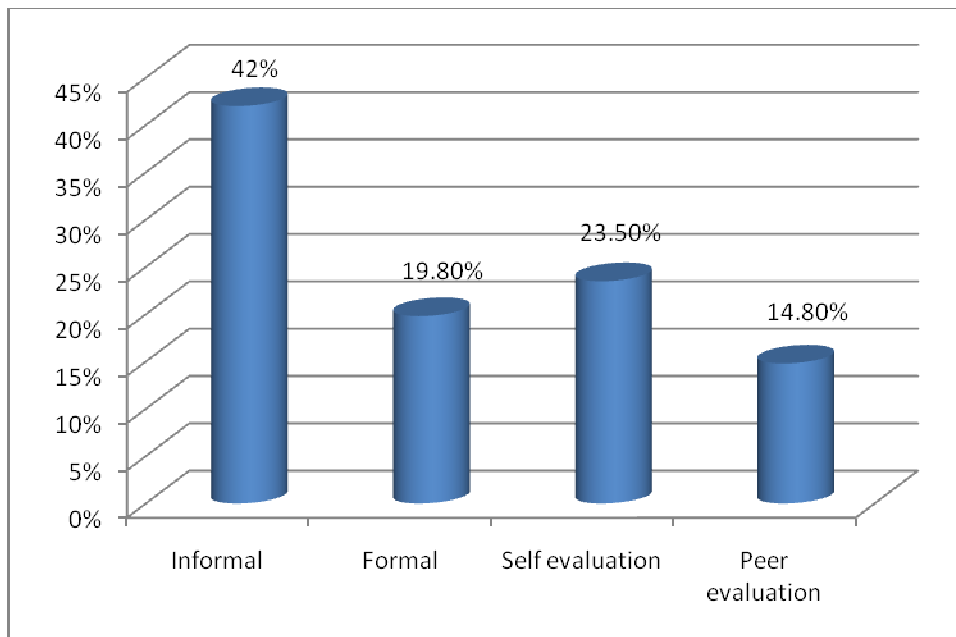**Figure 5.9: Methods of evaluation used during and after a guided tour**

Table 5.10: Methods of evaluation used during and after a guided tour

Type of evaluation	F	%	Percentage of cases
Informal	34	(42)	73.9
Formal	16	(19.8)	34.8
Self-evaluation	19	(23.5)	41.3
Peer evaluation	12	(14.8)	26.1

* Some respondents gave more than one answer

Table 5.10 indicates that tour guides at SANParks use different types of evaluation. The results indicate that the informal method of evaluation (such as simple observation of verbal/body language of tourists) was mostly used by guides (42%), although some tour guides use more than one method as shown in Table 5.10. The formal type that was indicated by 19.8% (n=16) referred to the evaluation done by tourists who visit the park.

5.3.1.5 Factors that affect effective interpretive delivery

This section presents the results of the analysis of the data on interpretive delivery techniques, with a view to establishing how tour guides perceive their own application thereof.

5.3.1.6 Tour guides' problems with interpretive delivery techniques

A detailed explanation of the interpretive delivery techniques has already been given in Chapter 2 (refer to 2.7). Basically, these interpretive delivery techniques emanate from the suggested activities that can be used to enhance effective interpretation according to the EROT (Enjoyable, Relevant, Organised and Thematic) model of interpretive communication. For instance, the three qualities of interpretation (ERO), underpin the necessary task of capturing and maintaining the attention of the tourists. Failing to impart any of these qualities to a tour or commentary may impact upon tourists' attention (Ham, 2003:4).

The Likert scale of 1- 5 was used to establish whether the tour guides had problems with the application of techniques. Merging 1 with 2 to make it "not a problem", and 3, 4 and 5 (in the Likert scale) to make it "a problem" became necessary for a clear indication of the problems. Table 5.11 also ranks the problems with interpretive delivery techniques according to the mean scores of twelve statements. The mode and the median scores are also reflected.

Table 5.11: Tour guides' perceptions of problems in interpretive delivery techniques

Problems in interpretive delivery techniques	Not a problem		Problem		Mode	Median	Mean	
	f	%	f	%				Rank
Addressing tourists by their names.	24	(52.2)	22	(47.4)	1	2.0	2.543	1
Using five senses (such as touching an interesting texture, smelling a plant).	32	(69.6)	14	(30.4)	1	1.0	1.804	2
Gaining the attention of tourists.	38	(82.6)	8	(17.4)	1	1.0	1.739	3
Encouraging participation of tourists through questioning them.	38	(82.6)	8	(17.4)	1	1.0	1.739	4
Presenting the content in a simple manner so that it does not take a lot of effort from the tourists to follow the presentation.	36	(78.3)	10	(21.7)	1	1.0	1.717	5
Maintaining the attention of tourists throughout.	39	(84.8)	7	(15.2)	1	1.0	1.652	6
Simplifying technical information (using explanations).	37	(80.4)	9	(19.6)	1	1.0	1.653	7
Presenting in such a way that the tourist understands the broader theme or context of the topic (for example the role of an animal in its habitat or the history of a heritage site).	38	(82.6)	8	(17.4)	1	1.0	1.586	8
Presenting to tourists in such a way that you relate to things familiar in their daily lives (e.g. by comparisons).	38	(82.6)	8	(17.4)	1	1.0	1.543	9
Presenting in such a way that there is a clear introduction to what I am going to say, the content is comprehensive and I provide some conclusions and insight at the end.	40	(87)	6	(13)	1	1.0	1.500	10
Entertaining tourists (using stories, humour, jokes).	40	(87)	6	(13)	1	1.0	1.478	11
Using eye contact as far as possible.	39	(84.8)	7	(15.2)	1	1.0	1.434	12

* f = Frequency

As indicated in Table 5.11, the mean rankings given to each item of problems in interpretive delivery techniques ranged from 1.43 to 2.54. The mean scores as presented in Table 5.11 seem to suggest that the responses to most items (which are interpretive delivery techniques) were positive.

It is important to highlight that the two interpretive delivery techniques that achieved the 1st and the 2nd highest mean scores regarding the application problems seemed so because tour guides mostly guide tourists on open safari vans (refer to Table 5.11). That is why they responded that it was not possible to address tourists by their names because of the large number of tourists who join open safari vans. This reason seems to apply to problems with "encouraging tourists to use five senses" (especially touch), where it was indicated that this was not possible on open safari vans.

The minority of tour guides who had problems with some of the interpretive delivery techniques specifically mentioned some of the reasons why they had problems, as mentioned in Table 5.12 below.

Table 5.12: Tour guides' reasons for their inability to apply interpretive delivery techniques

Interpretive delivery technique	Problems indicated
Gaining the attention of tourists.	• Tourists are naturally and easily distracted. • Some tourists cannot be attentive because they do not understand English.
Encouraging participation of tourists through questioning them.	• They (some of them) as tour guides are introverts. • Some tourists do not understand English, it becomes impossible to encourage them to participate.
Presenting the content in a simple manner so that it does not take a lot of effort from the tourists to follow the presentation.	• It is not easy to present to tourists who do not understand English. • They (some of the tour guides) are fast speakers.
Maintaining the attention of tourists throughout.	• It is not easy on guided walks because the walking pace of some tourists is slow.
Simplifying technical information (using explanations).	• Their inability to simplify technical information is because they are too used to scientific language because of their training which exposed them to scientific language, especially in a degree programme.
Presenting in such a way that the tourist understands the broader theme or context of the topic (for example the role of an animal in its habitat or the history of a heritage site).	• Inadequate books and other resources.
Presenting to tourists in such a way that you relate to things familiar in their daily lives (e.g. by comparisons).	• No reason was given.
Presenting in such a way that there is a clear introduction to what I am going to say, the content is comprehensive and I provide some conclusions and insight at the end.	• No reason was given.
Entertaining tourists (using stories, humour, jokes).	• Reasons such as "language barrier, if tourists do not understand the language used by a tour guide", "being an introvert, as a guide", and "sometimes tourists do not want to participate" were among those that were given.
Using eye contact as far as possible.	• It is not always possible to maintain eye contact while driving in an open van.

From the results as presented in Tables 5.11 and 5.12, it is clear that not all of the interpretive techniques are applicable in every situation. Their applicability depends on the circumstances.

The respondents were asked to rank the five aspects which in their opinion are most important in effective interpretive delivery, by indicating "most important", "second most important" to the "fifth most important". Of forty-six (n=46), the majority (n=11) ranked "Gaining the attention of tourists" as the "most important" one, followed by nine respondents (n=9), who gave the "most important" ranking to "Presenting to tourists in such as a way that you relate to things familiar in their daily lives". Seven (n=7) respondents perceived "Presenting the content in a simple manner" as the third most important. Three techniques that got high rankings have to do with enhancing the attention of tourists. The response by the tour guides indicates that they acknowledge the importance of tourists' attention when dealing with a non-captive audience such as tourists.

While the findings about the application of interpretive delivery techniques have been presented in this section, conclusions about whether to reject or accept Hypothesis 1 (H1), "Within the South African context tour guides do not effectively apply interpretive delivery techniques in national parks", will be made later in this document after comparison of the tourists' responses.

The following section ascertains how far tour guides needed training in each delivery technique.

5.3.1.7 Training needs in interpretive delivery techniques

The Likert scale of 1 – 5 was used to establish to what extent the tour guides needed training in interpretive delivery techniques. Merging 1 and 2 of the Likert scale to make it "no need", and 3, 4, and 5 to make it "some need" became necessary for a better clarification of the needs in interpretive delivery training. The results, in the form of the

frequencies, are shown in Table 5.13. The mode, median and mean scores were computed and the tour guides' responses regarding interpretive training needs were ranked according to the mean scores as shown in Table 5.13. The mean rankings for the interpretive delivery training needs were calculated in order to establish the aspect of interpretive delivery techniques in which tour guides need training and the aspect of training in interpretive delivery techniques that was less needed.

Table 5.13: Tour guides' training needs in interpretive delivery techniques

Training needs in interpretive delivery techniques	No need		Some need		Mode	Median	Mean	
	F	%	f	%				RANK
Addressing tourists by their names.	22	(47.8)	24	(52.2)	1	3	2.609	1
Maintaining the attention of tourists throughout.	27	(58.7)	19	(41.3)	1	2	2.478	2
Gaining the attention of tourists.	27	(58.7)	19	(41.3)	1	2	2.478	3
Presenting the content in a simple manner so that it does not take a lot of effort from the tourists to follow the presentation.	28	(60.9)	18	(39.1)	1	2	2.435	4
Simplifying technical information (using explanations).	28	(60.9)	18	(39.1)	1	2	2.435	5
Encouraging participation of tourists through questioning them and interacting with them.	28	(60.9)	18	(39.1)	1	2	2.413	6
Entertaining tourists (using stories, humour, jokes).	28	(60.9)	18	(39.1)	1	1	2.370	7
Presenting in such a way that the tourist understands the broader theme or context of the topic (for example the role of an animal in its habitat or the history of a heritage site).	30	(65.2)	16	(34.8)	1	1.5	2.304	8
Presenting in such a way that there is a clear introduction to what I am going to say, the content is comprehensive and I provide some conclusions and insight at the end.	30	(65.2)	16	(34.8)	1	1.5	2.217	9
Presenting to tourists in such a way that you relate to things familiar in their daily lives (e.g. by giving examples and comparisons).	30	(65.2)	16	(34.8)	1	1.5	2.109	10
Using five senses (such as touching an interesting texture, smelling a plant).	32	(69.6)	14	(30.4)	1	1	2.087	11
Using eye contact as far as possible.	33	(71.8)	13	(28.2)	1	1	2.043	12

* f = Frequency

The mean rankings of the training needs in interpretive delivery techniques ranged from 2.04 to 2.61. "Addressing tourists by their names" had the highest mean score (2.61), as it had in the mean rankings of the problem in interpretive delivery techniques, whereas the aspect of "using eye contact" had the lowest mean score of 2.04. The lowest mean score for this item seems to suggest that tour guides did not perceive training in "using eye contact" as needed. It should be highlighted that while the mean cannot strictly be used as a ranking tool under these circumstances, the mode and median scores do support this.

The overall results as presented in Table 5.13 indicate that the number of tour guides that perceived interpretive delivery training as not needed was higher than the number of tour guides that felt training was needed. The mode scores for all the interpretive delivery techniques seem to confirm this. It was noted that the mean scores of the training needs were slightly higher than the mean scores of the interpretive delivery problems. The increase in the number of those that needed training when they did not seem to have as much concern about the application of the techniques seems to suggest that they would however not hesitate to avail themselves of any training opportunity in these techniques.

It is noted that there was a sizeable number of tour guides who needed training in "maintaining the attention of tourists throughout" and "gaining the attention of tourists". These training needs (which have to do with communication competence) may be because of the non-captive nature of tourists, so that a particular kind of training will be needed to enable tour guides to maintain their attention. This confirms Ryan and Dewar's (1995:301) assertion which stresses that communication competence assists in retaining the interest of tourists.

Further information on training needs was sought by posing an open-ended question that aimed to find out about any other type of training that they needed in order to improve their interpretive delivery techniques. The results of the response are shown in Table 5.14 below.

