AN EXAMINATION OF INTERNATIONAL TROPHY HUNTERS' SOUTH AFRICAN HUNTING EXPERIENCES

Xiliang Han

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Supervisor: Prof. Laetitia Radder

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DECLARATION

I, Xiliang Han, hereby declare that:

- the work in this dissertation is my own original work;

- all sources used or referred to have been documented and recognised; and

- this dissertation has not been previously submitted in full or partial fulfillment of the requirements for an equivalent or higher qualification at any other recognised education institution.

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ABSTRACT

The diversity of wildlife resources and the highly-developed trophy hunting and game ranching industry make South Africa a sought-after destination for travelling hunters. Significant economic, social and ecological benefits result from the annual visits of 16 000 hunters. These benefits, in turn, accelerate industry competition. To maintain or increase the clientele base, hunting providers should continue to manage and improve their clients' safari experiences.

This research investigated visiting hunters' South African safari experiences by measuring their perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention. The results of the research could assist hunting providers in identifying areas where service expectations are not met and understanding the impact of service quality and satisfaction on clients' loyalty.

The literature study contextualised the South African trophy hunting industry within the tourism environment, the realms of wildlife tourism, and the characteristics of hunting tourism. An overview of tourism services, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioural intention was also provided. The resulting conceptual model hypothesised relationships among the safari experience variables (service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention).

The empirical data were collected by means of a mail survey, using a self-administered questionnaire distributed to 2 000 foreign hunters who had participated in a South African hunting safari at least once between 2003 and 2007. Two hundred and thirty six completed questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 13.2%.

The majority of the hunters were male, aged between 40 and 60 years, and from the United States of America and Europe. Hunters perceived the level of service quality delivery by hunting providers to be relatively high and were generally satisfied with their South African safaris. As a result, they were willing to return for another hunting experience and were very likely to speak positively about their experiences.

By performing exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, a three-factor (augmented services, core services and supporting services) service quality construct was identified and confirmed. Multiple regression analyses found that core services was the strongest predictor of overall satisfaction; overall satisfaction was significantly related to revisit intention; and revisit intention significantly predicted word-of-mouth intention. An empirical model was accordingly constructed to replace the original conceptual model.

It is recommended that South African hunting safari providers should:

- use the suggested measuring instrument to monitor their performance of service quality delivery on a regular basis;

- train their employees to ensure that they are knowledgeable and well prepared for field guidance and to promote ethical hunting practices;

- ensure an abundance of game and a wilderness atmosphere in the hunting area;

- conduct focus group studies to further understand the factors that shape clients' perceptions of the safari experience; and

- invest in developing long-term relationships with existing clients.

KEYWORDS:

- Behavioural intention

- Customer satisfaction

- Service quality

- South African safari experiences

- Travelling hunters

- Wildlife tourism

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Participation in nature-based activities has become a major purpose of domestic and international tourism (Nyaupane, Morais & Graefe 2004:541). Nature-based tourism has registered growth rates three times higher than that of the tourism industry as a whole (The International Ecotourism Society 2006:2) and accounts for approximately 20% of all trips (Queiros 2003:79). The main reason for the growing demand for nature tourism is that in an increasingly urbanised world and with today's increased awareness of global environmental degradation, people tend to have a deeper appreciation for nature and are more likely to visit natural areas (Nyaupane et al 2004:541; Orams 2002:286). It is therefore no surprise that nature tourism is regarded as one of five key market segments of the future (Heath 2003:263).

Wildlife tourism, as a subset of nature tourism (Burns & Howard 2003:699; Queiros 2003:79), is similarly increasing in popularity across the world (Reynolds & Braithwaite 2001:31). Throughout history people have had close relationships with animals, as illustrated by the fact that domestic pets, such as dogs and cats, have been the companions of humans in a wide variety of

cultures over many centuries (Orams 2002:281). From the perspective of the consumptive use of wildlife, animals are viewed as a source of food, trophies, and fabric, among other resources (Reynolds & Braithwaite 2001:31). The range of opportunities for tourists to interact with wildlife continues to increase (Orams 2002:282). Tourist-wildlife interaction in a captive or semi-captive situation may occur in zoos, aviaries and aquariums (Newsome, Dowling & Moore 2005:3). In contrast, tourist-wildlife interaction in the wild may occur in national and provincial parks and reserves, communal reserves and on privately-owned game ranches (Queiros 2003:79).

Although game ranching is a relatively new agricultural industry in South Africa, it has been well-established (Hoffman, Muller, Schutte & Crafford 2004:123) and is still growing (Reilly, Sutherland & Harley 2003:144). There is a countrywide movement away from cattle farming to game ranching mainly due to potential higher profitability per hectare (Cloete, Taljaard & Grove 2007:71). The game ranching industry rests on three pillars, namely, hunting, live game trade, and ecotourism. Although some game ranches offer game viewing, bird watching, night drives, day visits, photo safaris, walking trails, horse riding and mountain biking, hunting is still the most important driver of the industry's development (Cloete et al 2007:77).

In South Africa, hunting occurs mainly on privately-owned ranches (Von Brandis & Reilly 2007:156) and can take the form of professional hunting or recreational hunting. The former aims to secure trophies (such as skins, horns and tusks), while the latter aims to secure meat (Report to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 2005:8-9).

Trophy hunters, also known as sport or safari hunters, make an important contribution to the economic, social and ecologic welfare of South Africa. In terms of economic benefits, the game ranching and trophy hunting industry has developed into a multi-million rand industry, with R730 million (US$ 91.2 million) resulting directly from daily rates, trophy fees and taxidermy work (Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa 2009a:¶3). This amount excludes indirect contributions to other parts of the economy, such as airlines, pre- and post-safari accommodation, and shopping (Damm 2005:5). In terms of social benefits, the industry has created an estimated 70 000 direct jobs (Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa 2009a:¶3) and initiated many career development programmes in favour of people from previously disadvantaged groups (Report to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 2005:15). Lastly, in terms of ecological benefits, the industry provides financial incentives for investments in wildlife ownership, management and conservation (Van der Waal & Dekker 2000:151-156).

Although some South African residents participate in trophy hunting, this number is exceptionally small (Patterson & Khosa 2005:9). At least 16 000 foreign hunters, however, annually travel to South Africa for the safari (Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa 2009a:¶3), contributing to the country's growing tourism industry. It is expected that tourism's contribution to the GDP will increase to 12% by 2014 (South African Yearbook 2008:524).

There is a general agreement in the literature that perceived quality and satisfaction are good predictors of tourists' loyalty (behavioural intentions) in terms of revisit and spreading positive word-of-mouth messages (Petrick 2004:400). Thus, quality of and satisfaction derived from tourism experiences are perceived as having a direct link to providers' profitability and sustainable development. Given the important role of foreign (travelling) hunters in the South African hunting industry, hunting providers (game ranchers, hunting outfitters and professional hunters) should ensure that perceived quality of and satisfaction with the safari experience are maximised (Radder 2003:26).

1.2   RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The South African hunting industry operates as a free-market enterprise, which provides hunting providers with both opportunities and threats (Hoffman,

Muller, Schutte, Calitz & Crafford 2005:33). Public perception of the industry has been undermined due to the lack of quality and price standards and unethical practices such as canned (put-and-take) hunting (Von Brandis & Reilly 2007:158). The ethics surrounding human utilisation of animals is still a topic of major debate. Trophy hunting, in particular, is an activity that has been under increasing attack by anti-hunting groups (MacKay & Campbell 2004:443).

Travelling hunters play a vital role in the South African hunting industry. They tend to pay a premium price for the safari and are therefore likely to expect a differentiated hunting experience, which may not be available in their home countries. Statistics have shown that there are about 37.5 million active hunters internationally (Patterson & Khosa 2005:12). To maintain or increase their clientele bases, hunting providers must come to realise that quality management is the fundamental tool for achieving a sustainable competitive advantage (Von Brandis & Reilly 2007:158). Hunting providers can increase their revenues by attracting more first time hunters and/or having repeat visitors. Given the background to the study, the popularity and importance of trophy hunting in South Africa, and the impact of quality and satisfying experiences on loyalty, the research question that arose was:

"How do travelling hunters perceive their South African

safari experiences?"

Several studies (e.g. Frey, Conover, Borgo & Messmer 2003:277-286; Fulton & Hundertmark 2004:1-16; Heberlein & Kuentzel 2002:229-250) have examined hunters' satisfaction with the hunting experience in North America. However, the findings cannot be generalised to South Africa due to a lack of cross-cultural, valid, reliable measuring instruments (Knight 1997:215). Furthermore, no studies have been traced that simultaneously investigated the relationships among service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention in the South African context, or in the global hunting tourism industry. The current study therefore attempted to fill this research gap.

The main research question (stated above) was further divided into four research sub-questions.

- How do travelling hunters assess the levels of service quality in a South African safari?

- How do travelling hunters assess the levels of satisfaction in a South African safari?

- To what extent would travelling hunters like to return to South Africa for another hunting experience?

- To what extent would travelling hunters want to recommend their South African hunting experiences to others?

To address the above research question and sub-questions, the following six research objectives were identified:

- review the literature on the nature of tourism, the scope of wildlife and hunting tourism, and the status of the South African hunting industry;

- review the literature on the nature of services, factors influencing service expectations and perceptions, and the measurement of service quality;

- review the literature on the definition and measurement of customer satisfaction, the difference between service quality and satisfaction, and variables related to revisit and word-of-mouth intentions;

- review the literature on the antecedent, mediating and consequent relationships among service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioural intention;

- conduct an empirical investigation into the South African safari experience as perceived by travelling hunters and report on the major findings; and

- draw conclusions to the study based on both the theoretical and empirical findings and make recommendations on methods through which hunting providers can better monitor and improve travelling hunters' safari experiences.

1.3 CONCEPTUALISATION AND HYPOTHESES

In a highly competitive environment, the provision of quality service is a core competitive advantage (Chen 2008:709). Perceived quality leads to satisfaction, which in turn influences behavioural intention (Baker & Crompton 2000:798). Given this interrelationship, it is important to understand the concepts of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention.

1.3.1 Service quality

The provision of the safari hunt is essentially service-driven. Service businesses differ from product-oriented ones in four aspects, namely, intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability (Hoffman & Bateson 2006:28). These unique characteristics complicate the objective measurement of service quality.

SERVQUAL has been one of the most widely used scales for measuring service quality (Bigné, Martínez, Miquel & Andreu 2003:258). The instrument consists of five dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) used to measure service quality as being the difference between consumers' expectations and their actual experiences (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988:12-40). Various modified versions of SERVQUAL have

been employed in recent tourism studies (e.g. Gilbert & Wong 2003:519-532; Hudson, Hudson & Miller 2004:305-312; Sultan & Simpson 2000:188-216). For example, Khan (2003:109-124) added an extra *eco-tangibles* dimension to the original SERVQUAL instrument to measure service delivery in an ecotourism context.

In addition to its *multidimensional* nature, the service quality construct is also *hierarchical* in nature (Brady & Cronin 2001:34), but should ultimately be seen as a single measure of service quality (Kilbourne, Duffy, Duffy & Giarchi 2004:528). The hierarchical construct can be viewed as a second-order factor model (e.g. Radder & Han 2009:107-119), or even a third-order model (e.g. Martínez Caro & Martínez García 2008:706-720). The foregoing leads to the first set of hypotheses for the current research, namely:

H1a: The service quality construct of the safari comprises six first-order factors (eco-tangibles, hunt-tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy).

H1b: The service quality construct of the safari comprises a second-order factor (perceived overall service quality).

1.3.2   Customer satisfaction and behavioural intention

In the tourism field, distinctions have been made between perceived quality and satisfaction. Quality perception is the cognitive response to a service experience, while satisfaction is an affective response to that experience (Petrick 2004:399). The former adheres to the attributes of a service which can be controlled by the service provider, while the latter reflects an emotional state of mind which may be beyond the provider's control (Baker & Crompton 2000:787). Satisfaction, as a psychological outcome derived from an experience, is increasingly becoming a salient issue in the tourism industry (Akama & Kieti 2003:75).

Most research on tourist satisfaction has used the disconfirmation paradigm, which suggests that tourist satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a function of the disconfirmation resulting from discrepancies between prior expectations and actual performance (Hui, Wan & Ho 2007:966). It is important for tourism researchers to distinguish overall satisfaction from attribute satisfaction. The former focuses on the tourist's overall feeling towards a tourism destination, while the latter focuses on the tourist's feelings towards the various components of the destination (Chi & Qu 2008:3). The current research addressed overall satisfaction.

During the last decade, researchers spent considerable time and effort investigating the antecedents and consequences of customer satisfaction (Brady & Robertson 2001:53). There is general consensus that the perception of service quality precedes the perception of satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Grönroos 2007:89; Yuan & Jang 2008:280).

It is furthermore widely accepted that satisfaction is a strong predictor of revisit intention. The latter, in turn, is a good predictor of word-of-mouth intention (Oh 1999:77; Petrick 2004:400). Moreover, service quality has both a moderating effect (through satisfaction) and a direct effect on revisit intention (Cronin, Brady & Hult 2000:207). Based on the foregoing assertions, a second set of hypotheses can be formulated, namely:

H2a: Perceived overall service quality has a positive and direct effect on hunters' overall satisfaction.

H2b: Perceived overall service quality has a positive and direct effect on hunters' revisit intentions.

H2c: Perceived overall service quality has a positive and indirect (through overall satisfaction) effect on hunters' revisit intentions.

H2d: Hunters' overall satisfaction has a positive and direct effect on their revisit intentions.

H2e: Hunters' revisit intentions have a positive and direct effect on their word-of-mouth intentions.

1.3.3   Demographic variables

Since the early 1960s, research has consistently documented the relationships between hunting participation and demographic variables. Generally, gender, age, race, region of residence, home environment, education and income were found to influence hunting participation (Bissell, Duda & Young 1998:75-80; Heberlein & Thomson 1996:85-86). Of these, gender, age, region of residence, and home environment were regarded as the most influential variables (Floyd & Lee 2002:93-94).

Radder (2003:3-5) finds that most foreign hunters who visit South Africa are male (96%), between the ages of 40 and 60 years (59%), and from Europe and the United States of America (USA). Heberlein and Ericsson (2005:214) indicate that hunting is part of the rural culture and often dominates rural areas. In contrast, urban people have more negative attitudes towards hunting. However, urban residents who grew up in the countryside have more positive attitudes towards hunting than other urban residents. These findings lead to the third set of hypotheses for the current research, namely:

H3a: Hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intention differ significantly with respect to age.

H3b: Hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intention differ significantly with respect to region of residence.

H3c: Hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intention differ significantly with respect to current home environment.

H3d: Hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intention differ significantly with respect to childhood home environment.

The hypothesised relationships among the variables that might influence travelling hunters' evaluation of their South African safari experiences resulted in a conceptual model (shown in Figure 1.1).

FIGURE 1.1

CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF TRAVELLING HUNTERS' SOUTH AFRICAN

SAFARI EXPERIENCES
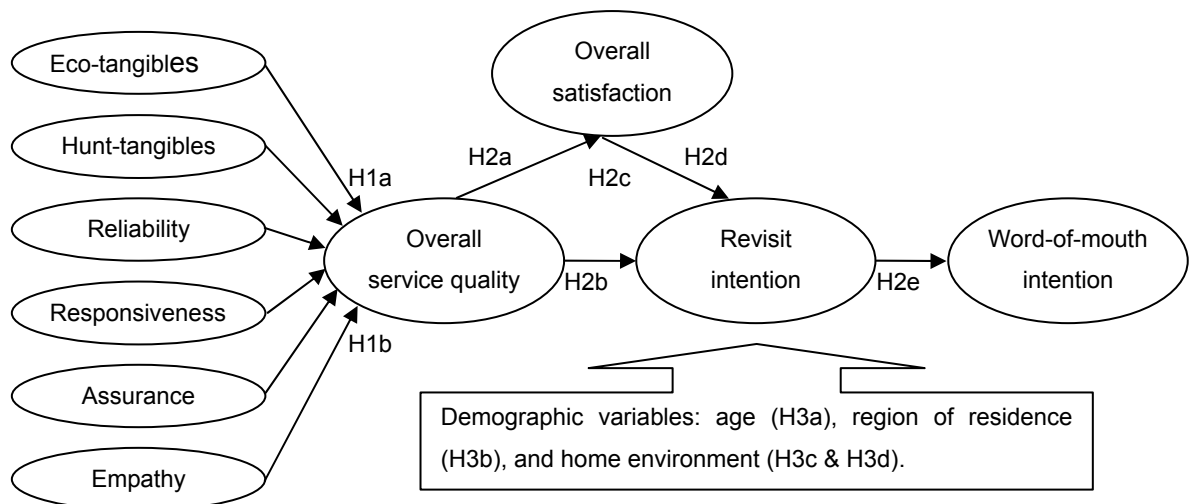
Source: Own construction

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Marketing research uses information to link the customer, the consumer and the public to the marketer. The marketer can use such information to identify and define marketing opportunities and threats (Proctor 1997:2). This study formed part of a comprehensive research project on travelling hunters. Only those research methods relevant to the measurement of hunters' perceived service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intentions were discussed below.

1.4.1 Research design

A research design forms the framework of the research process and ensures that the information obtained is relevant to the research problem (Chisnall 2001:34). Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2006:63) believe that research problems can be addressed by using one or more of the three types of research designs, namely, exploratory, descriptive and causal. All three research designs were employed in this study. Firstly, exploratory research was used to gather relevant background literature at the preliminary stage of the investigation. Then, descriptive research was applied to assess hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention. Finally, causal research was used to examine the antecedent, mediating and consequent relationships among service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intentions.

1.4.2   Data collection

Secondary data are existing data that have been collected by someone else for other purposes, but may be helpful in solving the research problem at hand (Parasuraman, Grewal & Krishnan 2004:92). In this study, secondary data were collected from books, journals, electronic databases, newspapers and governmental reports with the aim of providing a conceptual framework for the research.

In contrast, primary data are originated by the researcher to solve the particular problem under investigation (Churchill 1995:270). There are generally three basic methods for collecting primary data, namely, surveys, observations and experiments (McDaniel & Gates 2006:35). Primary data for the current research were collected by a mail survey, using a self-administered, paper-based questionnaire. This data collection method has the advantages of low cost and less interviewer bias (Kanetkar 2000:117).

Two main types of questions are commonly used in questionnaires, namely, open-ended and closed-ended questions, with the latter being dichotomous, multiple-choice, or scaled questions (Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins & Van Wyk 2005:397). Dichotomous and multiple-choice questions were used in the current study to gather respondents' demographic details on gender, current

and childhood home environment, country of residence and annual household income. Six-point Likert-type scales were used to measure respondents' perceived levels of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention. Open-ended questions were used to gather respondents' demographic information on age and post-school education.

1.4.3 Sample selection

Sekaran (2000:267-268) defines sampling as the process of selecting a group of individuals from the population so that by studying the characteristics of the group, it would be possible to generalise the characteristics of the population. The target population of this research consisted of all foreign hunters who took part in the South African safari between 2003 and 2007.

Kent (2007:231) differentiates between probability and non-probability sampling. Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method, was employed in this research. Churchill (1995:581) maintains that convenience sampling is commonly used when respondents do not reside in the country where the investigation is being conducted. The sample size of 2 000 travelling hunters was determined using certain rules of thumb and by taking into account the relatively low response rates (10% to 20%) usually associated with mail surveys (Kanetkar 2000:117).

1.4.4   Statistical analysis

The primary data obtained from the survey were subjected to statistical analyses. This analytical process involved four important stages. First, the raw data were edited, coded and captured into various statistical packages (Microsoft Excel, SPSS Version 15, and AMOS Version 7) for different statistical purposes. Then, the goodness of measures was estimated in terms of their reliability and validity. Thirdly, descriptive statistics were computed to report respondents' demographic details and ratings of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention. Lastly, inferential statistics were calculated to test the hypotheses, by means of factor analyses, multiple regression analyses and t-tests.

1.5   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This study was expected to make theoretical and managerial contributions. Theoretically, the study may contribute to the body of knowledge on service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intentions in the hunting tourism industry, with a particular focus on the South African market. It could also be one of the first studies to simultaneously explore the relationships among service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intentions in the South African hunting industry.

From a managerial perspective, the study could assist hunting providers in managing and enhancing their clients' safari experiences. By identifying and defining the specific service quality dimensions, hunting providers would be better able to allocate limited resources to those areas hunters deem important and those where quality expectations are not met. In addition, this study could lead to a good understanding of the impact of service quality and satisfaction on hunters' loyalty (in terms of their revisit and positive word-of-mouth intentions). The latter directly links to the providers' profitability and sustainable development.

1.6   DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

To ensure that the research topic is manageable, the boundaries of the problem must be stated. There were three delimitations in this study. Firstly, the study did not attempt to investigate South African meat and subsistence hunters' hunting experiences. Secondly, the study only focused on assessing the hunting experience of rifle hunters and thus excluded other forms of hunting. Finally, the study employed a non-probability convenience sampling method, which might limit the generalisability of the findings.

1.7 DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

In this study, five key concepts must be clearly defined as they are closely linked to the research problem. These are trophy hunting, customer experience, service quality, satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) and behavioural intention.

- Trophy hunting is "a specific form of wildlife use that involves payment for a hunting experience and the acquisition of a trophy by the hunter" (Little 2005:1).

- Customer experience is "a blend of a company's physical performance and the emotions evoked, intuitively measured against customer expectations across all moments of contact" (Shaw & Ivens 2002:6).

- Service quality is "the difference between an individual's expectations of a service and his or her perceptions of service delivery" (Palmer 2005:126).

- Satisfaction or dissatisfaction is "the final state of a psychological process" (Navarro, Iglesias & Torres 2005:507) and the results of comparing "the consumers' pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase evaluation" (Poon & Low 2005:218).

- Behavioural intention refers to "post-purchase behavior as an indicator of loyalty", and focuses on exploring the likelihood of "repeat purchase and positive word-of-mouth recommendation" (Chi & Qu 2008:3).

1.8   STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

This study follows a logical structure and is presented in six chapters. Chapter 1 serves as an introductory chapter and explains the research questions, objectives and hypotheses. A conceptual model is also presented in this chapter. Chapter 2 provides a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology applied in the study. The discussion includes sample selection, data collection and data analysis.

The literature review is divided into two chapters: Chapter 3 discusses the nature of tourism, wildlife tourism, hunting tourism, and the profile of the South African hunting industry; Chapter 4 explains the nature of services, the definitions, determinants and measurement of service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intention, and the underlying relationships among the three variables.

Chapter 5 reports the major findings resulting from the empirical study. An empirical model is also presented and compared with the conceptual model. Finally, Chapter 6 provides a synopsis of the current research, draws conclusions and proffers recommendations based on both the theoretical and empirical findings. Figure 1.2 illustrates the structure of the study.

