

**GUEST SATISFACTION DIMENSIONS  
IN  
THE ECOLODGE CONTEXT**

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**Signed:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Kim Lian Chan', written over a horizontal line.

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores guest satisfaction dimensions from the consumer perspective in the ecolodge context and asks to what extent guest satisfaction can be explained by using Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory. Guest satisfaction dimensions are explored from the experiential perspective and the behavioural approach to refocus and replace the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm and SERVQUAL model that are primarily based on cognitive aspects and ignores the experiential factors. The present research recognises that in the service experience context the experiential and perceptions factors contribute significantly to guest satisfaction (Otto and Ritchie, 1996).

The present research recognises the complexity and controversy of the measurement and definition of satisfaction as well as its constructs due to lack of generally acceptable definition of satisfaction. The complexity of guest satisfaction can be approached from an alternative perspective by extending Herzberg's theory developed for job satisfaction. This theory is contended to be better able to address human satisfaction more adequately compared to expectancy disconfirmation and service quality theory as both of these theoretical underpinning are driven by product and services. It has demonstrated both theoretical and operations limitations of expectancy disconfirmation and service quality theories in measuring consumer satisfaction in the service experience context.

To overcome the methodological limitation of Herzberg's approach, the present research incorporates a multi research technique of participation observation and Profile Accumulation Techniques (PAT) for data collection. PAT is adapted from its original version developed by Johns and Lee-Ross (1995). These research techniques supplement and complement the strengths and weaknesses and to achieve consistency and reliability. An exploratory qualitative inductive approach enables the collection of "authentic" data that capture guests' voices. This offers a satisfactory methodological framework and a holistic, reliable and valid approach.

The research reveals that guests interact with physical and human dimensions, involvement, and participation in leisure activities that are the main elements termed as satisfaction dimensions or satisfiers. The physical facilities, amenities and maintenance and operations standard are regarded as main elements of dissatisfaction dimensions or dissatisfiers. Guests' satisfaction is measured from both the cognitive and affective responses derived from two different sets of constructs. These satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions emerge from two different opposite motivational forces, as two different continua. At one extreme, satisfiers are dimensions related to the personal experiential aspects that derive from the ranges of natural environment and attractions, physical sites and participation in leisure activities that are sourced from the external ecolodge environment. These are intangible elements that are also uncontrollable by the ecolodge operators. At the other extreme, dissatisfiers are dimensions related to the performance and availability of facilities, amenities and maintenance of the ecolodge context. These are regarded as tangible and controllable elements. This indicates that guest satisfaction with ecolodges is a two-dimensional measurement. Thus, Herzberg's theory is capable of exploring and explaining guest satisfaction dimensions, and these are perceived as two distinct constructs to represent service quality dimensions in a more meaningful way. This suggests that guest satisfaction can be theorised by job satisfaction theory and both contribute to human life satisfaction and the principle of human dual factors using Herzberg's theory. However, one must also note that these dimensions suggest that satisfiers and dissatisfiers may not be universal as they are subject to the nature of the service context and the type of activities provided.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

This thesis addresses key issues relating to the measurement of consumer satisfaction in the tourism and hospitality context. It suggests that consumer satisfaction can be measured by proposing a paradigm that adopts a behavioural and experiential perspective rather than the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm that is predominantly employed in measures the consumer satisfaction. Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory is suggested as relevant and offers better insight into guest satisfaction than expectancy disconfirmation and service quality theories. This chapter provides a general introduction to the present research. It presents a broad background to the present research and its significance, and sets out the research aims, objectives and questions. Finally, the research scope and a brief outline of the thesis are delineated.

### 1.2 Background to the Research

Consumer satisfaction is a key objective for contemporary organizations to deliver high quality and satisfactory products and services as well as to position firms competitively in the marketplace. In the 1980s, researchers sought to identify the dimensions that consumers use to assess the quality of services and service quality, perceived as a critical factor in business success (Kanadampully, 2000; Hudson and Shephard, 1998) and which emerged as a globally important strategic force (Imrie et al., 2002).

Consumer satisfaction has become one of the most researched areas within marketing and consumer behaviour; and the complexity and controversial nature of the measurement and definition of satisfaction is recognised. Thus, Peterson and Wilson (1992) note that: "*studies of customer satisfaction are perhaps best characterized by their lack of definitional and methodological standardization*". The literature demonstrates the complexity of measuring consumer satisfaction via various theories

with different perspectives. While different approaches have been explored extensively in the past, no consensus has been reached. Nevertheless, consumer satisfaction is important in the hospitality context due to the nature of businesses that deal with people and provides services to paying guests and, therefore, ecolodge operators operating in the competitive eco-destinations environment. Favourable and unfavourable responses resulting from satisfaction/dissatisfaction are important areas for improvement in service quality and are pertinent to the contemporary business environment. This, in turn, contributes to the development of a competitive edge, positioning and sustainable use of eco-resources/natural resources in the eco-environment.

Although extensive research has focused on consumer satisfaction, the relevant literature has not yet explicitly established a general consensual definition of satisfaction. There is a wide variance in the definitions of satisfaction and the lack of a consensual definition limits the contribution of consumer satisfaction research. The evidence shows an extensive debate about whether consumer satisfaction is a process or an outcome (Yi, 1990). Consumer satisfaction has been emphasized either as an evaluative process (Hunt, 1977; Oliver, 1981) or as a response to an evaluative process (Howard and Sheth, 1969; Oliver, 1981; 1997b). In the same vein, there are multiple process definitions by way of responses. They can be regarded as fulfilment responses (Oliver, 1997b); affective response (Halstead et al., 1994); overall evaluation (Fornell, 1992); psychological state or evaluative responses (Day, 1994); and global evaluative judgments (Westbrook, 1987). Researchers regard consumer satisfaction as either a cognitive (Howard and Sheth, 1969) or an affective response (Cadotte et al., 1987) and, in its operational definitions, it is likely to include behavioural dimensions of satisfaction.

Researchers also contend that these problems are pervasive and important (Peterson and Wilson, 1992; Yi, 1990) and that these factors influence and limit valid measures of satisfaction. Despite these definitional problems, there is a common thread in the definitions of satisfaction in the literature, where it is described as comprising three basic components – types of responses, focus of the responses and responses that

refer to a particular time (Giese and Cote, 2002). This seems to offer an alternative way of developing a more conceptually consistent, clearly delineated and context-specific definition of consumer satisfaction, where one can focus on these three elements: a) consumer responses (emotional or cognitive), b) responses pertaining to a particular focus (expectation, product, consumption of service, etc.), and c) the responses occurring at a particular time (during or after consumption). Building upon this, this thesis aims to investigate consumer satisfaction based on these elements - responses, time and context – as specific parameters in order to establish a more meaningful and consistent conceptual framework.

The conceptual components of satisfaction comprise both cognitive and emotional elements (Bowen and Clarke, 2002). However, past studies show a tendency to focus on either one of these elements. Arguably, in reality, consumer satisfaction is a complex human process involving extensive cognitive, affective and other undiscovered psychological and physiological dynamic. This has resulted in extensive debate in the marketing literature in relation to the determinants of consumer satisfaction and how it is best measured (Oh and Parks, 1997).

Consequently, it is pertinent that such research should be conducted in a broader framework to reflect complex definitions and true context.

There has also been a growing need for more reliable ways to measure consumer satisfaction as evidenced both from the theoretical and methodological limitations of previous empirical studies (Oh and Parks, 1997). Both expectancy disconfirmation theory and service quality theory have been widely used to measure consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction (comparisons of expectations and outcomes/ performance), which ignore the experiential element of hospitality management. The SERVQUAL model has been widely adopted to determine service quality dimensions and widely applied in various service categories but it has significant limitations (Carman, 1990; Fick and Ritchie, 1991; Babakus and Boller, 1992). The dimensionalities of service quality have been found to be inconsistent and to produce discrepancies due to the inability of the SERVQUAL scale to be replicated. The number and types of dimensions also raise questions.

Likewise, the SERVQUAL-style questionnaire developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985; 1988) to measure consumer satisfaction in various service sectors has faced serious criticism including:

- the validity of its expectation scores (Oberon and Hales, 1990);
- an unscientific method to measure responses (Johns and Less-Ross, 1997);
- the choice of measurement scale (Woodruff et al., 1983); the composition of attribute-specific and overall evaluation structure as incapable of addressing affective and holistic factors in service experiences (Fick and Ritchie, 1991);
- its failure to capture a rich understanding of guest satisfaction that consists of “emotional/affective and experiential aspects” (Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988a; 1988b; Johnston, 1995).

The techniques and models originally designed to measure consumer satisfaction were developed in product management. These are cognitively constructed and treat satisfaction as a post consumption evaluation, with expectations being formed prior to consumption based on repurchase performance. These techniques and models have been widely adapted to measure consumer satisfaction in tourism and hospitality. These properties limit the extent of the measurement of guest satisfaction in the service experience context and beg questions as to the extent to which these models are relevant in the service sector. It is argued that tourism and hospitality can be regarded as belonging more to the service experience consumption context. Within this context, it is argued that consumers learn and adapt their attitudinal and behavioural responses as a result of their consumption and experience of the service. Consequently, it is contended that different theories should be considered for the measurement of guest satisfaction in order to achieve more reliable, valid and well-founded results.

Extensive research has shown that there is also no clear consensus in this area in terms of a theoretical and methodological measurement approach. In the tourism and hospitality context, hospitality researchers have attempted to introduce theories and a methodological framework for measuring consumer satisfaction: for example, Dube

et al., (1994) in restaurant services and Barsky (1992), Barsky and Labagh (1992), Getty and Thompson (1994) and Saleh and Ryan (1991) in hotel services. Nevertheless, these studies adopt theories and methods developed to research product marketing and ignore the theoretical and methodological issues raised in the consumer behaviour literature.

Only a few studies have directly explored the dimensionality of consumer satisfaction measures (Yi, 1990, Czepiel et al., 1974; Leavitt, 1977). Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory concerning job satisfaction is often suggested as being applicable for investigating the dimensionality of consumer satisfaction (Oh and Park, 1997). Nevertheless, the service and hospitality literature has not reported empirical evidence on the viability of this theory in terms of consumer satisfaction.

In the service experience context, satisfaction results from the experiential nature of consumption and contains both perceptions and experiences (Otto and Ritchie, 1996). The hospitality industry provides a series of experiences derived from both physical and intangible elements within the hospitality environment. Otto and Ritchie (1996) argue that the psychological environment (also called the service experience) — subjective personal reactions and feelings experienced by consumers when they consume a service — has been found to be an important aspect of consumer evaluation and satisfaction with services (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991). Arnould and Price (1993) adopt a similar approach in the context of white-water rafting and reveal that experiential themes — personal growth, self-renewal, communities and harmony with nature — are significant in explaining the underlying dimensions of satisfaction from experiential perspectives, since hospitality services are more of an experience and less of a utilitarian transaction (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1997). The service experience is inherently interpretive, subjective and affective (McCallum and Harrison, 1985; Parasuraman et al., 1988) and has gained important recognition in service encounter research.

Furthermore, in the service experience context, it is perceived that consumers evaluate satisfaction based on two responses. The first response is related to the

actual functioning of the goods and services and is processed through the logical side of the brain. The second response is related to the emotional aspects of the individual that are emitted by things or people in the environment and are perceived by the senses. This means that experience components offers value in terms of both extrinsic benefits, which are more utilitarian in nature, and intrinsic benefits, which are more based on appreciation of the experience itself.

There is significant empirical research to determine consumer travel behaviour needs, motivation factors and attitudes. Much of the empirical evidence shows a wide range of motivator factors of different types of consumers and in different destinations but a gap is shown in work relating to ecotourists in the ecolodge context. Furthermore, theories of motivation are unable to ascertain the individual's underlying motivations (Mill and Morrison, 1998) and Maslow's theory (1970) of the hierarchy of needs fails to determine guest expectations, since these increase and change over time (Balmer and Baum, 1993). Herzberg's theory is widely cited in the accommodation literature (Balmer and Baum, 1993; Johns and Lee-Ross, 1997) but there is a lack of empirical evidence in the hospitality literature to determine its applicability.

### **1.3 Significance of the Research**

Research in tourism and hospitality endeavours to produce new knowledge through different perspectives and methodologies. In view of this, this thesis adopts an experiential perspective. It also employs a behavioural approach and interpretative paradigm, as an alternative to the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm, in order to investigate consumer satisfaction in the ecolodge context.

This research suggests that guest satisfaction is the consumption of experiences involved in both behavioural and comparison components. It is derived from job satisfaction studies, and is a function of two types of condition, known as hygiene factors (dissatisfiers) that lead to the condition of dissatisfaction (prevention), and motivators (satisfiers) that lead to a condition of satisfaction, based on Herzberg's

theory. Satisfaction dimensions are determined from service quality attributes, the desired social-psychological benefits (motivation) and attitude.

This research is conceptualised within both consumer behaviour and consumer satisfaction disciplines in the tourism and hospitality, with the main focus domain being consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the ecolodge context. By considering theoretical and applied positions within the disciplines of consumer behaviour and consumer satisfaction and the focus domain, a number of factors that endorse the importance and relevance of the research can be identified.

Hospitality organizations provide experiences for guests and these experiences are sourced from tangible and intangible elements that form positive and negative experiences, subsequently leading to satisfaction or dissatisfaction. It is valuable to analyse the underlying dimensions of satisfaction from experiential perspectives, since hospitality services are both services and transaction-based experiences. To understand what attracts guests, an understanding of their motivation and needs in the consumption of experiences in the hospitality context is crucial for managing and improving service quality.

There is limited empirical evidence about guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions in ecolodges. Ecolodges are relatively new, small specialist nature-dependent and environmentally friendly accommodation units that focus on experience management (Ayala, 1996a), and draw on segments of the leisure market that have specific motivations, needs, expectations and vacation activity preferences. Specifically, guests in this context are looking for certain experiences and activities to satisfy their needs and wants. They are generally more environmentally conscious and their behaviour is influenced by natural and environmental factors. Little is known about guest behaviour in relation to their satisfaction that may hinder quality improvement and the sustainable use of eco-resources. Previous ecotourism studies focus on supply-side factors, primarily destination and management practices (Khan, 2003). More attention is required on demand-side factors, from the perspective of guest satisfaction, which are of equal

importance in ecolodge management. It is postulated the guests have different needs and wants and motivations when visiting ecolodges in comparison to other types of small hotels or accommodation. An understanding of ecotourist/guest behaviour is an equally important factor that influences the management and planning of sustainable ecotourism, yet little attention has been given to the field of consumer behaviour and satisfaction in relation to ecotourism. This implies that understanding guest behaviour, in relation to satisfaction, contributes significant information and is one of the mechanisms for achieving sustainable development and consumption of eco-resources for the ecolodge operators.

Past consumer satisfaction studies in the hospitality literature emphasise the sources of guest satisfaction (attributes) and effective ways of determining consumers' wants and needs. Previous studies have researched theories of needs, motivation and expectations as dimensions of tourist behaviour within the concept of eco-tourism (Boo, 1990; Eagles, 1992; Wight, 1997; Klenosky, 2002; Khan, 2003; Maher et al., 2003; Mohsin and Ryan, 2003). Though such studies have been undertaken on other segments of the tourism industry (Crompton, 1979; Gnoth, 1997; Dann, 1981; Geva and Goldman, 1989; Ross and Iso-Aloha, 1991), little is known about specific guest behaviour in the ecolodge context.

Understanding consumer behaviour in terms of motivation, needs and wants is important for ecolodge operators, in order to provide a compatible and conducive environment to meet their needs and hence improve consumer satisfaction. More importantly, ecolodge operators need to acquire a better understanding of their consumers' current consumption behaviour in order to be in a better position to match their product and services to existing market demand, to predict future consumption patterns and to position themselves competitively in the global marketplace by delivering high quality and satisfying services that fulfil the needs and motivations of their consumers. This means that understanding and predicting consumer expectations is a prerequisite for delivering better services (Parasuraman et al., 1988).



In the ever increasingly competitive eco-destinations environment, in order to achieve sustainable planning and development of eco-resources, one of the important tasks for ecolodge operators is to focus on guest satisfaction, as satisfied guests are returning customers who will spread positive advertising through word of mouth as free marketing for ecolodges. In doing so, ecolodge operators or managers need to understand the underlying satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors of their guests and what sorts of experience their guests seek in this context before strategizing for improving guest satisfaction. Hence, an insight into guests' motivation and their perception of service quality attributes that will act as satisfiers (motivators) and dissatisfiers (hygiene/ maintenance factors) is vital for ecolodge management to achieve guest satisfaction.

By confirming the importance of the underlying dimensions of guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context, the present empirical research provides insights into guest perceptions and experiential factors about service quality attributes, and subsequently guest satisfaction. Previous empirical findings are limited by the nature of the research design and methodology, since quantitative approaches often lack the capacity to provide an accurate and "consistent interpretation of people's accounts" (Keliva and Chu, 2001, p.253)

The present research adopts Herzberg's theory as a conceptual research framework to explore the underlying satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions of guests from an experiential perspective and behavioural approach. In the present research context, it is postulated that satisfaction results from the experiential nature of consumption during the service delivery process, since a consumer's evaluation of service in the hospitality context is likely to contain affective/emotional responses as well as cognitive ones. Hence, the evaluation of satisfaction in the service experience consumption context is multi-faceted, involving: a) satisfaction with service performance/outcomes (utilitarian dimensions), and b) satisfaction with service experience (expressive dimensions). These dimensions encompass both utilitarian aspects and expressive dimensions (motivation) or guest satisfaction service quality dimensions that can be linked to two different motivational factors in Herzberg's

theory. These are satisfiers or factors that lead to true satisfaction and hygiene or maintenance factors. It is argued that satisfaction derived from service quality attributes consisting of tangible products are termed “hygiene factors”; intangible services are styled “motivators”; and it is postulated that guest satisfaction is parallel to job satisfaction - a function of two types of conditions (Herzberg, 1962): a) hygiene factors (dissatisfiers) leading to conditions of dissatisfaction; and b) motivators (satisfiers) leads to conditions of satisfaction. The different facets of interaction between experiences and attitudinal consequences and different unrelated dimensions cause satisfaction and dissatisfaction simultaneously.

#### **1.4 Research Objective and Questions**

This research aims to explore satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge context from the consumer perspective. Guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions are conceptualised from both service quality attributes and the service experience. Subsequently, this study explores the extent to which guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions can be explained by relating them to satisfiers/dissatisfiers in accordance with Herzberg’s theory. Finally, the study proposes ways of managing and improving guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context and seeks to enhance the sustainable use of eco resources.

An exploratory qualitative inductive approach utilizes three different techniques to collect “authentic” data. This aims to achieve a holistic view, and thus to present an alternative, more reliable, valid approach based on well-founded results concerning guest satisfaction.

**The two main research questions are:**

- 1) What are the underlying dimensions of guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction in service experience consumption in the ecolodge context?
- 2) To what extent can guests' satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions be explained by use of Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory?

**The sub-research questions are:**

- 1) What are the motivational and decision-making factors for guests visiting ecolodges in Sukau?
- 2) How are guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions perceived and constructed in the ecolodge context?
- 3) How do guests react in relation to their "happy" and "unhappy" moments during participation in riverboat cruise trips?
- 4) What are guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge context?
- 5) What are the satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions that can be termed "satisfiers/motivators" and "dissatisfiers/hygiene" factors?
- 6) What are the perceived service attributes that lead to the satisfaction/dissatisfaction of guests and can be described as "satisfiers/motivators" and "dissatisfiers/hygiene" factors?
- 7) How can ecolodge operators better manage and improve guest satisfaction?

In order to answer these questions, this research has the following objectives:

- To explore guests' underlying attitudes and motivation in the ecolodge context.
- To describe how satisfaction and dissatisfaction determinants are perceived and evaluated in the ecolodge context.

- To observe and describe guest behavioural aspects in terms of their actions and reactions during participation in riverboat cruise trips by using participation observation techniques.
- To explore guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions from a behavioural and experiential perspective in accordance with true satisfiers /motivators and dissatisfiers/hygiene factors.
- To identify perceived service quality attributes that are congruent with satisfiers/motivator and dissatisfiers/hygiene factors.
- To develop a Perception Profile of an Ecolodge

## **1.5 Research Scope**

The research aim is to explore consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction and the primary research is focused solely on the hospitality sector and is linked to satisfiers and dissatisfiers in accordance with Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory. Within this broad context, the present research concentrates on guests/consumers. In a temporal context, the thesis is limited to describing the phenomenon of guest satisfaction between November 2003 and February 2004, the period during which primary research was undertaken. Furthermore, as a result of practical exigencies, a cross sectional approach was adopted for the data collection and consequently this thesis relates to a series of "snapshots" of guest satisfaction during this period.

A significant factor in the present research is the issue of consumer behaviour in relation to satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions, and, in particular, the extent to which these dimensions result from different perceptions of consumers and can be explained using two different motivational forces known as "satisfiers" and "dissatisfiers" based on Herzberg's theory. The relative positions of the interviewer and interviewees are considered in the discussion of the methodology. However, the thesis and the present research on which it is based is shaped by and bounded by the perceptions of both the researcher and the researched.

## **1.6 Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter provides a broad overview of the background of the present study and its significance. This research suggests the measurement of guest satisfaction using Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory, where satisfaction and dissatisfaction are termed "satisfiers" and "dissatisfiers". Guest satisfaction is defined as a consumption of experience involving both behavioural and comparison components. These are a function of two types of condition, known as hygiene factors (dissatisfiers) that lead to the condition of dissatisfaction (prevention); and motivators (satisfiers) that lead to a condition of satisfaction, according to Herzberg's theory. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions are determined from service attributes, the desired social-psychological benefits (motivation) and attitude. It is postulated that satisfiers are derived from experiential factors that involve affective responses while dissatisfiers are derived from a utilitarian transaction that is based on cognitive responses. There are two different facets of interaction between their experiences and attitudinal consequences of the individual; being satisfied and dissatisfied simultaneously by different unrelated dimensions. The level of satisfaction is independent of the level of dissatisfaction. This indicates that guest satisfaction is two-dimensional and consists of two different motivational forces.

Likewise, the measurement of guest satisfaction is conceptualised as a multifaceted construct that encompasses service and experiential dimensions; and guest satisfaction evaluation is referred to as both process and outcome and is seen to consist of socio-psychological benefits in the service experience.

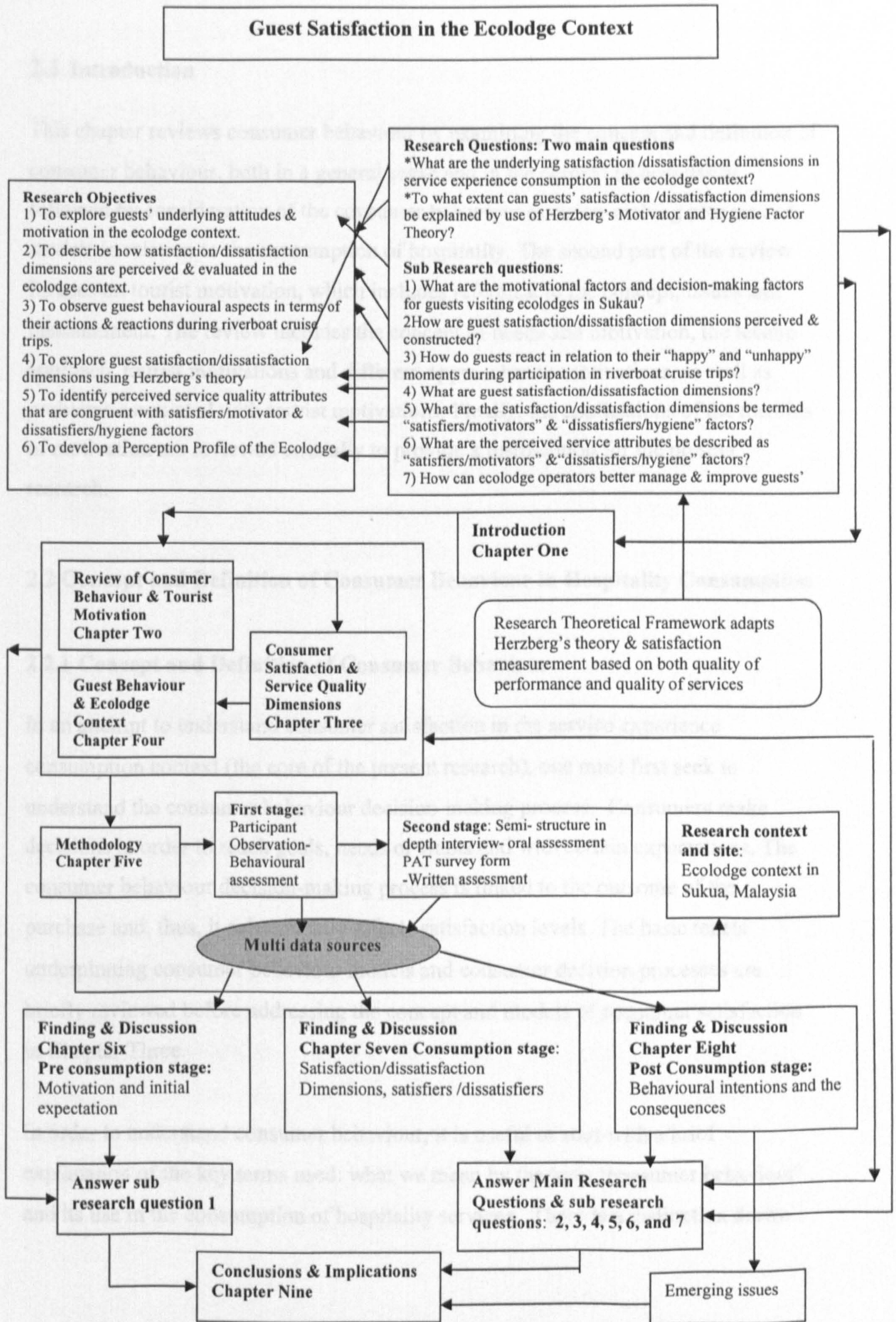
## **1.7 Thesis Outline**

This thesis consists of nine chapters and the overview of its structure is presented in Figure 1.1 below.

Chapter two provides a review of consumer behaviour and tourist motivation in terms of the decision-making process, models in relation to the consumption of

hospitality and the application of the theories of motivation. Chapter Three reviews consumer satisfaction and service quality dimensions. Chapter Four addresses guest behaviour at ecolodges and the characteristics and management of ecolodges – small-scale “service management” accommodation, that entail service experience consumption. Chapter Five presents a description and justification of the methodological choices that were made in developing the research strategy and design as well as the use of multiple methods as research techniques in the primary data collection that is congruent with the underlying research objectives in the present research. Then, the empirical findings and discussion on guest motivation, initial expectations, at the pre-consumption stage process in the consumer behaviour model are presented in Chapter Six. The findings and discussions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions, and satisfiers and dissatisfiers during the consumption process as well consideration of the use of Herzberg’s theory are presented in Chapter Seven, while Chapter Eight discusses empirical evidence based on the post consumption stage, focused on: a) positive experiences leading to satisfaction; b) negative comments and suggestions for improvement; and c) neutral factors and d) the perceptions of service quality levels. The implications of the empirical findings, the limitations of the present research and the direction of future research are discussed in Chapter Nine.

**Figure 1. 1: An Overview of Thesis Structure Guest Satisfaction in the Ecolodge Context**



## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Consumer Behaviour and Tourist Motivation**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews consumer behaviour by examining the concept and definition of consumer behaviour, both in a general sense and in the context of hospitality, followed by consideration of the consumer behaviour decision-making process and models in relation to the consumption of hospitality. The second part of the review focuses on tourist motivation, which includes reference to the concept, issues and measurement. The review includes the concept of needs and motivation, the leisure approach, tourist motivations and different approaches to motivations, as well as problems associated with tourist motivations. Finally, the applications of the theories of motivation are reviewed critically to provide a justification for the present research.

#### **2.2 Concept and Definition of Consumer Behaviour in Hospitality Consumption**

##### **2.2.1 Concept and Definition of Consumer Behaviour**

In an attempt to understand consumer satisfaction in the service experience consumption context (the core of the present research), one must first seek to understand the consumer behaviour decision-making process. Consumers make decisions in order to reach goals, needs or wants and with certain expectations. The consumer behaviour decision-making process is linked to the outcome of the purchase and, thus, it subsequently affects satisfaction levels. The basic tenets underpinning consumer behaviour models and consumer decision processes are briefly reviewed before addressing the concept and models of consumer satisfaction in Chapter Three.

In order to understand consumer behaviour, it is useful to start with a brief explanation of the key terms used: what we mean by the term 'consumer behaviour' and its use in the consumption of hospitality services. There is a distinction drawn



between consumers and customers, although these terms are often used interchangeably. Williams (2002, p.7) describes the difference by stating that: “[the] customer is used to describe someone who makes purchases, that is, with customers there is usually an element of exchange. It tends to focus on an individual who undertakes the purchase decision”. This implies that there is a simple economic relationship between a business and a buyer (Gabbott and Hogg, 1998). By contrast, ‘consumer’ is regarded as a wider term and refers to a higher level of behaviour encompassing a wide range of relationships.

The term “consumer behaviour” has been defined by several researchers (Gabbott and Hogg, 1998; Horner and Swarbrook, 1996; Wilkie, 1994). Among the definitions proposed, it is noted that Engle et al., (1995, p.121) offer one that is among the most useful and complete: “Those activities directly involved in obtaining consuming and disposing of products and services including the decision processes that precede and follow these actions”. Later, the concept of consumer needs and wants has also been incorporated into definitions of consumer behaviour. The present research adopts the definition by Solomon (1996, p. 43) who defines consumer behaviour is: “The process involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and wants”. This is also supported by Gabbott and Hogg (1998) and Moutinho (1987) and Mowen and Minor (2001).

### **2.2.2 Consumption Approaches and Decision Making Perspectives**

The emergence of consumer behaviour research as a distinct discipline occurred because of the practical need to help marketing managers to understand how social and behavioural science can help to find specific causes of consumer behaviour, particularly consumer buying decisions (Statt, 1997). A positivist approach means focusing on what consumers would do under certain specified condition, and makes a number of assumptions about consumer research, as noted by Williams (2002, p.14):

- All behaviour has objectively identifiable causes and effects, all of which can be isolated, studied and measured.

- When faced with a problem or decision, people process all the information relevant to it.
- After processing this information, people make a rational decision about the best choice or decision to make.

It became clear that this perspective has limitations for understanding consumer behaviour in the service experience consumption context. The consumption process in the service experience context, such as the hospitality sector, is more complex than simply one of buying and selling at a rationale level. The positivist approach leaves open the question of an individual's capacity to process a large amount of information prior to making decisions. It is clear that the positivist school of thought that emphasis rationality ignores symbolic aspects of consumption. The relationships in which we are involved are important in understanding consumer behaviour simply because they affect the buying decisions and consumption patterns of each individual. This implies that consumer behaviour has to be understood within the context of human interaction, which is known as the interpretive school of research. Williams (2002, p.15) presents a summary of the assumptions made by this school of research:

- Cause and effect cannot be isolated because there is no single objective reality that everyone can agree on.
- Reality is an individual's subjective experience of it, and as such each consumer's experience is unique.
- People are not simply rational information processors or decision makers, but this view takes no account of emotion.

This implies that buying behaviour has to be interpreted in the light of a person's whole consumer experience. However, the positivist and interpretivist schools of thought are regarded as complementary to each other (Statt, 1997). Put simply, the role of prediction and control is seen as trying to isolate cause and effect in behaviour, while at the same time the importance of understanding the complexity of consumer buying behaviour is also emphasized. However, the present research tends to adopt the interpretive approach, as its assumptions appear more relevant and

pragmatic to the service experience context and also because it is exploratory research.

It is worthwhile to review briefly the approaches to consumption and the different perspectives of the decision-making process in service consumption, as these approaches and perspectives influence the present research design. A review of the contemporary literature indicates three broad approaches to consumption. The first approach is the economic and positivist (rational) or cognitive consumer, that assumes that consumers are logical and adopt a structured approach to consumption. Consumers are expected to make rational decisions based on benefits and losses. This can be related to the traditional decision making perspective that emphasizes the rational, information processing approach to consumer behaviour. It involves several stages of decision making in a linear fashion and consumers do not always go through an extended decision making process, as noted by researchers in the 1970s.

The second approach is known as the behavioural or interpretive consumer (learning) approach, which emphasizes a punishment or reward approach or avoidance, assuming that there is a relationship between experience and subsequent behaviour. The behavioural influence perspective focuses on the behaviour of consumers and the contingencies of the environment that influence the behaviour is the focus. This implies that the physical environment can influence the behaviour of consumers; for example, the use of lighting creates an atmosphere that elicits the desired responses from consumers.

The third approach is the experiential consumer (post-modern) approach, which rejects a structural response to experience. Aspects such as choice, decisions and learning are seen as modern constructs and replaced by post-modern constructs, such as fantasy, hedonism or symbolism (Gabbott and Hogg, 1998). It is viewed as the experiential decision-making perspective that recognises consumers as 'feelers and well as thinkers'. These consumers consume products for the sensations, feelings, images and emotions that the product generates, and products have subjective symbolic meanings for consumers that are regarded as more than functional goods

(Mowen and Minor, 2001). In terms of the decision making process, there is a difference between actual and desired affective states, and the latter impacts on the choice options. In the alternative stage, the options are evaluated based on their affective quality and choice is primarily based on affective criteria (which product will make me feel better?) and whether the outcome satisfaction evaluation meets the emotional expectations of the consumer.

Although experiential and behavioural perspectives are controversial to some researchers, it is recognised that decision-making occurs whenever consumers engage in behaviour. Furthermore, adopting a single-minded focus on belief formation and rational information processing fails to capture adequately the richness of consumer's behaviour. Since the 1980s, thinking about consumers as automata, receiving inputs and through a process of maximization, producing output has shifted and they are now perceived as socially constructing individuals participating in a multitude of interactions and contexts (Williams, 2002). Thus, both experiential and behavioural perspectives are considered in the present research, given that service experience consumption is the present research context.

### **2.2.3 Frameworks for Considering Hospitality Consumer Decision-Making**

The growth in the importance of understanding consumer behaviour and the consumption process in the hospitality context is well documented in the literature. This is supported by the change that recognises that services are becoming increasingly important in economic terms. Ways of consuming hospitality services differ from that of physical goods (Williams, 2002). However, the consumption of hospitality goods and services is regarded as complex, multifaceted interaction between consumers, suppliers and others within the macro and microenvironment. This is further complicated by the unpredictability of consumer behaviour due to individual differences (preferences) and the ways in which we categorize consumption decisions that make the study of consumer behaviour a far more complex undertaking. Nevertheless, it is clear that, if one wants to meet the

expectations of consumers in terms of hospitality, an understanding of the needs, motives and preferences that generate those expectations is essential.

The consumer decision-making process is central to an understanding of how consumers behave and it is a complex phenomenon. A range of models of the decision process and consumer behaviour is employed in an attempt to identify, in a simplified manner, the relationships between the factors that influence behaviour. They also seek to provide a description, explanation and prediction of consumer behaviour. However, in the hospitality context, research on consumer behaviour is at a very early stage of development. Williams (2002) questions the use and relevance of these theories in exploring hospitality consumption. Still, these models can be useful and valuable in providing us with a basic understanding of consumer behaviour hospitality consumption.

It is worthwhile reviewing the model developed by Engle and Blackwell (1982), which is a basic descriptive model of consumer decision-making that encompasses the four stages that involve motivation and recognition of need; information search; alternative evaluation; and consumption and outcome. Although this model has limitations in terms of its complexity and predictive capacity, it forms the basis of many future developments within decision-making research and various applications have been developed in the tourism literature.

The basic models of consumer behaviour categorize consumption into three components – pre-consumption, consumption and post-consumption. The stages of the process that researchers have focused on are the pre-consumption and post-consumption ones. This has been driven by the marketing managers' desire to: 1) influence consumers to purchase their brand during pre-consumption, and 2) predispose them favourably towards buying their product again (post-consumption). The activities of buying, using and disposing are grouped together as the "consumption process" (Nicosia, 1966). Finally, in the post consumption stage, the individual evaluates the performance of the product. Fishbein's theory suggests that attitudes influence intentions and in turn are a predictor of behaviour. This means

that intentions transform attitudes into action, but Bagozzi (1988) notes that research has found that attitudes sometimes directly affect behaviour without necessarily or fully working through intentions. This implies that evaluating the consumer's response to a consumption experience will provide the marketer with a valuable insight into the likely future performance of the products or services. Based on this, it is held that three stages of consumption process (pre-consumption, consumption and post consumption) are important in exploring and explaining consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the service experience consumption context.

