

**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**SCHOOL OF TOURISM AND HOTEL**  
**TOURISM AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**THE ROLE OF ECO-TOURISM IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM  
BUSINESS PROMOTION IN VICTORIA FALLS ZIMBABWE**

**SANDRA MATOPE**

**JANUARY 2018**

**NICOSIA**

**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**TOURISM AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT**  
**MASTER'S PROGRAMME**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**THE ROLE OF ECO-TOURISM IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM BUSINESS  
PROMOTION IN VICTORIA FALLS ZIMBABWE**

**PREPARED BY:**

**SANDRA MATOPE**

**20165454**

**SUPERVISOR:**

**DR. KAREN HOWELLS**

**JANUARY 2018**

**NICOSIA**

**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**Marketing Master Programme**

**Thesis Defence**

**THE ROLE OF ECO-TOURISM IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM BUSINESS  
PROMOTION IN VICTORIA FALLS ZIMBABWE**

**We certify the thesis is satisfactory for the award of degree of Tourism and  
Hotel Management**

**Prepared by**

**Sandra Matope**

**Date of approval**

**...../...../.....**

**Examining Committee in Charge**

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Sağsan**

**Near East University**

**Department of International  
Business**

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Ertugan**

**Near East University**

**Department of Marketing**

**Dr. Karen Howells**

**Near East University**

**Department of Marketing**

**Approval of the School of Social Sciences**

**Prof. Dr. Mustafa Sağsan**

**Director**

Date: .. /.. / ....., Nicosia

20\_\_/20\_\_ Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ Semester

## DECLARATION

Type of Thesis:                      Master                       PhD

STUDENT№: .....

PROGRAME: .....

I ....., hereby declare that this dissertation entitled  
“.....”  
.....”

has been prepared myself under the guidance and supervision of  
“.....” in partial fulfilment of The Near East  
University, Graduate School of Social Sciences regulations and does not to be the best  
of my knowledge branch and any Law of Copyrights and has been tested for  
plagiarism and a copy of the result can be found in the Thesis.

Signature:

## ABSTRACT

This study seeks an in-depth understanding of the role of ecotourism practices in promoting businesses at the same time achieving sustainable tourism. This research paper will use both an exploratory and deductive approach and will follow a positivism philosophy of research.

This study will adopt a qualitative approach and a purposive sample will be drawn from managers of companies practising ecotourism in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Data will be collected primarily using telephone interviews and questionnaires and will be analysed using content analysis. Secondary data collection methods will be used that is by use of the country's tourism master plan from the statutory tourism boards and publications over the past years. Data was analysed through SPSS and various tests were computed to test the hypotheses formulated for the study. The response rate was suitable to validate the results obtained from the study. Pearson correlation, linear regression, one sample thematic Analysis were conducted to determine relationships between ecotourism and promotion of businesses in Victoria Falls. Significant relationships were found between ecotourism and business promotion in Victoria Falls. Companies seem to be adopting ecotourism practices for various reasons which fall under the three dimensions of sustainability which include environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social sustainability.

**Keywords:** *ecotourism, sustainable tourism, sustainable development*

## ÖZ

Bu çalışma, işletmelerin sürdürülebilir turizme erişmesi için teşvik edilmesinde ekoturizm uygulamalarının rolünün derinlemesine anlaşılmasını istemektedir. Bu araştırma makalesi, hem keşfedici hem de tündengelimli bir yaklaşım kullanacak ve pozitifizmin araştırma felsefesini takip edecektir.

Bu çalışma nitel bir yaklaşımı benimseyerek Zimbabwe Victoria Falls'da ekoturizm uygulayan şirketlerin yöneticilerinden yararlanarak bir örnek oluşturacaktır. Veri öncelikle telefon görüşmeleri ve anketler kullanılarak toplanacak ve içerik analizi kullanılarak analiz edilecektir. Geçmiş yıllardaki yasal turizm kurullarının ve yayınların, ülkenin turizm master planları kullanarak ikinci derecede veri toplama yöntemleri kullanılacaktır. Veriler SPSS ile analiz edildi ve çalışma için formüle edilen hipotezleri test etmek için çeşitli testler yapıldı. Cevap oranı, çalışmadan elde edilen sonuçların geçerliliği için uygundu. Victoria Falls'daki ekoturizm ile işletmelerin tanıtımı arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek için Pearson korelasyon, doğrusal regresyon, bir örnek tematik Analiz yapılmıştır. Victoria Falls'da ekoturizm ve iş promosyonu arasında önemli ilişkiler bulundu. Şirketler çevresel sürdürülebilirlik, ekonomik sürdürülebilirlik ve sosyal sürdürülebilirlik gibi sürdürülebilirlik üç boyutuna giren çeşitli nedenlerle ekoturizm uygulamalarını benimsiyor gibi görünüyor.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** *ekoturizm, sürdürülebilir turizm, sürdürülebilir kalkınma*

## **DEDICATION**

To my parents, Prof. and Mrs. Matope; this one is for you mum and dad.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank the department of Tourism and Hotel Management for the opportunity to pursue this research in a supportive and encouraging environment. My experience at Near East University would not have been such a success without the numerous people that make the department what it is. Many thanks go to my supervisor Dr. Karen Howells, for her continued support, feedback and encouragement. This research would not have been possible without her. I would also like to sincerely thank my colleagues for their valued input and participation throughout the research process. To all of my fellow students, many thanks for making my Nicosia experience a special one. Their continued support and encouragement was invaluable, and they more than once provided the necessary distraction from my research problems. Special thanks also goes to my brother Kumbirai for the love and support he gave me during this time. My family and friends have always, and will continue to be a grounding force in my life, and their encouragement during my time here in North Cyprus has been priceless. During the past two years, I have not only learned a great deal but I have grown significantly into a fearless and ambitious woman and to everyone who played a part, thank you.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ÖZ</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Research background	1
1.2 General overview of Zimbabwe	2
1.3 History of Zimbabwe	2
1.4 Tourism in Zimbabwe	3
1.5 Tourism statistics	4
1.6 Source markets	4
1.7 Victoria falls	5
1.8 Research Problem	7
1.9 Research objective	7
1.10 Importance of the study	7
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>9</b>
2.0 Introduction	9
2.1 Sustainable development and sustainable tourism	9
2.1.1 Sustainable tourism	11
2.1.2 Sustainable business promotion	12
2.2 Ecotourism	12
2.2.1 Concepts and definitions	12
2.2.2 Ecotourism principles	17
2.2.3 Ecotourism marketing	22
2.2.4 Ecotourism in the region	24
2.3 Developing sustainable tourism in the Victoria Falls area	25
2.3.1 Management of the destination	26
2.3.2 Policies, Education and stakeholder involvement	27
2.3.3 Strategic implementation of ecotourism practices	28

2.4 Research model and Hypotheses	29
2.5 Conclusion	30
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>31</b>
3.0 Introduction	31
3.1 Research design	31
3.2 Study area	31
3.3 Mixed method approach	32
3.4 Data collection	33
3.4.1 Questionnaire design	33
3.4.2 Semi structured interviews	34
3.5 Pilot study	35
3.6 Sampling	35
3.7 Data analysis	35
3.8 Reliability and validity	36
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS</b>	<b>37</b>
4.0 Introduction	37
4.1 Survey data and findings	37
4.2 Analysis by objectives	40
4.3 Analysis on interviews	43
4.4 Hypothesis testing	47
4.5 Summary	50
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>51</b>
5.0 Conclusion	51
5.1 Summary of findings and responding to the research questions	51
5.2 Theoretical implications	53
5.3 Practical implications and recommendations	54
5.4 Concluding remarks, limitations and suggestions for further research	55
<b>REFERENCES</b>	
<b>APPENDIX</b>	

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1.5.1:</b> Tourism statistics	4
<b>Table 1.6.1:</b> Source markets	5
<b>Table 2.2.1.1:</b> Summary of key components used to define Ecotourism in the current literature	16
<b>Table 4.3.1:</b> The main principles of ecotourism	44

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

<b>Figure 2.1.1:</b> Sustainable development through ecotourism	11
<b>Figure 2.2.2.1:</b> Summary of ecotourism dimensions	21
<b>Figure 2.4.1:</b> Research model and Hypotheses	29

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**CBT:** Community Based Tourism

**EIA:** Environmental Impact Assessment

**NGO:** Non-Governmental Organizations

**SD:** Sustainable Development

**TIES:** The International Ecotourism Society

**UN:** United Nations

**UNWTO:** United Nations World Tourism Organization

**WCED:** World Commission on Environment and Development

**WTO:** World Tourism Organization

**WTO:** World Tourism Organization

**ZCT:** Zimbabwe Council for Tourism

**ZTA:** Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Research background**

The concept of sustainable tourism is derived from the study of sustainable development which was first defined the Brutland report in the 1980s since then the tourism industry has embraced the concept and it has evolved through the years leading to a term called ecotourism. The whole concept is quite complex and it needs breaking down so that it can be understood. In Zimbabwe and in its most popular tourist town Victoria Falls, the issues of sustainability have become a major concern in all sectors that is the private and public over the years. Sustainable tourism aims at promoting business practices which are sustainable and also aims at increasing awareness to ensure more tourists come in the destination.

According to Swarbrooke (1999) and Sharply (2000) a lot of previous studies and most tourism businesses tend to focus on the environmental aspect of sustainability whilst neglecting the whole concept. However, Hitchcock & Willard (2009) noted that there are three dimensions which are interdependent and for sustainable business practices to be effective and to take place there should be optimization of all three.

## **1.2 General overview of Zimbabwe**

The Republic of Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in southern Africa, covering an area of 390,757 square kilometres of which land occupies 386,670 square kilometres and water occupies 3,910 square kilometres. The country is bordered by Zambia in the north, Mozambique in the east, Botswana in the west and South Africa in the south. The population of Zimbabwe is estimated to be about 16.5 million as of 2017. Zimbabwe population density is 41.2 people per square kilometre (106.8/mi<sup>2</sup>) as of November 2017. The female population is greater, with 8,288,086 women, representing 51.32% of the total, compared to 7,862,276 or 48.68% men.

From 2000 to 2008, the country experienced economic contraction that led to among other things, hyperinflation, large-scale job losses, and a shrinking formal economy. Since then the unemployment rate has been increasing. The government has tried some developments to restore some sense of stability, however the country's economy, and in particular, the tourism industry is yet to fully recover.

There are high levels of poverty in the country which are indicated by high unemployment rate and the majority of the people survive on less than US\$1 per day which is very low. According to such statistics Zimbabwe is classified in the third world economy i.e. basing this according to the definition of the World Bank. These kinds of economies have few resources to base their economies on (Mawere & Mubaya, 2012).

## **1.3 History of Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe derives its name from historical stone structures called "Great Zimbabwe" (houses of stone), the largest in Africa after the pyramids of Egypt. The Great Zimbabwe was located in a city which had about 20 000 to 30 000 inhabitants. During the period of about 800-1500 AD the Great Zimbabwe became a citadel, a regional Mecca and famous for world trade centre and that is how tourism and trade started to become popular. However, the Bantu people did not develop a form of writing, hence little is known of their history before the Great Zimbabwe era. Rather less is known about that period after the contact with the Portuguese during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Later on by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the great Shona speaking empires had broken down into a lot of principalities and chiefdoms. There was Mzilikazi, who broke from

the powerful Zulu kingdom of South Africa and his troops marched towards Zimbabwe and settled in the south western parts of the country in about 1836 after subduing the local chiefs forming what is now known as the Ndebele kingdom. In 1860, Mzilikazi's son Lobengula, became the second and last Ndebele king who was then deposed by British soldiers in 1893.

European penetration into Zimbabwe began through Christian missionaries who befriended King Mzilikazi in 1858. They were followed by fortune hunters, soldiers, and land grabbing settlers. Cecil John Rhodes and his British South African Company bought the Rudd Concession from King Lobengula mainly for mining purposes, but he brought an army and settled at present day Harare in 1890. Thereafter, Rhodes declared war on Lobengula and overthrew him and named the country Rhodesia thus the beginning of the colonial rule.