FIGURE 1.2

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

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                    │    Chapter 1    │
                    │  (Orientation)  │
                    └────────┬────────┘
                             │
                             ▼
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │    Chapter 2    │
                    │  (Methodology)  │
                    └──┬───────────┬──┘
       Secondary data  │           │  Primary data
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    ┌───────────┐                                   
  │ │ Chapter 3 │   │           │                 │
    │ (Tourism) │                 ┌───────────┐
  │ └─────┬─────┘   │           │ │ Chapter 5 │   │
          ▼                       │ (Results) │
  │ ┌───────────┐   │           │ └───────────┘   │
    │ Chapter 4 │
  │ │(Experience)│  │           │                 │
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Theoretical findings                Empirical findings
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                 │  (Conclusions)  │
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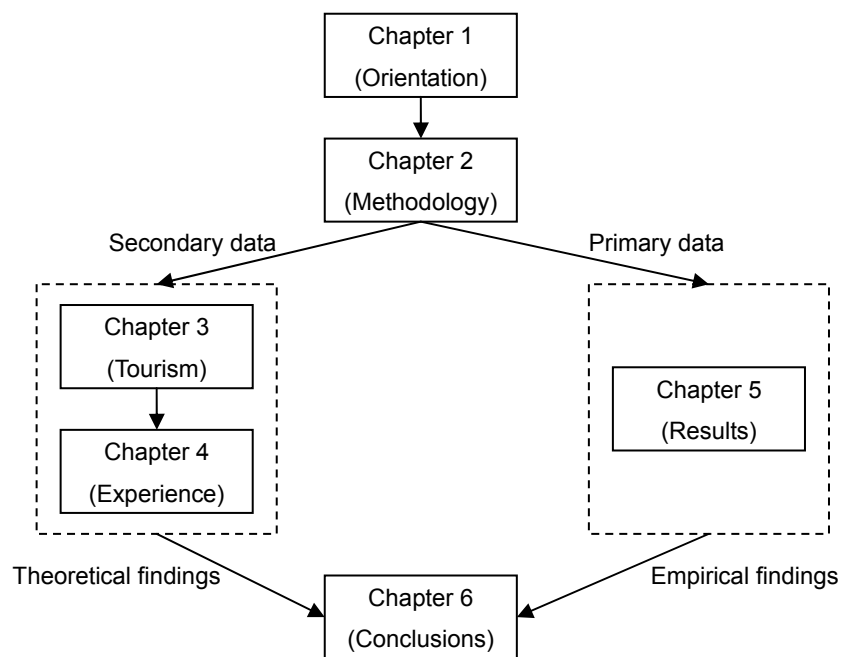
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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 provided the background and rationale to the research, identified the research questions, objectives, and hypotheses, and emphasised the significance of the research. This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology applied in the study (see Figure 2.1), and provides a detailed description of different types of research designs, secondary and primary data collection methods, sampling methods and statistical analysis stages.

FIGURE 2.1

LOCATION OF CHAPTER 2 IN THE DISSERTATION
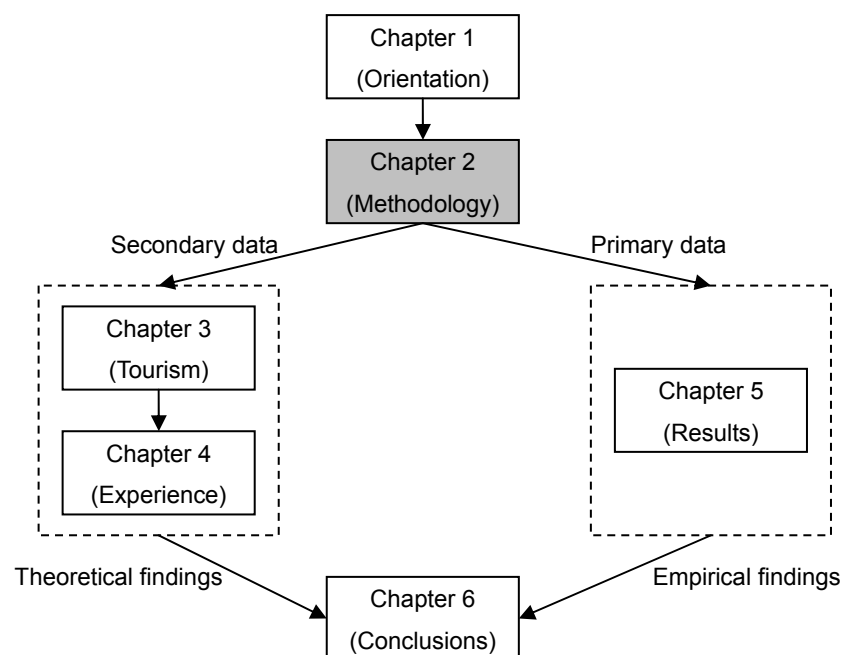
Source: Own construction

2.2   TYPES OF RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan used as a blueprint in conducting a study. An adequate research design will ensure that the study is relevant to the problem and carried out in an economical way (Churchill 1995:114). Research designs can be classified from different perspectives depending on the classification bases. Collis and Hussey (2003:10) propose four classification schemes (see Figure 2.2), namely, the research's outcome (basic and applied), logic (deductive and inductive), purpose (quantitative and qualitative), and process (exploratory, descriptive and causal).

FIGURE 2.2

CLASSIFICATION OF RESEARCH DESIGNS
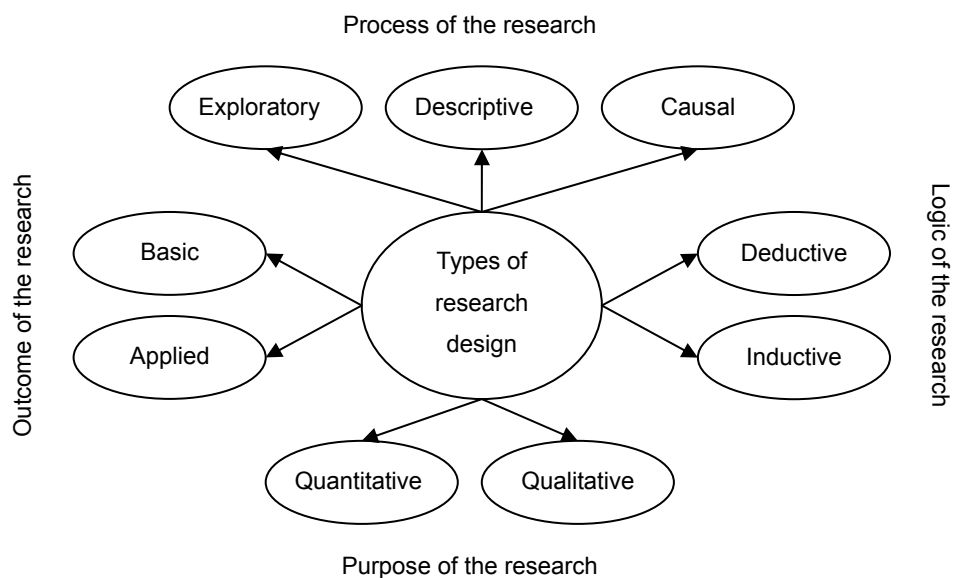
Source: Adapted from Collis and Hussey (2003:10)

2.2.1 Basic and applied research

Research projects can be classified as either basic or applied research (Parasuraman et al 2004:13). Basic research aims to enhance the understanding of an existing theory or learn more about a phenomenon. Although the findings of most basic research cannot be directly and immediately implemented by industry practitioners, these findings help people understand more about certain problems at hand and may later on solve these problems (McDaniel & Gates 2006:10).

In contrast, applied research aims to solve a specific problem rather than to expand knowledge. Its results are therefore directly and immediately relevant to practitioners (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhell 1997:2). Applied studies can be further divided into three groups, namely, programmatic, selective and evaluative research. Programmatic research is used to develop marketing options via market SWOT analysis and segmentation, and consumer attitude and product consumption studies; selective research is performed to test various decision alternatives, such as new product concept testing and advertising copy testing; evaluative research is done to assess operational performance, such as corporate and brand image studies and measuring customer satisfaction with the product and service quality (Aaker, Kumar & Day 2007:31). The current research was applied and evaluative in nature,

since the main purpose was to assist hunting providers in assessing and improving hunters' safari experiences.

2.2.2 Deductive and inductive research

Theory refers to a body of interconnected propositions about the way in which a specific phenomenon operates (Hair, Bush et al 2006:276). The creation of hypotheses about relationships is an important part of theory development, which is undertaken through the process of deduction or induction (Gibson & Brown 2009:28). Figure 2.3 graphically explains the difference between deductive and inductive research.

FIGURE 2.3

COMPARISON OF DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE REASONING

Accept/reject hypotheses	Develop theory
⇧	⇧
Collect and analyse data	Formulate relationships
⇧	⇧
Formulate hypotheses	Analyse patterns and themes
⇧	⇧
Develop theory	Observe phenomena
Deductive reasoning	**Inductive reasoning**
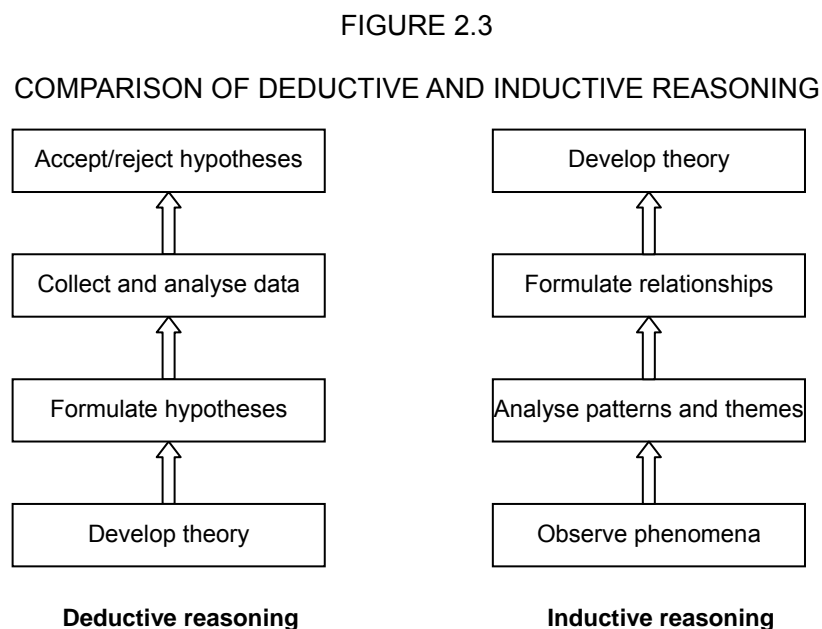
Source: Adapted from Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran (2001:36)

Deduction is the process by which researchers begin with a theoretical proposition and then explore concrete empirical evidence (Wiid & Diggines 2009:4). In contrast, induction is the process by which researchers begin with observations of certain phenomena and then explore underlying theoretical generalisations (Cavana et al 2001:36). Grounded theory is a typical inductive approach that refers to the process of creating theory through analysis, rather than using analysis to test pre-formulated theories (Gibson & Brown 2009:26). This research followed a deductive reasoning process, in which the hypothetical model built on existing theories in service experience literature was empirically tested using the data gathered from travelling hunters.

2.2.3   Quantitative and qualitative research

Positivism originally comes from the natural sciences, which have a longer history than the social sciences. Positivist research uses deductive reasoning and is usually associated with quantitative data (Cavana et al 2001:8). Quantitative research generally involves the collection of primary data from a large number of respondents, with the aim of projecting the results to a wider population (Bennett 1996:125). A typical quantitative study aims to identify the research hypothesis (the expected solution to the problem) and then attempts to prove the hypothesis by using statistical analysis and reporting the facts by means of numbers and figures (Cavana et al 2001:34).

Contrary to positivism, social constructivism argues for the primacy of qualitative data (Jankowicz 2000:127). Qualitative research generally uses inductive reasoning and involves elements such as small samples, unstructured interviews, indirect measurement of respondents' attitudes, and direct observation (Dillon, Madden & Firtle 1994:116). Although qualitative research is cost-effective and deemed the best way to understand the in-depth motivations of consumers, management are often reluctant to base important decisions on small-sample findings and on the subjective interpretation of the interviewer (McDaniel & Gates 2006:78-79). The current research was quantitative, as evidenced by the use of a survey to collect data from a large number of potential respondents and advising hunting providers on ways of enhancing clients' hunting experiences.

2.2.4   Exploratory, descriptive and causal research

Research projects can also be categorised by means of the procedures used to collect and analyse data (Burns & Bush 2006:29). Research procedures can be exploratory, descriptive, or causal.

- Exploratory research is undertaken to gain background information about the nature of the problem. It is usually conducted when the researcher does not know much about the problem and needs additional information (Burns & Bush 2006:117).

- Descriptive research is used to answer who, what, when, where and how questions. It is most appropriate when the research objectives include the need to determine the frequency with which something occurs (Tustin et al 2005:86).

- Causal research is designed to determine cause-and-effect relationships between two or more variables. It is most appropriate when the research objectives include the need to understand which variable is the cause of the dependent phenomenon (Hair, Bush et al 2006:64).

As already explained in Section 1.4.1 of Chapter 1, all three research procedures were used in the present study. Based on the above discussion, it could be argued that the nature of this research was applied (in terms of its outcome), deductive (in terms of its logic), quantitative (in terms of its purpose), and exploratory, descriptive and causal (in terms of its process).

2.3   DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Since research provides processed data to help solve specific problems, researchers should be able to identify the types and sources of data they attempt to use. Several data collection methods are commonly used in tourism marketing research and the choice varies according to the nature of the research problem. Jankowicz (2005:220) identifies four main data

collection methods, including:

- *explicatory methods* in which researchers focus research questions on written sources and make judgements about the data using literature review, or direct questions at people to arrive at conclusions based on observation;

- *case studies* in which researchers explore issues in the past and in the present by applying former similar case situations to the current problem;

- *experimental methods* in which researchers manipulate a selected group of independent variables and measure the impact of these manipulations on the dependent variable; and

- *surveys* in which researchers collect large amounts of raw data using question-and-answer formats from a large number of people.

Since this study formed part of a comprehensive research project on travelling hunters, it is important to note that only those data collection methods relevant to the measurement of hunters' safari experiences were presented below. Both the explicatory and survey methods were used to address the current research problem. Specifically, the explicatory method was employed to collect secondary data with the aim of building a conceptual framework for the investigation, while the survey method was used to collect primary data in an attempt to measure hunters' safari experiences.

2.3.1 Secondary data collection methods

At the broadest level, data sources can be classified as either primary or secondary. Primary data are original data collected to solve the problem under investigation, while secondary data are existing data previously gathered for some purpose other than the problem at hand (Dillon et al 1994:62). Despite the disadvantages associated with secondary data such as lack of relevance, inaccuracy, and insufficiency, many advantages also exist. Secondary data may:

- be less costly and time consuming to obtain than primary data;

- help to clarify the problem at the exploratory investigation stage;

- provide a solution to the problem under study;

- provide alternatives to primary data research methods;

- uncover potential research dangers and difficulties; and

- provide background information and build credibility for the research report (McDaniel & Gates 2006:52-53).

Secondary data are classified in terms of internal and external sources. As the terms imply, internal data exist within the organisation for which the research is being undertaken, while external data exist outside the organisation (Churchill 1995:278).

In the process of completing the current study, the researcher relied heavily on the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's library resources, where an array of periodicals, books, research reports, government documents and trade association publications are readily accessible. In addition, the researcher reviewed the primary research findings of numerous academic journal articles which were retrieved from various electronic databases, such as Elsevier, EBSCOHost, and Emerald. Most manuscripts that appear in these journals have been through a lengthy process of review and rewriting before publication (Yuksel 2003:438). Their content can therefore be regarded as being of relatively good quality.

2.3.2   Primary data collection methods

A survey is "a method of primary data collection in which information is gathered by communicating with a representative sample of people" (Wiid & Diggines 2009:107). In this research, the primary data for measuring hunters' safari experiences were collected by a survey investigation. The survey method has been adopted in a variety of tourism satisfaction studies (e.g. Neal, Sirgy & Uysal 1999:153-163) and service marketing studies (e.g. Bebko 2000:9-26) for one or more of the following reasons: surveys provide for standardisation, are easy to administer, uncover latent information, are easy to analyse, and reveal subgroup differences (Burns & Bush 2006:235-236).

According to Hair, Bush et al (2006:232-247), all survey methods can be classified into four categories: person-administered, telephone-administered, self-administered, and online. Every category further comprises several types of surveys (see Table 2.1). This study employed a self-administered, mail survey method to collect the primary data.

TABLE 2.1

TYPES OF SURVEY RESEARCH METHODS

SURVEY METHOD	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Person-administered	
In-home interview	An interview takes place in the respondent's home or, in special situations, within the respondent's work environment.
Executive interview	Businesspeople are interviewed in their offices concerning industrial products or services.
Mall-intercept interview	Shoppers in a mall are approached and asked to take part in a face-to-face survey.
Telephone-administered	
Telephone interview	Interviews take place over the telephone and may be conducted from a central telephone location or the interviewer's office or home.
Computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI)	A computer is used to assist the interview process in which an interviewer enters respondents' answers directly into the computer.
Completely automated telephone survey (CATS)	The survey is completely administered by a computer without the use of any human interviewer.
Self-administered	
Mail panel survey	Surveys are mailed to a representative number of individuals who have agreed in advance to participate.
Mail survey	Surveys are distributed to and returned from respondents via the postal service.
Online	
E-mail survey	Surveys are distributed to and returned from respondents via electronic mail.
Internet survey	The Internet is used to ask questions of and record responses from respondents.

Source: Adapted from Hair, Bush et al (2006:232)

In a self-administered survey, respondents may complete the survey in their own time and at their own pace. The major advantages are low cost per survey and absence of interviewer bias as there is no agent (human or computer) involved (Burns & Bush 2006:241-242). Mail surveys are preferable when:

- the geographical area covered by the research is extensive;

- the respondents are geographically dispersed; and

- there are hard-to-reach (e.g. country) areas (Smith & Martins 1996:161).

The current research context was in line with the above situations, as previous literature revealed that most travelling hunters lived in North America and Europe, a large proportion of whom resided within a rural environment.

Low response rates are a major disadvantage of mail surveys (Proctor 1997:97). Response rates refer to the percentage of respondents who have completed and returned the questionnaire and can thus be calculated as:

$$\text{Response rate} = \frac{\text{Number of completed questionnaires}}{\text{Number of eligible respondents}}$$

where the number of eligible respondents is equal to the number of questionnaires sent *minus* the number returned due to unknown, incorrect, or changed addresses. For any ad hoc mail survey (where respondents have not previously agreed to participate in the study), without any pre- or post-mailing follow-up, "typically no more than 10 to 20 percent of the questionnaires can

be expected to be returned" (Dillon et al 1994:144). During the primary data collection period, 2 000 survey packages (each comprising a questionnaire and postage pre-paid reply envelope) were sent to potential respondents. By the due date, 215 packages were undeliverable and 236 completed questionnaires were returned, giving a tolerable response rate of 13.2%.

2.3.3   Primary data collection techniques

The instrument used to obtain mail survey data is usually the questionnaire (Wiid & Diggines 2009:106). Sound questionnaire construction is particularly important because mail surveys are impersonal in nature and lack the advantages of face-to-face interviewing, such as the possibility of clarifying the questions and probing the deeper response (Chisnall 1991:37).

A questionnaire is a set of questions designed to generate the data necessary for achieving research objectives (Parasuraman et al 2004:307). Questions can be either open-ended or closed. Open-ended questions allow respondents to answer in their own way, while closed questions allow respondents to make choices among a set of alternatives predefined by the researcher (Cavana et al 2001:229). Open-ended questions are inappropriate for mail surveys as respondents often write more briefly than they speak and illegible handwriting can create a problem (Kinnear & Taylor 1996:362).

With the underlying advantages of reducing interviewer bias, enhancing respondents' willingness to answer questions, and facilitating coding and cross-tabulation (Proctor 1997:139), closed questions (dichotomous, multiple-choice and six-point Likert-type measures) thus constituted the *main* body of the questionnaire used in this survey study (see Annexure A). Specifically, the first two types of measures intended to gather respondents' demographic details on gender, current and childhood living environment, income and country of residence. The Likert-type measures intended to investigate respondents' safari experiences by assessing their perceived levels of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention (loyalty). In addition, the questionnaire contained a cover page that explained the purpose of the research, ensured anonymity and confidentiality, communicated the instructions, and invited respondents' participation.

To determine the levels of service quality, every respondent was asked to indicate his or her expectation and perception of each of twenty-five service attributes by circling respective numbers, the end points being 1=totally unimportant and 6=extremely important on the expectation side, and 1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree on the perception side. The six-point scale aimed to prevent respondents from routinely circling the mid-point, which can reinforce its central tendency (Ryan 1995:152). The selected service attributes were chosen based on a review of relevant

academic literature, hunting-related promotional materials, governmental research reports, and a diary written by an American hunter on his South African safari. Since a questionnaire pre-testing was not viable for a cross-national study due to cost and time limitations, a panel of experienced hunting tourism scholars and practitioners scrutinised the identified attributes. The statements were randomly placed in the questionnaire to reduce respondent bias (Tribe & Snaith 1998:29). The proposed factor structure is shown in Table 2.2 below.

TABLE 2.2

THE PROPOSED FACTOR STUCTURE

FACTOR	ITEM ALLOCATION
Hunt-tangibles	SQ1, SQ2, SQ3, SQ4, SQ5
Eco-tangibles	SQ21, SQ22, SQ23, SQ24, SQ25
Reliability	SQ10, SQ11, SQ12, SQ13
Responsiveness	SQ14, SQ15, SQ19, SQ20
Assurance	SQ6, SQ7, SQ8, SQ9
Empathy	SQ16, SQ17, SQ18

Source: Own construction

2.4   SAMPLING DESIGN

Sampling design is an important aspect of research design and aims at drawing conclusions about the whole population in a more cost-effective, less time-consuming way (Wiid & Diggines 2009:191). A complete sampling design often involves a series of decisions made by the researcher with

respect to the target population, sampling frame and methods, and sample size of the research undertaken.

2.4.1 Target population

An element is "the unit about which information is sought". Individuals are the most common elements in tourism marketing research sampling (Kinnear & Taylor 1996:407). A population (or universe) is "the aggregate of all the elements" and must be defined in terms of "elements, sample units, time, and size" (Loubser 1996:251). For the research in question, the population refers to all foreign hunters who had participated in a South African safari at least once between 2003 and 2007.

A sample is "a subset of the population". By studying the sample, researchers can draw conclusions that are generalisable to the population (Cavana et al 2001:253). Compared with a census survey, a sampling survey has many advantages: it takes less time and costs less; it is often more accurate as the quality of the data gathered are better; and it is more practical when the population is difficult to locate or its size is large (Wiid & Diggines 2009:192). In this study, a sampling survey was conducted with the aim of projecting the characteristics of the hunters surveyed to the profile of all travelling hunters who have visited South Africa for a hunting safari (the population).

2.4.2   Sampling frames

A sampling frame is a list of the elements of the population from which the sample is selected (McDaniel & Gates 2006:300). Some common sources of sampling frames are a local telephone directory, a list of magazine subscribers, the customer list from a credit card company, and the student list from a university.

The quality of a sampling frame is very important. An incomplete or inaccurate sampling frame will make it impossible for every element in the population to have a chance of selection. As a result, the sample may not be representative of the population (Saunders et al 1997:127). Since the available records on foreign hunters are often outdated and the updated ones are usually confidential to protect the clientele base, the researcher had no access to a reliable sampling frame, but had to rely on the collaboration of an official facilitator in the industry for the questionnaire distribution. This might have reduced the quality of the sampling frame and is therefore acknowledged as a limitation of the research.