The consumer behaviour literature provides an extensive framework of models and concepts aimed at identifying different processes and intervening factors that can explain consumer behaviour. Implicitly, the consumer is portrayed as a rational thinker who aims to maximize his/her utility with the purchase undertaken (Howard and Sheth, 1969). Consumer choice is understood as a sequence of activities whereby information is processed to form an attitude system toward a product. Attitude is defined as an overall evaluation and portrayed as playing a major role in shaping consumer behaviour. Several factors, such as individual differences, search activity, and types of involvement are also portrayed as affecting the criteria structure of each individual. The results of the choice process, satisfaction or dissatisfaction reinforce, in turn, future purchase behaviour through repeat purchase, future preferences being linked to the cognitive activity during the purchase process.

Thus, consumer behaviour is a broad and elusive area where all factors and processes are involved in the consumption process. Behaviour itself is considered to be influenced by several factors, including social, cultural and individual influence at the motivation and recognition of need stage in the consumer decision making process (Williams, 2002) and is also found in the Buyer Behaviour Model (Mill and Morrison, 1998). Kotler et al., (1996) highlights four psychological factors that influence behaviour:

- **Motivation:** a need that is sufficiently pressing to direct an individual to seek satisfaction

- Perception: the process by which people select, organize and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the world
- Learning; changes observed in one's behaviour which arise from experience
- Beliefs and attitudes: the descriptive thought individuals have about something, and their evaluation, feelings and tendencies towards an object

This research does not review all these constructs and consider how they might relate to each other in consumer satisfaction. Rather, it is limited to a focus on exploring the satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions where both motivation and perception are considered relevant. Motivation will be reviewed later in this chapter and perception in Chapter Three, and provides a deeper insight into consumer behaviour and how this subsequently influences and determines the satisfaction of consumers.

## **2.3 Review of Concept of Services, Service Experiences and Service Encounters**

### **2.3.1 Concept of Services and Characteristics of Services**

It is important to review what service is, as this research context focuses on the service experience. The word “service” has great richness and a diversity of meanings, which results in considerable ambiguity when the concept is used in management literature. The development of managerial and academic interest in services had led to a plethora of definitions that would be impossible to relate in the whole literature. Briefly, services have been defined in many ways, such as “service” can be used to denote an industry, an outcome or output and a process or an activity, but there has been no general agreement as to what really constitutes a service (Johns, 1999a). The broad definition of services suggests that intangible aspects of a service are commonly seen as the most distinctive features (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). Other characteristics also appear to define its specificity and these can be summarized as intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability.

Services can be segmented based on their intangibility or tangibility. Shostack (1977) was one of the first to use the continuum approach to characterise services. Shostack refers to services with a high reliance on sensual and psychological benefits as “Intangible -dominant”, within which these dominants were placed at one end of a continuum. At the other end, tangible –dominant products, which were less reliant on emotional or sensual benefits, were placed. This categorization enables the consumer to evaluate services. More frequently, services are described as “intangible” and their output is viewed as an activity rather than a tangible object (Johns, 1999a). However, there is no clear distinction made because a service output has a substantial tangible component. This means service is produced by the integration of various tangible and intangible components, and with a purpose to satisfy the varying wants of potential customers.

In term of service exploration, Johns (1999a) explores service more specifically in terms of the quality of service encounters and service experience. It is noted that dichotomies can be found between the delivery and consumption of “core services” and the emotional/hedonic dimensions of service performance, which are important for marketing, and the management of services, as well as this research, in exploring consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. It is noted that there are clear dichotomies between service providers’ and customers’ views of “service”. Therefore, it is regarded as inappropriate to equate a service provider’s concept of services with customer-oriented ones, because the phenomenological nature of the service experience means that these viewpoints will always be different and the dichotomies will be found within each of these perspectives, as Johns (1999a, p.968) notes:

*From the service provider, service process contains elements of core delivery and interpersonal performance, which are present to different extents in different service industries and processes and need to be managed in different ways. On the other hand, customers’ experience of service contains elements of core transaction and personal experience, which are present in different proportions in different service outputs and encounters and contribute in different ways to each individual experience.*



From the customer's perspective, service is viewed as a phenomenon – part of the experience of life - and thus the customer's experience has elements of core needs fulfilment and emotional or hedonic content, whilst core delivery and performance are related to the provider's process. Based on these differences, Johns (1999a) suggests new ways of accessing consumers' perceptions of service, without imposing the language or conceptual structure of service provision upon them and, more importantly, such findings can be presented in a form that providers can use and to which they can relate. Explicitly, Johns regards the positivist scientific approach as inadequate for probing the subtleties of consumer perceptions. The evaluation process of how the experience gained (positive/ negative) leads to satisfaction (inductive approach) is more relevant if expressed by the consumers themselves rather than when gauged by researchers using a quantitative methodological approach. Such differences and suggestions have been recognised in this research, which adopts a new approach to assessing the consumer service experience in relation to satisfaction by adopting the Profile Accumulations Technique (PAT).

The consumption of services is distinct from those of goods, based upon the fundamental characteristics of service. These unique service characteristics stress the significance of the experiential nature of service consumption as discussed in section 2.3.3. The consumption and production of services occurs simultaneously. This means that a service is consumed while it is produced and the performance of services in hospitality requires the participation of service providers and consumers, and both affect the service outcomes. The consumer's input becomes vital to the quality of service performance (Parasuraman et al, 1985).

The high degree of variability in the performance of services and heterogeneity means that services and service delivery might not be consistent across individuals, time and situations. The quality of performance often varies from employee to employee, from consumer to consumer and from day to day (Parasuraman et al, 1988; O'Brien and Deans, 1996)

Thus, this means that consumers evaluate the quality of a tourism or hospitality service only during or after consumption of the service. This shows that service quality embraces not only the service delivered, but also the manner in which it is delivered, and such notions are recognised in the present research in the measurement of service quality.

### **2.3.2 The Service Experience and Service Encounters**

The essence of service is often focused on how the customer processing (operation) is linked to outcome. The service encounter (server and consumer relationship) places emphasis on quality, experiences and added values while theoretical frameworks centre on the service encounter. Service quality usually occurs during service delivery in an interaction between the consumer and the contact person from the service firm (Bebko, 2000, Parasuraman, et.al, 1985).

The identification of the four unique characteristics of services, namely the intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability (Lovell, 1984) have substantial implications that require re-thinking of marketing principles and service management to accommodate its uniqueness. First, services need to be considered more broadly, by conceptualizing their consumption process as a whole experience. Contemporary authors argue that consumers are not buying goods or services, but rather the value or the satisfaction of the offer. For example, Buttle (1992) applies Levitt's (1981) definition to hospitality services, arguing that consumers seek intangible benefits regardless of whether the product is tangible or not. The author uses restaurant meals to support this argument, suggesting that it is characterized by aspects that are both tangible – food – and intangible - atmosphere, but Buttle refers to the sum of these experiences as the catering product. This is also supported by Nightingale (1985) who describes hotels as a composite of activities and interactions, each of which has a physical and emotional content. Bateson (1991) introduces the notion of bundle of benefits in reference to what customers receive through the service delivery experience, although the service performance is aided by tangibles, *“What the consumer purchases when he or she purchase a service is an experience.”*

(Bateson, 1991, p.495). This experience is customarily described as all the interpersonal and human environment interactions that take place during service (Baum, 1997). These series of human and environmental interactions by the customers are embedded during the service encounter process (Shostack, 1985). It is these series of interactions that make up so-called "services". Furthermore, customers' appreciation relates not only to the outcomes but also the processes. Thus, a service experience is made up of a multitude of encounters that will shape the customers' perception of the services. The experiential nature of service consumption suggests that a consumer's evaluation is likely to contain an affective element in addition to a cognitive one, what Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) term the "fun, feelings" of the service consumption experience.

The concept of service encounter relates to the services second characteristics of inseparability. Bitran and Lojo (1993) note that the service encounter plays a critical role in determining customer satisfaction. Since services are produced and consumed simultaneously, the consumer is experiencing the total service within the firm's facility (Bitner, 1992). Thus, the concept of service encounter also refers to the interaction between the consumer and firm (Suprenant and Solomon, 1987) and is commonly defined as "a period of time during which a consumer directly interacts with a service"(Shostack, 1985, p. 244). The service encounter thus, includes all the customers' interactions with a firm such as the personnel, physical facilities, tangible elements and other customers. The understanding of service encounters and their influence on the service experience is an aspect, which has been intensively researched. The present research stems from an underlying belief that "customer satisfaction depends directly and most immediately on the management and monitoring of individual service encounters" (Bitner, 1990, p. 69). This interactive process is seen as an important step in shaping the customers' perceptions of the service received and is often referred to as the firm's "moment of truth" (Baum, 1997).

The intangibility of services implies that consumers search for tangible cues concerning the firm's capabilities and quality, thus, the surrounding is, in fact, very

influential in communicating a firm's image (Bitner, 1992). The physical surroundings also denominate the servicescape, meaning that reference is made to the built environment. Various research studies have been conducted on the servicescape (Bitner, 1990; Booms and Bitner, 1982); the atmosphere (Kotler, 1974) and some studies have extended the concept of servicescape to the natural environment particularly in the leisure services context (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1994; Peterson, 1974).

Another encounter heavily researched concerns interactions with other customers, with the analysis of the effect of other customers' presence on an individual service perception. One aspect particularly examined is the perception of crowding which is understood as the "negative subjective experience of certain density levels" (Rapoport, 1975, p. 134). Other researchers see the encounter with service employees as the core to most services. The necessity of a high level of contact between customer and service employees (person to person) also legitimises the importance of the service encounter.

Other studies have addressed other dimensions such as the communication process between employees and customer (Zeithaml et al, 1988) and consumers' emotional response to the encounter (Price et al, 1995). Brady and Cronin's (2001) advanced research framework on customer's evaluation of service quality includes a) interaction quality, b) physical /environment quality, c) outcome quality. These aspects of quality are derived from both technical and functional of service product, service delivery service environment and the service experience.

This discussion concludes that the recognition of the important role played by service encounters suggests new implications for marketers and managers and the development of new concepts since the marketing of services has to refer to activities and processes. Booms and Bitner (1981, p.50) note that the traditional four Ps of the product marketing mix (product, place, price and promotion) should be reconsidered by adding three new dimensions: participants, physical evidence and process of services assembly.

The unique characteristics of services thus constitute a challenge as customers' judgments of a service depend as much on the service process as on the outcome. Thus indirectly, consumer satisfaction can be seen as depending on the production of services as well as on their consumption (Bateson, 1991). Such consideration has been conceptualized in the present research. To reiterate, the quality of a service can only be evaluated by being "experienced."

In the same vein, service encounter research increasingly recognises that service experience is inherently interpretive, subjective and affective (Czepiel et al., 1985, McCallum and Harrison 1985 and Parasuraman et al., 1988). Service experience in tourism has been translated into managerial action. Research into the experience of tourism has predominately been done from a service marketing perspective. Hospitality services are often seen to be more of an experience and less of a utilitarian transaction (Johns, 1997; 1999b). The experiential element influences a substantial portion of consumer satisfaction in the service context (Otto and Ritchie, 1996).

Thus, reviewing service experience and service encounters provides some basic understanding of service quality evaluation. The main service characteristics, the study of service encounters and service experience also suggest that service quality might be more complex to evaluate than goods. It appears to be more difficult to measure and standardize service. It also requires a different perspective in measuring consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction by taking into consideration its experiential elements and argues that service quality measures may be insufficient for an understanding of satisfaction in the tourism industry.

### **2.3.3 The Experiential Factor in Consumer Behaviour**

The distinguishing features of services characteristics signify the importance of the experiential nature of the service consumption process. However, this aspect of service consumption has received little attention either conceptually or empirically

from researchers into satisfaction. Recently, in recognition of the importance of the experiential factor in the service consumption process, Knutson and Beck (2003) propose a model which incorporates the four major components of the consumer buying process: expectations and perception of service quality, the consumer's experience with the organization, value and satisfaction.

The experiential nature of consumption also means that customers may find it more difficult to form pre-consumption expectations about the service. Inseparability and heterogeneity lead to variability in the performance of a service. The implications of these characteristics of services mean that, even for the experienced customer, expectations are likely to change not only between successive service purchases (inter-consumption) but also within a single service journey (intra consumption). Inter-consumption changes in expectations have received some attention from consumer behaviour researchers under the more general area of attitude change (Young, 1961). In the literature, inter-consumption changes in attitudes have been predominantly attributed to the impact of communications. Other variables that influence attitude change are reference group behaviour (Kelly and Volkart, 1952) and other social phenomena. In the area of consumer satisfaction, La Barbear and Mazursky (1983) have produced empirical evidence to support their hypothesis that satisfaction acts as a mediator between pre- and post -consumption attitudes. Satisfaction was found to influence repeat purchase intentions, but it was found that intra-consumption changes have not been examined. The principle reason for this is that general models of consumer behaviour processes are inclined to consider either the antecedents to decision-making or the consequences/evaluation of these decisions. They tend to ignore the process of consumption. Since satisfaction is a post consumption evaluative process, consumer satisfaction researchers have also tended to disregard the potentially dynamic process of the experience during consumption. This means that, despite the importance of the experiential factor in the service experience consumption process, neither consumer behaviour nor consumer satisfaction, as they currently stand, address the post-decision stage in such a way as to incorporate the impact of experience on consumer satisfaction measurement

The environment being variable and intangible within the service itself imposes a difficulty in investigating consumer behaviour decision processes. Because, within hospitality, the duration of consumption of service is varied and also there is a wide and complex range of options available, consumer wants and needs will be varied. These will be dependent upon such factors as situation, circumstance and expenditure (Williams, 2002).

In the post-consumption stage, the levels of satisfaction provide the link between expectation and experience and relate directly to repurchase decisions. Satisfaction is seen to occur where consumer's expectations are met and there are limited signs of dissatisfaction, as measured against experience and norms. Satisfaction reinforces positive attitudes towards a product, leading to a greater likelihood of repeat consumption. By contrast, dissatisfaction will lead to negative attitudes and will lessen the likelihood of repetition. There are possible business strategies that can be implemented to reduce dissonance. Wilkie (1994) suggests five ways:

- By ignoring dissonant information
- By selecting and interpreting any information about their chosen product
- By lowering their level of expectation
- By seeking out positive information about their chosen product
- By seeking to convince others they have made a good choice and thereby convincing themselves

## **2.4 Utilitarian and Hedonic Factors in Service Consumption Process**

### **2.4.1 The Importance of Hedonic and Utilitarian Factors in Service Experience Consumption**

The recognition that motives other than utilitarian can exist in the consumption of products has been noted in the consumer behaviour literature. This is apparent for leisure and tourism consumption since hedonic, emotional and imaginary outcomes of consumption seem to have a central place in the understanding of consumer

behaviour. Sheth (1980) suggests that, in order to understand consumer behaviour better, other elements need to be taken into account such as habits and conditioning, situational effects, group behaviour and motivations. Levy (1959, p. 118) also notes that product evaluation could not be limited to their tangible attributes since they portray meanings to individuals beyond these tangible specificities: *“People buy things not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean.”*

Following this, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982a, 1982b) produced a detailed investigation of the scope and limits of the traditional information processing models (consumers as rational thinkers and aims for maximization in their utility). They introduced the hedonic components of the consumption experience, as the most advanced insight into non-utilitarian consumption and to provide a framework that could relate to the analysis of leisure and tourism consumption processes. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982a, p. 92) note that consumers do not always behave as rational thinkers with careful judgemental evaluation *“but often display mental activities characterised as: primary process where their thinking is based on pleasure principles rather than rational relations”*. The concept of hedonic consumption is defined as designing *“those facets of consumer behaviour that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one’s experience with products.”* Thus, utilitarian functions of products, symbolic meanings and emotions are considered as important dimensions of product evaluation. Hedonic components allow for a better understanding of products in a way that traditional consumer behaviour models have not addressed. Hedonic aspects was regarded as particularly important for products for products that *“the symbolic role is especially rich and salient: for example, entertainment, the arts, leisure activities encompass symbolic aspects of consumption behaviour that make them particularly fertile ground for research”* (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982a, p. 134).

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982a, p.132) also introduce the *“experiential view”* similar to *“phenomenological in spirit and regards consumption as a primary subjective state of consciousness with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic*



response, and aesthetic criteria.” This implies that the evaluation of products’ utilitarian functions needs to be reconsidered by adding the enjoyment and resulting pleasure feelings that the consumption of a product might bring. The “experiential” perspective suggests that emotional and imaginative association occurring during consumption might be equally important. These pleasurable aspects of consumption are portrayed as seeking “fun, amusement, fantasy, arousal, sensory stimulation and enjoyment” (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982a, p. 134). This has strong implications for satisfaction formation and measurement in the service experience context and is recognised in the present research.

The hedonic perspective and experiential factors can be considered as prime determinants of behaviour and satisfaction evaluation, but whether these mediate or directly influence satisfaction or both are still matters that require clarification. This theory has highlighted two different aspects that relate to two different streams in the satisfaction literature. First, the theory suggests hedonic motives might have a strong influence on satisfaction and that the emotions and images created through actual consumption might be better predictors of satisfaction than utilitarian aspects. Second, it recognises the importance of hedonic criteria in the consumption of some products and this could lead to a better understanding of the choice process for these products.

One stream of the satisfaction literature focuses mainly on the types of affect elicited during the consumption experience and on the importance of emotions. This approach concentrates on the antecedent of satisfaction (satisfaction as a process approach) rather than the satisfaction as an outcome. Following this, researchers have attempted to investigate the role that both hedonic and utilitarian factors might play in consumption and satisfaction processes. The hedonic perspective highlights that satisfaction might not be solely embedded in the attributes of a product but could also be linked to the hedonic dimensions in the consumption of a product. Batra and Athola (1990, p. 161) who are concerned with utilitarian and hedonic dimensions of satisfaction, use the following terminology and note:

*The hedonic determinant of overall evaluation is presumed to be based on the consumer's assessment of how much pleasure he gets; his utilitarian determinant is based on this assessment about the instrumental value of the brand's functional attributes.*

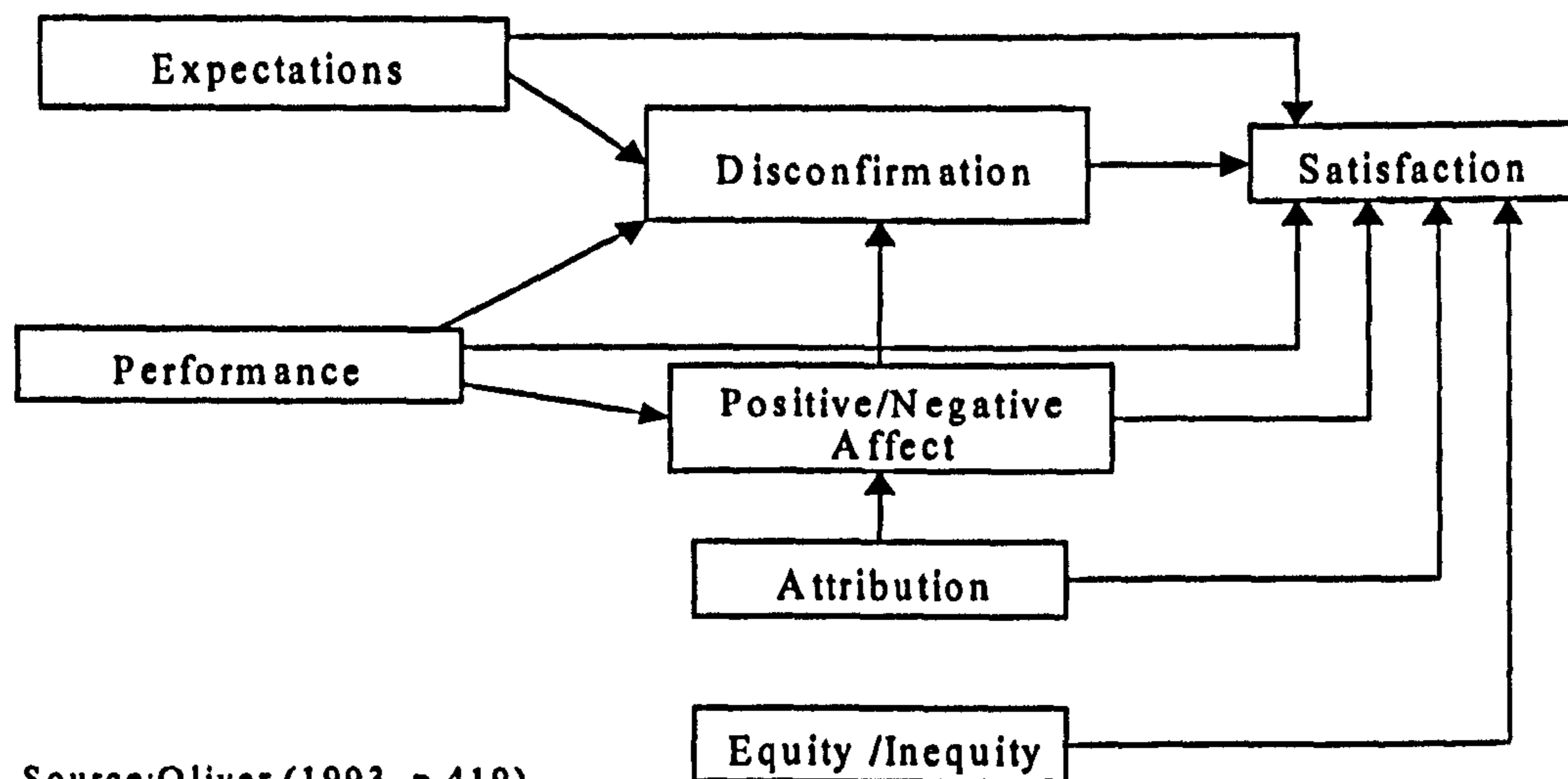
Their research confirms previous findings by recognizing that both utilitarian and hedonic dimensions could be present, to a greater or lesser extent, according to the type of product consumed. Similar findings from Halvena and Holbrook's work (1986, p. 394) recognise that the relative importance of each aspect might vary considerably across different products. This is also supported by Mittal (1988, p.505) who notes the importance of both aspects:

*The functional/expressive descriptor is proposed here as a distinction, not a dichotomy. Our position is that most, perhaps all, products serve some functional needs. In addition, some service expressive needs as well.*

A situation in which hedonic or expressive dimensions are more important than the utilitarian have also been termed the affective choice mode (Mittal, 1988).

Functional needs are defined as "the maximization of gains from the physical and economic environment" while the expressive needs are related to the consumer's consumption goals in their psycho-social worlds" (Mittal, 1988, p. 505). Mano and Oliver (1993) assess the potential links between hedonic and utilitarian judgments on affect and satisfaction. Their findings show that both the hedonic and utilitarian are antecedents of two affective states (pleasantness and arousal) which in turn mediate satisfaction judgments with the product consumed. Hedonic judgments appear to trigger levels of arousal that would generate higher levels of affect. Utilitarian judgments appear to mute this effect suggesting that higher levels of utility would be expected (Krishnan and Olshavsky, 1993; Mano and Oliver, 1993). Satisfaction is thus posited as a consequence of affective and cognitive judgments and is affected via the positive and negative effects that these create (Figure 2.1 below)

**Figure 2.1: Combined Cognitive and Affect-Augmented Consumer Satisfaction Model**



Source: Oliver (1993, p.419)

Consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction refers to the emotional responses generated as a consumer evaluates good and services. Based on this, Wilkie (1994) suggests five key elements in satisfaction evaluation as:

- Expectation generates during the pre-consumption stage. These expectations are taken forward to consumption and post consumption stages by consumer
- Performance is experienced during consumption, when consumers perceive performance on the dimensions they consider important
- Comparison is undertaken when consumers compare expectations and performance
- Confirmation and disconfirmations is the result of the above comparison.

#### **2.4.2 Conceptualisation of Hedonic and Utilitarian Factors in Tourism and Leisure Consumption Process**

The importance of symbolic meaning in tourist consumption has also been recognised by Brown (1992) who stresses the need to consider further the symbolic associations in the ways tourists interpret the cultural, environmental and the quality of the settings they are consuming. Otto and Ritchie (1996, p. 165) also stress the importance of recognizing the role of experiential factors: *"In tourism, understanding*

*experiential phenomena is particularly important as emotional reactions – and decisions – prevail amongst consumers”*. Crompton and Love (1995, p. 12) introduce a review of these two approaches in the leisure and tourism fields as utilitarian and expressive aspects of the consumption experiences under separate terminology. These two aspects are also used to differentiate the construct of both quality and satisfaction in Chapter Three.

*Quality of opportunity is defined as quality of the attributes of a service that are under the control of suppliers while quality of experience involves not only the attributes provided by a supplier but also the attributes brought to the opportunity by the visitor or recreationist.*

In short, the importance of affect in the achievement of satisfaction has been recognised although its relationship to other concepts still requires clarification. The hedonic perspective seems to suggest the superiority of affective processes in determining behaviour and predicting satisfaction. However, the relationships between these constructs still require more clarification. Furthermore the importance of hedonic and utilitarian criteria in consumption processes appears to be not only product based but also to be dependent on consumers. However, the importance of hedonic or utilitarian criteria appears to differ among individuals and might be linked to variables such as motivations.

The tourism and leisure literature has a more ambiguous approach. The view that dominates seems to show the supremacy of hedonic motives in the evaluation stage. However, it is also recognised that the attributes in a product might help in the achievement of those benefits. According to this view, both hedonic and utilitarian criteria contribute relatively importance to the achievement of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. It is this approach that is of interest in the present research, which aims to explore the underlying satisfaction and dissatisfaction with a belief that both utilitarian and expressive aspects are important in determining satisfaction. Moreover, in the service experience context, satisfaction results from the experiential nature of consumption and contains both perceptions and experiences

(Otto and Ritchie, 1996). Experiences are regarded as the core output from service performance (tangible products and intangibles services), and arguably, hospitality is both an experience and utilitarian transaction. Furthermore, in the present research study context, ecolodges are new small specialist nature-dependent and environmentally friendly accommodation units that focus on experience management (Ayala, 1996a) and their provision of eco experiences (natural environment and attractions) could be seen as similar to historic houses or theme parks. Consumption is primarily for experiential/emotional reasons. The consumption of service experiences could be seen as more important than its functional properties. Thus, the psychological benefits gained by consumers are important in this context, whilst utilitarian aspects still play an important part in the service performance that contributes to overall satisfaction.

## **2.5 Tourist Motivation: Concepts, Issues and Measurement**

### **2.5.1 Concepts and Definition of Motivation**

The word, “motivation”, means to move and is derived from the Latin “movere”. In this sense, tourists move and are moved through space, to seek relaxation, peace and tranquillity and they imbue their movement there with meaning and actions (Silverman, 1973). Evan et al., (1996, p.20) define motivation as: “an activation, drive and or reason to engage in certain behaviour and to maintain that behaviour. Motivation determines the direction and the strength or intensity of behaviour.” Statt (1997, p.95) suggests that needs, drives, goals and satisfiers are the key terms to define motivation.

The meaning of motivations to travel has been loosely defined and widely interpreted in the literature. The psychological perspective defines motivation as: “*the study of the direction and persistence of attitudes*” (Krech et al., 1962, p.68), and attitudes are based on hierarchically organized needs (Malsow, 1970) which are goal related. Several studies (Crompton, 1979; MacCannell, 1973, 1976; Smith, 1979) adopt more of a socio-psychological stance, and view individual needs in terms of the group of

which the person deliberately or otherwise is a member, and from which certain properties are derived.

Market analysis stresses the appeal to subjective needs and symbolic meanings in the tourism product, emphasizing the matching of tourists' motivational demand in terms of local supply (Dann and Sethna, 1977). This means that there is diversity according to situation and variation in different disciplines towards motivation.

The literature records varieties of motivation defined by researchers. Moutinho (1987, p.14) asserts "*motivation refers to a state of need, a condition that exerts a "push" on the individual towards certain types of action that are seen as likely to bring satisfaction*". This is also supported by Fodess (1994) and Dann (1981). In general, this means that motivation is regarded as explaining consumer's need and choices and is related to choice and satisfaction.

However, a common trend among researchers has been the recognition that tourist choices involve multi motives (Crompton, 1979; Moutinho, 1987 and others) and consumers are seen as consuming a specific product or destination in relation to various motivations, as noted by Pearce (1993, p. 120): "*Increasingly there is a recognition that much human behaviour (including travel behaviour is multi-motive or over-determined)*."

Understanding the motivating factors that lead to travel decision and consumption behaviour is vital for the tourism and hospitality industry. It provides an understanding in terms of why hospitality consumers behave or perceive things as they do – how the external world gets translated into the world of the hospitality operator, thus providing a better understanding of hospitality consumer behaviour (Williams, 2002). Implicitly, location, design, characteristics and features of the development must match the travel motivations and expectations of those making up the principal target markets, as McIntosh and Goeldner (1990) stress. By this notion, tour operators and tourism related institutions can better understand the real expectations, needs and goals of tourists (Goodall, 1988) and are in a better position to provide travel products to meet these needs and expectations. Stover and Garbin

(1982) and Beard and Rashed (1983) highlight that the needs, motivation and expectations of individuals differ, as do the different levels of expectations from different types of market segments. This implies that tourist destinations must understand the motivating factors that lead to the travel decision and consumption behaviour in each market segment. Likewise, each destination offers a variety of products and services to attract visitors and tourists have an opportunity to choose from a set of destinations (Crompton, 1992). Hence, the understanding of human motivation is to discover what needs people have and how they can be fulfilled (Witt and Wright, 1992).

### **2.5.2 The Concept of Needs and Motivation**

The consumer behaviour literature shows that needs and motivations are interrelated (Witt and Wright, 1992; Goodall, 1988). The concept of needs has often been posited as a central element in motivation and has been considered as the “*prime force that arouses motivated behaviour*” (Witt and Wright, 1992, p.34). Need is anything required for our physiological and psychological health. This implies that the needs people have should be first assessed in order to understand their motivation.

Motivations arise out of the felt wants or needs of the individual. The process of translating a need into the motivation to visit a tourist destination or undertake a specific activity is a complex process. Gilbert (1991) specifies that it is only when a need is recognised that it becomes a want and the motivated action is then the result of the attempt to satisfy this want. Motivation is thus conceptualized as occurring when an individual wants to satisfy a need (Mill and Morrison, 1998). In 1938, Murray (cited in Witt and Wright, 1992) presented an extensive list of 14 physiological and 30 psychological human needs that included achievement, recognition, affiliation, play and conservancies. The detailed list provided an extensive framework through which motivational theories could be developed further into lists and models (Plog, 1987).

Central to most theories of motivation is the concept of need. Needs are seen as motivating behaviour and, to understand human motivation, it is necessary to

discover what needs people have and how they can be fulfilled. Maslow (1943) was the first researcher to attempt to do this when he developed his needs hierarchy theory, the best known of all motivation theories. Maslow (1943) developed a hierarchy of the different needs and expectations that are assumed common to all people. He identified five levels of need:

- 1) Physiological: hunger, thirst, rest, activity
- 2) Safety: security, freedom from fear and anxiety
- 3) Belonging and love: affection, giving, and receiving love
- 4) Esteem: self esteem and esteem for others
- 5) Self-actualization: personal self-fulfilment

Maslow argues that an individual's behaviour is directed towards satisfying a sequential set of needs as presented above. It is assumed that if none of the needs appear to be satisfied, the lowest needs, physiological needs, would dominate behaviour, but the empirical evidence has questioned the order of the hierarchy. Nonetheless, five levels of need have served as the basic tenet for the development of various motivation models and categorizations. The application of this theory to tourist motivation is reviewed in the section 2.7.

These general approaches to understanding consumer needs have been used in the consumer behaviour field as much as in the leisure and tourism literature. The leisure and tourism literature often links motivation to the concepts of needs, wants, desires, goals and the distinction between these constructs is not always clear. The tourism literature records an extensive study of the needs and motivation for travel as presented in section 2.5.4 while the leisure field has tended to concentrate on the needs fulfilled through the choice of more specific leisure activities in section 2.5.3.

### **2.5.3 Leisure Approach**

Needs have been of central importance and the understanding of the formation and influence on leisure choices often constitutes the core of theories. Tourism and hospitality can be regarded as both a service and a leisure industry that provide



leisure experiences. Leisure studies have concentrated more precisely on the needs that motivate the decision to take part in a leisure activity and the needs that can be fulfilled through actual participation. Instead of attempting to summarize all the motivation types identified in leisure consumption through an exhaustive list, only studies that present an integrative approach of the range of motivation encountered are reviewed.

Leisure is essential to human well-being because of the opportunities it provides for recreation, recuperation, relaxation, self-improvement, self-reliance, appreciation of self, knowledge of environment, social interaction (Tinsley, 1979). The author claims that whenever individual experiences leisure, some psychological needs will be satisfied. The satisfaction of a person's psychological needs is likely to impact positively on their mental health, psychical health, life satisfaction and even personal growth (Tinsley, 1984). Furthermore, leisure travel is about the purpose of an experience that can be an "emotional, intellectual, spiritual or physical experience" (Marsh and Hensahll, 1987, p.49).

Empirical leisure researchers aim to define what characterizes an activity as a leisure pursuit. Iso-Ahola (1980) identifies a leisure activity for students as one in which they can participate freely. Likewise, Gunter (1987) reviews the main leisure experiences of students and identifies leisure activity as: a sense of separation (escape from everyday routine), intense pleasure and enjoyment, freedom of choice, spontaneity, timeliness, fantasy, adventure/exploration, and self- realization.

These studies appear to group together both the conditions that lead individuals to give a leisure purpose to an outing (freedom) and needs which could be fulfilled through an activity (adventure, escape). Their studies focus on the needs that motivate the decision to take part in leisure activity and the needs that can be achieved through the actual participation. They have some resemblance to the multiple motives approach that will be reviewed in the tourism literature in Section 2.5.6.

It is shown in the literature that the reasons for participating in leisure activities are relatively similar among individuals but differ when considering the types of activities pursued (Cato and Kunstler, 1988). Thus, motivations can be considered as both general and specific in that only some will be present for specific activities and their relative importance will also vary from one activity to another. Driver and Knopf (1977) identified 39 psychological benefits grouped into 19 benefit domains known as the Recreation Experience Preference (REP). His later (1987) study shows variation according to the activity undertaken and the settings in which they take place. The four categories identified were:

- Social: sharing enjoyment with others
- Escape: from everyday life and stresses
- Self-esteem: the ability to test oneself, understand better one's own capabilities and achievement
- Being in a pleasant surrounding: the value of the natural environment for its aesthetic qualities

Ewert (1987) proposes that the range of benefits encountered in leisure consumption can be categorized into four categories: psychological, sociological, education, and physical. He also suggests that, although the leisure field has focused on psychological and sociological benefits, both educational and physical benefits are relatively less studied and deserve better attention. In contrast, Schreyer (1987) identifies several barriers to participation; namely, limitations in terms of time, cost, access and crowding.

To conclude, it seems that the leisure approach keeps its focus on leisure motivations and needs and the study of particular benefits associated with specific activities. Nevertheless, the review of motivations is similar to the ones identified in tourism, with social, educational and escapes motivations being also present. In contrast, motivations are linked to taking part in activities that identify more specific dimensions, such as a sense of achievement, fitness, enjoyment of the natural environment and others. This approach suffers from a lack of generalization of the findings into a holistic approach of the whole purchasing process.

#### **2.5.4 Tourist Behaviour and Motivation**

The literature shows that many studies address the theories of needs, motivation and expectations as dimensions of tourism behaviour. Motivation is only one of many variables besides perceptions, cultural conditions and learning but is a critical variable because it is the driving force behind all consumer behaviour (Fodness, 1994), and an impelling and compelling force behind all behaviour (Berkam and Gilson, 1978). Ross and Iso-Ahola (1991) meanwhile advocate that motivation and satisfaction are central to understanding tourist behaviour. This means that motivation is identified with the satisfaction of an individual's needs that pushes or motivates them into particular types of behaviour.