Africans resisted British rule from the beginning of European settlement and thus wars broke out. The liberation war ended in December 1979, following the Lancaster House Conference, at which the Rhodesian regime and the British government conceded defeat and granted independence under a democratic constitution. Zimbabwe emerged as an independent state on 18th April 1980. Zimbabwe quickly became an active member of the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the Commonwealth of Nations, and the Non-Aligned Movement. On the regional front, the government joined the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

#### **1.4 Tourism in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe has a wide natural beauty and an outstanding array of wildlife, which for tourists there are plenty of experiences and a lot of ecotourism activities one can indulge in. There are so many attractions with Victoria falls being the largest natural attraction the country has, some also include the Eastern Highlands which has beautiful mountains and vegetation, Matopos National Parks and many other parks, man-made attractions like Lake Kariba, the Great Zimbabwe only to mention a few. There are also different reasons for tourism which can include sports tourism, health



tourism, religious tourism which is now on the rise and also the most popular MICE tourism.

The market share of arrivals into the country has been increasing for the past decade despite the economic recession faced in 2007 to 2009. The tourism industry has also been contributing a large percentage of the country's GDP with also employing a large number of the country's population.

Zimbabwe is one of the few countries in Africa which have driven its ecotourism to become the fastest growing sector on the continent. Ecotourism is a growing industry which Zimbabwe is set to cash in on by targeting tourists who spend more and stay longer and this was dubbed high yield low volume tourism by the Ministry of Tourism, which adds to the local economy and creates employment. Ecotourism in Zimbabwe is on the rise and becoming internationally recognised for providing jobs, it's estimated that the industry now employs around 200,000. Since ecotourism has been booming in the past decade, businesses and local communities are becoming aware of these practices and ought to use them to their benefit and for future generations to come thus putting into practice the concept of sustainable tourism.

### 1.5 Tourism statistics

**Table 1.5.1:** Tourism statistics

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tourist arrivals</b>	<b>Receipts US\$(mil)</b>
2011	2 423 280	662
2012	1 794 230	749
2013	1 832 570	856
2014	1 880 028	827
2015	2 056 588	886
2016	2 167 686	819

*Source: <http://www.zimbabwetourism.net/>*

### 1.6 Source markets

The survey revealed that about 70% of the visitors were in the broad age group 25-49 years. A majority of the visitors were from Africa (80.7%) followed by those

from Europe (9.8%) and the Americas (5.7%). In the African region, South Africa was the leading source market for visitors to Zimbabwe with 38.1% followed by Zambia (18.5%) and Malawi (18.1%). For the European region, United Kingdom is the leading source market at 38.3%. The leading source markets in the Asian, the Americas and Oceanic regions were Japan (21.8%), United States of America (82.1%) and Australia (86.0%), respectively. The results show that three quarters (75.2%) were repeat visitors. (VES Report, 2016)

**Table 1.6.1: Source markets**

Region	Number of visitors	Ave expenditure/person
Africa	23 724	310
Americas	1 835	883
Asia	555	884
Europe	3 231	909
Oceania	655	1 354
Not stated	4 499	363
Grand Total	34 517	385

Visitor exit survey 2016

Visitors from Oceania are the high spenders followed by those from Europe. The least spenders are visitors from Africa. (VES Report, 2016)

## **1.7 Victoria Falls**

Scottish explorer David Livingstone was the first European to discover the Victoria Falls after he was led to the edge of the waterfall in 1855, by the Makalolo tribe in a dug-out canoe. Although Livingstone named the falls after his queen, Victoria, it's known locally as Mosi-Oa-Tunya which means the Smoke that Thunders. Settlements by the English traders along the Zambezi River began after they had heard reports from Livingstone and they named the area Victoria Falls Town. Increasing numbers of visitors from the Transvaal and South Africa arrived, travelling by horseback or ox-wagon.

The Victoria Falls Bridge was built in 1905 and was created to connect what are now Zimbabwe and Zambia. Sir Ralph Freeman (also responsible for the Sydney Harbour Bridge) designed the arch from steel, which spans 156.50m, at a height of 128m above the fall's valley floor. Carrying cars, trains and foot traffic, the bridge is also the spot where the daring can do the famous 111m Shearwater bungee jump. The railway brought numerous guests to the falls, prompting the building of the original The Victoria Falls Hotel in 1906. The village earned town status 66 years later.

The Victoria Falls was declared as a World Heritage Site in 1989 for being one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the world. The Falls are on the Zambezi River, which serves as a natural border between Zimbabwe and Zambia, and both sides play host to tourism industries that promote not only Victoria Falls but also local wildlife, white water rafting, fishing, bungee jumping, sunset cruises, helicopter flights, curio markets, cultural experiences and accommodation that ranges from backpacker lodges to 5-star resorts. Both sides claim to have the best views of the falls, the best accommodation and the most exciting activities. This competitive spirit, which reflects not only national pride but, perhaps more accurately, a battle to profit from tourist traffic, has been a long time in the making.

The Falls and associated gorges and rapids downstream are an outstanding example of a river capture and the upstream erosive forces of the water as it erodes into the solid basalt bedrock, forming one of the seven so called 'Natural Wonders of the World'. When the river is in flood, the Falls are the largest curtain of falling water in the world. The falls and the surrounding rainforest are preserved as a 23.4 kilometre National Park and form one of Zimbabwe's four World Heritage sites. During these periods, over 500 million litres of water per minute go over the falls, dropping up to 99m into the chasm below. At low water in November flow can be reduced to around 10 million litres/minute, and the river is divided into a series of braided channels that descend in many separate the falls. The rain forest within the waterfall splash zone is a fragile ecosystem which contains many unique plant species, and a wide variety of water birds frequent the contrasting river environs above and below the falls.

## **1.8 Research Problem**

Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel. This means that those who implement, participate in and market ecotourism activities should adopt the right ecotourism principles. Over the past years the main objective of tourism was to generate revenue, create employment and focus mainly on the economic aspect neglecting the environmental side of tourism. The introduction of ecotourism practices now pays attention to the environment and the local community's culture. The problem now arises on how these practices can be done so that sustainable tourism is adopted and business in the Victoria Falls resort town run profitably. The aim of this research is to study how this can be done effectively.

## **1.9 Research objective**

The objective of this study therefore is to analyse the importance or the role of ecotourism in sustainable tourism business promotions in the resort town of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. These are the research objectives in detail:

1. To find out if businesses in Victoria Falls are practicing Ecotourism and why they are doing so.
2. To examine the effectiveness of these ecotourism practices in achieving their intended long-term objectives of sustainable tourism in promoting businesses and benefiting the local communities.
3. To find out the advantages practising ecotourism in promoting their businesses and barriers they face in implementing these practices.
4. To find out if the businesses are partnering with the government and relevant governing boards in practising ecotourism and sustainable tourism.

## **1.10 Importance of the study**

This research paper will have a lot of benefits to the various stakeholders in the Zimbabwe business society. This study is important in understanding the importance of ecotourism in bringing out the best of the sustainable tourism practices in businesses in the tourism sector in the Zimbabwe tourism industry.

The study will also be significant to scholars as they will get to understand the theories of sustainable tourism and the ecotourism concepts. It will also add to the existing literature in the area of ecotourism in the tourism industry. The proposed study will give insights to small businesses in resort towns who might wish to practice ecotourism in the sector in future so that they remain competitive which will lead to a rise in the tourism sector as a whole. The Government of Zimbabwe and responsible tourism boards such as The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) and Zimbabwe Council for Tourism (ZCT) can also make use of the information provided by this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of literature as follows; first, a review of ecotourism principles. The principles reviewed cover areas of ecotourism dimensions including the environmental, economic and social dimensions. The chapter also reviews empirical studies on factors influencing ecotourism, advantages and barriers to implementing ecotourism practices. Hypotheses and research model of this study is also in this chapter.

#### **2.1 Sustainable development and sustainable tourism**

The concept of sustainability was first put out on the scene in the Brundtland Report by the WCED in 1980. Since then this has been a popular trend and has further developed into further trends or concepts for example sustainable tourism and ecotourism. Sustainable development is important especially for developing countries which encounter economic, social, cultural, environmental and physical constraints (Bhuiyan et al., 2012). The Brundtland Report noted that for sustainable development to be achievable, economic growth and environmental protection must be compatible and interdependent as one of these two cannot exist without the other.

There are many definitions of sustainable development and the most commonly used definition quoted from the Brundtland Report also known as our common future is:

“The development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations in meeting their own needs.”

This definition has two parts which are:

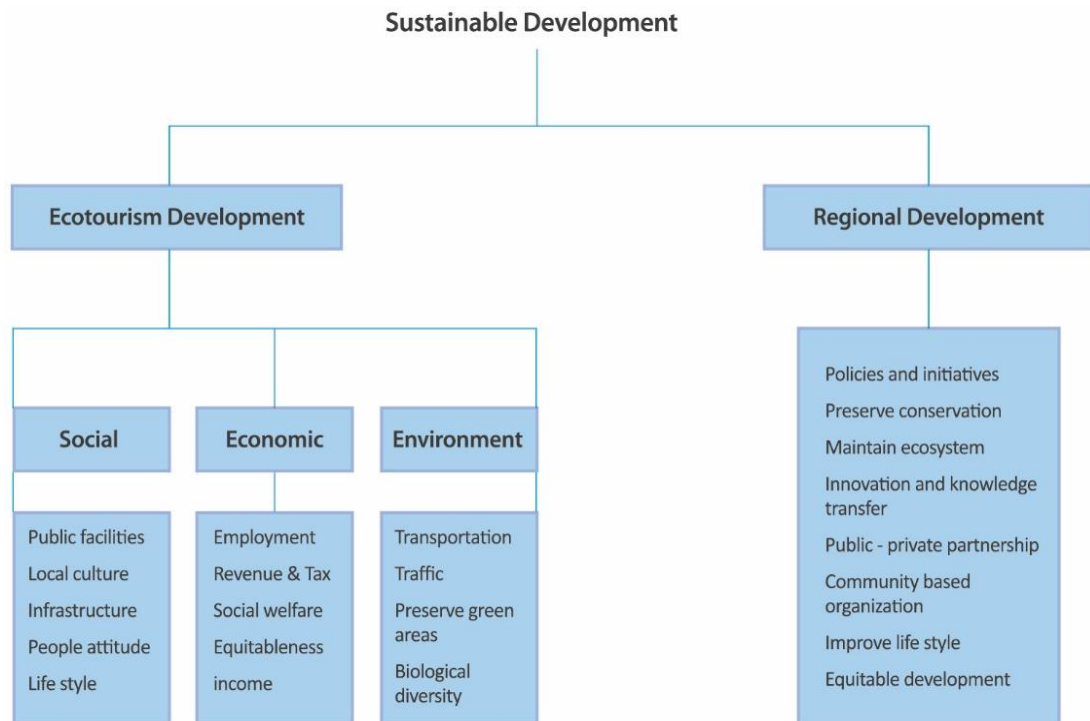
- The first concept is that of the needs, in particular this means the essential needs of the less privileged in the world to which overriding priority should be given to; and
- The second concept which is the idea of limitations caused by technological advancements and the way the environment is socially organized to meet the needs that is of both the present and the future.

The increasing concern for the environments natural resources and social equity in the 1980s led to the development of the concept of sustainable development which was given its definition which talks about managing of the present and future needs which was brought about in the Brundtland Report. According to this report the United Nations World Tourism (UNWTO) defined sustainable tourism as ‘development of the destination that meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while not compromising the opportunities of the future.’ This was depicted as managing all resources in a way that economic, social and environmental needs can be fulfilled while the cultural integrity, important ecological processes, biodiversity and life support systems are maintained.