2.4.3   Sampling methods

All sampling methods can be classified into two broad categories, namely, probability and non-probability (see Figure 2.4). Probability sampling is an objective process in which the chance of selection for each population element is known beforehand (Parasuraman et al 2004:360). The results obtained by using probability sampling methods, such as simple random, systematic, stratified and cluster sampling, can be generalised to the population and the sampling error (the difference between the sample value and the population value) can be estimated (Proctor 1997:76).

FIGURE 2.4

CLASSIFICATION OF SAMPLING METHODS
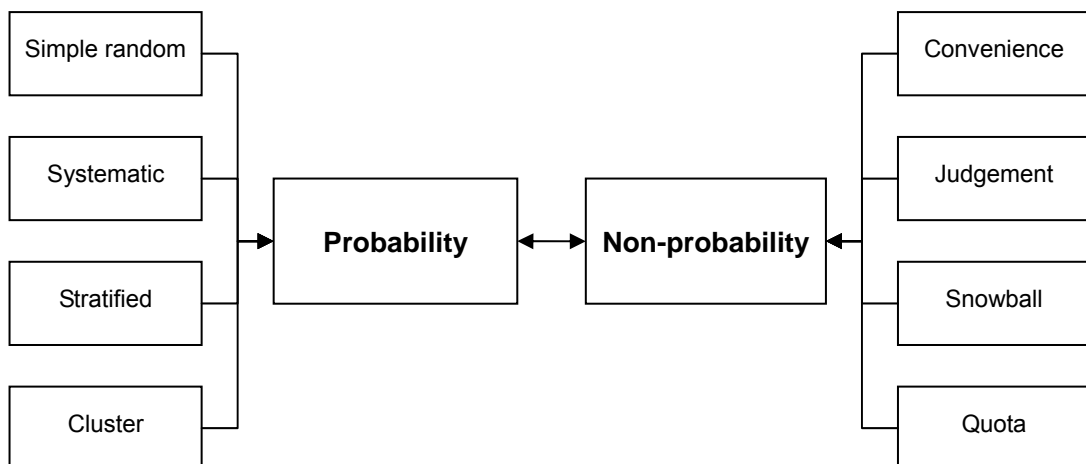
Source: Adapted from Wiid and Diggines (2009:199)

Non-probability sampling, on the other hand, is a subjective process in which the chance of selection is unknown for each population element

(Parasuraman et al 2004:360). With a non-probability (convenience, judgement, snowball, or quota) sampling method (see Figure 2.4), the researcher is able to reduce the cost and time of sampling, but has to use a sample that may or may not be representative of the population, depending on how well the researcher organises and controls the selection activities (Hair, Bush et al 2006:331). The current research employed a convenience sampling approach, in which respondents were selected based on convenience or availability (Loubser 1996:253). Since mail surveys are a data-collection method of self-selected, voluntary participation, convenience samples are usually produced (Dillon et al 1994:243).

2.4.4   Sample size

Determining the sample size for probability samples involves financial, statistical and managerial considerations. Generally, the larger the sample is, the smaller the sampling error will be (McDaniel & Gates 2006:324). Although various sample-size formulae are available for probability samples, none of them is applicable to non-probability counterparts. Therefore, determining the sample size for non-probability samples is a subjective procedure in which the researcher makes a decision based on the availability of resources, past studies and rule of thumb (Hair, Bush et al 2006:320).

Sekaran (2000:296) proposes the following rules of thumb for determining sample size: sample sizes larger than 30 and smaller than 500 are appropriate for most studies; where samples are divided into subsamples, a minimum sample size of 30 for each category is required; and when multivariate analysis techniques (e.g. factor analysis and multiple regression analysis) are used, the sample size should be several times (preferably 10 times or more) larger than the number of variables to be analysed.

In light of these rules and the relatively low response rates (normally 10 to 20%) of mail surveys, a sample size of 2 000 travelling hunters was chosen for the current research, that is, 2 000 questionnaires were sent to foreign hunters who had participated in the South African safari between 2003 and 2007.

2.5   STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The purpose of statistical analysis is to make sense of the data obtained so that accurate conclusions and recommendations can be drawn. This section discusses four important aspects in a statistical analysis process, namely, preliminary preparation, reliability and validity analysis, and statistical methods and techniques.

2.5.1   Preparing the data for analysis

The raw data obtained from the survey instrument must undergo preliminary preparation before starting analysis using statistical techniques. The quality of the findings obtained from the analysis and their subsequent interpretation depend largely on how well the data were prepared (Aaker et al 2007:432). A typical preparation procedure consists of three sequential steps, namely, data editing, coding and capture.

Editing is the process of examining the data to ensure maximum accuracy and clarity (Smith & Albaum 2006:197). Editing should be conducted in both the field and the central office (Wiid & Diggines 2009:229). Since this research collected primary data using a self-administered, mail survey method, central office editing was deemed the only approach to inspect and correct omissions, ambiguities and errors in the responses. As the Likert-type scales used in this research had an even number of categories, the mean score of a particular item was assigned to its missing values (Cavana et al 2001:316).

Coding involves converting the data into numerical values which are later captured into a statistical package for analysis (Miller, Acton, Fullerton & Maltby 2002:41). In this research, most questionnaire questions (except age and education) were precoded, that is, codes were assigned to categories

before the data were collected (Smith & Albaum 2006:198). The coded data were captured in Microsoft Excel for descriptive statistical analyses, and then imported into the SPSS Version 15 and AMOS Version 7 packages for inferential statistical analyses, such as factor analyses, regression analyses, and t-tests.

2.5.2   Reliability and validity analysis

Any measuring instrument used in research must be both reliable and valid (Burns & Bush 2006:290). Reliability is the degree to which a scale provides consistent or stable data, while validity is the degree to which a scale truly reflects the concept to be measured (Parasuraman et al 2004:294). Figure 2.5 explains the relationship of reliability and validity in analogy to rifle hunting.

FIGURE 2.5

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY IN ANALOGY TO RIFLE HUNTING
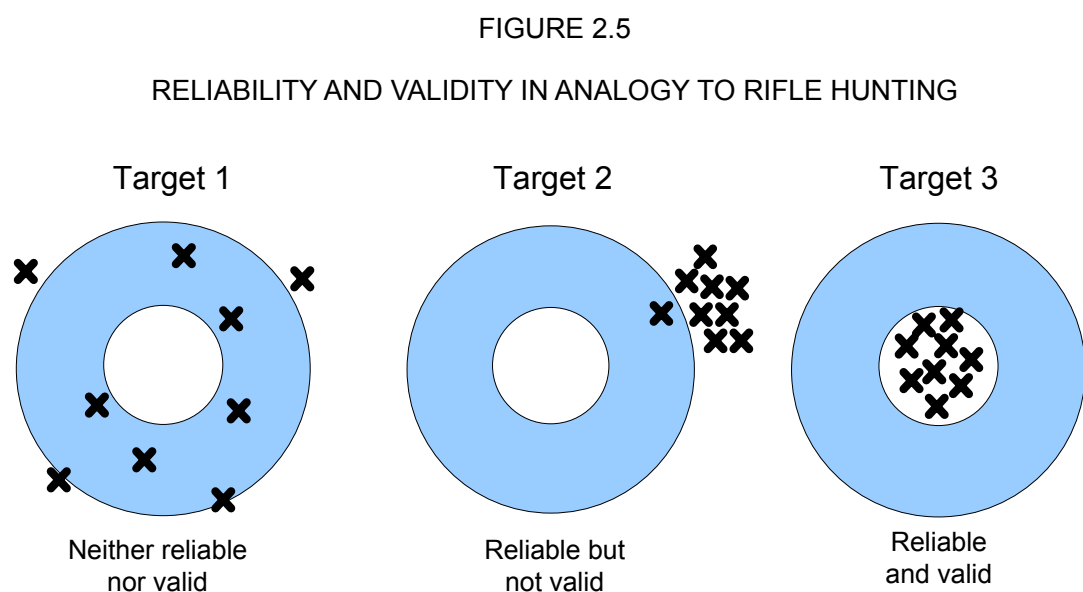
Source: Adapted from Cavana et al (2001:212)

Scale reliability can be evaluated in terms of its stability or internal consistency. A stable scale is one for which a respondent responds in the same or in a very similar manner to an identical question at different times under different conditions (Burns & Bush 2006:290). Stability is usually established through the test-retest technique. On the other hand, the internal consistency of a scale indicates the homogeneity of a set of items in the scale that tap the same concept. Internal consistency is usually established by examining whether these items are highly correlated (Cavana et al 2001:211). Since the questionnaire used in the current study was of a multi-item and multi-factor nature, internal consistency was deemed the most appropriate method for assessing the reliability of the questionnaire.

Scale validity can be examined from different perspectives; in this research content and construct validity were addressed. Content (face) validity is the degree to which the items of a scale seem to represent all the aspects of the concept being measured (Parasuraman et al 2004:294). The researcher, together with a panel of field experts, scrutinised the items for face validity at the stages of questionnaire design and data reduction. Construct validity, on the other hand, is the degree to which the items of a scale logically link the observed phenomenon to the construct (McDaniel & Gates 2006:227). Construct validity was established by testing the convergent and discriminant validity of the questionnaire at the stage of confirmatory factor analysis.

2.5.3   Statistical methods

Statistical procedures can be roughly classified into descriptive and inferential statistics (Howell 2008:5). According to Antonius (2003:9), descriptive statistics consist of measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode), measures of dispersion (range and standard deviation), and measures of position (quartiles, deciles and percentiles). The researcher used descriptive statistics to report respondents' demographics, and ratings on the safari experience variables (service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intentions).

The purpose of inferential statistics is to project sample findings to the broader target population from which the sample was drawn (Wegner 2000:8). Statistical inference can be performed through parameter estimation or hypothesis testing (Antonius 2003:161). The current research employed the latter, which aims to examine whether a particular proposition concerning the population is likely to be true. It is vital to select the most appropriate statistical technique for every hypothesis to be tested (Tustin et al 2005:583). The selected statistical techniques are described below.

2.5.4   Statistical techniques

Three sets containing a total of 11 hypotheses were proposed to address the research problem (see Figure 1.1 of Chapter 1). These hypotheses were tested by using factor analyses, multiple regression analyses and t-tests. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed to test the first set of hypotheses (H1a and H1b). Factor analysis is usually viewed as a data reduction technique, through which a number of items are condensed into a smaller, more manageable number of factors. Exploratory factor analysis explores the intercorrelations among variables, while confirmatory factor analysis confirms specific assumptions or theories concerning the structure underlying the variables (Pallant 2007:179).

Multiple regression analyses were used to test the second set of hypotheses (H2a, H2b, H2c, H2d, and H2e). Multiple regression analysis, as an extension of two-variable regression analysis, aims to use two or more independent variables to predict a dependent variable (Hamburg & Young 1994:505). Lastly, independent-samples t-tests were conducted to test the third set of hypotheses (H3a, H3b, H3c, and H3d). An independent-samples t-test is commonly used to examine whether the means of two unrelated groups of data are significantly different from one another (Miller et al 2002:119).

2.6   PROBLEMS OF THE RESEARCH

The major problem in the process of conducting this research was related to the accessibility of a reliable sampling frame. As already mentioned, an up-to-date sampling frame was not available to the researcher because safari providers were very reluctant to provide their clients' details to others. Therefore, the researcher relied on the cooperation of an intermediator for the sampling and mailing of the questionnaires.

2.7   SUMMARY

This chapter discussed research design, data collection, sample selection, and statistical analysis. Research can be classified in terms of its outcome, logic, purpose and process. The nature of this research was applied, deductive, quantitative, exploratory, descriptive and causal. The explicatory method was used to collect secondary data from external sources. The mail survey method was used to collect primary data by means of a self-administered questionnaire. Dichotomous, multiple-choice, and six-point Likert-type questions constituted the main body of the questionnaire.

The population of this research consisted of all travelling hunters who had participated in the South African safari between 2003 and 2007. A convenience sampling method was employed to draw 2 000 respondents. By

the due date, 236 completed questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 13.2%. The statistical analysis process involved four important stages, namely, preliminary preparation, reliability and validity analysis, and the computation of descriptive and inferential statistics.

Chapter 3 contains a literature review, focusing on the global tourism industry and the South African hunting tourism market.

CHAPTER 3

TOURISM, WILDLIFE TOURISM, AND HUNTING TOURISM

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 discussed research design and methodology. This chapter, as the first of the two theoretical chapters in this study (see Figure 3.1), addresses the first research objective stated in Section 1.2 of Chapter 1, namely, to examine the basic tourism concepts and the characteristics of wildlife and hunting tourism, and to gain a better understanding of the South African hunting industry, the focus of the present research.

FIGURE 3.1

LOCATION OF CHAPTER 3 IN THE DISSERTATION
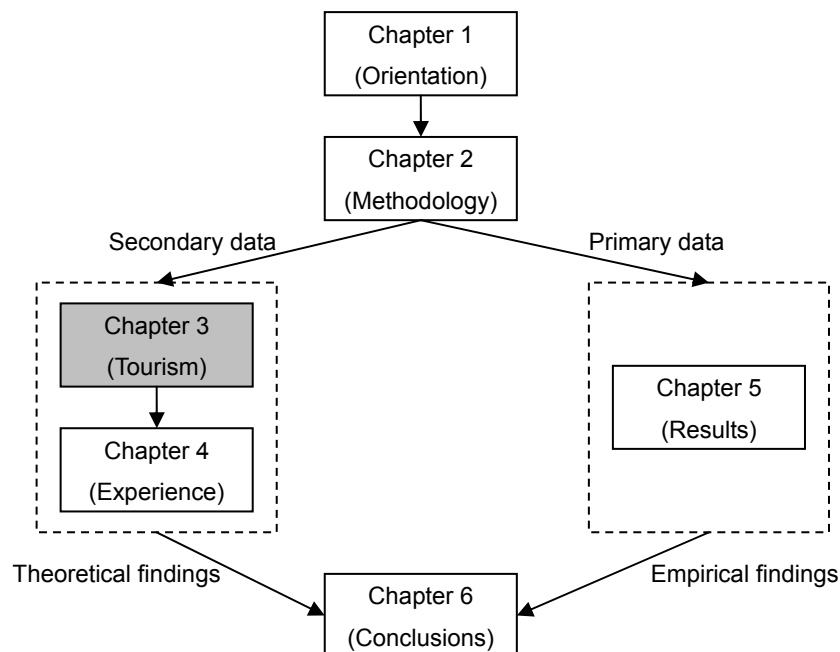
Source: Own construction

3.2   TOURISM

Tourism, as an industry and a domain of study, is complex and dynamic. This section gives a brief overview of some of the most important tourism concepts, including the definitions of tourism and tourism marketing, the models of tourist experience and motivation, and the notion of sustainable tourism development.

3.2.1   Definitions of tourism

Over the last few decades, various definitions of tourism addressing different concerns and perspectives have been raised by academics (George 2004:20). Leiper (1979:390-407) adopts a systems approach and believes that tourism is "the system involving the discretionary travel and temporary stay of persons away from their usual place of residence for one or more nights". Gilbert (1990:4-27) views tourism from a social viewpoint as " one part of recreation which involves travel to a less familiar destination or community, for a short-time period, in order to satisfy a consumer need for one or a combination of activities". Goeldner and Ritchie (2003:4-6) acknowledge the importance of various interest groups that participate in and/or are affected by the tourism industry, and thus define tourism as "processes, activities, and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions among tourists,

tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities, and surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting and hosting of visitors".

In contrast with the preceding definitions, a definition offered by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) was deemed most appropriate for the current research. WTO defines tourism as "the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes" (Southern African Development Community 2004:¶1). George (2004:20-21) provides several points associated with this definition that need to be highlighted.

● It includes an element of travel; however, all travel is not tourism; it excludes commuter travel (e.g. to neighbourhood offices and shops).

● It is not restricted to tourists who travel for leisure; it includes travel for social, religious, educational, sports, health and business reasons.

● It is temporary and short-term, but not restricted to overnight stays; it includes excursionists (same-day visitors).

3.2.2   Tourism marketing

Lambin (2000:33) maintains that marketing is "both a business philosophy and an action-oriented process". The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines marketing as "the performance of business activities that direct the

flow of goods and services from the producer to the consumer or user"
(Goeldner & Ritchie 2003:526). During the 1990s and early 2000s, tourism
marketing was commonly viewed as the application of marketing principles in
tourism management situations. However, most recent debate suggests that
tourism marketing is gradually forming an identity of its own and represents a
separate discipline (Fyall & Garrod 2005:37).

George (2004:23) regards tourism marketing as the process through which a
tourism organisation first anticipates tourists' needs, then manages and
satisfies those needs to achieve sales. Lumsdon (1997:25) takes market
competition into account and defines tourism marketing as "a managerial
process of anticipating and satisfying existing and potential visitor wants more
effectively than competitive suppliers or destinations". Goeldner and Ritchie
(2003:527) stress that tourism marketing managers must satisfy tourists'
wants in a profitable and efficient manner by constantly searching for the right
marketing mix.

Woodruffe (1995:15) suggests an extended marketing mix (see Figure 3.2),
involving the traditional four Ps (product, place, promotion and price) and the
extended three Ps (people, process and physical evidence). George (2004:31)
advocates that the extended mix is more appropriate for the tourism industry
than the traditional one, as it recognises that the people who produce and

deliver tourism offerings, the process of production and delivery, and the physical layout and atmosphere of the tourism organisation are important to the success of tourism practices. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (1996:113), the three new elements constitute the *evidence of service* that might influence the customer's perceptions of service quality. These concepts are explored in depth in Section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4.

FIGURE 3.2

THE EXTENDED MIX FOR TOURISM MARKETING

Integration
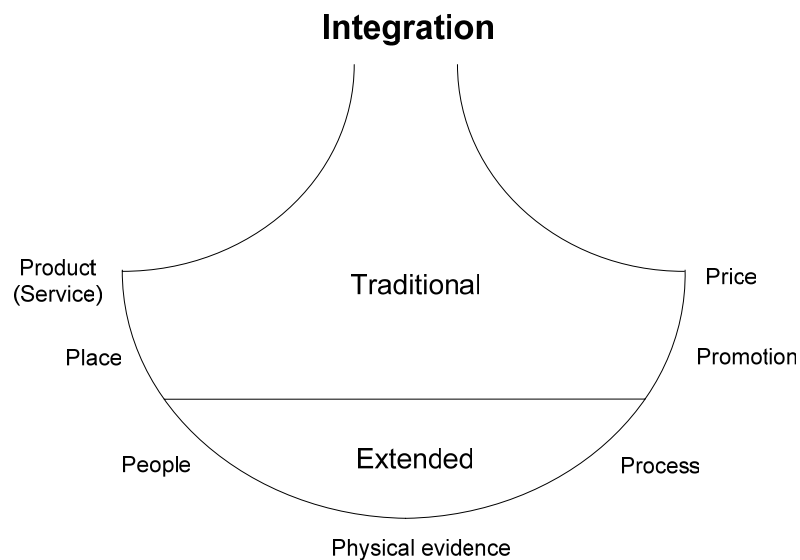
Source: Adapted from Kandampully (2007:176)

3.2.3   Tourism experiences

Grönroos (2007:12) distinguishes the experience economy from the ordinary economy. In the experience economy, customers are looking for more than

ordinary goods and services and are prepared to pay substantially more for experience activities. In the tourism literature, both the terms *tourism experience* and *tourist experience* have been used interchangeably to describe a source of long-term competitive advantage (Jennings 2006:8). Bennett and Strydom (2005a:11-14) argue that the tourism experience consists of five phases, namely, planning, journey, destination, return journey and revival.

- The planning phase includes activities such as decision making concerning the travel destination, the route and mode of transport, and the type of accommodation.

- The journey phase involves the physical movement of the tourist by car, train, air, or other mode of transport. During the journey, tourists often make use of fuel, takeaways, restrooms and overnight accommodation.

- The destination phase represents the core of the holiday. Most attractions and facilities are located at the destination area where tourists spend most of their time and money.

- Return journey differs from the journey phase in terms of the tourist's physical and psychological state. Tourists often feel tired and disappointed about the prospect of returning home and to work.

- The revival phase starts with arriving home when tourists and their family and friends relive the holiday experience. Dissatisfied tourists may experience cognitive dissonance.

These tourism experience stages have important implications for the South African hunting safari. The safari comprises a bundle of visible and invisible elements of experience throughout its various stages. In the planning phase, hunters typically engage the services of local travel agents who arrange the flight and those of the South African hunting outfitter who arranges the hunt. En-route, hunters mainly deal with the services offered by airline staff and immigration officers. During the safari, hunters are served by the outfitter, the professional hunter, skinners, trackers, camp staff, and later on by the taxidermist. After returning home, they are likely to share their experiences with others by displaying the trophy and telling their stories.

3.2.4   Tourism motivations

Motivation has long been an important research topic in the tourism literature (Snepenger, King, Marshall & Uysal 2006:140). Motivation, as a starting point in describing tourist behaviour, is critical to understanding the tourist's destination-choice process (Crompton 1979:408-424; Sirakaya & Woodside 2005:815-832). Yoon and Uysal (2005:45-56) find that motivation is fundamental in assessing tourist satisfaction with the travel experience. Crompton and McKay (1997:427) define tourism motivation as "a dynamic process of internal psychological factors (needs and wants) that generate a state of tension or disequilibrium within individuals".

Based on Maslow's (1954:80-106) hierarchy of needs theory, Pearce (1993:85-105) suggests a Travel Career Ladder (TCL) model, which describes tourist motivation as consisting of five different levels (from bottom to top), namely, relaxation needs, safety and security needs, relationship needs, self-esteem and development needs, and self-fulfillment needs. Schoeman and Mynhardt (2005:74) stress that tourists aim to satisfy higher-order needs only after their lower-order needs have been realised. Goeldner and Ritchie (2003:253) believe that a travel career is similar to a work career, that is, that although "people may start at different levels; they are likely to change their levels during their life cycle; and they can be inhibited in their travel career by money, health, and other people". Radder (2005:1141-1144) finds that South Africa's international trophy hunters have five interrelated needs (i.e. spiritual, emotional, intellectual, self-directed, biological and social) and suggests that future research investigates whether a hierarchy of needs similar to the travel career ladder can be applied to trophy hunters.

3.2.5   Sustainable tourism development

Over the last decade, the concept of sustainable tourism development has been credited with growing interest and importance by both academics and practitioners. It is now generally accepted as the most desirable objective of

tourism development policy and practice (Sharpley 2000:1-19). Aronsson (2000:31-36) indicates that development means positive change, while sustainable development means maintaining the conditions that allow continued growth in the economic, social, and cultural spheres of human society. However, Goeldner and Ritchie (2003:468) point out that tourism has the power to destroy the environment as tourism development is often environmentally consumptive and destructive in nature.