The tourism literature identifies the types of motivation involved in tourism consumption and also analyses the whole purchasing process, based on consumer behaviour models. This approach allows for a better insight into the motivation concept that is often disregarded in the consumer behaviour literature. The identification of types of motivation in the tourism industry leads to a deeper appreciation of different behavioural needs, and, subsequently, to the exploration of the satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions of different behavioural profiles. Motivation has always been conceptualized as a central element of tourists' behaviour and choices, and also as the basis from which other factors involved in travel depend, such as the reasons for and choices of travel (Parrinello, 1993). Numerous empirical studies have explored the concept of travel motivation to explain tourist behaviour and destination choice (for example, Qui and Lam 1999; Ryan and Glendon 1998; Uysal and Hagan 1993; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991).

On other hand, Dann (1981, p.203) emphasis that: "*Satisfaction is the comparative measurement of the event and its expectations, and that the latter is based on motivation*". Pizam et al., (1978, 1979) claims that satisfaction cannot be studied in isolation of other motivations. Events and their anticipation are imbued with meaning, the contextualization of motivation. Moreover, where the events involve

interaction with others, such meaning is symbolic in content and requires communication. Satisfaction is an emotional reaction to an event or stimulus, comprising the faculties of intellect and will.

### **2.5.5 Approaches to Motivation and the Typology of Motivation**

Dann (1981) proposes seven motivation approaches for tourists. These will be noted, but not discussed at length, since they are not the main focus of the present research.

The seven categories of travel motivation include:

- Travel as a response to what is lacking yet desired
- Destination pull in response to motivational push
- Motivation as a fantasy
- Motivations as classified purposes
- Motivation typologies
- Motivation and tourist experiences
- Motivation as auto-definition and meaning (suggesting that the way in which tourists define their situations provides a greater understanding of their motivation than simply observing their behaviour)

This indicates that the studies of motivation can be very varied and complex, but motivation approaches in terms of a destination's pull in response to motivational push, the classification of purposes, typologies, tourist experiences and meaning are deemed useful and relevant to understanding consumer behaviour in the service experience context.

In the literature, tourist motivations have been attributed to a variety of social, economic, demographic and psychological factors, and external and intrinsic factors in relation to the individual, form a solid foundation for an understanding of their motivation (Dann, 1981).

Williams (2002) notes that external factors are related to the attractiveness of destinations or hospitality goods or services in terms of the consumer's desire to own

or experience them. In this sense, hospitality goods and services can be seen to offer both internal (physiological factors –food and drink) and external (attractiveness of experiencing the services) motivating forces. Likewise, motivation can be demonstrated as a positive or negative aspect; positive in that we seek positive moods, pleasure, and social approval, while also negative in that we seek to escape negative situations such as pain, pessimism or discomfort.

Howard and Sheth (1968) distinguish between specific and non-specific motivations, and Holloway (1994) agrees, and adds that there is also specific motivation and general motivation. General motivation is aimed at achieving a broad objective, also known as “push” factors, for example getting away from routine and enjoying different surrounding, whilst specific motivation refers to meeting specific needs, also known as “pull” factors.

Pull and push theory is widely used to study tourist motivation (Gray, 1970; Rivers, 1972; Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979). Push factors are described as person-specific motivations that are considered as socio-psychological motives that push an individual into wanting a particular type of holiday (Sharpley, 1994). Pull factors are described as destination-specific attributes (Goodall, 1991) within the decision making process, where the motives are aroused by the destination. Push motives are useful in explaining the desire to go on a vacation and pull motives are used to explain the choice of destination (Crompton, 1979). The tourism literature stresses the importance of both push and pull factors in shaping tourist motivations and choices (Crompton 1979). Kozak (2002) states that push factors are origin related and refer to the intangible, intrinsic desires of the individual traveller – desire for escape, rest and relaxation, adventure, health or prestige. Pull factors are mainly related to the attractiveness of a given destination and its tangible characteristics – such as beaches, accommodation, recreation facilities, cultural and historical resources (Uysal and Hagan, 1993). The destination choice process might therefore be related to tourists’ assessment of destination attributes and their perceived utility value. Kozak (2002) also notes that preference sets and destination attributes can be matched to specific psychographic profiles of tourists.

Dann (1977) considers push factors as internal factors that instil a desire for travel and therefore aim to satisfy various psychological needs; whilst pull factors, which are considered external factors, focus on the benefits of a particular destination and influence where, when and how that person decides on his/her vacation. Crompton (1979) and Crompton and MacKay (1989) agree with Dann. Klenosky (2002) asserts that push factors lead to the decision to take a vacation while pull factors cause the decision to select one destination over another. Thus push factors may relate to the needs and wants of the traveller, such as escape, rest, relaxation, adventure, prestige, health and fitness, and social interaction, while pull factors relate to the features, attractions, or attributes of the destination itself. In short, push factors focus on whether to go and pull factors focus on where to go, which two separate decisions are made at two separate points of time (Klenosky, 2002).

Many empirical studies have investigated pull and push factors in order to gain an insight into travel motivations. Push factors, such as escape, relaxation, cultural experiences and social interaction feature frequently in the empirical studies, while pull factors, that are associated to destination attributes, vary according to the studied destinations. However, it is interesting to note that novelty can be treated as both a pull and a push factor.

Similarly, the findings from the study by Turnbull and Uysal (1995) show a different order and importance for both push and pull factors across destinations and also cultures. It is not the intention to list all of the related studies here.

This review of the classifications of travel motives is not exhaustive, but these findings seem to identify fairly similar dimensions, five of which recur frequently: relaxation, escape, cultural, health, and social motives. These findings contribute to the present research, since motivation helps to explain and influence consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction and so forms an important aspect of consumer behaviour. These findings are also corroborated in studies that attempt to identify categories of tourists following these types of motivations.

Elsewhere, motivation is treated as the purpose of travelling (Cohen, 1972, 1974, 1979). McIntosh and Goeldner (1990) relate motivation to the purpose of a trip rather than the satisfaction of an identified or hidden psychological need, and present four categories of basic travel motivators: physical, cultural, interpersonal and status and prestige. Thus, this approach describes the outcome or goal oriented behaviour that results from a specific need rather than the actual motivation itself.

Researchers generally agree that the primary motives for taking a pleasure vacation involve personal enrichment of one kind or another. Crompton (1979) conceptualizes the motives for pleasure travel and destination choice based on socio-psychological motives, while Dann (1977) asserts psychological motives for tourism, while Iso-Ahola (1982) argues that tourism motivation is just one form of leisure motivation. From the psychologist's or social psychologist's perspective, motive is regarded as an internal factor that arouses, directs and integrates an individual's behaviour. In addition, motivation is also associated closely with tourist typologies in terms of tourist roles or experiences, as Dann (1981) points out. Finally, Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) highlight tourist's motivation based on site experience. Motivation is a dynamic concept that varies from one person to another, from one market segment to another, from one destination to another, and from one decision making process to the next (Uysal and Hagan, 1993).

### **2.5.6 The Multi-dimensional Approaches to Motivation**

The previous section reviewed the various approaches to understanding tourist motivation. This confirms that the nature of tourist motivation is heterogeneous and multiple (Crompton, 1979; Mayo and Jarvis, 1981). Researchers, such as Cohen (1972), Plog (1974) and Dann (1977) recognise multiple motivations as proposed in tourist typologies based on the relationship between a tourist's personality and his/her tourism activities.

The recognition of the importance and multiplicity of motivations has led to various categorisations of possible motivations for consuming tourist products and services. In order to avoid further confusion and endless discussion, these approaches are

divided into two categories by the researcher, as i) lists of the motivations involved in travel and ii) the constructed typologies of travellers based on their motivational profiles.

Multidimensional approaches to motivations might not, as such, provide defined types of tourist consumers, but they aim to list the motivations sought in travel. These motivations provide a powerful “database” through which researchers can refine their appreciation of multiple travel motivations.

The Beard and Ragheb Leisure Motivation Scale derived from the work of Maslow (1970), when applied to recreation studies, shows that four motives determine the satisfaction to be gained from leisure pursuits: a) intellectual motives which involve mental activities such as “learning, exploring, discovering, thought or imaging”; b) social motives, which include “needs for friendship and interpersonal relationship and need for the esteem of others”; c) competence-mastery motives where individuals “seek to achieve, master, challenges and compete”; and d) stimulus-avoidance motives which involve the desire to escape from an over-stimulating life situation. This has been applied to various dimensions of leisure and tourism provision (Ryan, 1994). Likewise, Dann (1977) categorises the basic tourist motivations for travelling into two constructs: anomie and ego-enhancement that are similar to the need for self-esteem and love present in Maslow’s needs hierarchy. Pearce (1988) adapts Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to interpret tourists’ holiday motivations and identifies five levels: relaxation/bodily needs stimulation, relationship, self-esteem and development, and fulfilment. The author asserts that the motivations for participating in tourism are dynamic and change with age and life cycle stage, and can relate to one’s “travel career” and other factors in section 2.2.4. Plog (1974) also recognises this dynamic character.

Kozak (2002) indicates four types of tourist motivations: culture, pleasure-seeking/fantasy, relaxation and physical. Relaxation and pleasure are regarded as the prime reasons for taking a vacation, which matches the physical and cultural

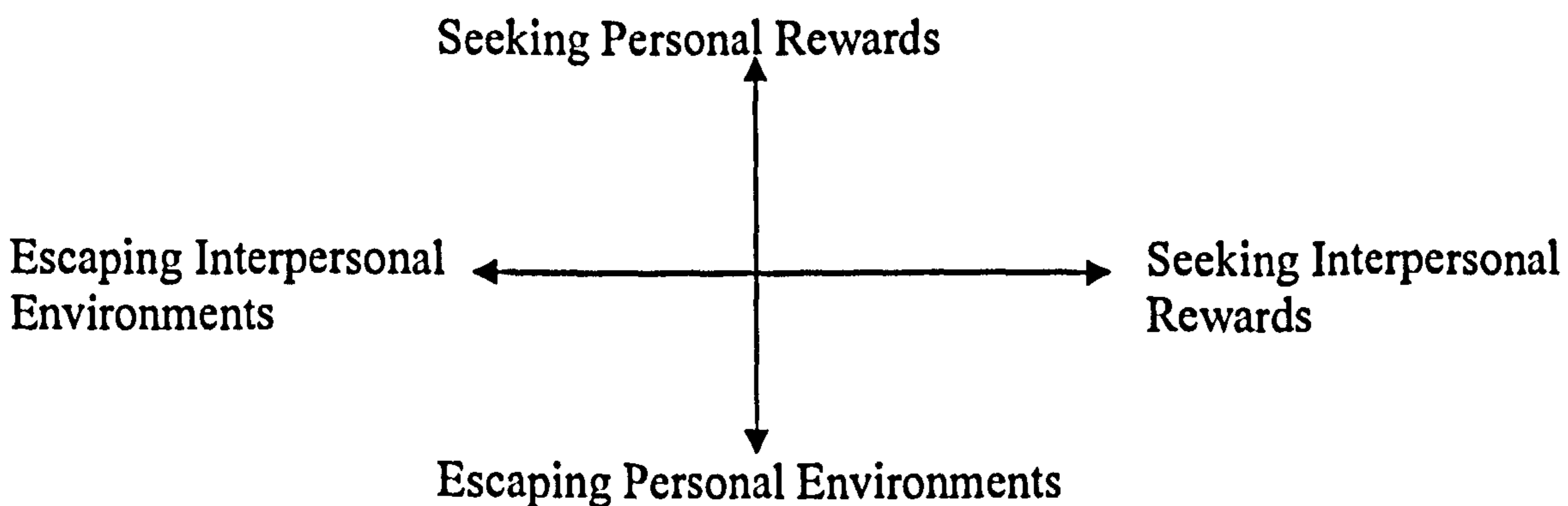


categories of tourist motivation described by McIntosh and Goeldner (1990), and parallels Ryan and Glendon's (1998) relaxation motivation category. Consistent with this, Krippendorf (1987) states that relaxation and getting away from routine life are the main two psychological reasons for taking a vacation. Likewise, Hill et al., (1990) agrees that relaxation and escape are the primary reasons for travelling to different destinations, and Kozak (2002) notes that relaxation, as a motivation factor, does not differ according to nationality or destination.

One widely mentioned study was undertaken by Crompton in 1979 who considered the travel motives of a small American sample. He identified nine motives – seven of which may be classified as socio-psychological or push motives, and two as cultural or pull motives. The former are: escape from a mundane environment, exploration and evaluation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, facilitation of social interaction, while the latter were novelty and education.

Mannel and Iso-Ahola (1987) identify two main types of push and pulls factors in the leisure context – personal and interpersonal – and suggest that people are motivated to travel to leave behind the personal or interpersonal problems of their environment and to obtain compensating personal or interpersonal rewards. The personal rewards are mainly self-determination, a sense of competence, challenge, learning, exploration, and relaxation, whilst the interpersonal rewards arise from social interaction, as illustrated in Figure 2. 2 below:

**Figure 2. 2: The Escaping and Seeking Dimensions of Leisure Motivation**



Source: adopted from Mannel and Iso-Ahola (1987)

Tourism is widely acknowledged as a social-psychological experience (Pearce, 1982; Iso-Ahola, 1983; Mannel and Iso-Ahola, 1987). Empirical research argues that sociological factors such as income and socio-economics affect tourist behaviour but are not significant determinants of the quality of the experience, since more important is the individual's cognition and feelings about the experience (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991).

Likewise, behaviour is often expected to produce personal satisfaction. Deci (1975, p.99) notes that "*a motive is an internal factor that can be linked to an awareness of potential satisfaction*". This means that motives are cognitive representations of future states that are expected to lead to personally satisfying experiences. Motivations and satisfaction are therefore positively related to one another but they happen at different times, the motive by definition occurring before the ensuing experience and satisfaction. Iso-Ahola (1982; 1990) identifies seeking and escaping as the basic motivational dimensions of leisure behaviour, and these two motivational forces simultaneously influence the individual's leisure behaviour. Ostensibly, leisure activities provide novelty or change from daily routine and stress for an individual. By escaping the everyday environment, the person can escape their personal and/or interpersonal worlds but, on the other hand, they also tend to seek psychological (intrinsic) rewards from participating in leisure activities. In this case, the rewards can be categorized as personal and interpersonal. Self-determination, a sense of competence, challenge, learning, exploration and relaxation are regarded as personal, whilst social contact is referred to interpersonal. Iso-Ahola (1983, p. 55) concludes that the two motivational forces that interplay in the leisure context are the: *escaping of routine or stressful environment and seeking of opportunities for certain psychological rewards*.

One could also argue that escape is prevalent in the tourism experience because of its inherent nature. In addition, seeking information and knowledge about certain places may appear to be more dominant than escape. Nevertheless, Iso-Ahola (1990)

concludes that the two motivational forces (seeking and escape) are interwoven and points out that: *people seek by escaping and escape by seeking*.

Schreyer and Roggenbuck (1978) present seven categories of experience expectations in relation to recreational river users: learning about nature, action/excitement, stress release/solitude, affiliation, autonomy/achievement, self-awareness and status. Elsewhere, Fluker and Turner (2000) find that “escape from the humdrum of everyday life”, “enjoy the excitement”, “try something new and challenging” are regarded as needs and motivations for the whitewater rafting experience and also supported by Arnould and Price (1993).

### **2.5.7 Motivation and the Tourist Experience**

Ryan (1994) argues that a strong tourist motivation to derive enjoyment from the holiday experience becomes a determinant of behaviour. Cohen (1979) presents a phenomenology of tourist experiences as a means of explaining the different types of tourists experience that are significant dependent upon the individual’s “total world view”. By this notion, a tourist’s behaviour in a destination is closely associated with their worldview. Cohen (1979) identifies five types of tourist motivation:

- Recreational – entertainment, restoring physical and mental power and endowing a sense of well-being
- Diversionary – a diversion or escape from the boredom and meaninglessness of everyday life
- Experiential – the search for the meaning of life in the culture of the “other”, observing and interacting with other cultures and the exploration of their ideas and value system, while remaining aware of their “otherness”
- Experimental - experiencing foreign culture in a different way of living with the aim of discovering a feeling of authenticity and a new culture, higher involvement and immersion with local culture.
- Existential – the individual’s spiritual centre is located in another place away from the home environment

A review of tourist travel experiences in ecotourism specific is presented in Chapter Four in section 4.3.

### 2.5.8 Typologies of Tourists

The grouping of consumers who display similar motivational profiles has long been practiced by researchers and helps to clarify the complexity linked to the multidimensional aspects of motivation. Most researchers interested in tourist motivation seek to determine the type of tourists based on motivations identified (Fodness, 1994).

Predominantly, tourism researchers use socio-demographic and economic variables in market segmentation. Although these are very useful in the type of information they provide, they can be rather limiting, since they merely describe customers and cannot give insights into the behavioural and attitudinal variables that explain tourist choices and behaviour (Holloway, 1994). Anderek and Caldwell (1994, p.44) state that: *“Demographics simply do not inform tourism marketers much about what people are looking for in a travel experience.”*

It is noted that demographics and socioeconomic factors are inadequate to explain or understand consumer behaviour and there is an increasing use of *“psychological variables, which they connect with response to products”*. (Lowyck et al, 1992, p.15):

The multiple approaches to motivation from the previous section have been used to cluster respondents with similar profiles. Other approaches can be grouped into two main categories based on psychographics or buyer behaviour variables.

Psychographics remains a generic term that is used in different approaches and whose definition remains multiple (Wells, 1975). Its underlying concept is to grasp the “inner person “ (Beane and Ennis, 1984) by understanding an individual personality, lifestyle, and system of references in order to understand better how that

person will operate their choices and behave in terms of various consumption decisions.

One of the earliest attempts of this type was developed by Gray (1970), who divided travellers into two types – “sunlust” and “wanderlust” – and showed that both types were attracted to different types of destinations. The “sunlust” characteristic desires to experience something different and various amenities for activities like sport. On the contrary, “wanderlust” relates to the desire to experience different cultures and places and appreciate historical assets.

The tourist motivation model is based on the concept of psychographics to examine and understand the tourist’s intrinsic desire to choose a destination. Plog, writing in the 1970s, is widely cited in the literature. According to Plog, travellers can be classified along two dimensions, namely allocentrism/psychocentrism and energy, as the personality characteristics that influence the type of destination sought by tourists. Allocentrics are adventurous, experimental and confident travellers who enjoy a sense of discovery and new experiences in the destination environment. They are likely to inform their friends about their travels. Psychocentrists tend to be self-inhibited, nervous and less adventurous people who prefer the familiar. The energy dimension is added later, which describes the desired level of activity preferred by the tourists – high-energy travellers prefer a high level of activity whereas low-energy travellers prefer fewer activities.

Plog (1974) demonstrates that, according to the category to which they belong, consumers were likely to display different profiles, interests, spending patterns and vacation characteristics. Plog argues that if psychographics provide an understanding of the reasons why people travel, the activities they wish to engage in while on vacation are directed by their lifestyle. However, both personality and lifestyle approaches have generally been used alternatively towards similar aims, and the choice of one technique rather than another is not always justified. In fact, lifestyle has also been frequently utilized to distinguish consumers and its superiority over alternative approaches in describing consumer behaviour is debated by several authors (Veal, 1993; Wells, 1975).

Other researchers have devised various classifications for tourists, but similar characteristics tend to emerge: looking for adventure, discovering new cultures versus accustomed daily habits, budget, the importance attached to nature and authenticity, seeking relaxation, sun, sand and sea. Many of these studies of tourism motivation and typologies, particularly those of Plog and Cohen, detect a direct link between the behaviour of individuals in their own environments and the destinations they choose to visit. This is important for the present research, as the visit context impacts on consumer behaviour and subsequently influences satisfaction and dissatisfaction. A review of typologies of ecotourists is presented in Chapter Four section 4.4

## **2.6 Problems with Tourist Motivation Theories**

Cohen (1974, p.528) refers tourist motivations as a “fuzzy set” of definitions and descriptions. Subsequently, considerable amalgam of ideas that relating to the Cohen’s idea of tourist motivation is found in literature, for example Sutton (1967); Lundberg (1972); MacCannell (1973; 1976); Dann (1977); Crompton (1979) and Pearce (1982). It is recognised that motivation is a complex concept, and cannot safely be inferred from behaviour, as similar behaviour may originate from different motivations. Two people may eat in the same restaurant, for example, but hunger is the key for one while the other may be motivated merely because it is lunchtime. Likewise, Lundberg (1972, p.107) notes that the difficulty in determining, “*Why do people travel?*” stems from individual and cultural conditioning: “*What the traveller says are his motivation for travelling may only be reflections of deeper needs, needs which he himself does not understand nor wish to articulate*”. Thus the motivation may be conscious and/or unconscious. However, researchers believe that consumption motives can be determined through indirect methods, such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions that seek to identify the underlying motives for behaviour of which the consumers may be unaware.

## 2.7 The Application of Motivational Theories to Tourist Motivation

Both Maslow's needs and Herzberg's goals have been applied to the motivation situation that influences behaviour. Presumably, if one knows the hierarchy of an individual's needs, one can determine what goals/incentives (Herzberg) to provide in a particular environment in order to motivate those individuals (Hersey and Blanchard, 1982). A review of Herzberg's theory is presented in section 2.8.

Maslow's theory (1970) has been widely adapted by tourism researchers due to its simple and understandable framework of a wide range of different human needs. Travel motivations fit well into Maslow's hierarchy of needs model, as shown in Table 2.1 below. Mill and Morrison (1998) regard travel as a need or want and so adopt Maslow's hierarchy of needs to explain travel motivations. Arguably, this theory is invalid as customer expectations (needs and wants) increase and change over time (Balmer and Baum, 1993) especially in the hospitality context.

Furthermore, Maslow's original work was part of a clinical experiment and not of a foundation for a theory of motivation that explains why people take holidays.

**Table 2. 1: Maslow's Needs and Motivations Listed in the Travel Literature**

NEED	MOTIVE	TOURISM LITERATURE REFERENCE
Physiological	Relaxation	Escape, relaxation, relief of tension, sunlust, physical, mental relaxation of tension
Safety	Security	Health, recreation, keeping oneself active and healthy for the future
Belonging	Love	Family togetherness, enhancement of kinship relationship, companionship, facilitation of social interaction, maintenance of personal ties, roots, ethnic, show one's affection for family members, maintain social contacts
Esteem	Achievement	Convince oneself of one's achievement, status, show one's importance to others, prestige, social recognition, ego-enhancement, professional/business, status and prestige
Self-actualization	Be true to one's self	Exploration and evaluation of nature, self-discovery, satisfaction of inner desires
To know and understand	Knowledge	Cultural, education, wanderlust, interest in foreign areas
Aesthetics	Appreciation of beauty	Environment, scenery

Source: Mill and Morrison (1998, p. 59)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs has received little clear or consistent support. Some of his propositions have been totally rejected, whereas others have received mixed or questionable support (McCabe, 2000). Witt and Wright (1992) criticise this theory for its failure to include several important needs, possibly because they do not fit conveniently into Maslow's hierarchical framework. . Elsewhere, the Ulysses factor (Mayo and Jarvis, 1981), which refers to the human need for exploration, is considered as much an intellectual as a physical need in the travel context.

In the same vein, the literature indicates that a fundamental problem remains concerning tourist motivation. What actually constitutes the motivation to travel? Is it the conclusion of the research or the explanation of the tourists? In fact, Maslow's Theory of Motivation faces difficulty in ascertaining the individual's underlying motivations as the travellers are often unaware of the true reason behind travelling or the true psychological motivation behind travelling (Mill and Morrison, 1998), or they may be reluctant to reveal it (Crompton, 1979). McIntosh and Goeldner (1990) relate motivation to the purpose of trip rather than satisfaction of an identified or hidden psychological need. However, a major problem associated with motivation by the purpose approach is that it describes the outcome or the goal oriented behaviour that results from a specific need, rather than the actual motivation itself. In addition, the basic notion of needs results in motivated behaviour, we need to recognise that if we accept that tourist motivation is also dependent on the extent to which people expect a particular choice of action to lead to certain outcomes. Other unresolved difficulties concerning the theories of motivation include the general definition of motivation and its various implications, which have led to some confusion in the literature.

## **2.8 A Review of Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory: Its Underlying Principles**

The following section reviews Herzberg's theory by focusing on its principles and methodology, its applications and the major criticisms that have implications for the present research. Subsequently, a review of its applications to consumer satisfactions and Herzberg's theory is conceptualised in the ecolodge context.



Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory was developed from the series of experiments into work motivation designed to capture a description of work conditions by the workers through expressing their feelings, both especially good and especially bad, about their job. This theory asserts that job satisfaction is a function of two types of condition, known as hygiene (dissatisfiers) factors which are related to the job context (environment) and lead to the condition of dissatisfaction (prevention); and motivators (satisfiers) which are related to job content and lead to a condition of satisfaction. Herzberg termed the first category of needs as hygiene/maintenance factors simply because they describe people's environment and serve the primary function of preventing job dissatisfaction and are required to be continually maintained. Maintenance factors are not an intrinsic part of a job; rather they are related to the conditions under which a job is performed. This means that hygiene attributes are defined as the necessities of a job that must be satisfied before a worker becomes motivated. These include mainly tangible items such as company policies, interpersonal relationships with others, salary, job security and working conditions and their presence is expected because they are normal components of a job and represent a minimal expected set of conditions as presented in Table 2.2 below.

The second category of needs are known as motivators as these seem to be effective factors in motivating people to superior performance and have a positive effect on job satisfaction. The presence of motivators is perceived to be contingent on the job leading to psychological benefits such as achievement, recognition, personal growth, responsibility and intellectual challenge, as show in Table 2.2 below. These benefit attributes are the vehicle that facilitates intrinsic sources of fulfilment associated with the job.

**Table 2. 2: Motivation and Hygiene Factors Applied to Job Satisfaction by Herzberg's Dual Factor Theory**

<b>MOTIVATORS</b>	<b>HYGIENE FACTORS</b>
<b>The Job Itself</b>	<b>Environment</b>
Achievement	Policies and administration
Recognition for accomplishment	Supervision
Challenging work	Working conditions
Increased responsibility	Interpersonal relations
Growth and development	Money, status, security

Source: Hersey and Blanchard (1982, p.58)

Herzberg et al (1959, p. 81-82) conclude that motivators affect job attitudes in a positive direction and *“their absence will much less frequently lead to job dissatisfaction”*. On other hand, hygiene *“represents the major job dissatisfiers with little potency to affect job attitudes in a positive direction.”* People attribute their satisfaction to certain aspects of the job and dissatisfied feelings to aspects other than those connected with job satisfaction. Later, Herzberg (1964, p. 3) further confirms that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not the opposite of each other and claims that *“job satisfaction is made up of two unipolar traits.”* The two unipolar continua (satisfaction, dissatisfaction) are unrelated. Herzberg states that satisfaction is a function of motivators and dissatisfaction is a function of hygiene factors. This means that satisfaction is due to the presence and/ or level of motivators and the variance in dissatisfaction is due to the presence and/ or level of hygiene factors.

This theory conceptualises people's lives at two separate levels – feeling pain and happiness concurrently. Accordingly, it is possible for people to conceive their experiences which are made up of these two diverging parts and yet be motivated by two opposing needs, known as the concept of the dual nature of man demonstrated in real-life situations (Herzberg et al., 1962). Similarly, the two different categories of needs, also termed growth and avoidance, affect behaviour in different ways (Herzberg et al., 1962). In this context, “growth” can be conceptualised as “seeking” and “avoidance” as “escaping” in the context of the guest's motivation in application to the present research. Herzberg (1966) also suggests that all aspects of an experience (in the workplace) can be classified as either a motivator or a hygiene factor. Likewise, Price et al, (1995) concludes that what makes a consumer happy is

very different from what makes them unhappy. It is this approach that the present research adopts in exploring the underlying satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions of consumers.

### **2.8.1 Review of Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory: its Methodology**

Herzberg et al. (1959) uses a basic critical incident technique for data collection. Two sets of data are collected regarding the job experience by using a qualitative method, by first asking the participants to recall a time during their job tenure when they are either a) satisfied or b) dissatisfied. They are then asked to discuss these events (incidents) and specify the factors that contribute to their satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The original study (Herzberg et al., 1959) identifies 16 job factor categories through content analysis that are then collapsed into two general categories — motivators and hygiene factors — on the basis of the logical relationships between the categories. Relationships between motivators, hygiene factors and job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are hypothesized by examining the frequency with which motivators are associated with job satisfaction, and hygiene factors with job dissatisfaction.

### **2.8.2 Application of Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory**

Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory has contributed to knowledge about human nature, motives and needs that is significant to both organizations and individuals through understanding the forces or factors leading to improvement in morale, happiness and self-realization in the work environment (Hersey and Blanchard, 1982). This theory has been extended to scientists and managers at various levels of organizations from top management to hourly employees, and later to service industries. However, these studies either support or fail to support the findings of Herzberg's theory. Rather than reviewing these at length, only the limitations that affect the findings of the present research will be discussed.

## **2.8.3 Criticism of Herzberg's Theory**

### **2.8.3.1 The Supportive and Non Supportive Studies**

Some of the supportive research (Myers, 1964; Saleh, 1964; Schwartz et al., 1963) reports results that correspond well with Herzberg's conclusion that motivators determine satisfaction and hygiene factors determine dissatisfaction. These studies adopt a basic Herzberg methodology to collect and analyse data and typically uphold the theory (Schwartz et al., 1963; Saleh, 1964; Myers, 1964). Friedlander's (1963; 1964) two studies provide support for the theory and the 1964 study concludes that, for the most part, satisfaction and dissatisfaction are unrelated and not complementary functions. Halpern's (1966, p. 200) study employs a 7-point graphic scale and his findings support the basic thesis of Herzberg's theory: "*it is the motivators...that are primarily related to job satisfaction*". On the other hand, Lindsay et al. (1967) argue that Halpern's findings support the conclusion of Herzberg's theory by stating that motivators and hygiene interact in determining worker's levels of job satisfaction.

Several researchers have presented their studies as non-supportive of Herzberg's theory. Lindsay et al.(1967) argue that both motivator and hygiene factors are related to satisfaction (conceived as a bipolar variable) and there is a differential strength in the relationship between motivators, hygiene factors and level of satisfaction. This is supported by other researchers (Halpern, 1966; Gordon, 1965; Wernimont, 1966; Burke, 1966). Similarly, other researchers have concluded that motivators and hygiene factors are not unidirectional in their effects (Gordon, 1965; Burke, 1966).

On the other hand, those studies that use job factors in a structured format (questionnaire) and techniques for data analysis (factor analysis; Ewen, 1964; Gordon, 1965; Halpern, 1966, etc) and scaling technique (Burke, 1966), conclude that they either do not support the theory as stated or, at best, give it equivocal support. Brayfield (1960) discounts Herzberg's theory on the basis of the method used (content analysis of interview data). It seems apparent that part of the ambiguity

surrounding this theory may be attributed to methodological inconsistencies and the lack of formal and logically consistent statements of the relations between the variables of interest.

It appears that those studies that directly support Herzberg's theory employ a questionable methodology that has been criticized (Lindsay et al, 1967; Vroom, 1964). On the other hand, those studies that do not directly support Herzberg's theory have controlled response variability by using a structured format, considering the relationship of motivators and hygiene factors to more than two levels of satisfaction, and have either implicitly or explicitly conceptualised satisfaction as a bipolar variable. Other researchers argue that defensive behaviour and displacement could account for Herzberg's findings (Brayfield, 1960; Vroom, 1966). The issues of polarity or dimensionality of job satisfaction and the relationship of the variables within the theory still require further clarification (Lindsay et al., 1967).

#### **2.8.3.2 Critics of Herzberg's Theory**

Herzberg's theory has been criticised based on principles of attribution theory where people are more inclined to attribute satisfying incidents at work, the motivators, as a favourable reflection on their own performance (Vroom and Maier, 1961). The dissatisfying incidents are more likely to be attributed to external factors and to other people. It has been criticised due to the simplistic nature of the theory and the lack of allowance for individual difference – this means that not all workers are greatly interested in the job content of their work, or motivators or growth factors (such as hourly workers).

Lindsay et al. (1967) point out criticism of Herzberg's methodology in terms of using critical incident interviews, where this technique controls neither the number of incidents from a given subject nor the number of job factors mentioned in a given incident. It fails to consider the relationship between job satisfaction and motivators and hygiene factors across intermediate levels of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

This implies that the theory does not specify a functional relationship between the variables of interest, and fails to provide an examination of higher degree (interaction) effects between these two classes of variables (motivators and hygiene factors) as they relate to satisfaction.

Another criticism is related to the question that data was not based solely on current satisfaction with a present job, and fails to distinguish whether the participant is referring to their current job or to a previous one. This means that there is no control over the sampling frame for the data and no clear cut basis for drawing inferences about the relative contribution of various job factors to overall job satisfaction (Hinrichs and Mischkind, 1967). This has influence on the present research design and the present research aims to focus on the guests' satisfaction based on their recent experiences in ecolodge context, while data collection is focused on "on-site behaviour and experiences" gained. This means that responses to incidents (experiences) are the most current ones and informants with "fresh memory" depend less on recollection-reflection as compared to data collected after they return home. In summary, Herzberg's theory is a source of frequent debate and controversy, as well as being subject to several different interpretations. The general criticism relates to the fact that the methodology that describes the events that gave rise to good or bad feelings is subjective and likely to influence the results, the simplistic nature of the theory, and the lack of allowance made for individual differences.

Likewise, some workers appear to adopt an "instrumental" view, regarding work as a means to an end, which means that financial rewards and security are their main motivations (Mullin, 2001). Nevertheless, other factors may be included in order to explain the basic dynamics of job satisfaction, such as experience or exposure to various job attributes. The importance that an individual ascribes to different job attributes is another factor, and an important variable can reflect other critical factors – personality and cultural or social systems variables, which are to be accounted for in any predictive theoretical statement (Hinrichs and Mischkind, 1967). The above reveals the deficiencies of Herzberg's theory and, subsequently, shows that the validity of its conclusions is questionable. But, it seems these

criticisms are drawn from positivist perspectives and are not supported from a qualitative perspective.

#### **2.8.4 The Strength of Herzberg's Theory**

Herzberg's theory is claimed to have the capability to establish dimensions and offer an understanding of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction. This theory clearly recognises that *"both kinds of factors (motivator and hygiene) meet the needs of the employee"* (Herzberg et al., 1959, p. 114). Hinrichs and Mischkind (1967, p. 192) note that: *"A theory is only as powerful as its ability to accommodate deviant cases, and there is nothing in the Herzberg notion which provides a basis for explaining cases which do not conform to the simple two factor dichotomy"*. Furthermore, this theory permits that the prediction of the satisfied and dissatisfied dimensions form pertinent basic psychological variables associated with the content/context factors (Hinrichs and Mischkind, 1967). It is a widely accepted that class of job factor – motivators and hygiene – can be used describe most of the variance in job satisfaction, and the former are demonstrated as more important to job satisfaction than the latter.

On the other hand, it should also be noted that this theory does not predict levels of satisfaction with any single factor, whether it be hygiene or motivator. Although the theory claims that motivators lead to overall job satisfaction, there is no certainty that employees cannot be equally satisfied with all aspects of their jobs. This theory simply states that these two factors have very different consequences for overall job satisfaction and Hinrichs and Mischkind (1967, p. 198) note that Herzberg's interpretation relies on *"a moral definition of the nature of man and analogy (Human beings are essentially characterized as self-actualizing organisms and anything which is not a self actualiser acts as hygiene factor)"* Also, there is a possibility of saliency of a job factor and satisfied/dissatisfied attitudinal responses (Hinrichs and Mischkind, 1967). Meanwhile, Herzberg's theory has been extended to consumer satisfaction across various service sectors and is reviewed in the following section.

