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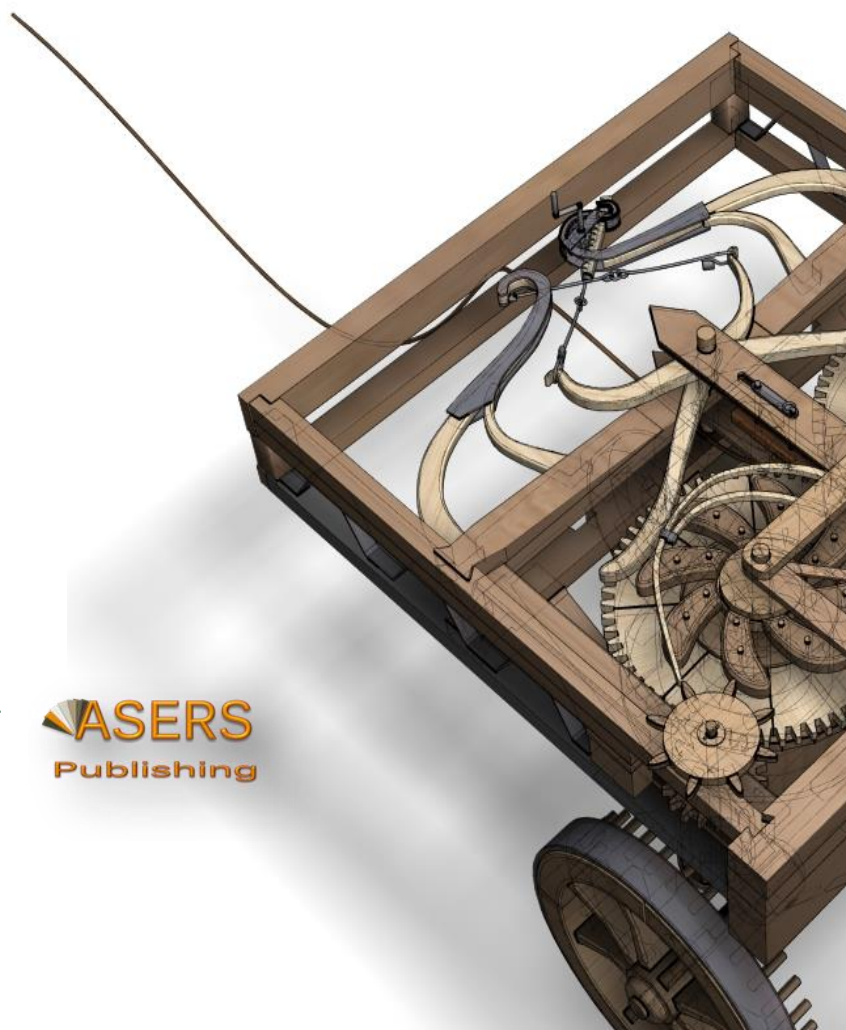
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Motives to Visit Urban Ecotourism Sites: A Study of a Botanical Garden in South Africa

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Abstract:

Botanical gardens are a global phenomenon. Historically developed with the intention of maintaining a living collection of plants (under scientific management) for the purpose of research and education, botanical gardens have evolved to provide an accessible urban alternative for ecotourism experiences. Given that many botanical gardens are publically funded, income secured from tourist visitation can help supplement (limited) government funds. The purpose of this study was determining the motives of visitors to a botanical garden in South Africa. Employing a quantitative methodology, an onsite intercept survey by means of convenience sampling yielded 304 usable responses. An exploratory factor analysis revealed six distinct visitor motivations. The results inform the marketing of botanical gardens with a view to promoting their financial sustainability as visitor attractions, and ultimately their continued role as centres of scientific research, conservation and education.

Keywords: visitor motives; botanical garden, urban ecotourism.

JEL Classification: Q26; Z32.

Introduction

Botanical (or botanic) gardens are a worldwide phenomenon. Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) defines botanical gardens as "institutions holding documented collections of living plants for the purposes of scientific research, conservation, display and education" (BGCI, 2020). Since their inception in the 16th century, botanical gardens have proliferated and there now exists over 1700 gardens spanning 148 countries (BGCI, 2020).