The close links between tourism and the environment have been widely recognised for many years. Tourism and the environment should not only depend on each other, but also benefit each other (Butler 1991:201-209). Tourism development, however, often results at the expense of high and unsustainable use of natural resources such as water and agricultural land. If tourism development aims to be sustainable, it must be environmentally responsible by employing a more ecologically balanced approach (Bushell 2001:33). Hunter (1995:155-165) regards sustainable tourism development as a central philosophy of tourism development that is designed to:

● improve the quality of life in the local host community;

● satisfy the needs and wants of tourists; and

● safeguard the environmental resource base on which both the host community and the tourist depend.

3.3   WILDLIFE TOURISM

A large number of variables (e.g. scale and ownership) have been used to classify different types of tourism (Pearce 1992:15-30). Contrary to *mass tourism*, the concept of *alternative tourism* has emerged to describe a situation in which tourists choose to participate in a specific tourism activity to satisfy particular interests and needs (Derrett 2001:3). Wildlife tourism, as one of the most recognised alternative tourism areas, is increasing in popularity across the world and is defined as "an area of overlap between natured-based tourism, ecotourism, consumptive use of wildlife, rural tourism, and human relations with animals" (Reynolds & Braithwaite 2001:32). These influential factors of wildlife tourism (see Figure 3.3) are elaborated on below.

FIGURE 3.3

THE SCOPE OF WILDLIFE TOURISM
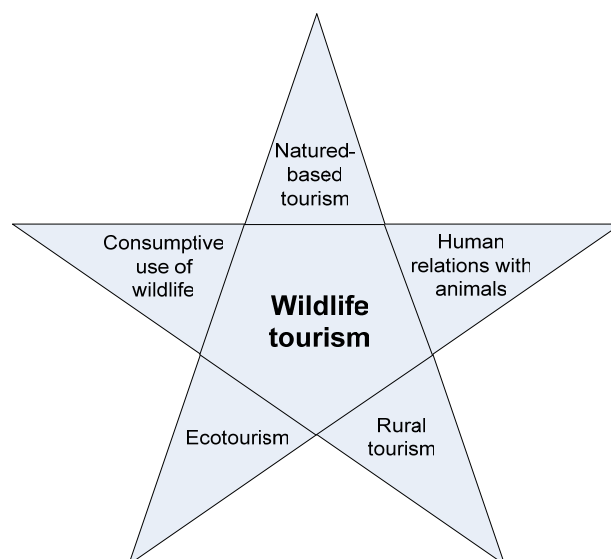
Source: Adapted from Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001:32)

3.3.1   Nature-based tourism and ecotourism

The general public often confuses the terms *nature-based tourism* and *ecotourism* (Dowling 2001:293). Ceballos-Lascuráin (1998:7-10) warns that ecotourism is not synonymous with nature-based tourism as the latter refers to any tourism activity taking place in the natural environment. According to Hall and Boyd (2005:3), nature-based tourism may include tourism in natural settings (e.g. adventure tourism), tourism that focuses on specific elements of natural resources (e.g. wildlife tourism), and tourism that is developed to protect natural areas (e.g. ecotourism). Therefore, ecotourism can be seen as a subset of nature-based tourism.

In the tourism and environment literature, ecotourism has been defined in many ways, with no common definition in place (Ross & Wall 1999:123-132). However, Diamantis (1999:93-122) claims that most ecotourism definitions contain three common components:

- within the natural-based component, ecotourism is perceived as having certain similarities with nature-based tourism and could take place in both protected and non-protected areas;
- within the sustainable management component, ecotourism should abolish the *tourism-centred* (demand-driven) planning view and adopt the *nature-centred* (supply-driven) approach; and

- within the educational/interpretation component, ecotourism requires training programmes (to educate both tourists and locals about the function of the natural environment) and interpretation services (to enhance visitors' on-site experiences with destination areas).

3.3.2 Rural tourism

Rural communities often face the challenge of continuous economic development. Tourism has increasingly become a development tool for rural areas to supplement declining primary traditional industries such as farming, fishing and hunting (MacDonald & Jolliffe 2003:307-322). Because of its rural characteristic, Turnock (1999:192-199) argues that rural tourism may embrace all tourism-related practices appropriate in the countryside. Fleischer and Felsenstein (2000:1007-1024) point out that most tourism enterprises in rural areas are small and family-based. Therefore, rural tourism development is often associated with the generation of local jobs and incomes and the promotion of small businesses and entrepreneurs. Trophy hunting tourism has been shown to make an important contribution in this regard (Von Brandis & Reilly 2007:153).

Killion (2001:175-176) explains the emergence of farm tourism and concludes that "neither all farms nor all farm families are necessarily suited to tourism".

Those farmers who intend to start a tourism operation as an additional income source must evaluate what their farm can offer the tourist, the cost and time efficiency for tourism, and the authenticity of the tourist experience that they deliver. This has an important implication for the South African farming industry. Having experienced a continued reduction in profits since the early 1990s, a large number of traditional farms chose to switch from domestic livestock to game. Due to a lack of expertise and skills, some game ranchers failed to deliver a quality tourism experience and carried out unethical practices such as put-and-take hunting (Damm 2005:3).

3.3.3 Human relations with wild animals

Wild animals are often incorporated into tourism practices. Tourist-wildlife relationships can be explained in terms of *value orientations* and *interaction opportunities*. Kellert (in Reynolds & Braithwaite 2001:34-35) suggests a typology of wildlife value orientations, namely, naturalistic (affection for wildlife and the outdoors), ecologistic (concern for the environment), humanistic (affection for domestic animals), moralistic (concern for animal rights), scientistic (interest in the physical attributes and biological functioning of animals), aesthetic (interest in the artistic and symbolic characteristics of animals), utilitarian (concern for the practical and material value of animals), dominionistic (interest in control of animals), and negativistic (avoidance of

animals). The general public tends to be humanistic and moralistic, while wildlife managers tend to be ecologistic, scientistic and utilitarian. Radder (2005:1141-1144) maintains that travelling hunters in the South African safari are more naturalistic (passionate about outdoor activities and appreciative of nature) and aesthetic (seeking quality trophies such as skins and horns).

Orams (2002:281-293) provides a spectrum of tourist-wildlife interaction opportunities (see Table 3.1) in which all wildlife-related activities can be classified into three categories, namely, captive, semi-captive and non-captive (wild), and claims that both wildlife feeding and viewing as tourism attractions may occur in all three categories. In contrast, most South African trophy hunting practices take place in privately-owned game ranches that fall in the semi-captive category.

TABLE 3.1

SPECTRUM OF TOURIST-WILDLIFE INTERACTION OPPORTUNITIES

CATEGORY	SETTING	DEGREE OF HUMAN INFLUENCE	EXAMPLE
Captive	Aviaries Zoos Oceanariums	Completely humanly constructed	The Johannesburg Zoo
Semi-captive	Wildlife parks Rehabilitation centres Game ranches	Certain elements humanly-made	Roydon Private Nature Reserve
Non-captive (Wild)	National parks Migratory routes Breeding sites	Natural environment	Kruger National Park

Source: Adapted from Orams (2002:281-293)

3.3.4   Consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife

Wilson and Tisdell (2001:279-288) claim that "all wildlife tourism involves use values". Wildlife tourism activities may occur in the form of consumptive use (e.g. hunting and fishing) or non-consumptive use (e.g. wildlife viewing and photography). Although both uses can take place in conjunction by allocating different zones for different use options, non-consumptive tourism is perceived as having higher environmental requirements than its consumptive counterpart. The success of the former requires the possession of certain areas that have beautiful landscapes, offer more services and infrastructure, and preferably contain the "Big Five" (Report to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 2005: viii-ix).

In both the tourism and conservation literature, researching the possible influence of utilising wildlife resources in the long-term for wildlife conservation is increasing in popularity (Hutton & Leader-Williams 2003:215-226). Tourism is both a threat and an opportunity to the conservation of species and habitats. Tourism activities may have a negative impact on wildlife, but partly compensate for this by generating revenue and awareness to enhance local conservation values (Lindsay, Craig & Low 2008:730-739). Hunters argue that their hunting practices contribute significantly to conservation (Novelli & Humavindu 2005:178).

According to Baker (1997a:273-286), in Africa hunting and photographic tourism could both negatively influence wildlife. Photography may harm wildlife because tourists sometimes interfere with an animal's natural hunting and mating behaviour when they try to take perfect photographs. Trophy hunting is said to be beneficial and sustainable only if six criteria can be met in the development and implementation of hunting management systems, namely, scientific wildlife population estimates, comprehensive and enforced quotas, reputable and honest outfitters, transparent and accountable revenue collection and allocation mechanisms, competent management and overseeing of the industry, and fair distribution of proceeds to local communities (Baker 1997b:306-321).

3.4 HUNTING TOURISM IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

South Africa is known for its wildlife resources and professional conservation management systems (Han & Radder 2009:17). Trophy hunting is conducted throughout the year, although June, July and August are the most popular months (Drakensberg Tourism 2009:¶23). The following section identifies hunting types and methods and depicts hunting tourism providers and participants typical of the South African hunting industry.

3.4.1   Types of hunting

Non-subsistence hunting is generally categorised into professional, recreational and gamebird hunting. Professional hunting (also known as trophy, sport or safari hunting) refers to hunting activities undertaken by individuals whose primary objective is to secure trophies from killed mammals. In South Africa, this commercial form of hunting is mainly carried out by foreign visitors who engage the services of a hunting outfitter and professional hunter (Report to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 2005:ix). For most species, professional hunting is limited to older male mammals because they contribute little to breeding but guarantee the quality of the trophy (Baker 1997b:308). These hunters are the focus of the current study.

Recreational hunting refers to hunting activities undertaken by individuals where the primary objective is to bag one or more mammals mainly for the meat value. This form of hunting is usually carried out by residents of a country and does not involve a professional hunter or outfitter (Report to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 2005:x). Recreational hunting can be commercial or non-commercial in nature. The former is known as harvesting, with the aim of making profits from the sale of game meat, whereas the latter is known as biltong hunting, with the aim of providing venison and biltong (Radder & Bech-Larsen 2008:1-2).

Gamebird hunting (also known as wingshooting) is a fast growing sector for the consumptive use of wildlife and has the potential to develop into a lucrative trophy hunting sport (Report to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 2005:ii). It involves the hunting of gamebirds, which differs fundamentally from the professional and recreational hunting of mammals explained above, in terms of the characteristics of the hunt, the hunting process, habitat characteristics and use patterns as well as economic and social aspects. In South Africa, gamebird hunting activities are primarily pursued by local residents on agricultural land (Report to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 2005:xi). There are some 14 species of ducks, two geese, ten partridge, two pheasant-sized birds, pigeons, doves and quail that are huntable across the country (Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa 2009b:¶1).

3.4.2   Methods of hunting

The type of animal being hunted may influence the choice of hunting methods, which subsequently requires different types of equipment and skills. Hunting with rifles is now the traditional method of hunting throughout the world and dominates the South African trophy hunting safari market (Report to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 2005:9). Compared with rifle hunting, bow hunting is a more challenging form of hunting. Strict zoning

policies could ensure that bow hunting replaces rifle hunting in certain areas (Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa 2009b:¶9). However, concerns about the cruelty of bow hunting due to poor marksmanship are increasingly being raised. Lastly, dart hunting (also known as "green" hunting) is mainly conducted by wildlife management for animal care and scientific research purposes. The impact of dart hunting on the tourist experience is, however, limited (Report to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 2005:9).

3.4.3   Providers of hunting tourism

The professional hunter and the hunting outfitter are the primary and direct trophy hunting providers in South Africa. To obtain their respective licences, both are required to complete a comprehensive training course at a certified professional hunting school and to pass a written examination administered by the relevant provincial nature conservation authorities (School for Professional Hunters in South Africa 2009:¶2-3). This strict registration procedure aims to assure the foreign hunter of a quality hunting experience and to promote ethical hunting practices and sustainable use of wildlife.

The professional hunter is the person who physically guides a client to hunt for trophies on the hunting safari. In addition, the professional hunter has to

ensure that the:

- client holds the necessary permits and licences before shooting;

- client does not hunt contrary to the provisions of the law;

- client is safe and cared for in the camp and in the hunting area; and

- client's trophies are skinned and prepared correctly (Professional Hunters'

  Association of South Africa 2009c:¶12-13).

A three-year practical experience period as a professional hunter is a prerequisite to become a hunting outfitter (Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa 2009d:¶8). A hunting outfitter plays a more important role in influencing and determining the level of foreign visitor's safari experience than a professional hunter does. The outfitter is legally responsible for:

- reaching a written agreement with the client on the animals to be hunted

  and the facilities and services to be offered;

- arranging and organising the client's hunt from beginning to end;

- furnishing the camp with all its conveniences and services;

- recruiting the professional hunters and the camp personnel; and

- obtaining the necessary permits to transport and export the client's

  trophies (Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa 2009c:¶16).

It is important to note that the outfitter and professional hunter could be the same person. In this case the person would be responsible for the combined

duties and functions and is required to possess both work permits (Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa 2009c:¶18).

3.4.4   Participants in hunting tourism

Radder and Han (2008:3) highlight that hunting and adventure tourism share a number of typical characteristics. Trophy hunters, similar to adventurers, are characterised by three sets of motives related to their hunting participation. Firstly, they are driven by the opportunity for exploration, discovery, enjoyment, learning and self-development. Secondly, they engage in trophy hunting for physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual enhancement. Thirdly, they value the incidences of stimulation, excitement, escapism and separation on the hunting safari (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie & Pomfret 2003:9-14).

Most of the trophy hunters who visit South Africa reside in the United States of America, Spain, Germany and Belgium (Radder 2003:3). These hunters have to travel long distances to reach the hunting area. A one-way journey can take up to 36 hours, depending on country of origin and airport transfers (Radder & Han 2008:3). The South African hunting safari typically lasts about ten days. Hunters can choose from approximately 60 species of huntable mammals spread over various hunting regions across the country. Each hunter takes down around nine animals at an average individual trophy fee of US$800. In

addition, each hunter pays daily fees of about US$360 per day for meals and accommodation, plus US$150 per accompanying person (Damm 2005:3-5). About 65% of overseas clients have their taxidermy work done in South Africa, as the local taxidermy industry is well recognised for its professional and reputable taxidermists and its value for money offerings (Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa 2009e:¶1).

According to Radder (2000:129-133), the South African safari experience not only involves payment for the safari and the acquisition of the trophy, but also encompasses multi-layered components termed essentials, embellishments, enchanters and enhancers.

- *Essentials* are the core requirements associated with the safari, namely, the opportunities of taking down the desired trophy.

- *Embellishments* constitute the supplementary offerings, such as transport and accommodation, the presence of which would lead to satisfaction beyond the basic experience.

- *Enchanters* are the additional benefits, such as the abundance or size of the game, the presence of which would lead to future preference being given to the game ranch offering these.

- *Enhancers* consist of unique characteristics, such as Bushman drawings and walking trails, the absence of which does not lead to dissatisfaction, but the presence of which could result in unexpected delight.

Given the complex and multi-layered nature of the safari experience, the current research attempted to investigate the variables that might influence the levels of the experience as perceived by travelling hunters. The researcher proposed that the safari experience could be affected by hunters' judgements on service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention. The conceptualisation of these variables is discussed in the next chapter.

3.5   SUMMARY

This chapter introduced some basic tourism concepts, and explained the basic characteristics of wildlife tourism and the nature of hunting tourism. The main purpose of the chapter was to contextualise the South African trophy hunting industry within the tourism environment.

The tourism experience consists of five distinct phases, namely, planning, journey, destination, return journey and revival. Tourist motivation encompasses five different levels, that is, relaxation needs, safety and security needs, relationship needs, self-esteem and development needs, and self-fulfillment needs. Sustainable tourism development aims to simultaneously improve the quality of life in the host community, satisfy the tourist's needs and wants, and protect local environmental resources.

The wildlife tourism realm includes nature-based tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism, human relations with animals, and consumptive use of wildlife. Professional, recreational, and gamebird hunting are three main types of hunting; rifle, bow, and dart hunting are three main methods of hunting; and the professional hunter and the hunting outfitter are the primary safari hunting providers. The South African safari experience encompasses multi-layered components termed essentials, embellishments, enchanters, and enhancers.

Chapter 4 discusses the variables that might influence travelling hunters' South African safari experiences, namely, service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention.

CHAPTER 4

SERVICE QUALITY, SATISFACTION AND BEHAVIOURAL INTENTION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 provided a brief overview of tourism, wildlife tourism and hunting tourism. This chapter, as the second of the two theoretical chapters in this study (see Figure 4.1), addresses the second to fourth research objectives stated in Section 1.2 of Chapter 1, namely, to discuss the nature of services marketing and to explore the concepts and interrelationships of service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioural intention.

FIGURE 4.1

LOCATION OF CHAPTER 4 IN THE DISSERTATION
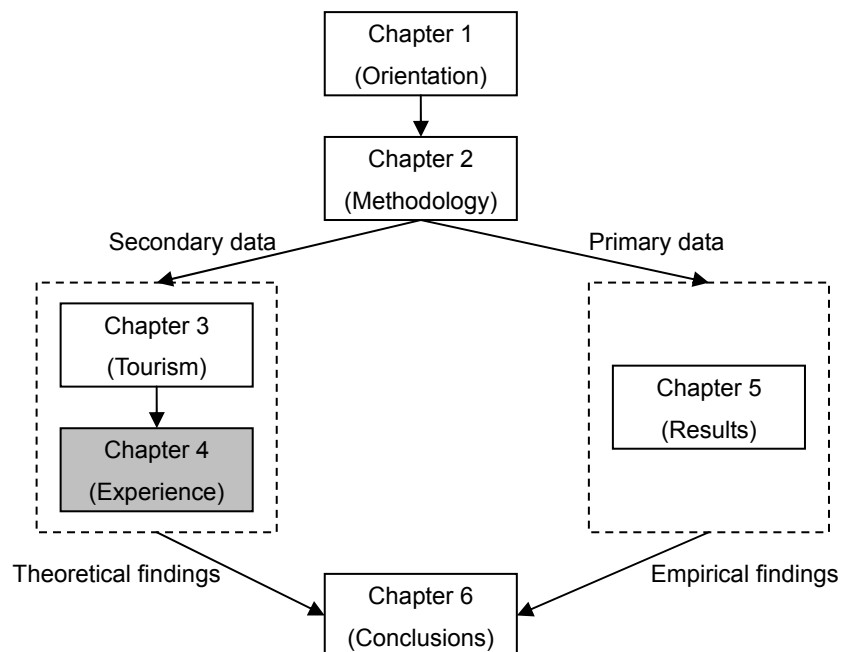
Source: Own construction

4.2 SERVICES MARKETING FOR TOURISM

Tourism represents an important part of the service sector of the South African economy (George 2008:23). Compared with other industries of the service sector such as banking and telecommunication services, tourism providers are more concerned with delivering experiences (Hsu, Killion, Brown, Gross & Huang 2008:13). On the other hand, tourism shares the fundamentals of services marketing with other services. These are elaborated on below.

4.2.1 Definitions of services

The growth of the service economy worldwide has been accompanied by the rapid development of services marketing literature (Woodruffe 1995:26). However, offering a definition of services is not an easy task as a service is "a complicated phenomenon" (Grönroos 2007:51). Zeithaml and Bitner (1996:5) define services in simple terms as "deeds, processes, and performances". Desmet, Van Looy and Van Dierdonck (1998:5) argue that services centre on intangibility and simultaneity and can thus be defined as "all those economic activities that are intangible and imply an interaction to be realised between service provider and consumer".

Lovelock and Wirtz (2007:15) offer a more comprehensive definition of services as "economic activities offered by one party to another, most commonly employing time-based performances to bring about desired results in recipients themselves or in objects or other assets for which purchasers have responsibility. In exchange for their money, time, and effort, service customers expect to obtain value from access to goods, labor, professional skills, facilities, networks, and systems; but they do not normally take ownership of any of the physical elements involved". Fisk, Grove and John (2008:5) compare services with goods and argue that "services are not things, yet services often rely on things for their performance". For example, a trophy is not a service, but the provision of a safari to secure trophies is a service; a camp is not a service, but the offering of hospitality in the camp is a service.

4.2.2 Characteristics of services

Intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability, common to all service industries, differentiate services from goods. Intangibility refers to the fact that unlike physical goods, services normally cannot be seen, touched, smelt, or tasted (Evans, Campbell & Stonehouse 2003:28). The intangibility of services might cause a lack of confidence on the part of the tourist (Woodruffe 1995:19). To overcome this, hunters could look for tangible cues to tangibilise the service, such as the cleanliness of the camp accommodation and the

assortment of meals and beverages offered. Hunting providers, on the other hand, could assure the client of professionalism, seriousness and expertise by displaying their professional certificates, dressing appropriately, and distributing printed promotional materials.

Inseparability means that services are produced and consumed simultaneously (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons 2008:19). The service producer and the service provider are often the same person (Bennett & Strydom 2005b:250). Customers also participate in the service delivery process and can affect the outcome of the service (Woodruffe 1995:19). The involvement of the customer leads to an interaction between the employee and the customer and makes the human factor crucial (Desmet et al 1998:8). In this context, the hunter's safari experience might be highly dependent on the service encounters among the provider, the hunter, and other hunters in the same environment.

The intangible and inseparable nature of services results in variation of service delivery (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons 2008:20). Unlike mass-produced manufactured goods, service heterogeneity results in no two service offerings being exactly the same (Baron, Harris & Hilton 2009:33). Although tourism managers attempt to standardise service delivery through staff training, many factors are outside of their control (Hsu et al 2008:15). For

example, camp staff might be moody, leading them to treat the client in a less than friendly manner. Similarly, no two hunters are exactly the same, as they might have different demands, expectations, tastes and emotions. As a result, safari experiences could vary according to the particular situation.

Perishability implies that services cannot be stored for future sale (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Wanhill & Shepherd 1998:355). Demand forecasting, capacity management and marketing techniques are important in overcoming tourism perishability (Hsu et al 2008:15). In the hunting industry, if a specific day or week is not booked for a safari, the capacity is lost forever.

4.2.3   Special features of tourism services

In addition to the four basic characteristics common to all services, there are some features that are unique to the tourism industry, including ownership, interdependence and external shocks. These features also have important implications in the trophy hunting market from both the provider's and the consumer's perspectives.

While consumers have access to a tourism offering, they do not usually receive ownership of anything tangible (Bennett & Strydom 2005b:251). A car is hired at the tourism destination, but ownership is not transferred to the

lessee; a hotel room is reserved, but the guest is only allowed to use that room for a period of time (Evans et al 2003:32). Since transfer of ownership is not involved, tourists particularly value onsite experiences and souvenirs (George 2008:26). Travelling hunters would take home trophies (such as skins and horns), or photographs as testimony of their South African safari experiences. It is thus important for safari providers to maximise clients' perceptions of the value of experiences and souvenirs.

Although tourists visit a destination for the attractions that meet their travel motivations, they also use other facilitating or support services in the tourism system. A tour company can buy services from different suppliers, re-assemble and deliver them to tourists in order to make a package tour possible (Hsu et al 2008:16). According to Evans et al (2003:35), the tourism supply system consists of five interdependent segments, namely, accommodation (e.g. hotels), attractions (e.g. theme parks), transport (e.g. car rental companies), travel organisers (e.g. tour operators), and destination organisations (e.g. local tourist offices). In the hunting market, foreign hunters might contact local travel agents to purchase a flight, liaise with hunting outfitters who arrange the hunt, and deal with professional hunters, skinners and trackers during the hunt. After the safari ends, hunters might stay at the destination for a few more days to visit other attractions or return home engaging once more with airline staff, flight attendants, and the like.