Table 5.14: Other training needs of tour guides

Other types of training you personally need to improve your delivery techniques.	F	%
Guiding	11	(23.9)
Communication	3	(6.5)
Nature conservation	9	(19.6)
Other (e.g. first aid, customer care, hospitality management and 4x4 courses for road)	23	(50)
Total	46	100

* f = Frequency

Table 5.14 indicates that 50% of the tour guides (23.9%; 6.5%; 19.6%=50%) had training needs related to interpretive guiding. Training needs in this aspect did not come as a surprise, considering what guiding is. Guiding means being an effective interpreter with appropriate communication skills. It has to do with accurately understanding the sites, resources and products, hence the need for nature conservation training. Guiding also encompasses understanding of tourists' needs and desires and language (Yamada, 2011:148). The increase in the number of tourists who are interested in learning about and understanding conservation issues and their role as visitors (Eagles, McCool & Haynes, 2002:109; Moscardo, 1999:11) necessitates a thorough training in guiding, which calls for continuous professional development in order to address gaps.

An independent two-sample T-test was computed to establish if the views on the interpretive delivery training needs and views on the problems with interpretive delivery techniques differed according to academic qualifications (Matric, Diplomas, Degrees), i.e. between those who had matriculation and those with a higher qualification. The results indicate that there was no significant difference between the views of those who had matriculated (mean=26.50; SE=3.031) and those who had a higher qualification (mean=29.70; SE=3.290) with regard to interpretive training needs and problems with interpretive delivery techniques (t= -711; df = 44; $p=0.481>.05$). This seems to confirm an observation that was made earlier in this document that having qualifications higher than matriculation (such as university degrees) does not necessarily mean having been exposed to interpretive training. These guides would then need specific training in interpretive guiding. Those with post-matriculation diplomas and degrees might still

need training to beef up their content (conservation). The same inferential results applied to perceptions of problems with interpretive delivery techniques versus academic qualifications. An independent two-sample T-test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference between the tour guides who had matriculation as their highest academic qualification (mean=20.19,SE=1.433) and those who had academic qualifications higher than matriculation (mean=20.65,SE=1.431), in respect of how they perceived problems relating to interpretive delivery techniques. The results showed no difference in perception of problems with interpretive delivery techniques between the tour guides who had matriculation as their highest academic qualification and those tour guides who had a higher qualification (*t* = -.222;df=44,*p= 0.825*>.05). These findings may have also been influenced by the a fairly long experience which many of SANParks' guides have as well as the on-job-training that many of them have been exposed to.

In summary, it may be concluded from these findings that the tour guides see training as a way of enhancing their interpretive delivery. The findings therefore confirm Hypothesis 2 (H2), which states "Tour guides perceive the provision of continuing education and training in interpretive techniques as essential in improving their effectiveness in interpretive techniques".

5.3.1.8 Other concerns with regard to effective interpretive delivery

This section, which was divided into two, intended to find out what tour guides perceived as aspects that impede their quality of interpretation. This section also aimed to obtain information on whether the guides had attended any upgrading courses on interpretive guiding.

5.3.1.9 Aspects that impede effective interpretive delivery

This section aimed to establish to what extent tour guides felt that the statements in Table 5.15 had a negative effect on the quality of their interpretive delivery.

Table 5.15: Aspects that impede effective interpretive delivery

Item	Agree		Disagree		Mode	Median	Mean	Rank
	F	%	F	%				
Lack of skills in planning interpretation.	8	(17.4)	38	(82.6)	5	4.0	3.848	1
Lack of time to design interpretation programmes properly.	15	(32.6)	31	(67.4)	5	4.0	3.522	2
Too many other responsibilities apart from interpretive guiding (e.g. compiling tourists' itineraries).	13	(28.2)	33	(71.8)	Multiple	3.0	3.217	3
Financial constraints in providing effective interpretive delivery.	19	(41.3)	27	(58.7)	Multiple	3.0	2.957	4
Lack of support from tour operators/park management in further training.	22	(47.8)	24	(52.2)	1	3.0	2.696	5
Not enough materials to improve the interpretive delivery.	23	(50)	23	(50)	1	2.5	2.696	6
Language problems. Please specify with which language/s you experience the most problems.	27	(58.7)	19	(41.3)	1	2.0	2.370	7

*Key: f = frequency

Table 5.15 compares the mean scores of the statements, ranking them according to the statement with which most respondents disagreed. When comparing the mean scores of the statements on the aspects that have a negative effect on the quality of their delivery techniques, it is evident that the statement with which most tour guides agreed was "language problems" (mean=2.370), followed by "not enough materials to improve the interpretive delivery" (mean=2.696).

Table 5.15 seems to confirm that the majority of the tour guides felt that language had a negative impact on the quality of their interpretive delivery. Only 41.3% (n=19) disagreed, feeling that language did not have a negative effect on the quality of their delivery. The languages that were mentioned included French, Italian, German, Afrikaans, Spanish, Chinese, Xhosa, English and Zulu. The mode and the median computed confirmed that there was generally a problem with language. The problem of language in interpretive guiding has been reflected in literature. The findings of the study by Chowdhary and Prakash (2008:293) reflected that there are inadequate facilities for learning foreign languages.

Fifty percent (n=23) of the tour guides seem to agree that there is a problem of inadequate materials, which, if they were adequate, could help to improve their interpretive delivery. The problem of inadequate material had emerged when tour guides explained the reasons for their inability to apply interpretive delivery techniques (refer to Table 5.12).

The majority of the respondents seem to disagree that "lack of skills in planning interpretation" (82.6% n=38), "lack of time to design interpretation programmes properly" (67.4% n=31), being overloaded with "responsibilities apart from interpretive guiding" (71.8% n=33) impact negatively on the quality of their interpretive delivery. These results are contrary to the views held by Hall and McArthur (1996:92) that there is

resistance to more formal planning of interpretation because of time and resource constraints.

About 58.7% (n=27) of the tour guides disagreed and 41.3% (n=19) agreed that "financial constraints" had a negative impact on the provision of effective delivery techniques. These results indicate that financial constraints especially regarding upgrading do not seem to be a big issue. This may because the skills development policy in SANParks may have exposed some tour guides to free upgrading programmes. It emerged from the research that one of the challenges of interpretive guide training is making it affordable to those who have the most to gain from it.

What should be highlighted is the result of the response regarding tour guides' views on the "lack of support from … management", in which a sizeable number of tour guides (47.8% n=22) indicated that lack of management support for further training seemed to have a negative effect on the quality of their interpretive delivery.

Despite the responses indicating lack of managerial support, one cannot conclude that the tour guides lack support from their management (SANParks or individual parks) and that this has had a negative impact on tour guides' effective application of interpretive delivery techniques.

It became essential to find more information on whether tour guides have upgraded their interpretive delivery skills, since upgrading is one of the key issues in effective interpretation, as explained in the following section.

5.3.1.10 Tour guides' information on upgrading interpretive skills

Guides were asked if they had attended any upgrading training course on interpretive guiding since they started working as guides, and the results (Figure 5.10) show a fairly

equal split. Tour guides who had not attended any upgrading course since they started working as guides were asked to give reasons (Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10: Have you ever attended any upgrading training course on interpretive guiding since you started working as a tour guide?
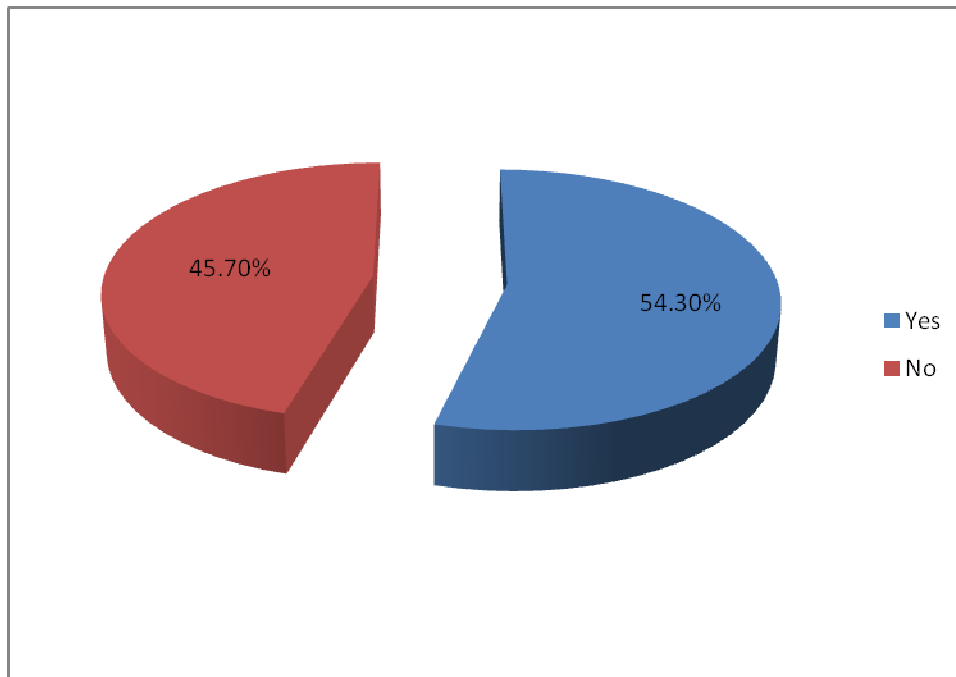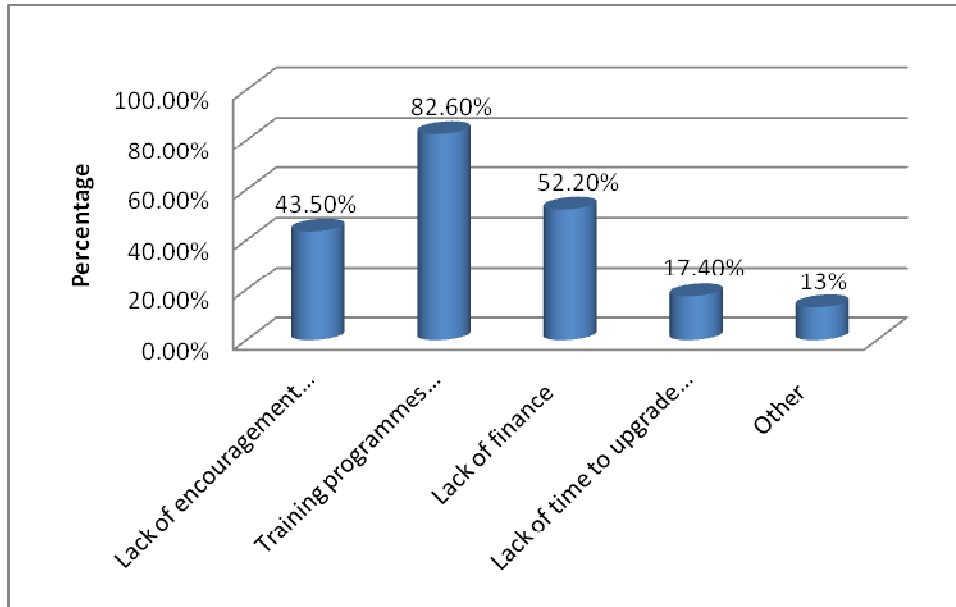
Figure 5.11: Reasons for not attending guiding courses

Highlighted here is that only 50% (n=23) of the guides gave reasons why they had not upgraded themselves through doing courses. Nonetheless out of the 50% of the guides who gave reasons why they had not upgraded themselves, a minority indicated "lack of time" as a reason, compared to a majority of 82.60% who gave "the scarcity of training programmes" as a reason. The reason regarding the scarcity of training programmes contradicts the earlier observation which the researcher has made about several THETA-accredited training providers in guiding that are available in South Africa. This suggests that awareness of THETA-accredited training providers should be promoted, and tour guides themselves should be proactive in themselves looking for information about guiding institutions.

5.3.2 Data analysis for tourists

This section presents and describes the analysis of data of tourists who participated in the study. The aim of this analysis is to give an overview of tourists' perceptions on whether they had enjoyed their experience, if they were generally satisfied with the way the guides had presented the material and if their experience of the guides'

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presentations had increased their knowledge of environmental/cultural issues. This section further aims to provide an understanding of how tourists perceived the guides' application of interpretive delivery techniques. To begin with, the analysis of the tourists' profile.

5.3.2.1 Tourists' profile

The usable questionnaires which were completed and returned by tourists totalled 169 (n=169). The age distribution, gender and nationality of the tourists who participated in the study are shown in Figures 5.12, 5.13 and 5.14.