Over time, botanical gardens have evolved to include a recreational role, evidenced by the expansion of visitor services and amenities including playgrounds, restaurants, tours, exhibitions, and a range of sporting, musical, theatrical, and spiritual events and activities. Attracting over 500 million visitors annually, botanical gardens are indeed considered important contributors to local and national economies, in addition to societal benefits such as the promotion of mental and physical well-being (BGCI, 2020). Many botanical gardens are based in close proximity to large population centres and therefore can be considered as sites facilitating urban ecotourism experiences. Certainly, given the accelerated urban growth rates, notably in Sub-Saharan Africa (Saghir & Santoro 2018), such 'accessible' nature-based sites become increasingly important.

Some botanical gardens are administered as public entities, and as such they are often challenged due to dwindling government funding (see Sample 2015). Consequently, botanical gardens increasingly rely upon visitor spend as revenue and hence, an understanding of visitors at gardens is critical for their long-term financial viability (Fox & Edwards 2008). In particular, visitor motives are central to the design of an effective marketing strategy (Boo & Jones 2009; Slabbert & Viviers 2012). However, extant literature on motives to visit botanical gardens is somewhat scant.

The purpose of this study was to determine a profile of visitors to the Pretoria National Botanical Garden (PNBG) in South Africa. In order to achieve this aim, two key objectives were formulated; firstly, to generate a demographic and behavioural profile of visitors and secondly, to determine the motives for visitation.

This paper commences with a review of a literature pertaining urban ecotourism and visitor motivation. Following an elucidation of the methods employed in the study, findings are presented and discussed in relation to the extant literature. Subsequently, a visitor profile is presented and management implications are explicated. The paper concludes by acknowledging limitations of the study and identifying opportunities for future research.

1. Literature Review

Urban ecotourism

Ecotourism is considered one of the fastest growing tourism niche markets in South Africa (Bouwer, Geldenhuys, Hermann & Taylor 2022). This form of tourism according to The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), ecotourism is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education” (TIES, 2018). Ecotourism is therefore often seen as a core form of sustainable tourism (Machnik 2021). Ecotourism sites (*i.e.* the location for ecotourism experiences) are diverse and include public protected areas, privately-owned protected areas, wilderness and indigenous territories. Indeed, according to Weaver (2005), the fundamental defining criterion of an ecotourism site is its location in a rural, natural and undisturbed setting.

Urban ecotourism would therefore appear to be a contradiction in terms. However, Higham and Lück (2002) refer to the potential of urban and urban fringe sites for ecotourism experiences. Such modified environments essentially include former industrial sites and agricultural land. Geldenhuys and Saayman (2009) contend that such sites can indeed promote greater diversity of, and volume in, wildlife populations, in addition to facilitating more opportunity and scope for ecotourism activities. Furthermore, the close proximity to concentrated populations may also help to alleviate pressure from the more traditional rural ecotourism sites. Prime examples of urban ecotourism sites include zoological gardens and botanical gardens.

Botanical gardens

Botanical gardens have a long history. The first botanical gardens with an underlying scientific foundation can be traced back to the physic gardens of Italy, created in the 16th century by universities for the purpose of the academic study of medicinal plants (BGCI, 2020). The age of exploration and advent of international trade witnessed a change in usage in the 17th century as gardens such as the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Gardens and Real Jardín Botánico de Madrid were set up to try and cultivate new species that were being brought back from expeditions to the tropics. The 19th and 20th century saw municipal and civic gardens being created in Europe and the British Commonwealth for the purpose of ‘pleasure’ rather than scientific purposes. In the last 50 years’ botanical gardens, however, have seen a revival as scientific institutions due to the emergence of the conservation movement (BGCI, 2020). Today, botanical gardens are considered visitor attractions, representing a culmination of scientific study, conservation, education and recreation roles.

An examination of academic literature to date concerning botanical garden visitation reveals research essentially pertaining to education and interpretation (see Ballantyne, Packer & Hughes 2008; He & Chen 2012), benefits of visitation (see Wassenberg, Gouldenberg & Soule 2015), visitor perceptions (see Catahan & Woodruffe-Burton 2019; Goh & Mahmood 2016), visitor satisfaction (see Salvarci & Aylan 2021), and the recreational functions of botanical gardens (see Karasah & Var 2013). In addition, Ballantyne, Packer and Hughes (2008) and Ward, Parker and Shackleton (2010) consider motives to visit botanical gardens but beyond these key contributions, motives are largely under-researched.