Lastly, the tourism industry is particularly prone to external shocks beyond the control of the providers. Wars, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, disease, pollution, adverse publicity, political events and economic factors can cause a dramatic and speedy impact on tourism demand (Evans et al 2003:40). Crisis management is thus of crucial importance to tourism suppliers (Hsu et al 2008:18). Recent electricity power cuts, high crime rates, and fluctuating exchange rates have undermined the South African tourism industry.

4.2.4 Classification of services

Services can be classified into a variety of schemes, depending on the particular combination of different dimensions (Desmet et al 1998:10). This section highlights two commonly used methods of classification that might have direct implications in the hunting tourism market.

Lovelock (1983:9-20) proposes a service classification scheme, focusing on to what or whom the service is directed (a thing or a person) and the nature of the service act (tangible or intangible). This creates four service categories, that is, tangible actions directed at the customer's body, such as airlines and restaurants; tangible actions directed at the customer's possessions, such as freight shipping and laundry cleaning; intangible actions directed at the customer's mind, such as museums and broadcasting; intangible actions

directed at the customer's assets, such as banking and insurance. It is acknowledged that a service might spill over into two or more categories. The core service act is confined to one category; supporting acts may fall within other categories. The hunting tourism service is directed primarily at hunters' minds by creating a memorable safari experience, although its delivery often requires tangible actions, such as catering and trophy shipping.

Schmenner (1986:21-32) developed a two-dimensional classification matrix by combining the degree of customer interaction/customisation with labour intensity. This creates four categories, namely, service factory (low labour intensity and low customer interaction/customisation), service shop (low labour intensity and high customer interaction/customisation), mass service (high labour intensity and low customer interaction/customisation), and professional service (high labour intensity and high customer interaction/customisation). The services offered by the hunting outfitter and the professional hunter are likely to fall into the professional service category.

4.3   PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY IN TOURISM

Having examined definitions, characteristics and classification of services, the term *service quality* is subsequently discussed, as it is a critical contributor to the perception of the tourism experience (Jennings 2006:6-7). There are

numerous definitions of quality, but all seem to agree that delivering quality is to deliver what the customer requires (Randall & Senior 1996:164). In recent academic literature, the words *value* and *standard* are often used interchangeably with quality. The former is an expression of the customer's view and explains a process of mental trade-off between the benefits perceived from the service relative to the sacrifice perceived by paying the price; the latter is an expression of the provider's view and reflects "a level of performance that customers will find the very least acceptable" (Mudie & Pirrie 2006:86-90).

Many researchers employ a customer-oriented approach to define service quality, which is particularly suitable for the tourism industry (Williams & Buswell 2003:47). The most frequently cited definition of service quality states that it is "the degree and direction of discrepancy between consumers' perceptions and expectations" (Parasuraman et al 1988:17). Since service quality has to be defined by consumers and each consumer is unique, service quality is more appropriately termed *perceived service quality* (Baron et al 2009:169).

The notion of perceived service quality highlights a comparison of customer expectations with their perceptions, known as the expectancy disconfirmation model (Brady, Cronin & Brand 2002:17; Grönroos 2007:72). If customer

perceptions meet expectations, the expectations are *confirmed* and the customer is satisfied with the service performance. Perceptions and expectations that are not equal can be regarded as *disconfirmed*. There are two types of disconfirmation. Firstly, a negative disconfirmation will result if perceptions fall below expectations and will lead to customer dissatisfaction. Secondly, a positive disconfirmation will result if perceptions exceed expectations and will lead to customer satisfaction (Hoffman & Bateson 2006:304). Figure 4.2 illustrates the disconfirmation-based service quality concept.

FIGURE 4.2

THE DISCONFIRMATORY SERVICE QUALITY MODEL
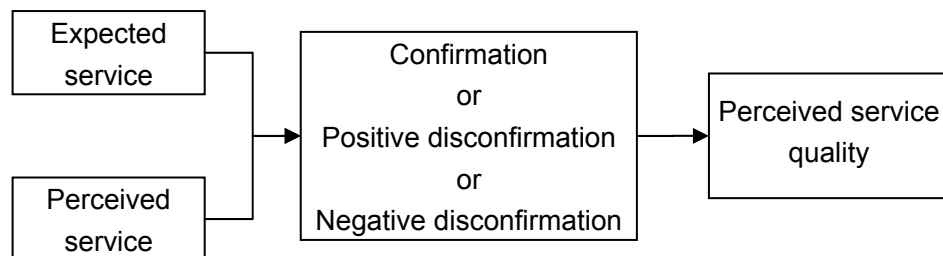
Source: Adapted from Zeithaml and Bitner (1996:77)

4.3.1 Customer expectations of service

According to Díza-Martin, Iglesias, Vázquez and Ruiz (2000:133), customer expectations have received the most thorough treatment in the service quality literature for two main reasons. Firstly, customer expectations are dynamic.

They can vary for different tourists and for the same tourist in different situations. Secondly, customer expectations are crucial. In addition to being a determinant of perceived service quality, they also serve as a segmentation base to identify groups of tourists with homogeneous characteristics and behaviours in tourist markets (Bigné, Gnoth & Andreu 2008:153).

The core concept of customer expectations is the *zone of tolerance* (see Figure 4.3), which reflects the difference between desired service and adequate service. The former refers to the level of service that the customer wishes to receive, while the latter refers to the minimum tolerable level of service that the customer will accept (Kurtz & Clow 1998:67-68). The customer's tolerance zone varies in terms of the importance of different service factors. Since biltong hunters regard honesty of the provider, slaughtering facilities, abundance and size of game, and atmosphere on the ranch as the most important factors contributing to a successful meat hunt (Radder 2000:129-133), they tend to hold very high expectations for these factors. This leads to high levels of both desired and adequate services and a narrow zone of tolerance (Zeithaml & Bitner 2000:53).

FIGURE 4.3

DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE

Antecedents of desired service

Antecedents of desired and predicted service

| Enduring service intensifiers |
| Personal needs |

| Explicit service promises |
| Implicit service promises |
| Word-of-mouth |
| Past experience |

Desired service

Zone of tolerance

Antecedents of adequate service

| Transitory service intensifiers |
| Perceived service alternatives |
| Self-perceived service role |
| Situational factors |

Adequate service

Predicted service

Source: Adapted from Zeithaml and Bitner (2000:63)

Since expectations could play a critical role in hunters' assessment of the safari experience, providers need to understand the factors that might shape these expectations (Radder 2001:174). Enduring service intensifiers and personal needs are two major influences on desired service levels (see Figure 4.3). *Enduring service intensifiers* are long-lasting, personal factors that lead the hunter to be more sensitive to the need for service. Two major factors include the hunter's personal service philosophies and derived expectations. The latter are created from the expectations of others, including the hunter's family and friends (Hoffman & Bateson 2006:324-325). *Personal needs*, on the other hand, are conditions essential to the hunter's physical, social and

psychological needs. For instance, hunters with high social needs are more willing to travel and hunt in a group (Radder 2001:175).

In contrast with the above factors shaping desired service, antecedents of adequate service are usually short-term and fluctuating (Hsu et al 2008:170). Five major elements (see Figure 4.3) that might affect adequate service levels in a hunting tourism setting are briefly outlined below.

- *Transitory service intensifiers* are short-term personal factors that make the hunter more aware of the need for service, for example, a hunter facing time constraints is more aware of a need for shooting opportunities.

- *Perceived service alternatives* are other providers from whom hunters can obtain similar hunting experiences. An increase in the number of providers would raise the level of what is regarded as acceptable service.

- *Self-perceived service role* refers to how well hunters believe that they are performing their roles in the safari. The acceptable level of service for a novice hunter is likely to be lower than that for a highly-skilled hunter.

- *Situational factors* are circumstances that hunters view as beyond the control of the provider. Weather conditions are crucial to the success of a hunting safari, yet are totally out of the provider's control.

- *Predicted service* is the level of service that hunters believe they are likely to receive from the provider. It is an estimate of what will happen in the next hunting safari (Radder 2001:176; Zeithaml & Bitner 2000:57-61).

When foreign hunters plan to participate in a South African hunting safari, they are likely to gather information from several internal and external sources (Radder 2001:175). These sources may affect both the desired and predicted service levels (see Figure 4.3) and are explained below in a hunting context.

- *Explicit service promises* are both personal and non-personal statements about the safari experience made by the provider to the hunter. Personal statements are made by service personnel, while non-personal statements are made by advertising and promotional materials.

- *Implicit service promises* are service-related cues that lead to inferences about what the hunting experience should be. These cues could be price and tangibles associated with the safari, such as decorations in the hunting camp and the vehicle used for transporting hunters.

- *Word-of-mouth* offers unbiased information from someone who has been through the hunting experience, such as family, friends and experts. It is important in the selection of an ideal hunting destination, especially for those without prior personal experiences.

- *Past experience* refers to the hunter's previous exposure to the safari. The hunter may compare the current hunting safari with all the previous ones at the particular ranch and also with those at other ranches (Radder 2001:175-176; Zeithaml & Bitner 2000:61-63).

4.3.2   Customer perceptions of service

In addition to customer expectations, another determinant of perceived service quality is customer perceptions. Perception is a term often used in psychology and cognitive sciences (Hsu et al 2008:171) and is defined as a "process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture" (Schiffman & Kanuk 1987:174). According to Reisinger and Turner (2003:151), there are three types of perceptions: perceptions of other people (e.g. tourist perceptions of hosts), perceptions of one's own (e.g. tourist perceptions of themselves), and perceptions of the perceptions (e.g. tourist perceptions of how they are perceived by hosts). This study concentrates on the first type, that is, travelling hunters' perceptions of the South African safari provider and his or her services.

Perceptions can be established through actual or supposed experiences (Kasper, Van Helsdingen & De Vries 1999:199). Customers perceive services in terms of the quality of the service, how satisfied they are with the service, and the overall value of the service (Zeithaml & Bitner 1996:116). In other words, customer perceptions of service encompass service quality, customer satisfaction and value (see Figure 4.4). Service quality and customer satisfaction are the focus of this research. Figure 4.4 illustrates four primary factors influencing customer perceptions of quality, satisfaction and value,

namely, service encounters, the evidence of service, image and price. The first two factors are more important, as they better distinguish perceptions of service from perceptions of manufactured products (Zeithaml & Bitner 1996:104) and will be elucidated below.

FIGURE 4.4

DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE
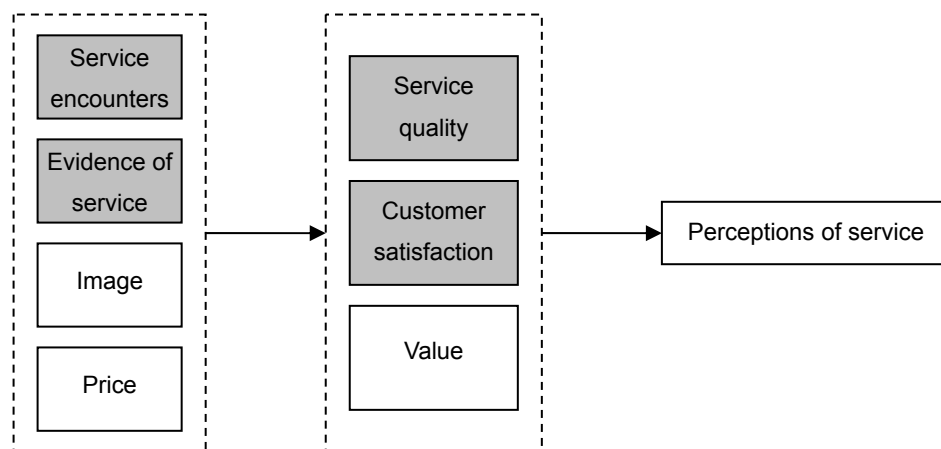
Source: Adapted from Kandampully (2007:193); Zeithaml and Bitner (1996:104)

4.3.2.1   Service encounters

Customers play a more significant role in the production of services than in the manufacturing of products. The involvement of the customer is particularly distinctive in the tourism industry (Williams & Buswell 2003:106). *Service encounters*, also called moments-of-truth, occur when tourists directly interact with any human or non-human aspect of the service system (Baron et al 2009:12). In a hunting context, the former may include hunting outfitters,

professional hunters, trackers, skinners and fellow hunters, while the latter may refer to transportation, accommodation, catering and physical surroundings on the farm.

The tourist experience can be viewed as a service process containing a series of sequential encounters. Some encounters are more important than others in forming the tourist experience and can be named *critical incidents*. When negative critical incidents (service failures) occur, tourism providers should immediately find possible solutions (service recovery), rather than try to rectify the problem after the tourist's departure (Hsu et al 2008:166). The critical incidents in a hunting context, for example, may include the professional hunter's ability to provide field guidance (a human element) and the abundance and size of game (a non-human element).

4.3.2.2   Evidence of service

Because services are intangible, customers look for *evidence of service* in every interaction with the provider. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2000:94), people, process and physical evidence constitute the three major categories of evidence experienced by the customer (see Figure 4.5).

FIGURE 4.5

THE EVIDENCE OF SERVICE
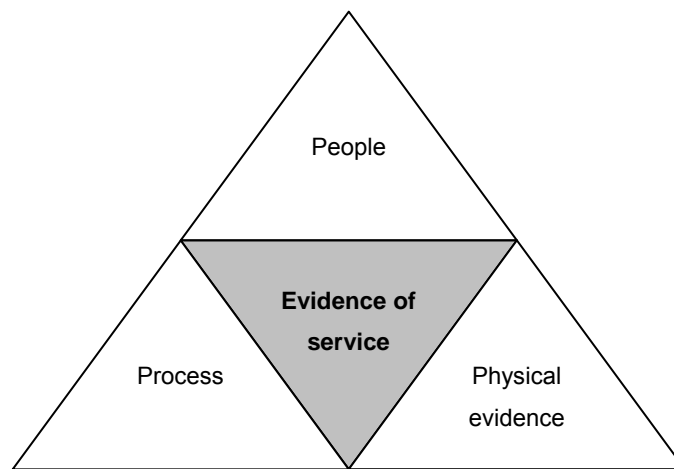
Source: Adapted from Zeithaml and Bitner (2000:95)

Three groups of *people* are important in tourism marketing, that is, the guest, the host (owners, hired managers and employees), and other guests in the service environment (George 2008:371). Frontline employees interact with customers directly and thus significantly affect service delivery. Their performance can be enhanced by training and empowerment and by promoting teamwork (Radder & Wang 2006:556). Moreover, the perception of service is also affected by the actions of the guest and those of other guests.

Process refers to the service delivery and operation systems consisting of all the procedures, mechanisms and activities by which the service is delivered to the customer (Zeithaml & Bitner 2000:20). Generally, blueprinting and service mapping are two frequently used techniques for the design of service process (Baron et al 2009:119). In contrast, the service quality gaps model is

commonly used for the assessment of the service process (Hoffman & Bateson 2006:334) and is explained in depth in Section 4.4.2 of this chapter.

Finally, *physical evidence* refers to all tangible components of service which can be classified into essential and peripheral parts (Woodruffe 1995:190). In the hunting context, the former may include abundance and size of game, while the latter may refer to accommodation and catering facilities.

4.4   MEASURING PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY IN A TOURISM CONTEXT

The pressure of competition in the tourism industry has forced businessmen to look for ways to enhance their competitive position. Many have decided to distinguish themselves from others by continuously improving the levels of service quality. However, objectively measuring tourist perceptions of service quality is a challenge due to the unique nature of tourism offerings. Since the early 1980s, researchers have proposed various service quality measuring models that can be broadly classified into either attribute-based or incident-based. Attribute-based models involve the use of specific attribute lists in measuring perceptions of service quality, while incident-based models focus on the outcomes of customer experiences during service encounters (Langer 1997:73). Some of these models are now discussed in more detail.

4.4.1   The Nordic model

Grönroos (1984:36-44), a well-recognised Swedish service researcher, originally developed the Nordic model (see Figure 4.6) based on the disconfirmation paradigm. This model is fundamentally incident-based and focuses on the evaluation process during a service encounter (Langer 1997:53). Two service quality dimensions are identified, namely, technical and functional quality. The technical (outcome) dimension refers to *what* the customer receives from a service provider, whereas the functional (process-related) dimension describes *how* this technical quality is delivered (Cooper & Hall 2008:325), for example, a foreign hunter shoots two animals in the hunting area (the "what") under the supervision and assistance of a professional hunter (the "how").

FIGURE 4.6

THE NORDIC MODEL
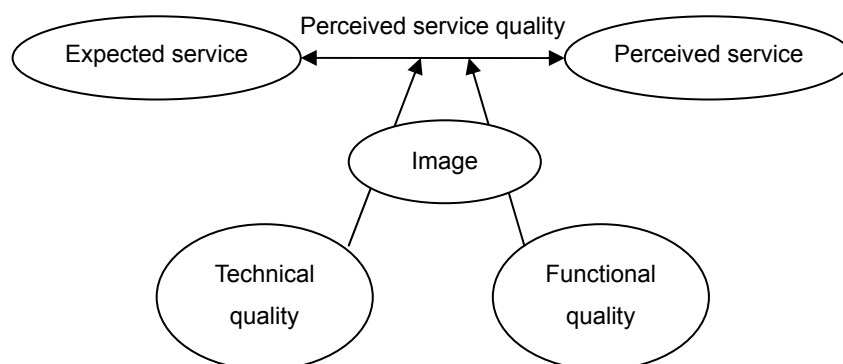
Source: Adapted from Grönroos (2007:74)

Figure 4.6 also demonstrates the importance of the provider's image, as the image may particularly help customers formulate their expectations of the service (Williams & Buswell 2003:50). Based on more research findings, Rust and Oliver (1994:1-19) proposed the addition of a third dimension to the original Nordic model. Their three-component model of service quality included technical quality, functional quality, and service environment.

4.4.2 The SERVQUAL model

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985:41-50) point out that "quality evaluations are not made solely on the outcome of a service; they also involve evaluations of the process of service delivery". Their research resulted in a service quality gaps model (see Figure 4.7), asserting that the service quality process can be examined in terms of four provider gaps and one customer gap. The four provider gaps are a:

- *knowledge gap*, that is, the difference between customer expectations and management perceptions of customer expectations;
- *standards gap*, that is, the difference between management perceptions of customer expectations and service quality specifications;
- *delivery gap*, that is, the difference between service quality specifications and the service actually delivered; and
- *communication* gap, that is, the difference between service delivery and

what is communicated about the service to customers (Zeithaml & Bitner 2000:482-489).

FIGURE 4.7

THE SERVICE QUALITY GAPS MODEL
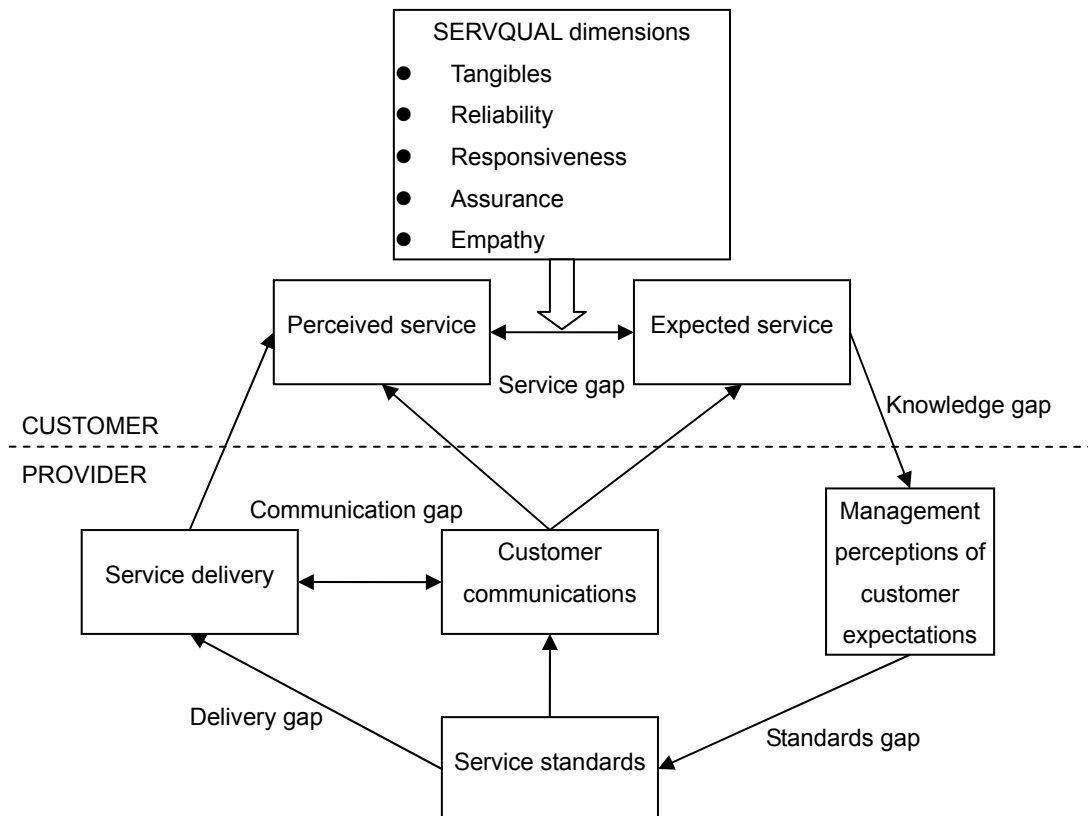
Source: Adapted from Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2008:111)

The existence of any of the four provider gaps will lead to the service gap (see Figure 4.7), which is the result of the customer's comparison of expected service with perceived service delivery (Tsang & Qu 2000:317). If expectations are met, service quality is perceived to be satisfactory; if expectations are not met, service quality is perceived to be less than satisfactory; if expectations are exceeded, service quality is perceived to be

more than satisfactory. The principal focus of a service organisation is to close a negative service gap, or at least narrow it as much as possible by working on the four provider gaps (Hoffman & Bateson 2006:334).

SERVQUAL is an attribute-based service quality measurement model, which aims to measure the size and direction of the service gap (Parasuraman et al 1988:12-40). It was initially developed based on data from five service industries, namely, appliance repair, retail banking, long-distance telephone service, securities brokerage and credit card companies (Zhu, Wymer & Chen 2002:71). The SERVQUAL instrument consists of two sets of 22 statements measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale and has the ability to produce gap scores in the range of -6 to +6 (Williams & Buswell 2003:179). The 22 statements can be grouped into five service dimensions (see Figure 4.7), including:

- *tangibles* that refer to the appearance of physical facilities and surroundings, equipment, personnel and communication materials;
- *reliability*, that is, the provider's ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately;
- *responsiveness*, that is, the provider's willingness to help customers and deliver prompt service;
- *assurance* that refers to the provider's knowledge and courtesy as well as the ability to convey trust and confidence; and

- *empathy* that relates to the provider's provision of caring, individualised attention to customers (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons 2008:108-109).