Figure 5.12: Age distribution of tourists
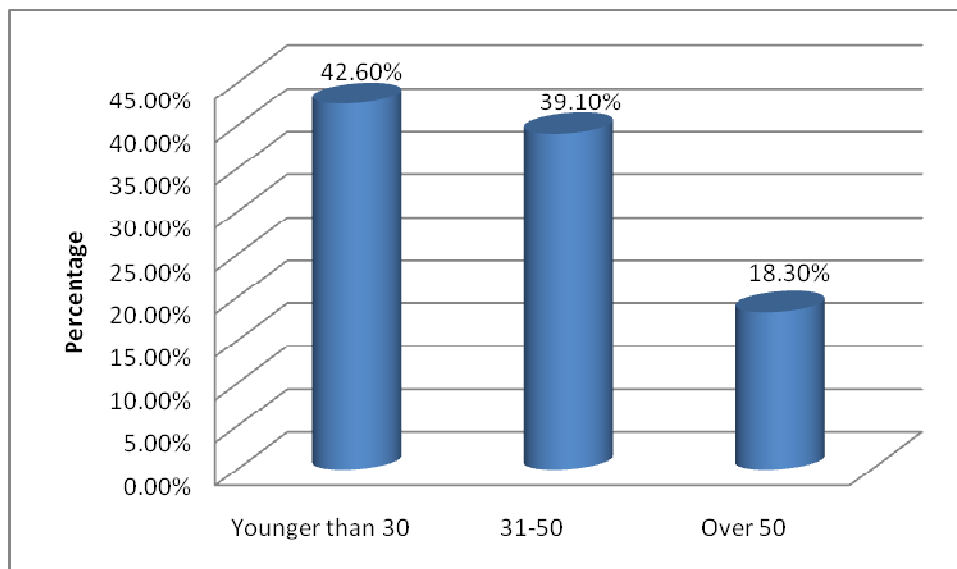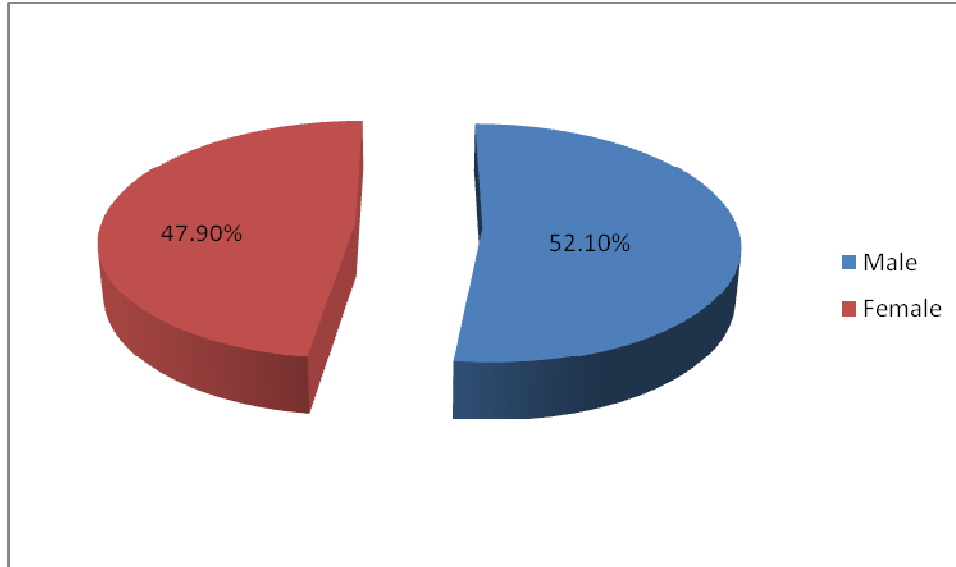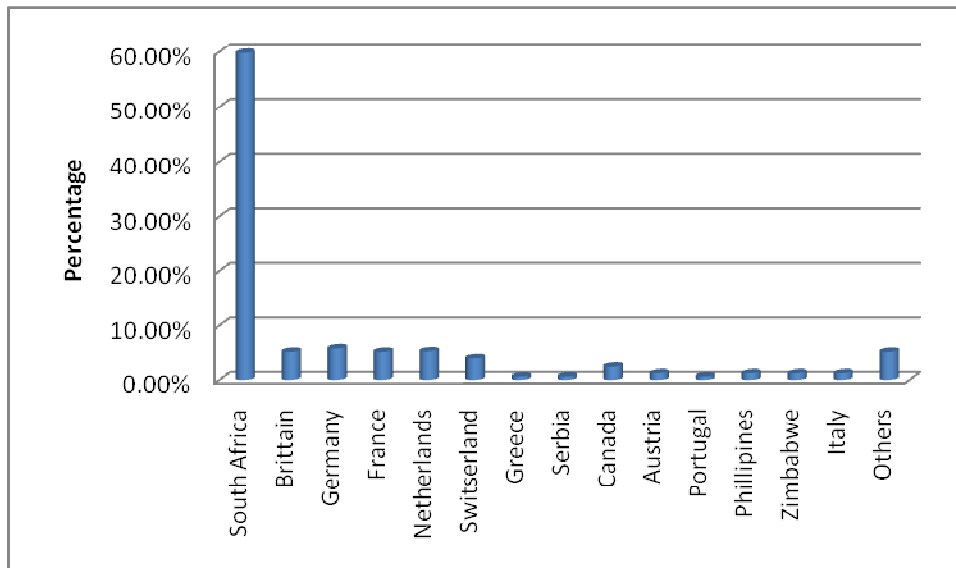
Figure 5.13: Gender

Figure 5.14: Nationality of tourists

About 43% (n=72) of the tourists who participated in this study were younger than 30 years, 39% (n=66) were between 31 and 50 years, and 18% (n=31) were over fifty years old, as shown in Figure 5.12. Of the 169 tourists, about 52% (n=88) were males and about 48% (n=81) were females (Figure 6.13). Most of the tourists who participated

were South Africans, followed by German (6%, n=10) and British (5%, n=9) tourists, as shown in Figure 5.14. The rest were from France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Greece, Serbia, Canada, Austria, Portugal, the Philippines, Italy, Zimbabwe and other countries. The noticeable number of South African tourists may have been as a result of SANParks present drive to increase the number of domestic tourists.

5.3.2.2 Perceptions on general satisfaction of tourists with the guides' presentation

Following the tourists' profile was a question that was meant to establish the tourists' general experience (experience, satisfaction and gaining of cultural/environmental knowledge), and the responses are shown in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16: Tourists' views on general experience

	Very much		Not sure		Not at all		Mode	Median	Mean
Item	f	%	F	%	F	%			
The experience from the guide has increased my knowledge of environmental issues/cultural heritage.	145	(85.8)	11	(6.5)	13	(7.7)	1	1.0	1.591
I was generally satisfied with the way the guide presented.	146	(86.4)	12	(7.1)	11	(6.5)	1	1.0	1.550
I enjoyed my experience.	153	(90.5)	9	(5.3)	7	(4.2)	1	1.0	1.450

Key: f = frequency

According to Table 5.16, it appears that the majority of tourists enjoyed their interpretive guided experience (91%, n=153). The response reflected a high level of satisfaction with the guide (86%, n=146) and it was evident that the tourists felt that the guides had increased their knowledge of environmental issues and cultural heritage sites (86%, n= 145). Noted in this section of the questions are the high modes, median and mean scores computed for each of these items, which are indicative of positive perceptions. However note should be taken of the tourists who were neutral and gave low scores in these items.

Cross-tabulations were constructed and Chi-square test statistics calculated to establish if there was an association between age and the views on tourists' general satisfaction with the way the guide presented. Conclusions based on Fisher's Exact test (*Test statistic*=.496, *p=0.765*> .05) show that there was no statistical association between the age groups and the satisfaction levels, as well as gender and tourists' satisfaction. This seems to suggest that views on how satisfied they were with the way the guide presented did not differ according to whether a tourist was female or male. Conclusions drawn from the Fisher's Exact test (Test statistic = 0.011, *p*>.05) confirm this suggestion that there was no statistical relationship between gender and tourists' views on their satisfaction about the way the guide presented. The Fisher's Exact further indicated that there was no statistical relationship between nationality and views on tourists' satisfaction about the tour guides (*p*>.05).

Cross-tabulations were constructed and Chi-square test statistics calculated to establish if there was an association between the responses to the question, "I enjoyed my experience" and "I was generally satisfied with the way the guide presented".

According to the results based on Fisher's Exact test, there is a significant association between the responses regarding the tourists' enjoyment and their general satisfaction (test statistic = 10.56, *p* < .001). Of the 153 respondents (n=153) who said they had enjoyed their experience, 146 (95.4%) also mentioned that they were generally satisfied with the way the guide presented. However, the remaining seven respondents (4.6%) of those who said they had enjoyed the experience were not generally satisfied with the way the guide had presented. The standardised residual value of -3.0 of those who said they were not generally satisfied with the way the guide presented indicates that fewer respondents than expected were dissatisfied.

The conclusion drawn from these results is that there was a likelihood that the tourists who enjoyed the experience would be generally satisfied with the way the guide presented. Therefore the quality of the guides' presentation enhances the tourists' experience.

The results of the cross-tabulation indicate that there is a significant association between tourists' views about whether or not their experience of the guide had increased their knowledge of environmental issues/cultural heritage, and the view that they were generally satisfied with the way the guide presented ($p<$ .001 from Fisher's Exact Test, value = 8.160). The association is evident in the cross-tabulation results that show that of the 145 respondents who agreed that their experience of the guide had increased their knowledge of environmental issues/cultural heritage, 138 of those (95.2%) also said they were generally satisfied with the way the guide presented. However, seven (4.8%) of those said they were not satisfied with the way the guide presented. The smaller number of dissatisfied tourists is reflected by the standardised residual of -2.9.

Following the item on the general tourist experience were the questions on tourists' perceptions of the application of interpretive delivery techniques by guides, as explained in the following paragraphs.

5.3.2.3 Tourists' perceptions of the application of interpretive delivery techniques by tour guides

The tourists were asked to indicate on a Likert scale (1 = never to 5 = always) how they perceived tour guides' application of interpretive delivery techniques during interpretation. The results are shown in Table 5.17 below.

Table 5.17: Tour guides' application of interpretive delivery techniques as perceived by tourists

Items	Never f	%	Not sure f	%	Always F	%	Mode	Median	Mean	Rank
The guide presented clearly and logically.	15	(8.8)	8	(4.7)	146	(86.4)	5	5.0	4.414	1
The guide made eye contact with me/us (where applicable).	16	(9.5)	14	(8.3)	139	(82.2)	5	5.0	4.379	2
I was able to gain the guide's attention when needed.	15	(8.9)	14	(8.3)	140	(82.8)	5	5.0	4.355	3
The guide managed to hold my attention.	17	(10)	11	(6.5)	141	(83.4)	5	5.0	4.308	4
She/He presented in a simple and understandable manner.	13	(7.7)	19	(11.2)	137	(81)	5	5.0	4.308	5
She/He simplified technical information (using explanations).	15	(8.9)	18	(10.7)	136	(80.5)	5	5.0	4.225	6
She/He encouraged participation from us by using questions and by interacting with us.	23	(13.6)	14	(8.3)	132	(78.2)	5	5.0	4.201	7
The guide entertained me by using stories and making jokes.	22	(13)	17	(10.1)	130	(76.9)	5	5	4.160	8
There was a central theme throughout her/his presentation.	24	(14)	21	(12.4)	24	(14.2)	5	5.0	4.124	9
I could relate to things from my daily life through examples and comparisons which she/he gave.	23	(13.6)	38	(22.5)	108	(64)	5	4	3.905	10
She/He encouraged me/us to use five senses, where applicable (such as touching an interesting texture, smelling a plant).	21	(18.4)	27	(16)	111	(65.6)	5	4.0	3.863	11
The guide addressed me by my name (where applicable).	55	(32.6)	28	(16.6)	86	(50.9)	5	4.0	3.385	12

* 1=never to 5=always

Table 5.17 shows that tourists' perceptions of tour guides' application of interpretive delivery techniques is mostly positive, except for "the guide addressed me by my name (where applicable)". The mode and median scores confirm this overall positive perception. It is important to highlight that while the mean cannot strictly be used as a ranking tool under these circumstances, the mode and median scores seem to support this. The technique which was highly rated by tourists was "The guide presented clearly and logically", whereas the one that was rated lowest was "The guide addressed me by my name". The number of tourists who reflected that the tour guides never applied specific interpretive delivery techniques is noted. The number of tourists who were uncertain about the guides' application of the interpretive delivery techniques seems to indicate uncertainty on their part about whether the guides were able to apply specific interpretive delivery techniques.

It may be deduced from the above that the findings reject hypothesis 1 (H1) which states, "Tour guides do not effectively apply interpretive techniques in national parks.

5.3.2.4 Section summary

In concluding this section, it is important to highlight the fact that there was a positive perception of the guides' application of interpretive delivery techniques by tourists. It should however be noted that there were some tourists who gave a low score to the tour guides' application of interpretive delivery techniques and some who were uncertain about the guides' application of these techniques.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter (Chapter 5) presented and interpreted the results of the qualitative (interviews) and the quantitative studies. The results from the qualitative study revealed that there is a need for continuing education for tour guides in order to improve their communication skills and interpretive content. There were indications that there are problems with regard to the evaluation of interpretation. The quantitative analysis further

confirmed the need for continuing education by highlighting the areas of communication and content (conservation) as areas where they need training. However the results indicated that tour guides have a fair ability to apply interpretive delivery techniques, the view that was confirmed by the tourists. Special note should be taken of a few tourists who showed some dissatisfaction with some tour guides.