In South Africa, there are eleven national botanical gardens under the stewardship of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) - an organisation established in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act no 10 of 2004). SANBI is tasked with biodiversity research and information dissemination. It is legally mandated to contribute to the management of the country’s biodiversity resources, and manage gardens as “windows to (our) biodiversity for leisure, enjoyment, spiritual upliftment and education” (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2022). However, as with many public entities, budgets

are stretched. Understanding visitor motives can assist in the development and marketing of these gardens, hence securing a revenue that can supplement state funds and ultimately promote their sustainability.

Visitor motivation

Motivation refers to the reason(s) for acting in a particular way. More specifically, a motive is what induces the person to act (Hermann & Du Plessis 2014).

Table1. Ecotourism attractions in Africa: visitor motives

Contributor(s)	Site / attraction	Key motives to visit
Masina, Boshoff and Sifolo (2021)	Manyeleti Game Reserve (South Africa)	- Escape - Relaxation - Social contact - Enriching and learning experiences - Novelty - Adventure - Destination attractions - Recreation activities - Learning experience - Culture
Grobbelaar, Bouwer and Hermann (2019)	Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains - UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) (South Africa)	- To escape - To learn and for novelty - To participate in activities and networking - For fun - For personal importance
Amuquandoh (2017)	Kakum National Park (Ghana)	- Adventure - Education - Escape - Social interaction
Mutanga, Vengesayi, Chikuta, Muboko, Gandiwa (2017)	Gonarezhou and Matusadona National Parks (Zimbabwe)	- Recreation and knowledge seeking - Wildlife appreciation - Feeling close to nature - Abundance of wildlife - Availability of different animal and plant species - Wilderness - Beautiful landscape - Peaceful/quiet environment
Hermann, Van der Merwe, Coetzee and Saayman (2016)	Mapungubwe National Park and WHS (South Africa)	- For heritage and education - For escape and relaxation - To experience nature - For the Park attributes
Hermann and Du Plessis (2014)	National Zoological Gardens of South Africa	- Exploration of self - Children and conservation - Enhancement of relationships - Education and learning - Nature experience seeking - Escape - Novelty
Van der Merwe, Slabbert and Saayman (2011)	Marine destinations (South Africa)	- Destination attractiveness - Escape and relaxation - Time utilisation - Personal attachment
Kruger and Saayman (2010)	Tsitsikamma and Kruger National Parks (South Africa)	- Knowledge seeking - Nature experience - Photography - Relaxation - Park attributes - Nostalgia

Hence, tourism motivation refers to the driving force behind participation in tourism (Park & Yoon 2009) or, in other words, the force that drives consumer behaviour (Snepenger, King, Marshall & Uysal 2006). Visitor

motivation is well documented in tourism literature and assessing these drivers of visitation may be considered an important scale for the understanding of customer demand and thus has an impact on customer satisfaction (Kruger, Saayman & Hermann 2014; Rahatmawati *et al.* 2020).

Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill (2013) report how the study of motivation has derived from a range of social science fields, which has consequently resulted in diverse approaches in tourism. Certainly, there are numerous tourist motivation theories, models and typologies that have been developed and subsequently applied to different contexts; contributions by Cohen (1972), Plog (1974), Crompton (1979), Dann (1981), McIntosh, Goeldner and Ritchie (1995), and McKercher (2002) are cases in point. At a broader level, macro theories of human motivation such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow 1970) and the Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci 2000) have been applied to a tourism context (refer to Allan, Dowling & Sanders 2015; Šimková & Holzner 2014). Crosscutting many of these approaches is the notion that motivation in tourism is essentially intrinsically driven or extrinsically driven. A number of studies have also sought to understand specific motives for visitation to specific sites. In the context of ecotourism in Africa, such studies have tended to focus upon visitation to national parks, UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS), nature/game reserves, and zoological gardens. Table 1 details a selection of studies in this regard.

Common to these ecotourism attractions are the motives for 'escape', 'relaxation' and 'learning / education / knowledge seeking', with 'seeking a 'nature experience' and visiting for 'novelty' reasons being frequently cited. Similarly, 'push' and 'pull' factors (Crompton 1979) are also evident across the studies. However, some motives are unique to specific attractions, for example, the 'heritage' motive for visiting Mapungubwe National Park and WHS.