Despite criticism from other researchers (e.g. Cronin & Taylor 1992:55-68; Teas 1993:18-34), SERVQUAL remains the most commonly used diagnostic model for measuring service quality and the development of service quality strategies across countries and industries (Chen 2008:710). For instance, SERVQUAL or its adapted versions had successful applications in the services of ocean freight shipping (Durvasula, Lysonski & Mehta 1999:132-150), mobile communication (Lai, Hutchinson, Li & Bai 2007:244-262), health care (Kilbourne et al 2004:524-533), insurance (Stafford, Stafford & Wells 1998:426-440), and higher education (Tan & Kek 2004:17-24).

Considerable research has been undertaken on the ways of measuring customer service quality in the fields of tourism and hospitality. As a result, various derivatives of SERVQUAL have been proposed for different service contexts, such as the LQI model (Getty & Getty 2003:94-104) for the hotel industry, the DINESERV scale (Stevens, Knutson & Patton 1995:56-60) for the restaurant setting, the ECOSERV instrument (Khan 2003:109-124) for the ecotourism market, and the HISTOQUAL model (Frochot & Hughes 2000:157-167) for historical sites. The current research used an adapted

version of SERVQUAL to measure foreign hunters' perceptions of service delivery in the South African safari.

4.4.3   The multilevel model

In addition to its multidimensional nature, the service quality construct is also hierarchical in nature. Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz (1996:3-16) suggest that the service quality construct in a retail setting may differ from that in pure service industries and thus propose a multilevel model in which retail service quality is viewed as a high-order factor that is defined by two additional levels of attributes. Brady and Cronin (2001:34-49) combined the Rust and Oliver's (1994:1-19) model and the Dabholkar et al's (1996:3-16) hierarchical structure to develop a multilevel, multidimensional model of perceived service quality (see Figure 4.8). In this model, service quality is explained by three primary dimensions (interaction, physical environment and outcome), each consisting of three corresponding subdimensions. Martínez Caro and Martínez García (2007a:60-72; 2008:706-720) adapted this conceptualisation to the travel agency and urgent transport services and advocated that it improves the understanding of what defines service quality perceptions. The current research examined whether a multilevel, multidimensional service quality model exists in the South African hunting tourism industry (see hypotheses H1a and H1b in Section 1.3.1 of Chapter 1).

FIGURE 4.8

THE MULTILEVEL AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL MODEL
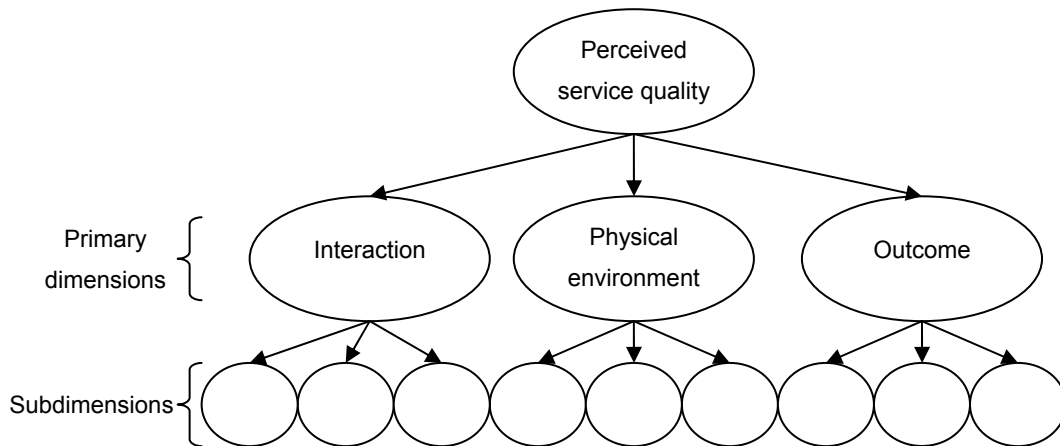
Source: Adapted from Brady and Cronin (2001:37)

4.5   CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Knowledge of customer satisfaction is critical for both tourism managers and tourists. In a competitive environment, tourism management have to focus specific attention on measuring tourist satisfaction with the purpose of improving service performance, enhancing competitive position, and gaining higher profitability (Huang & Sarigöllü 2008:942). On the other hand, tourists' satisfaction with tourism experiences contributes significantly to their life satisfaction and well-being which is an important way to assess the quality of life of societies (Del Bosque & Martín 2008:552).

4.5.1   Customer satisfaction versus service quality

Tourists perceive performance in terms of the quality of service delivered and the satisfaction level attained. Tourism organisations may differentiate themselves by providing better quality service and customer satisfaction, which would lead to retaining clients and employees, avoiding price competition and reducing complaints (George 2008:375).

The difference between service quality and satisfaction has been debated repeatedly in the literature, but in practice, these concepts are often used interchangeably (Grönroos 2007:89). Zeithaml and Bitner (2000:74) argue that although service quality and satisfaction are both evaluation variables relating to customers' perceptions of a given product or service, and can be measured based on the expectancy disconfirmatory paradigm, satisfaction is generally viewed as a broader concept while service quality is a focused evaluation of specific dimensions of service. In other words, service quality is an essential part of customer satisfaction. Besides it, product quality, price, situational factors (e.g. weather conditions) and personal factors (e.g. emotional states) can also influence customer satisfaction. The association between these two concepts is illustrated in Figure 4.9.

FIGURE 4.9

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND SERVICE QUALITY
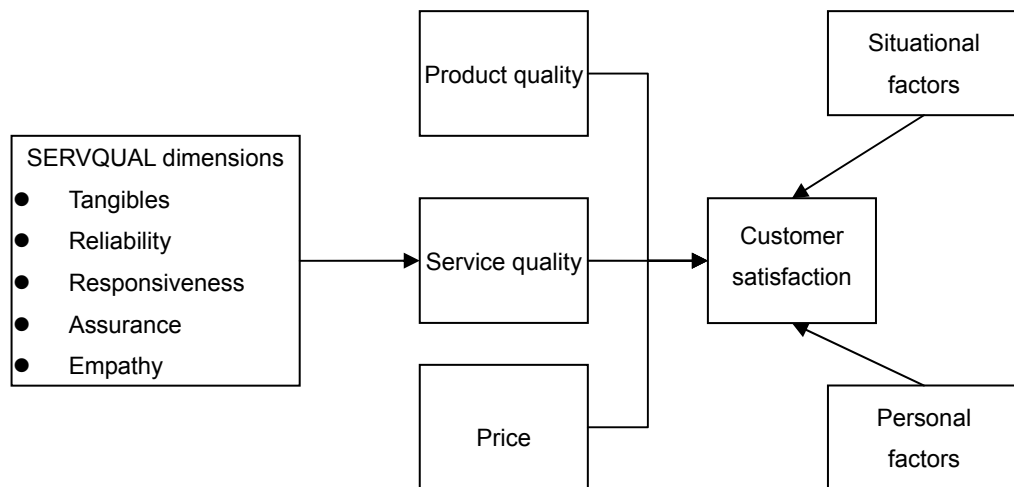
Source: Adapted from Zeithaml and Bitner (2000:75)

4.5.2   The nature of customer satisfaction

Traditionally customer satisfaction has been defined from either a cognitive or an affective perspective. The cognitive school defines satisfaction as customers' cognitive states influenced by their previous cognition, while the affective school views satisfaction as customers' overall affective reaction to an offering (De Rojas & Camarero 2008:526). The need to incorporate cognitive with affective components in conceptualising customer satisfaction has been increasingly acknowledged in the literature (Williams & Soutar 2009:418).

Affective-based research on customer satisfaction has revealed that the inclusion of affect (the emotional side of consciousness as opposed to thinking) into the conceptualisation of satisfaction is extremely important in the case of services, given their experiential and interactive nature (Wirtz, Mattila & Tan 2000:347-365). Emotions consist of two interdependent components, namely, pleasure and arousal. The pleasure-arousal interaction thus represents the affective character of satisfaction. Pleasure refers to the degree to which a tourist feels good, joyful or happy, while arousal relates to the extent to which a tourist feels stimulated and active (Bigné, Andreu & Gnoth 2005:834).

Cognitive-based research on customer satisfaction has provided evidence that disconfirmation of expectation is the key determinant of satisfaction (Yuan & Jang 2008:280). Customer (dis)satisfaction is thus a function of the disconfirmation derived from discrepancies between prior expectations and actual performance. Higher performance relative to expectations will lead to satisfaction and vice versa (Hui et al 2007:966). Although the use of expectations to measure satisfaction has been criticised in the literature, expectations play a pivotal role in determining tourist satisfaction in the tourism industry (Truong & Foster 2006:843). Tourists usually establish initial expectations of the type and quality of services to be offered in a particular destination before their journeys begin. These expectations are formed mainly

through formal (e.g. advertisements and brochures) and informal (e.g. friends and relatives) information channels (Akama & Kieti 2003:75).

Satisfaction can be evaluated at either attribute or overall level (Johnston & Clark 2005:133). In a tourism setting, attribute satisfaction relates to a tourist's continued subjective judgements based on observations of attribute performance (Oliver 1993:421) and serve as a direct antecedent of overall satisfaction (Chi & Qu 2008:624-626). Overall satisfaction refers to a tourist's overall subjective judgement based on all encounters and experiences with a particular provider (Chen 2008:711). This research focused on the cognitive character of tourist satisfaction that was measured from an overall perspective. Figure 4.10 highlights the interrelationship between the elements of customer satisfaction.

FIGURE 4.10

MEASUREMENT OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
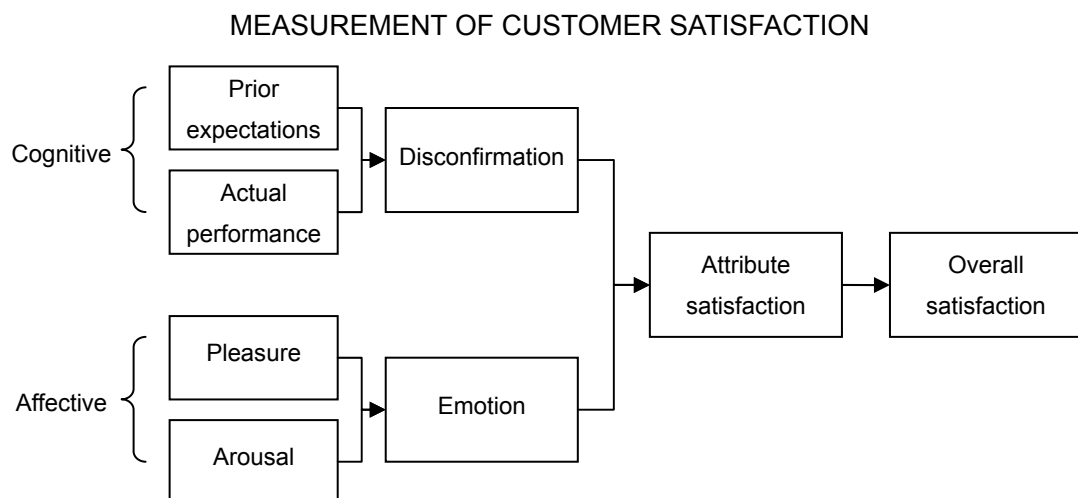
Source: Adapted from Hui et al (2007:967); Martínez Caro and Martínez García (2007b:110)

4.5.3   Linking service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention

Dabholkar (1995:101-106) suggests that the relationship between service quality and satisfaction is situation-specific and depends on the service context. If customers are cognitive-oriented, they will perceive the relationship as service quality causing satisfaction. However, if customers are affective-oriented, they will perceive the relationship as satisfaction causing service quality. Brady and Robertson (2001:53-60) tested these arguments by comparing consumers from the US with those from Ecuador and concluded that consumers from developed countries are more cognitive-oriented and those from less-developed countries are more affective-oriented. Given the fact that the vast majority of trophy hunters visiting South Africa are from developed countries, the cognitive-based relationship was thus assumed in formulating hypothesis H2a (see Section 1.3.2 of Chapter 1).

In contrast with the ambiguous antecedent role of service quality and satisfaction, the relationship between satisfaction and behavioural intention has been clearly established (McDougall & Levesque 2000:392). The tourism literature generally supports the role of satisfaction in predicting behavioural intention (e.g. Baker & Crompton 2000:785-804; Hui et al 2007:965-975; Kim, Ng & Kim 2009:10-17; Ladhari, Brun & Morales 2008:563-573).

Therefore, ensuring customer satisfaction is of great interest in service organisations because satisfaction links purchase to post-purchase phenomena such as attitude change, repeat purchase, positive word-of-mouth publicity and brand loyalty (Oliver 1993:418-430). Satisfied customers are more likely to maintain their patronage and express their appraisals to various parties. Dissatisfied customers may, however, stop buying the provider's offerings, switch to a competitor, and voice their complaints (Chan, Hui, Lo, Tse, Tso & Wu 2003:878). In this study, behavioural intentions were addressed in the form of revisit and word-of-mouth intentions. Research (e.g. Oh 2000:58-66) has found that customers' intentions to revisit a provider may predict their willingness to spread positive word-of-mouth publicity about the provider. Drawing on the above literature, hypotheses H2d and H2e (see Section 1.3.2 of Chapter 1) were formulated.

4.6   SUMMARY

This chapter discussed services marketing and the concepts of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention. The definition, determinants and measurement of each concept were highlighted and the causal relationships among these concepts were explained.

Intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability differentiate services from goods. The service quality construct is multidimensional and multilevel in nature, but is most popularly seen as the difference between consumers' perceptions and expectations. SERVQUAL is the most commonly used service quality measuring instrument. Customer satisfaction results from high levels of perceived service quality and leads to repeat purchase and positive word-of-mouth publicity. Based on the above findings from the literature, a number of hypotheses were postulated. The results of their testing are provided in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 reviewed the literature on service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention that constituted the safari experience variables. This chapter addresses the fifth research objective stated in Section 1.2 of Chapter 1, namely, to report the results derived from the empirical investigation (See Figure 5.1). Hypotheses are tested in this chapter using factor analyses, multiple regression analyses and t-tests.

FIGURE 5.1

LOCATION OF CHAPTER 5 IN THE DISSERTATION
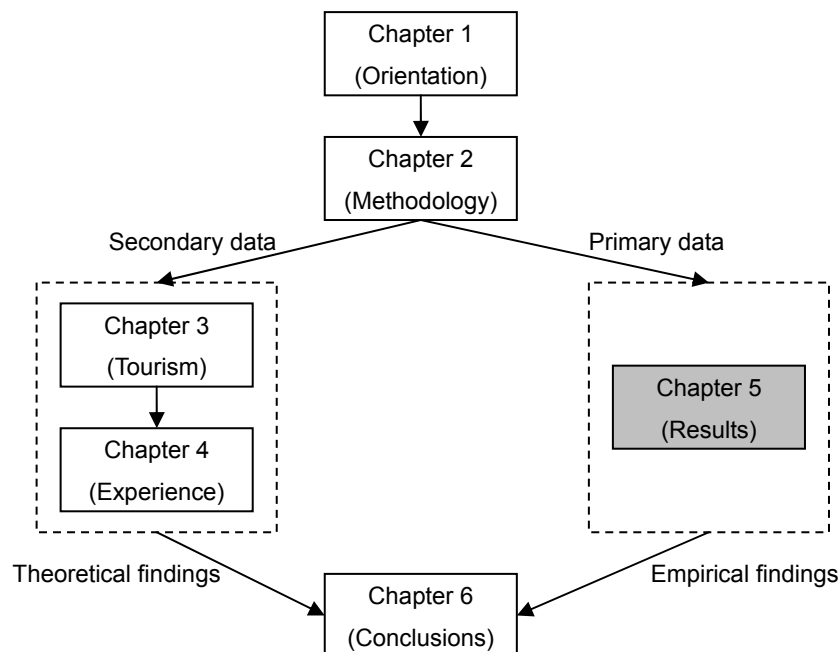
5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The demographic data gathered via open-ended, dichotomous and multiple-choice questions of the questionnaire are presented in Table 5.1. These relate to respondents' gender, age, region of residence, current and childhood home environment, annual household income and post-school education.

A total of 236 respondents completed the questionnaire. Of these, the majority (96%; n=227) were male; only a small percentage (4%; n=9) were female. The largest proportion (64%; n=150) belonged to the middle (40 to 60 years) age group; the rest (36%; n=86) were either younger than 40 or older than 60. The largest proportion (65%; n=154) of the respondents were from the USA; the balance (35%; n=82) were from European countries. The above characteristics are in line with the findings of Radder's (2003:3-5) research on the profile of the international hunter.

At the time of the survey, the largest proportion (58%; n=138) of the respondents were living in rural areas; the rest (42%; n=98) were living in urban areas. In terms of childhood home environment, it is interesting to note that the proportion of the respondents who grew up in rural surroundings (50%; n=118) was equal to that in urban surroundings (50%; n=118). The

largest proportion (39%; n=93) of the respondents had an annual household income of less than US$100 000, closely followed by the respondents earning between US$100 000 and US$ 200 000 (37%; n=86). The smallest proportion (24%; n=57) had an income exceeding US$ 200 000. Finally, the respondents' level of education was generally high because 47% (n=110) had received higher education of one to four years and 41% (n=97) had more than four years. Only 12% (n=29) had no post-school training.

TABLE 5.1

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Gender		
Male	227	96
Female	9	4
Age		
< 40 or >60 years old	86	36
40 – 60 years old	150	64
Region of residence		
USA	154	65
Europe	82	35
Current home environment		
Urban	98	42
Rural	138	58
Childhood home environment		
Urban	118	50
Rural	118	50
Annual household income		
<US$100 000	93	39
US$100 000 – US$200 000	86	37
>US$200 000	57	24
Post-school education		
None	29	12
1 – 4 years	110	47
> 4 years	97	41

5.3   FACTOR ANALYSES

All measures used in tourism marketing research must be accurate. An accurate measure is both reliable and valid. Reliability and validity are concerned with the credibility of the research findings (Aaker et al 2007:306-310). For the purpose of the current research, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was first performed to identify the underlying dimensions of the service quality scale. Then confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the overall fit of the measurement model and to scrutinise the reliability and validity of the factors found in EFA. As a result, the first set of hypotheses presented in Section 1.3.1 of Chapter 1 could be tested.

5.3.1   Exploratory factor analysis

The 25 items of the service quality scale were subjected to EFA using the SPSS Version 15 statistical package. The difference (perception minus expectation) scores were employed to refine this disconfirmation scale. Initially, the suitability of the data for factoring was determined by examining the strength of the relationship among these items. Two statistical techniques are most commonly used to help assess the appropriateness of EFA, namely, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser 1970:401-415) and the Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett 1954:296-298).

The KMO value was 0.922, exceeding the cut-off value of 0.60; the Bartlett's test reached statistical significance (p=0.000), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Therefore, the service quality data gathered were suitable for factoring.

Principal components analysis was adopted at the factor extraction stage. The decision concerning the number of factors was determined by consulting the Kaiser's criterion (Kaiser 1960:141-151) and the Catell's scree test (Catell 1966:245-276). Three eigenvalues were greater than one and a clear elbow appeared between the third and fourth components in the screeplot, suggesting the presence of three latent factors. These three factors explained a total of 62.388% of the variance, consisting of 25.635%, 21.537%, and 15.217%, respectively. For any factor to be meaningful at least 5% of the total variance should be attributable to that factor; for any solution to be satisfactory at least 60% of the total variance should be attributable to that solution (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham 2006:120). Thus, the three-component structure was considered an interpretable factor solution.

To assist in the interpretation of this extracted factor solution, an oblique rotational approach using the Direct Oblimin technique was employed at the factor rotation stage. Contrary to the orthogonal approach, the oblique approach assumes that the extracted factors are correlated to one another

(Pallant 2007:183). This approach has been used in many previous service quality studies (e.g. Parasuraman et al 1988:12-40; Wilkins, Merrilees & Herington 2007:840-853) to allow for intercorrelation among the service factors.

After the data were rotated, 19 of 25 items were retained, each loading onto a single factor at a practical significance level (factor loading $\cong$ 0.5). Whereas statistical significance explores whether the result is attributable to chance, practical significance seeks to discover whether the result is useful in achieving the research objectives (Hair, Black et al 2006:2-3). Six items (SQ2, SQ10, SQ12, SQ19, SQ21, and SQ23) failed to load significantly onto any factor, or had significant cross-loadings. To avoid possible ambiguous dimensionality, these six items were omitted from any further analysis.

The rotated three-factor solution is illustrated in Table 5.2, indicating the items comprising each factor, factor loadings and the relevant reliability statistics. It is important to note that some of these items were rephrased for the purpose of easier interpretation of the findings. This resultant factor structure differed from the anticipated structure where six factors were proposed (see Table 2.2 in Chapter 2). These results are in line with several other studies (e.g. Akbaba 2006:170-192) which found it impossible to transfer the original or adapted SERVQUAL dimensions across industries. Overlapping dimensions have, for

example, also been experienced when SERVQUAL was implemented in the context of travel agencies (Bigné et al 2003:258-262) and ecotourism (Khan 2003:109-124). Given the difference between the anticipated and resultant factor structures and the exploratory nature of this study, the researcher scrutinised the items for face validity. The new three-factor solution was accepted as a construct of service quality for the South African hunting safari.

TABLE 5.2

RESULTS OF EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

ITEM	AUGMENTED SERVICES	CORE SERVICES	SUPPORTING SERVICES
SQ15: Staff delivering prompt service	0.801		
SQ14: Staff having good social skills	0.800		
SQ17: Staff having my best interests at heart	0.779		
SQ13: Staff showing a sincere interest in solving my problems	0.772		
SQ16: Staff giving me personal attention	0.762		
SQ18: Staff understanding my specific needs	0.758		
SQ11: Staff providing services on time	0.629		
SQ20: Staff being ready to provide field guidance		0.780	
SQ07: Staff being knowledgeable		0.707	
SQ08: Staff being well-trained		0.704	
SQ25: Facilities reflecting a wilderness feeling		0.686	
SQ22: Facilities being appropriate to the environment		0.668	
SQ09: Game being abundant		0.620	
SQ24: Staff having ethical standards		0.581	
SQ04: Accommodation being clean			0.770
SQ03: Accommodation being comfortable			0.745
SQ05: Meals and refreshments being excellent			0.708
SQ06: Physical safety being consistently high			0.637
SQ01: Transport to and from hunting area being excellent			0.621
Eigenvalue	9.641	1.984	1.476
Variance explained (%)	25.635	21.537	15.217
Total variance explained (%)	25.635	47.172	62.388
Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	0.932	0.887	0.782

The three factors can be explained as follows. Factor one, *augmented services*, explained the largest proportion (25.635%) of the total variance of the solution and comprised seven items, consisting of two items (SQ11 and SQ13) expected to measure the reliability dimension, two items (SQ14 and SQ15) intended to measure the responsiveness dimension, and three items (SQ16, SQ17, and SQ18) proposed to measure the empathy dimension. This factor gathered most of the invisible attributes essential for successful interactions between the staff and the client, which highlighted the role of the client in the co-production of the safari service.