Hall 2008 defined sustainable tourism as moving from one state to another and added that the transition results to be positive and negative depended on how the change of the destination is measured. Participation of all stakeholders in the destination and the country at large is required so that Sustainable tourism is achieved. This includes a strong political leadership which creates a strong policy framework and monitoring impacts of tourism. The policy makers need to formulate preventive and corrective measures for the destinations and conduct feasibility reports before starting new projects. Sustainable tourism should ensure that tourists are highly satisfied by offering them a unforgettable and meaningful experience whilst at the

same time educating them about nature conservation by promoting sustainable and ecotourism practices (World Tourism Organization, 2001)

Sustainable development through ecotourism is an issue that has growing concern in the world today. A lot of countries have made sure that their regional development is done by this concept. In this concept, sustainable development usually occurs simultaneously by the ecotourism and regional development in the area. There are three main dimensions of ecotourism development shown in figure 1 which are environmental, economic and social dimensions of tourism. Tourism stakeholders must strike a balance between these three dimensions to ensure that there long term maintenance of sustainability (Bhuiyan et al., 2012)



**Figure 2.1.1:** Sustainable development through ecotourism (Bhuiyan et al., 2012)

### 2.1.1 Sustainable tourism

This concept in simple terms can be defined as tourism that takes complete accountability of its present and future environmental, economic and social impacts whilst at the same time addressing the needs of visitors, environment, host communities and the industry itself. The objective of sustainable tourism is to make sure that the destination benefits from the economic and social advantages through



development but at the same time the impacts on natural and social environment should be reduced.

The WTO identified three key dimensions of sustainable tourism and these are:

- Make optimal use of environmental resources that lead to the tourism development by maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve the natural resources and biodiversity.
- Respecting the social authenticity of the host or local communities and conserve their built social values and heritage.
- Ensuring viable and long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed including stable employment and income earning opportunities and social services to host communities and contributing to poverty alleviation.

### **2.1.2 Sustainable business promotion**

“Sustainable development is not the origin of the problems of any single organization but it is the whole problem itself. (Bradbury, 2003). This means that the problem is not exclusive to a single company but rather it is a collaborative goal that requires all stakeholders to participate. These stakeholders include private businesses, land owners and managers, the local government boards and the destination managers need to make efforts to consider sustainable business practices on a day to day basis so that they can be achievable (Millar, Mayer, & Baloglu, 2012).

## **2.2 ECOTOURISM**

### **2.2.1 Concepts and definition**

Being a complex phenomenon, ecotourism has emerged quickly over the past two decades. The WTO also views ecotourism as one of the fastest growing industries in the world currently. The tourism industry is fast growing and one major subsector of this industry which is ecotourism has been singled out to be growing at 20-25% per annum Lascrain (2012). In a 2013 study, Cosser stated that ecotourism has the potential to improve developing countries which are characterised by poverty and

helps in economic uplifting that is by creating employment and capitalizing the growing industry

According to Saarinen (2006), theoretical research on environmental sustainable tourism mainly focuses on the goals of environmentalism, with the notion of sustainability in tourism outlined from the wider view of sustainable development.

Another author, Roxanna (2012) notes that ecotourism should have a link to conserving nature i.e. protected areas, by preserving the authenticity and involving local communities in all prospects of the sustainable tourism process. She also noted that the development process takes time and sustains efforts from all the stakeholders involve cannot bring major benefits but contributes mainly to forming sustainable business practices.

Research on environmentally sustainable tourism is theoretically oriented to the programmatic goals of environmentalism, with the notion of sustainability in tourism conveyed from the wider discourse of sustainable development (Saarinen, 2006).

Ecotourism is often seen as a type of nature-based tourism and has attracted a lot of attention from tourists as an alternative type of tourism. Another definition comes from The International Ecotourism Society, which describes the activity as “travelling responsibly to natural areas making sure that the environment is conserved and well-being of the local people is improved.” (TIES, 2014). Ecotourism has also been referred to as “responsible,” “sustainable,” “green,” or “low impact” tourism. In any definition used ecotourism must have a positive impact on the natural environment and the local community.

In Roxanna's (2012) research, he noted that ecotourism should be directly related to conserving of nature i.e. Protected areas making sure that the local communities remain with their authenticity and involving them in the whole sustainability process. Committed efforts from all those involved will benefit the local community in the long run and helps in creating sustainable or ecotourism businesses.

Roxanna also added that ecotourism is about:

- travelling to appreciate, study and enjoy nature

- making sure visitors have unique experiences by use of natural resources in an ecological manner at the same time minimizing impacts on the environment
- incorporating sustainable development with natural environment
- responsible travel to environmental areas, making sure that the ecosystem including both flora and fauna is not harmed or disturbed
- conserving the protected areas

A different author, Rahman (2010) also comes up with a similar view on ecotourism principle as he notes that its main focus is on experiencing and learning the nature i.e. from different landscape, to vegetation to wildlife and how these interact. It also includes enjoying the local culture with its originality and authenticity, local artefacts and a relationship of the cultural environment and natural environment by how they entertain and interact with the tourists. All this can be seen if there is careful policy planning and implementation of the ecotourism practices.

Most definitions of ecotourism play around the three main ideas or concepts which are:

- ensuring environmental protection
- including community participation in ecotourism practices
- ensuring profitability and sustainability in the long run

Ecotourism tries to raise environmental consciousness by exploring ecology and ecosystems and by providing environmental type experiences. Taking part in ecology actively and getting first hand impressions of how ecosystems work influence peoples' ways of thinking, which finally raises awareness of conservation and protection.

According to Patterson (2012), for an enterprise to be considered as an ecotourism business it should meet the following criteria:

- It must have a minimum impact or harm on protected area and natural resources
- It must make sure that wildlife is not harmed i.e. No hunting or poaching
- Visits to natural areas are limited or controlled i.e. by controlling visitor entrance, limiting number of groups per day, week or season
- It must hire local people

- it must use locally produced supplies
- it must make sure that all stake holders are involved in planning, implementing, developing and monitoring policies and practices
- supports community groups and educating them on natural resources conservation
- use guides to train both employees and visitors by orienting them in the destinations history, and how to maintain its natural attractiveness
- it must make sure that visitors are satisfied and know that nature appreciation is the main reason for their travel
- it must ensure that the local peoples culture is respected and have right to their privacy

The WTO states that eco-tourism should include existing communities in planning, conserve local cultural traditions, and identify how to bring benefits to the local communities. Ecotourism also has a unique potential in promoting local areas and local businesses that offer ecologically interesting natural environments that are combined with settlements of local people. Sree (2010) notes that ecotourism can develop a destination economically, infrastructural and culturally, but if poorly developed it can create crime and other social problems, which is detrimental. In order to achieve sustainable development through ecotourism, effective partnership between local people, tourists, government and other sections of the industry are essential, otherwise ecotourism a boom for the development of nation may become a doom.

Yadav (2010) emphasises the importance of ecotourism for long-term conservation and bio-diversity. He explains that in most protected areas, ecotourism remains an unrealised possibility and the links between ecotourism development and conservation are poorly understood. He also says that ecotourism developments are often limited by a narrow focus on infrastructure development and have failed to maximise opportunities for generating local benefits. According to Sambotin et al., (2011) the whole ecotourism concept develops from sustainable tourism and it constantly shows its relationship with sustainable development. Ecotourism mainly focuses on providing quality experience and value for money for tourists and also ensuring the host community's quality of life for the people is improved by reducing poverty. It ensures that there is continuity of the destinations running in the future by

preserving natural areas and regeneration of the environments ecosystem. Lastly ecotourism ensures that there must be a balance between sharing economic benefits amongst all stakeholders, conserving the environment, community wellbeing and meeting the needs of the tourists and the tourism industry at large.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Committee Member States, through Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.9 to “*devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products*”. The importance of sustainable tourism, as a driver for jobs creation and the promotion of local culture and products, is also highlighted in Sustainable Development Goal target 12.b.

For the purpose of this research, ecotourism can be defined as “environmentally sustainable tourist activities in relatively undisturbed natural areas to enhance the appreciation of and learning about natural ecosystems while providing benefits to local communities and promoting businesses.”

**Table 2.2.1.1:** *Summary of key components used to define Ecotourism in the current literature*

Author's name	Year	Key components
Patterson	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low impact on nature</li> <li>• Customer orientation</li> <li>• Local empowerment</li> <li>• Wildlife protection</li> <li>• Cultural protection</li> </ul>
Sree	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Community participation</li> <li>• Cultural awareness</li> </ul>
Sambotin	2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature and culture appreciation</li> <li>• Increased revenue</li> </ul>

Roxanna	2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation promotion</li> <li>• Minimise human impact</li> <li>• Visitor experience</li> </ul>
TIES	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize impact</li> <li>• Environmental and cultural awareness</li> <li>• Positive visitor experience</li> <li>• Financial benefits and local empowerment</li> </ul>
Rahman	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental protection</li> <li>• Community participation</li> <li>• Business promotion and profitability</li> </ul>
The International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN	1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• undisturbed natural areas</li> <li>• appreciation of nature</li> <li>• conservation promotion</li> </ul>

### 2.2.2 Ecotourism principles

It is generally considered that ecotourism is a particular form of tourism that occurs in natural areas, that is ecologically sustainable, that enables tourists to interpret and learn about the environment which they are visiting and which improves the socio-economic condition of local communities. Therefore, the ecotourism principles cover the economic, social and environmental aspect.

## **I. Environmental dimension- Resource efficiency and biological diversity**

The environmental dimension of ecotourism is the most widely researched one. Ecotourism involves low-impact tourism that should be managed in such a way that it contributes to the conservation of the flora and fauna of natural areas. This concept talks about sustainability in terms of the ecology i.e. conserving and protecting the nature at the same time ensuring there is economic growth whilst minimizing impacts on the social and cultural. It also emphasizes the environmental carrying capacity is not exceeded.

Natural resources are seen to be essential in making sure that there is growth in sustainable development. However, the relationships between the natural resources and human impact are interdependent and need carefully managed so that these two live in harmony. On one hand, humans are generally mostly dependent on the quality and availability of natural resources whilst on the other hand they produce various impacts on the natural resources which can be either positive or negative. According to (Jones, 2002; Mbaiwa, 2012) integration of communities and natural resources management is seen to be developing largely across southern Africa including Zimbabwe.

Generally, this dimension deals with the biodiversity of natural environments. This dimension emphasizes on minimizing negative impacts on the environment to ensure that the destination remains the same over the years without natural resources depletion and distortion which causes imbalance of nature. It emphasizes that the integral part of ecotourism is travel to enjoy and appreciate nature while there is minimal impact on the environment. Responsible ecotourism programs especially those that ensures that the nature is undisturbed are often encouraged by this dimension. Environmental impact assessments are also put in place to monitor and check that ecotourism is properly done.

This environmental dimension also makes sure that there is:

- Minimization of tourism's own environmental impact
- Conservation of biological diversity through ecosystem protection

- Tourism to unspoiled natural resources with the primary concern being minimum impact
- Local environment appreciation: forests, wildlife and natural landscapes being the main attractions
- Building of environmental awareness

## **II. Economic dimension- Economic viability and local businesses promotion**

Roberts and Tribe (2008) defined economic sustainability as how businesses survive the different economic systems and how they can be profitable in them at all levels including local and national. It can also be defined as the use of various strategies for employing existing resources optimally so that a beneficial and responsible balance can be achieved in the long run. This whole concept means a system of production that satisfies present consumption levels without compromising future needs.

In order for businesses to consider themselves as sustainable they must have an impact on the community by creating employment, local wages and contributing to the local economic growth. All levels across the value chain must fully engage in sustainable activities to ensure that they share similar values and practices that do with economic sustainability. Whilst doing this, businesses need to ensure that they maintain corporate profitability and remain financially stable (Landrum & Edwards, 2009).

Ecotourism should encourage local participation and control in developing tourism that is of sustainable socio-economic benefit to local communities. Local and regional benefits must also be recognized to make sure that is local community wellbeing advocating for local business ownerships and job creation especially for people in rural areas

The UNWTO (2014), opines that tourism can be a tool which allows communities to pursue development without losing their identity while generating income and opportunities promoting local development in these areas, and therefore reversing migration to urban areas.



According to Swarbrooke (1999) sustainable businesses purchase locally produced goods as a means to maximise economic benefits for tourism in the local economy and reduce costs in terms of transportation and energy consumption. Creating strong economic linkages in the tourism sector spreads the economic benefit in the industry and throughout the economy which could lead to an improved economic development. Supply and demand linkages can be created for resource sharing by the local companies (Shaw & Williams, 2002).