Considering botanical gardens as ecotourism attractions, Ballantyne, Packer and Hughes (2008) researched visitor conservation awareness, interests and motives to visit the Mt. Coot-Botanic Gardens in Queensland, Australia. Key reasons for visiting included: to enjoy oneself, to admire the Garden's scenery, to spend quality time with family or friends, and to enjoy being outdoors / in nature. The level of interest in, and commitment to, conservation issues was low, with 'restoration' being rated as more important than 'learning and discovery' as motivations for visiting. Similarly, Cudjoe and Gbedemah (2020) in their study of Legon Botanical Gardens, found key motives for visitation pertaining to admiration of natural beauty, curiosity (looking around), adventure and fun, and relaxing with family.

More specifically to South Africa, Ward, Parker and Shackleton (2010) sought to determine a profile of botanical garden users. Visitors were typically middle-aged to mature, well-educated, and in high-income brackets. Primary reasons for visitation were to enjoy the Garden's natural beauty, and to exercise and get a breath of fresh air. Few cited education or horticultural reasons, especially those who were repeat visitors. However, the small sample size gleaned from each garden (approximately 50 respondents), the limited correlational analysis with demographic variables, and the now somewhat dated nature of the study provides the rationale for a more focused analysis on a specific botanical garden, drawing from a larger sample.

Study site

The Pretoria National Botanical Garden (PNBG) is a 76-hectare, sub-tropical botanical garden on the eastern suburbs of South Africa's administrative capital, Pretoria. Opened to the public in 1984, the Garden boasts a diversity of flora and fauna (including over 220 bird species), in addition to amenities and services such as restaurants, education and interpretation facilities, tours, theatrical and musical performances, events, and venue hire opportunities.

2. Methodology

Employing a quantitative methodology, the target population was visitors to the PNBG. By means of convenience sampling, an onsite intercept survey was administered to visitors to the Garden during the months of June, July and August 2019. Visitors were surveyed on all days of the week in order to gain a representative sample of garden users. The survey instrument was adapted from a similar study on a national zoological garden in South Africa (Hermann & Du Plessis 2014).

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A measured twenty-six constructs relating to visitor motives. These constructs were tested with a Likert scale agreement rating, ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree). Section B captured information concerning the demographic and behavioural profile of respondents (e.g. gender, age, home language, education, employment, visitation frequency, etc.)

The data were initially captured onto a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and subsequently exported into the software programme IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20. Data analysis was performed in two stages. Firstly, descriptive statistics were drawn in the form of raw count frequencies, raw count percentages and cumulative

percentages for the grouped data (i.e. the demographic and behavioural variables). Secondly, an exploratory factor analysis was performed to determine the primary motives to visit the Garden based on the twenty-six constructs.

3. Results

The results obtained are presented as follows: firstly, an overview of the demographic profile of the festival attendees is presented and this is followed by a discussion of the results from the factor analysis.

Demographic profile of respondents

The results obtained are indicated in Table 3.

Table 2. Profile of respondents

Characteristic	N	%	Characteristic	N	%
Gender			Education		
Male	147	48	No schooling	9	2.97
Female	154	52	Matric (High school)	58	19.14
Age			Certificate	39	12.87
1949 and earlier	10	3.41	Diploma/degree	113	37.29
1950-1959	14	4.78	Postgraduate degree	76	25.08
1960-1969	31	10.58	Other	8	2.64
1970-1979	48	16.38	First time or repeat visitor		
1980-1989	109	37.20	First time	103	34.68
1990-1999	70	23.89	Repeat	194	65.32
2000-2004	11	3.75	Frequency of visit to other botanical gardens per year		
Language			Once	144	48.48
Afrikaans	80	26.58	Twice	50	16.84
English	72	23.92	Three times	35	11.78
seTswana	30	9.97	Four and more times	68	22.90
isiZulu	25	8.31	Number of adults per group		
Northern Sotho	20	6.64	One	58	19.53
Ndebele	13	4.32	Two	123	41.41
Swati	13	4.32	Three	32	10.77
isiXhosa	12	3.99	Four	19	6.40
Southern Sotho	7	2.33	Five and more	65	21.89
Venda	7	2.33	Number of children per group		
Other	12	3.99	None	198	66.67
Marital status	N	%	One	32	10.77
Single	128	42.24	Two	34	11.44
Married	134	44.22	Three	12	4.04
Living with partner	20	6.60	Four	4	1.34
Divorced	11	3.63	Five and more	17	5.72
Widow/er	10	3.30	Mode of transport		
Place of residence	N	%	Personal car	247	80.98
Pretoria	217	72.09	Minibus taxi	18	5.90
Johannesburg	44	14.62	Metered taxi. Uber or Bolt	15	4.92
Other Location in Gauteng	20	6.64	Bus	14	4.59
Other province	20	6.64	Walked on foot	7	2.30
			Other	4	1.31

*When totals (N) do not add up to 301, this may be attributed to missing responses.