#### **2.8.4.1 Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory and Consumer Satisfaction**

The idea that customer satisfaction is formed on the basis of perceived quality has been debated extensively. Some writers suggest that satisfaction is an overall post purchase evaluation (Fornell, 1992; Giese and Cole, 2000), whilst other researchers highlight the possibility that it occurs during the consumption process (Wilkie, 1994; Williams, 2002). Satisfaction literature evidences that consumer satisfaction measurement is a two-dimensional evaluation that is based on a combination of instrumental as well as expressive attributes (Swan and Combs, 1976). Expressive attributes are more emotional and truly contribute to satisfaction, whereas instrumental attributes are more cognitively oriented and, if absent, are inclined to create dissatisfaction. This is also supported by Neal et al. (1999) in reference to a number of studies that investigate the influence of the expressive and/or instrumental attributes of satisfaction in the leisure context and also echoed by Johnston (1995) in a consumption experience. Westbrook (1987) suggests that consumers form their overall satisfaction based on two separate factors; one concerned with positive affects, the other with negative ones. Therefore, consumer satisfaction can be seen to be based on two-dimensional approaches and can be linked to the two different motivational forces as described in Herzberg's theory.

There have been several empirical works on consumer satisfaction in the hospitality and tourism context and other service industries, adopting Herzberg's theory. Jensen (2004) extends Herzberg's theory to explain tourists' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with experiences in tourist attractions, and confirms that the attraction content, which is intangible, is a motivator, while peripheral elements like parking, eating and toilet facilities, which are tangible elements, constitute hygiene factors.

Howard and Crompton (1980) explore key factors in visitors' satisfaction with experiences of recreation facilities and confirm that physical attributes of tourism and recreation facilities or special event sites are termed maintenance attributes. These are the tangible physical environment that is a necessary prerequisite for an event and can reduce the probability of a negative experience. They are the foundation on



which a meaningful event is built but are an insufficient condition for visitors to report a satisfying experience at an event. It suggests that hygiene factors should not be the focus of management. On other hand, satisfier attributes are used to create environments that are most conducive to deliver the sought social-psychological benefits, so that visitors have an emotionally satisfying experience.

Similarly, Herzberg's theory is conceptualised to explain the relationship between hygiene/ maintenance attributes and motivator attributes that facilitate the delivery of social-psychological benefits in the context of festivals (Crompton, 2003). Hygiene attributes are conceptualised as a site's physical environment – parking spaces and the cleanliness of restrooms and are the distinctive differentiating features from satisfiers. The satisfiers become an opportunity to facilitate the social-psychological benefits when the maintenance attributes meet the threshold quality. Motivator attributes are key attractors to a festival and facilitate satisfaction, while maintenance attributes are the generic uninteresting common infrastructure features of all festivals. However, these findings require further verification for confirmation in order to establish that these properties are constant or universal. Earlier, Howard and Crompton had noted that (1980, p. 372): *“Factors in the psychological environment are recreation “satisfiers” but they are dependent upon the hygiene or dissatisfiers factors since any shortfall in the dissatisfiers factors will undermine the recreational experience.”*

Meanwhile several researchers have attempted to relate service quality dimensions or factor by using the concept of “satisfiers” and dissatisfiers”. For example, Johns and Lee-Ross (1997) in their study of service quality in small hotels and guesthouses termed positive attributes as satisfiers which were associated with availability of the equipment and facilities available in the rooms. In their study, negative attributes, were seen to act as dissatisfiers which refer to standard items that did not function properly. Johnston (1995) concludes that “satisfiers” and “dissatisfiers” from service attributes respectively influence customer satisfaction /dissatisfaction in banking services. Cadotte and Turgeon (1988a) extend the concept of attributes as satisfiers and dissatisfiers to the context of the restaurant and lodging industry, where

compliments are identified as satisfiers while complaints are treated as dissatisfiers. Satisfiers are those attributes where unusual performance apparently elicits compliments and satisfaction. This implies that “Satisfiers represent an opportunity to shine, to move ahead of the pack and to stand out from the crowd” (Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988a, p.51). Dissatisfiers are sourced from complaints about low performance or the absence of a desired feature. This implies that dissatisfiers require management control to prevent poor performance and to maintain minimum standards, while satisfiers suggest potential opportunities for further improvement (Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988b). These findings may have important theoretical and managerial implications, but further research or empirical testing is required. Hence, the present research shares this view and aims to address service quality dimensions in term of “satisfiers” and “dissatisfiers” in accordance with Herzberg’s theory.

In the same vein, the literature points to only a few studies that have directly investigated the dimensionality of the consumer satisfaction measures (Czepiel et.al, 1974; Leavitt, 1977; Yi, 1990), and Herzberg’s theory is the most frequently proposed theory for measuring the dimensionality of consumer satisfaction and also deemed as relevance theoretical consideration (Balmer and Baum, 1993; Oh and Park, 1997). There is a need for empirical evidence to determine the viability of this theory, and the present research aims to fill this gap by adopting this theory and conceptualising the satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions as motivators and hygiene factors in the ecolodge context.

### **2.8.5 Extending Herzberg’s Theory into the Ecolodge Context**

Previous reviews show that Herzberg’s theory is deemed to be superior in explaining guest motivations to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and deemed more adequate than expectancy disconfirmation theories as well as SERVQUAL model. This is because consumer’s needs and expectations are not static and change over time. Thus, Herzerbg’s theory is adopted for the present research. It is argued that exploring guest satisfaction in association with motivational factors, in accordance with Herzberg’s theory, provides a profound insight into the factors that lead to guest

satisfaction and improvement of guests' needs. Subsequently, it may have implications for ecolodge management practices, which is one of the objectives of the present research.

Although this theory was applied to researching motivation in the workplace, it may be applied to consumer satisfaction (Maddox, 1981) and guest satisfaction (Mullin, 2001). More importantly, it is contended that the concept of satisfaction is common to both workplace and the present research context since both are dealing with humans (Pfaff, 1973; Czeipel et al., 1974; Robinson, 1978), and the two dominant factors that contribute to an individual's life satisfaction (Andrews and Withey, 1974; Maddox, 1976). This theory has been cited widely in the accommodation literature (Balmer and Baum, 1993; Johns and Lee-Ross, 1997) but is yet to be investigated empirically.

The rationale for adopting Herzberg's theory in the present research is justified with several supportive arguments. The two dimensions of satisfaction can be linked to the two motivational forces — motivator/satisfiers and hygiene/dissatisfiers. They are deemed to offer alternative ways of exploring and explaining the satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions compared to other consumer satisfaction theories which are primarily based on expectations and performance or performance and need theories where the needs of consumer changes and are dynamic.

Second, the research strategies employed by Herzberg are deemed to be relevance in this exploratory research context, and the underlying principles and assumptions of the theory incorporate the behavioural and experiential elements that are relevant to the service experience context in order to understand consumer satisfaction in the present research. Likewise, one can also assume that all the aspects of the ecolodge service experience can be classified as either motivators or hygiene factors as described in Herzberg's theory. Finally, the two opposite motivational forces may offer a useful explanation in explaining "how", "what" and "why" in terms of understanding consumer satisfaction when set alongside those of other existing consumer satisfaction theories. In particular, Herzberg's theory suggests that the

constructs for satisfaction and dissatisfaction are quite different since they are caused by different facets of interaction between the experiences and attitudinal consequences of the individual. This also means that the level of satisfaction is independent of the level of dissatisfaction, unlike the traditional one factor theory which postulates satisfaction and dissatisfaction as opposites on a single or bi-polar continuum (Maddox, 1979). Thus, it is possible to apply this to guests in the ecolodge context where different unrelated constructs can result in guests being simultaneously satisfied and dissatisfied where the constructs for satisfaction and dissatisfaction are quite different. This research conceptualises consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction in the ecolodge context based on two motivational forces in Herzberg's theory and was motivated by Balmer and Baum (1993) who postulate that Herzberg's theory, developed from job satisfaction can be applied to guest satisfaction in the accommodation sector. Ostensibly, these forces can be considered as two separate areas of motivational factors; motivators ("satisfiers") leads to a positive event experience and hygiene factors ("dissatisfiers") may lead to negative experience if they are absent. Furthermore, tangible products offered in the accommodation sector can be categorized as "hygiene factors" and intangible services as "true satisfiers", the tangible attributes of service are more likely to be dissatisfiers than tangible ones (Balmer and Baum, 1993), as shown in Table 2.3 below. This implies that guest satisfaction is derived from the satisfiers, while hygiene factors, which are crucial for maintaining the minimum level of quality of opportunity in this context, will not affect satisfaction although, without them, dissatisfaction levels may increase. However, this thesis still requires empirical evidence.

**Table 2. 3: Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factors Applied to Guest Satisfaction**

<b>True Motivators/Satisfiers (Intangible Services)</b>	<b>Hygiene/Maintenance Factors (Tangible Products)</b>
Recognition by staff	Pricing
Sense of belonging	Facilities- cleanliness, size, variety
Flexibility by hotel	"Freebies"/Extra
Service orientation	

Source: Balmer and Baum (1993, p.33)

In addition, the two different categories of needs known as hygiene factors and motivation factors can be linked to Maslow's hierarchy of needs; hygiene factors deal with maintenance in terms of Maslow's physiological, security and social needs. Motivation factors deal with the developing of an individual's potential and can be related to Maslow's self-esteem, cognitive, aesthetic and self-actualising needs.

The present research adopts both utilitarian (perceptions) and expressive (service experiences) aspects in the evaluation of satisfaction and assumes that these can be further explained by adopting Herzberg's theory. The conceptual framework for this research is developed in Chapter Five.

The aim of the present exploratory qualitative research is not to make universal generalisations. Rather, it aims to explore and identify the underlying dimensions of guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context, which is influenced by the desired social-psychological benefits (motivation) and their attitude in the service experience that emerged as satisfiers (motivators) and dissatisfiers (hygiene factors). These satisfiers and dissatisfiers, derived from the attitudinal consequences of positive and negative experiences gained were subsequently developed into a conceptual framework capable of conceptualising the nature of guest satisfaction.

## **2.9 Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed consumer behaviour and the decision-making process in relation to hospitality and leisure consumption, the service encounters and service experiences that are important "inputs and understanding" in satisfaction measurement within the service consumption context. It also provides a "clearer direction" on which the present research framework is built.

This chapter review has influenced the present research in several ways. It has contributed to building the conceptual framework by adopting a behavioural and experiential consumption perspective as the research approach. Subsequently, a qualitative interpretive paradigm is justified as being more relevant for understanding consumer behaviour as a research method in the present research. Both hedonic and

utilitarian dimensions in consumption phenomena are taken into consideration in measuring guest satisfaction. Other areas of the review include the leisure approach, tourist behaviour and motivation, multi-dimensional approaches to motivation, and typologies of tourists, all of which are relevant and will contribute to the discussion in the present research.

The problems relating to tourist motivation and the application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory facilitate the formulation of a justification for the chosen research approach and design in order to investigate consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the service experience consumption context. It has led to a reconsideration of another theory, known as Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory, as a theoretical framework for exploring guest satisfaction. This theory, which was developed based on job satisfaction, has been suggested by researchers as being applicable to the investigation of the dimensionality of consumer satisfaction (Oh and Park, 1997), but there remains a lack of empirical evidence regarding its viability in the service and hospitality literature. This takes us to the next chapter, where the concepts, definitions, satisfaction and service quality dimensions, as well as consumer satisfaction theories, are critically reviewed. These elements contribute significantly to the understanding of "consumer satisfaction" conceptually and theoretically in building this research. Also, the theoretical and methodological limitations in relation to existing consumer satisfaction research are highlighted. Subsequently, an alternative research method is considered and justified for use in this research, and the rationale for not adopting the prominent expectancy disconfirmation theories and service quality theories as theoretical frameworks is also discussed.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Consumer Satisfaction and Service Quality Dimensions**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews consumer satisfaction and service quality dimensions. The first section reviews consumer satisfaction including concepts, theories and constructs of satisfaction in the context of tourism and hospitality. The review also provides in-depth constructive criticism of satisfaction theories. The second section reviews service quality dimensions that cover the concept, service quality from two different schools of thought and explicates key constructs of service quality dimensions from previous research. Subsequently, criticisms of the SERVQUAL scale and model are reviewed in term of its principles, replicability and generalisibility. This provides a basis for the chosen method of assessing service quality attributes in the present research. Finally, the chapter focuses on the theoretical formation and the measurement of satisfaction and service quality dimensions in this research.

#### **3.2 Satisfaction: the Underlying Principles**

Consumer satisfaction is a key objective for contemporary organizations and has become one of the most researched areas within marketing and consumer behaviour (Williams, 2002). It has been studied extensively in the tourism, leisure and marketing literature. Such research is vital for any service organization in order to remain financially sound and competitive in the market place.

The literature documents a variety of approaches to the explanation of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. An early, underlying belief that governs satisfaction research views consumer satisfaction as based on the outcomes model in which consumer satisfaction is considered an outcome of consumption (Churchill and Suprenant, 1982).

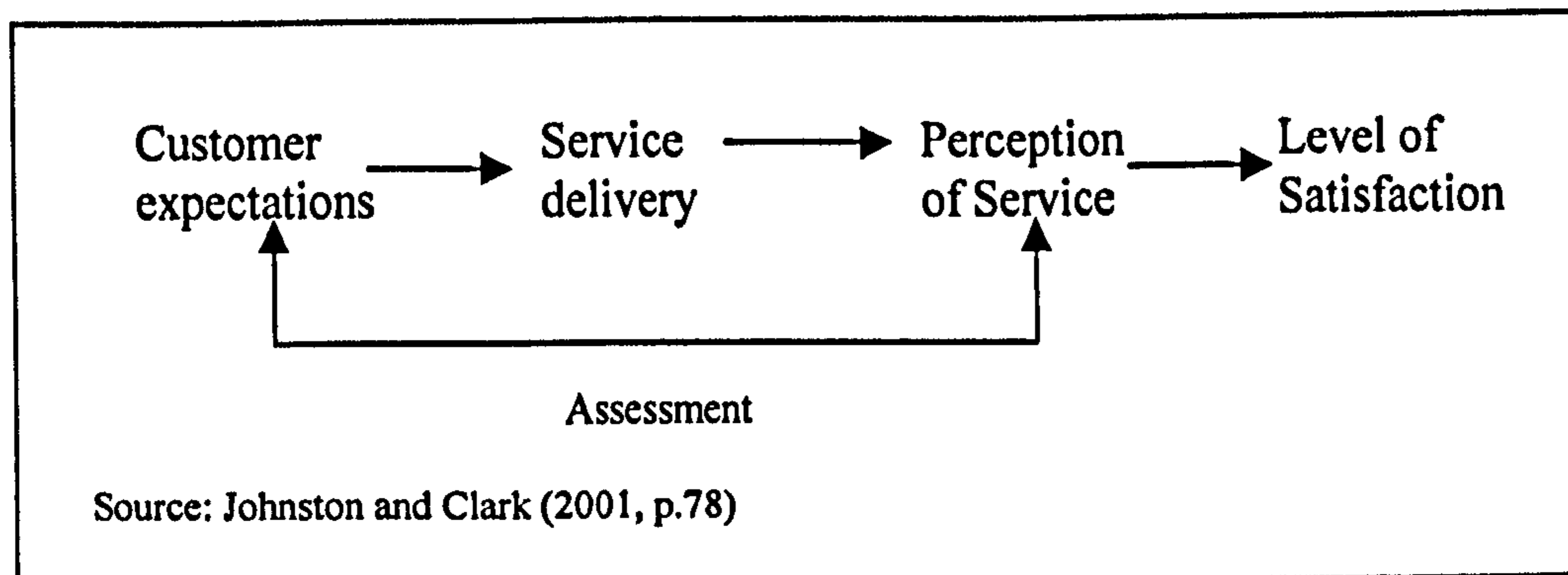
In contrast, Engle and Blackwell (1982) propose a process model that views consumer satisfaction as a process whereby the chosen alternative is compared with

prior belief, whilst Tse and Wilton (1988, p.240) define consumer satisfaction as the: *“evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations and the actual performance of the product”*. Subsequently, Oliver (1997b) views consumer satisfaction as an affective response to an evaluation process. Later Oliver and (1997a, p. 58) describe customer satisfaction as: *“a judgment that a product or service features, or the product or service itself, provided (or providing) a pleasure level of consumption –related fulfilment, including level of under- or over-fulfilment”*. Other research shows that the process model covers a broader spectrum of the evaluation process than the outcomes model (Yi, 1990).

Woodruff et al. (1983) assert that satisfaction should be linked to the cognitive and emotional processes, and regard customer satisfaction/ dissatisfaction as an emotional feeling in response to confirmation/disconfirmation (cognitive). This is also supported by Pfaff (1977). Klaus (1985, p. 21) defines satisfaction as *“the customer’s subjective evaluative of a consumption experience, based on some relationship between the customer’s perceptions and objective attributes of the product”*. Other researchers point out that what is perceived (outcome) and what is expected are subjective and, thus, are psychological phenomena (Mannell and Kleiber, 1985). Vavra (1997, p. 4) refers to satisfaction as *“a process, emphasis the perceptual, evaluative and psychological processes contributing to customer satisfaction”*. This means the assessment of satisfaction is made during the service delivery process and that satisfaction results from a customer’s assessment of a service based on a consumption of their perceptions of service delivery with their prior expectations (Binter and Hubbert, 1994) as shown in Figure 3.1 below. It implies that if customer’s perceptions of the service experience and outcomes match or exceed their expectations then they are satisfied. Conversely, if their perceptions of the service do not meet their expectations, they may be dissatisfied, this is also known as disconfirmation theory (Churchill and Surpenant 1982; Oliver and DeSarbo, 1988). Thus, expectations and perceptions are key components in delivering quality service.



**Figure 3. 1: Expectations -Satisfaction**



The disconfirmation model describes that expectations are formed prior to the experience and then compared with the delivered product or service. The second determinant of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the importance of value of the product or services, which may be measured by expectations. The third factor affecting satisfaction is the perception of the performance of the product or service. These three determinants of dissatisfaction create problems for the model and there is variation in the emphasis placed on the different determinants. Some researchers (Oliver, 1980; 1981; Swan and Trawick, 1981) emphasise expectations separately from disconfirmation, while others (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Tse and Wilton, 1988) give attention to perceptions. Also, the consumer's evaluation of a service can be represented on a continuum from (extreme delight) satisfaction to (extreme) dissatisfaction (Johnston and Clark, 2001).

It is noted that satisfaction is not a universal phenomenon and not everyone gets the same satisfaction out of the same hospitality experience. This is because customers have different needs, objectives and past experience that influence their expectations (Pizam and Ellis, 1999). Thus, it is important to gain a clear idea of customer needs and objectives that correspond to different kinds of satisfaction. Also, the consumer evaluation process provides the management with an understanding of “where and how” to improve their services.

In both the marketing and tourism literature, satisfaction is regarded as the notion of fulfilment that has been conceptualised and defined in a variety of ways. In the field of tourism and recreation, Mannell and Kleiber (1997) suggest two different ways of

conceptualising the satisfaction construct, both of which have been long accepted in the field. Firstly, satisfaction has a needs-based definition, closely related to motivation, so that satisfaction is perceived as resulting from meeting corresponding needs or motives. "Needs satisfaction" has been conceptualised as being the result of the fulfilment of drives, motives or needs (Stankey, 1972; Brady et al., 2002). Previous research into guest satisfaction placed the achievements of needs and motivations as the prime sources of satisfaction (Beard and Ragheb, 1983; Lounsbury and Hoopes, 1985; Otto and Ritchie, 1996), while Ryan (1995a) notes that satisfaction is a function of the congruence of need and experience whereby needs are met by an appropriate experience that generates satisfaction. This implies that the holiday experience is a determinant of guest behaviour. This behaviour can be explained by a set of service quality attributes that shape and change expectations and therefore influence the level of satisfaction.

The second approach is called "appraisal satisfaction" and refers to a form of assessment or evaluation based on the extent to which an individual's perceived reality meets with his or her current expectation (Stankey, 1972; Brady and Robertson, 2001). Appraisal satisfaction has been more a popular conceptualisation of satisfaction than needs satisfaction, because it is widely accepted that visitor satisfaction is a more complex construct than the mere fulfilment of needs. Satisfaction has also been interpreted as an end psychological state that consists of *"The emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer's prior feelings about the consumption experience."* (Oliver, 1981, p. 27).

In recent years, satisfaction in the context of tourism and recreation has also been perceived as relating to psychological outcomes – recognizing that recreation is a state of mind rather than a behaviour or activity (Crompton and Love 1995, Pizam and Ellis, 1999, Oh, 2000). Mannell and Kleiber (1997, p. 185) note that "psychological outcomes and benefits" have been used by researchers to describe the social psychological process that satisfaction represents. This implies that satisfaction can be described as either an end state or a process (Rust and Oliver, 1994; Schofield, 1999). Both views of satisfaction involve a comparative framework

by which perceived reality is compared to expectations, but they differ in that the former emphasizes the outcome of the experience process, whereas the latter focuses upon the unique components of each of the stages in the experience process that combine to generate satisfaction (Vikas et al., 2001). The present research considers that both approaches are important in exploring satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions in the service experience consumption context.

Indeed, the above review illustrates multiple concepts of consumer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction has been encapsulated as either an evaluative process (Hunt, 1977; Oliver, 1981) or as a response to an evaluative process (Howard and Sheth, 1969; Oliver, 1981; 1997b). There are multiple process definitions by way of responses. They can be regarded as fulfilment responses (Oliver, 1997b); affective response (Halstead et al., 1994); overall evaluation (Fornell, 1992); psychological state or evaluative responses (Day, 1994); and global evaluative judgments (Westbrook, 1987). Researchers regard consumer satisfaction as either a cognitive (Howard and Sheth, 1969) or an affective response (Cadotte et al., 1987) and, in its operational definitions, it is likely to include behavioural dimensions of satisfaction. In this research consumer satisfaction is conceptualised as a response to an evaluative process that involve both cognitive and emotional aspects that is related to psychological outcome.

Consumer satisfaction with service is a complex phenomenon and a process that can be studied at various levels. It is a multifaceted concepts and measurement as documented in many tourism studies (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Duke and Persia, 1996). The conceptual components of satisfaction show that cognitive and emotional elements contribute to satisfaction (Bowen and Clarke, 2002). Consumers' satisfaction with service refers to satisfaction judgement directed towards the service provision. It is driven by the product and service quality of a transaction (Parasuraman et al., 1994). Consumers are satisfied when the service that they receive matches their expectations, and this refers to "quality of performance". On the other hand, consumer satisfaction with the service experience refers to the totality of the consumption experience which consists of and is influenced by a variety of

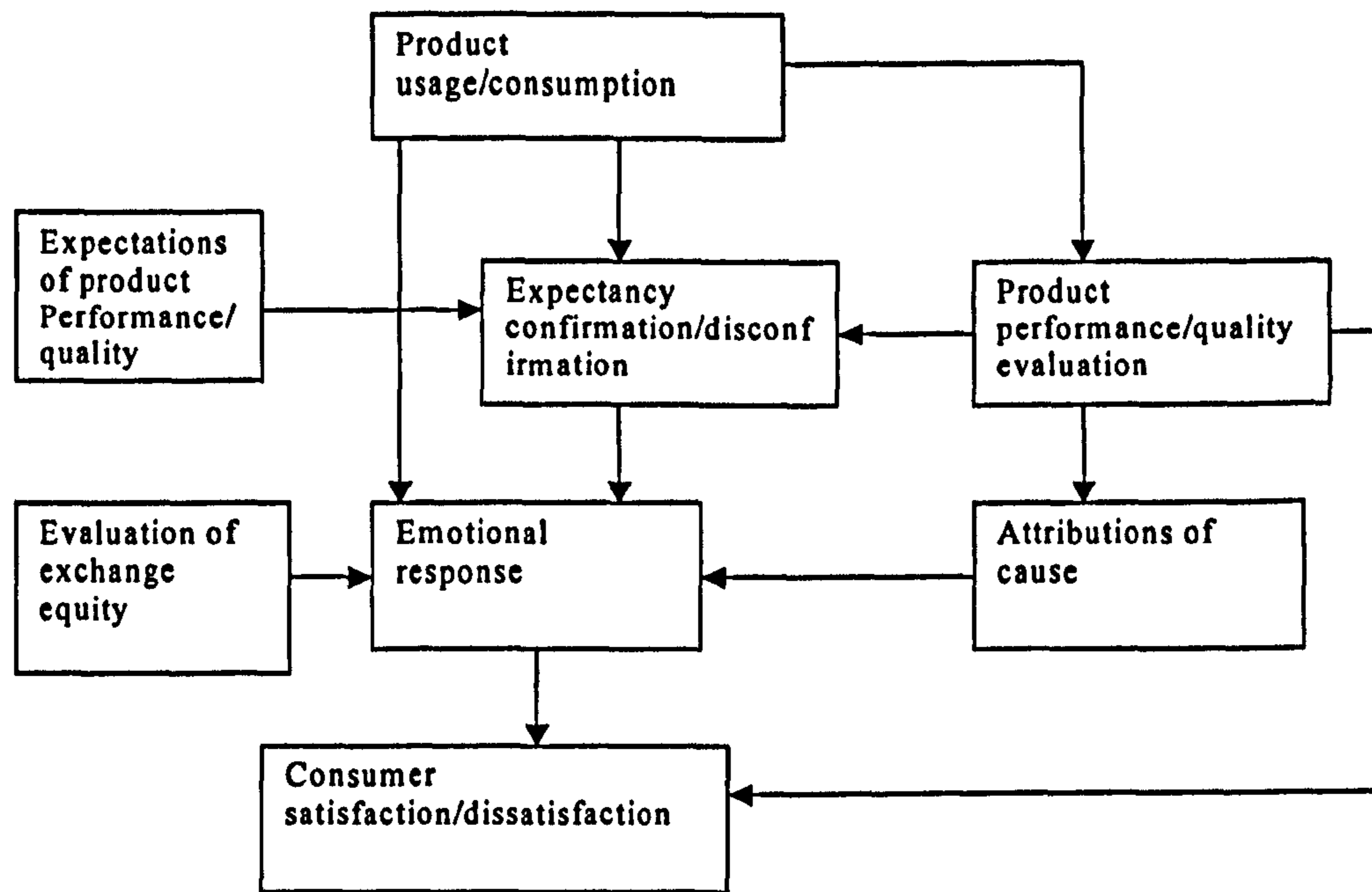
factors – consumer involvement, motivations, social interactions, and site attributes (Baker and Crompton, 2000), also known as “ quality of experience.” Similarity, Pine and Gilmore (1999, p. 12) note that “companies must realise that they make memories, not goods, and create the stage for generating greater economic value, not deliver services.”

### **3.3 The Occurrence of Consumer Satisfaction**

During and after the consumption and use of product or services, consumers develop feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Mowen and Minor (2001) define consumer satisfaction as their overall attitude regarding a product or service in terms of its acquisition and use. It is a post-choice evaluative judgment, resulting from a specific purchase selection and the experience of using or consuming it (Westbrook and Oliver, 1991). Despite the lack of any common conceptual consensus that clearly defines satisfaction and a clear definition of consumer satisfaction; previous studies confirm that perceptions of quality, expectations and performance are pivotal in explaining consumer satisfaction. Arguably, it is a subjective measurement of an evaluative orientation - consumers express, through their intentions and behaviour, a subjective judgment associated with emotion (Noe, 1999), consisting of both attributes and experiences (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991).

Mowen and Minor (2001, p. 200) suggest the factors (comparison and emotion responses) that contribute to feelings of consumer satisfaction, as shown in Figure 3.2 below. This is considered a useful process and conceptual framework for measuring and evaluating the satisfaction dimensions in this research. It captures both the utilitarian and expressive/ hedonic aspects in terms of the outcomes of the consumption process.

**Figure 3. 2: Model of Consumer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction**



Source: Mowen and Minor (2001, p.200)

In many ways, customer satisfaction provides an intervening variable, linking current consumption behaviour with future behaviour. In general, the responses to a satisfactory consumption experience will contain both emotional and behavioural elements. Consumer satisfaction will result in positive affective states (attitude, intention to repeat purchase and brand loyalty), which, in turn, mediates the response between customer satisfaction and behavioural responses (positive word of mouth communication, complaint behaviour and repeat purchase).

### 3.3.1 The Behavioural Response- Consumer Satisfaction

In terms of a satisfactory experience, three behavioural responses have been investigated. Firstly, customer satisfaction has been demonstrated to have a positive effect on customer loyalty (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Boulding et al., 1993). However, customer loyalty is not a singular behavioural response: it contains both attitudinal and behavioural aspects (Baldinger and Rubinson, 1996). Secondly, customer satisfaction has been found to have a positive impact on word-of-mouth communications (Swan and Oliver, 1989). However, it has also been established that

customer dissatisfaction results in negative word of mouth communication. Thirdly, repeat purchase or customer retention has also been investigated, but the evidence presented in support of a relationship between satisfaction and retention is mixed.

It is theoretically believed and empirically supported that customer loyalty is positively related to repeat patronage and positive recommendations of the objects to relatives and/or friends. Word of mouth is considered to be important for several reasons. It is more effective than mass media advertising (Sheth, 1971) and more reliable, as the senders are friends, peers or family members. It can raise the expectations of consumers, which, in turn, affects customer satisfaction and subsequent behaviour (Zeithaml et al., 1993), and satisfied customers also display a greater price tolerance for their usual brands (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Oliver (1997b) finds that customer satisfaction with hotel services is associated with loyalty, and in the tourism industry, the research findings have suggested that satisfied tourists are more likely to return to the destination and recommend it to friends and relatives and are less likely to look for alternatives (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Yuksel, 2001). However, in the tourism context, repeat visitations may not be a valid indicator of consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Jensen, 2004). Tourists are often motivated by a wish to escape from the daily routine in order to seek new experiences. Thus, even satisfied tourists may not intend to revisit an attraction or destination, but may exhibit loyal behaviour by recommending relatives or friends to visit it. This is even true of international tourism behaviour where people may have to spend a large amount of money and time to revisit a certain place (Jensen, 2004).

### **3.3.2 Consumer Dissatisfaction**

In addition to examining the behavioural responses to satisfactory consumption, a significant amount of work has investigated responses to unsatisfactory experiences. Hirschman (1970) suggests that there exist three behavioural responses in consumer dissatisfaction – exit, voice and loyalty. Several studies have demonstrated the relationship between dissatisfaction and complaining behaviour (Swan and Oliver, 1989, Westbrook, 1987). It has been suggested that it is in the interest of the service

providers to encourage dissatisfied consumer to complain, since by doing so, they have the chance to recover the situation (Hart et al., 1990).

However, other research indicates that even those consumers who have their complaints satisfactorily resolved are more likely to exit from the relationship with the service provider than those who had not been dissatisfied in the first instance (Bolton and Bronkhorst, 1995). Furthermore, it has also been found that only a minority of dissatisfied customers complain (Dobree and Page, 1991), but the majority exit their relationship with the service providers in silence. This means that consumer satisfaction with firms will be determined to a greater extent by service performance rather than service recovery.

### **3.4 The Measurement and Focus of the Satisfaction Construct**

Measuring customer satisfaction requires the collection of information to determine customer needs, pleasures, displeasures and their social psychological benefits. It means understanding that attributes are the most important to them and which attributes affect their decision-making, and also obtaining a performance evaluation on how well the firm is delivering each attribute which is the context of the present research.

The term 'satisfaction' in the tourism literature is used loosely. Some researchers equate customer satisfaction with attribute performance, others use the term to connect customer satisfaction with the service experience, and others use it to denote both attribute performance and service experience, which is conceptualised in the present research.

Thus, there is variation not only in the theoretical explanation of consumer satisfaction, but also in the foci of the research studies. Marketing researchers tend to focus on the service itself and mostly ask consumers to evaluate the technical attributes of the services (Tse and Wilton, 1988; Oliver, 1997a). Consumers' feelings about the service experience are, therefore, often ignored or neglected. Leisure

scientists tend to focus more on the psychological aspects of the leisure experience without reference to the service attributes (Beard and Ragheb, 1980; Gunter, 1987; Tian-Cole et al., 2002). This means that satisfaction is being measured in different ways, although the two groups of researchers use the same terminology.

In an attempt to assess consumer satisfaction, it is surprising to note that studies addressing the concept of satisfaction itself have adopted a different approach. Satisfaction, according to tourism and leisure theorists, usually refers to the evaluation of the whole experience as a psychological state rather than product attributes to which service quality relates in the evaluation of the product or service consumed. The emphasis lies, in part, on the long-term recognition of the importance of motivations as a central element in the choice and consumption of tourism products. Such an approach has been conceptualised in numerous studies, such as guided tours (Hughes, 1991), leisure time pursuits (Hawes, 1978, Tinsley and Kass, 1987) and sightseeing tours (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991). Nonetheless, there is an unclear relationship between the objects and service purchased and a good holiday experience (Urry, 1990) and Otto and Ritchie (1996, p. 168) also recognize that:

*Even if tourism sectors have a clear functional component to them, as do accommodation and transport service, experiential benefits will remain a critical part of the process evaluation.*

On the other hand, researchers have attempted to mix both physical and motivational aspects in relation to satisfaction. Moutinho (1987, p.35), for example, defines satisfaction as a construct that includes various elements of the consumption process: *“satisfaction is probably a function of the material attributes of the service, the motivations, perceptions, efforts expended, as aspirations of the tourists as well as the availability of alternatives”*.

Moutinho (1987) introduces the distinction between the instrumental and expressive evaluation of product performance. The former refers to the performance of a physical product while the latter corresponds to psychological performance. Two



types of satisfaction are then differentiated, one relating to the evaluation of the alternative and one relating to the fulfilment of needs. Finally, since satisfaction is conceptualised as influencing consumer attitude and future purchase behaviour, the level of satisfaction /dissatisfaction will determine whether consumers will discontinue, continue or change their purchase behaviour, and consequently, become repeat or non repeat users of the products.

Some of the tourism and leisure literature appears to focus on one side of the choice process of alternatives via the information processing models. In this approach, the importance of needs in directing consumers' preferences for certain types of destination is recognised, although the actual evaluation of satisfaction in the post-purchase stage of consumption is less clear. On the other hand, tourism studies of the satisfaction construct itself have mainly defined satisfaction as the fulfilment of the original needs, disregarding the importance of physical attributes in this evaluation.

Crompton and Love (1995) propose that the term 'satisfaction' should be used exclusively to represent the psychological benefits that consumers receive from participating in leisure activities. They further contend that customer evaluation of the service attributes should be conceptualised as the quality of opportunity.

Crompton and Mackay (1989, p. 368) differentiate between the two constructs as follows:

*Quality of opportunity is defined as qualities of the attributes of a service that are under the control of supplier.... Satisfaction is measured by how well leisure activities are perceived to fulfil the basic needs and motives that stimulated the desire to participate in an activity.*

This distinction assumes that customers' evaluation of service attributes is cognitive in nature and that satisfaction, as an affective concept, should be adopted in the evaluation of the service experience. Yet consumer satisfaction with service performance has been studied extensively in both the marketing and tourism literature (Yi, 1990; Oh and Parks, 1997; Pizam and Eillis, 1999), and there is strong

evidence to support notions of performance related satisfaction. Researchers found a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and service performance such as employee behaviour, service features and service settings (Wirtz and Bateson, 1999; Winstead, 2000). Bitner et al. (1990) agreed service performance is one of the sources of customer satisfaction.

Similarly, in the service management and service experience context, satisfaction results from the experiential nature of consumption and thus contains both perceptions and experiences (Otto and Ritchie, 1996). It is logical to analyse the underlying dimensions of satisfaction from the experiential perspectives. The experiences and attitudes of the consumers can be translated into future action, both economically and personally. Otto and Ritchie (1996) propose two different ways of assessing consumer satisfaction: a) satisfaction with service offerings, b) satisfaction with consumption experience.

Yi (1990) claims that the difference between satisfaction with the service offering and satisfaction with the consumption experience relates to the fact that the two constructs have different foci and determinants. Satisfaction with the service offering is a judgment that is driven by the product and service quality of a transaction whereby service meets their expectations. Satisfaction with service can be controlled by the service provider (Baker and Crompton, 2000). Satisfaction with the consumption experience refers to the total experience, which may be influenced by a variety of factors, such as involvement, motivation, social interaction, and programme or site attributes. Satisfaction with an experience is largely driven by the involvement and motivation of customers, which are more difficult to manipulate (Mannell and Iso -Ahola, 1987). This means that these two levels of satisfaction can be described as “provided quality” and “experienced quality” (Johns, 1999b) and the two different ways of assessing consumer satisfaction are conceptualised in the present research.