The next chapter (Chapter 6) concludes the study by discussing the conclusions drawn from the results, which then lead to the development of environmental interpretation that is proposed in this study. Thereafter, the chapter discusses the recommendations based on this study, the limitations of the study, the contributions made by the study and the directions of future research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The overall purpose of the study was to develop a conceptual model for effective interpretation by tour guides employed in South African national parks. In order to achieve this purpose, the following overall objectives were formulated:

- To examine the place and nature of interpretation in national parks.
- To identify the factors constituting effective interpretation for tour guides in South African National Parks.
- To determine whether tour guides appropriately apply interpretive delivery techniques.
- To identify tour guides' continuing education and training needs regarding interpretive delivery techniques.
- To assess the role of management within the context of South Africa's situation in supporting effective interpretation in SANParks national parks.
- To conceptualise a model for effective interpretation for tour guides in SANParks' national parks.

A literature survey was undertaken to ascertain what previous research had been conducted in this field and to study the various theories relating to environmental interpretation in nature-based tourism. From the literature, the concept of environmental interpretation was thoroughly analysed and the constructs that form the framework for measuring environmental interpretation were identified. This framework was used to develop the conceptual model as depicted in Figure 6.1. In order to overcome any gaps

in the literature, it was decided to embark on a qualitative study to identify any further constructs from knowledgeable respondents not covered in the literature.

In order to assess the situation in the national parks in South Africa in regard to the effectiveness of tour guides in environmental interpretation on the basis of the identified constructs, hypotheses were formulated to guide the process of the empirical investigation (refer to 1.5). The empirical investigation delivered data against which the hypotheses were tested, and this chapter discusses the results and whether these hypotheses could be validated. From the results, conclusions and recommendations are drawn and applied to the conceptual model. Finally the limitations of the study are presented, against which the results and the interpretation thereof should be circumspectly viewed, and recommendations for future research are made.

6.2 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE RESULTS

This section deals with the discussion and the conclusions that emerged from the literature review (Chapters 2 and 3) as well as from the results of quantitative and qualitative data analysis (as presented in Chapter 5) which provide an anchor for the development of a model of effective interpretation. The proposed model as depicted in Figure 6.1 comprises the following components:

- Park policies and requirements.
- Park managers' support for effective interpretation.
- Knowledge and application of interpretive delivery techniques.
- Evaluation.
- Continuing education and training.
- The role of effective interpretation in regard to ecotourists.

The paths that are reflected in the model show the influences that affect the elements of the model. These elements are discussed fully in the ensuing section.

6.2.1 Effective interpretation

The role of tour guiding in South Africa and specifically in South African national parks has been highlighted time and again in the previous chapters. The discussions on tour guiding further incorporated explanations on the place of interpretation in nature-based tourism. The role of interpretation in nature-based tourism is commonly seen as that of enhancing tourists' experience (recreational role) and of minimising the negative impact of tourists on the environment (conservation role). That is why many authors regard environmental interpretation as a management tool in national parks, a tool that needs to be carefully managed and evaluated. This means that, for environmental interpretation to be effective, there need to be appropriate management and evaluation mechanisms in place.

Achieving the level of effectiveness in interpretation and managing it in national parks in South Africa and abroad means ensuring that key players in its delivery, that is, tour guides, should have a clear understanding that their guiding roles in nature-based settings go beyond the traditional roles (pathfinders and mentors) and incorporate that of being interpreters. In South African national parks, the importance of the interpretive role of tour guides is recognised especially because it is evident that a large number of tourists, who are interested in visiting the national parks to experience both the cultural and the environmental heritage (refer to 1.3 & 2.4.2), have high expectations of interpretive guiding. There is evidence that many tourists join the guided activities in SANParks. Literature indicates that there have been concerns with regard to the quality of tour guiding in South Africa that emanate partly from the political transformation in South African tourism and in the conservation agencies (refer to 1.2). These concerns are evident in the recent research which led to the South African document on the "strategy to professionalise tourist guiding and legislative review" (Department of Tourism, 2009).

However, tour guides' effectiveness in interpretation depends on many factors. The following crucial factors that contribute to tour guides' interpretive effectiveness are part of the proposed model.

6.2.1.1 Parks' policies and requirements for interpretation

The first factor that is shown in the model is "the policies and the requirements for tour guides' employment". From the literature and the empirical results, it became clear that SANParks is guided and influenced in its operation by the broader South African national policies and the policies of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, including the employment of tour guides.

For instance it emerged from the literature that tour guides in South Africa have to follow procedures laid down by the Tourism Second Amendment Act, No. 70 of 2000 (Tourism Act, 2000). According to this Act no one is supposed to practise as a guide unless that person is registered in the relevant provincial registrar as a tourist guide. The provincial registrar considers whether a person qualifies to practise as a guide after having looked at a number of aspects, including the training qualification. The results of the interviews indicate that park management holds the view that tour guides should comply with the regulations laid down by the South African government, through the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) or the newly established Department of Tourism. Tour guides have to register with the department and must have a required qualification such as the National Certificate in Tourism: Guiding (NQF 2 or NQF4) in order to work as tour guides in the national parks. It is believed that this will promote effective interpretation in the parks.

The significance of such qualifications is seen in the conclusions drawn from the study by Armstrong and Weiler (2003:38), who assert that it is sensible in tour guiding to recruit staff specifically trained for the field. These requirements in some parks seemed to surpass and overlook the stipulations in the Responsible Tourism Manual for South Africa (2002:51), which calls for local people to be employed as tour guides. In addition

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these requirements seem to surpass the requirements of the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998, which SANParks recognises. These national legislative frameworks seem to be overlooked because tour guiding needs special communication skills and knowledge of aspects of conservation and culture. This was the view that was stated during the interviews.

The analysis of the tour guides' responses confirmed that the majority of tour guides had formal training before they started working as tour guides.

6.2.1.2 Application of interpretive delivery techniques

The second factor in the model is the ability to apply the interpretive delivery techniques. The ability to apply interpretive delivery techniques is one of the core fundamentals of effective interpretation. Interpretive delivery is all about communication. Communication becomes successful if the tour guide is able to capture the attention of the tourists, hold and maintain it by communicating, among other things, what is relevant to them. The attention aspect of interpretation that is stressed is based on the fact that tourists are a "non-captive audience", and are not obliged to be attentive. Therefore inability to communicate well may not yield the intended positive results of interpretation in national parks (conservation and recreation).

The literature shows that there are debates about what constitutes effective interpretation. Consequently authors have developed the principles that guide effective interpretation. These principles, which often emerge in debates and discussions on interpretation, are believed to have been formulated first by Tilden (1977:9). However, other authors have since provided further inputs and modified Tilden's principles of effective interpretation. Thus what constitutes effective interpretation can be explained by referring to Ham's (1992) suggested model of interpretation, normally called the EROT model of interpretation (refer to 2.7): for tour guides to be effective in interpretation, they have to execute interpretation in such a way that it is Enjoyable, Relevant, Organised and has a Theme.

Effective application of these interpretive techniques together with knowledge of the content of what is being interpreted (interpretive content such as conservation and cultural aspects) is important for guides to be effective in interpretation. However, the literature indicates that there are difficulties associated with the provision of effective interpretation in nature-based tourism. Lack of professional communication skills, lack of knowledge about the area and the inability to transmit simplified and understandable messages to tourists, are some of the concerns that are raised in the literature (refer to 1.2). In many cases, guides provide interpretation of a lower quality (McArthur in Newsome, Moore & Dowling, 2002:239), they lack the knowledge and skills to apply interpretive delivery techniques (Weiler & Ham, 2001:550), and they do not pay sufficient attention to interpretive techniques (Rabotić, 2010). Particularly in SANParks, literature indicates that there has been a situation when many employees with expertise left the organisation for socio-political reasons as a result of transformation in the country (refer to 1.2). It is important, according to Spenceley (2003:23), for people to be allowed to use their indigenous knowledge rather than insisting on formal education as a basis for becoming a tour guide. This situation may have affected the quality of interpretive guiding as well.

However, the depressing picture presented in certain cases in the literature does not apply to this study. The results as presented in Table 5.11 indicate that the majority of the tour guides employed by SANParks have a fair knowledge of how to apply interpretive delivery techniques. The first five highly ranked techniques consist of the crucial ones that have to do with attention and the transmission of information. Those techniques are "gaining the attention of tourists", "encouraging participation of tourists through questioning them", and "presenting the content in a simple manner so that it does not take a lot of effort from the tourists to follow the presentation" "addressing tourists by their names" and "using five senses" (refer to Table 5.12). Beside those techniques, they felt that the appropriate method of application would depend on the circumstances (e.g. one would use a different approach in addressing a small group of tourists or a large number travelling in an open van), that is, These results compare well with the result of the study conducted by Armstrong and Weiler (2003:29), which found

that 60 per cent of the guides constantly addressed the visitors by their names, whereas 13 per cent occasionally addressed visitors by their names or knew only the names of some of their tour group. Generally speaking, guides with smaller groups were naturally more successful in using names than those with larger tour groups. Some guides made no effort to learn names even with reasonably small groups. The tour guides who participated in this study held a similar view, that addressing tourists by their names is impossible when dealing with large numbers.

It was interesting to note that the majority of the tour guides do not have problems with entertaining the tourists, especially because fun and entertainment are part of interpretation in national parks. Special note should however be taken of those tour guides who indicated that they had problems with the application of interpretive delivery techniques.

The application of interpretive techniques was further tested using the tourists. The tourists' perceptions indicate that many tour guides followed the example of Ham's EROT model (which, briefly, encompasses enjoyment, relevancy, organisation and a theme). The interpretive delivery techniques that were highly ranked by the tourists (first 3) are "The guide presented clearly and logically", "I was able to gain the guide's attention when needed" and "The tour guide made eye contact with me/us". The questions which received low ratings from the tourists were, "The guide addressed me by my name", "She/he encouraged me/us to use five senses" and "I could relate to things from my daily life through examples and comparisons which she/he gave"

The conclusion drawn from the tour guides' perceptions of problems with interpretive delivery techniques is that the tour guides studied have a fair knowledge of the interpretive delivery techniques. It was only a small proportion of the tour guides who indicated that they had problems with some of the techniques.

The results of this study specified the first three highest-ranked interpretive delivery techniques in terms of problems. The statement which ranked first in the problems with interpretive delivery techniques was "Addressing tourists by their names". About 47.4 per cent of tour guides felt it was a problem to address tourists by their names, while 52.2 per cent felt it was not a problem.

Getting tourists to use their five senses (by e.g. feeling an interesting texture, smelling a plant etc.), ranked second among the problems with interpretive delivery techniques in this study. About 30 per cent of the tour guides indicated that they had experienced problems with this technique, as opposed to 69.6 per cent who had not. The results of the study conducted by Armstrong and Weiler (2003:28) reported a far lower percentage of those who successfully used all five senses. Encouraging the use of the senses assists in making interpretation lively and enjoyable (Markwell & Weiler, 1998:106).

With regard to gaining the attention of tourists, the results indicated that few of the tour guides had a problem with this technique.

6.2.1.3 Continuing education and training

The other factor in the model is "Continuing education and training". The literature indicates that training for tour guides working in nature-based settings must be continuous in order to improve their interpretive effectiveness (refer to 3.4.1.3). In South Africa continuing education and training for tour guides is recognised as a tool that can help to address gaps in the tour guides' training and also address the problem of inadequate training in certain cases.

There is always a debate about the type and amount of training that is required for tour guides. Also highlighted is the attitude of many commercial tour guides, who doubt whether theory or academic work adds much value to interpretive effectiveness (Pond, 1993), an attitude which could easily discourage them from furthering their training.

Such an attitude was not observed in this study. The park managers believe it is the responsibility of the park management and the tour guides themselves to improve the tour guides' interpretive competence.

The view in favour of the need for continuing education and training in communication skills dominated during the interviews. This view undoubtedly supports training in interpretive delivery skills, since, according to the literature, interpretation is communication. The interviews that were conducted with park/tourism managers brought insights into the need for tour guides to acquire further good communication/interpretive skills (such as gaining and maintaining of tourists' attention) and improve their knowledge of the content of interpretation (such as conservation/cultural heritage themes) as part of their continuing education and training. The managers saw this as critical for effective interpretation.

In recognising the need for continuing education and training for tour guides in SANParks, some of the parks have gone to the extent of producing reading and training manuals to enhance both the content and the interpretive skills (refer to 5.2.3, 5.2.4, Table 5.3 & Table 5.5). Some parks sometimes benefit from the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's training of tour guides. The Department's involvement in the continuing education and training indicates the government's interest in improving tour guiding in South Africa (refer to 5.2.4).

One of the findings of the study was that there were tour guides in SANParks who needed training in each of the twelve interpretive techniques, as can be inferred from Table 5.13. This is an indication that training in communication skills is always required by tour guides. The aspects of interpretive training which were ranked the highest (the first three) as mainly needed by most tour guides in the study were: "Addressing tourists by their names", "Maintaining the attention of tourists" and "Presenting the content in a simple manner so that it does not take a lot of effort from the tourists to follow the presentation". Guiding and communication emerged again when tour guides listed other

training aspects which they personally felt they needed in order to improve their interpretive delivery techniques (refer to Table 5.14).