The results presented provide an overview of the respondent demographic and behavioural profile. From this result it is evident that slightly more females participated in the survey compared to males. Most respondents were born in the 1980's, implying a market dominated by so called Generation X patrons. The predominant languages spoken by respondents was Afrikaans and English. Most respondents were married, visiting the garden in groups of two adults, had post-high school education and lived close to the garden, travelling there in their own personal vehicles. In terms of visitation, most respondents were repeat visitors to the PNBG visiting at least once a year.

3.1 Visitor Motivations

The second section of the questionnaire dealt with motivational variables. Here respondents were requested to rate 18 variables on a five-point Likert Scale where 1 represented *extremely unimportant* and 5 represented *extremely important*. Table 2 provides a description of these results.

Table 2. Visitor motivations

	Motivator variable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	To relax	2.05	3.07	4.44	40.27	50.17
2	To share the experience with someone special	3.44	7.56	12.71	32.30	43.98
3	To have fun	2.42	4.50	14.53	36.33	42.21
4	To explore a new attraction	3.1	14.14	16.55	36.21	30.00
5	For spiritual reasons	17.12	27.40	22.26	18.84	14.38
6	To participate in an event	21.75	26.32	13.68	19.30	18.95
7	To spend time with family and friends	5.65	3.89	8.48	34.63	47.35
8	It is an opportunity to visit Pretoria	16.38	15.02	19.80	23.89	24.91
9	It is convenient as it is close to where I live	10.76	17.36	17.01	22.57	32.29
10	To do something out of the ordinary	5.84	9.62	25.09	32.99	26.46
11	Because it was part of an organised tour	28.83	27.80	14.24	14.58	13.56
12	To picnic	9.25	10.62	11.99	32.53	35.62
13	To see unique plants	7.82	11.22	19.39	27.89	33.67
14	It is a regular commitment	16.44	24.32	23.63	15.07	20.55
15	It is value for money	7.88	5.82	18.84	33.22	34.25
16	To see something out of the ordinary	6.41	9.96	23.13	33.45	27.05
17	To escape and get away from my routine	4.41	4.07	18.64	32.54	40.34
18	To meet people with similar interests	13.31	29.01	25.26	16.72	15.70
19	To socialise	8.87	19.45	20.48	27.99	23.21
20	To have my curiosity aroused	7.46	17.63	31.53	24.07	19.32
21	For nostalgic reasons (reminds me of my childhood)	15.65	24.15	26.19	19.39	14.63
22	To learn about plants	9.83	16.61	19.32	29.83	24.41
23	To learn about animals	10.74	21.14	21.48	25.17	21.48
24	To do birding	14.92	20.68	19.66	25.76	18.98
25	For the benefit of my children	20.55	17.12	13.7	20.55	28.08
26	For the benefit of my physical health	10.17	8.47	14.24	33.56	33.56
27	For the benefit of my mental health	7.74	5.05	13.13	32.32	41.75

From Table 2 it is evident that each variable was perceived by respondents in divergent ways as each received distinct scores. However, the result reveal that the following six variables as individual items were perceived as the major contributors to visitation; to relax, to share the experience with someone special, to have fun, to spend time with family and friends, to escape, to get away from routine and for the benefit of mental health. The two variables that received the lowest rating was that the visit was part of an organised tour and for events.

3.2 Factor Analysis Results: Identifying the Key Motivators

The motivator variables as described in Table 2 were further analysed by means of an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The principal component EFA was conducted using orthogonal varimax rotation as used resulting in six distinct factors. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was used to test the overall suitability of the data for the EFA. The KMO for this test was 0.9075 which according to Field (XXXX) is considered above adequate for an EFA. The results of the EFA are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor analysis results