Likewise, these satisfaction dimensions are measured by using two different approaches known as the rational approach (weighted average by SERVQUAL

scale) and the incident based approach (individual incidents) that result in feelings of overall satisfaction. In reality some combination of these approaches is likely.

On the other hand, a multifaceted concept is documented in many tourism studies (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Duke and Persia, 1996). Previous tourism satisfaction studies can be divided into three broad categories: a) satisfaction with the tour service and experience, b) satisfaction with the destination, and c) satisfaction with the tourism experience. Indeed, studies into consumer responses to travel service and experience aim to improve service provision and quality improvement, whereas studies on destination satisfaction focus on consumer responses to destination attributes, and aim to improve the effective marketing and positioning of those destinations. Research into satisfaction with the tourism experience has been investigated by leisure scientists to ascertain the influence of the tourism experience on life satisfaction.

Likewise, researchers have adopted one of three positions regarding the nature of the satisfaction construct. Hunt (1977) regards it as an evaluative judgment, Oliver (1981) views it as an emotional state and Tse and Wilton (1988) consider it to be a combination of the two. The first approach that regards consumer satisfaction to be the result of a cognitive evaluation is the one adopted by early proponents of the dominant expectancy- disconfirmation model of consumer satisfaction. There is continuing debate surrounding the issue of the variables that should be included in the model and the relative importance of these variables. However, it is widely accepted that an element of affective processing takes place in the second approach. Consequently, those who propose that the construct is a purely emotional one deny much of the empirical work on consumer satisfaction of the 1980s.

The third definition of the nature of the construct suggests that consumer satisfaction is a process that entails both the evaluation of the experience and the responses caused by that evaluation. In this case, consumer's evaluation is generally regarded as cognitive in nature and the response to the evaluation is emotional or affective

(Tse and Wilton, 1988). This definition has been advanced more recently than the previous two, and has possibility arisen as a result of:

- The poor explanatory power offered by early empirical studies on consumer satisfaction based on a purely cognitive evaluation
- The development of the services marketing literature where cognition was thought to contribute to the emotional element of the consumption of many services

The third definition has been adopted in the present research. It is recognised that the relative importance of the cognitive and affective aspects of the construct will depend on the nature of the consumption experience (Dabholkar, 1995). The conceptual components of satisfaction show that cognitive and emotional elements contribute to satisfaction (Bowen and Clarke, 2002).

### **3.4.1 The Components of Satisfaction in the Hospitality Industry**

Most hospitality experiences are an amalgam of products and services, so it is possible that satisfaction with hospitality experiences, such as hotel stays or restaurant meals is the sum total of the satisfactions with the individual elements or attributes of all the products and services that make up the experience. There is no uniformity of opinion among market researchers as to the classification of the elements in service encounters.

Czepiel et al. (1985) suggest that satisfaction with a service is a function of satisfaction with two independent elements – the functional element (food and beverages in a restaurant) and the performance delivery element. Lovelock (1955) divides the service attributes into two groups – core and secondary. Lewis (1987) classifies the service encounter attributes into two groups – essential (also known as functional, core, or direct) and subsidiary - accessibility, convenience of location, availability and, timing and flexibility. These interactions are equivalent to a combination of the behaviour and environment elements. In general, researchers also

support the idea that the service encounter attributes are situational-specific and, as such, cannot be classified into universal elements.

On the other hand, Otto and Ritchie (1996) developed six construct domains for the service experience, as shown in Table 3.1 below.

**Table 3. 1: The Construct Domains of Service Experience**

Dimension	Examples
Hedonic	Excitement, Enjoyment, Memorable
Interactive	Meeting people, Being part of the process, having choice
Novelty	Escape, Doing something new
Comfort	Physical comfort, Relaxation
Safety	Personal safety, Security of belongings
Stimulation	Educational and informative, Challenging

Source: Otto and Ritchie (1996, p.169)

More recently, researchers have adopted various components to determine satisfaction with the service experience context as presented in the Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3. 2: Summary of Component of the Experience Consumption**

Authors	Year	Components
Berry and Haeckel	2002	Functional – Emotional
Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon	2001	Extrinsic – Intrinsic
Wirtz and Bateson	1999	Pleasure-Arousal
Pine and Gilmore	1999	Absorption – Immersion
O’Sullivan and Spanger	1998	Real – Virtual Novelty- Communality Mass-produced- Customized Interaction with others – Alone
Holbrook	1994	Active – Passive

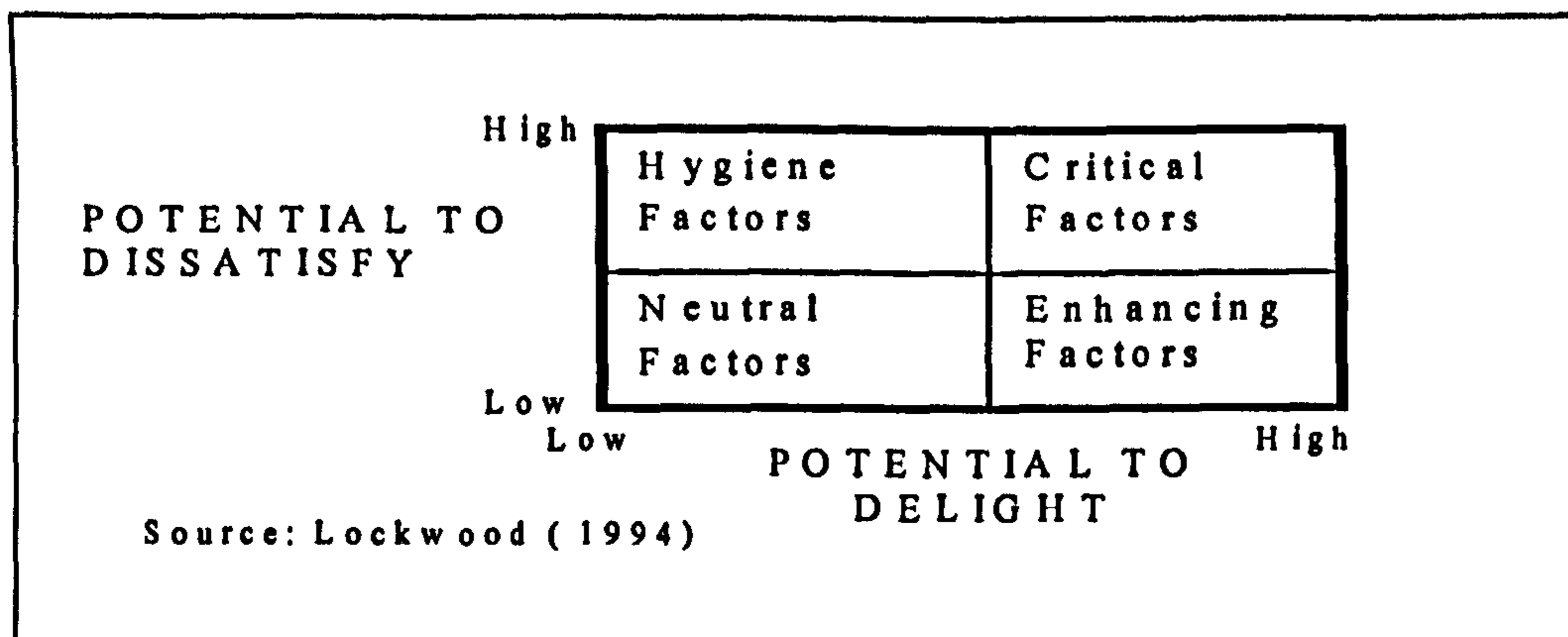
Source: Knutson and Beck (2003, p. 29)

### 3.4.2 The Dimensions of Satisfaction

Service quality is used as a means to measure satisfaction (Zeithaml et al., 1996). In a service organization, the assessment of the quality of the service is made during its actual delivery – mostly an encounter between the customer and a service contact person. In a broad sense, service quality factors or dimensions can be divided into four groups (Johnston and Clark, 2001) based on Lockwood’s (1994) classifications

as presented in Figure 3.3. This is also supported by prior work of several researchers (Cadotte and Turgeon 1988b; Johnston, 1995; Johnston and Heineke, 1998; Silvestro et al., 1990) who suggested that service evaluation consists of four distinct factors.

**Figure 3. 3: Delighting and Dissatisfying Factors**



These factors are known as hygiene factors – they need to be in place and if not they will be the source of dissatisfaction but they are not likely to be the sources of satisfaction. Enhancing factors (satisfiers) are those having the potential to satisfy the customer, but if they are not there, it is unlikely to dissatisfy the customer. Critical factors are those that have the potential to both satisfy and dissatisfy the customers. Neutral factors are those that, in a given situation, will have little effect on satisfaction. These service quality factors have been adopted by researchers to explain consumer satisfaction and this is reviewed in section 3.7

Likewise, consumer satisfaction in the tourism industry has been researched extensively including the dimensions of tour services and experience, the dimensions of satisfaction with destination and dimensions of tourism experiences. The study of tourist satisfaction and expectations during a tour by Geva and Goldman (1989) concludes that there are three service dimensions and one experiential dimension. These service dimensions are the instrumental aspects of the tour (hotels, meals and local services), social activities (group dynamics), the performance of the tour guide (expertise, skill) and personal experience. It seems tourists have little idea about what to expect at the initial stage and that expectations are formed from the instrumental aspects of the tour, where tourist's satisfaction depends primarily on social activities and tour guide performance. Ross and Iso-Ahola (1991) explore the motivation and

satisfaction dimensions of 255 one-day sightseeing tourists. The findings reveal six themes where knowledge, escape, social interactions, and social security are termed as the tourist experience. It was found that the “seeking” component is most relevant to tourists whilst the sources of satisfaction are knowledge and social interaction. In addition, it seems that tourist motivation and satisfaction are related and possess overlapping dimensions. In another context, Bowen (2001) studied a two-week adventure tour of Malaysia and Singapore to explore the antecedents of consumer satisfaction. The study confirms that expectations, performance, disconfirmation, attribution, equity and emotion are the performance antecedents that have the greatest effect on consumer satisfaction, and concludes that tourist satisfaction is determined by the performance of individual tourists and that expectation has little effect on tourist satisfaction.

Kozak and Rimmington’s (2000) study of British tourists in Mallorca, Spain found that their satisfaction factors are: a) destination attractiveness, b) tourist attractions and facilities, c) the ability to use English, and d) the facilities and services at the destination airport. Destination attractiveness is the most important dimension associated with satisfaction, and satisfaction is also expressed through revisit intention and word of mouth communication, whereby satisfied tourists tend to repeat the visits and talk positively about the destination. Using the same instrument to focus on British and German tourists in Turkey, Kozak (2001) discovered eight factors as satisfaction dimensions: a) accommodation services, b) local transport services, c) hygiene, d) hospitality and customer care, e) facilities and activities, f) level of prices, g) language and communication, and h) destination airport services. The above review shows that a variety of factors significantly influence tourists. However, there are common dimensions, such as attractions, transportation and accommodation across various destinations.

Satisfaction with the tourism experience is related to quality of life research by Lounsbury and Hoopes (1985) who compare the influence of work-related and vacation-related factors on vacation satisfaction. The authors found five vacation – related factors based on factor analysis: a) relaxation and leisure, b) natural

environment, c) escape, d) marriage and family, and e) food and lodging. They found that the first four factors are associated directly with vacation satisfaction.

Otto and Ritchie (1996) develop and test a tourism experience framework for the tourism sectors of airlines, hotels and tourist attractions, and conclude that six major themes are representative of the service experience. Using factor analysis, four factors – hedonism, peace of mind, involvement and recognition – emerged as satisfaction dimensions, where hedonism and involvement are the most important dimensions. Swan and Comb (1976) note that satisfaction is measured based on instrumental and expressive dimensions, and the results show that satisfaction with travel and tourism services and experiences have a direct influence on life satisfaction.

Other frameworks found in the literature include three leisure experience determinants (intrinsic satisfaction, perceives freedom and involvement) defined by Unger and Kernan (1983). Johns and Gyimothy (2002a) classify three types of motives – relaxation, nature and local culture – that inspire visitors to Denmark.

This review reaches no consensus about the domain and structure of the tourism experience and so the present research adopts the framework proposed by Mannell and Iso –Ahola (1987), which is more parsimonious, and postulates that travellers are driven by two opposite but complementary goals. This means that they want to “escape” from the daily routine and also wish to “seek” psychological (intrinsic) rewards. These two elements are commonly found in most tourism experience frameworks as discussed in Chapter Two.

### **3.5 Multiple Theoretical Perspectives on Customer Satisfaction**

The conceptual components of satisfaction comprise both cognitive and emotional elements (Bowen and Clarke, 2002). This is also the focus of consumer satisfaction research. Arguably, in reality, consumer satisfaction is a complex human process involving extensive cognitive, affective and other undiscovered psychological and physiological dynamics; and has resulted in extensive debate in the marketing



literature in relation to the determinants of consumer satisfaction and how it is best measured (Oh and Parks, 1997). Consequently, it is pertinent that such research should be conducted in a broader framework to reflect its complex definition and the true context. Meanwhile Bowen (2001) places emphasis on three major customer satisfaction theories: a) equity, b) attribution, and c) expectancy disconfirmation. These theories are reviewed briefly and their inadequacy justified for non - adoption in the present research.

### **3.5.1 The Equity Theory**

This is based on the assumption that satisfaction is related to the consumer's perception of the input-output balance, where their satisfaction occurs where the output is greater than the input, and dissatisfaction follows a perceived inequity. This suggests that consumers will feel equitably treated and thus satisfied, if the ratio of their outcomes to inputs are perceived as fair in comparison with that of other customers. This theory has received less attention in the field of customer satisfaction than others. The empirical evidence produced to support this theory is weak.

### **3.5.2 Attribution Theory**

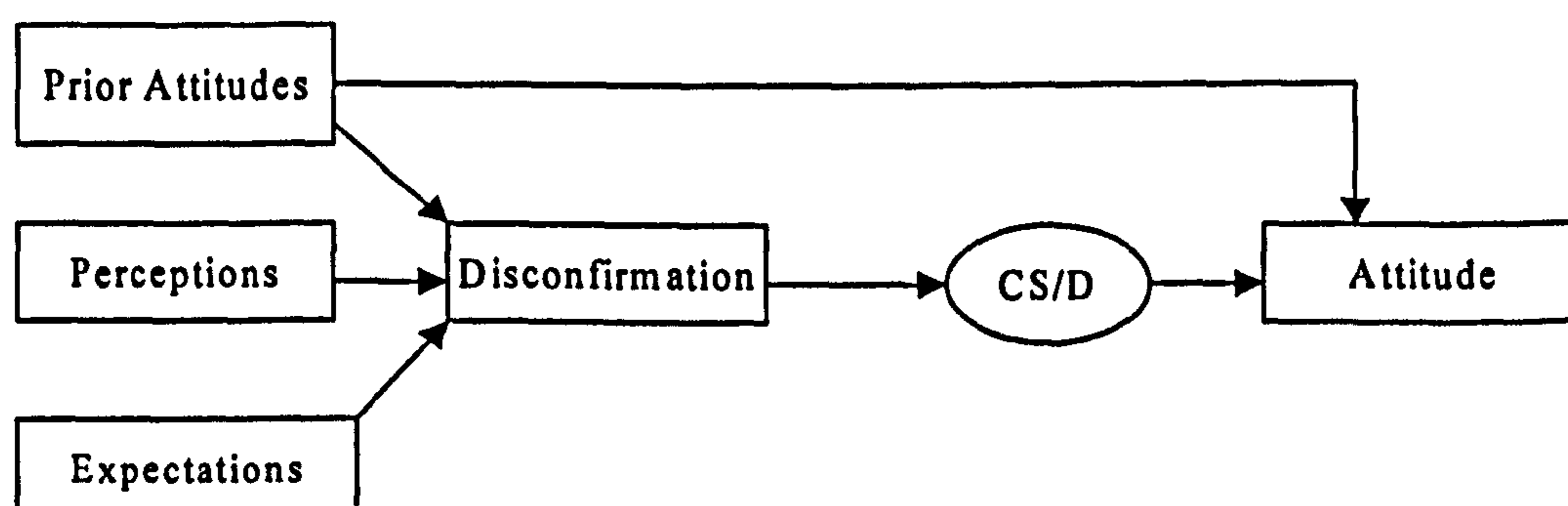
This refers to how individuals link behaviour to its causes, and examines outcomes in terms of causal attributions. Consumers tend to attribute success to internal factors (personal qualities) and failure to external factors. Thus, they can enhance or protect their own self-esteem. It addresses which factors a consumer attributes to their satisfaction with an experience (self or provider), and attempts to answer the question of to whom can the success or failure of the experience be attributed? It shares with equity theory the belief that the satisfaction derived from a consumption experience is, to a degree, conditioned by the input of the consumer. Conversely, it has been found that individuals who attribute their success to external factors will be more satisfied than those who attribute it to internal factors (Oliver and DeSarbo, 1988). In addition, when the product experience has been a success, satisfaction ratings are found to be higher where the success is internally attributed (the result of the

individual's own effort and ability) than where the success is attributed to the task, others' efforts, or luck (Weiner, 1980). Where the success is not internally attributed, the dominant emotional responses tend to be appreciation and gratification rather than satisfaction (Richins, 1983). Thus, it seems that this theory is inadequate to address consumer satisfaction.

### 3.5.3 The Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory

This is the most widely supported theory, proposed by Oliver (1980), which has been tested and confirmed by several studies (Oliver, and DeSarbo, 1988; Tse and Wilton, 1988), and suggests that customers purchase goods and services with pre-purchase expectations about the anticipated performance. When the outcome (after purchase and use) matches expectations, confirmation occurs, while disconfirmation occurs when there are differences between expectations and outcomes. Negative disconfirmation occurs when products or services performance is lower than expected and positive disconfirmation occurs when product or services performance is higher than expected. Satisfaction is caused by the confirmation or positive disconfirmation of consumer expectations, and dissatisfaction results from negative disconfirmations, as shown in Figure 3.4 below. This theory regards consumer satisfaction as a post consumption cognitive evaluation by the consumer that is not suitable in the service experience context as explained in Chapter Two section 2.4

**Figure 3. 4: Oliver's Model of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction**



Source: Oliver (1980; 1981)

The debate about the effects of expectations, perceptions and disconfirmation and consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction (CS/D) is extremely complex and will not be addressed fully in this review. Expectancy disconfirmation theory has had an important influence on subsequent customer satisfaction studies and the majority of studies in tourism and hospitality are based on this theoretical framework. Bearden and Teel (1983) find support for the expectancy-disconfirmation model. Most studies have found disconfirmation to be a significant predictor of customer satisfaction, but it is expectation that has received mixed support and so this theory has suffered criticism despite its contribution. Disconfirmation theories define satisfaction as the difference between what is expected and what is perceived. Yet, consumers in tourism and hospitality revise their expectations during the service process and service encounters and many researchers also recognize that consumer expectations are not static, but evolve as the tour unfolds (Geva and Goldman, 1989; Bowen, 2001). The evidence also suggests that pre-tour expectations are irrelevant to tourist satisfaction. Botterill (1987) argues that the tourism experience contains the “surprise” element inherent in the tourism event. Although expectations have been conceptualised as central to customer satisfaction, the specific types of expectations that tourists have remain unclear. There are different types of expectations – ideals, desires, and prior experience – and none of these has full empirical support. Likewise, some studies have confirmed that satisfaction is directly affected by expectations (Oliver and Linda, 1981; Westbrook and Reily, 1983). Other researchers have failed to report any significance (Churchill and Suprenant, 1982; Oliver and Bearden, 1983). Churchill and Suprenant (1982) found that neither disconfirmation nor expectations played a significant role in the determination of customer satisfaction. Instead, a product’s perceived performance was the only significant variable.

Both the intangibility and inseparability of many services may make forming expectations more difficult. In addition, since the consumer is involved in shaping the service as he interacts with the service provider; his expectations are more likely to be formed during the early stages of consumption rather than before consumption

begins, as reviewed in Chapter Two. Furthermore, as the service experience unfolds, there is no reason to believe that expectations will not continue to evolve.

But the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm holds that expectations are formed prior to consumption of services, and these remain unchanged during the course of consumption.

The review demonstrates the complexity of measuring consumer satisfaction via various theories with different perspectives, and that while different approaches have been explored extensively in the past, no consensus has yet been reached. Indeed, satisfaction components remain questionable. The consumer satisfaction theories have brought confusion and no consensus with regard to measuring consumer satisfaction. This confusion and lack of consensus has led to a serious reconsideration about adopting any of these theories as a theoretical framework for the present research.

On the other hand, the satisfaction literature has gradually come to focus on the affective components of satisfaction. Two main streams of research have emerged. One aims at identifying the hedonics and utilitarian differences in consumption phenomena and the other focuses on the emotions elicited during the consumption experience itself. The first approach is of more interest to the present research, which believes that both the hedonic and utilitarian aspects are important in satisfaction evaluation of the service experience consumption.

### **3.6 Review of Measurement of Service Quality**

The following section reviews critically the issues of measuring service quality and the SERVQUAL scale in relation to its application in service industries such as tourism and hospitality.

#### **3.6.1 Schools of Thought Regarding Quality Management**

It is important to understand the concept of quality and service before proceeding to review service quality in depth. The concept of quality has been given many,

confusing definitions, regardless of the period or context in which it has been examined (Reeves and Bednar, 1994). This confusion has been attributed primarily to the extensive parallel schools of thought in the literature. There are four major approaches to assessing quality:

- The metaphysical approach
- The behavioural or perceived quality approach
- The production management approach
- The economic approach

Reviews of these approaches provide an understanding of the different perspectives of quality management.

The metaphysical approach regards quality as a non-analysable property, which an individual can learn to recognize only through experience. The influence of this approach is shown by the fact that service quality is defined as an elusive and abstract construct (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The behavioural or perceived quality approach regards quality as a matter of perception. Service quality is defined as the consumer's assessment of the overall excellence or superiority of a service (Parasuraman et al., 1985; 1988), and so it is also addressed as a function of expected and perceived service, which, in turn, influences consumer satisfaction (Brown and Swartz, 1989). This approach is important to tourism and hospitality services.

Production management regards quality as a function of people involved in the delivery of service, defined as "conformance to requirements" (Crosby, 1974; Juran, 1974). This approach is useful in the present research as it is related to quality improvement that may be useful for quality management in an ecolodge context. Simply put, Juran (1974), conceptualises quality as "fitness for use", that is a universal concept for both manufacturing and services, which encompasses any feature of the products materials (properties and attributes) and processes as quality characteristics. The author recognises that the cost of failure can be substantive, where external failure costs expressed as customer complaints, dissatisfied customers and the loss of future sales may be major factors in the overall cost of quality. Such

an approach may be relevant to the context of tourism and hospitality in an effort to improve service quality from the management perspective so that they can better manage their guests' satisfaction via quality improvement.

Finally, economists regard quality as a function of the attributes of a product or service. The physical facilities associated with services are believed to contribute significantly to the consumers' evaluation of service quality (Bitner and Hubbert, 1994). One can conclude that quality is a pertinent element to success in the delivery of services and also important in evaluating the services by both providers and users. The present research quality framework is embedded in the perceived quality approach, whilst the production management approach is important to the improvement of guest satisfaction via the improvement of service quality in the ecolodge context.

Following this discussion, it is worthwhile to examine the relationship between quality and satisfaction in the tourism and hospitality industry in order to seek some clarity in term of measurement and the constructs of the two terms.

### **3.6.2. The Quality and Satisfaction Constructs**

The literature indicates that quality still remains an “elusive, indistinct and ambiguous construct” (Crompton and Love, 1995, p.1). This elusiveness is manifested in the array of different ways in which it has been conceptualised and operationalised in the tourism, leisure and marketing literature and the continuation of the confusion about its relationship to satisfaction. LeBlanc (1992, p.5), for example, studied the customer evaluation of service quality in travel agencies and concluded “*though quality and satisfaction are in theory concerned with the difference between expectations and perceptions, at present no theoretical distinction seems to be made between the two concepts in the literature.*”

Cronin and Taylor (1992a) report a strong correlation between satisfaction and perceived service quality and conclude that the two concepts measure the same

underlying construct. The authors further claim that: "Service quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction exerts a stronger influence on purchase intentions than service quality." (Cronin and Taylor, 1992a, p.65). The common theoretical derivation and the conceptual overlap of service quality and satisfaction have caused some authors to use these constructs interchangeably (Bolton, 1998; Patterson and Johnston, 1993). They believe that service quality and satisfaction are the same construct and the difference between them is semantic rather than substantive. Thus, they suggest that service quality and satisfaction can be measured in the same way to assess the effectiveness of a service. In other cases, service quality was used as a means of measuring satisfaction and this is recognised in the present research. However, the distinction between the two is important to managers and researchers because service providers need to know whether their objective should be to have consumers who are "satisfied" with their performance or to deliver the maximum level of "perceived service quality".

Crompton and Love (1995) argue that service quality is a global judgment or attitude relating to the superiority or excellence of the service, whilst satisfaction is related to a specific transaction. Satisfaction is conceptualised as the fulfilment of the basic needs that stimulated the choice for an activity: "*leisure scientist use of satisfaction is confined to measuring the psychological outcomes from a leisure experience*". It is recognised in leisure research that satisfaction is very much a subjective process since it was self-produced. Consumers may react differently and interpret or react to the environment through personal systems that were portrayed as independent from the attributes provided.

In the context of leisure services, the differentiation of the two (quality and satisfaction) constructs is based upon the differences between quality of opportunity and quality of experience (satisfaction). Quality of opportunity is defined as the quality of the attributes of a service that are under the control of suppliers, and evaluation is based on a judgment about the performance of the leisure opportunity supplier. The quality of experience involves both the attributes provided by the supplier and the emotional state of mind from the consumer/visitor. Their conceptual

framework differences are presented in Table 3.3 below. Both quality of opportunity and quality of experience (psychological outcomes; Mannell and Iso-Ahola, 1987) or emotional responses (Laws, 1991) are the focus of satisfaction research. Both are central conceptual and operational constructs for understanding consumer satisfaction in the consumption of services (Mannell and Iso-Ahola, 1987). They are also influenced by tangible and intangible elements provided in the accommodation environment.

**Table 3. 3: Concept Framework of Quality of Opportunity and Quality of Experience**

<b>Quality of Performance/Opportunity</b>	<b>Quality of Experiences</b>
Conceptualise as the attributes of a service	Conceptualise as social-psychological state (needs, disposition)
Output of tourism providers	Consumer's outcome
Evaluation: tourist's perception of the performance of the service provider	Emotional state of mind after exposure to the opportunity
Expectancy Disconfirmation Service Marketing	Expectancy Disconfirmation Service Marketing

Sources: Brown, 1988; Crompton and Love, 1995; Baker and Crompton, 2000

The main difference between satisfaction and perceived service quality is that the concept of satisfaction is connected with a specific transaction while service quality is considered to be the consumers' overall evaluation of the service and also resembles the attitude concept (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Bitner, 1990). There appears to be agreement in the literature that the evaluation of service quality is mainly cognitive, while the evaluation of service satisfaction is a combination of cognitive and affective elements (Yi, 1990; Mano and Oliver, 1993). Thus, theoretical conclusions have been made with regard to quality.

The services marketing and customer satisfaction field agree to some extent that satisfaction is a transaction –based measure, and influences customers' global attitude /perceived quality towards a service. Indeed, service marketing has portrayed the evaluation of service quality as cognitive in nature, while the satisfaction literature has addressed the concept of satisfaction as a combination of cognitive and



affective components. This means that satisfaction is purely experiential, a cognitive and affective reaction (Rust and Oliver, 1994), while service quality perceptions reflect a consumer's evaluative perceptions of a service encounter at a specific point in time. Consumer satisfaction judgments are experiential in nature and involve both an end state and a process, reflecting both emotional and cognitive elements as reviewed in section 3.2 and recognised in the present research.

In attempts to measure satisfaction in the hospitality context, resulting from a series of experiences and self-produced by guests, an understanding of the quality of opportunities is insufficient for managers to fully understand the holistic views of the guests' satisfaction, as experience is equally pertinent and is part of the satisfaction that guests will experience. Likewise, much of the leisure and tourism literature focuses on measuring quality or satisfaction in the context of measuring consumers' evaluations of the quality, instead of measuring satisfaction in the context of experience and behaviour. Thus, the present research intends to fill this gap by taking into consideration on consumers' evaluation of satisfaction in both contexts as conceptualised in Chapter Five.

Likewise, physical items, such as food, sensual benefits (such as taste) and psychological benefits (such as status) all influence the guests' opinion and hence their level of satisfaction (Sasser et al., 1978; Bitner 1992). Thus, it is essential to control not only what is offered, known as "tech quality" (Gronroos, 1984; Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1992), but also how it is presented (touch quality) which significantly influences guests' opinions. Technical quality or dimensions can be observed and manipulated using statistical methods that enable management to keep track of any particular and undesired physical quality change (Deming, 1982), while it is more difficult for touch quality because the dimensions vary according to the type and degree of interaction between guests and employees. This leads to the argument that quality experience in tourism, therefore, consists of both physical and human dimensions.

### **3.7 The Measurement of Service Quality using the SERVQUAL Scale**

The following section reviews service quality and the use of the SERVQUAL scale. It also provides a justification as to why SERVQUAL was not employed in the present research and reasons will be given why the alternative technique of Profile Accumulation Technique (PAT) was adopted for measuring service quality dimensions.

There has been a growing interest in service quality measurement since the services sector began to outstrip other sectors of the economy in the 1970s. Researchers have sought to identify the dimensions that consumers use to assess the quality of services. Service quality was researched intensively in the 1980s as it has become a critical factor of business success (Hudson and Shephard, 1998; Kanadampully, 2000), emerging as a globally important strategic force (Imrie et al., 2002) as well as a key strategic tool in the armoury of management (Leonard and McAdam, 2002). Customer retention through service quality and satisfaction has become vital in global competitive markets and saturated markets, such as the international hospitality and tourism industry (Johns and Tyas, 1996). In addition, the needs and tastes of guests vary according to demographic psychographics changes, such as the ecolodge context, as discussed in Chapter Four.

There are two distinctive schools of thought on models of service quality. The first one is known as North American School based on the SERVQUAL model also known as gap of perceived performance and customer expectations developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985). The instrument is claimed to be the most reliable tool for the measurement of service quality as a benchmarking of service quality delivery levels. It segments customers into a perceived quality category. It produces a generic SERVQUAL scale. However, this model is faced with several critics – conceptual, definition and operational problems in term of the validity of constructs as reviewed in section 3.7.8.

The Nordic European School approach is based on perceived service quality, also known as satisfaction (Gronroos, 1984), whereby the model is operated as a

perceived disconfirmation process. This school of thought is adopted in the present research conceptual framework to investigate service quality dimensions in relation to guest satisfaction. Despite the extensive body of previous research on service quality, many theoretical and methodological problems remain in this area (Oh and Parks, 1997) and research remains at an early stage in the tourism industry (Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995). Hence, the present research aims to explore, through a conceptual approach, the issue of service quality and its measurement and suggest an alternative approach to investigating service quality attributes as service outcomes in the service experience consumption context.

### **3.7.1 The Service Quality Concept**

Service quality is defined as 'meeting customers' expectations' and remains a complex construct to conceptualise and measure. Researchers have concluded that consumer's perception of service quality is different from their satisfaction level, and that service quality can best be understood by measuring the gaps between consumer expectations and the actual performance of a service (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996).

Service quality is rarely concerned with a single aspect of the service package but is usually focused on with many aspects that relate to the products and services being offered, the delivery systems, delivery environment, technology, and employees (Sasser et al., 1978; Berry et al., 1985). It encompasses numerous factors that are important to the customer's satisfaction (Bitran and Lojo, 1993). Service quality has been variously conceptualised as ten dimensional (Parasuraman et al., 1985), five dimensional (Parasuraman et al., 1988), three dimensional (Haywood-Farmer, 1988; Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1982), and two-dimensional (Gronroos, 1984).

In addition, the debate over the definition and dimensions of service quality is far from resolved (Babakus and Mangold, 1992; Reeves and Bednar, 1994), partly due to the subjective nature of service quality (Reisner, 2001). Woodside (1991) and Johns (1999a) suggest that the reliance on one definition of quality will lead to a myopic evaluation and delivery of service quality.

### **3.7.2 Service Quality Evaluation in the Tourism and Hospitality Context**

In the tourism and hospitality context, consumers evaluate services based on performance and expectations, and so the assessment of services is based on consumer perceptions about service outcomes and process. Hospitality organizations provide a series of experiences that incorporate both physical and intangible elements, such as atmosphere, ambience and staff. Two areas where guests' opinions are critical to the success of hospitality services are: a) the evaluation of a hotel's functionality in terms of its operations as a performance, and b) attitude i.e. what the guest thinks of his/her stay and the property. Guest attitude contributes to overall feelings of satisfaction, intent to return and value (Schall, 2003). The term quality services in the hospitality sector often refers to the quality experienced by guests in two areas: 1) technical quality – relatively quantifiable aspects of service that consumers experience during their interactions with the accommodation; and 2) functional quality – the way the service is delivered to the guests (Kandampully et al., 2001). These aspects are considered in the present research. In order to gain an insight into how consumers perceive hospitality performance, it is necessary to identify service quality attributes or dimensions and how these dimensions influence consumers' perceptions of service quality, as addressed in the present research.

Balmer and Baum (1993) argue that, despite the subjectivity and complexity of customer expectations, it is possible to predict or identify customer expectations and demands by relating them to the physical products and service quality provided by the accommodation. Subsequently, they propose Herzberg's theory of using "hygiene factors /dissatisfiers" and "motivators/ true satisfiers" as an alternative to investigate guest satisfaction, as reviewed in section 2.8. Similarly, Berry and Parasuraman (1991) suggest that "tangibles" as part of the service experience are often over emphasized by managers, being perceived as the only element in the service cycle that they can control and manipulate. Elsewhere, service marketing tends to measure service performance by its tangibility but what the consumer really purchase is the experience of "interpersonal and human and environment interactions" that takes place during the service (Bateson, 1991).

As consumers participate in the production and consumption of services, they interact closely with various aspects of the organization. This insider knowledge allows them to assess services critically, particularly in terms of quality, by comparing the service they get with the service they desired. This is particularly important in the ecolodge context, as new small specialist nature-dependent and environmentally friendly accommodation units, and draw on specific segments of the leisure market that have specific motivation, needs, expectations and vacation activity preferences. If service quality in relation to ecolodges is known to the operators, they will be in a better position to market these experiences effectively in this burgeoning market, eliminating gaps in service provision and subsequently enhancing guest satisfaction.

The present research seeks to understand consumer behaviour in relation to satisfaction (social psychological benefits) in the service experience consumption context, where satisfaction is derived from their perceptions about and interaction with the ecolodge attributes. In this context, two issues are critical to the management of ecolodge guests' satisfaction. It is important to identify, firstly, the service quality attributes that can be classified into the characteristics of motivator and hygiene attributes that contribute to guest's satisfaction/dissatisfaction, and secondly, the maintenance and motivator attributes which explain the perception of the overall quality of the experience.

### **3.7.3 Service Quality Dimensions**

In attempting to identify the service quality dimensions for the present research, it was essential to identify their domain. Swan and Combs (1976) propose a model to reflect the instrumental and expressive aspect of clothing items, after which numerous researchers conceptualised the dimensions of quality in the service context. Table 3.4 below shows the various types of quality dimensions identified in the service literature:

**Table 3. 4: Dimensions of Service Quality**

<b>Researcher</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982)	Process quality, output quality, physical quality, interactive quality, corporate quality
Gronroos (1984)	Technical quality, functional Quality
Czepiel, Solomon, Suprenant and Gutman (1985)	Functional, performance delivery
Gummesson and Gronroos (1987)	Design quality, production quality, delivery quality, relational quality
Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988)	Tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy
Edvardsson, Gustavsson and Riddle (1989)	Technical, integrative; functional, outcome

Gronroos (1984) makes a distinction between technical quality (what the consumer actually receives from the service firm) and functional quality (the manner in which the service is delivered). The former is more cognitively oriented while the latter is more emotionally oriented. This means that service quality involves both outcomes and staff performance. Likewise, Czepiel et al. (1985) assert that service quality includes functional and performance delivery elements. Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) propose three quality dimensions – physical, corporate and interactive, whereby the former relates to the technical aspects of the service (i.e. food in a restaurant), and the latter two serve to emphasize the corporate image of the service organization and the interactive processes that constitute the interactions between the contact staff and consumers and between the consumers themselves. The authors further differentiate between the quality associated with the delivery of the service and that associated with its outcome. Lovelock (1984) argues that services differ in their nature along two dimensions: the level of staff and the level of facility interactions. The author defines five aspects: the nature and type of relationship with the customers, personnel judgment and customisation, the nature of supply and demand, and the method of service delivery. Haywood-Farmer (1988) proposes three other criteria through which services may be classified: degree of contact and interaction, degree of labour intensity and degree of service customisation.