Factor two, *core services*, explained the second largest proportion (21.537%) of the total variance of the solution and grouped together seven items, consisting of one item (SQ20) anticipated to measure the responsiveness dimension, three items (SQ7, SQ8, and SQ9) proposed to measure the assurance dimension, and three items (SQ22, SQ24, and SQ25) expected to measure the eco-tangibles dimension. This factor combined invisible with visible attributes reflecting the direct benefits sought by the client from the safari and the core requirements associated with the service.

Factor three, *supporting services*, interpreted the smallest proportion (15.217%) of the total variance of the solution and captured five items, including one item (SQ6) intended to measure the assurance dimension and

four items (SQ1, SQ3, SQ4, and SQ5) proposed to measure the hunt-tangibles dimension. This factor was dominated by visible attributes that were extra services offered to add value to core services and help differentiate them from the competition. These extra services were not in themselves predictors of satisfactory safari service delivery, but their absence could generate dissatisfactory service delivery.

Finally, each resultant factor was tested for reliability. Internal consistency, judged by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, is regarded as the most appropriate method for measuring the reliability of a multidimensional scale (Hair, Bush et al 2006:374). Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the three factors ranged from 0.932 to 0.782 (see Table 5.2), exceeding the recommended cut-off point of 0.70 (Pallant 2007:95). As a result, adequate internal consistency among the service attributes within each dimension was established.

5.3.2   Confirmatory factor analysis

The three-factor solution identified in the EFA was subjected to CFA using the AMOS Version 7 software. The proposed measurement model (see Figure 5.2) was computed using the maximum likelihood estimation technique (Sharma 1996:181-185). A two-step process of CFA was implemented: first

the overall fit of the measurement model was assessed, and thereafter the construct validity of the model was evaluated.

FIGURE 5.2

THE MEASUREMENT MODEL
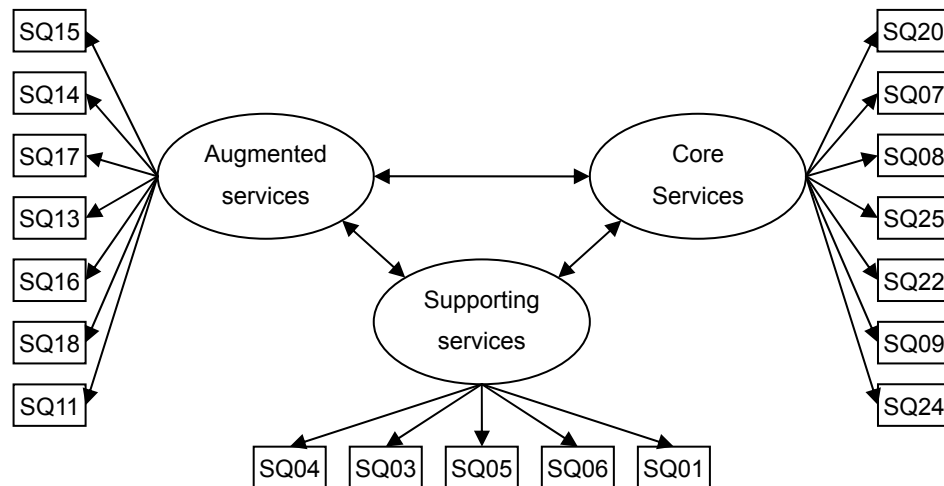
5.3.2.1   Overall fit of the model

The model fit can be calculated at either a statistical or practical level. Statistical fit is evaluated via the chi-square statistic and the associated p-value, while practical fit is evaluated via various indices of fit (Savalei & Bentler 2006:341). Although the chi-square value (see Table 5.3) was significant (p=0.000), reliance on the chi-square statistic as the sole fit indicator of a measurement model is not recommended due to its sensitivity to sample size, especially for cases in which the sample size exceeds 200 respondents (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black 1998:655), as occurred here

(236 respondents). Additional fit indices were chosen following Hair, Black et al's (2006:752) guidelines, namely, that the researcher should report at least one incremental index (e.g. CFI), one absolute index (e.g. GFI), and one badness-of-fit index (e.g. RMSR). As illustrated in Table 5.3, the model's fit was adequate, since the values of normed chi-square, GFI, CFI and RMSR were within the recommended tolerances. As a result, the factor structure suggested in the EFA was confirmed in terms of the fit.

TABLE 5.3

EVIDENCE OF MODEL FIT

FIT MEASURE	THRESHOLD VALUE	SAMPLE VALUE
Chi-square (x^2)	-	431.793
P-value	$\geqq 0.05$	0.000
Degree of freedom (df)	-	149
Normed chi-square (x^2/df)	1.0-3.0	2.898
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	$\geqq 0.90$	0.906
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	$\geqq 0.90$	0.918
Room Means Square Residual (RMSR)	$\leqq 0.08$	0.069

Source: Adapted from Hair, Black et al (2006:745-751); Tabachnick and Fidell (2007:715-720)

5.3.2.2   Construct validity of the model

CFA is particularly useful in evaluating construct validity (Hair, Black et al 2006:776). A model's construct validity can be determined by simultaneously assessing its convergent and discriminant validity (Churchill 1979:70). Convergent validity is established through high correlations between the

measure of interest and other measures that are supposedly measuring the same concept (Aaker et al 2007:307). The relative amount of convergent validity among item measures is estimated by assessing item reliability, construct reliability, and variance extracted.

The results (reported in Table 5.4) confirmed convergent validity of the service quality model relating to the hunting safari.

● Item reliability was supported, since the critical ratio (t-value) associated with each item was statistically significant (p<0.001) (Anderson & Gerbing 1988:411-423).

● Construct reliability was evident, since the reliability coefficient of each construct exceeded the recommended cut-off level of 0.7 (Hair, Black et al 2006:778).

● Variance extracted was 0.54 for *core services* and 0.67 for *augmented services*, which were above the recommended threshold of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker 1981:39-50). Variance extracted by *supporting services* was at a marginally acceptable level of 0.47.

TABLE 5.4

EVIDENCE OF CONVERGENT VALIDITY OF THE MODEL

FACTOR AND ITEM	STANDARDISED LOADING	UNSTANDARDISED LOADING	CRITICAL RATIO	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY	VARIANCE EXTRACTED
Augmented services				0.93	0.67
SQ15	0.85	1.08	12.99		
SQ14	0.85	1.29	13.00		
SQ17	0.82	1.10	12.64		
SQ13	0.85	1.23	13.13		
SQ16	0.81	1.11	12.39		
SQ18	0.80	1.11	12.18		
SQ11	0.73	1.00	-		
Core services				0.89	0.54
SQ20	0.74	1.10	10.32		
SQ07	0.89	1.35	12.08		
SQ08	0.89	1.39	12.11		
SQ25	0.65	1.16	9.15		
SQ22	0.71	1.13	9.92		
SQ09	0.52	0.78	7.49		
SQ24	0.68	1.00	-		
Supporting services				0.81	0.47
SQ04	0.83	1.48	5.97		
SQ03	0.80	1.58	5.93		
SQ05	0.77	1.50	5.87		
SQ06	0.52	0.98	5.07		
SQ01	0.40	1.00	-		

In addition, discriminant validity was determined through low correlations between the measure of interest and other measures that are supposedly *not* measuring the same concept (Aaker et al 2007:307). Discriminant validity can be empirically assessed by comparing each of the variance-extracted scores of any two constructs with the squared correlation coefficient between these two constructs (Fornell & Larcker 1981:39-50). Table 5.5 illustrates the correlation coefficients in the bottom-half diagonal and the squared correlation

coefficients in the top-half diagonal, which provided evidence for the distinctiveness between the constructs. As a result, the factor structure suggested in the EFA was also confirmed in terms of the construct validity.

TABLE 5.5

EVIDENCE OF DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY OF THE MODEL

FACTOR	AUGMENTED SERVICES	CORE SERVICES	SUPPORTING SERVICES
Augmented services	1.00	0.48	0.28
Core services	0.69	1.00	0.32
Supporting services	0.53	0.57	1.00

5.3.3   Summary of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses

Since the three-factor structure found in the EFA was verified by the CFA in terms of the model fit and construct validity, hypothesis H1a, which postulated six first-order service quality factors, was rejected. Also because only *three* first-order factors resulted, it was deemed not appropriate to test whether a second-order model (with the three identified first-order factors and a proposed second-order factor termed perceived overall service quality) existed in the South African safari context. This decision was informed based on Hair, Black et al's (2006:818) suggestion, namely, that if a second-order model consumes as many degrees of freedom (DFs) as a first-order model (as occurred here), the second-order model is not desirable as it is less parsimonious than the first-order model from the standpoints of the fit and

simplification. Consequently, all four hypotheses relating to the presence of a second-order factor were rejected, that is, H1b, H2a, H2b, and H2c.

5.4   RESULTS OF THE SERVICE QUALITY GAP ANALYSIS

One of the sub-questions of the research was to determine how travelling hunters assess the levels of service quality in the South African safari (see Section 1.2 of Chapter 1). This can be addressed by computing the service gap scores based on the perception-minus-expectation (P-E) specification, as discussed in Section 4.3 of Chapter 4. A positive gap indicates that hunters perceived service delivery to exceed their expectations; a negative gap indicates that perceived service delivery did not meet their expectations.

Table 5.6 shows the perception and expectation mean scores, and gap scores on the 19 observable attributes, and the scores for the latent factors and for the combined measure. The wordings of some attributes were rephrased for easier interpretation of the findings. At the item (attribute) level, the perception mean scores ranged from 5.13 to 5.61; the expectation mean scores ranged from 4.72 to 5.58. Except one item (SQ24), all the gap scores were positive, ranging from 0.013 to 0.602. The average gap score for the 19 attributes was 0.254. These findings imply that the performance linked to the safari exceeded hunters' expectations and the service was judged to be satisfactory.

TABLE 5.6

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

FACTOR AND ITEM	PERCEPTION		EXPECTATION		MEAN	T-TEST	
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	GAP	T	Sig
Factor one: Augmented services	**5.34**	**0.92**	**5.08**	**0.87**	**0.259**	**4.26**	**0.000**
SQ15: Staff delivering prompt service	5.36	0.97	5.00	1.01	0.369	5.53	0.000
SQ14: Staff having good social skills	5.22	1.10	4.89	1.07	0.335	4.21	0.000
SQ17: Staff having my best interests at heart	5.38	1.01	5.24	0.93	0.140	2.02	0.045
SQ13: Staff showing a sincere interest in solving my problems	5.34	1.07	5.29	0.97	0.047	0.62	0.534
SQ16: Staff giving me personal attention	5.35	0.97	4.80	1.15	0.555	7.78	0.000
SQ18: Staff understanding my specific needs	5.32	1.06	5.05	1.06	0.267	3.69	0.000
SQ11: Staff providing services on time	5.40	1.01	5.30	0.86	0.102	1.42	0.156
Factor two: Core services	**5.40**	**0.80**	**5.31**	**0.65**	**0.085**	**1.65**	**0.100**
SQ20: Staff being ready to provide field guidance	5.60	0.89	5.58	0.74	0.021	0.33	0.739
SQ07: Staff being knowledgeable	5.47	0.97	5.45	0.78	0.021	0.33	0.744
SQ08: Staff being well-trained	5.43	0.99	5.42	0.81	0.013	0.19	0.848
SQ25: Facilities reflecting a wilderness feeling	5.13	1.13	4.94	1.10	0.186	2.45	0.015
SQ22: Facilities being appropriate to the environment	5.35	0.95	4.97	0.99	0.381	5.62	0.000
SQ09: Game being abundant	5.33	0.94	5.30	0.87	0.034	0.54	0.592
SQ24: Staff having ethical standards	5.46	0.99	5.53	0.77	-0.064	-1.01	0.314
Factor three: Supporting services	**5.50**	**0.66**	**5.01**	**0.81**	**0.483**	**9.41**	**0.000**
SQ04: Accommodation being clean	5.58	0.73	5.21	0.92	0.369	5.95	0.000
SQ03: Accommodation being comfortable	5.51	0.83	4.91	1.02	0.602	8.81	0.000
SQ05: Meals and refreshments being excellent	5.49	0.83	5.02	0.93	0.475	7.03	0.000
SQ06: Physical safety being consistently high	5.61	0.75	5.21	1.05	0.398	6.07	0.000
SQ01: Transport to and from hunting area being excellent	5.29	1.00	4.72	1.19	0.572	6.67	0.000
Average	**5.40**	**0.73**	**5.15**	**0.69**	**0.254**	**5.44**	**0.000**

Augmented services describes the skills and abilities required by safari staff to successfully interact with clients. Table 5.6 shows that the largest gap in this factor related to giving clients' personal attention (+0.555; p=0.000), which implies high levels of satisfaction with this particular service attribute. The smallest gap related to showing a sincere interest in solving clients' problems (+0.047; p=0.534). This gap shows that there was a very close match between hunters' expectations and their experiences of this service attribute.

Core services focuses on the direct benefits sought by the client from the safari. The ethical standards of safari staff showed the only negative gap score (-0.064), not only within this factor but also among all the items (see Table 5.6). Although this gap implies that hunters were dissatisfied with staff's ethics, the magnitude of the differences was very small and statistically insignificant (p=0.314).

Supporting services gathered attributes such as meals and accommodation, which might indirectly affect the levels of service delivery of the safari. The comfort of accommodation (+0.602; p=0.000) had the largest item gap score, not only within this factor but also among all the items (see Table 5.6). This implies that hunters were most satisfied with this service attribute.

Table 5.6 also shows the results of a paired-samples t-test conducted to determine whether any of the gap scores was significant. A statistically significant difference (p<0.05) was found on 12 of 19 observable attributes, two of three latent factors, and the average measurement scale. Considering the significant magnitude of the differences, it could be argued that hunters' expectations of the quality of service associated with the safari were met.

To facilitate comparisons, Figure 5.3 was also constructed to illustrate the existence of *positive* service gaps at the factor (dimension) level. It is evident

that factor mean scores on perceptions were consistently higher than those on expectations. This reflects that hunters' expectations of the three service dimensions were positively disconfirmed (met). The largest gap existed on supporting services, and the smallest on core services.

FIGURE 5.3

COMPARISON OF FACTOR MEAN SCORES
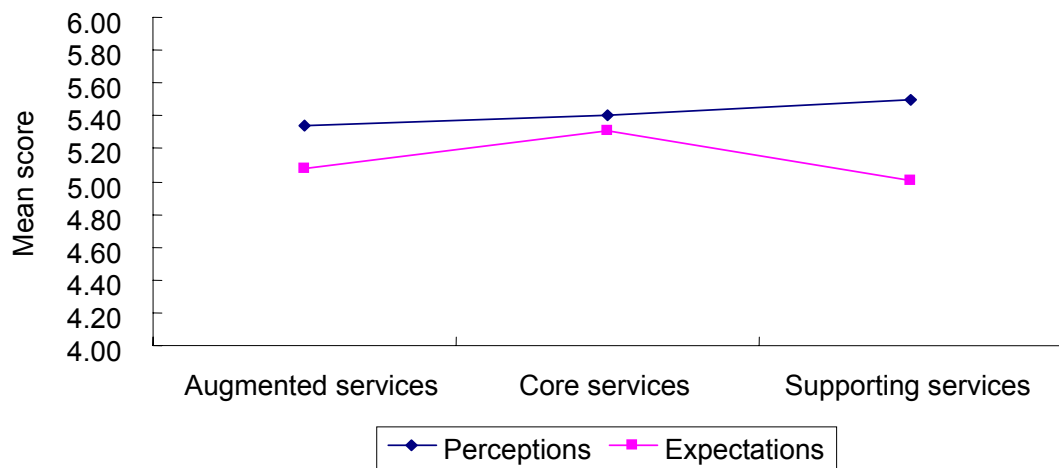
5.5 MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES

Multiple regression analysis is a statistical procedure for relating one or more independent variables to a dependent variable and for testing whether independent variables are statistically significantly related to the dependent variable (Lehmann 2006:255). In this research, three separate standard-type multiple regression analyses were performed in SPSS Version 15 to examine the cause-and-effect relationships among service quality dimensions, overall

satisfaction, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendation. Compared with hierarchical and stepwise approaches, the standard approach is the most commonly used regression analysis method, in which all the independent variables are entered into the equation simultaneously (Pallant 2007:147).

5.5.1 The first set of multiple regression analyses

The first multiple regression analysis was employed to assess the ability of the three identified service quality dimensions (augmented services, core services and supporting services) to predict levels of overall satisfaction. Overall satisfaction was measured by a single six-point Likert-type scale, namely, "I had a positive overall hunting experience during the South African safari". The mean score of this scale was 5.19, yielding a standard deviation of 0.85. This implies that travelling hunters were generally satisfied with the South African safari. For the purpose of predicting the value of overall satisfaction for given values of the three service quality dimensions, the regression equation could be written as: $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3$ (where Y is the predicted value of overall satisfaction; X_1, X_2, and X_3 are values on service quality dimensions; α is the Y-intercept when all service quality dimensions are set to zero; β_1, β_2, and β_3 are the regression coefficients for the corresponding service dimensions).

It is important to note that only the relevant *perception* measures of service quality were used in the regression analysis. Previous studies (e.g. Cronin & Taylor 1992:55-68; Hui et al 2007:965-975) have concluded that, in predicting overall satisfaction, measuring service quality based on performance *alone* is superior to the disconfirmation-based approach.

A preliminary analysis was conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of multicollinearity, normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Multicollinearity, which occurs when the independent variables are highly correlated ($r \cong 0.9$), can be detected by consulting the value of tolerance. The absence of multicollinearity among the three service quality dimensions was confirmed, as the tolerance values ranged from 0.272 to 0.520 (see Table 5.7), exceeding the recommended cut-off point of 0.1 (Hair, Black et al 2006:227). Tolerance is an indicator of the amount of variability of a specific independent variable *not* explained by the other independent variables (Pallant 2007:156). The presence of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity between predicted overall satisfaction scores and errors of prediction was confirmed by inspecting the pattern of the normal probability plot and the residuals scatterplot (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007:125).

TABLE 5.7

RESULTS OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	B	BETA	T-VALUE	SIG	TOLERANCE
Overall satisfaction (R^2=0.380; F=47.461; p=0.000)	Intercept	1.355		3.618	0.000	
	Augmented services	0.132	0.143	1.570	0.118	0.323
	Core services	0.447	0.419	4.226	0.000	0.272
	Supporting services	0.131	0.101	1.412	0.159	0.520
Revisit intention (R^2=0.087; F=22.314; p=0.000)	Intercept	3.159		6.974	0.000	
	Overall satisfaction	0.407	0.295	4.724	0.000	1.000
WOM recommendation (R^2=0.158; F=43.763; p=0.000)	Intercept	2.969		7.946	0.000	
	Revisit intention	0.458	0.397	6.615	0.000	1.000

Coefficient of determination (R^2) refers to the percentage of the variation in the dependent variable that is predicted by the independent variables. R^2 may range in value from 0 to 1. When it is 0, none of the variation is predictable based on the independent variables; when it is 1, all of the variation is correctly predicted. Although a larger R^2 is always preferred, survey data generally produce R^2 in the range of 0.3 to 0.5 (Lehmann 2006:259). As demonstrated in Table 5.7, the linear combination of the three service quality dimensions was significantly related to the overall satisfaction level (R^2=0.38, F=47.461, p=0.000). Technically, 38% of the variation in overall satisfaction was explained by the three service quality dimensions. The regression equation was constructed as: $Y=1.355+0.132X_1+0.447X_2+0.131X_3$ (where Y=overall satisfaction; X_1=augmented services; X_2=core services; and X_3=supporting services).

Beta coefficients and the associated t-values are usually used to compare the contribution of independent variables to the prediction of the dependent variable (Pallant 2007:159). As shown in Table 5.7, core services had the strongest impact on overall satisfaction (beta=0.419), followed by augmented services (beta=0.143) and supporting services (beta=0.101). However, in terms of statistical significance, only *core services* made a significant unique contribution to the prediction of overall satisfaction (t=4.226, p=0.000).

5.5.2   The second set of multiple regression analyses

By following the same statistical procedure explained above, the second multiple regression analysis was employed to test the impact of overall satisfaction on revisit intention. Revisit intention was measured by a single six-point Likert scale, namely, "I will return to South Africa for another hunting experience". The mean score of this scale was 5.27, yielding to a standard deviation of 1.18. This implies that hunters' revisit intentions were relatively high. The preliminary analysis provided evidence of no violation of the assumptions of multicollinearity, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity, ensuring that the results obtained (see Table 5.7) were truly representative of the sample.

At the model level, overall satisfaction explained 8.7% of the variation in revisit intention, which was deemed statistically significant with an F-ratio of 22.314 and a significance level of 0.000. The regression equation was constructed as: Y=3.159+0.407X (where Y=revisit intention and X=overall satisfaction). At the variable level, overall satisfaction made a significant contribution to the prediction of revisit intention (beta=0.295, t=4.724, p=0.000). Hypothesis H2d, which postulated that overall satisfaction has a positive and direct effect on revisit intention, was therefore supported.

5.5.3   The third set of multiple regression analyses

A third multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the predictive power of revisit intention on WOM publicity. WOM publicity was measured by a single six-point Likert scale, namely, "I will recommend South Africa to my family and/or friends wanting a hunting experience". The mean score of this scale was 5.38, yielding a standard deviation of 1.36. This implies that the likelihood of travelling hunters recommending South Africa as an ideal safari destination to their family and friends was relatively high. Since no violation of the assumptions underlying the regression analysis was found, the results obtained (see Table 5.7) were deemed truly representative of the sample.

At the model level, revisit intention significantly explained 15.8% of the variation in WOM intention (F=43.763, p=0.000). The regression equation was written as: Y=2.969+0.458X (where Y=WOM intention and X=revisit intention). At the variable level, revisit intention made a significant contribution to the prediction of WOM intention (beta=0.397, t=6.615, p=0.000). Hypothesis H2e, which postulated that revisit intention has a positive and direct effect on WOM intention, was therefore supported.

5.6   EMPIRICAL MODEL OF THE STUDY

Based on the results of the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses and of the multiple regression analyses, the conceptual model (see Figure 1.1 of Chapter 1) was reconstructed to produce a more appropriate model reflecting hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention. This reconstructed model was renamed the empirical model of travelling hunters' South African safari experiences, as shown in Figure 5.4.