Motivator Factors	Factor loading	Average inter-item covariance	Reliability coefficient
Learning about fauna and flora		0.9743412	0.8813
To see unique plants	0.7541	0.9978	0.8612
To have my curiosity aroused	0.5212	1.13897	0.8925
To learn about plants	0.8878	0.8808	0.8260
To learn about animals	0.8798	0.8998	0.8343
To do birding	0.8292	0.9538	0.8579
Escape and health		0.7608358	0.8208
It is value for money	0.4978	0.7608	0.8173
To escape and get away from my routine	0.5472	0.6119	0.7837
For the benefit of my physical health	0.7312	0.5222	0.7503
For the benefit of my mental health	0.8291	0.5329	0.7396
Hedonism		0.5309536	0.8180
To relax	0.5109	0.7608	0.8208
To share the experience with someone special	0.4749	0.6227	0.7982
To have fun	0.5116	0.6119	0.7747
To spend time with family and friends	0.7276	0.5222	0.7559
To picnic	0.8307	0.5329	0.7486
Social dynamics		0.7238048	0.7975
For spiritual reasons	0.4876	0.7785	0.7842
To participate in an event	0.7606	0.6826	0.7571
It is an opportunity to visit Pretoria	0.4899	0.7459	0.7804
Because it was part of an organised tour	0.6907	0.7307	0.7736
To meet people with similar interests	0.7486	0.6743	0.7385
To socialise	0.7290	0.7309	0.7628
Novelty		0.5766761	0.7035
To explore a new attraction	0.5277	0.8747	0.7932
To do something out of the ordinary	0.8434	0.4388	0.5030
To do see something out of the ordinary	0.7866	0.4198	0.4937
Convenience		0.5289332	0.5540
It is convenient as it is close to where I live	0.6960	0.5956	0.5051
It is a regular commitment	0.5322	0.5189	0.4535
For nostalgic reasons (reminds me of my childhood)	0.4901	0.4710	0.3995

As indicated in table two six distinct factors were identified which are as follows:

Factor 1: Learning about fauna and flora. This factor received the highest factor loadings and highest α score. This factor included the variables of seeing unique plants, having curiosity aroused, learning about plants and animals and to do birding. This factor therefore may be deemed as the primary motivator of visitation to the PNBG and correlates with previous findings by Kruger and Saayman (2010), Hermann and Du Plessis (2014) and Mutanga *et al.* (2017).

Factor 2: Escape and health. The second major factor for visitor motivation to the PNBG includes the variables of value for money, escape and getting away from routine, for the benefit of physical and mental health. This factor is a generally common motivator for visitation to ecotourism attractions as was proposed by Grobbelaar, Bouwer and Hermann (2019) and Masina, Boshoff and Sifolo (2021).

Factor 3: Hedonism. The third most prevalent motivator factor was associated with the need for intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics, more specifically these associated with people closely associated with the respondent. This factor included the variables of the need for relaxation, to share the experience with someone special, to have fun, to spend time with family and friends and to have a picnic. These results correspond to those of Grobbelaar, Bouwer and Hermann (2019) and Masina, Boshoff and Sifolo (2021) who found hedonistic factors as major motives in an ecotourism context.

Factor 4: Social dynamics. Similar to the previous factor in terms of the need for socialisation, however this factor dealt specifically with the need for inter-personal social dynamics involving other people with similar interests and spirituality. This factor included; the need to visit the garden for spiritual reasons, to participate in an event, that it is an opportunity to visit Pretoria, because it was part of an organised tour, to meet people with

similar interests and to socialise. Amuquandoh (2017) and Masina, Boshoff and Sifolo (2021) encountered the same factor in their investigations. This factor could be supported by the high number of respondents visiting the garden in groups as opposed to singularly.

Factor 5: Novelty. As with most attractions, not all visitors may be regular or repeat visitors and some may be first-time visitors. The novelty of the PNBG in itself may also be considered important to those first-time visitors. This factor did not feature as one of the major motivations, which may be attributed to the large number of repeat visitors as opposed to first timers. This factor included the variables of; exploring a new attraction, to do something out of the ordinary and to see something out of the ordinary, which was also encountered by Hermann and Du Plessis (2014) and Masina, Boshoff and Sifolo (2021).

Factor 6: Convenience. The final factor identified with motivation at the PNBG dealt with the convenience of the attraction. With a reliability α of 0.554, this factor's reliability may be considered least acceptable of all the factors and thus the least important of all the factors. This may be attributed to the variables incorporated into the factor which include; convenience as the attraction is close to where respondents live, regular commitment and nostalgia. These variables describe an attraction which has become almost normalised into the daily life of some local residents and the features of the attraction no longer serve as a drawcard. Some visitors purely visit it due to convenience and they have been doing so for a long period of time due to nostalgia.