Baum's (2006) research noted that in order for sustainable tourism practices concerned with human resource management all levels of management ranging from managers to subordinates must be interested in the long run satisfaction of their customers so that their businesses will be profitable. In order for this to work the tourism industry must employ quality staff that is well groomed, skilled and good at serving tourists.

### **III. Social dimension - Visitor fulfilment and community wellbeing**

Ecotourism should provide opportunities for learning and meaningful encounters between tourists and the environment/local community.

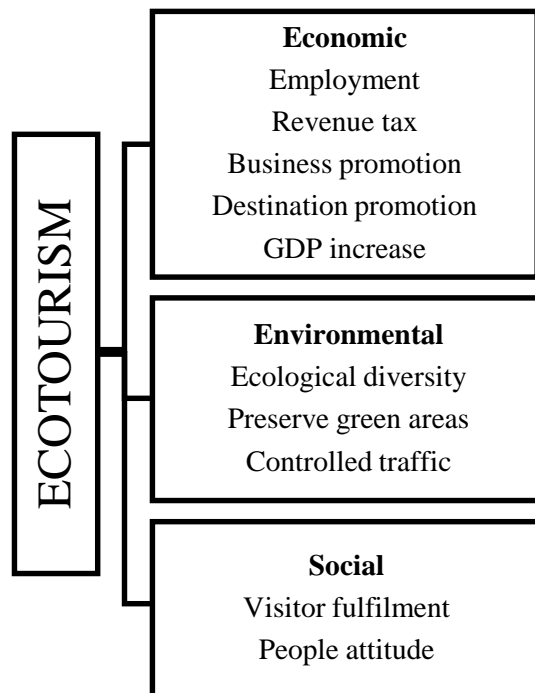
Key issues for a sustainable business include hosts and guest's interaction and the involvement of the local people by contributing their traditions and culture to the tourists' experiences (Roberts & Tribe, 2008). However, in developing countries such issues if not carefully managed might have negative impacts on the socio-cultural conduct of people. This raises the question of authenticity in the tourists experiences especially when their cultural traditions get commodified or staged for tourist consumption. commoditizing these cultural traditions might be convenient for tourists but on the other side they lead to false representation of the traditional meaning of the whole event (Mason, 2003). On the other hand, cultural promotion by educating tourists enhances appreciation for cultural and historic heritage which is beneficial as the tourists are satisfied.

This theory of social sustainability calls for the economic growth constrained by the requirements of social equity. In order to link these the host environment must be created so that it optimizes resource use and prioritize resource allocation and ensures

that there is equitable resource distribution so that there is a healthy community well-being.

The local peoples and businesses participation in the ecotourism activities are major elements of social sustainability in ecotourism practices. The local community can be supported through supporting and funding their business development groups, memberships in NGOs and access to educational materials on sustainable practices (Roberts & Tribe, 2008)

**Figure 2.2.2.1:** Summary of ecotourism dimensions



*Source: Author*

Ecotourism is important as it follows the principles and concept of sustainable tourism that is mainly the three dimensions which are environmental, economic and social sustainability. It is also of importance because it contributes actively to natural environment and cultural heritage protection. Ecotourism ensures that visitor experience is valued as they get to appreciate nature and study about ecotourism practices. Also businesses are benefiting from practicing ecotourism as it ensures that they continue to operate in the long run if there is careful planning and following through of these plans and close monitoring of the success.

### **2.2.3 Ecotourism marketing**

For marketing to be possible, there are a couple of conditions which should be met: the prime being that there must be an individual or an enterprise that wants to sell a product or service and the other one is there should be customers for this particular service or product.

Tourism enterprises, whether having a basis on destination areas or tourist-generating, are mainly concerned with the growth of an enterprise and a short-term profitability but not with the long-term development in the destination of a well-balanced tourism. Then they come up with what sells, meaning the destination will be fitting to its needs, not vice-versa.

Marketing, operational and the knowledge of finance to the planned endeavour will be brought by the business bringing a management plan as well a strategy that will take up every principle needed to support a business which is successful. The development of ecotourism brings enterprises which are socially aware with a chance of making a crucial effect on social development and the preservation of environment, all of which are inclusive in the identification and categorisation of promoting and creating a business which is sustainable.

Due to recent indigenisation policies many companies in the Victoria Falls area are owned by locals and there are a few that are owned by foreigners. The destination has the potential to contribute to sustainable tourism development. This requires a planning process that satisfies the needs of the tourists and tour operators while being sensitive to the social, cultural, economic and environmental needs of the host destination or country. Achieving sustainable tourism development requires a vision which encompasses a larger time and critical planning than that traditionally used in community planning and decision making.

Sustainable tourism's popularity is also evident in the acceptance of it as a potential dogma for saving tourism destinations or minimizing tourism's impact on future destinations. Sustainable tourism's success has given rise to many niche definitions within the tourism industry.

Despite its national and international protected status and reputation, the Victoria Falls/ Mosi-Oa-Tunya Site is under threat of losing its UNESCO World Heritage status through a lack of cross-border co-operation in management and development aims. The specific concern is that the special wilderness value of the Zambezi River and the falls is being eroded by inappropriate visitor behaviour and tourism development, including unchecked commercialization, ad hoc development, unauthorized road and camp building, noise pollution, littering and abuse of camping sites, and illicit tour and guide activities. According to Wynn (2002) there are five major concerns:

- Too many people, too much impact — unruly and insensitive behaviour such as harassing wildlife with too many tour vehicles or noisy visitor behaviour on river cruises and human-generated pollution and litter.
- Noise pollution — human-generated sounds that are unnatural for the setting such as loud radios and music in campsites or mechanical noise such as fuel-powered electrical generators at lodges and camps, and motorized vehicles such as motorboats, motorbikes, trucks, light aircraft and helicopters.
- Over development — tourists want to get away from the hustle and bustle of urban civilization and development, and they report some development detracts from the wilderness experience: too much infrastructure, too many roads, too many lights, and too many regulations.
- Commercial tourism — low-key/low-impact infrastructure and activities designed to be nature-sensitive are acceptable in wilderness areas; however, some commercial tourism detracts from wilderness quality such as luxury high-rise hotels, insensitive architecture, advertising billboards, commercial sales outlets, 'tame' wildlife, and exploitation and harassment by vendors and dealers.
- Ecological Impacts — damage or alterations to ecosystems such as tree cutting, wildlife poaching, and the presence of non-native species.

By encouraging eco-tourism concepts of environmental awareness and responsibility within the tourism industry and wider local business community the

foundations on which to strengthen the conservation and protection of the Victoria Falls area can be created, at the same time as developing tourism infrastructure and delivering associated economic benefits.

If tourism providers work together an industry-lead commitment to eco-tourism best practice can be created, whilst also developing market demand for eco-tourism products and services. Eco-audited tourism providers will have the opportunity to invest their eco-footprint compensation payments in selected local projects through their eco-balance contributions.

We cannot discuss about the natural resources without talking about wildlife especially in the Victoria Falls area. Wildlife constitutes an important natural resource in southern Africa and its utilisation can provide revenue and can be the basis for a lucrative tourism industry. Ecotourism principles place nature and conservation in a central position to which all other uses are subordinate. The Zimbabwe Parks Department has a clear commitment to sustainable utilisation as a means of conserving wildlife heritage. Its policy of sustainable utilisation, which would not jeopardise the survival of any species, is intended to overcome the potentially competing interests of environment and development. Zimbabwean philosophy is that wildlife cannot survive in a developing economy unless its management can be economically self-supporting in which part of the land must be allocated to wildlife tourism just as it is done to agriculture and ranching.

#### **2.2.4 Ecotourism in the Region**

In the region of sub-Saharan Africa tourism enterprises have been shown to be ill represented in international tourism scholarship (Rogerson 2012, Rogerson & Visser, 2011).

- ***Ghana***

The 2013 Tourism and Travel Competitive Index ranks Ghana in the thirteenth position in Sub-Saharan Africa considering tourism and travel. In 2011, US\$2.19 billion income was generated, a contribution of 2.3% to Ghana's G.D.P and a provision of jobs mounting up to 234 679. The second National Tourism Development Plan for a period of 2013 to 2027 stress ecotourism as tourism which is beneficial with a profit

margin which is fairly large (Ershun & Tonto, 2014). Foreign interest does not govern the tourism of Ghana, its plans for tourism progress exhibit unstopped colonial manipulation, pertaining to the assumption that international visitors and drawing on foreign capital can bring sustainable tourism.

Ankasa Resource Areas, Kakum National Park as well as Mole National Park have been advertised to entities which can provide tourist facilities or infrastructure, but attracting international visitors being of main concern. Honey maintains that public-private partnership between Wildlife Safaris and South Africa's Makuleke Contract Park has assisted to place the area as a destination of ecotourism (Shehab).

- *Namibia*

NGOs, donors and governments all over the world have been recently supporting and promoting tourism businesses which are community-based and genuine as well, (CBTEs), and Namibia, dating from independence, is no exception. The government of Namibia vividly observes the sector of tourism as that which makes a significant contribution to the mitigation of poverty.

### **2.3 Developing sustainable tourism in the Victoria Falls area**

Butler (2003) implied that a definition which works of sustainable development in tourism context could be viewed as tourism which remains viable indefinitely and does not change or lower in value the environment, that is, human and physical in which it exists to an extent that the successful development and other activities' well-being and processes will be forbidden.

Sustainable tourism was defined by the UNWTO, in congeniality with Butler's implication has as a development of sustainable tourism that encounter the requirements of host regions and tourist whom are present at the same time augmenting and protecting future opportunities. It is conceived as leading to resource conservation in a manner that social, business opportunities requirements can be satisfied while maintaining biological diversity, important nature conservation and systems which support human and wildlife systems and the integrity of culture, (World Tourism Organisation).

Sustainable tourism has turned into academic interest area and tourism policy-making has been adopted by both private and public sectors at all governance levels and in organisations constituting United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (Hall, 2011).

The Victoria Falls was written on the World Heritage List (WHL) in the year 1989 as a trans-boundary site which is shared between Zimbabwe and Zambia. The World Conservation Union (previously the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, IUCN), evaluated the site. During the period of evaluation, the proposed was deemed to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee for nomination was too large and areas which are covered, example being the Victoria Falls urban area, which offers no contribution to the values of the site which are prominent.

Development and the bringing about of certification of sustainable tourism is a process that can end up in a significant dialogue and the process of policy-making about tourism type development that a certain country would like to aim for, greater business community awareness of the contribution and requirements of the local communities and attitude shift across generations and sectors (Bowman, 2011). Many companies in the Victoria Falls are owned by locals due to recent indigenisation policies and there are few that are owned by foreigners.

### **2.3.1 Management of the destination**

For ecotourism to take place there must be a natural setting and this case it depends on the waterfalls, wildlife and forests. The management of a destination can be difficult as many stakeholders are involved and political groups will seek to have economic ownership over the whole destination. It is more difficult in developing countries where the political influences tend to be corrupt as one can find the whole destination being owned by few individuals for their personal gains. For this reason that is why there exists conflicts between different governing boards over these world heritage sites therefore to settle these conflicts there must be policies set out to rule over such issues.

The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Act is there for the purpose of assigning the national parks in Zimbabwe including Victoria Falls to preserve and protect the natural landscape and preserve and protect wildlife, plants and the natural ecological stability of wildlife and communities to enjoy, learn and be an inspiration to the general public. The act also stipulates the boards that will be in charge of all the national parks and their duties which will be to examine and report on the conservation of all natural landscapes, wildlife and ecological stability in these parks and communities.

### **2.3.2 Policies, Education and Stakeholder Involvement**

- ***Policies***

According to the National Tourism Policy, (2014) the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality is the government board that is relevant for setting policies for the industry. It added that for the policies to be successful the government should lead in making policies and a national economic strategy and tourism master plan must be developed and implemented. The policy must allow the ecotourism sector to be a stand-alone sector.

