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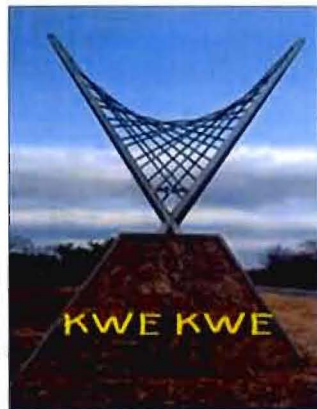
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**Local Community's Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Ecotourism and Biodiversity  
Conservation: A Case Study of Sable Game Park, Kwekwe**

By

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**A dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master of  
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## ABSTRACT

In the present study I carried out interviews with key informants and administered questionnaires to residents in low density suburbs (N=51), medium density suburbs (N=47) and high density suburbs (N=82) in Kwekwe city in order to determine local residents' attitudes and perceptions towards ecotourism and wildlife conservation, the contribution of ecotourism to conservation and local communities and assess the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and tourism benefits, perceptions and support for conservation.

The questionnaires were arranged in four sections namely (i.) Personal details (ii.) Residents' expectations of and suggestions for tourism planning and management strategies (iii.) Local residents' perspectives on the natural value of Sable park (iv.) local residents' attitudes towards ecotourism and wildlife conservation. There were eleven statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

I used the Kruskal - Wallis Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test whether there were significant differences in community perceptions on conservation and of tourism among the three communities. I used the mode to determine scores that occurred most frequently in the data sets and the range to quantify the dispersion of scores in the data given that the data were not normally distributed. I used Pearson's chi-square analysis to determine if there was a significant relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and perceived benefits from ecotourism. Pearson's chi square analysis was used to establish a relationship between socio-demographic factors and respondents' perceptions of given statements.

Overall survey responses for low, medium and high density suburbs reflected positive attitudes towards ecotourism and biodiversity conservation. Residents in the three suburbs

believed that the main purpose of Sable Park was recreation. The analyses for the suburbs concluded that the main benefits perceived from Sable Park were employment opportunities. Conservation attitudes were influenced by their socio-economic status. Income, age, gender and suburb had a significant association with favourable conservation attitudes. However, level of education did not have a significant effect on conservation attitude. Residents felt like they were not involved in the planning and management of Sable Park.