FIGURE 5.4

EMPIRICAL MODEL OF TRAVELLING HUNTERS' SOUTH AFRICAN

SAFARI EXPERIENCES
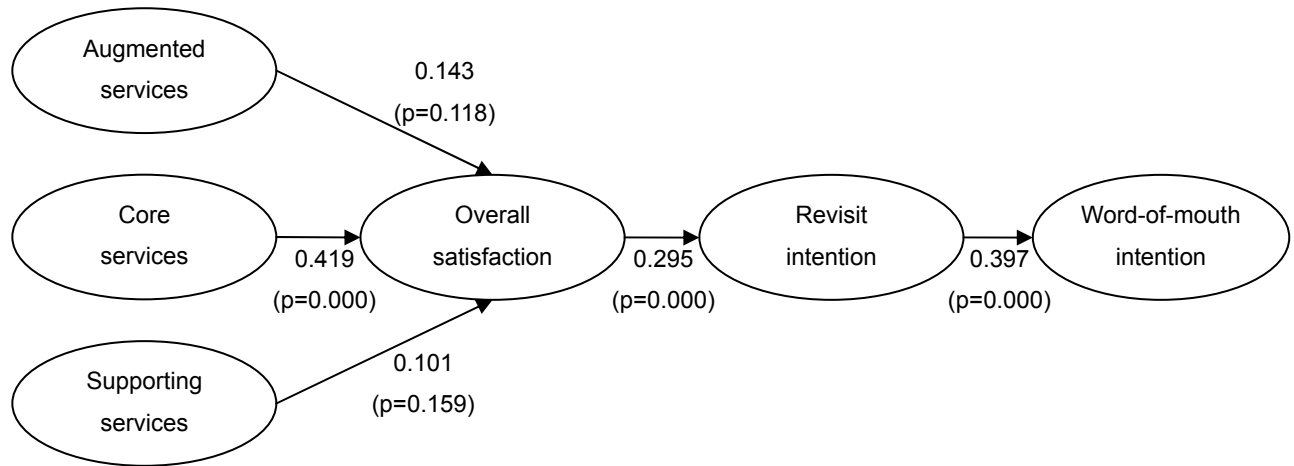
5.7   COMPARISONS BASED ON RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHICS

Since previous studies (e.g. Floyd & Lee 2002:91-106) have provided evidence of the impact of hunters' demographic variables on their levels of hunting participation, it was deemed necessary to explore the potential discrepancy in travelling hunters' safari experiences across various demographic groups. Specifically, this research investigated the effects of age, region of residence, and current and childhood home environment on hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention. It is important to note that only the relevant *perception* measures of service quality were used for comparison purposes.

5.7.1 Effects of age

Based on Radder's (2003:4) research findings on travelling hunters' age distribution, the respondents were classified into two groups, namely, 40 to 60 years (n=150) and the remainder (n=86), with the aim of exploring the impact of age on hunters' safari experiences. An independent-samples t-test showed statistically significant differences in the mean scores of revisit intention (t=-3.145, p=0.002) between the two age groups (see Table 5.8). Hypothesis H3a, which postulated significant differences in hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention with respect to their ages, was therefore partially supported. It is worthwhile to note that hunters aged between 40 and 60 perceived the levels of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention consistently higher than the remainder of the hunters did, suggesting the presence of a higher level of safari experiences.

TABLE 5.8

COMPARISON OF HUNTERS' SAFARI EXPERIENCES

BASED ON AGE GROUPS

VARIABLE	<40 OR >60 YEARS (n=86)	40-60 YEARS (n=150)	MEAN DIFFERENCE	T-VALUE	SIG
Augmented services	5.28	5.37	-0.093	-0.742	0.459
Core services	5.32	5.44	-0.122	-1.128	0.260
Supporting services	5.49	5.50	-0.012	-0.130	0.897
Overall satisfaction	5.08	5.26	-0.179	-1.552	0.122
Revisit intention	4.92	5.47	-0.555	-3.145	0.002
WOM intension	5.29	5.43	-0.143	-0.777	0.438

5.7.2   Effects of region of residence

Based on Radder's (2003:2) research findings on travelling hunters' regions of residence, the respondents were classified into two groups, namely, the US sample (n=154) and the European sample (n=82), with the aim of exploring the impact of region of residence on hunters' safari experiences. An independent-samples t-test showed statistically significant differences in the mean scores of supporting services (t=2.094, p=0.037), revisit intention (t=-3.084, p=0.002), and WOM intention (t=-2.218, p=0.028) between the two regional groups (see Table 5.9). Hypothesis H3b, which postulated significant differences in hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention with respect to their regions of residence, was therefore partially supported. It is worthwhile to mention that the European hunters rated four (augmented and core services, and revisit and WOM intentions) of the six experience variables higher than the US hunters did. This suggests that the European hunters perceived the level of safari experiences to be higher than that of the US hunters.

TABLE 5.9

COMPARISON OF HUNTERS' SAFARI EXPERIENCES

BASED ON REGIONS OF RESIDENCE

VARIABLE	USA (n=154)	EUROPE (n=82)	MEAN DIFFERENCE	T-VALUE	SIG
Augmented services	5.31	5.39	-0.073	-0.577	0.565
Core services	5.39	5.41	-0.012	-0.126	0.900
Supporting services	5.56	5.37	0.188	2.094	0.037
Overall satisfaction	5.21	5.16	0.056	0.477	0.634
Revisit intention	5.12	5.55	-0.425	-3.084	0.002
WOM intension	5.26	5.61	-0.350	-2.218	0.028

5.7.3   Effects of home environment

In addition, an independent-samples t-test was performed to explore the impact of current home environment on hunters' safari experiences. Results showed no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of any experience variable between the rural and urban hunters. Hypothesis H3c, which postulated significant differences in hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention with respect to their current home environment, was consequently rejected. Similarly, in terms of childhood home environment, there was no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of any experience variable between the rural and urban hunters, which justified the rejection of hypothesis H3d.

5.8 SUMMARY

This chapter reported on the empirical findings of the research. The report commenced with a description of the respondents' demographics, such as gender, age, region of residence, current and childhood home environment, annual household income, and post-school education. The majority of the respondents were males, between the ages of 40 to 60, and from the USA.

By conducting the EFA, 19 of the 25 service quality statements were retained. These items constituted three service quality factors (augmented services, core services and supporting services) instead of the anticipated six factors. In the CFA, the three-factor measurement model was confirmed in terms of the model fit and construct validity, leading to H1a, H1b, H2a, H2b, H2c being rejected.

Multiple regression analyses found that *core services* made a significant contribution to the prediction of overall satisfaction; overall satisfaction significantly predicted revisit intention, leading to H2d being supported; revisit intention significantly predicted WOM intention, leading to H2e being supported.

Independent-samples t-test showed significant differences in revisit intention with respect to age, H3a was thus partially supported. Significant differences in supporting services, revisit and WOM intentions with respect to region of residence led to H3b being partially supported. Insignificant differences with respect to current and childhood home environment showed that H3c and H3d had to be rejected.

CHAPTER 6

SYNOPSIS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 reported the empirical findings resulting from the statistical analysis of the primary data gathered. The current chapter addresses the last research objective stated in Section 1.2 of Chapter 1, namely, to draw conclusions based on theoretical and empirical findings and to make recommendations based on the said conclusions (see Figure 6.1). This chapter commences with a synopsis highlighting the structure of the preceding chapters.

FIGURE 6.1

LOCATION OF CHAPTER 6 IN THE DISSERTATION
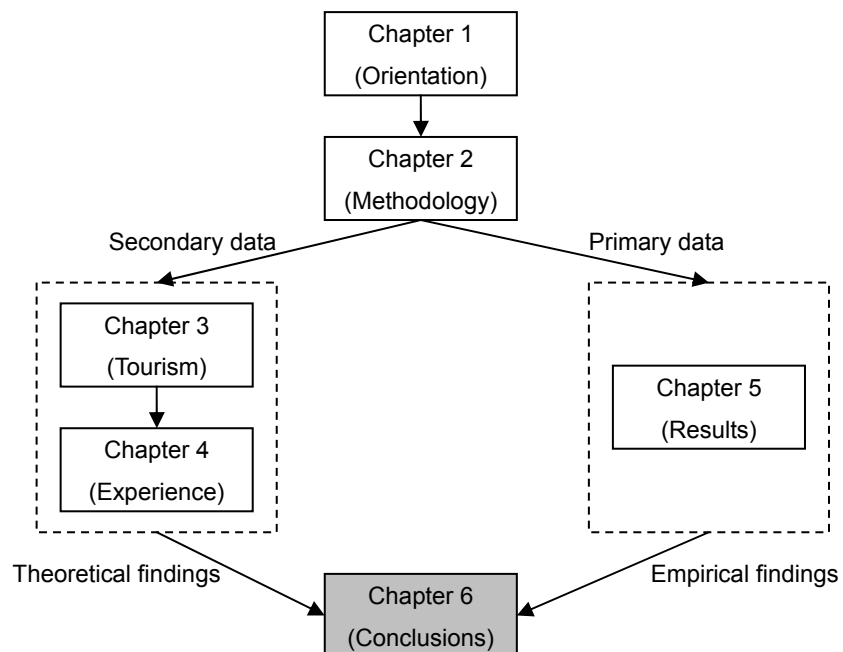
Source: Own construction

6.2   SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH

Chapter 1 served as an introduction to the current research project. The main research question raised was divided into four sub-questions. Six research objectives were identified to address these questions. A brief literature review led to a conceptual model in which the hypothesised relationships among the safari experience variables (service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention) were illustrated. In addition, the significance of the research was discussed from a theoretical and managerial perspective.

Chapter 2 discussed the research design, data collection, sample selection, and statistical analysis relevant to the current research project. The nature of the current research was established based on four classification bases (outcome, logic, purpose and process). A detailed explanation of secondary and primary data collection methods and techniques followed. Thereafter, four stages in the sampling process were elaborated on, namely, the target population, sampling frame, sampling method, and sample size. Lastly, four important issues in the statistical analysis procedure were described, namely, preliminary preparation, reliability and validity analysis, and statistical methods and techniques.

Chapter 3 served as the first theoretical chapter and contained a literature review on tourism in general, wildlife tourism, and hunting tourism. Firstly, core tourism concepts were highlighted, including definitions of tourism and tourism marketing, the composition of tourist experience and motivation, and the importance of sustainable tourism development. Secondly, the five activities related to wildlife tourism were expounded on, namely, nature-based tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism, human relations with animals, and consumptive use of wildlife. Lastly, the types and methods of hunting and the profiles of the providers and participants in the South African hunting tourism industry were discussed.

Chapter 4 served as the second theoretical chapter and contained a literature review on tourism services, service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions. The chapter commenced with an overview of the characteristics and classification of tourism services, followed by a detailed discussion of the determinants of service expectations and perceptions. Then three representative service quality measuring models were presented, namely, the Nordic model, the SERVQUAL model, and the multilevel model. Next customer satisfaction was distinguished from service quality and the different approaches to measuring customer satisfaction were explored. In addition, the antecedent and consequent roles of customer satisfaction were discussed.

Chapter 5 reported the major findings of the empirical study. The chapter commenced with a brief discussion of the demographic details of the respondents. Next followed a detailed description of the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis procedures for testing the first set of hypotheses. Then the multiple regression analysis procedure for testing the second set of hypotheses was explained as well as the t-test procedure for testing the third set of hypotheses. As a result, an empirical model was constructed to replace the original conceptual model. In addition, descriptive statistics for determining the levels of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention were presented.

6.3   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations of the research are presented in the following section. The conclusions are drawn based on the theoretical and empirical findings, while the recommendations are made based on the said conclusions. *Five* pairs of conclusions and recommendations can be established for the current research relating to the three different sets of hypotheses, the perceived levels of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention, and the demographic profile of travelling hunters. Table 6.1 provides a summary of the outcomes for each hypothesis.

TABLE 6.1

SUMMARY OUTCOMES FOR HYPOTHESES

HYPOTHESIS		RESULT
H1a	The service quality construct of the safari comprises six first-order factors.	Rejected
H1b	The service quality construct of the safari comprises a second-order factor.	Rejected
H2a	Perceived overall service quality has a positive and direct effect on hunters' overall satisfaction.	Rejected
H2b	Perceived overall service quality has a positive and direct effect on hunters' revisit intentions.	Rejected
H2c	Perceived overall service quality has a positive and indirect (through overall satisfaction) effect on hunters' revisit intentions.	Rejected
H2d	Hunters' overall satisfaction has a positive and direct effect on their revisit intentions.	Supported
H2e	Hunters' revisit intentions have a positive and direct effect on their word-of-mouth intentions.	Supported
H3a	Hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intention differ significantly with respect to age.	Partially supported
H3b	Hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intention differ significantly with respect to region of residence.	Partially supported
H3c	Hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intention differ significantly with respect to current home environment.	Rejected
H3d	Hunters' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intention differ significantly with respect to childhood home environment.	Rejected

Source: Own construction

6.3.1   The first set of hypotheses

The theoretical study indicated that hunting tourism is a service-driven industry. Services offered in hunting tourism not only possess four universal characteristics (intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability), they exhibit three industry-specific characteristics (untransferable ownership, interdependent suppliers and high sensitivity to external shocks). This complicates the objective measurement of service quality in the hunting

tourism industry. However, it is generally agreed in the literature that the service quality construct is multidimensional and multilevel in nature and that SERVQUAL remains the most commonly used diagnostic model for measuring perceived service quality in the global tourism industry.

The results of the empirical study revealed three service quality dimensions (augmented services, core services and supporting services) instead of the proposed six SERVQUAL-based dimensions. Hypothesis H1a (see Table 6.1) was rejected since these identified dimensions of the hunting safari differed from the ones proposed by SERVQUAL. This implies that it is impractical to use the SERVQUAL dimensions to measure the perceived service quality of the South African safari. The findings support those of past research, namely, that the number and components of service quality dimensions are not generic to all services but dependent on the particular service being offered (Akbaba 2006:185). The results also showed the absence of a second-order latent factor (perceived overall service quality) in the measurement model of service quality of the safari, which led to hypothesis H1b (see Table 6.1) being rejected. This suggests that the nature of the service quality construct in the South African safari is multidimensional but *not* hierarchical.

From a methodological perspective, the empirical study resulted in the development of a usable measuring instrument for assessing travelling

hunters' perceptions of service quality delivery in the South African safari. The three-dimensional measurement model showed a good fit, adequate internal consistency, and satisfactory construct validity. Thus, the current research provides those involved with the hunting safari with a verified scale for monitoring their performance on service delivery. By using this scale, safari providers could identify those areas where service expectations are not met and then look for possible solutions to overcome these service failures.

6.3.2   The second set of hypotheses

The theoretical study showed that travelling hunters may perceive safari services in terms of the quality of service delivered and the satisfaction level attained. Service quality and satisfaction are separate concepts but share two characteristics: both are cognitive variables relating to hunters' judgements of the safari experience and both are attitudinal variables influencing hunters' behavioural intentions.

With respect to the causal relationships among service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention, theory suggested that service quality is an antecedent to satisfaction, particularly among tourists from developed countries. Most safari hunters in the current research are from developed countries. It was acknowledged in the literature that satisfaction is antecedent

to revisit intention which, in turn, is antecedent to word-of-mouth intention. In addition, it was found in the literature that service quality has an indirect effect (through satisfaction), and a direct effect on revisit intention.

Since the empirical study proved that the proposed second-order service quality factor model was not prevalent in the South African hunting tourism context, hypotheses postulating the presence of the second-order latent factor (perceived overall service quality), namely, H2a, H2b, and H2c (see Table 6.1) were all rejected.

The first multiple regression analysis investigated the relationships between service quality dimensions and overall satisfaction. Results showed that *core services* was the strongest predictor of overall satisfaction. This implies that improvement of the quality delivery of core services might help safari providers enhance the levels of hunter satisfaction. The findings indicate that safari providers should continue to train their employees to ensure that they are knowledgeable and well prepared for field guidance, and promote ethical hunting practices. In addition, safari providers have to ensure an abundance of game and that facilities reflect a wilderness atmosphere.

The results of the second multiple regression analysis indicated that *overall satisfaction* was significantly related to revisit intention, which leads to

hypothesis H2d (see Table 6.1) being supported. However, the predictive power of overall satisfaction was deemed limited because the regression model only explained 8.7% of the variance in revisit intention. Similarly, the results of the third multiple regression analysis showed that, while *revisit intention* was found to be significantly related to word-of-mouth intention (hypothesis H2e was supported as shown in Table 6.1), the predictive ability of revisit intention was deemed limited because the regression model only explained 15.8% of the variance in word-of-mouth intention. Combined, these findings suggest that the proposed relationships between overall satisfaction and revisit intention and between revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention are valid but *not* reliable. This might be due to the use of single-item scales for measuring overall satisfaction and revisit intention. Thus, future research should employ multi-item scales to measure these two concepts to ensure the reliability of the relationship analysis and to help identify specific areas in which it is succeeding or failing.

6.3.3   The third set of hypotheses

The theoretical study found that hunters' perceived levels of the safari experience might be affected by their demographic characteristics. Age, region of residence, and home environment are considered the most prominent influential variables. In terms of home environment, it is generally

agreed in the literature that all residents who grow up in rural areas tend to have more positive attitudes towards hunting than those who come from urban areas.

The t-test based on home environment showed *no* significant difference in the means of any experience variable, leading to hypotheses H3c and H3d (see Table 6.1) being rejected. The t-test based on region of residence showed significant differences in the means of supporting services, revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention, leading to hypothesis H3b (see Table 6.1) being partially supported. The results of the t-test showed that significant differences in the means of revisit intention were evident in the case of age. This resulted in hypothesis H3a (see Table 6.1) being partially supported.

In terms of descriptive statistics in the empirical study, it is worth noting that hunters aged between 40 and 60 rated all six safari experience variables consistently higher than other hunters did, and that the European hunters rated four of the six experience variables higher than the US hunters did. This implies that hunters from these four demographic groups had clearly different perceptions of the South African safari experience. Therefore, safari providers could conduct four separate focus group discussions with hunters aged between 40 and 60, hunters either younger than 40 or older than 60, hunters from Europe, and hunters from the USA, respectively. The general purpose of

these group discussions would be to gain a better understanding of the factors that might shape hunters' perceptions of the safari experience.

6.3.4   Levels of service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention

The theoretical findings revealed that travelling hunters' perceived service quality could be measured by comparing their perceptions with expectations. This is known as the service quality gap analysis. A positive gap indicates that perceived service delivery exceeded hunters' expectations, while a negative gap indicates that perceived service delivery did not meet hunters' expectations.

The empirical findings showed that the gap scores for 18 of the 19 service attributes retained, following the data reduction phases, were positive. The average gap score for the 19 attributes was also positive. These results suggest that safari providers' performance exceeded travelling hunters' expectations. Furthermore, hunters perceived that the level of service quality delivery by safari providers was relatively high. The only negative gap related to the ethical standards of the staff. This implies that hunters believed that safari providers, or their employees engaged in some unethical practices. This seems to be in line with the findings of Von Brandis and Reilly (2007:158) and might relate to practices of canned (put-and-take) hunting. Thus, safari

providers must be aware that any involvement in unethical practices could negatively affect clients' perceptions of service quality delivery, which in turn could weaken clients' levels of satisfaction and intentions to revisit or spread positive word-of-mouth publicity.

The theoretical findings indicated that it might be profitable for safari providers to ensure client satisfaction, as satisfaction links purchase to post-purchase phenomena such as attitude change, repeat purchase, and verbal recommendation. It is suggested in the literature that revisit and positive word-of-mouth intentions are good indicators of customer loyalty which is crucial to the long-term success of a tourism organisation.

The empirical findings showed that travelling hunters were generally satisfied with their South African safaris. They were willing to return for another hunting experience and expressed their likelihood of speaking positively about their experiences. This seems to indicate that foreign hunters are loyal to their South African safari providers. As a result, safari providers could strengthen their long-term relationships with existing clients, for example, by sending clients promotional messages on a regular basis to invite their repeat visits.

6.3.5   Demographic profile of travelling hunters

The empirical study showed that the majority of the hunters were male, aged between 40 and 60, and from the USA and European countries. These findings are consistent with those of Radder (2003:3-5). The largest proportion of the hunters were living in rural areas, had post-school education, and earned an annual household income of less than US$ 100 000. Providers of the South African hunting safari could focus their marketing efforts on these segments.

6.4   SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study suggested two major directions for future research. Firstly, further research can be conducted from the hunting management perspective to determine if any differences exist between what hunting providers and travelling hunters regard as good safari experiences. Secondly, further research is needed to assess the value travelling hunters perceive to be gained from the South African safari. The perceived value dimension could then be added to the empirical model (see Figure 5.4 of Chapter 5) of the safari experience.

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ANNEXURE A: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

for tomorrow

Unit for Applied Management Sciences
Second Avenue Campus
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING
Tel. +27 (0)41 5043818 Fax. +27 (0)41 5049818

BETTER HUNTING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Hunter

You have hunted in South Africa – did you have a memorable African experience or did you have problems with the PH, the outfitter, the taxidermist, customs or the shipping of trophies? How can we make your next hunt more enjoyable?

Those involved in game ranching and hunting in South Africa, want to know what you liked or disliked about your previous safari and what you would like from your future safari(s) in South Africa.

Please spend a few minutes answering the questions that follow. Your cooperation will enable us to better understand your needs and make your next South African safari, *and* that of your fellow hunters, what you would like it to be!

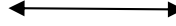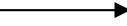THIS WILL COST YOU <u>NOTHING</u>. We have provided you with an envelope and paid the postage on your behalf. Please complete the questionnaire as soon as possible and send it to us in the envelope provided. We would really appreciate your doing so within the *next few days*. Be assured that your identity will be kept confidential at all times.

Thank you and happy hunting!

Laetitia Radder
Research Coordinator

A. SERVICE QUALITY

Instructions: Referring to your most recent South African hunting safari experience, please rate the importance of each service attribute in the first set of columns (the end points being 1=totally unimportant and 6=extremely important) and the actual performance of that in the second set of columns (the end points being 1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree).

Attribute	Importance Unimportant ← → Important							Performance Disagree ← → Agree					
SQ01: Transport facilities to and from hunting area	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ02: Skinning and caping facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ03: Comfortable accommodation	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ04: Cleanliness of accommodation	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ05: Meals and refreshments	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ06: Physical safety	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ07: Staff being knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ08: Staff being well-trained	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ09: Abundance of game	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ10: Conditions spelt out clearly and not changed afterwards	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ11: Services provided on time	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ12: Professionalism of staff	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ13: Interest of staff in solving my problems	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ14: Social skills of staff	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ15: Staff delivering prompt service	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ16: Staff giving me personal attention	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ17: Staff having my best interests at heart	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ18: Staff understanding my specific needs	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ19: Service of the outfitter	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ20: Field knowledge of the PH	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ21: Natural beauty of the environment	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ22: Facilities being appropriate to the environment	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ23: Facilities being environmentally safe	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ24: Owners and staff having ethical standards	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ25: Facilities reflecting a wilderness feeling	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6

B. SATISFACTION AND FUTURE INTENTION

Instructions: The statements below aim to measure your satisfaction with the South African safari, as well as your future intentions to revisit and recommend this activity. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement (the end points being 1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree).

Statement	Disagree					Agree
I had a positive overall hunting experience during the South African safari	1	2	3	4	5	6
I will return to South Africa for another hunting experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
I will recommend South Africa to my family and/or friends wanting a hunting experience	1	2	3	4	5	6

C. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Instructions: Please mark the appropriate box and/or provide the information required.

1. **Gender:** ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. **Year of birth:** 19………………..

3. **Country of residence:** ☐ Germany ☐ Spain ☐ UK ☐ USA
   ☐ Other (please indicate)…………………

4. **Current home environment:** ☐ Urban ☐ Rural

5. **Childhood home environment:** ☐ Urban ☐ Rural

6. **Annual household income:** ☐ Less than US$ 60,000
   (in US dollars before tax) ☐ US$ 60,000 – US$ 100,000
   ☐ US$ 100,001 – US$200,000
   ☐ US$200,001 – US$400,000
   ☐ More than US$400,000

7. **Years of post-school education:** ……………. Year(s)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND COOPERATION AND TIME.

Please return the completed questionnaire as soon as possible, using the enclosed envelope.