Parasuraman et al. (1988) propose a multifaceted framework using SERVQUAL as the instrument. Through numerous qualitative studies, they conclude that service quality can be categorized into the following five dimensions:

- **Tangibles:** physical facilities, equipment and the appearance of the personnel
- **Reliability:** the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
- **Responsiveness:** the willingness to help consumers and provide a prompt service
- **Assurance:** the knowledge and courtesy of the employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence
- **Empathy:** the caring, individualized attention that the firm provides for its customers

A conceptual strand that threads through the literature is the distinction between technical quality (tangible elements) and functional quality (intangible elements). Irrespective of theoretical approaches, studies have predominantly incorporated these two notions. For example, “tangible” and “reliability” proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) correspond to technical quality, whilst “responsiveness,” “assurance”, and “empathy” correspond to functional quality.

Since, then, several researchers have developed models that can be used for monitoring, measuring, or rating service quality (Kandampully and Butler, 1998) or for assessing customer satisfaction (O’ Neil, 2001; Wisniewski, 2001). Of the several attempts to explain the nature of service quality, early work in the field identified two major dimensions of quality – that of the service offering, perceived by the provider, and that of the received service, perceived by the consumer (Nightingale, 1985), which is the present research focus. This approach has been successfully refined into Parasuraman et al.’s (1985) gap concept from the SERVQUAL (abbreviated form of ‘service quality’) model (Parasuraman et al., 1988). This serves as a research tool to direct the way forward for more rigorous quality monitoring.

### **3.7.4 SERVQUAL: the Principles**

SERVQUAL is a service quality model based on The North American school of thought to measure service quality developed by Parasuraman et.al. in 1985, refining in 1988 and 1991. The SERVQUAL model views service quality as the gap that occurs between customer expectations and perceived performance, also known as gap measurement. Thus, service quality is explained and assessed by the formula of perception minus expectations – also known as the inferred disconfirmation measurement. The model on which SERVQUAL is based proposed that customers evaluate the quality of service on five distinct dimensions: a) reliability, b) responsiveness, c) assurance, d) empathy, and e) tangibles.

Early service quality conceptual work by Gronroos (1984), Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982), Parasuraman et al. (1985) and others contributed to the building of a firm foundation for service quality. European authors (Gronroos, Lehtinen and Lethinen) still maintain that service quality should be viewed as a two or three-dimensional construct, whilst Parasuraman et al. (1985), rather than following this school of thought, developed the SERVQUAL scale. The authors also stress the necessity to develop a standard instrument for measuring customers' service quality perceptions, and introduced the SERVQUAL model scale in 1988. The SERVQUAL scale measures the gap between consumer expectations of excellence and their perceptions of the actual service delivered. Its definition resembles definitions of satisfaction as suggested by the disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1981), in that service quality is intended to be measured as a comparison between customers' expectations and perceptions about a service (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Customer satisfaction is a negative or positive outcome resulting from a comparison process between initial expectations and the perceived performance of products and services. According to the SERVQUAL model, where levels of expectations are higher than the perceptions of performance, this suggests a lower level of quality; conversely, expectations that met or exceeded perceptions result in higher quality levels.



### **3.7.5 The Limitations of SERVQUAL**

Over the years, the SERVQUAL scale has become a widely adopted tool for measuring and managing service quality. But many researchers have criticized the model based on its inability to be re-applied across a range of services, even though the authors originally stated that their scale was “designed to be applicable across a board spectrum of services” (Parasuraman et al., 1988). SERVQUAL suffers various criticisms that affect its credibility. These criticisms can be divided into two categories: operational and theoretical and they have influenced greatly its acceptance as an appropriate service quality measurement tool in the context of the present research.

### **3.7.6 SERVQUAL: Operational Shortcomings**

Several operational criticisms of SERVQUAL are documented in the literature. First, the use of both negatively and positively worded statements to measure perceptions and expectations have proved confusing to respondents when answering questionnaires. The authors who apply the scale show that negatively worded statements have consistently lower mean expectation and perception scores than positively worded statements (Fick and Ritchie, 1991). The use of both statements leads to respondents’ confusion and misinterpretation (Carman, 1990; Babakus and Boller (1992). Secondly, there has been criticism of the lack of clarity in defining the term “expectations” (Carman, 1990; Teas, 1993). Service expectations are defined by Parasuraman et al. as an ideal standard measuring “normative expectations”, that is how a brand should perform for the customer to be satisfied. The debate suggests a preferred or ideal standard be introduced, but this will not be discussed here. Thirdly, the use of a differential construct to measure perceived service quality implies that consumers should be surveyed via two questionnaires, which Carman (1990) feels would be of “little value”. The use of the seven-point Likert scale has also been criticized. Lewis (1993) criticizes the lack of verbal labelling for points 2 to 6, suggesting that respondents might overuse the end of the scale.

### **3.7.7 SERVQUAL: Theoretical Shortcomings**

One of the two strong criticisms of SERVQUAL has remained the measurement of perceived service quality as a gap measure. Several studies have investigated the relationship between the different types of measurement and the final constructs. These approaches opt for an evaluation of perceived quality in two different ways: by using the perceptions measure only or by using a comparative measure. Boulding et al. (1993), meanwhile, reject the value of the gap-based model by demonstrating that service quality is only influenced by perceptions and this is echoed by Fick and Ritchie (1991) and Carman (1990). Cronin and Taylor (1992b) further claim that using SERPERF, i.e. the measurement of service perception, is sufficient to explain most variance in the measurement of overall service quality. This is further supported by Mazanec (1997), in a study of city tourists, who argues that satisfaction should be evaluated on performance-based measures that would also appear to correlate more with the actual behaviour of tourists. The use of performance scores is also supported by other researchers such Armstrong et al. (1997) in studies of consumers' satisfaction with hotel services, and by Johns and Tyas (1996) in a study of a fast food outlet.

Thus, the questions arise in relation to service quality as a function of "expectations" and "perception" or of "perception" alone. Do its operational problems produce questionable results due to biases and dubious answers from the respondents? Hence, it is therefore determined that the scale is unsuited to this research.

Studies by Carman (1990) and Babakus and Boller (1992) conclude that SERVQUAL dimensions are not generic, and suggest the SERVQUAL instrument may be a one-dimensional construct. Until this point, the literature remains uncertain in resolving its operational and theoretical limitations. Thus, the present research aims to provide an alternative approach to measuring service quality.

### **3.7.8 Replication of SERVQUAL to other Services**

Many studies have adopted the SERVQUAL model to investigate service quality despite the recognition of its operational and theoretical problems. They contribute towards the understanding of types of indicators that consumers use to measure service quality across service sectors and also contribute to the discussion in the present research.

Problems were encountered when SERVQUAL was applied to tourism services, especially regarding the replication of the scale to different services. In travels agencies, nine dimensions were identified which differ significantly from SERVQUAL, of which the most important is corporate image (Leblanc, 1992). Saleh and Ryan (1991) used SERVQUAL in the hotel context and identify five dimensions: conviviality, tangibles, reassurance, avoiding sarcasm and empathy, which do not conform to the SERVQUAL dimensions. To add to the confusion, in 1997, Ekinci and Riley compared the SERVQUAL and LODGESERV scales and concluded, *“both scales fail to replicate the proposed dimensions and to provide content validity in these specific applications (resort hotels)”* (Ekinci and Riley 1997, p. 163).

Conversely, Fick and Ritchie (1991) conducted a multi-service comparison of SERVQUAL in four services companies: airline, hotel, restaurant and ski area services and concluded that it should be adopted only when comparing firms within a common service segment rather than across segments. These findings support the multidimensionality conception of service quality. Mackay and Crompton (1990) apply the SERVQUAL scale to the study of recreation services and successfully reproduced the five original SERVQUAL dimensions.

Carman (1990) applies SERVQUAL to different service settings (a tyre shop, a dental clinic, a Business School Placement Centre and a hospital), and “when one of the dimensions of quality is particularly important to customers, they are likely to break that dimension into sub-dimensions” (p37). Babakus and Boller (1992) suggest

that the number of service quality dimensions may be a function of a particular service industry, and it is recognised in the present research that service quality dimensions in the ecolodge context may be different from other types of hotels and guesthouses. Carman also concludes that the scale is essentially one-dimensional for the specific service studies, and so consumers may form an overall one-dimensional quality judgment. Saleh and Ryan (1991) conclude that one dimension (conviviality) explains most of the variance observed in service quality ratings. Thus, analysis of the above creates more confusion than clarification, and suggests that SERVQUAL can only be replicated successfully in certain new service contexts. Thus, each new application of SERVQUAL may need to develop different dimensions.

The limited generalization of SERVQUAL could be linked to the particularities of the services upon which it was developed, where these services involve situations in which consumers buy a service for rational and functional purposes. Most tourism and hospitality services involve complex processes, multiple encounters and a longer involvement with the service firm. For example, the consumption of a tourist attraction involves contact with different staff, with a multitude of tangible aspects (attractions, decor, ambience, comfort) and the evaluation of the different services provided (attractions, restaurant, lodge). Thus, the encounters are multiple and varied and all need to be integrated into the evaluation processes of service quality. More importantly, these different service features imply that the nature of the service delivery might consequently follow different patterns. For example, service experience in the ecolodge context consists of service encounters that are both internal and external to lodge environment. The encounters with the staff and environment are substantial but the intangible aspects (the natural environment) are important, suggesting that the evaluation processes might be based on different criteria. This question is believed to be at the centre of the SERVQUAL controversy. The present research recognises that the objective to build a generic scale is unrealistic since it would suggest wrongly that service quality always displays similar service delivery features and that consumers will use similar criteria to evaluate service quality.

It also recognises that service quality dimensions differ according to the service characteristics as echoed by Babakus and Boller (1992). They note that the appreciation of service quality might be substantially different among different services. It is noted that differentiating services between continuous discrete, low-high involvement criteria may provide further insights into the dimensionality of service quality, as noted by Crompton and Mackay (1989, p.371):

*In a high facility – low staff intensive activity the ambience of the facility and equipment are likely to be of central importance to a satisfying outcome, whereas in painting classes, which are high staff low facility intensive, the physical ambience is not likely to be crucial to a satisfying outcome.*

These findings were confirmed by Hamilton et al. (1991) in a study on State Park visitors in that the service quality dimensions did not display similar importance ratings. It is suggested that the park's service provision relied on the setting and facilities rather than the staff services. The SERVQUAL dimensions of tangibles and reliability were of most importance to visitors, and dimensions such as responsiveness and empathy were considered as unimportant. In fact, this was underestimated in the development of SERVQUAL since the tangible aspects of service delivery took on limited importance. Tangible aspects were considered as a functional element of the service delivery, an environment that would provide cues of quality and would be mainly characterized by functionality.

Previous studies on service quality dimensions from the various researchers from both schools of service quality across various service sectors are presented in Table 3.5. One commonality is that tangible elements emerge soon in all the studies and it seems that service quality dimensions can be termed as “tangibles” and “intangibles”.

**Table 3. 5: Service Quality Dimensions From Nordic European and North American School of Thought**

<b>Author /Year</b>	<b>Service quality dimensions</b>
Gronroos (1984)	Technical, functional dimensions
Johns and Lee-Ross (1995, 1997)	Tangible and intangible, satisfiers and dissatisfiers
Parasuraman et al. (1988)	SERVQUAL scale: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangible
Knuston, Steven, Wullaert and Yokoyama (1990, 1991)	LODGSERV: reliability, assurance, responsiveness, tangible, empathy
Getty and Thompson (1994)	LODGUAL: tangible, reliability, contact
Steven, Knutson and Patton (1995)	DINESERV: reliability, tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy
Dean and White (1999)	HOLSER: employees, tangibles, reliability
Frochot and Hughes (2000)	HISTOQUAL: responsiveness, tangibles, communication, consumables, empathy
Khan (2003)	ECOSERV: eco-tangibles, assurance, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibles

Putting aside operational problems, and despite its non generic nature, the range of information that SERVQUAL can provide along with insights into the service quality evaluation processes remains a strength that cannot be ignored, although the reasons justifying its lack of reproductability across services reveals its theoretical limitations in the service experience context. The identification of the determinants of service quality is necessary in the ecolodge context in order to be able to specifically measure and control and improve perceived consumer service quality and enhance to consumer satisfaction. In this context, ecolodges are new areas that have received little attention.

### **3.7.9 Service Quality Dimensions in Hotels**

Hotel quality elements were studied by using interviews with managers and customers (Lewis, 1984), whilst questionnaires were employed with customers, staff and managers in hotels by Nightingale (1985) and Callan (1989) in small country hotels. Conclusively, within these studies, service quality dimensions are derived from both tangible and intangible elements provided in the hotels and small country hotels.

Likewise, Johns and Lee-Ross (1997, p.361) note that: "*Most services are evaluated upon a similar range of dimensions, but that different dimensions take precedence within different service industries*". For example they conclude that aesthetics, cleanliness, comfort and friendliness are the most important service quality elements in small hotels and guesthouses, and responsiveness, attentiveness and courtesy are important for customers in banking services, as presented in Table 3.6 below.

Similarly, it was confirmed in small hotels and guesthouses that tangible characteristics are most mentioned, in terms of both their positive and negative attributes (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1997). Positive attributes are associated with tangibles, such as food, rooms and the environment. Even though attributes relating to tangibles are very important, the most frequently mentioned positive quality characteristics were friendliness and interpersonal interactions, where "*guests perceived the service as informal, personal, home-like and centered around interpersonal involvement and that guests expect to develop a closer relationship with staff at a hotel.*" (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1997, p. 357).

This means that guests' quality perceptions in a conceptual framework are built upon tangible signifiers, as supported by Teare (1992) who notes the importance of tangibles in the hospitality service mix. This suggests that tangibles act as signifiers of the quality of hospitality experience, and play a semiotic role in the guest perception.

**Table 3. 6: A Comparison Between the Service Quality Dimensions of Parasuraman et al. (1985), Johnston and Silvestro (1990) and Johnston 1995)**

<b>Parasuraman et al. (1985) 10 dimensions</b>	<b>Johnston and Silvestro (1990) 12 dimensions</b>	<b>Johnston's (1995) 18 dimensions (banking services)</b>
Tangibles	Aesthetics	Aesthetics
Comfort	Cleanliness	Cleanliness
Reliability	Comfort	Comfort
Responsiveness	Reliability	Functionality
-	Responsiveness	Reliability
Communication	Communication	Responsiveness
Credibility	-	Flexibility
Security	Security	Communication
Competence	Competence	Commitment
Courtesy	Courtesy	Integrity
-	-	Security
-	-	Competence
-	-	Courtesy
-	-	Friendliness
Understanding/Knowing customers	Friendliness	Care
Access	Access	Access
-	Availability	Availability

Source: Johns and Lee-Ross (1997, p 353)

Thus, hotel services are thought to consist of “bundles” of tangible and intangible components and it appears that the tangible components help consumers to clearly differentiate the components of services from one another. This implies, in the tourism and hospitality setting, that tangible elements and surroundings of the service delivery are a central feature and must be both functional and attractive to consumers. By this notion, both tangibles and intangibles are an important part of service delivery in the present research since consumers “gaze” upon both, which become central to their visit enjoyment. It can be argued that considering the length of time spent within the service environment; this environment might take an even more important place. There has been speculation that tangible attributes of services are more likely to be dissatisfiers than intangible ones (Balmer and Baum, 1993) It is perceived that ecolodge services are likely to be classified as low facility/high staff services with high interaction with the environment due to the guided eco-activities or tours provided by the ecolodges. Thus, it is more useful to categorize service quality dimensions as “tangible” and “intangible” aspects. However, the



*“tangible dimension also imposed a linguistic problem whereby good service is described as reliable or responsive but not tangible”* (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1997, 352).

Parallel to this argument, it is noted that service quality attributes may contribute positively to quality or detract from it. Johnston and Silvestro (1990) and Balmer and Baum (1993) draw parallels between these classes of quality attributes and the application of Herzberg’s Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory that is reviewed in section 2.8.

### **3.8 SERVQUAL: Is it applicable to Ecolodges in terms of Service Experience Consumption?**

The previous sections provide evidence of the shortcomings of SERVQUAL as an instrument for measuring service quality and the operational and theoretical problems associated with its scale. This does not justify the use of SERVQUAL scale in the present research, since the argument is based on the subjectivity of the service experience and the nature of the present research is simply exploratory.

There has been empirical work on service quality expectations of ecotourists by Khan (2003), who developed ECOSERV. This consists of six service dimensions: eco-tangibles are the most important dimension, followed by assurance, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and tangibles (as the least important dimension). These findings conform to the SERVQUAL scale. Arguably, these findings present a limited explanation of the underlying factors that lead to guest satisfaction in the eco-service environment. These findings are also subject to operational limitations and thus, may be questionable. More importantly, from theoretical perspective, the use of the SERVQUAL approach is based on cognition and ignores the experiential element that is found to be important in influencing consumer satisfaction in the service context (Otto and Ritchie, 1996). The present research addresses the importance of having an appropriate methodological framework to produce a more reliable, holistic view, and well-founded results of service quality dimensions. It regards the

application of any theoretical framework as potentially justifiable or relevant to the nature of the study context – the service experience – in order to produce sound, unbiased findings.

In fact, the SERVQUAL scale was initially considered for the present research, but then the operational and theoretical limitations which influence the reliability and validity of the findings (biased, unauthentic and not holistic) were discovered. Furthermore, the aim of the present research was not to confirm or negate the SERVQUAL scale. Hence, these limitations justify the search for a more suitable alternative by using the Profile Accumulation Technique as an alternative to the conventional closed-end questionnaire survey to produce a more natural and detailed evaluation of guest satisfaction (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1995; 1997). This technique is reviewed in Chapter Five section 5.4.2.3

### **3.9 The Measurement of Consumer Satisfaction in the Hospitality Context: The Theoretical and Methodological Limitations**

The review of existing theories adopted in consumer satisfaction research shows the theoretical concerns and methodological problems of assessing consumer satisfaction in the service experience context. Two limitations in the customer satisfaction literature have been identified. Satisfaction is deemed to be a post consumption experience. Similarly, expectations are deemed to be formed prior to consumption, and then remain unchanged during the process of consumption. However, the experiential nature of service consumption may result in consumers finding it difficult to form expectations prior to consumption. The dynamic aspect of service delivery is likely to result in consumers experiencing satisfaction during the process of service consumption. The experiential nature of services consumption suggests that consumers learn and adapt their attitudinal and behavioural responses. It is possible that satisfaction evaluation is not limited to post-consumption, as it may occur during the consumption process. Moreover, it is proposed that the experiential nature of consumption could result in consumers making several satisfaction

judgments during the service delivery process. Therefore, this seems to contradict the assumptions from expectancy –disconfirmation theories.

Secondly, the majority of research studies into customer satisfaction fail to consider the affective component of satisfaction judgments. While consumer behaviour researchers have begun to consider this aspect of consumption, few customer satisfaction researchers have incorporated a measure of affect into their models. It is perceived that service consumption is likely to result in satisfaction judgments containing an affective component in the service experience context. Likewise, the consumer behaviour field, in itself, encompasses various conceptualisations of satisfaction whereby it can either be measured by its antecedents or by its outcomes. The tourism and leisure fields appear to have focused on motivation and on the pre-choice process that does not allow for a full appreciation of the conceptualisation of satisfaction.

With regards to theoretical limitations, it is clear that both the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980) of consumer satisfaction and the SERVQUAL model and scale ignores the experiential aspect of hospitality service management, where satisfaction presumably results from the experience gained from tangible and intangibles elements (Pizam and Milman, 1993). Consumer satisfaction research into hotels has ignored the issues raised in the consumer behaviour literature (Saleh and Ryan, 1991; Barsky 1992).

Likewise, studies on tourism favour the experiential or emotional dimensions in satisfaction evaluations over utilitarian ones (Crompton, 1979; Otto and Ritchie, 1996). Fundamentally, this approach disregards the contribution that the quality of the services provided can bring to that process. One should also focus on the controllable dimension of the service provision (tangible aspects).

This review of the literature concludes that the techniques and models originally designed to measure consumer satisfaction were developed in product management. These models are cognitively constructed and treat satisfaction as a post consumption

evaluation. The present research believes that these properties limit the extent to which the models are relevant to the service experience context and also the understanding of human behaviour. In view of this, the researcher contends, in the service experience context, theories relating to human behaviour are of more relevance to investigate consumer satisfaction.

There are methodological issues in measuring consumer satisfaction, specifically concerning the research paradigm, research design and the validity of the data. Previous consumer satisfaction research predominantly adopts a positivist paradigm and quantitative scale in the research method. Questionnaires with scale – response have been the main instrument to gather information and the methodological approach was always quantitative. The limitations of this approach, as highlighted by Bowen and Clarke (2002, p.303) are that:

*The self-administered questionnaires set by management from the management perspectives of attributes affecting CS/D and both the consumer voice and service provider voice are muted, attributes are viewed as a whole rather than a part of the tourism experience; time period of measurement is too limited, the questions depends on the consumer's ability and desire to rationalize and express thoughts and sometimes feelings both literately and honesty.*

This method has been widely used in the hospitality industry. Lewis and Pizam (1982) argue it fails to measure the relative importance of different aspects of customers' experiences and to differentiate between different market segments. All respondents (guests) are treated as homogeneous in terms of how their needs are satisfied (Jones and Ioannou, 1993). Likewise, the SERVQUAL-style questionnaire developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985; 1988) to measure consumer satisfaction in various service sectors has been criticised in term of the validity of its expectation scores (Oberon and Hales, 1990). The poor statistical validity of the instrument used, the one-off nature of the survey questionnaire, and the unscientific method to unsolicited responses (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1995; 1997) were the major criticisms of this approach.

The choices of measurement scale, the composition of attribute-specific and overall evaluation, and the reliability factor structure remain questionable. Specifically, this method is incapable of addressing affective and holistic factors in service experiences (Fick and Ritchie, 1991) and of capturing a deeper understanding of guest satisfaction that consists of “emotional/affective and experiential aspects” (Johnston, 1995; Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988a, 1988b; Maddox, 1979,1981; Webb, 2002). Explicitly, the voice of consumers and their experiences show that their satisfaction was ignored. Arguably, an investigation of tourist satisfaction that involves tourist experiences needs to be grounded in the realities that the tourists themselves describe. The experience gained is the core output and an important element in influencing satisfaction within tourism and hospitality. What matters is the individual’s cognition and feelings about the experience being undertaken (Ross and Iso-Aloha, 1991).

This leads to the argument about the inadequacy of quantitative-based customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction data (CS/D) for understanding satisfaction and these processes. Qualitative approaches have gained greater attention as a research method in the hospitality context. Johns and Gyimothy (2002b) used focus groups to capture consumers’ voice and in-depth unstructured interviews to investigate the emotional experiential content of visits to Legoland in Denmark. Fournier and Mick (1999) contend that satisfaction is an experience and should be expressed through the consumer’s voice. Ryan (1995b) adopts conversations in participant observation in tourism research as an effective technique to remedy the inadequacy of quantitative approaches. Johns and Lee-Ross (1997) introduce the Profile Accumulation Technique (PAT), which is able to measure guests’ expectations and perceptions of the service in a “*freer, less interventional way than was achieved using SERVQUAL style questionnaires*”. Building on this perspective, this technique is adopted in the present research and details are discussed in Chapter Five (section 5.4.2.3). A qualitative research framework offers open consideration of existing theory and knowledge.

### **3.10 Chapter Conclusion**

The reviews of consumer satisfaction and service quality dimensions presented in this chapter are paramount to the present research. Firstly, these reviews have provided a conceptual framework for the measurement of guest satisfaction in this research. Satisfaction is defined as the social-psychological benefits and outcomes as well as the process evaluative judgments. The concept of satisfaction is a combination of the cognitive and affective components. Thus, the evaluation of satisfaction encompasses the quality of both performance and the experience, and both are influenced by the tangible and intangible elements provided in the accommodation environment. Service quality dimensions are both tangibles and intangibles, and form an important part of the service delivery on which consumers “gaze”.

Several points of justification were made relating to the consideration of a theoretical framework in relation to consumer satisfaction and service quality dimensions. The limitations of the SERVQUAL model and scale justify the search for a superior alternative and, consequently, the approach of the Nordic European School of Thought, specifically, the Profile Accumulation Technique, is adopted for measuring service quality in the present research. The conceptualisation and measurement of the construct of consumer satisfaction remains unclear. There is no single model that is unanimously endorsed to explain the occurrence of consumer satisfaction. The present research measures satisfaction based on: a) satisfaction with service performance; and b) satisfaction with service consumption, as proposed by Otto and Ritchie (1996).

Finally, the review has provided significant direction and a recognition of the existing theoretical and methodological limitations, which has led to a consideration of an alternative perspective for exploring consumer satisfaction dimensions. Herzberg’s Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory, as reviewed in Section 2.8, was adopted as a possible alternative theory to explain guest satisfaction in terms of

expressing motivators (satisfiers) and hygiene factors (dissatisfiers), which provide a better explanation of a more valid approach to and well-founded findings concerning consumer satisfaction.

The next step is to gain an understanding about the definition and terms of “ecotourism”, guest behaviour and the ecolodge context in general and Malaysia in particular. The review will highlight studies on guests’ profiles and characteristics from different regions which offer a better understanding and justification for the present research, in terms of the contextual difference (ecolodge management and operations) and the study site (Sukau, Malaysia). It is perceived that guests may behave differently in this context, since an ecolodge is a new small unit of accommodation that is closely linked to “service management”.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Guest Behaviour and the Ecolodge Context**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter present a brief review of ecotourism as a sub sector of tourism. Ecotourists are also addressed as guests at ecolodges. Ecolodge characteristics and management as small “service management” accommodation units, that entail service experience consumption are also considered. The chapter finally presents an overview of the study site – Malaysia and Sabah. These reviews are deemed necessary as they provide insightful background information that are related to an understanding of guest behaviour and also provide justification for the present research.

Ecolodges are a key component and vital infrastructure in ecotourism that offers unique service experiences to ecotourists who are also guests. In this respect, a brief review on the concept of ecotourism and the profiles, characteristics and motivation of ecotourists are deemed relevant to the discussion of the present research before reviewing ecolodges and the study site.

#### **4.2 The Concept and Definition of Ecotourism**

Ecotourism literature documents that the concept of ecotourism still needs clarification and the conceptualisation of ecotourism is still at an infant stage. There are various ecotourism definitions put forward by researchers who are interested in nature –based tourism and ecotourism (Fennell, 1999). This range of definitions has done little to clarify the meaning of ecotourism and, instead, has caused confusion about its precise definition. This has led to problems with its operational definition (Page and Dowling, 2002) as well as difficulties in estimating the size and growth of the market.



There are different dimensions and interpretations of ecotourism, as noted by Waldeback (1995) who put forward eight different dimensions of ecotourism: activity, business, philosophy, strategy, marketing device, handle, symbol, and principles and goals, which perhaps, add more confusion to the term and also hint at the complexity and the difficulties of presenting the one clear agreed term for ecotourism. Other researchers such as Butler (1990), Harrison (1996), De Alwis (1998) and Shackley (1996) question the whole notion that ecotourism exists separately from nature tourism but this debate is beyond the scope of the present research.

The work of Ceballos –Lascurain (1987, p. 14) is regarded as the most important, contribution to the development of the concept of ecotourism and also widely accepted.

*Travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in this area.*

In 1993, Ceballos-Lascurain revised the definition to include the environment, social and local population elements (Page and Dowling, 2002). Subsequently, this definition has been officially adopted in the National Ecotourism Plan by the Malaysian Government as a concept and strategy to develop ecotourism (WWFM, 1996a). The present research also addresses ecotourism based on this definition.

In a general sense, the term “ecotourism” has become synonymous with nature-based tourism, while Non-Government Organizations, development experts and academics came to apply the term as a sustainable development tool (Epler Wood, 2002). Boo (1990) states that ecotourism is a combination of nature conservation and economic development. This means that ecotourism is a concept with a set of principles and also a specific market segment, with a close relationship to the environment, culture and conservation (Cater and Lowman, 1994). From the tourism market segmentation

perspective, ecotourism is regarded as synonymous with nature-based tourism that involves leisure travel to observe and experience nature (Laarman and Durst, 1987, Valentine, 1992). Hawkins and Khan (1998) advocate that the primary market for ecotourism is special interest and nature-oriented travel, as the demand is associated with adventurous, participatory, educational and nature-oriented tourism activities. Likewise, the ecotourism or sustainable tourism market is also regarded as a sub-segment of tourism, which may also overlap with various other sub market segments, including cultural, rural, adventure, and wildlife tourism. The two different interpretations of ecotourism and their understanding are recognised in the present research and subsequently, the review is focused in line with these perspectives and the study context has also adopted these interpretations of ecotourism.

This implies that ecotourism is closely related to natural settings, ecological sustainability and environmental education (Beaumont, 1998) and other researchers suggest that ecotourism is a subset of nature tourism (Blamey, 1997; Bottrill and Pearce, 1995; Bukley, 1994; Fennel, 1999, 2001; Moore and Carter, 1993; Orams, 1995 and Goodwin, 1996). These three elements are frequently found in definitions of ecotourism and the natural environment is a major focus of the phenomenon. Other researchers, such as Boo (1990) and Eagles (1992), stress the nature-based experience in a pristine natural environment sought by visitors. Fennell (1999) asserts that ecotourism is both tourism and recreation and place an emphasis on a holistic experience for ecotourists. Thus it can be conceptualised in both a tourism and leisure framework.

Laarman and Durst (1987) define ecotourism as involving some degree of interest in the destination's natural history and the type of visit (educational, recreational and often adventurous). This means that ecotourism is based on the natural environment with its biological, physical and culture attractions, and must be economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. It has educational characteristics and the involvement of the local community should generate mutual benefits for the community and the environment as well as contributing to the quality of the tourist experience.

In contrast, Laarman and Durst (1993) identify a conceptual difference between ecotourism and nature tourism, and key variables or principles that separate ecotourism from more broad-based nature tourism are: educative, sustainability (Blamey, 1995), the ethical nature of the experience (Wight, 1993; Hawkes and William, 1993; Wallance and Pierce, 1996).

Researchers emphasize the importance of sustainability (Blamey, 1995) and the educative element (Wight, 1993, Hawkes and William, 1993, Wallance and Pierce, 1996), meaning that ecotourism offers a different experience to nature-based tourism. It also means careful planning and development of attractions and facilities are crucial to conserve the pristine environment and natural resources. This means that high quality education and responsible tourism are pivotal to the success of ecotourism and that changes in ecotourist travel behaviour are essential in terms of their needs and motivation. Ecotourism is highly dependent upon the quality of the environment for its success. Holden (2000) stresses the importance of the maintenance of a good quality environment in a destination, which affects the satisfaction of ecotourists. Ayala (1996b) also asserts that the quality of the environment will influence the travellers' choice of destination.

Within the ecotourism context, tourists interact with nature, the environment and other sources of stimulation such as wildlife viewing, and this is what they wish to experience. Shakley (1996) argues for the needs of sustainability to provide visitors with a unique and outstanding experience that helps to maintain the quality of the environment.

The review has presented a range of definitions of ecotourism, and it is clear that visitors' satisfaction and experience tend to relate to both nature-based and sustainable-based activities. There is a growing demand for products and experiences that are labelled "ecotourism" despite the lack of a clear, universally agreed definition.

Although understanding the experiences and satisfaction of visitors is complex in this context, tourist satisfaction with the ecotourism experience is crucial to its long-term

success (Page and Dowling 2002). An understanding of the elements that constitute visitor experiences in relation to the satisfaction/dissatisfaction in this context and its dimensions are crucial for the management of the sustainable use of eco resources and the improvement of visitors' quality experiences by the operators, which is one of aims of the present research as noted in Chapter One.

The growth of ecotourism is closely related to the consumption of natural resources and its consequences (Honey, 1999). Less developed countries began to realize that nature-based tourism offers a means of earning foreign exchange and providing a less destructive use of resources than other alternatives such as logging and some forms of agriculture (Honey, 1999). Whelan (1991) asserts that the increase in nature-based recreation activities with learning or educational components have given rise to the phenomenon of nature-based tourism or 'ecotourism'. The desire to "get back in touch with nature", escape from normal working life in an undisturbed pristine environment and participate in leisure activities has contributed to the growth of ecotourism.

Elsewhere, Morrison et al., (1996) advocate that there is an increasing demand for certain types of visitor experiences and activities especially in rural, wilderness and historic settings. Needs, motivations, expectations and demands are changing because they are searching for a more satisfying, enriching and educational vacation which many specialist accommodation providers may offer. Wight (1997) recognises the differences between traditional tourism and ecotourism trends, suggesting that visitors' behaviour and the management of tourism will be affected significantly by this shift. This results in different perceptions and expectations especially in the functions of the accommodation component and the services for the guests, something recognised in the present research.

Likewise, many researchers recognize that ecotourism is a growing segment of tourism (Meric and Hunt, 1998; Wight, 2001) and that it contributes to the environmental, social and economic benefit of a particular site. The growth also suggests the need for an investigation into its impact in context as well as into the needs of the ecotourists who seek this type of experience (Page and Dowling, 2002).

A number of previous studies have researched theories of needs, motivations and expectations as dimensions of tourist behaviour within the concept of ecotourism (Khan, 2003; Klenosky, 2002; Mohsin and Ryan, 2003; Boo, 1990; Eagle, 1992; Maher et al., 2003). Little is known about specific guest behaviours (satisfaction and dissatisfaction) associated with an ecolodge context, which may hinder quality improvement and the sustainable use of eco-resources. Moreover, most of the ecotourism studies describe and focus predominantly on supply- side factors - destination and management practices (Khan, 2003) and place limited emphasis on demand factors such as guest satisfaction, particularly in the ecolodge context, which plays a role of equal importance for ecolodge management. Thus, the present research aims to bridge the gap by exploring the demand side of guest behaviour in relation to satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

#### **4.2.1 Issues in Ecotourism**

The review of issues and problems of ecotourism from the literature led to the identification of the research gaps for the present research and justification for the study.

The World Eco-tourism Summit in Mozambique 2002 (Page and Dowling 2002) identified three main areas as of importance for ecotourism: a) the development of ecotourism in national and wildlife parks, protected and other natural areas; b) the involvement of local communities; and c) the management of facilities, visitors and activities related to ecotourism. A significant body of research has focused on the first two areas but there is limited literature about ecotourist management facilities, visitors or activities, or, on particularly ecotourist behaviour, which is important to ecotourism management and planning, and which is recognised as a key research gap for the present research. This view echoes that of Fennel (1990) who supported the importance of understanding ecotourist behaviour in pristine environments as a means of developing appropriate ecotourism planning strategies. Priskin (2003) notes that an understanding of visitor characteristics, behaviour, user patterns and attitudes pertinent in designing a suitable management framework in ecotourism are

important. Eagles and Higgins (1998, p.36) comment on the need to understand the ecotourists' behaviour:

*The number of people desiring to experience nature through travel is increasing. They want to see, feel and experience wildness and stressed the importance of providing the services, programs and sites to fulfill this need and also the importance of understanding the social, environment and business implications of this growing sub-sector.*

Another prominent problem is that there are few clear statistical records of the actual numbers of ecotourists in any particular destination (Page and Dowling, 2002). This is due to the lack of systematic recording of the origin and locations of the demand for ecotourism (Eagles and Higgins, 1998). Despite the lack of statistical data, Europe is seen as an important nature tourism outbound market as there is evidence of European interest in nature-based travel and ecotourism. The European market interest in nature travel exceeds any other inbound market, including the US and Canada (Epler Wood, 2002). Northern Europeans have consistently shown an interest in tourism with high standards of sustainability, and nature tourism is strongly developing as an outbound market in these countries (Epler Wood, 2002). Consequently, the lack of statistical data on ecotourists worldwide and also, in the case in Malaysia (WWFM, 1996a), provides a justification for the use of purposeful sampling in the present research.