- ***Education***

In ecotourism education is all about informing the concerned stakeholders about all the essential ecotourism principles, policies and activities for it to be successful. Ecotourism education must be made available to all members including the local communities, tourists and businesses so that awareness about ecotourism issues. Ecotourism education will have many advantages including:

- appreciation of natural environment and wildlife and culture so that it will be passed on to future generations
- it improves the ecotourism performance and will help in minimising negative impacts on the environment such as pollution, littering, forest fires and waste disposal adverseness
- there are monetary value in conserving the natural environment and it benefits the neighbourhood



- promoting ecotourism creates opportunities for youth that is small business creation and jobs will be created

Therefore the education of ecotourism practices in Zimbabwe should be encouraged and can start at early stages in education system that is primary, secondary to tertiary institutions should have the subject of ecotourism.

- ***Stakeholder involvement and empowerment***

Ecotourism policies and developmental plans that are implemented affect many stakeholders in the industry. To ensure collaboration and smooth implementation of these policies all these stakeholders must come together and work hand in hand without conflicts. On top of the stakeholder pyramid is the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Management which sets policies for the industry followed by governing boards such as the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority which is responsible for marketing the Zimbabwe tourism product, Zimbabwe Council for Tourism responsible for monitoring policies and disciplinary measures and Zimparks which is responsible for wildlife and nature conservation. Other stakeholders include businesses, local communities, local tribal chiefs, suppliers and tourists and all play important roles in ecotourism.

### **2.3.3 Strategic implementation of ecotourism practices**

In order to achieve successful implementation of ecotourism practices, the holistic concept of sustainability has to be comprehended and then included in all strategies of the company. Dunphy et al., (2007) defines strategic sustainability as the commitment that is shown by managers which show all efforts in avoiding risks and minimising costs

According to Hitchcock and Willard (2009), to integrate sustainability into the strategic planning process, businesses need to develop a more long-term focus which helps in examining threats and opportunities thus identifying relationships that are present in the economy and making use of the current trends. It is important that businesses must perceive sustainable practices as a long term companywide goal that is incorporated in every aspect of the business and its relationships. There must be created an environment where each individual and each part of the business

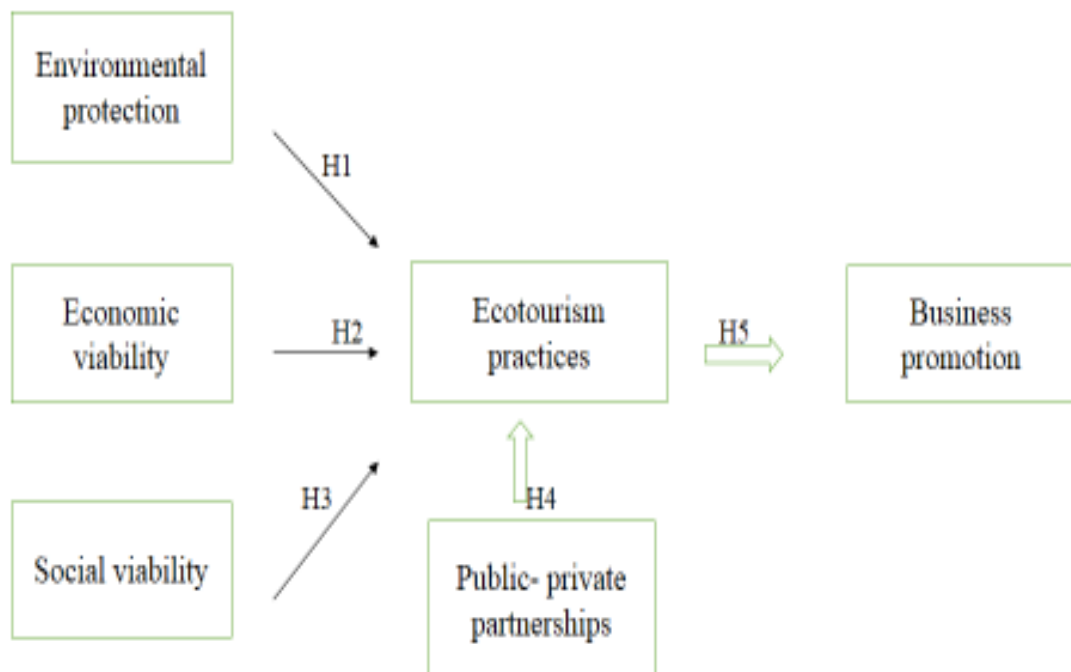
contributes in resourceful manner that leans towards sustainability (Landrum & Edwards, 2009)

Therefore, budgets should be examined and upgraded constantly and also goals and tactics should require the use of bottom-up and top-down approaches in management of sustainable businesses. Blackburn (2007) also notes that monitoring and evaluation of the processes and performance should be done on a regular basis. Processes and performance need to constantly checked and examined adequately (Blackburn, 2007).

The governance on Zimbabwe tourism boards follows western culture of no supporting development of ecotourism practices. This causes conflicts between the government and the board responsible for marketing Zimbabwe as a destination that is the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority board which is making efforts to put Zimbabwe on the international market. Recently it rebranded the country as a 'World of Wonders' which needed huge investments and capital and aggressive marketing to attract foreign investors and more international tourists but however the government seemed not to be interested as ecotourism is not seen as an important sector in the economy.

## 2.4 Research model and Hypotheses

**Figure 2.4.1:** Research model and Hypotheses



Source: Author

**H1:** Companies' sustainability commitment is driven by implementing sustainability (ecotourism) activities related to environmental issues.

**H2:** Engagement in social issues (visitor fulfilment and community well-being) in the value chain serves as a driver for companies to be involved in sustainability issues

**H3:** Business leadership issues e.g. economic viability and local prosperity drive companies to include sustainability issues in the corporate strategies

**H4:** Cooperation or partnership between businesses and the public sector will aid in the implantation on of sustainable ecotourism practices

**H5:** Ecotourism practices if properly managed by companies will lead to their business promotion and destination promotion as a whole.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to establish a theoretical framework of the sustainable development and sustainable tourism concepts. It was also important to review the significant literature that shows the ecotourism dimensions and how the concepts were developed by breaking down the ideologies. It also justified the research area to give understanding of the research problem by showing the research model and hypotheses.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology how the study was carried out. The subsections discussed here are the research design, data collection tools and procedure and data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research design**

Bryman and Bell (2007) define research design as „a framework for the collection and analysis of data. This study was both exploratory and descriptive in nature. This was a cross sectional study and it used a deductive approach as different theories were used. A positivism research philosophy was used as this study aimed to uncover and measure patterns of behaviour. The positivism theory states that certain knowledge is based on natural phenomena and their properties and relations.

#### **3.2 Study area**

Tourism destinations consist of several types of attractions that are planned and managed to provide various tourist interests, activities, and enjoyment. Gunn (1988) and Lee (1999) explained that tourism destinations such as national parks, theme parks, beaches, resort, and cultural/heritage destinations can be grouped according to

their basic resource foundation: natural or cultural. While destinations based on a natural resource include beach resorts, campgrounds, parks, golf courses, natural reserves, and scenic roads, destinations based on cultural/heritage resources are comprised of historic sites, and ethnic areas.

The research area for this study was the Victoria Falls town in Zimbabwe. It is one of Zimbabwe's most popular natural destinations. Therefore, the study selected the Victoria Falls as the study area in order to accomplish the objectives of the study.

### **3.3 Mixed method approach**

Using mixed methods of data collection can be very useful in tourism research. This is whereby the researcher uses both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. In this research quantitative data was obtained through the use of questionnaires which were emailed to the companies researched on and it also used qualitative data collection through the conduction of in-depth interviews to the relevant governing boards in the tourism industry of Zimbabwe.

By mixing both qualitative and quantitative research the researcher gains a deeper understanding of the research area while offsetting the weaknesses brought about each method used by itself. The main advantage of using this is triangulation which means using different methods of data collection to examine the same phenomenon. Triangulation allows one to understand deep concepts more accurately by approaching it from different point of views, methods and techniques. The researcher used the mixed method approach to validate the results obtained from other methods in this case to validate information obtained from in-depth interviews by using questionnaires. The researcher also wanted to look at research questions from different angles so that findings would be clarified and be able to test the hypotheses.

Using mixed methods has its advantage that is provides strengths that offsets the weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative data which is important for this research. It also provides an in-depth understanding of the research problem that what either qualitative or quantitative research can do alone. Lastly by using qualitative research it is possible to obtain information on a certain topic which is later validated by obtaining quantitative data in order to develop an instrument with better construct validity.

### **3.4 Data collection**

Although the evolving nature of companies' commitment to sustainability is recognised in the literature, empirical studies of the process and its drivers are lacking, as also noted by others (Brower & Mahajan, 2013; Leonidou et al., 2013; Metcalf & Benn, 2013). Due to this and with the aim to assess the validity of the essence of the research model primary data was collected for this study. Primary data was collected through semi structured telephone interviews and questionnaires.

#### **3.4.1 Questionnaire design**

##### *Questionnaires*

According to Veal, (2006) the most common used form of collecting data is the use of questionnaire as it helps in getting people's attitudes towards certain principles and study their behaviour and intentions. This study used questionnaires as a research instrument to gather data from key managers of the businesses in Victoria Falls. They were also used to gather information from the ministry of tourism of Zimbabwe. The questionnaires had a maximum of thirty questions. The survey was conducted from 1st – 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2017 in the geographical area of the Victoria Falls.

Questionnaires main advantage is that they are more convenient to respondents as they read questions on their own and respond without having pressure which is caused by interviews. However there is a disadvantage that some might not be completed in time or some leave out some questions therefore there must be carefully designed (Bryman, 2004; Veal, 2006). Fifteen questionnaires were distributed via email and out of those fifteen, ten were responded to.

The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it had three sections. The first section had set of questions that asked about the company profile. The questions gathered information about the services offered, activities done by the company, natural resources used and seasons they operated in. It also asked about employees; that is the number of employees they had, number of part time employees they usually get and the number of local residents among those employees.

The second section sought information about ecotourism practices and if the companies considered themselves as ecotourism businesses and natural resources based businesses. It also asked about ecotourism promotion in Victoria Falls and if they provided educational material to tourists. The last section asked the actual ecotourism practices the businesses do and the reasons why they do them. This last section used 5 point Likert scale which had answers varying from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

### **3.4.2 Semi structured interviews**

For tourism studies the use of interviews is very important for qualitative data as it provides adequate information to make a good analysis (Veal, 2006). The most common used type of interview is in-depth interview as questions are tailor made to the particular subject being asked and the interviewer encourages the interviewee to participate and then the interviewer has a chance to probe to get a deeper understanding of the respondents view. This method was appropriate to use as various stakeholders in the tourism industry have differing views and understanding on the sustainability concept. The questions were carefully structured and customized to suit the different organizations to be interviewed so that the interviewees were made free to share their views pertaining to sustainable tourism and ecotourism.

Therefore, semi structured telephone interviews were conducted on these managers. The interviews were semi structured as these businesses targeted are different in terms of nature and type hence some questions were customized to suit the different organizations. The researcher selected the sample of four managers of the different tourism governing boards based on the fact that the sample was most likely to provide the desired information and was a reasonable one in order to represent the true situation.

#### ***Interview schedule***

The first set of questions of the interview were to ask the relevant governing boards if they understood the concept of sustainability and ecotourism principles. The second set of questions were to seek understanding on how these boards view importance of sustainable tourism, possible negative effects that could occur to the destination if not carefully managed, and if they are doing a good job in maintaining

the destination sustainably. The last section was to know how ecotourism practices can be implemented the barriers in doing these, the advantages and the companies' responsibility on ecotourism. It also sought to know how and what the public sector is doing to help private businesses in implementing ecotourism practices.

### **3.5 Pilot study**

To make sure that there are no misunderstandings on the research questionnaire a pilot study was conducted. This was necessary as it points out mistakes made on questionnaire and correct the weaknesses and all the areas which needed revision.

The questionnaire was piloted with two companies on 30 November 2017 and received the two questionnaires. The average time to complete the questionnaire was 10 to 15 minutes and for the majority all questions were comprehensive. Since all of the answers were clear to understand and, the respondents elaborated their concerns in the questionnaire, we used the same questions and formats for the survey.