The need for continuing education has always been emphasised by authors such as Pereira (2009:9) as a way of helping tour guides to keep abreast of developments in knowledge and skills in interpretation. The demand by tour guides in SANParks for training is evident in the results of the inferential statistics, which seemed to indicate that whether they had a degree, diploma or matric did not make a significant difference in the need for training. It is important to highlight that while some had degrees or diplomas as their highest qualifications, they had not necessarily received any interpretive training in their academic studies; hence the need for more interpretive training, with probably not as much training on the content (conservation and cultural aspects), whereas those who had matric as their highest academic qualification may have had some interpretive training during their guiding training through THETA-accredited institutions (receiving, for example, the National Certificate in Tourism: Guiding). The results regarding the need of SANParks' guides for continuing education and training are consistent with the results of the study conducted by Cheng (2005:66; Hu, 2007:188), which revealed the need for continuing education through professional development.

Furthermore, the literature confirms that staff need help not just with the content, but also with the methods of interpretation (Aiello, 1998:60). Carbone (2006:55) is of the view that local guides often lack knowledge about the specific area where they are working. In this study, the need for training in both methods and content was also indicated in simple terms by tour guides referring to "guiding", "communication" and "nature conservation".

6.2.1.4 Evaluation

In this study evaluation was incorporated as part of the literature. This component is viewed in the literature as essential for the interpretive effectiveness of tour guides.

Evaluation follows the quality assurance mechanisms in interpretive guiding (professional associations, codes of conduct, professional certificate, licensing and individual awards for excellence, training and registration), which are viewed as tools to manage quality and enhance tour guides' interpretive effectiveness (refer to 3.4). Some of these tools are used in SANParks in complying with the National Department's regulations, and some as a way of motivating their employees (including tour guides) to be excellent in their jobs. For instance, tour guides in SANParks have to comply with the code of conduct as outlined by the National Department (Department of Tourism, which used to be part of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism) and to register as tour guides with the provincial registrar. Their employees also receive awards for excellent performance.

To enhance effective interpretation in nature-based tourism, the view frequently surfaces that there always needs to be evaluation of interpretation. Different types of evaluation are identified in the literature (refer to 3.5), such as self-evaluation, peer evaluation, evaluation by staff (senior) and evaluation by tourists. These are further categorised into formal and informal. The quantitative results of this study established that tour guides in SANParks use more than one type of evaluation (refer to 5.4.1.3). However, informal evaluation is predominantly used by most tour guides (refer to Figure 5.9), although the results of this study revealed that informal evaluation is the form least used in SANParks. Diverse opinions about the evaluation of tour guides' performance emerged from the interviews (refer to 5.2.3). It became evident from the results that some of the evaluation forms that are presently used in SANParks need to be improved. For instance the most tried evaluation mechanism is the evaluation through the questionnaire that tourists fill after a guided activity such as a game drive.

There are several concerns about the tourists' questionnaire. Park managers and officials felt that tourists often did not have time to complete it. There was dissatisfaction with the tourists' questionnaire because the form is not only about the evaluation of the guided activities but is a general form which evaluates any other experience which the tourist encountered in the park. Some of the park managers felt that tourists' evaluation

is effective because it gives the managers an idea of their tour guides' performance and accordingly an opportunity to guide tour guides in the event of concerns and complaints that emerge from the tourists' questionnaires.

The results of the interview show that evaluation by a supervisor is not common. Surprisingly, it was only one park official who indicated that in their park, they do have "direct observations" of the tour guides by the supervisors. This gives them an opportunity to identify interpretive problems and if there are, they use corrective measures such as in-house training. The park official concerned felt satisfied with this form of evaluation. The literature indicates that this type of evaluation provides insights into the effectiveness of interpretation and the tour guides' other skills and ability, as well as the tourists' reaction (Ward & Wilkinson, 2006:228). However one wonders about the feasibility, the time constraints and the implications and realities of introducing such evaluation, especially in a large park with a big number of tour guides.

One of the interesting types of evaluation used by one park is to establish from the tour guides themselves (through self-evaluation) what problems they have with regard to interpretive guiding. Then the park official organises a workshop based on the areas of concern as indicated by the tour guides. The literature indicates that self-evaluation is a simple method that many people tend to be comfortable with, but tour guides do not regularly use it (refer to 3.5). With regard to peer evaluation, the results of this study indicate that this type of evaluation is used on a rather lower scale at SANParks (refer to Figure 5.9). This type of evaluation is recommended as useful, and therefore needs to be encouraged at SANParks. According to the literature peer evaluation should also be encouraged. For instance, it allows for immediate feedback on one's performance; and also serves as a motivational tool. Since the feedback comes from one's own peers rather than from management, there is a greater likelihood of buy-in than if it was the other way round.

6.2.1.5 Park management support towards effective interpretation

The last factor in the model is "park management support towards effective interpretation". It is essential that management should support interpretation in the national parks. Management support contributes positively towards guides' effectiveness in interpretation and particularly in the application and knowledge of interpretive delivery techniques.

To begin with, it is important that besides discussions in the literature review on the SANParks' management support of quality in interpretive guiding, elucidation of the South African Government's support for quality in guiding (through government's requirements and policies), has been reflected in this study (refer to 1.2). To reiterate just a few instances, THETA for instance was established to give access to training for tour guiding even to those who had been previously deprived as a result of the past government policies. Another example is the emphasis on the RPL policy, which enables tour guides to proceed with their training based not only on their previous academic knowledge, but also on their indigenous knowledge and experience. That is evident in the results of this study, which indicates a remarkable number of tour guides who have obtained their qualifications through THETA-accredited institutions (refer to 5.4.1.2).

Various management strategies have been highlighted in the literature (such as giving adequate time to tourist guides to plan their interpretation, making interpretive material/ sources available, supporting tour guides to further their training, ensuring that tour guides are not overloaded with other responsibilities). The conclusion drawn from this study is that tour guides have adequate time to design their interpretive guiding and are not too overloaded with other responsibilities (other than their main interpretive guiding), which may prevent them from providing effective interpretation to tourists (refer to Table 5.15). The issue of time as a problem in interpretive guiding was highlighted by Weaver (2006:186), who said tour guides may be able to devote only a small portion of time to

developing a persuasive interpretation, even if they have the motivation to do so, because of other roles that they are expected to play (such as coordinating logistics). What should be highlighted is the number of tour guides (47.8%) who are of the view that "there is a lack of support from park management for further training", and (50%) who feel that there is a lack of materials to improve their interpretation". These results compare well to those of the interviews, in that park managers/park officials held the view that the tour guides themselves should be motivated to further their studies in connection with tour guiding. They categorically stated that tour guides should be pro-active in improving themselves (refer to Table 5.6). With regard to the issue of the lack of interpretive materials, it was interesting to note that the problem of inadequate materials for interpretation also emerged during the interviews. The findings of the study conducted by Armstrong and Weiler (2003:40) in Victorian Parks showed the same results in regard to the need for adequate materials. Armstrong and Weiler (2003:40) therefore recommended that there was a need to provide materials that would facilitate interpretive delivery.

Some other areas of concern that emerged among tour guides were language problems, not only foreign languages but even local languages that are not their mother tongues. The majority of tour guides considered their lack of knowledge of other languages as a problem that impeded effective interpretation. Language problems were also highlighted by Carbone (2006:55), who stated that most of the time local guides have problems with language skills. Chowdhary and Prakash (2008:293) raised the issue of language in their study by stating that there were inadequate facilities for learning foreign languages.

Following the above-mentioned aspects were issues regarding attendance of upgrading training in interpretation. Asking the tour guides to respond to such questions was a way of checking how supportive management is of effective interpretation.

In the study there were a remarkable number of tour guides who had not attended any upgrading courses since starting work as tour guides. The most prominent reasons that

were given by the tour guides for not attending such courses were, for example, that "Training programmes are scarce" (the same conclusion drawn by Chowdhary and Prakash (2008:293) from their research), "Lack of finance", and "Lack of encouragement from management to upgrade their interpretive skills". This confirms the assertion by Pond (1993:27), who states that most guides have little professional or academic support. It should be noted that it was only 50 per cent of the respondents who had said they had not attended any upgrading training course on interpretive guiding since they started working as guides. Lack of encouragement to upgrade their interpretive skills was contrary to the results of the interview, where park managers felt that upgrading interpretive skills through continuing education and training is crucial (refer to 5.2.4).

Support by management for aspects that have been mentioned above will help to improve the quality of interpretation in South African national parks. In particular, encouragement from management to upgrade their skills will enhance the tour guides' knowledge and application of interpretive delivery techniques.

6.2.2 Tourists' perceptions of their interpretive experience

It has been reiterated throughout this study that some of the core beneficiaries of the process of interpretation in national parks, if it is done effectively, are the tourists. That is why in SANParks guided activities aim at "creating a unique, holistic and meaningful tourists' experience" (SANParks, 2008:3). The model depicts that effective interpretation by tour guides has a positive effect on the tourists' experience. Some studies have shown that there is a connection between the quality of guiding and tourist satisfaction (Weiler & Ham, 2002:551). Some research has specifically indicated that interpretation plays a role in tourists' experience (Armstrong & Weiler, 2002; Beck & Cable, 1998; Lew, Hall & Timothy, 2008:21).

The results of the qualitative study indicated that park managers in SANParks have a common understanding of the role and purpose of interpretation in the national parks.

It became clear that the role and purpose are two-fold, i.e. to conserve the natural and cultural environment, and to enhance the tourists' experience.

The first purpose of conservation is fulfilled through making tourists aware of the negative impact of inappropriate behaviour. The second purpose is executed through entertaining interpretation and through the increase in environmental/cultural knowledge. These purposes are the driving forces behind effective interpretation in national parks. The park managers' and tourism managers' chances of promoting effective interpretation through the knowledge and the application of interpretive delivery techniques are high. The tourists' expectations can only be met if tour guides are effective in their delivery. This makes the role of tour guides crucial in interpretive guiding in tourism.

6.2.2.1 Tourists' learning

Literature review clarifies the connection between interpretation and tourism. What is reflected and emphasised in the literature is that education, which is one of the key elements in interpretation, has long been a component of tourism (McArthur & Hall, 1996:89). This has not changed, when one considers the growth in general interest tourism that involves learning while travelling (Eagles, McCool & Haynes, 2004:14). Many reasons, apart from promoting tourists' enjoyment, have fostered this interest in learning, such as the tourists' interest in environmental and cultural issues, including conservation. The tourists' interest in these issues and the realisation of the need to use interpretation as a strategy to minimise the negative impact of tourism are among the reasons for the promotion of interpretation in the tourist destinations such as national parks.

The results of the data obtained from the tourists undoubtedly indicate that tourists had positive perceptions about the interpretive experience. According to the tourists, the experience provided by the tour guides increased their knowledge of environmental issues and/or cultural heritage (refer to Figure 5.16). The increase in visitors' knowledge

was evident in studies conducted by Tubb (2003:477) and Marion and Reid (2007:23). In the current study, the relationship between the increase in knowledge of environmental issues/cultural heritage and tourists' satisfaction with the way the guide presented was evident (refer to 5.5.2). The results indicated a significant association between tourists' views on whether or not the experience provided by the guide had increased their knowledge of environmental issues/cultural heritage, and the view that they were generally satisfied with the way the guide presented ($p < .001$).

6.2.2.2 Tourists' enjoyment and satisfaction

The literature highlights the significance of interpretation in national parks and in tourism by emphasising that it enriches tourists' experience, enhances their enjoyment and facilitates their understanding of conservation, heritage and culture (Ballantyne & Hughes, 2001:2; Chou, Tsai & Wang, 2002:600; Ham, Housego & Weiler, 2005:7; Hu, 2007:33; Kuo, 220:94; Markwell & Weiler, 1998:109; Walker & Moscardo, 2006:105). The results of the interviews revealed that park/tourism managers also perceived the purpose of interpretation as educative while at the same time entertaining, views similar to those of most authors (Kuo, 200:95; Weiler & Davis, 1993:9; Tilden, 1977:8). They see the purpose of interpretation as conserving the natural and cultural environments and enhancing tourism experience, and therefore contributing towards tourists' satisfaction. That was in line with what is reflected in the literature.

The majority of the tourists were generally satisfied with the way the guides presented and they enjoyed their experience (refer to Figure 5.16). Noted is the number of tourists who were neutral about the statements and those who did not agree. Neutrality may be perceived as an expression that does not convey full satisfaction. Neutrality and the disagreements about the level of satisfaction may give a bad impression of the overall interpretive experience, which may be conveyed by word of mouth to other potential tourists (Hu, 2007:188).

It was also noted that age, nationality and gender did not have an influence on the tourists' perception of their experience. This was contrary to previous research on tourists' satisfaction, which showed that the level of satisfaction of tourists differed according to their background, such as countries of origin and nationality (Ham & Weiler, 2007:6).

The success of the application of specific interpretive delivery techniques was ascertained through obtaining the tourists' perceptions. Many tour guides were generally successful in applying most techniques. However, the tour guides were least successful in addressing tourists by their names, in encouraging tourists to use their five senses, and in relating their interpretation to things from the tourists' daily lives.