Another crucial issue relating to the marketing of ecotourism is the lack of knowledge about market demand, visitor motivation, expectations, needs and the delivery of product information (Page and Dowling, 2002). These authors note that marketing is complicated by ecotourism's intangibility, quality of delivery and evaluation of experiences that are difficult to visualise, heterogeneity (diversity), perishability, intangibility, and inseparability (consumer must travel to the product/resources base). This implies that there are difficulties for both providers and consumers (tourists) to assess satisfaction.

Ecotourism has the potential to generate high levels of visitor satisfaction via the creation of memorable (authentic) experiences and value-added products that can generate profit maximization. By this notion, one has to recognise that the management of visitor impacts are critical to the success and sustainability of ecotourism. Effective management ensures the long-term protection of natural and cultural resources and continued visitor enjoyment and use (Marion and Farrell, 1998). In the absence of effective visitor management, ecotourism can lead to adverse impacts on the natural, cultural and heritage environments to the extent of effecting visitor satisfaction negatively (Marion and Farrell, 1998). Finally, if ecotourism is regarded as contributing to sustainable tourism development, issues such as environmental resources, recreational opportunities, the quality of the environment, the quality of the experiences and visitor satisfaction must be addressed.

#### **4.3 Ecotourism as Experiential Place Product Consumption**

The literature reveals that ecotourism is a travel experience that gives visitors a better understanding of unique natural and cultural environments around the world. Weaver (2001, p.15) describes ecotourism as *“a form of tourism that fosters learning experiences and appreciation of the natural environment, or some components thereof, within its associated cultural context...preferably in way that enhances the natural and cultural resources.”* Duffy (2002), meanwhile, regards it as a form of taking pleasure that invades natural habitats, while Ryan (2000) defines it as a directed viewing of nature and wildlife rather than a holistic understanding of natural processes. Thus ecotourism is associated with and measured by activities related to nature, outdoor, and cultural experiences (Wight, 1996a), while others assert that it involves experiencing change and doing something different (Weiler and Davis, 1993).

Researchers recognise that ecotourism is a specific travel market that involves leisure travel to observe and experience nature (Laarman and Durst, 1987; Valentine, 1990) and ecotourists select certain travel experiences and destinations that are nature-

oriented in pristine natural environments. Thus, ecotourism is regarded as a place product that has a clear ecological, cultural and geographical identity, where the quality derives from the destination's heritage resources and the experience of these resources (Ayala, 1996b). Page and Dowling (2002) describe ecotourists as distinct visitors who consume ecotourism-related tourism products and experiences. They search for an authentic and complex learning activity as part of a leisure experience as well as the destination's diverse natural and cultural resources (Ayala, 1996b). Thus, ecotourism is regarded as a holistic experience-based product that has clear ecological, cultural and geographical identity, often in wilderness settings and pristine areas that offer a sense of closeness to nature (Holden and Sparrowhawk, 2002) and local communities (Ayala, 1996b). Ryan (2000, p.158) stresses the intensity of the interaction with the site, while Wight (1997, p. 218) believes that ecotourists seek *"uncrowded, remote, wilderness, learning about wildlife, nature, and local cultures, community benefits and having physical challenge"*.

Meric and Hunt (1998) assert that ecotourists desire to learn about nature, be physically active, meet people with similar interests, participate in and learn new outdoor skills and aim to see as much as possible in the available time. Backman et al., (1994) believes that they like to travel to experience natural phenomena, learn about nature and meet people with similar interests. Likewise, other empirical studies (Fennel, 1990; Eagles, 1992; Ballantine 1991) conclude that ecotourists want to see and experience as much as possible in the time available and also desire high quality guide and interpretation services, while seeking to spend their money on conservation and in a way that benefits the local economy. Crossley and Lee (1994) conclude that ecotourists like to visit uncrowded destinations, experience remote and unspoiled nature, increase their knowledge of wildlife, interact with native people, benefit the local community in economic terms, observe unusual plants and animals, and increase their confidence through challenging adventures. Meric and Hunt (1998) also conclude that observing wildlife and visiting state parks, national wildlife refuges, historic sites and hiking wetland trails are popular activities among ecotourists, and observing wildlife and nature with minimal impact were also identified by Blamey (1995).



Ayala (1996b) asserts that the potential for learning and the complexity and authenticity of the experience is important in the ecotourists' choice of destination. Naturally, small groups of ecotourists tend to be accompanied by local guides (Lindberg et al., 1998), and guides and interpretation are an important part of their learning experience. Thus, high quality guides are crucial, with language skills and a wide knowledge of natural and cultural history, environmental interpretation, communication, and ethical principles (Henning 1993; Ballantyne et al., 2000). Weiler and Davis (1993) assert that guides play an important role in ensuring an environmentally responsible tourist experience.

Within the ecotourism experience, finding appropriate mechanisms to interpret and convey the essence of what is being consumed and delivered is vital to the quality of the experience. Page and Dowling (2002) stress the important principal characteristics of guides that include the education or knowledge of both product and surroundings, environmental awareness of the natural, cultural and heritage environment, an ethical approach that fosters integrity and honesty, enthusiasm. It is seen that guides enhance the quality of visitors experience both through information and understanding given and the way in which it is imparted. It is also one way to add value to the ecotourism experience. The presentation skills of the guide will significantly enhance the quality of the experience. It is noted that guiding and interpretation are major elements in ecotourism. Effective communication skills and entertaining personality are seen as a vital element of the visitor experience. Baum (1997, p. 92) stresses, "*Experiences of the consumer is highly intense and intimate in the interaction...with those providing services*". This suggests that the quality of the ecotourist experiences can be attributed to both a human (guides) and a physical (destination) dimension.

Likewise, the tourism industry is widely acknowledged as a social psychological experience (Iso-Ahola, 1983; Mannel and Iso-Ahola, 1987), and, arguably, this can also be applied to ecotourism. Page et al. (2001) state that a tourist experience can be influenced by individual, environmental, situational and personality-related factors, as well as communication with other people. Thus it is a complex amalgam of

factors, which shapes the tourists' feeling and attitudes towards their visit (Page, 1995). Since all of these factors are interrelated, it is impossible to predict tourist responses to individual situations. Thus, this give arises to an alternative to determine tourist responses by referring to tangible and intangible elements that can be termed as satisfiers/motivator and dissatisfiers/hygiene factors provided during their visitation.

In the ecotourism site context, tourist interactions with nature, the environment and other sources of stimulation (such as wildlife viewing) are an element of the very product or service that the tourist wishes to experience. Experiences can be defined as "*the subjective mental state felt by participants during a service encounter*" (Otto and Ritchie, 1996, p.166). Ecotourism sites' attractions can, thus, be seen as "experiential" products facilitating feelings, emotions, and knowledge for tourists, which is similar to river trips that contribute to similar feelings (Arnould and Prices, 1993). The visitor's perspective has been advocated as essential in achieving a symbolic relationship between visitor and resources (McArthur and Hall, 1996). The core product of ecotourism is described as "beneficial experiences" gained by the visitors, as valued by them and expressed in their own words. The very nature of intangible "products" or services means that, in essence, ecotourism involves the consumption of an experience that provides attractions for their visit through the site in terms of interaction and interpretation. Making an effort to understand the dimensions that contribute to the ecotourists' experiences is paramount to the quality of management as well as contributing to sustainable resource management.

#### **4.4 Typologies of Ecotourists**

Just as there is no definite definition of ecotourism (section 4.2), similarly there are different views as to the characteristics of ecotourists and who ecotourists actually are. Given the difficulty in defining ecotourism, it is not surprising that it is subsequently difficult to categorise ecotourists, which leads to confusion over the type of behaviour that an ecotourist could be expected to display. Likewise, tourists are not homogeneous (Wight, 2001) and their complexity and sophistication are

increasing in term of seeking a diversity of experiences (Ryan, 1997). Mowforth and Munt (1998, p.32) conclude that ecotourists are the “*new bourgeoisie, often employed in the service sector with high incomes and seeking authentic ecotourism experiences*”.

Thus, it is crucial to define who these tourists are, their behaviour, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, all of which are matters that will be considered in the present research. Various attempts have been made by researchers to propose a classification of ecotourists (Page and Dowling, 2002). Ecotourists have also been defined according to certain parameters, such as group type, motivation/interest level, activity and physical rigour (Laarman and Durst, 1987; Wight, 1997; Hvenegaard, 1994). This has impacted on understanding of consumers’ perception and expectations and, subsequently, on their satisfaction and dissatisfaction in term of meeting their needs, wants and goals.

Early work by Laarman and Durst (1987) made a distinction between “hard” and “soft” dimensions of ecotourism, based on both the intensity of physical challenge and level of interest in nature, which provides a useful starting point when considering types of ecotourist themselves. This is adopted in the present research. Page and Dowling (2002, p.74) define hard ecotourism as “*an intense, personal and prolonged encounter with nature*”. The trips take place within a wilderness setting or some other mainly undisturbed natural venue where access to services and facilities are virtually non-existent, a view that echoes that of Laarman and Durst (1987). Wight (1997) confirms that experienced or ‘hard’ ecotourists prefer activities such as mountain climbing, hiking/trekking, wildlife viewing, boating, and fishing in wilderness settings. Types of ‘hard’ ecotourists include expert or professional environmentalists or specialist tourists, such as botanists or ecologists. On the other hand, ‘soft’ ecotourism is described as short-term and frequently mediated interactions with nature that are often just one component of a multi-purpose tourism experience (Orams, 2001). Soft ecotourists show casual interest in the natural attraction and experience it at a more superficial and highly mediated level and they are less prepared to accept discomfort and physical hardship as part of

the experience. Their visitations are “*within a less natural setting, such as a park interpretation centre, scenic lookout, signed hiking trail, or wildlife park and are accompanied by a high level of service and facility provision*” (Weaver and Opperman, 2000, p. 369-370).

In a major survey of North American ecotourists, Wight (1996b) finds that a shift in interest by general consumers was moving towards ecotourists’ preferences. This means that interest in ecotourism may be spreading to other market segments of tourism. It is, thus, useful to classify the characteristics and typologies of ecotourists into a more meaningful framework, and this can be done by referring to an interesting classification of ecotourists as a diverse and yet distinct series of tourist groups by Mowforth (1993) who presents a threefold classification of ecotourists as rough, smooth and specialist as shown in Table 4.1 below. This classification seems more useful as it incorporates the different motivations of ecotourists in relation to pursuits they engage in as well as the organization and cost of the experiences. Although this classification may illustrate the scope of the criteria and characteristics of ecotourists, it is important to recognize that ecotourism is also closely associated with an attitude of mind - an experience and perceived elements that cannot be readily classified.

**Table 4. 1: A Threefold Classification of Ecotourists**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>The rough ecotourist</b>	<b>The smooth ecotourists</b>	<b>The specialist ecotourist</b>
<b>Age</b>	Young-middle-aged	Middle-aged-old	Young-old
<b>Travelling</b>	Individually or in small groups	In groups	Individually
<b>Organization</b>	Independents	Tour-operated	Independent and specialist tour
<b>Budget</b>	Low: cheap hotel/B& B; local /fast food; uses buses	High: 3*/5* hotels; luxury cafes; uses taxis	Mid-high: cheap – 3* hotels; mid-lux, cafes: as necessary
<b>Type of tourism</b>	Sport and adventure	Nature and safari	Scientific investigation/hobby pursuits

Source: Mowforth (1993)

The literature also indicates that there are less conceptual differences between ecotourism and nature –based tourism when attempting to differentiate between them. A study by Hvenegaard and Dearden (1998) shows that ecotourists in Thailand did not differ from other types of tourists in term of socio demographics and characteristics. Priskin (2003) confirms the difficulty of distinguishing nature-based tourists from ecotourists based on the characteristics and perception of tourists in Western Australia. Palacio and McCool (1997) find no distinction between the two groups in term of the nature of the activities engaged, and confirm that both groups share many similar characteristics in terms of their behaviour.

#### **4.4.1 Evidences of Ecotourist Profiles and Characteristics**

The previous section highlighted the various approaches in defining the ecotourist and notes that the meaning of the term still lacks clear consensus. The following section reviews the characteristics of ecotourists that are varied according to the destination. The review of these studies is included in order to gain some understanding of who ecotourists are.

Luzat's et al. study (1995) shows that ecotourists are upper-income groups with nature-related hobbies and interests, and they tend to be middle aged with higher education and income levels than general travellers (Meric and Hunt, 1998). However, the literature also shows that ecotourists' profiles vary according to destination. For example, empirical research describes Canadian ecotourists as older, highly educated and having a higher than average income compared to other tourists (Ballantine, 1991; Eagles and Cascagnette, 1995). Their main interests are visiting wilderness, national parks and tropical forest, and viewing birds, mammals, trees and wild flowers. Learning about nature on their trips and photographing landscapes and wildlife are important to them. They like to experience new lifestyles, meet people with similar interests and visit historically important places.

American ecotourists are middle-aged or senior travellers, married, with some university education and employed in professional and technical occupations

(Backman et al., 1994). They have sufficient leisure time and disposable income to stay away for an average of two weeks and tend to spend more time planning their tours. Wight (1996a) also found that North American ecotourists tend to be better educated than general tourists.

Empirical research also shows that Australian ecotourists usually have professional/administrative occupations such as teaching or lecturing, medical or dental practices and engineering or science, a tertiary or higher degree of education and higher incomes (Blamey, 1995). They prefer to visit protected areas, such as national parks, state parks, reserves or caves and aboriginal sites. They were also most satisfied by the quality of the sites visited, the number of the guides on the tour, the measures taken to minimize the environmental impact of the tours, and the information provided about the natural environment. In the same vein, Page and Dowling (2002, p.112) define the broad characteristics of ecotourists in a similar way to Meric and Hunt (1998) as:

*Older than other tourists, with higher education and income levels. They have more leisure time and disposable income, and are serious travellers who know what they are looking for from their trips and experiences, taking a great deal of time to pre-plan and organize their travel and trip. There also appear to be slightly more female than male eco-tourists in some studies.*

Likewise, Wight (1996a, 1996b) confirms that nature tourists tend to be college graduates aged 35-54 who travel in small groups as couples, family groups or individuals. They are experienced nature tourists who are willing to spend more than general tourists. Wilderness settings, wildlife viewing, hiking and trekking are important elements of the trips. They are inspired by the natural history of relatively undeveloped areas, and aim to appreciate, participate in and be sensitive to the environment. In the same vein, wildlife viewing is regarded as the main preference activity of ecotourists (Meric and Hunt, 1998; Blamey, 1995). Wildlife and bird life are dominant factors and the ecotourism experience is nature-based (natural area and wildlife abundant) and also a form of education.

Fennell (1990) found that personal references from friends, films, books and quality written material are the main sources for Canadian ecotourists, while Blamey (1995) reports that word-of mouth, advertisements in newspapers, magazines, radio and television inspire ecotourists in Australia. Likewise, Meric and Hunt (1998) confirm that previous experience; travel books/guides; and word of mouth are the main sources of travel information for ecotourists in North Carolina.

Past studies show that the party composition of ecotourists varies according to the type of activity, and families tend to be in a minority. The majority of ecotourists travel as couples, while experienced ecotourists tend to travel alone. Also, it is noted that European residents show a clear demand for environmentally friendly products (Page and Dowling, 2002). Reviews of the duration of ecotourist trips at various destinations have been forward by Page and Dowling (2002), and they found, for example, that the average length of a stay in Nepal is 9.3 nights per visit, 5 nights in the US, and 12 days in Alaska. The duration also varies according to the type of activity. For example, an average nature observation package trip in Canada is 5.3 days, while wildlife viewing trips range from 2.9 to 7 days and seal watching is less than one day.

The review has provided some empirical evidence with respect to variation in ecotourist profiles, and that means it still requires further clarification and more work is required. Fennell (1999) makes the case for further research on ecotourists' profiles as a function of the different variables including the types of experiences and products offered to them. Page and Dowling (2002) argue for further research on demand for tourism experiences based on the 'eco' label, the characteristics of ecotourists who choose 'eco' experiences as defined in the existing studies, and the types of experiences sought by the eco-tourists.

#### **4.4.2 The Motivation of Ecotourists**

Motivation is a dynamic process of internal psychological factors — the needs, wants and goals of an individual—and is a key element of the individual and group

experience regarding tourism products or experiences. Thus, it is crucial to know the factors and issues that contribute towards the motivation of tourists to purchase the phenomena of ecotourism or ecolodges. Although researchers have been unable to find any agreement about why people take holidays (Pearce, 1993; Page et al., 2001), ecotourists' motivation remains of substantive interest to many researchers (Page et al., 2001). The literature shows that there is little understanding about the intrinsic motivations of ecotourists (Holden and Sparrowhawk, 2002). Palacio and McCool (1997) note that there has been little social science research on ecotourists motivations and anticipated benefits. This gap forms the justification for the present research.

The literature documents that changes in environmental attitudes, the development of environmental education and the development of an environmental mass media are three significant motivational factors in the pursuit of ecotourism (Eagles and Higgins, 1998). On other hand, Holden (2000) points out that the various typologies of tourists show that they are not homogenous but are likely to search for different kinds of experiences from the destination environment. This means that reasons behind and motivations of ecotourists are dynamic and can relate to nature, outdoor activities and cultural activities (Wight, 1996b). Equally, multiple reasons to participate and motivations may exist for ecotourists, varying by destination and target market (Wight 1996b).

Other researchers describe visiting uncrowned destinations, experiencing remote and unspoiled nature, learning about nature and culture, interacting with native people and participating in physically challenging programmes as the characteristics and motivations of ecotourists (Wight, 1996b; Eagles, 1992; Eagles & Cascagnette, 1995). Holden and Sparrowhawk (2002) report that relaxation in a natural environment was rated the most important need by ecotourists, while Wearing and Neil (1999) found that some ecotourists travel to satisfy leisure, pleasure and recreational needs as well as to educate themselves about specific areas (Page and Dowling, 2002). Nevertheless, a complication arises due to the different environments combined with the different perceptions, needs, and attitudes of the



consumers. To date, this issue has yet to be dissolved and this means that different motivational factors influence different studies.

Likewise, enjoying scenery and nature as well as seeking new experiences or places as a form of novelty have been found to be main motivations for nature based visitors (HLA and ARA Consulting, 1994, Wight, 1996a, 1996b). Blamey (1995) describes the main motivations of ecotourists in Australia as the desire for exposure to different or unique ways of experiencing nature, which includes animals, plants and landscapes, and learning about the biological, ecological, cultural, historical and geographical aspects of the areas (Weaver and Lawton, 2002). The primary motivations of ecotourists in Thailand are to see birds and other wildlife, while experiencing the natural environment is secondary (Page and Dowling, 2002). The main motivations in Africa include wildlife viewing, camping and relaxation in the forest, predominated by a desire for direct communion with nature (Page and Dowling, 2002).

Epler Wood (2002) argues that the main motivations for ecotourism are observation and appreciation of natural features and related cultural assets. Holden and Sparrowhawk (2002) state that the main intrinsic motivations for ecotourists are: learning about nature, being physically active, and meeting people with a similar interest, while Ballantine and Eagles (1994) believe that their prime motivation is to learn about nature in wild or undisturbed areas. Both Page and Dowling (2002) and Eagles (1992) confirm that both attractions and social factors play an important role here. This implies that ecotourists enjoy the natural environment and also value their personal development as a major motivation underlying their trips. A wilderness or natural setting is an important feature for experienced ecotourists, and they generally have clear travel motivations.

Eagles (1992) describes ecotourist motivations as either “attractions motivation”, which can be termed “pull factors”, or “social motivation”, which can be termed “push factors”. Attraction motivation such as wilderness, water, mountain, parks and rural areas are important when choosing a destination. Social motivation such as

interactions with others, being physically active, experiencing a new and simpler lifestyle, meeting people with similar interests, escaping from normal daily or work life, seeing cultural activities and buying local crafts are related to the psychological needs, wants and goals of an individual (Fishman, 1995).

Silverberg et al., (1996) state that educational experience and social opportunity are important psychographics characteristics of ecotourists, which is consistent with Holden and Sparrowhawk (2002). Ross (1992) found that friendships or relationships and personal fulfilments are positive motivators whilst accommodation and food and beverage are not important motivators. Wright (1996b) confirms that the motivation factors for ecotourists in North America are scenery/nature, new experiences/places, wildlife viewing; wilderness and uncrowded sites.

The varieties of motivations indicate clearly that ecotourists are not homogenous as a group. Similarly, their reasons for travel are attributed to the characteristics of the destination. There seem to be two common themes for ecotourist motivation: a) attractions motivation, b) social motivations. This implies ecotourist motivations are attributed to socio-psychological and destination attractions, as considered in Chapter Two.

The significant body of empirical work on ecotourists' profiles and motivations reviewed above is based on studies of destination cases in different regions (Page and Dowling (2002), thus limiting its generalisability to its specific populations. But they provide a fundamental understanding and description of varied ecotourists' profiles. This information is pertinent to the understanding of guest behaviour in the ecolodge context. Understanding ecotourist behaviour in terms of motivations in a pristine environment and protected areas will assist the development of appropriate ecotourism planning strategies for sustainable management (Fennell, 1990).

Likewise, Holden and Sparrowhawk (2002) believe that a clearer understanding of ecotourist's motivation will help to improve the long-term success of ecotourism management. An understanding of what motivates ecotourists to choose a travel destination and what they expect to experience is crucial primary information for

planning and executing sustainable economic tourism programmes and to improve the quality of experiences of visitors and their satisfaction. Knowledge of ecotourists' characteristics, particularly their preferences and motivational characteristics, will benefit and assist the planning for what, where and how to market natural areas to ecotourists (Palacio and McCool, 1997). The review shows that the majority of studies on ecotourists/ecotourism focus on tourist motivations, profiles, needs and behaviour, there is no emphasis on the experiences aspects and the satisfaction of the ecotourists, or adopting experiential approach in investigation of ecotourist satisfaction. This is conceptualised in the present research.

## **4.5 Characteristics and Management of Ecolodges**

### **4.5.1 The Concept and Management of the Ecolodge**

The concept of ecolodges was formally launched at the First International Ecolodge Forum and Field Seminar in the Virgin Islands in 1994 (Epler Wood, 2002, p. 27). Subsequently, The Ecolodge Sourcebook for Planners and Developers was published, which provides a definition of ecolodges and also the main criteria for their development (Epler Wood, 2002). Fennell (1999, p.169) refers to ecolodge criteria as : *“the sustainable design concepts that incorporates interpretation, natural and cultural resources, site and building design, energy management, water supply, waste prevention and facility and maintenance operations”*.

Ecolodges are regarded as key components and the necessary infrastructure for ecotourists (also termed as guests) to stay overnight at eco-sites. The style of lodge varies from the extremely rustic to the luxurious (Epler Wood, 2002). These are the main domains of the ecotourism lodging market and, unlike small hotels and traditional lodges, they are designed and built with the primary aim of reducing disturbance to the natural landscape and achieving a sense of harmony within a pristine environment, by actions such as recycling waste products.

Ecolodges attract specific segments of the leisure market that have specific motivations, needs, expectations and vacation activity preferences, and appeal to individuals who are willing to pay high prices for products and services provided by

environmentally conscious operators (Boo, 1990; Eagles, 1992; Wight, 1996a; Ryle and Grasse, 1991; Whelan, 1991). Ecolodges are not primarily perceived as the provision of another bed in the wilderness, and there is a wide range of add-ons, such as programmes, guides, activities, interpretation, sense of place and environmental sensitivity as an extension of the ecotourism experience (Wight, 1997). Thus, both the lodge and their add-on services contribute significantly to the guests' experience and degree of satisfaction. Ayala (1996a) states that ecolodges are new small specialist nature-dependent and environmentally friendly accommodation units with a focus on experience management. They provide guests with learning experiences through visits and activities using local guides. Russell et al (1995, p. X) describes ecolodges as: "*a nature-dependent tourist lodge that meets the philosophy and principles of ecotourism*", with the emphasis on ecological sensitivity rather than educational or experiential concepts. The differences between traditional lodges and ecolodges are presented in the Table 4.2 below. The distinctions can be made by references to their level of luxury, unique style, nature based activities, surroundings key attractions, roles of guides and nature interpreters, all of which have a strong emphasis in the ecolodge operation context.

**Table 4. 2: Traditional Lodges versus Ecolodges**

<b>Traditional lodge</b>	<b>Ecolodge</b>
Luxury	Comfortable basic needs
Generic style	Unique character style
Relaxation focus	Activity/educational focus
Activities are facility based	Activities are nature based
Enclave development	Integrated development with local environment
Group/consortium ownership common	Individual ownership common
Profit maximization based on high guest capacity, services, prices	Profit maximization based on strategic design, location, low capacity, services, price
High investment	Moderate/low investment
Key attractions are facility and surroundings	Key attractions are surroundings and facility
Gourmet meals, services, and presentation	Good /hearty meals and service-cultural influence
Market within chain	Market normally independent
Guides and nature interpreters non-existent or minor feature of operations	Guides and nature interpreters focus of operation

Source: Russell et al (1995, p. x)

#### **4.5.2 Ecolodges as Experiential Consumption Accommodation**

The literature confirms that both ecolodges and ecoresorts (a chain of ecolodges) offer important ecotourism facilities and contribute to the overall ecotourism experience, although they are not considered as a profound motivation factor for ecotourists (Fennell, 1999). It was found that visitors generally choose the natural environment that they wish to experience before accommodation (Wight, 1995; 1997). Furthermore, HLA and ARA Consultants (1994) and Wight (1995) both argue that natural setting, wildlife viewing and the experiences gained from the activities are of primary importance for ecotourists, while the experiences gained from ecolodges themselves are secondary. In general, ecolodges provide excellent wildlife viewing opportunities as well as meeting standards of environmental sustainability. They are often located in wilderness areas and their environment is their main attraction. Russell et al. (1995, p. X) confirm that: *“many lodges were found in or adjacent to protected area, with outstanding natural beauty acting as a key to success of the operation.”*

The attraction of ecolodges depends on their ability to protect substantial biodiversity, wildlife and pristine landscapes. Many have established their own private reserves, enabling them to directly manage the natural resources they depend on for their businesses. They need to protect and conserve the environment but also offer facilities and services that enhance the guests' satisfaction (Nair et al., 2005). It seems that travel experiences in fragile natural and cultural areas can also benefit from a variety of innovative small-scale operations by the ecolodges that also attempt to reduce visitor impacts to protect and conserve the natural environment. It is found that ecolodge operators in many developing countries attempt to market ecotourism based on nature-based tourism, by capitalizing on natural attractions such as in Malaysia. Thus, by enriching the understanding of their guests, ecolodge operators will be able to improve the sustainable use of resources and also enhance their guests' satisfaction.

Ecolodge operations generally involve guiding and interpretation walks (Russell et al., 1995; Lindberg et al., 1999). Local guides have in-depth knowledge of the local flora and fauna and can interpret the natural features of their home to outsiders. In addition, ecolodge operators generally offer interactive learning experiences to their guests by introducing small groups of travellers to new environments and cultures, while minimizing the negative environmental impacts and supporting conservation efforts.

There is a range of different types of accommodation available to both “soft” and “hard” ecotourists and Wight (1997) found that experienced ecotourists tend to prefer cabins, lodges, inns and tents. The Japanese market generally seeks chalets on ranches with a high level of amenities, while the European market seeks comfortable accommodation with character. More specifically, the British prefer a mix of accommodation and enjoy something rustic as part of the trip as well as something more upmarket. Germans prefer remote, small accommodation. In general, most markets appear to demand a high degree of comfort (like beds, bathtubs and showers), but the empirical findings suggest that ecotourists are more interested in more intimate, adventure-type as well as environmentally sensitive accommodation than general tourists (Wight, 1997). It was found that “hard” ecotourists prefer accommodation like tents and cabins/cottages located in remote settings where the activities are provided, whilst “soft” ecotourists prefer hotels/motels. In general, most ecotourists prefer something in the middle – not too classic and not too comfortable, which is consistent with Eagles (1992) who notes nature travellers seem more willing to accept and appreciate local conditions, customs and food and this corresponds with Boo’s (1990) statement that ecotourists do not require luxurious accommodation, food or nightlife.

Ecolodges are categorized as a type of small specialist accommodation, and their operation and management as small-scale homegrown entrepreneurs and the focus on performance is similar to that of small hotels or guesthouses (Morrison, 2002). Like any other small specialist accommodation (Morrison et al., 1996), a personal interaction emphasis is also placed by ecolodge owners. Likewise, small specialist

accommodation also focuses on environmental standards and long-term sustainability (Andrews et al., 2001) and equally these aspects are also found in ecolodge management. Ecolodges are mostly individually owned rather than part of a chain (Epler Wood, 2002) but corporate ownership is becoming more common (Fennell, 1999).

Traditionally, ecolodges are small sized operations found in remote locations in pristine environments. The Ecolodge Sourcebook records a growing trend by which the concept of ecolodges is changing into ecoresorts that provide enjoyable, authentic and enlightening ecotourism experiences, such as those found in the Amazon with pools and conference centres (Ayala, 1996b). It is recognised that the development of eco-resorts is based on the concept of ecotourism, and aims to provide guests with interpretive activities and programmes that conserve the destination's natural and cultural heritage (Ayala, 1996b) and emphasizes the quality of sustainability.

#### **4. 6. An Overview of the Study Site Context: Ecotourism and Ecolodges in Sabah**

##### **4.6.1 Brief of Ecotourism in Malaysia**

The review of ecotourism development in this section is primarily based on the Malaysia National Ecotourism Plan framework and other empirical evidence relating to ecotourism in Malaysia and Sabah. This review highlights the importance of ecotourism in the country so as to provide a general understanding of the study context as well as the justification for the fieldwork site.

Malaysia's Tourism Policy identifies ecotourism as a specialised form of tourism to be developed (WWFM, 1996b). It aims to increase environmental consciousness to be used as a tool to develop newer markets and new tours, emphasising Malaysia's rich natural and cultural heritage, and ensuring sustainable development and the promotion of conservation as well as significant socio-economic benefits for local communities (WWFM, 1966b). There are also efforts to increase revenue from ecotourism by providing and ensuring a quality experience for ecotourists, such as offering interesting rainforest experiences with high guiding standards, and ensuring

visitor satisfaction in particular areas. Ecotourism in Malaysia is viewed as possessing the capability to generate a major market segment by the expansion and promotion of its nature-based tourism resources (Khalifah and Tahir, 1997). Some tour operators argue that ecotourism does not exist in Malaysia, simply regarding ecotourism as too small in scale to be significant. In fact, for them ecotourism is considered as just another marketing tool for nature-based tourism under a new name in order to make more money (WWFM, 1996d).

Research shows that natural beauty and scenic attractions were the two most important reasons for European and North American tourists to visit the country (Khalifah and Tahir, 1997). Ecotourists also tend to seek wilderness and undisturbed nature, and place the rainforest as their favourite destination (WWFM, 1996d). The main existing ecotourist market segments are the Japanese, with predominant interests in diving and marine parks, while the European market is particularly interested in bird watching and the rainforest. The Singaporean market makes up 14% of the Malaysian ecotourist market, while the domestic market prefers national parks and other natural areas for recreational activities (WWFM, 1996d).

There are several issues and problems faced in the development of ecotourism in Malaysia (WWFM, 1996a). These issues are related to the lack of understanding of ecotourists' expectations, actual statistical data on the total numbers of nature tourists or ecotourists visiting Malaysia, ecotourist site development in accordance with the perception of demand; shortage of information about local tourist attractions and poor inter-agency integration on ecotourism in terms of conflicting publicity and guidelines (WWFM, 1996a). There is lack of research relating to ecotourism in the area such as inventories of plants and animals in ecotourism areas, and a methodology for assessing carrying capacity, the socio-economy of ecotourism sites, and tourist characteristics/opinions/responses at specific sites (WWFM, 1996a). Khalifah and Tahir (1997) assert that understanding the changing tastes of tourists and identifying their preferences regarding ecotourism products would be beneficial for ecotourism development in order to meet tourists' needs. This is one of the aims of the present research.



#### **4.6.2 Sabah as a Nature and Ecotourism Destination**

Sabah, as part of the island of Borneo, is associated with impenetrable jungles, and is regarded as a mystical and mysterious land. The island of Borneo is recognised as one of the world's ecotourism destinations (Weaver and Oppermann, 2000).

Likewise, Sabah is regarded as one of the twelve mega-diversity sites in the world with its rich living heritage (Liew, 2000). It has vast pristine hinterlands, interior village trails, jungle treks, waterfalls, island, and dive sites (Chan and Yeoh, 2001). Thus, nature tourism is the main focus in Sabah, and it is well known for its ecotourism due to its rich eco-resources. This justifies the location selected for the present research.

Nature-based tourism is treated as synonymous with ecotourism in Sabah and soft ecotourism is the main segment, and many existing ecotourism sites allow soft ecotourists to appreciate and experience nature, with access to comfortable and modern facilities and services (Weaver and Oppermann, 2000). Soft ecotourism in Sabah is promoted based on existing nature-based sites, which enables ecotourists to carry out activities such as bird-watching, day and night safaris for wildlife viewing, jungle trekking and trails, and observing lowland tropical rainforest (Yeoh, Annuar and Chang, 2005).

The Sabah Tourism Masterplan (1996) outlined the development and promotion of nature-based tourism activities as Sabah's core attraction; and the Sandakan/Kinabatangan Region is identified as one of the main nature tourism zones. Lower Kinabatangan is one of the popular tourist destinations promoted in Sabah for wildlife viewing. This is considered as a suitable fieldwork location for the present research.

Research findings indicate that the long haul tourist market (such as the UK or other parts of Europe, America and Canada) are attracted to Sabah by the nature and wildlife, bird-watching, relaxation that is made possible by staying in a tropical forest reserve lodge or ecolodge (Chan and Yeoh, 2001). These ecolodges offer

jungle activities, wildlife viewing, endangered species of flora and fauna, and a unique living experience in the middle of the jungle.

European tourists form the major market segment for Sabah (WWFM, 1996d) and the UK is the primary market and this justifies the composition of the sample respondents for the present research. Chan and Yeoh (2001) also point out that tourists who are interested in nature and wildlife, adventure, relaxation and cultural attractions know about Sabah through “word of mouth.” Ecotourists generally express an interest to see and experience something different and new and most international visitors are fascinated by the untouched and pristine rainforest and rare species of wildlife found there (Chan and Yeoh, 2001).