### **3.6 Sampling**

Non probability sampling has a weakness of not representing the population or generalizing information about tourism studies but however it is very cost effective and it saves it. It was appropriate for this research as the representatives of the whole population was impossible to obtain.

For this study purposive sampling technique was used and it focused on managers of relevant governing institutions and board that oversee tourism development in Victoria Falls including the Ministry of Tourism, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, Zimparks and Zimbabwe council for Tourism. The sample size was 4 managers and this was an appropriate technique as it saved time and these managers provided relevant information for the study.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

The qualitative data of this research was analysed by thematic content analysis. The data gained from the interview was interpreted by getting familiar with the data and re-reading then it was coded or labelled manually. This was done to get a better understanding of the data and gain more insight on the research topic. Themes or



heading were transcribed to get better patterns of the meaning. Through the coding there were re-occurring themes which included 'Sustainable development in Victoria Falls', 'Public sector responsibility', 'Sustainable business practices', 'Advantages and barriers of implementing ecotourism', 'Support and efforts of the government', 'Responsibility of the businesses' and 'Future concerns'.

To add on to this qualitative data, the researcher used quantitative data. This was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 23. Descriptive analysis method was used to get the frequency for example mean mode and standard deviation of things like number of employees, activities done and services offered to get a general understanding of the businesses that operate in Victoria Falls. The data concerning ecotourism practices was coded for example 'yes' was coded 1, 'no' was coded 2 and 'uncertain' was coded 3.

### **3.8 Reliability and validity**

This aim of this chapter is to describe the logic behind the research design, and the use of the mixed research methods. The research methods employed in this thesis are described in detail, both quantitative and qualitative parts, followed by a discussion on the advantages of selecting a mixed method research design concerning triangulation of these two approaches. According to Field (2009) the mostly used method of measuring reliability is the use of the Cronbach's alpha and this has a general minimum of 0.70. This study also implemented the usage of the Cronbach's alpha statistics in examining the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

In this chapter the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis will be presented to support the hypotheses and previous studies in the literature review. The results will show descriptive statistics of the companies in Victoria Falls thus showing a general overview of how they are structured and how they operate. It also presents the analysis of the qualitative data obtained from interviews to provide an in-depth understanding of the sustainable business practices in Victoria Falls.

#### **4.1 Survey data and findings**

Preliminary findings are described in this section, including quantifying the extent of ecotourism companies and identifying the types of services/activities/natural resources provided by these companies. We also identified their needs and barriers to operating their businesses, quantifying the extent of ecotourism companies and identifying their characteristics

Ecotourism, resource-based recreation, and ecotourism/resource-based recreation companies were both self-identified and objectively identified. For the

latter, three objective criteria or levels were used to screen questionnaire responses.

These three levels include

- travel to a natural area,
- education objectives, and
- sustainability goals.

In order to assess the development of the ecotourism sector in Victoria Falls, the number and sizes of ecotourism companies were quantified. Data on customers' interests in environmental information and the companies' needs for information were also obtained.

- ***Number of employees***

The majority of the businesses in Victoria Falls are Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs). By definition these fall into three categories which are:

1. A micro business which has less than 10 people
2. A small business which has 10-49 people
3. A medium size business which has 50-250 people.

Most of the businesses (40%) had between 26-50 employees and a couple of businesses were below 25 employees. 40% of the businesses in Victoria Falls were found to be medium enterprises employing from 50 to 100 employees.

- ***Number of local employees***

Half of the companies hired between 26-50 local people to work in their companies. A few companies (10%) hired above 75 local employee and the rest (40%) hired below 25 local employees. This showed that a lot of the employees in these businesses were locals from the Victoria Falls town.

- ***Ecotourism business services***

It was found out that the business offers a small range of services including tours, lodging, on-site guides and watercraft equipment. 80% of the businesses in the research offer tours which recorded the highest number then followed by on site guides which recorded 60% and then followed by lodging and watercraft equipment hiring

with 50% and 30% respectively. This showed that most of the businesses offer touring services to the natural environment thus making ecotourism an important aspect for their businesses. Without practising ecotourism there will be resources depletion which will then compromise their business.

- ***Ecotourism business activities***

Businesses in Victoria Falls offer a wide variety of activities which include hiking, boating, rafting, horseback riding, wildlife observation, fishing, camping and bird viewing. All these services require ecotourism and careful management of the natural environment so that their businesses keep going in the long run. The questionnaires required them to tick the services they offered and the table below shows what the researcher found out.

From what was found out most businesses do wildlife observation which recorded 90% followed by camping which recorded 60%. Hunting had the least which recorded 10% only. This is because consumptive tourism is seen as a non-ecotourism practice as it depletes the natural resources by killing wildlife which is often discouraged and very few businesses offer it. Hiking and bird watching are also offered by half of the businesses as they recorded 50%. There are also other services offered by few companies which are canoeing, rafting and fishing with 20%. All these activities done by the companies are dependent on the natural environment and wildlife which therefore can be seen that ecotourism is vital for the businesses in Victoria Falls.

The researcher found out that 70% of the business operate all year round and 30% operate during the summer time only which is usually from September to March. No business operates around the winter time only. Domestic tourists usually travel around the summer time as they have more holiday vacations during that time and it is the busiest time at the Victoria Falls that is why some businesses opt to operate during summer only.

- ***Types of natural resources used by company***

All of the businesses in Victoria Falls are dependent on the natural environment that is they use rivers and streams which is mainly the Zambezi River, forests i.e. the

Victoria Falls national park and unique natural features which is the Victoria Falls main waterfalls and gorges. According to this research 80% of the businesses in Victoria Falls use the forests, 70% use the Zambezi River and 60% use the waterfalls and other unique natural features.

## **4.2 Analysis by objectives**

### **Objective 1**

*To find out if businesses in Victoria Falls are practicing Ecotourism and why they are doing so.*

To find out this objective, respondents of the questionnaire were asked if they viewed their companies as ecotourism businesses or not. The companies are really practicing ecotourism in Victoria Falls as the questionnaire asked the respondents are doing practices such as providing educational materials or information on ecology or conservation, encouraging the protection of sensitive environmental areas in their tourist business activities and providing leadership in natural resource protection and conservation (such as attend planning meetings and participate in local management discussions, etc.) and they agreed to this.

Respondents of the questionnaire were also asked the main reasons why they conduct ecotourism practices. The researcher found out the main reasons why ecotourism practices are done falls under the three main dimensions as noted earlier by previous researchers. These three dimensions are economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability.

### **Objective 2**

*To examine the effectiveness of these ecotourism practices in achieving their intended long term objectives of sustainable tourism in promoting businesses and benefiting the local communities.*

The interviewees said that environmental sustainability goals are more important than the economic and socio-cultural ones. “Uniting conservation of environment, communities and sustainable travel that does not disturb natural environment and the main goal being preserving the environment then economic and social will follow”

(Interviewee 3) The interviewees emphasised that conserving the environment will promote the businesses in the long run.

The effectiveness of ecotourism can be evaluated through training employees and educating them. Most people who responded to the questionnaires mentioned that trainings for ecotourism business practices were being done and they were applying this in their jobs in the companies.

### **Objective 3**

*To find out the advantages practising ecotourism in promoting their businesses and barriers they face in implementing these practices.*

Concerning the importance of ecotourism, the public sector seems to be aware of this. They noted that it is of significant importance when it comes to sustainable development of the tourist destination. Main focus was on the protection of the environment, employment creation and economic viability for the whole country at large. When asked about the importance of ecotourism interviewee 1 stated these points:

*“involvement of local community which makes a healthy society, natural environment protection for future generations and employment creation”*

*“economic benefits- employment creation, visitor satisfaction destination and business promotion, preservation of the ecosystem and socio-cultural preservation” Interviewee 2*

The interviews stated the advantages of ecotourism which were:

*“Since the whole world is going green, it actually put Victoria Falls on the global arena then it promotes the businesses and the destination as a whole which leads to more tourists coming in”*

***Interviewee 1***

*“There will be more tourists and also more investment thus improving the GDP contribution, another advantage is there will be employment creation for the local people”*

***Interviewee 2***

*‘‘There will be promotion of the destination which attracts more visitors and investors and of course natural resources and wildlife preservation which is a big deal for the future’’ Interviewee 3*

All interviewees agreed on certain factors to which they saw as the barriers they face when implementing ecotourism practices.

**Objective 4**

***To find out if the businesses are partnering with the government and relevant governing boards in practising ecotourism and sustainable tourism.***

The government of Zimbabwe that is through the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality does a great job in ensuring smooth operation of ecotourism in Victoria Falls. It is the governing board responsible for making policies the support ecotourism. The researcher found out from Interviewee 1 that they:

- *Ensure an economic environment conducive to the development of ecotourism (through, for example, grants, loans, and incentive programmes);*
  - *Put in place policies that support ecotourism;*
- *Facilitate the development of infrastructure through imports of, for example, televisions and tourism equipment.*

*‘‘Local council assistance in maintain the town, helping in setting up ecotourism businesses’’*

***Interviewee 2***

As organisational culture implementation is regarded as a major change process and not merely a quick fix, it will take some time to filter the strategies down into behaviours (McCalman & Potter, 2015). This has to happen from top management down to the community, by management living and embracing the values of ecotourism. The other interviewees also added other points on assistance offered to businesses in Victoria Falls:

*‘Environmental protection training and education, Tour guides training,  
Laws on natural resources conservation and guidelines offered’*

***Interviewee 3***

### **4.3 Analysis on interviews**

- **Sustainability and Ecotourism**

It is usually difficult to settle on an exact definition of sustainability and ecotourism but there are main principles that seem to come up when trying to explain the concepts. All the interviewees understood the concepts of ecotourism and sustainable tourism. The main principle words which recurred were conservation of environment now” for the “future generations” “ecological balance” community development and economic wellbeing.

Interviewee 1 defined sustainability as:

*‘It is the avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to  
maintain an ecological balance.’*

*‘Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future  
generations to meet their own needs’*

***Interviewee 2***

*‘Sustainability means reserving essential ecosystem functions and to provide  
for the wellbeing of future generations’* ***Interviewee 3***



**These were the main principles of ecotourism given:**

**Table 4.3.1: The main principles of ecotourism**

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>travel to natural areas that conserves the environment</i></li> <li>• <i>local people well being</i></li> <li>• <i>wildlife conservation</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Tourism that involves:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>protection of natural ecosystem</i></li> <li>• <i>socio-cultural protection</i></li> <li>• <i>local community development and</i></li> <li>• <i>employment creation</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>uniting conservation of environment, communities and sustainable travel that does not disturb natural environment</i></li> </ul>

*Source: author*

- **Importance of ecotourism**

Concerning the importance of ecotourism, the public sector seems to be aware of this. They noted that it is of significant importance when it comes to sustainable development of the tourist destination. Main focus was on the protection of the environment, employment creation and economic viability for the whole country at large. When asked about the importance of ecotourism interviewee 1 stated these points:

*“involvement of local community which makes a healthy society, natural environment protection for future generations and employment creation”*

*“economic benefits- employment creation, visitor satisfaction destination and business promotion, preservation of the ecosystem and socio-cultural preservation” Interviewee 2*

- **Companies’ responsibility in ecotourism**

Concerning the responsibility of companies in Victoria Falls on ecotourism practices the public sector agreed that each business carries responsibility for more sustainable practices. In order to do this the governing boards suggested that the

companies educate or train their staff on practicing ecotourism and partner with the local community by raising awareness to them too.

*“Companies must engage with local community and work together, raising awareness to the public, minimising negative impacts done by their businesses”* **Interviewee 3**

*“Staff training to implement ecotourism and sustainable tourism development”* **Interviewee 2**

The governing boards also felt that companies play a big role in influencing the local community especially in this destination where it is a small town. This agrees with the notion that the social dimension of ecotourism.

- **Ecotourism in the promotion of businesses in Victoria falls**

All the interviewees agreed that ecotourism helps in the promotion of the destination Victoria Falls.