3.3 Comparative Results

In order to explore the results further and to determine whether there were any significant relationships between demographic variables and motivators, a Kruskal-Wallis equity of populations rank test was performed. The later test was deemed more appropriate over an analysis of variance (ANOVA) due to the uneven distribution of results, as can be seen by the distributions in Table 2. In order to proceed with the test we assumed the null hypothesis that there exists no significant relationship between demographics and motivators.

Table 4. Comparative results

Group comparisons	Mean rank differences	P-value	Degrees of Freedom	Chi2(P-value)
once vs twice	-1,53	0,063	3	10,48 (0,014)
once vs 3 times	-1,52	0,064		
once vs 4 plus	-3,1	<0,01		
twice vs 3 times	-0,16	0,437		
twice vs 4 plus	-0,09	0,137		
3 times vs 4 plus	-0,81	0,209		

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that there exists no statistically significant relationship in this regard except between the variables of regularity of visitation and motivation. With a significance of <0.05 we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that not all the population medians are equal ($P\text{-value}<0.0149$). Furthermore, it is important to note that, the post analysis (Dunn's pairwise comparison) indicated that the difference in motivators median only exist between visitors group of first visitation and those who had visited the garden more than four times ($P\text{-value}<0.01$). Therefore, it may be said that those visitors that visit the garden for the first time and those that visit the garden more than four times have different perceptions in terms of motivation and would have to be managed differently.

Conclusions and Implications

Botanical gardens are evolving, and provide an accessible urban ecotourism experience, especially in the light of urban growth and increased migration to cities in sub-Saharan Africa. Not only do they play a significant role in scientific study, conservation, education and recreation, they are considered to have significant societal benefits in terms of physical and mental well-being. Yet despite their evolution as visitor attractions, there is a paucity of literature concerning visitor demographic and motivational behaviour in this context. The aforementioned is considered a prerequisite for the development of effective marketing strategies and hence the sustainability of the site as a visitor attraction, and importantly, a scientific research and conservation hub. The purpose of this study was to determine a demographic, behavioural and motivational profile of visitors to the Pretoria National Botanical Garden (PNBG) in South Africa.

Key findings revealed a number of individual motivator variables, each of which is perceived differently in terms of importance from a demand side perspective. The EFA result indicate that visitors to an urban ecotourism attraction such as the PNBG experience motivators in six distinct ways. These motivator factors are, listed in

importance; learning about fauna and flora, escape and health, hedonism, social dynamics, novelty and convenience. These results confirm a number of previous studies within the field, especially relating to the desire to learn about fauna and flora and for reasons of escape and health. The factor that had the least influence in terms of motivation pertained to convenience. The latter may be due to the high proportion of visitors that are repeat visitors to the gardens. Repeat visitation is generally considered a positive barometer of customer satisfaction (Rahatmawati *et al.* 2020) and which brings along associated benefits of word-of-mouth advertising, customer loyalty and a resilient demand (Kruger, Saayman & Hermann 2014).

The study also strived to determine whether there were any significant relationships in terms of demographics and motivational factors. The results indicate that there are no significant relationships in this regard apart from one. This implies that regardless of demographic background all visitors generally perceived the six motivational variables in the same way. The only significant relationship was found to lie between first time visitors and those that visit the gardens more than four times. This may indicate that there is a need to manage service provision at this site in two broad ways. Firstly there is a large number of first time visitors that may be visiting the gardens primarily for learning, to escape from routine and to improve their health, in the process they participate in hedonistic activities such as having fun and spending time with family and friends, enhancing social dynamics such as meeting new people with similar interests and the attractiveness of the gardens in terms of novelty. However those visiting regularly may be doing so four or more time per year, thus implying very loyal visitors. They visit the gardens because they are conveniently located close to where they live, as most respondents lived in close vicinity. An attraction such as a botanical garden needs to manage the dynamic needs of first time and repeat visitors in such a way as to ensure that first time visitors are satisfied by their experience so that they may possibly return in future. This could be through the provision of ample quality information displays on fauna and flora, providing areas that are deemed 'quiet spaces', providing quality facilities for children to play and have fun and open spaces and facilities for adults to meet and mingle such as picnic facilities and restaurants. However the repeat visitors should also be taken into account. Although these repeat visitors may well utilise the same facilities as first time visitors and derive satisfaction thereof, additional benefits may be sought such as possible loyalty programmes that reward loyal visitors and discounted rates and/or annual membership/access fees that provide loyal visitors with financial discounts.