Figure 6.1: Proposed model of environmental interpretation

EFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION

FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK

- Policies
- Knowledge in interpretive delivery techniques
- Application of interpretive delivery techniques
- Continuing education and training in interpretation (techniques and content)
- Evaluation
- Management support

Tour guides' effectiveness

ECOTOURISTS
- Environmental and cultural learning
- Increased enjoyment/ satisfaction

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations derived from this study are as follows:

6.3.1 Continuing education and training

The continuing education and training of tour guides to provide skills that will allow the guides to apply appropriate delivery techniques is necessary in order to ensure tourists' satisfaction. Over and above the current training efforts in national parks, emphasis should specifically be directed at training in interpretive delivery techniques and interpretive content. Inasmuch as the findings of the study reveal that most of the tourists were happy with the performance of the tour guides, it might still be prudent on the part of management to maximise their performance, since in business "one client lost is too many". This underscores the need for continuing education and training.

Training in these techniques would also aim at maximising learning about natural and cultural issues as well as helping to motivate ecotourists towards environmentally friendly behaviour (Haig & McIntyre, 2002:46). It is also evident from the literature that using a range of interpretive techniques attracts and maintains tourists' interest (Ballantyne & Hughes, 2001:7). The results of this study indicated a need for training in interpretive delivery techniques and interpretive content. This will help to fill the gaps which may have existed, especially in the training on practical implementation of interpretation. The view which emanated from the research by the Department of Tourism (2009:24) supports the notion that there is a need to fill a gap in tour guiding practice. The document categorically states "Tourist guiding cannot be learnt from textbooks alone. There needs to be a substantive practical experiential training. The guidelines set by THETA are not always followed by training providers.

6.3.2 Management support

The training policy should be aggressively driven so that all categories of workers would benefit from the organisational training.

As regards interpretive resources, SANParks needs to invest in interpretive materials/resources and these materials should be made available and easily accessible to all tour guides in order to improve their interpretation. The idea of resource centres or park libraries is recommended in all the parks of SANParks that provide interpretive guiding.

Another recommendation that relates to management support is about a need to design an interpretive framework for SANParks. The researcher is of the view that the interpretive framework will give guidance on various issues regarding what is expected from tour guides in interpretive guiding. It is important to highlight that it was established from the results of the interviews that some of the parks have manuals which may seem to be serving the same purpose.

6.3.3 Evaluation

This study identified some weaknesses and inconsistency in the area of evaluation of interpretation in SANParks. It is recommended that an evaluation system should be put in place in all the national parks of SANParks in order to avoid sporadic evaluation. There should be a proper evaluation strategy which should be carefully monitored by the management of each park. It is recommended that self-evaluation and peer evaluation should be intensified in order to deal with problems encountered in the tourists' feedback forms. Appropriate peer evaluation and self-evaluation forms should be designed to be used during the process of evaluation. Over and above these evaluation forms, there should be periodic feedback that should be given to the management about the evaluation results. Proper feedback serves as a motivation to staff. It is way of quality-assuring their work. Importantly, workshops on evaluation

should be organised from time to time to make sure that all tour guides understand the purpose and the process of evaluation. In addition to the current informal evaluation that is done, peer and formal evaluation of interpretation by tour guides should be encouraged by management as well, since this feedback will help the tour guides to improve their performance. A survey should be conducted in SANParks about the possibility of using evaluation by the supervisors to establish the realities of its implementation in large and small parks.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Several limitations of this study are identified and discussed in the following:

The first limitation was the cross-sectional design used in this study. Using this design meant that the results for the participants (tourists, tour guides and park/tourism managers) represented only the opinions of the specific time and of the specific participants. The use of a longitudinal approach is suggested in future studies of this nature.

The second limitation is that all the participants were associated with SANParks, i.e. the tourism/park managers and the tour guides were employees of SANParks, and even the tourists were guided by SANParks' tour guides. As a result it would not be prudent to generalise the findings of the study to other national parks because of the varying circumstances, conditions, practices, different organisational cultures and policies. Initially it was part of the researcher's plan to incorporate private tour operators and tour guides employed by private tour operators (i.e. those that have a licence to do tour guiding in SANParks' national parks) to be part of the study. This became difficult to do because they seemed to be less interested. Their lack of participation in a study of this calibre was not a surprise to the researcher because in the study by Armstrong and Weiler (2003:36) that used tour operators, some tour operators saw the research project as too invasive, potentially compromising the client experience, intrusive on intellectual property and consuming valuable business time.

The third limitation concerns the time and budget constraints which prevented the researcher from collecting the anticipated number of tourists' questionnaires and thus from reaching out to a larger target group. Despite the challenges of time and budget constraints, the researcher tried to source some finance and also tried to make as much time as possible available, to avoid compromising the purpose and the objectives of the study.

Lastly, the fourth limitation relates to honesty and objectivity regarding the tour guides' responses. Despite the fact that they were assured of confidentiality, it could have happened that some respondents became suspicious about questions relating to management or those in which they had to indicate their weaknesses in interpretive delivery techniques. However, the incorporation of tourists in this study, with an instrument covering the same techniques that were tested through the tour guides' instrument, was a way of counter-checking the tour guides' honesty. As reflected in the results (Chapter 5), the positive results of tourists were consistent with those of the tour guides. However, it is recommended that in future a participant observation method should be used to establish how honest the tour guides are in implementing interpretation. This method was used by Hu (2007:182), who investigated the tour guides' guiding practice in Hainan, China, by undertaking a typical tour as a participant observer.

It is also suggested that the management of the organisation or of SANParks should be more involved in addressing the tour guides about the aim of the study, emphasising the benefits of the study to both the tour guides and the organisation.

In spite of the limitations of the study, the findings undoubtedly have important contributions and implications for future research, as discussed in the following section (6.5).

6.5 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE THESIS

This thesis will make the following contributions to the world of academia and the tourism industry:

The remarkably inadequate published research on interpretive guiding in South Africa, and particularly in nature-based tourism, undoubtedly makes this study contribute to the body of knowledge on interpretive guiding in South Africa in various ways. There is no evidence of an existing South African model on interpretation in national parks. The provision of a South African model of interpretation emanating from empirical investigation conducted in South Africa, not abroad, will therefore fill that gap in the literature. This thesis contributes to the existing body of knowledge on "interpretation in national parks" by providing a model for interpretation which can be used by academics to test its applicability in other national parks that are administered by other conservation and tourism authorities in South Africa.

One of the most significant contributions of the study is that it unearths the problems in the evaluation of interpretive guiding in SANParks. Especially because this aspect, i.e. evaluation, is considered as one of the most important areas in ensuring quality in interpretation in nature-based tourism.

The role of the South African government in general and in particular the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and the newly established Department of Tourism in tour guiding is highlighted in this study. The South African government has established legislative framework that enhances access to training programmes in tour guiding (NQF,THETA, RPL), and legislation that ensures quality (code of conduct, guides' registration, minimum requirements for practising as a tour guide), all of which obligates SANParks in its day to day operations. These efforts have been highlighted both in the literature and in the empirical investigation of this study and are considered as one of the contributions of the study.

The study has provided a guideline on the type of measuring instruments that could be used for future research in this area of study in other organisations that are similar to SANParks. Given some of the limitations, the measurement instruments could be expanded, improved and tested on a broader sample to improve their validity. As they stand, the instruments allowed the researcher to determine the training needs in regard to interpretive delivery techniques.

Concern about under-representation in tourism journals of topics related to interpretation in tourism has already been indicated in the earlier discussion (refer to 1.7.1). Articles that specifically deal with interpretation in South Africa will be produced as a result of this thesis. The contents of the research papers (in the form of the discussions and the results of empirical investigation) will provide a basis for academic debates and discussions on interpretive guiding, more especially because not much has been written on interpretive guiding in the South African context.

Previous research in this field of study has been on tourists' views and on evaluating guiding performance rather than guides' own perceptions of their effectiveness (Ballantyne & Hughes, 2001:33). This study, which goes beyond the tourists' views, looked at the tour guides' perceptions of their problems and application of the interpretive delivery techniques.

Previous chapters (Chapters 1 & 3) have indicated that limited research has been conducted to establish continuing education and training needs for the professional development of tourist guides, both abroad and in South Africa. Notably, no South African study of this kind has been identified in the literature that focuses on interpretive delivery techniques. This study will provide information that will help academics to improve academic continuing education and training programmes in tour guiding in South Africa.

As regards the contribution of the study to the nature-based tourism industry, it will contribute to a better understanding of interpretive guiding in the South African context.

It will provide research instruments (tourists' and guides' questionnaires) that can be used in the future to evaluate personal interpretation in national parks in South Africa. It should provide clear guidelines for national parks to improve the quality of the visitors' experience and should contribute to the achievement of the goals of sustainability.

It is envisaged that the results of this study will provide information that will assist officials in the national parks and those who provide professional development training for tourist guides to better understand the guides' need for further training skills in interpretation in South Africa, an issue which has not been adequately researched in this country.

It will help to verify to what extent guides adhere to the EROT model of interpretation in the South African context.

6.6 DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Suggestions for future research include the following:

This study revealed the training needs, weaknesses and strengths in regard to the interpretive delivery techniques. It would be interesting if further research could be undertaken to look at how far issues of interpretive delivery techniques are covered by the educational institutions in their guiding training.

The main focus of this study has been on personal interpretation instead of non-personal interpretation. It is recommended that future research focuses on perceptions of tourists regarding the non-personal interpretive activities as well.

This study focused only on issues related to the interpretive delivery techniques and continuing education and training needs, without looking into the interpretive messages (environmental, cultural and conservational) themselves. It is recommended that future research should investigate the messages that are conveyed by tour guides to tourists.

The study established that there is a problem of interpretive evaluation in many parks in SANParks without coming up with a designed and suggested framework for interpretive evaluation. It is recommended that future research could delve deeper into the area of interpretive evaluation in SANParks, and come up with an evaluative strategy for interpretive guiding.

It is suggested that future researchers could use the instruments designed for the present study for comparative studies in other organisations that manage national parks in South Africa.

6.7 CONCLUSION

This study has been able to integrate both theory and practice in order to show the significance of interpretation in nature-based tourism and to identify problems with interpretive delivery techniques as well as training needs. The model of environmental interpretation that has been proposed emanated from both the theoretical (literature review) and the empirical investigations.

The discussion and the conclusions drawn from the results took into account the objectives of the study. The researcher is of the opinion that all the objectives of the study as stated in 6.1 have been fulfilled.

The final implication of this study is that there is a need for continuing education and training in interpretive delivery techniques for tour guides operating in SANParks.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TOUR GUIDES

Researcher: Duduzile Lorraine Boemah
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018-3817370 (a/h)/018-3892041 (office)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This letter serves to explain the purpose and procedures of this survey. It also serves as a consent agreement between the researcher and the respondent. Therefore it protects your rights as a person participating in the research.

The topic of this research is "Factors Determining the Interpretive effectiveness of Ecotour Guides in South African National Parks: An Interpretation Model."

Interpretation in this questionnaire involves explaining natural or cultural phenomena in such a way that the visitor/tourist begins to understand the subject and is stimulated to learn more.

This survey is designed to obtain data on your views and feelings about the following:

- The role of guides in the application of the interpretive delivery techniques in South African National Parks and cultural heritage sites;

- The role of management (park managers/tour operators) in enhancing the provision of quality interpretation; and

- The interpretive in-service training needs for guides.

Kindly note that this is not a test, there are no right or wrong answers. Your answers will be treated as completely confidential. This information will be summarised in a statistical form so that individuals cannot be identified. It is therefore not necessary to provide your name. It is important that you honestly complete each item in the questionnaire. It should take approximately 25 minutes to complete this survey.

The participation is completely voluntary and there are no risks involved. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact me (Duduzile Boemah) at the numbers provided above.

Please sign below if you are willing to participate in this research study. Your participation and contribution is highly appreciated.

Participant's signature------------------------------------   Date-----------------------------

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL AN...

Kindly answer the following questions by ticking or placing a cross in the appropriate block where applicable.

<table>
<tr><td>1</td><td colspan="2">Gender</td><td>V1</td><td>☐</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>Male</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>2</td><td>Female</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

| 2 | Age: _____years | V2 ☐ |

3   Please indicate your highest academic qualification.   V3 ☐

1	Below Grade 12/Matric
2	Matric
3	Diploma
4	Degree
5	Other, please specify_____

4   Please tick the province/s in which you operate (Please tick all applicable options).

V4.1 ☐
V4.2 ☐

1	Limpopo	2	Eastern Cape	3	Mpumalanga	4	Western Cape	5	Northern Cape

V4.3 ☐
V4.4 ☐
V4.5 ☐

5   Please indicate by whom you are employed.

1	Tour operator	V5.1 ☐
2	SANParks	V5.2 ☐
3	Other, please specify_____	V5.3 ☐

6   How are you employed? (If more than one applies to you, for example you may be employed as a freelance guide and paid hourly, please tick all applicable options).