*“Yes, Global recognition, it puts the destination on the world map”*

**Interviewee 1**

*“Yes, since the whole world is focusing on natural environment protection it draws attention of the global environment”*

**Interviewee 3**

- **Advantages of ecotourism in Victoria Falls**

As stated earlier above these were some of the advantages of ecotourism pointed out by the interviewees representing the relevant governing boards of the tourism industry:

*“Since the whole world is going green, it actually put Victoria Falls on the global arena then it promotes the businesses and the destination as a whole which leads to more tourists coming in”*

**Interviewee 1**

*‘There will be more tourists and also more investment thus improving the GDP contribution, another advantage is there will be employment creation for the local people’*

**Interviewee 2**

*‘There will be promotion of the destination which attracts more visitors and investors and of course natural resources and wildlife preservation which is a big deal for the future’*

**Interviewee 3**

- **Barriers of implementing tourism**

*‘Lack of financial resources Lack of awareness of importance of ecotourism practices’*

**Interviewee 2**

*Some of the barriers include ignorance by the people, lack of knowledge by the local community and sometimes small businesses and another huge problem is resistance to change’*

**Interviewee 3**

- **Future concerns on Businesses in Victoria Falls**

*‘Technological advancements is needed because we seem to be behind in terms of hotel systems, transport networks’*

**Interviewee 3**

*‘Climate change which will affect the environment since now we already have a problem of wildlife migrating to area where there are waterholes, so its these things we need to be aware of and plan ahead’*

**Interviewee 1**

*''Pollution is one problem that needs to be looked at if the destination is not carefully managed and another problem will be overcrowding since people are migrating from other towns in search for employment and greener pastures of life''*

***Interviewee 2***

#### **4.4 Hypothesis testing**

***H1: Companies' sustainability commitment is driven by implementing sustainability (ecotourism) activities related to environmental issues.***

The data obtained from the questionnaires shows significant relationships between ecotourism one of the main reasons for implementation which is to reduce negative environmental impacts. All companies agreed to be practicing ecotourism for the reason of reducing negative impacts on the environment with 70% of the companies strongly agreeing and 30% of the companies agreeing.

There is a fair relationship between ecotourism practices and encouraging eco-friendly behaviour shown by the data obtained through questionnaires. This shows that businesses are doing a fair job in encouraging and teaching tourists and locals on practicing eco-friendly behaviour during their stay. 50% of the companies agreed to this and 40% strongly agreed to the notion that they were doing efforts to encourage eco-friendly behaviour to the tourists, local community and employees in their businesses. However' only 10% of the companies asked remained neutral to this point. To add on to this the interviewees also agreed that the main reason for practicing ecotourism was to conserve the natural environment quoting from Interviewee 3: *'uniting conservation of environment, communities and sustainable travel that does not disturb natural environment'*

This shows that the relationship is strong between these two variables therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

***H2: Engagement in social issues (visitor fulfilment and community well-being) in the value chain serves as a driver for companies to be involved in sustainability issues***

There are significant relationships between the variables ecotourism and the main reason for implementation being for the satisfaction of customers and well-being of the local community. This was proven by the data from the questionnaires using descriptive statistics. Of the companies researched on 60% of them strongly agreed that they practiced ecotourism to satisfy their customers, 30% agreed while 10% remained neutral. This shows a strong relationship between these variables. Pertaining to local community wellbeing, the relationship was somewhat fair as companies shared different views on this idea. 30% strongly agreed to the reason of maintaining the community's wellbeing while 40% agreed, adding this will represent 70% of the companies agreeing to this which shows a strong relationship between the two variables. However 20% remained neutral while 10% disagreed with this idea. Using all the statistics got the hypothesis was accepted by the researcher.

***H3: Business leadership issues e.g. economic viability and local prosperity drive companies to include sustainability issues in the corporate strategies***

Data obtained from the questionnaire indicated that when ecotourism practices are constantly realised there becomes more need for making plans, monitoring and evaluating them. This proves that there are strong relationships between the variables practicing ecotourism and the reason behind it being economic sustainability and business promotion. All this indicated that when sustainable business practices are implemented the business plans must be developed with long term objectives.

The correlation between the characteristics shows a fair relationship between ecotourism practices resulting in companies being committed to developing their employees by training them, planning their careers and giving them equal opportunities in promoting them at the work place. From the statistics, 60% of the companies strongly agreed, 30% agreed totalling a 90% of positive result whilst the other 10% remained neutral. This is fair and shows businesses are aiming towards the prosperity of the local employees as this research showed that most of these businesses have a higher numbers of local employees. From the statistics, 10% of the companies

strongly agreed and 60% agreed showing a 70% positive result. The other 20% remained neutral while 10% disagreed. From all this data collected the hypothesis was accepted as there was a positive result between the variables.

***H4: Cooperation or partnership between businesses and the public sector will aid in the implantation on of sustainable ecotourism practices***

The descriptive statistics show significant relationships between ecotourism practices and providing leadership in natural resource protection and conservation by attending planning meetings, participating in local management discussions ad partnering with the public sector. 30% of the companies strongly agreed and 30% agreed to this which totalled to 60% positive result which is fair. 30% remained neutral while 10% disagreed to this. This shows that the public and private sector are working hand in hand.

To add on to this the respondents agreed to be doing efforts to help businesses in setting up ecotourism businesses and they also added that they come up with policies which ensure that the practices are carefully planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated. All this information shows that there are significant relationships of the variables therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

***H5: Ecotourism practices if properly managed by companies will lead to their business promotion and destination promotion as a whole.***

The descriptive statistics used to analyse the questionnaires shows significant relationships between ecotourism practices and business promotion. The higher ecotourism was practices the more the businesses in Victoria Falls were being promoted. This is significant in that if ecotourism is put into practice the business will be promoted that's achieving its intended goals. 40% of the companies strongly agreed that their ecotourism promotes their businesses and 50% agreed and the total was 90% of the results was positive. The remaining 10% disagreed to this notion.

There was also a strong relationship between ecotourism practices and company and destination reputation which means the more ecotourism practices are done the more the company and the destination gets reputable. Of the companies that responded to questionnaires, 70% of them strongly agreed and 30% of them agreed to this. In

conclusion the relationship between ecotourism principles and plans to promote the destination was positive. Both the private and public sector was responsible for promoting tourism, therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

#### **4.5 Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to show the data obtained from the quantitative and qualitative findings of the research. In summary sustainable business practices were being taken serious by the companies and all businesses were very positive about ecotourism. Concerning the business characteristics of the companies studied in Victoria Falls correspond to previous researches. Significant relationships were found between ecotourism and business promotion in Victoria Falls. Companies seem to be adopting ecotourism practices for various reasons which fall under the three dimensions of sustainability which include environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social sustainability. Employees were being continually trained about ecotourism and their aim was to satisfy tourists. The advantages were business reputation and destination promotion. The largest barriers faced were lack of financial support and as well as lack of knowledge.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Conclusion**

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the research aim and the following three research questions. As highlighted in chapter one, the research aim was to:

1. To find out if businesses in Victoria Falls are practicing Ecotourism and why they are doing so.
2. To examine the effectiveness of these ecotourism practices in achieving their intended long term objectives of sustainable tourism in promoting businesses and benefiting the local communities.
3. To find out the advantages practising ecotourism in promoting their businesses and barriers they face in implementing these practices.
4. To find out if the businesses are partnering with the government and relevant governing boards in practising ecotourism and sustainable tourism.

#### **5.1 Summary of findings and responding to the research questions**

This section summarises the findings of this paper as well as responding to the three research questions dominated by the purpose and the overall research aim. The essence of this thesis was to identify the key elements, which can explain if businesses



are practicing ecotourism and how effective these practices are in promoting their businesses. The ecotourism dimensions which were studied to see if they are fulfilled were; environmental protection, economic viability and social wellbeing of the local community. Based on such findings there were advantages seen and also barriers to practising ecotourism but if companies work together with the public sector efficiently these barriers will be mitigated hence promotion of their businesses can be seen. Hence it is logical to summarise and respond to the research questions in one section.

The first task of this research was to find if businesses are practicing ecotourism. From the findings most of the businesses considered themselves as ecotourism businesses and a little portion responded as nature based businesses.

The second task was to find out if the practices are being effective and achieving their long term goals or not. From the research findings the practices are effective but there seem to be some areas of lack. Following the three dimensions brought about by this research that is the environmental, economic and social dimension all these dimensions are satisfied. The respondents agreed that they are doing all they can to protect the environment that is both flora and fauna so that the future generations can use the natural environment without distortion. This is being done by raising awareness, training their staff and attending meetings, seminars and conferences about environmental protection. The economic aspect is done by promoting their companies so that they get more profits and setting business plans so that they achieve their goals and get reputation by the international market and potential investors. Businesses in Victoria Falls are also satisfying the social dimension by engaging with the local community by educating and raising awareness on ecotourism. The companies are also doing a great effort in employing locals as seen from the finding that a great percentage of employees in these businesses are local people from the Victoria Falls town and these employees are continuously trained.

The third task was to find out the advantages of implementing ecotourism practises and also find out barriers local companies in Victoria Falls are encountering while trying to implement these practices. One of the main advantages got from the findings was that the whole world is going green hence practising ecotourism would actually put Victoria Falls on the global arena then it promoting the businesses and the destination as a whole which leads to more tourists coming in. another advantage was

that the environment is protected so that the destination remains intact as it would benefit the future generations to come which is a good thing as it is in agreement with the main aim of sustainable development which is to use the current resources without compromising the future generations. However, there are barriers which were faced by the companies in Victoria Falls in implementing these practices found by this research. A certain lack of funding was seen as the main barrier in practicing ecotourism. Most companies responded to this and through the interviews the relevant governing boards also agreed to this and they added that if local businesses in Victoria Falls could get investors there would be easy implementation and a boom in the industry would be seen in no time. From the finding another barrier was lack of knowledge and education to both the companies and the tourists on the benefits of ecotourism hence education is needed so that ecotourism can be fully practised. Some of the barriers got from the findings include ignorance by the people and sometimes small businesses and another huge problem is resistance to change. Also better partnerships and communication from the government and privately owned businesses can aid in reducing these barriers of practicing ecotourism.

The final task of this research was to find out if the businesses are partnering with the government and relevant governing boards in practising ecotourism and sustainable tourism. From the research findings the public sector is helping the private businesses in Victoria Falls by helping in setting up ecotourism businesses. There are also efforts by the local council assistance in maintain the town. The governing boards also help by setting up policies and laws on natural resources conservation and guidelines offered through environmental protection training and education sessions to these ecotourism businesses in Victoria Falls. However, more efforts are required from the government by these businesses.

## **5.2 Theoretical implications**

Literature consisting of ecotourism practices and sustainable tourism are as a result of the contribution of this study. Late researches may have concentrated on the sustainable environmental dimension whereas this research has looked attentively at the holistic sustainability aspect combining the dimensions of economic, environmental and social dimension. By examining the distinctions of business which do not only concentrate on the enterprise's size, but the classification as well,

enterprise type, certification and ownership. As a result, a picture which is more detailed consisting of possible likelihood in the ecotourism practices implementation was highlighted. Particularly in Zimbabwe small amount of research by individual enterprises' actions has been managed or conducted. In relation to tourism importance in Victoria Falls as well as the increasing significance of development which is sustainable this study brings the status of the practices of ecotourism and industry's picture.

### **5.3 Practical implications and recommendations**

Overall the study shows positive attitude towards practices by small enterprises in the Victoria Falls. The more ecotourism was practiced the increase the benefits were understood, therefore a more positive inclination could be achieved by means of provision of information as well as education. A communication which is better and partnership by the public sector that is the governing boards in the tourism industry by raising awareness for the future development of the resort town.

For ecotourism to be successful there should be more efforts from all stakeholders in the sector and town. This includes the governing boards that is the Ministry of tourism. ZTA, ZCT, Zimparks, local businesses that is hotels, tour operators, travel agencies, tourists and the local communities. All these levels of management should effectively communicate in implementing the policies and monitoring them at each stage. Also, education is necessary and awareness should be raised to all stakeholders.

The ecotourism industry should also work on improving technological advancements. Since the world is changing technologically, efforts must be made to bridge the gap so that the destination does not lag behind. IT is needed mainly for research and development as new trends and concepts continually come up so they need to catch up. IT is also necessary for communications and marketing the destination. For this to be achieved the industry can work hand in hand with the Ministry of ICT as it is responsible for such issues.