Although research on motivations have been done in ecotourism contexts, very little is known of visitor motivations in an urban ecotourism context, such as botanical gardens. This study provides a descriptive insight into this realm and it strives to enlighten the discourse into the field. Given the resource constraints in terms of time and human resource capacity, the conduction of the research study over a 6-week period in the winter season, suggests that the results may only present a 'snapshot' of visitor motives. Opportunities for future research therefore include a replication of the study at different times of the year. Future research could also involve a comparison of visitor motives with the visitor experience / satisfaction. Research surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and tourism is suggesting a newfound quest for immersive nature-based experiences and a heightened appreciation of the value of, and being in, nature. As the world emerges from the travel restrictions that were imposed by governments, it will be interesting to observe any changes in visitor numbers to, and visitor motives for, visiting botanical gardens in urban spaces.

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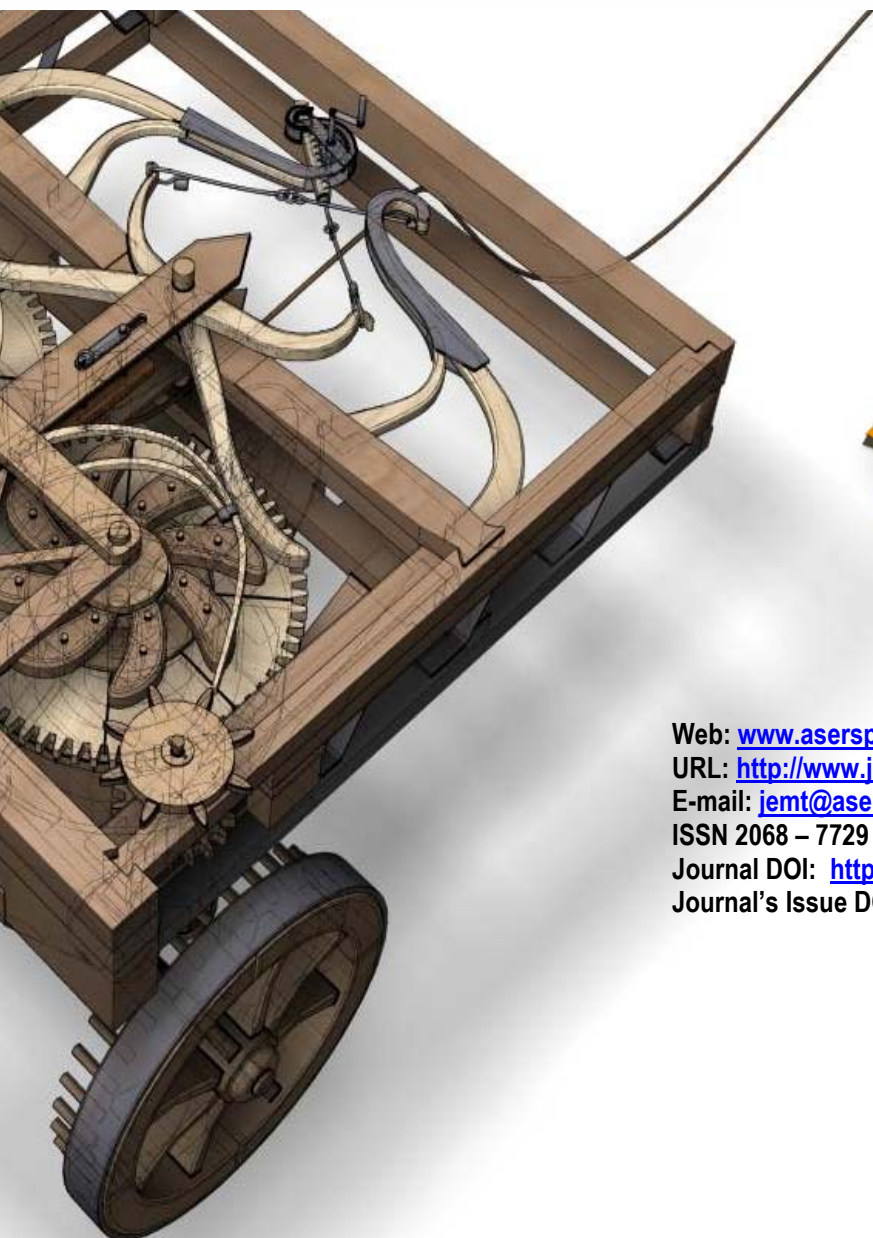
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