V6.1 ☐
V6.2 ☐

1	Permanent	2	Freelance	3	Other, please specify_____

V6.3 ☐

7   How long have you been working as a guide? _____years.   V7 ☐

8   Which interpretation activities are you directly involved in? (Please tick all applicable options).

1	Walking trails	V8.1 ☐
2	Open Safari Van	V8.2 ☐
3	Any other, please specify e.g. providing information at the front desk. _____	V8.3 ☐

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9	Indicate the kind of interpretation training you have had as a guide. (Tick all applicable options).		
	9.1	Formal training before you started working as a guide (e.g. certification)	V9.1 ☐
	9.2	On-the job training (see meaning in next question)	V9.2 ☐
	9.3	None	V9.3 ☐
	9.4	Any other, please specify_____	V9.4 ☐

10	If you had **on-the-job training**, indicate which of the following formed part of your training. (Tick all applicable options).		
	10.1	Lecture sessions by a tutor	V10.1 ☐
	10.2	Lecture materials (for example manuals, videos, tapes)	V10.2 ☐
	10.3	Tour manuals	V10.3 ☐
	10.4	Tests	V10.4 ☐
	10.5	Apprenticeship (for example getting experience through working with and observing an experienced guide)	V10.5 ☐
	10.6	Mentoring (for example getting experience through partnership with a well established guide)	V10.6 ☐
	10.7	Any other, please specify_____	V10.7 ☐

11	If you had **formal training**, please indicate the highest level and qualification that you have at the moment in guiding.		
	11.1 Highest level		V11.1 ☐
	1	Level 1	
	2	Level 2	
	3	Any other level (please specify)_____	
	11.2 Highest qualifications		V11.2 ☐
	1	National Certificate in Tourism: Guiding (NQF1)	
	2	National Certificate in Tourism: Guiding (NQF4)	
	3	Any other, please specify_____	
	11.3 At which institution/s did you obtain your qualification/s in guiding? _____		V11.3 ☐
	12.1	Informal (such as simple observation of verbal/body language of tourists, comments made by tourists in the comments' book).	V12.1 ☐
	12.2	Formal (such as post-tour surveys that tourists complete or, debriefings with tourists).	V12.2 ☐
	12.3	Self evaluation (writing reports, keeping a personal journal).	V12.3 ☐
	12.4	Peer evaluation (such as letting colleague/s join your tour).	V12.4 ☐
	12.5	Any other, please specify_____ _____	V12.5 ☐

14	By looking at question 13 again (13.1-13.12), please list the five aspects which, in your opinion, are the most important in effective interpretive delivery. Write the applicable number from question 13.1 in each box, for example:		

EXAMPLE ONLY

Most important	13.2
Second most important	13.5
_____	

Now, your opinion please:

14.1	Most important		V14.1
14.2	Second most important		V14.2
14.3	Third most important		V14.3
14.4	Fourth most important		V14.4
14.5	Fifth most important		V14.5

15	List any other type of training, which you feel you personally need to improve your delivery techniques. _____ _____ _____	V15.1 V15.2 V15.3

SECTION C: OTHER CONCERNS WITH REGARD TO EFFECTIVE INTERPRETIVE DELIVERY

16	Please indicate to what extent you feel that the following have a **negative effect** on the quality of your interpretive delivery. Please tick an appropriate number on the scale of 1 **(strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).**

		Strongly agree				Strongly disagree	
16.1	Lack of time to design interpretation programmes properly.	1	2	3	4	5	V16.1
16.2	Lack of support from tour operators/park management in further training.	1	2	3	4	5	V16.2
16.3	Too many other responsibilities apart from interpretive guiding (e.g. compiling tourists' itineraries).	1	2	3	4	5	V16.3
16.4	Lack of skills in planning interpretation.	1	2	3	4	5	V16.4
16.5	Language problems. Please specify with which language/s you experience the most problems. _____ _____	1	2	3	4	5	V16.5
16.6	Financial constraints in providing effective interpretive delivery.	1	2	3	4	5	V16.6
16.7	Not enough materials to improve the interpretive delivery.	1	2	3	4	5	V16.7

17		Have you ever attended any up-grading training course on interpretive guiding since you started working as a guide?	V17	☐
	1	Yes		
	2	No		

	17.1	If **Yes,** please specify which particular training skill/s you acquired.

_____
_____

	17.2	If **No** in question 17, which of the following is the reason for not attending guiding courses (tick all applicable options).		
	17.2.1	Lack of encouragement from the management.	V17.2.1	☐
	17.2.2	Training programmes are scarce.	V17.2.2	☐
	17.2.3	Lack of finance.	V17.2.3	☐
	17.2.4	I feel I don't need to upgrade my interpretive skills.	V17.2.4	☐
	17.2.5	Lack of time to upgrade interpretive skills.	V17.2.5	☐
	17.2.6	Other, please specify_____	V17.2.6	☐

THANK YOU. I APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS SURVEY. I HOPE THE INFORMATION FROM THIS SURVEY WILL ASSIST TO IMPROVE UPON THE QUALITY OF INTERPRETATION.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TOURISTS

	QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TOURISTS (*THE QUESTIONNAIRE WILL TAKE LESS THAN 5 MINUTES OF YOUR TIME*).						**For office use only**	

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out how you feel about the presentation and guided activities that you attended or participated in today. (in other words, the interpretation of nature/cultural heritage). Please know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions, nor are some responses better or worse than others. We simply want to know your honest opinions about your experience today by crossing the appropriate box.

Respondent No: [ ]

1 How old are you?

1	Younger than 30	2	31-50	3	Over 50

V1 [ ]

2 Gender

1	Female	2	Male

V2 [ ]

3 What is your nationality? _____

V3 [ ]

4 Please answer the following questions on your guided experience. Cross the appropriate number using a scale of 1 (**very much**) to 5 (**not at all**).

	Very much				Not at all	
4.1	I enjoyed my experience.	1	2	3	4	5	V4.1 [ ]
4.2	I was generally satisfied with the way the guide presented.	1	2	3	4	5	V4.2 [ ]
4.3	The experience from the guide has increased my knowledge of environmental issues/cultural heritage.	1	2	3	4	5	V4.3 [ ]

5 Indicate how often the guide did the following during your guided experience, by crossing an appropriate number using a scale of 1 (**never**) to 5 (**always**).

	Never				Always	
5.1	I was able to gain the guides' attention when needed.	1	2	3	4	5	V5.1 [ ]
5.2	The guide managed to hold my attention.	1	2	3	4	5	V5.2 [ ]
5.3	The guide entertained me by using stories and making jokes.	1	2	3	4	5	V5.3 [ ]
5.4	She/He simplified technical information (using explanations).	1	2	3	4	5	V5.4 [ ]
5.5	She/He encouraged participation from us by using questions and by interacting with us.	1	2	3	4	5	V5.5 [ ]
5.6	She/He encouraged me/us to use five senses, where applicable (such as touch an interesting texture, smelling a plant).	1	2	3	4	5	V5.6 [ ]
5.7	The guide made eye contact with me/us (where applicable).	1	2	3	4	5	V5.7 [ ]
5.8	The guide addressed me by my name (where applicable).	1	2	3	4	5	V5.8 [ ]
5.9	I could relate to things from my daily life through examples and comparisons which she/he gave.	1	2	3	4	5	V5.9 [ ]
5.10	She/He presented in a simple and understandable manner.	1	2	3	4	5	V5.10 [ ]
5.11	The guide presented clearly and logically.	1	2	3	4	5	V5.11 [ ]
5.12	There was a central theme throughout her/his presentation.	1	2	3	4	5	V5.12 [ ]

Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – FIRST PHASE

_____

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARK /TOURISM MANAGERS

1. What do you see as the primary purpose of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation?

2. What are the minimum requirements (education qualification and competencies) for guides to operate in the park?

3. What programmes/actions do you have in the park to ensure continued effective environmental and cultural heritage interpretation by tour guides? Name the three most important.

4. What do you see as critical for effective interpretation? Name the three most important.

5. What skills do you think current guides need to develop in order to provide quality interpretation at natural and cultural heritage sites?   List the three most important.

6. In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to improve the interpretative competence of guides?

7. What specifically do you think should be done to improve the quality of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in national parks and heritage sites?
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS INTERVIEW.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – SECOND PHASE
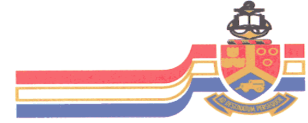
SECOND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARK OFFICIALS

INTERVIEWEE: --

DATE: ---

1. What measures do you use to monitor the performance of tour guides?

   ----

2. Do you have any problems with the type of measures that you use presently?

   ----

3. How do you evaluate the tour guides' communication competencies?

----

4. Are there any transformation employment policies that you have to use when employing a tour guide at your parks? What type of influence (negative/positive) do they have on the quality of guided tours?

APPENDIX E

EXTRACTS FROM THE INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Interview with respondent A		
Interview question	**Transcribed Responses**	**Categorized data**
1. What do you see as the primary purpose of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation?	*It adds value to the tourists experience and to the knowledge and preservation of indigenous knowledge.*	• Tourists' knowledge and overall experience.
2. What are the minimum requirements for tour guides to operate in the park?	*Formal qualifications in guiding. Registration with the relevant authorities.*	• Formal qualification. • Official registration.
3. What programmes/actions do you have in the park to ensure continued effective environmental and cultural heritage interpretation by tour guides? Name the three most important.	*There is a training process in this park.*	• There is existing training.
4. What do you see as critical for effective interpretation? Name the three most important.	*Relevant soft skills such as communication skills. And Sound knowledge base of the interpretation.*	• Communication skills • Knowledge of interpretation.
6. In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to improve the interpretative competence of tour guides?	*The organisation has to have a role. They have to carry that responsibility (line management- corporate--). The field guides must also see the need to improve themselves. It should be an on-going process/life learning process. Evaluation should be done from time to time to check the quality. The park management should provide opportunities for the field guides to improve themselves because interpretation is their product.*	• The organisation (SANParks line management). • Guides' initiative. • Evaluation of guides to determine their quality.
7. What specifically do you think should be done to improve the quality of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in national parks and heritage sites?	*An integrated approach (organic approach) to faster (develop) the people conservation issues. Articulation/ role established (inhabitants) recognising the role of indigenous people, recognising the need to develop the indigenous knowledge, ensure cultural beneficiation of peripheral communities (flow of information).*	• Develop indigenous knowledge.

Interview with respondent B

Interview questions	Transcribed responses	Categorised data
1. What do you see as the primary purpose of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation?	*Environmental - To ensure that we conserve our environment for the future generation. We are a conservation body therefore conservation is one of our mandates.* *Cultural interpretation – so that we conserve our heritage for future generation. We capitalise on it as education to visitors so that they could know our past history and how it relates to the present and future history. So that tourists can have a cultural view of our place.*	• Cultural and environmental conservation. • Tourists' knowledge (cultural and environmental).
2. What programmes/actions do you have in the park to ensure continued effective environmental and cultural heritage interpretation by tour guides? Name the three most important.	*Guides are currently on a course – DEDT PROJECT funded by the provincial government.* *We work with our skills development officer- I meet with him/her regularly to check their needs in general, i.e. the skills they need any as guides. Then a relevant workshop is organised accordingly.*	• Currently on training.
3. What do you see as critical for effective interpretation? Name the three most important.	*Good communication skills.* *Field guides should be passionate about interpretation.* *They should be well knowledgeable about their area of operation.*	• Communication skills • Passion for interpretation • Knowledge of the area
4. In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to improve the interpretative competence of tour guides?	*For both the management.* *Evaluation should be done from time to time to check the quality. In Table Mountain for instance there is a guest form that is filled by tourists to give an impression about their experiences including interpretive experience. The website helps them in Table Mountain to assess the perceptions and the feelings which tourists have about them. Partly it helps to measure the tourists' feelings.*	• Management and guides • Guides evaluation by tourists

	Transcribed responses	Categorised data
5. What specifically do you think should be done to improve the quality of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in national parks and heritage sites?	*Field guides need to be updated so that they can have relevant information about specific areas.* *They should be helped to improve their ability to communicate; therefore, they need to be taken to necessary programmes.*	• Continuing education and training

Interview with respondent C

Interview questions	Transcribed responses	Categorised data
1. What do you see as the primary purpose of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation?	*Environmental - To understand the environmental heritage.* *Cultural interpretation –So that people can understand the cultural heritage of our place- People may not a full understanding of heritage without interpretation.*	• Cultural and environmental knowledge and understanding.
2. What are the minimum requirements for tour guides to operate in the park?	*N4 cultural heritage guiding certificate/nature guiding certificate*	• N4 in guiding certificate
3. What programmes/actions do you have in the park to ensure continued effective environmental and cultural	*They attend refresher course in interpretation to check where they are lacking.*	• Refresher course
4. What do you see as critical for effective interpretation? Name the three most important.	*Constant training if not they have to read a lot themselves for themselves.* *They need to do a lot of research themselves – because we receive diverse groups of tourists with different and specific needs.*	• Continuing education and training • Self reading
5. What skills do you think current guides need to develop in order to provide quality interpretation at natural and cultural heritage sites? List the three most important.	*Communication skills Interpretation skills*	• Communication skills • Interpretation skills

CONT' – Interview with respondent C		
6. In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to improve the interpretative competence of tour guides?	*Direct supervisors.* *It should be part of skill development – they do other skills as part of skills development not necessarily interpretation therefore interpretation should be part of skills development.*	• Direct supervision. • Skills development in interpretation (continuing education and training).
7. What specifically do you think should be done to improve the quality of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in national parks and heritage sites?	*We need to have an interpretation strategy/plan.* *Information on interpretation should be available (i.e. literature)- including the researches that are conducted by the academics.*	• Interpretation strategy/plan.

