

## **DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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### **STATEMENT 1**

This dissertation is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Technologiae: Tourism and Hospitality Management.

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### **STATEMENT 2**

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by giving explicit references. A list of references is appended.

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### **STATEMENT 3**

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for interlibrary loan, and for the title and summary to be made available outside organisations.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost I would like to honour the God of Mount Zion, the one who planted the testimony inside me to have the fighting spirit during the cause of pursuing this study. *O modimo wa mehlolo Kgomo, Kgoši e kgolo ya ga-Mmamababolo.*

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this study to my parents, Piet and Johannah Mashapa. For instilling the power of education in me. Your spiritual guidance and mentorship embraced assurance in Matthew 21:22 that *those who believe, will receive whatever they ask for in prayer*. This became my shield and tool for crossing every bridge along the way. Thank You.

## **ABSTRACT**

Tourism has become an essential attribute of modern society that has an effect on the world and its citizens. On the other hand, tourism can also be blamed for an increase in environmental and social stress. Hence the need for a more sustainable tourism industry was advocated; thus the birth of alternative forms of tourism such as urban ecotourism, responsible tourism and community-based tourism. Urban ecotourism has been identified as a method of sustainable tourism that is expected to subsidise to both conservation and development in urban areas. This requires input and cooperation from various stakeholders. One of the most important stakeholders in this process is the local community. Thus, when there is collaboration with host communities in urban ecotourism projects, these projects convert to become community development. These projects such as urban parks are vital assets within the local community as they assist in addressing a broader range of environmental and societal issues. However, these instrumental resources are often ignored, resulting in a loss of potential benefits.

The aim of this research is to determine perceptions of host communities regarding urban ecotourism in Ivory Regional Park in the Gauteng province of South Africa. Quantitative research was done through the distribution of questionnaires to obtain understanding into the current perspectives of local community members and advice on strategies regarding the improvement of these perceptions. Stratified and convenience sampling approach was used to gather the data. Questionnaires were distributed to residents from communities adjacent to Ivory Regional Park.

From the descriptive results it was evident that community members are excluded from or not participating in the urban ecotourism development process and that the majority of them do not know about urban ecotourism. It is therefore evident that due to the lack of urban ecotourism knowledge, community members are unable to actively participate in urban ecotourism, which result in the loss of potential benefits and attractions such as Ivory Regional Park.

The factors analyses revealed the following factors for perception of impacts of: economic opportunities, community improvement, amenities, crime, involvement,

vandalism, environmental benefits, participation, community empowerment and involvement. It was clear that before residents can be active participants in urban ecotourism, they first analyse potential benefits that will come their way. Significant differences were found between gender and various impacts through t-tests. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed significant differences among age, place of residence, education, number of park visits and knowledge. From the Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient analysis, small, medium and large correlations were revealed which indicates that there is a relationship between perception of host communities' impacts and involvement in urban ecotourism.

The study concludes that urban ecotourism is a complex phenomenon and demands active participation from host communities since they form part of the product. Therefore, in the light of the findings, it is recommended that urban ecotourism authorities, law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders combine efforts to create awareness regarding urban ecotourism and to improve community involvement and participation thereof. This is imperative to ensure a sustainable urban ecotourism industry.

**Key words:** urban ecotourism, community involvement, perceptions, policies, Ivory Regional Park.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

AFSB	Accounting and Financial Site Builder
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DETR	the Urban Task Report
DTLGR	Department of Transport, Local Government and Regions
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
GTA	Green Tourism Association
IRP	Ivory Regional Park
JCPZ	Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo
MOSS	Metropolitan Open Space system
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
RDP	Reconstruction Development Programme
SAPS	South African Police Services
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
GTA	Toronto Green Tourism Association
TIES	the International Ecotourism Society
UED	Urban Ecotourism Declaration
UED	Urban Ecotourism Declaration
UN	United Nations
USIP	United State Institute of Peace
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation

## **LIST OF ANNEXURES**

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