## **5.4 Concluding remarks, limitations and suggestions for further research**

- ***Limitations***

The study was limited by the small sample size and the resources available to the researcher. This research was also limited by financial resources as a lot of communication expenses were incurred to approach and to distribute the questionnaires and undertake in depth interviews. Conducting the interviews was also time consuming hence this was a challenge.

This research encountered a low response rate on questionnaires due to limited time to conduct the interviews. This is because most of the managers were pre-occupied with their duties and it was hard to get them to fill out the questionnaire on time. To avoid this, the questionnaires did not too much questions and the questions ad there were as simple and straightforward as possible. However, this was carefully done so that it would not inhibit getting the necessary information that is required for the study.

This study also carried a significant portion of respondents, who were reluctant to give out information due to company policies on privacy and confidentiality though an ethics letter was sent.

- ***Suggestions for further research***

This research and its results was based on a small sample, so due to the limited number of respondents the validity of the research can be limited. Therefore a larger sample can be useful and also data collection should not be limited to organizations but to the tourists as well to understand their views on sustainability issues. This will enable random selection of the sample population. The study should not also be limited to one resort town but other tourist resort towns or to the whole country at large.

This research only represents a first attempt to investigate the topic of ecotourism practices in Victoria Falls and further research is required to gain more in-depth insights. The results of this study revealed an inconsistency in the costs reduction done by practicing ecotourism, thus a detailed study about how costs can be reduced in the process could reveal interesting results.

## REFERENCES

- Bhuiyan, A.H., Siwar ,C., Ismail , S.M., Islam, R., 2012. The Role of Ecotourism for Sustainable Development In East Coast Economic Region (Ecer),Malaysia,. / OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development, 3 (9): 53-60.
- Bowman, K. S. (2011). Sustainable tourism certification and state capacity: Keep it local, simple, and fuzzy. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 5, 269–281.
- Brower, J., & Mahajan, V. (2013). Driven to be good: A stakeholder theory perspective on the drivers of corporate social performance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 117, 313–331.
- Bryman, A. (2004) *Social Research Methods*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2006) ‘Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: how is it done?’, *Qualitative Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 97-113.
- Cohen, S. A., Prayag, G., & Moital, M. (2014). Consumer behaviour in tourism: Concepts, influences and opportunities. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 17(10), 872-909.
- Crawford, D. W., Jackson, E. L., & Godbey, G. (1991). A hierarchical model of leisure constraints. *Leisure Sciences*, 13(4), 309-320. doi:10.1080/01490409109513147
- Creswell, J.W. (2003) *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 2nd edition, London: Sage.
- Darnall, N., Henriques, I., & Sadorsky, P. (2010). Adopting proactive environmental strategy: The influence of stakeholders and firm size. *Journal of Management Studies*, 47(6), 1072–1094.

- Delmas, M., & Toffel, M. W. (2011). Institutional pressures and organizational characteristics: Implications for environmental strategy. In *Oxford handbook of business and the environment* (Ch. 13. pp. 229–247). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Denzin, N.K. (1970) *The research act: a theoretical introduction to sociological methods*, London: Butterworths.
- Finnegan, J. E. (2000). The impact of person and organizational values on organizational commitment. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*,
- Freeman, R. E., (2010): *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Geić, S., (2007): *Organisation and political tourism: Cultural, ecological and sociological aspect*, Split.
- Hall, C. M. (2011). Policy learning and policy failure in sustainable tourism governance: From first- and second-order to third-order change? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19, 649–671.
- Hart, S. L., & Dowell, G. (2011). A natural-resource-based view of the firm: Fifteen years after. *Journal of Management*, 37, 1464–1479.
- Honey, M, 2008. *Ecotourism and sustainable development: Who owns paradise?* 2nd edn. Island Press, Washington, DC. IISD, 2012. *What is Sustainable Development?* International Institute for Sustainable Development,
- Landrum, N.E. and Edwards, S. (2009) *Sustainable Business: An Executive's Primer*, New York: Business Expert Press.
- Leonidou, C. N., Katsikeas, C. S., & Morgan, N. A. (2013). Greening the marketing mix: Do firms do it and does it pay off? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41, 151–170.
- Mbaiwa, J. E. and Darkoh, M. B. K. 2009. *The Socio-economic Impacts of Tourism in the Okavango Delta, Botswana*. In: J. Saarinen, F. Becker, H. Manwa and

- D. Wilson (eds.), *Sustainable Tourism in Southern Africa: Local Communities and Natural Resources in Transition*, pp. 210–230. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- McCalman, J., & Potter, D. (2015). *Leading cultural change: The theory and practice of successful organizational transformation*. London: Kogan Page.
- Metcalf, L., & Benn, S. (2013). Leadership for sustainability: An evolution of leadership ability. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 112, 369–384. Miller, G.A. and Twining-Ward, L. (2005) *Monitoring for a sustainable tourism transition: the challenge of developing and using indicators*, Wallingford: Cabi.
- Morse, J.M. and Richards, L. (2007) *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*, 2nd edition, London: Sage.
- Mowforth, M. and Munt, I. (2009) *Tourism and Sustainability: New Tourism in the Third World*, 3rd edition, London: Routledge.
- Patterson, C. 2002. *The Business of Ecotourism: The Complete Guide for Nature and Culture-Based Tourism Operations*, Rhinelander, Wis.: Explorer's Guide Publishing Second Edition
- Rahman, A., 2010. *Application of GIS in Ecotourism Development: A Case Study In Sundarbans, Bangladesh*, Mid-Sweden University Master Of Arts, Human Geography Focusing On Tourism, A Masters Thesis, 79 p.
- Roberts, S. and Tribe, J. (2008) 'Sustainability Indicators for Small Tourism Enterprises – An Exploratory Perspective', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, vol. 16, no. 5, pp. 575-594.
- Roxana, D.M. 2012. *Considerations About Ecotourism and Nature-Based Tourism - Realities and Perspectives*. *International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management Sciences*, 1( 5): 215-221.
- Sâmbotin, D., Sâmbotin, A., Pătrășcoiu, M., Coroian, A., Mercel, I. I. 2011. *Ecoturismul – Model de Valorificare Durabilă a Resurselor Turistice*, *Lucrări Științifice, Seria I, Vol. XIII*

- Santhosh Yadav, "Ecotourism: problems and Prospects". Yojana, Vol.18, No.9, January 15, 2010, PP 41-42.
- Shehab, M, 2011. Tourism-led development in South Africa: A case study of Makuleke partnership with wilderness Safaris. PhD thesis, University of Witwatersrand.
- Sloan, P.; Legrand, W. and Chen, J.S. (2003) 'Assessing Hoteliers' Awareness and Perception of Environmental Initiatives, Conference Proceedings, EuroCHRIE Congress, Bad Honnef, Germany
- Swarbrooke, J. (1999) Sustainable Tourism Management, Wallingford: CABI.
- Tkaczynski, A., Rundle-Thiele, S. R., Beaumont, N., (2009): Insights into How Regional Tourism Operators View Their Market, International Journal of Organizational Behaviour, Vol. 13, No. 1, 16-27.
- Veal, A. J. (1992). Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism: A Practical Guide. London: Wesley Longman. WCED (1987) Our common future, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- WTO, (2001): The concept of sustainable tourism. Retrieved from <http://www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/concepts.htm>



## **APPENDIX**

### **APPENDIX 1: ECOTOURISM SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **Title: The role of eco-tourism in sustainable tourism business promotion in Victoria Falls Zimbabwe**

My name is Sandra Matope, I am a student at Near East University. I have prepared this questionnaire for the purpose of collecting data on my research work titled; The role of eco-tourism in sustainable tourism business promotion in Victoria Falls Zimbabwe for the award of a Master's degree in Tourism and Hotel Management.

#### **SECTION 1. Specific characteristics of your company.**

**Name of Company**\_\_\_\_\_

1. What types of services or products does your company provide to tourists? (check all that apply)

Tours       Lodging       On-site Guides       Equipment/Provisions        
Watercraft sales/rentals       Other\_\_\_\_\_

2. What types of activities does your company provide to tourists? (check all that apply)

Hiking       Biking       Camping       Hunting       Horseback Riding        
Boating       Canoeing       Rafting       Fishing       Wildlife Observation       Bird  
Watching       Other\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which seasons of the year do you operate? (check all that apply)

All Year       Summer       Winter

4. Which types of natural resources are used or served by your company? (check all that apply)

Rivers and streams       Unique natural landscapes       Forests  
Other\_\_\_\_\_

#### **SECTION 2. Your company and ecotourism-related needs and issues.**

1. Do you think of your company as an ecotourism business?       Yes       No        
Not sure

2. Do you think of your company as a natural resource-based recreation business?

Yes    No    Not sure

3. Are your company's services/activities provided in a specific geographic area? If yes, please specify.

Yes    No   \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you believe tourism in Victoria Falls benefits your company?

Yes    No    Don't know/Uncertain

5. Do you believe ecotourism in Victoria Falls benefits your company?

Yes    No    Don't know/Uncertain

6. Would greater promotion of ecotourism in Victoria Falls benefit your company?

Yes    No    Don't know/Uncertain

7. Does your company provide tour guides who talk about natural features or resource conservation?  Yes-natural features    Yes-resource conservation    No    Don't know/Uncertain

8. Does your company train tour guides to provide this information?

Yes    No    Not applicable

9. If 'No' to #8, please describe how your tour guides learn this information.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Does your company provide educational materials or information on ecology or conservation?    Yes    No

11. Does your company produce its own educational materials?

Yes    No    Not applicable

12. Does your company use educational materials produced by (check all that apply):

The Ministry of Tourism    Zimbabwe Tourism Authority     
Environmental Management Agency    Forestry Commission    Zimparks

Environmental organizations:

Other\_\_\_\_\_

13. Does your company encourage the protection of sensitive environmental areas in its tourist business activities? (e.g. Appropriate behaviour to avoid habitat damage, etc.)

Yes  No  Don't know

14. Does your company provide leadership in natural resource protection and conservation? (Such as attend planning meetings and participate in local management discussions, etc)

Yes  No  Not sure  If yes, please describe?\_\_\_\_\_

15. Would your customers be interested in more information on important environmental issues (e.g., global climate change, rare species habitat)?  Yes

No  Not sure  If yes, please describe?\_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you expect that global climate change will harm natural resources and your business within the next 5-10 years?  Yes  No  Not sure  If yes, please describe?\_\_\_\_\_

17. Does your company need information about (check all that apply):

Operating resource-based recreation/ecotourism companies in ecologically-sound ways

Impact of global climate change on Victoria Falls natural resources

Resource-based recreation/ecotourism company promotional and marketing assistance

Specific natural resource management or ecological issues (describe)\_\_\_\_\_

Other, please describe:\_\_\_\_\_

18. How many full-time employees do you have in season? \_\_\_\_\_ (no. of people)

19. How many part-time employees do you have in season? \_\_\_\_\_ (no. of people)

20. How many full-time in-season employees are permanent local residents?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (no. of people)

### SECTION 3: Ecotourism practices in your business

Please respond to the following statements (Tick one box only for each statement).

In our business we...	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Encourage eco-friendly behaviour by tourists through awareness raising and information (e.g. public transport, water and energy saving advice, etc.)					
Develop business plans to ensure long-term profitability and financial viability of the business					
Have a long-term commitment to all our employees and encourage their personal and professional development through trainings, career planning, equal promotion opportunities, etc.					
Sponsor and/or support at least one community action or group					
Inform tourists about local customs, cultural and historical heritage					
Cooperate and support local initiatives to promote and enhance appreciation for cultural and historical heritage					

#### **SECTION 4: Benefits of ecotourism practices**

Please respond to the following statements (Tick one box only for each statement).

The main reasons for implementing ecotourism practices are:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
Reduction of costs					
Increase in customer satisfaction, awareness and demand					
Enhancing reputation and image of the company					
Increase in employee job satisfaction					
Improvement of the relationship with the local community					
Reduction of negative Impacts on social, cultural and ecological environment					
Business- or Corporation promotion					

**Thank you for participating!**