Interview with respondent D		
Interview questions	**Transcribed responses**	**Categorised data**
1. What do you see as the primary purpose of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation?	*To raise awareness about certain things environmentally/culturally. To sell/spread a particular message(environmental/cultural.)*	• Increase environmental and cultural knowledge • Environmental and cultural conservation.
2. What are the minimum requirements for tour guides to operate in the park?	*They should obtain a recognised qualification from a recognised learning institution i.e. NQF2 OR NQF4.* *They should be well knowledgeable about the park and the general area of operation.* *They need to pass a test based on a local manual that helps to ensure the facts and understanding the environment where they operate. All the guides whether employed by SANParks or tour operators have to pass the test based on a local manual, which helps to ensure consistency in interpretation.*	• Recognised qualification • NQF2 or NQF4. • Knowledge of the park. • Knowledge of the area of operation. • Passing a test based on local manual.

CONT' – Interview with respondent D

3. What programmes/actions do you have in the park to ensure continued effective environmental and cultural heritage interpretation by tour guides? Name the three most important.	*The internal/local manual is continuously updated and therefore guides have to always go through it.* *We do constant training to encourage the guides to improve their qualification.e.g. those who have NQF2 are encouraged to improve to NQF4.*	• Training exists.
4. What skills do you think current guides need to develop in order to provide quality interpretation at natural and cultural heritage sites? List the three most important.	*Excellent communication skills.* *Safety skills.*	• Communication skills. • Safety skills. • Self improvement.
5. In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to improve the interpretative competence of tour guides?	*The guide himself/herself. - He has to improve himself to sustain his job because it is expected that he does well in his job.* *Also the employer, their improvement in their jobs will have a positive influence on the parks.*	• Guides and management.
6. What specifically do you think should be done to improve the quality of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in national parks and heritage sites?	*Properly trained guides should be employed or the employers should invest in training them. Because if they do not perform well, the tourists will be unhappy and that will have a negative impact on the organisation.* *The manual should have updated information and it should be accessible to guide, especially because information is scarce.*	• Properly trained guides. • Accessibility of manual to all guides.

Interview with respondent E		
Interview questions	**Transcribed responses**	**Categorised data**
1. What do you see as the primary purpose of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation?	*Environmental - To make the tourists aware of the broader spectrum.* *To give them a big picture so that they could understand how things fit together (animal species, soil, etc.)* *Cultural interpretation – so that they could realise there are people who have an influence on the environment and he environment has an influence on the people. To help visitors to have a picture of what has happened in the past e.g. importance of national graves, why they have to be conserved.*	• Increase environmental and cultural knowledge. • Conservation.
2. What are the minimum requirements for tour guides to operate in the park?	*NQF 2* *Registration with DEAT* *Fire arm competency---* *Orientation course of what the parks is all about e.g. policy.*	• NQF2 • Official registration as a guide. • Firearm competency.
3. What programmes/actions do you have in the park to ensure continued effective environmental and cultural heritage interpretation by tour guides? Name the three most important.	*Training – Parks' orientation e.g. policies*	• Further training (continuing education and training).
4. What do you see as critical for effective interpretation? Name the three most important.	*Good communication skills.* *Field guides should be passionate about interpretation.* *They should be well knowledgeable about their area of operation.*	• Communication skills. • Passion for interpretation. • Knowledge of the area of operation.

5. What skills do you think current guides need to develop in order to provide quality interpretation at natural and cultural heritage sites? List the three most important.	*To draw tourists into interpretation to let them feel that they are part of the interpretation – To do interpretation in such a way that the communication is a two-way communication. The communicator should not be the field guide only; the tourists must participate during the process.* *Knowledge and understanding of the area of operation.* *Skills to interpret some aspects which are perceived as not interesting by tourists e.g. soil, grass, etc. Therefore field guides need skills of interpreting such topics or aspects in such a way that the tourists end up that it was indeed worthwhile to be part of the interpretive experience. For instance, overseas tourists who are on a 3hour day walks are usually interested in seeing the BIG FIVE only, therefore the guides need the skills to draw them into an interpretive experience, gain and maintain their attention.*	• Application and knowledge of interpretive techniques • Knowledge of the area.
6. In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to improve the interpretative competence of tour guides?	*For both the management and the field guide themselves.* *The field guides must also see the need to improve themselves. It should be an on-going process.* *Evaluation should be done from time to time to check the quality.* *The park management should provide opportunities for the field guides to improve themselves because interpretation is their product.*	• Management and guides themselves. • Guides should be evaluated from time to time. • Management's involvement in ensuring guides further training.

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| :-- | :-- | :-- |
| 7. What specifically do you think should be done to improve the quality of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in national parks and heritage sites? | *An interpretation Management Plan is being put in plan for Kruger.*

Field guides need to be updated so that they see the link between cultural aspect and environmental aspects. (interlink). At the moment few guides attend such programmes that could help update their knowledge.

At the moment few guides attend workshops because they are not compulsory, sometimes it is difficult for them to leave their stations because no one will replace when she/he is attending a workshop.

Brochures should include a lot of information on cultural heritage interpretation as well. | • Process of putting together the interpretation management plan.
• Continuing education and training. |

Interview with respondent F		
Interview questions	**Transcribed responses**	**Categorised data**
1. What do you see as the primary purpose of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation?	*Environmental - To instil conservation values. To help with conservation knowledge and understanding for conservation values even after the trip. To provide knowledge/information on conservation. We are a conservation body therefore conservation part of our mandates. To give tourists an understanding of what we do and what is there at our park. Cultural interpretation – conservation and understanding of cultural heritage.*	• Environmental and cultural heritage knowledge. • Conservation values.

CONT' – Interview with respondent F

2. What are the minimum requirements for tour guides to operate in the park?	*Guides have to register with the Province.* *They should have FGASA – Level 2 qualification.* *Those guides who do day walks need to have Level 3.* *Fire arm training- how to handle etc.*	• Registration with the province. • FGASA –LEVEL 2.
3. What programmes/actions do you have in the park to ensure continued effective environmental and cultural heritage interpretation by tour guides? Name the three most important.	*We have a continuous evaluation programme.* *We train and re-train the guides to ensure competencies.*	• Training and retraining exists.
4. What do you see as critical for effective interpretation? Name the three most important.	*Guides need to read a lot in order to broaden their knowledge.* *They need to exchange knowledge with other guides, nationally and provincially.* *We need to arrange sessions for re-training them, once they are registered with the province.- Even now the provincial Department of Tourism assists with for instance re-skilling them in various aspect related to tourism.* *Also if there are researchers who are busy with research in our park, such as conservation, guides should be involved in some way. That will enable them to broaden their knowledge which could help in interpretation.*	• Self improvement. • Need re-training once registered as guides.
5. What skills do you think current guides need to develop in order to provide quality interpretation at natural and cultural heritage sites? List the three most important.	*Guides need to keep on searching for relevant information for the interpretation.* *They need to be dedicated themselves.*	• Research done by guides.

CONT' – Interview with respondent F		
6. In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to improve the interpretative competence of tour guides?	*Both the management and the guides themselves. Hence we have the skill development person who caters for the needed skills.*	• Management and guides.
7. What specifically do you think should be done to improve the quality of environmental and cultural heritage interpretation in national parks and heritage sites?	*Communication skills. Exchange programmes which will help them to share ideas with the guides from other provinces.*	• Communication skills.

APPENDIX F

THE REGISTRATION FORM AND CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TOUR GUIDES
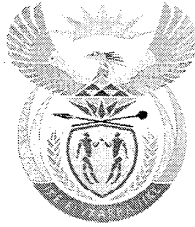
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS & TOURISM

2nd Tourism Amendment Act 2000

TOURIST GUIDE REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE YEAR 20_____ - 20_____

NEW REGISTRATION   RENEWAL (Reg. No.).......................

PERSONAL PARTICULARS	
TITLE	
SURNAME	
NAMES	
PHOTOGRAPH/S OF GUIDE	
NAME TO BE USED ON BADGE	
TELEPHONE NUMBERS	Cell:
	(W):
	(H):
	(F):
EMAIL ADDRESS	
DATE OF BIRTH	
IDENTITY NUMBER	
POSTAL ADDRESS	
RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS	
BUSINESS ADDRESS	
NATIONALITY	
COUNTRY OF NATIONALITY IF NOT SOUTH AFRICAN	
PASSPORT DETAILS	
WORK PERMIT DETAILS	
PERMANENT RESIDENCY DETAILS	
HAVE YOU BEEN REGISTERED IN THE PRECEDING YEAR	
PREVIOUS TOURIST GUIDE NO.	
LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES (proof to be attached)	
DRIVER'S LICENCE NO.	
PUBLIC DRIVING PERMIT NO.	

APPROPRIATE TRAINING COURSES SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

MODULE	DATE AND DURATION	TRAINING INSTITUTION
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

PRACTICAL GUIDING EXPERIENCE

EMPLOYER	NATURE OF EXPERIENCE	FROM	TO	CONTACT PERSON
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

QUALIFICATIONS

| NAME OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION	HIGHEST QUALIFICATION	YEAR OBTAINED
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

REGISTRATION	
PROVINCE OF REGISTRATION	
National Qualification Framework Qualification/s (TECHNIKON, UNIVERSITY THETA)	
Other specialist qualifications	

STATISTIC INFORMATION   (Circle appropriate one)

RACE:

WHITE	BLACK	COLOURED
INDIAN	ASIAN	OTHERS Specify ....

GENDER:

MALE   FEMALE

EMPLOYEMENT:

Employed as guide	Full-time	Part-time
Un-employed	Freelance guide	

APPLICATION FEE (R240.00)   (Circle appropriate one)

Cash payment	Cash deposit	Cheque payment
Cheque deposit	Electronic payment	

Date of payment ..../........./200......

Payment receipt / licence no.: ....

I DECLARE THAT THE ABOVE PARTICULARS ARE COMPLETE AND CORRECT

_____   _____
Signature   *Date*
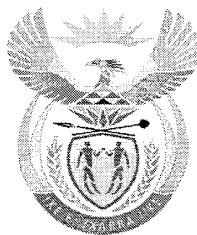
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM

THE TOURIST GUIDE CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

A Professional Tourist Guide:

- Shall be welcoming and demonstrate an enthusiasm for South Africa.

- Shall at all times show willingness to provide optimum support and quality service to all tourists, and will give tourists an opportunity to enjoy or visit a desired destination.

- Shall in no way discriminate in rendering service to any tourist on any basis, e.g. colour, gender, ethnicity, nationality, physical challenge, age, etc.

- Shall be impartial, unbiased and positive, and represent South Africa objectively.

- Shall be suitably dressed and presentable at all times.

- Shall be punctual, reliable, honest, conscientious and tactful at all times.

- Shall be a responsible driver, when driving as a guide.

- Shall carry out the programme/itinerary of a tour to his/her best abilities and be loyal to the company / organization that he/she is representing.

- Shall deal with conflict in a sensitive and responsible manner.

- Shall report any incident of injury or death to a nearby tourist authority or police station.

- Shall be knowledgeable and shall assist tourists and not provide them with misleading information.

- Shall in the event of not being familiar with, or being unable to provide information requested by a tourist, consult with the appropriate authorities for assistance.

- Shall at no time be under the influence of alcohol or a narcotic substance while on duty and shall refrain from administering any medication to a client without proper medical consultation.

- Shall never solicit for clients or gratuities.

- Shall be concerned at all times for the safety of the tourist.

- Shall wear the appropriate tourist guide badge and will carry his/her registration card.

- Shall treat all people, cultures and the environment with respect.

TOURIST GUIDE NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX G

LETTER OF APPROVAL

To develop and manage a system of
biodiversity, landscapes, and associated heritage assets of South Africa
for the sustainable use and benefit of all.

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

South African
NATIONAL PARKS

Arid &
PO Box
Hadison Park
Kimberley
8306
29 October 2008

North West University, Mafikeng Campus
Private Bag x2046
Mmabatho
2735

Dear Professor Lubbe and Mrs. Duduzile Boemah

APPROVAL LETTER

Your research project proposal entitled, "Factors determining the interpretative effectiveness of ecotour guides in South African national parks: an interpretation model," has been approved at the project meeting of 16 October 2008. This research will be conducted across multiple parks, namely, Kruger, Mapungubwe, Marakele, Kgalagadi, Addo and Table Mountain, and will conclude on 31 December 2009.

SANParks shall afford the researcher (and members of the research team) free park entry.

Standard conditions apply, refer to the project agreement for detailed conditions.

Should you have any queries, please contact me.

Regards,

Kelly Scheepers
Scientist (Social, Economic & Tourism)
South African National Parks, Conservation Services
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Cell. 072 2797872
Fax. 053 833 4543
E-mail: kellys@sanparks.org

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APPENDIX H

LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that I have edited the PH.D. thesis "Factors determining the Interpretive Effectiveness of Ecotour Guides in South African National Parks: an Environmental Interpretation Model", by Ms Duduzile Lorraine Boemah.

Cecily Kruger
083 298 3843

Mrs C A Kruger
PO Box 11360
Queenswood
0121