#### **4.6.3 Ecolodges in Malaysia**

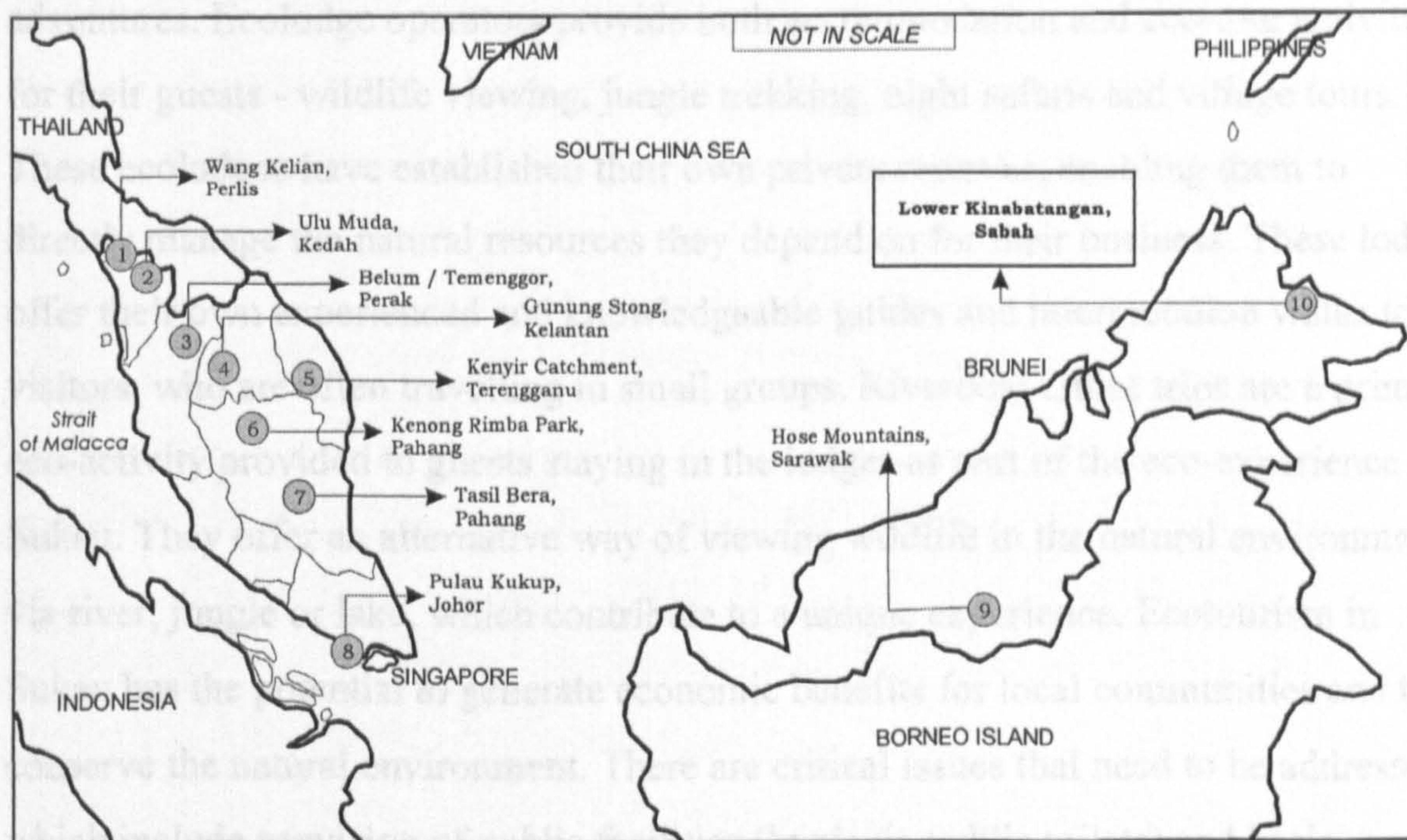
In general, ecotourism accommodation (ecolodges) in Malaysia aims to provide comfortable basic needs, unique character style, with a focus on activities in nature and education. They are developments integrated with the local environment. For example, wood and palm based construction materials are used for the accommodation. Its operational emphasis is on small/individual company ownership and profit maximization based on products that fulfil ecotourist expectations, through strategic design, locations and quality of natural surroundings. Environment is the key attraction and the guides and nature interpreters are the main focus of operation (WWFM, 1996d). In Sabah, ecolodges are generally located in special ecosystem zones, such as lowland, highland, coastal areas, territorial seas, island and natural boundaries which are surrounded by a well protected setting of biodiversity, wildlife and pristine landscape (WWFM, 1996c).

#### **4.6.4 Eco-sites in Malaysia**

Organisationally, Malaysia is made up of peninsular Malaysia, and Sarawak and Sabah, which are two states located on the island of Borneo, as shown in Figure 3 below. Both Sarawak and Sabah are promoted as nature and adventure tourism

destinations. Within the criteria of site selection, lists of strategies for eco-site management were identified along with criteria as stipulated in the plan (WWFM, 1996c). The safety and security of visitors and the provision of quality attractions in each region are important criteria for ecotourism development. Lower Kinabatangan is the most important of the ten very special places for Malaysian Ecotourism as shown in the map 3 below outlined in National Ecotourism Plan (WWFM, 1996c), and is selected for the study site.

**Figure 4. 1: Map of Malaysia and Ten Special Places for Ecotourism**



The Lower Kinabatangan basin, located in eastern Sabah, is Malaysia's largest river floodplain with natural forest and oxbow lakes, as shown in Figure 4.1 above. It is claimed to be one of Malaysia's richest wildlife areas, consisting of various rare and endangered species of proboscis monkeys, orang utan, all eight species of Bornean hornbills, the oriental darter and diverse lowland freshwater fisheries, (WWFM, 1996c). This area is particularly suitable for ecotourism due to the variety of rare wildlife species, which can be viewed on riverboat cruises. These provide easy access to viewing wildlife with less impact on the site. The state government of Sabah has established a wildlife sanctuary, which encompasses over 200 kilometres of the Kinabatangan River. The Lower Kinabatangan River is also one of the five eco-tourism sites in the Partners for Wetlands Programme, funded by the World

Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) in 1999 to support conservation initiatives and is the foremost wetland biodiversity area in Sabah. Sukau is in a district of Lower Kinabatangan, and also offers superb eco-experiences. Its jungle environment offers a view of many birds, proboscis monkeys, orangutan and other kinds of wildlife, such as monitor lizards and butterflies. Thus, inbound tour operators and the lodge operators in the area are capitalising on the available natural attractions.

There are three ecolodge units: Sukau River Lodge, Sukau Proboscis Lodge and Sukau Rainforest Lodge, located along the Lower Kinabatangan River bank. These ecolodges, located in the tropical rainforest, offer basic facilities for deep jungle adventures. Ecolodge operators provide both accommodation and eco-tour activities for their guests - wildlife viewing, jungle trekking, night safaris and village tours. These ecolodges have established their own private reserves, enabling them to directly manage the natural resources they depend on for their business. These lodges offer their own experienced and knowledgeable guides and interpretation walks to visitors, who are often travelling in small groups. Riverboat cruise trips are a primary eco-activity provided to guests staying in the lodges as part of the eco-experience in Sukau. They offer an alternative way of viewing wildlife in the natural environment via river, jungle or lake, which contribute to a unique experience. Ecotourism in Sukau has the potential to generate economic benefits for local communities and to conserve the natural environment. There are critical issues that need to be addressed which include provision of public facilities (hygienic public toilets) and basic infrastructure (road conditions) for the future growth in ecotourism (Chan and Yeoh, 2001).

#### **4.7 Chapter Conclusion**

The review in this chapter has provided clear direction and justification of the present research in many ways. The review provides an understanding that ecolodges are service management accommodation and are perceived as experiential consumption place product upon which the present research is based. There is also little previous research on guest satisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge context. This is identified as a research gap and justification for the present research. Also, the unique

characteristics of the ecolodge and the differences between the traditional lodges and other small hotels mean that guests may behave differently in relation to their satisfaction. The lack of statistical data on ecotourists in Malaysia (WWFM, 1996a) provides a justification for the use of purposeful sampling in the present research. Other areas of review in this chapter are particularly important to the discussion. These include typologies of ecotourists. Past studies of visitors expectations and motivations still remain questionable but offer a common trend for understanding and discussion points for the present research. Likewise, the review of ecotourism and ecolodges in Malaysia suggests little understanding of visitors' behaviour and expectations and the importance of ecotourism recognised by the Malaysian Government justifies the present research. Lower Kinabatangan, Sabah is the most important ecotourism site in Malaysia and justifies the location of the fieldwork.

#### **4.8 Conclusions from the Literature Review Chapters**

The following section brings together the literature review, in Chapters Two, Three and Four. Based on the literature review, the present research aims to explore guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge context in terms of both a) satisfaction with service performance (Quality of Performance) and b) satisfaction with service experience (Quality of Experience). Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory is then justified as the theoretical framework for the present research. The review also shapes the present research strategy and design as well as the choice of data collection techniques. Thus, the present research suggests an alternative approach - an interpretive paradigm of qualitative and inductive approaches rather than accepting the expectancy disconfirmation approach or SERVQUAL model. Likewise, the review has also led to the reconsideration of the widely adopted survey closed questionnaire as a research method. The present research considers three qualitative data collection techniques – participation observation technique, in-depth interviewing and Profile Accumulation Technique (multi approach) for use, as presented in Chapter Five. Therefore, this research adopts an alternative satisfaction methodological framework and attempts to present a more reliable, valid approach and to generate well-founded results about guest satisfaction.

#### **4.9 Focus of the Present Research**

The primary aim of the present research is to explore and identify the underlying satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions of guests in the ecolodge context and the extent to which these can be linked to and explained by using Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory. This entails examining how guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions are perceived and constructed in the ecolodge service experience context.

Both hedonic and utilitarian criteria may contribute to the perception and construction of satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions, since the present research context is described as service experience consumption, and arguably, in the service experience context, satisfaction results from the experiential nature of consumption and contains both perceptions and experiences (Otto and Ritchie, 1996). This implies that guests evaluate services based on the performance and expectations of products and services. Service quality attributes are a set of tangible and intangible elements that contribute to guest experiences and satisfaction. Experience is the core output from service performance (tangible products and intangible services), and hospitality is an experience rather than a utilitarian transaction. This research certainly does not deny that expressive aspects may outweigh utilitarian criteria in the service experience context, but suggests that the utilitarian aspect is equally important in assessing satisfaction from the service performance perspective since it also involves sets of tangible elements in the provision of services. Thus, satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions can be related to the tangible and intangible elements provided in the service experience context.

The second part of the research aims to identify guests' perceptions of service quality attributes in the service experience that lead to satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This aspect entails reviewing the concept of service, the SERVQUAL model and service quality dimensions in the hospitality context as well as the satisfaction evaluation aspect that encompasses both utilitarian and expressive aspects.

The third part of the research aims to identify satisfiers (motivators) and dissatisfiers (hygiene factors) defined by Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory as alternative motivational theories to explore satisfaction dimensions in the present research, as discussed in Chapter Two. In order to uncover these satisfiers and dissatisfiers in the ecolodge context and to achieve these aims, the next step is to gather this information, which is the subject of the next chapter.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodological choices that were made in developing the research strategy and design for the present research. It explains and justifies how the methodological decisions were made and their appropriateness to the present research. It justifies the use of a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative approach. It then outlines the strategy of the inquiry and the use of multiple methods as research techniques in the primary data collection that are congruent to the underlying research objectives. Finally, data analysis involves adopting a qualitative approach towards analysing all three data sets (observational data, interview data and PAT data). In addition, the PAT data is also analysed based on an informal quantification method, by transforming the qualitative data into figures and numbers to make it more accessible and understandable for the ecolodge operators.

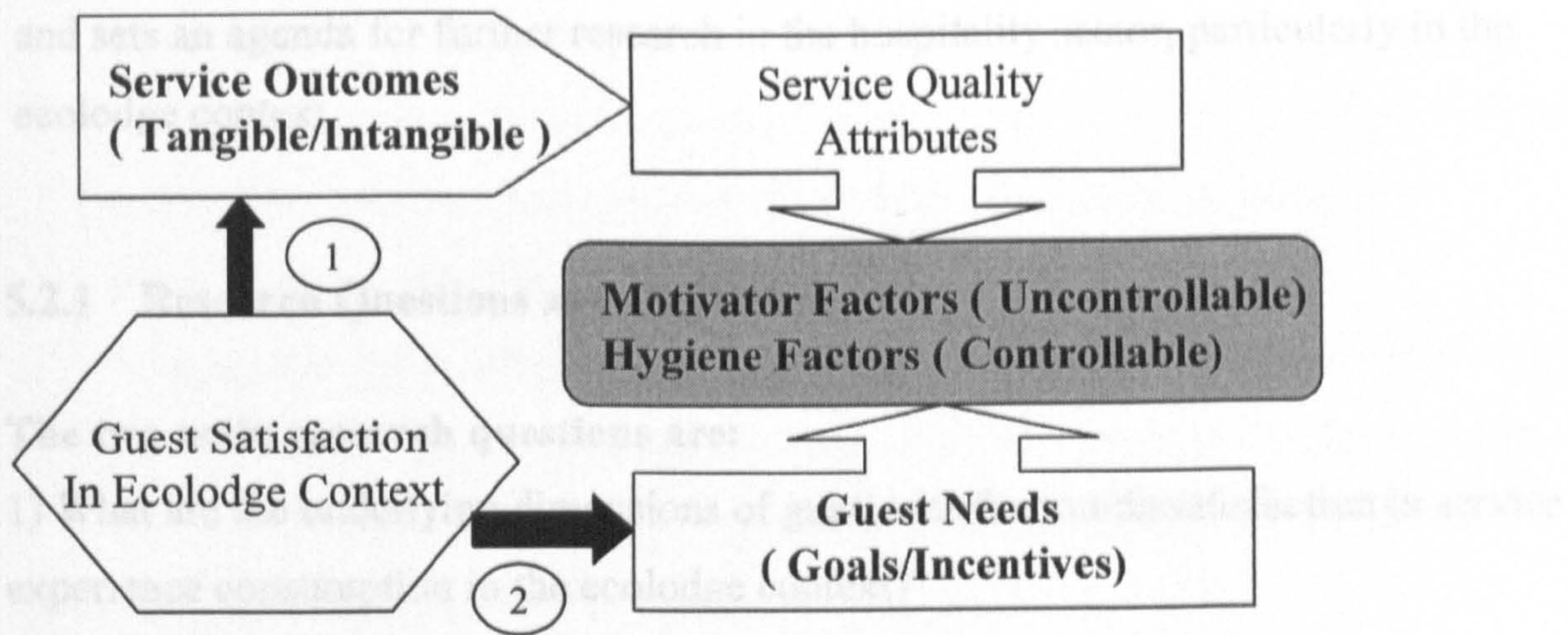
#### **5.2 Research Conceptual Framework**

The present research framework follows a theoretical discourse based on both consumer behaviour and satisfaction theories, and unifies existing knowledge. Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory is adopted to explain consumer satisfaction in terms of "satisfiers and dissatisfiers". The present research suggests that the dimensions of guest satisfaction are driven by an individual's life experience - one's expectations and perceptions of the consumption of service experiences in the ecolodge context. These dimensions are derived and linked to the tangible products and intangible services provided. Consumer satisfaction can be realized through two processes; namely: a) the perception and comparison of service quality attributes, and b) guest needs or social-psychological outcomes.

Thus, the satisfaction research conceptual framework encompasses both service attributes and service experience and is presented in Figure 5.1 below.

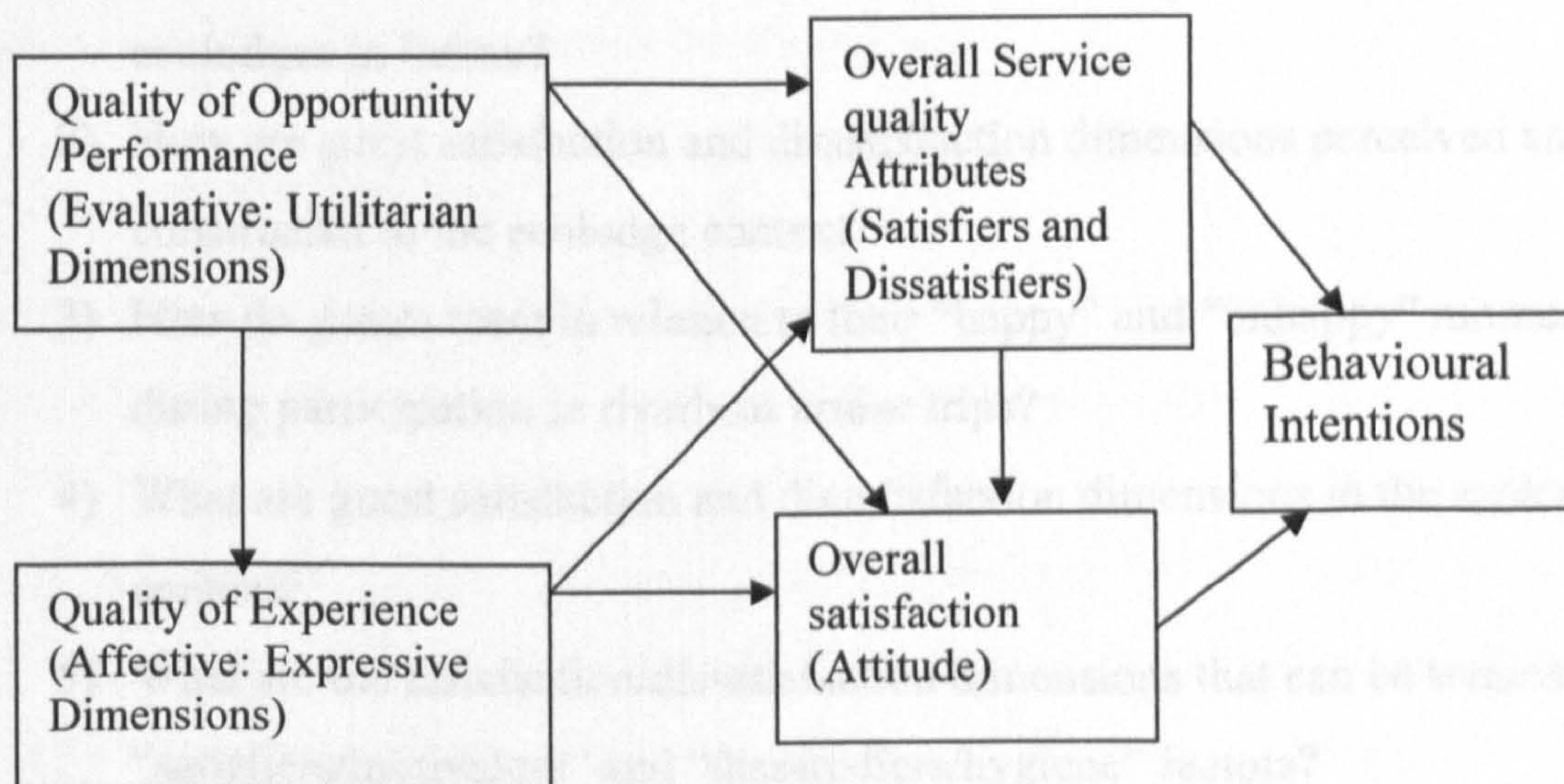


**Figure 5. 1: Research Framework on Guest Satisfaction in the Ecolodge Context**



The present research considers that consumer satisfaction is measured and derived from both quality of performance and quality of experience as presented in Figure 5.2 below.

**Figure 5. 2: Components of Satisfaction Measurement in the Service Experience Context**



By researching consumer satisfaction in the ecolodge context from the behavioural and experiential perspective, the study aims to enrich and contribute to hospitality research by extending and adopting Herzberg’s Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory and using multi methods with the aim to generate well-founded recommendations for ecolodge management. In this way, it aims to contribute to the theoretical and methodological advancement of the intellectual debate on guest satisfaction. Significantly, it provides a better prediction and understanding of the underlying satisfaction dimensions in terms of being “true satisfiers/motivators” and

“dissatisfiers/hygiene factors”. Also, it identifies areas that require further attention and sets an agenda for further research in the hospitality sector, particularly in the ecolodge context.

### **5.2.1 Research Questions and Objectives**

**The two main research questions are:**

- 1) What are the underlying dimensions of guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction in service experience consumption in the ecolodge context?
  
- 2) To what extent can guests satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions be explained by use of Herzberg’s Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory?

**The sub-research questions are:**

- 1) What are the motivational and decision-making factors for guests visiting ecolodges in Sukau?
- 2) How are guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions perceived and constructed in the ecolodge context?
- 3) How do guests react in relation to their “happy” and “unhappy” moments during participation in riverboat cruise trips?
- 4) What are guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge context?
- 5) What are the satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions that can be termed “satisfiers/motivators” and “dissatisfiers/hygiene” factors?
- 6) What are the perceived service attributes that lead to the satisfaction/dissatisfaction of guests and can be described as “satisfiers/motivators” and “dissatisfiers/hygiene” factors?
- 7) How can ecolodge operators better manage and improve guest satisfaction?

**In order to answer these questions, this research has the following objectives:**

- To explore guests’ underlying attitudes and motivation in the ecolodge context.

- To describe how satisfaction and dissatisfaction determinants are perceived and evaluated in the ecolodge context.
- To observe and to describe guest behavioural aspects in terms of their actions and reactions during participation of riverboat cruise trips by using participation observation techniques.
- To explore guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions from the behavioural and experiential perspective in accordance with true satisfiers /motivators and dissatisfiers/hygiene factors. In depth interview technique is adopted to gain depth with respect to observed behaviour.
- To identify perceived service quality attributes that are congruent with satisfiers/motivator and dissatisfiers/hygiene factors. The PAT survey is adopted for a holistic view so that guests' voices are heard with great flexibility and depth.
- To develop a Perception Profile of an Ecolodge

### **5.3. Approaches to Research Methodology**

#### **5.3.1 What is Research?**

Research can be fundamentally defined as a systematic and methodical process of enquiry and investigation that results in increased knowledge (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). This means that research is conducted to achieve an outcome, and can explore, describe, explain, analyse or predict (Neuman, 1997). Hussey and Hussey (1997, p. 10) classify the main types of research, as shown in Table 5.1 below. This implies that a research study has a purpose and the process of collecting data can be conducted through either quantitative or qualitative methods in order to produce an outcome.

**Table 5.1: Classification of Main Types of Research**

<b>Types of Research</b>	<b>Basis of Classification</b>
Exploratory, descriptive, analytical or predictive	Purpose of the research
Quantitative or qualitative research	Process of the research
Deductive or inductive research	Logic of the research
Applied or basic research	Outcome of the research

Source: Hussey and Hussey (1997, p. 10)

### **5.3.2 Methodological Choices**

Research methodologies are generally governed by specific paradigms. It is evident that any researcher is confronted with a number of choices about how to approach any given phenomenon in social scientific-oriented research. In order to make the appropriate choices, a research design needs to be congruent with the researcher's own worldview. Research design can be represented in one of two competing paradigms, the positivist and the interpretive/phenomenological, which also act as the basic world view that guides the researcher, not only in the choice of method but also in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways. The two approaches, the positivist and interpretive paradigms, have a common desire to understand behaviour but each makes different assumptions about research methods

These two approaches both aim to understand behaviour, but the underlying rationale and methods adopted vary. Therefore, there is an extensive debate between the two paradigms. The obvious issue, the claim by non-positivists, is that social scientists cannot be wholly objective in conducting value free research. They further argue that the use of scientific methods can be inappropriate to the study of social phenomenon, that is people and human behaviour, which is produced by human actions and constructed through shared meaning (Hussey and Hussey, 1997).

However, it is contended that *"neither approach should be thought of as better than the other, since they are better at different things"* (Sunders et al. (1997, p.73), depending where the research emphasis lies. The present research aims to explore human behaviour in relation to their satisfaction in the service experience consumption context. It is suggested that there is congruence between the aim and objectives of this research and the research strategy used. The nature of reality of the present research is subjective. It seeks to understand people's meaning and perceptions that are socially constructed and manifested in their voices or responses and within the phenomenon. Specifically, it focuses on the meaning that the research subjects themselves attach to social phenomenon, rather than the measurement of such phenomena, as explained and interpreted within the context in which this research is undertaken.

Thus, it is important to understand the meaning using the phenomenological approach or interpretive paradigm, which is, perhaps, the best method for studying human behaviour. Thus, due to the nature of the present research, the qualitative approach was adopted. This is further supported by the growing use of qualitative, interpretive research in marketing, particularly in the field of consumer behaviour (Goulding, 1999). For example, Thompson et al. (1990) carried out an existential phenomenological analysis of the consumption experiences of contemporary married women, and Holbrook and Hirschman (1993) recommend the interpretive perspective for the study of consumer behaviour, as they found that the experiential and meaningful aspects that underpin consumption are equally significant.

### **5.3.3 Justification for the Choice of Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is defined as an interpretative method of collecting and analysing data to explore and explain a phenomenon (Walsh, 2003). It can generate a deeper understanding of complicated behaviour rather than quantifying, generalizing or predicting it (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Walsh, 2003). It provides insight into how consumers think and feel, and the reasons for those thoughts and feelings. An interpretative analysis is especially appropriate for guest satisfaction in the hospitality context to explore consumer behaviour and motivations (Kwortnik, 2003). An inductive approach also offers the opportunity to be immersed in and exposed to the natural setting.

In the current study, the researcher aimed to use a “holistic” perspective to investigate and gain a “deeper understanding” of the phenomena. The qualitative approach provides the opportunity to collect in-depth, rich data as compared to quantitative method such as survey questionnaires. It also permits the use of multiple techniques.

Although the positivist paradigm has become prominent in the hospitality and leisure industry, especially in identifying leisure behavioural trends (Walsh, 2003) and measuring consumer satisfaction, there are problems associated with the methodology used in this approach to gather data in terms of the underlying

assumptions that are made about human behaviour. Statistical information often makes assumptions and predictions about leisure behaviour by describing the frequency and quantity of leisure activities. There is no basis for identifying the meanings and values that people attach to their leisure activities. Statistics tell us the figures and numbers, but do not explain why. Likewise, questionnaires with scale-responses are generally used to gather information in the positivist paradigm, and the limitations of these are reviewed in Chapter Three section 3.9. It is noted that human interaction in service provision is an emotionally charged process and the interactions can lead to experiential reactions and subsequently affect the quality of the service experience. Similarly, Scott and Godbey (1990) justify qualitative research in the context of a study of leisure behaviour. It is perceived that leisure is an experience and is a subjective term as a state of mind and not a fixed measurement. Leisure behaviour is regarded as a formative process, which involves the meaning of leisure, and it changes over time as well as a group phenomenon where the individual can be analysed in the context of a group as leisure involvement is embedded in social interaction. In the same vein, Kelly (1980) supports the use of qualitative research in the leisure field by arguing that leisure (hospitality), as the nature of the phenomenon being studied, is a qualitative experience and qualitative techniques provide better understanding the people's needs and aspiration. Furthermore, several researchers have advocated "*qualitative research is a more appropriate methodology for hospitality researchers especially when the subject of the study is concerned with behavioural issues*" (Chacko and Nebel, 1990, p.383). More importantly, qualitative research is able to offer explanations and understanding from both conceptual and practical perspectives that are becoming important for hospitality businesses. Qualitative research may provide more reliable and valid means to identify the issues and a more in-depth and holistic view of any situation (Hampton, 1999).

Data collection in qualitative research is guided by the research aims, research questions and methodology. Marshall and Rossman (1989) present a useful guide for researchers using the qualitative approach by matching research questions and data.

**Table 5. 2: Qualitative Research -Matching Research Questions with Strategy and Data Collection Methods**

<b>Purpose of the study</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Research Strategy</b>	<b>Data-collection method</b>
<b>Exploratory</b> -To investigate little understood phenomena -To identify/discover important variables To generate hypotheses for further research	What is happening in this social programme? What are the salient themes, patterns, and categories in participants' meaning structures? How are these patterns linked with one another?	Case study Field study	Participant observation In-depth interviewing Elite interviewing
<b>Explanatory</b> -To explain the forces causing the phenomena in question -To identify plausible causal networks shaping the phenomena	What events, beliefs, attitudes, policies are shaping this phenomena? How do these forces interact to result in the phenomena?	Multi-site case study History Field study Ethnography	Participant observation In-depth interviewing Survey questionnaire Document analysis
<b>Descriptive</b> -To document the phenomena of interest	What are the salient behaviours, events, beliefs, attitudes, structures, and processes occurring in these phenomena?	Field study Case study Ethnography	Participant observation In-depth interviewing Document analysis Unobtrusive measures Survey questionnaire

Source: Marshall and Rossman (1989, p.78)

The qualitative approach, which is adopted for the present research, reflects the assumptions of the interpretive paradigm. Strauss and Corbin (1998) assert that this approach assumes that all the concepts pertaining to a given phenomenon have not yet been identified, or at least not in the specific population or place under investigation or "*when one knows relatively little about the subject under investigation*" (Singleton et al., 1988, p.298-299). Thus, the qualitative approach is "exploration and description" which corresponds to the nature of the present research, since there is no empirical evidence about guest satisfaction in the

ecolodge context of Sukau or the application of Herzberg's theory. The descriptive nature allows the researcher to observe and record phenomena in detail. Most research methods can be used in either quantitative or qualitative studies, as presented in Table 5.3 below.

**Table 5. 3: Different Uses of Four Methods**

Method	Methodology	
	Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
Observation	Preliminary work, e.g. Prior to framing questionnaire	Fundamental to understanding another culture
Textual analysis	Content analysis, i.e counting in terms of researchers' categories	Understanding participants' categories
Interviews	"Survey research": mainly fixed -choice questions to random samples	"Open-ended" questions to small samples
Transcripts	Used infrequently to check the accuracy of interviews records	Used to understand how participants organize their talk

Source: Silverman (2000, p. 89)

Generally, observational studies form a preliminary or "exploratory stage" of quantitative research. Qualitative researchers, however, seek to provide a "deeper" understanding of social phenomena than can be obtained purely from quantitative data (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1998). Techniques, such as observation, can gain an understanding of subcultures, interviews can help in understanding "experience", audio and video recording can elucidate how interactions are organized, and text and documents can provide understanding of language and other sign systems (Silverman, 2000).

#### 5.4 Research Techniques

The selection of an appropriate data collection method is linked to the research objectives and research strategy and thus affects the data analysis and the quality of the data. Likewise, it is common for qualitative research to use more than one method to collect data due to the existence of several research questions or the need to use different methods to corroborate the results and achieve some form of methodological "triangulation" (Mason, 1996, p.25).



The most common techniques used to investigate human behaviour in the social sciences are (1) observation: participant or non-participant, (2) interviews, (3) questionnaires, (4) experiments, and (5) case studies (Carmouche and Kelly, 1995 p.41). It is also recognised that each qualitative research method has its own strengths and weaknesses, and it was important to evaluate each method in terms of its relevance to the current research. Moreover, over dependence on one method has increasingly been questioned (Hartmann, 1988). There is a growing emphasis on the process of triangulation as a means of verifying results, and eliminating methodological limitations or data and investigation bias (Decrop 1999; Oppermann, 2000). Easterby –Smith et.al. (1991, p. 31) further note that:

*Increasingly authors and researchers who work in organizations and with managers argue that one should attempt to mix methods to some extent, because it provides more perspectives on the phenomena being studied.*

An ethnographic study was also considered in this research. This approach is based on a period of immersion in the field and is favoured by anthropologists, although it has been criticised as producing only pure description and therefore offering little scope for understanding the dynamics of tourism (Dann et al., 1988). Given that generating “understanding” is the principal aim of this research, this method was deemed inappropriate.

Discourse analysis was also considered but was rejected since it would entail combining the analysis of theoretically constructed accounts with that of a definitive version of reality (Mason 1996). Furthermore, it has been argued that data generated by different methods cannot simply be aggregated, as it can only be understood in relation to the purposes for which it was created (Brannen 1992).

#### **5.4.1 Multi Methods of Data Collection**

Multiple methods allow the researcher to achieve a fuller picture of the research. According to Silverman (2000) the two reasons for adopting multiple methods are the existence of several research questions or the desire to use different methods or

sources to corroborate each other to achieve methodological triangulation. For example, a multi method approach (observation, semi –structured interviews and document analysis) is adopted in the study of ecotourism and indigenous micro-enterprise formation in northern Australia (Fuller et al., 2004). Thus, it enhances the validity and reliability of findings (Silverman, 2000; Patton, 2002), where cross validation of data is facilitated as well as combined of contextual and temporal observations with actors' interpretations and social constructions from the interview responses. Similar triangulated multiple qualitative data sources (interview and observation techniques) were adopted by Patton in his evaluation of educational and social service programmes. However, adopting multiple methods also requires more data analysis skills; and it is important to avoid moving to another dataset when experiencing difficulty in analysing one set of material.

The adoption of a multi-method qualitative method involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter was chosen for the present research, which is not simply aimed at aggregating data to arrive at an overall 'truth'. The use of multi methods in the present research was justified by the fact that the research questions and objectives require more than one method to collect data. The number of research objectives in the present research dictates the need to use more than one method. The investigation of the underlying satisfaction dimensions of the guests in the service consumption context focussed on two aspects: a) service attributes and b) service experiences, derived from both the internal and external environment of the ecolodge. Various research questions were developed to capture this information. Participant observation technique is used to observe and describe guest behavioural aspects in terms of their actions and reactions during participation in riverboat cruise trips. Thus, it addresses the research question: How do guests react in relation to their "happy" and "unhappy" moments during participation in riverboat cruise trips? Both in-depth interview technique and PAT address the following research questions:

- What are the motivational and decision-making factors for guests visiting ecolodges in Sukau?
- How are guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions perceived and constructed in the ecolodge context?

- What are guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge context?
- What are the satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions that can be termed “satisfiers/motivators” and “dissatisfiers/hygiene” factors?
- What are the perceived service attributes that lead to the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of guests and can be described as “satisfiers/motivators” and “dissatisfiers/hygiene” factors?
- How can ecolodge operators better manage and improve guest satisfaction?

The research problem is a complex and subjective topic that focuses on site behaviour and reflects on the whole experience of visitors, which includes the observation of behaviour and attitudes, seeking information and making sense of perceptions and emotional expression. Thus, methodological triangulation permits access to many different aspects of satisfaction by examining the various activities and experiences of guests through the collection of reliable ‘authentic’ data - gathering the understanding of people’s experiences and perceptions from their own words. A holistic view to provide the ‘whole picture’ by viewing data drawn from different sources and the ‘true’ state of affairs can be achieved by cross-examination. This aims at a convergence of results, and complements and supplements the strengths and weaknesses of in-depth interviewing, the participant observation techniques and the PAT survey data collection. Therefore, more credible and dependable information is gathered (Chan and Baum, 2004). Triangulation offers strength of fieldwork but it also creates the problem of “double-checking” on the informants. Hence, the informants were properly informed about the research purpose and the data collection process.

Also, methodological triangulation within an interpretive paradigm in the present research was adopted to circumvent the criticisms of Herzberg’s theory as “*methodologically bound*” in terms of its “*storytelling method*” to collect data with inadequate operational definitions utilized, and inconsistency with past evidence concerning satisfaction and motivation (House and Wigdor, 1967, p.372). By contrast multiple methods provide depth and richness of responses. Thus, multi-

techniques consisting of in-depth interviews, overt participant observation and a PAT survey are adopted as the collection technique for honest, unforced data about guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Building from the above justifications, this research adopts three different research techniques (participant observation, in-depth interviewing and Profile Accumulation Technique (PAT) survey questionnaire) to data collection. The following sections describe each research technique and its data collection procedures. Participant observation technique is presented in section 5.4.2.1; in depth interviewing is described in section 5.4.2.2 and PAT is reported in section 5.4.2.3.

#### **5.4.2 Data Collection Techniques**

There were two phases of data collection in this research. The first phase used overt participant observation techniques to investigate the external experience of the participants in the riverboat cruises. Information was recorded using participant observation data sheets (see Appendix 1). The second phase involved in-depth interviewing with the informant on their last day at the ecolodge. In-depth interviewing is conducted using the interview protocol (see Appendix 2). PAT survey forms (see Appendix 3) were given to the informants by the receptionist during check-in, to be completed and returned at checkout time. The research map of data collection process is outlined in Chapter One (Figure 1.1 – An Overview of Thesis Structure Guest Satisfaction in the Ecolodge Context)

The researcher considered observation and interview techniques as the most appropriate for gathering behavioural data. These are the most commonly used techniques by qualitative researchers to gather information (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Observation is generally a good method for studying natural behaviour, while interviews and questionnaires are more appropriate for opinions and beliefs. Both observation and interview techniques enable the researcher to compensate for the weaknesses of each technique and, at the same time, to complement their strengths.

The use of both observation and interviews can enhance the validity of the findings (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Data collection using multi qualitative methods in the present research is documented using an *emic* approach. It emphasises the importance of collecting data in the form of verbatim texts from the informants in order to preserve the original meaning of the information (Pelton and Pelton, 1978). Examples of this method are participant observation, interviews and the collection of life histories.

#### **5.4.2.1 Participant Observation Techniques and Procedures**

The participant observation technique is a systematic description of behaviour, events and artefacts in the social setting of a particular study. Hence, the researcher learnt about the behaviour and the meanings attached to that behaviour in a natural setting. The rationale for adopting this technique was furthered encouraged by a range of studies that had successfully used the technique in one-way or another. These include water rafting (Arnould and Price, 1993), visitor expectations and experiences of visiting a museum (Goulding, 2000) and observing conducted tours (Seaton, 2002). It has also been used as a creative solution to the measurement of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction among tourists (Bowen, 2002). This technique is also justified based on the fact that tourism is concerned with experience of places and the interactions that occurs at those destinations.

From the social science research perspective, "*all social research is a form of participant observation because we cannot study the social world without being part of it*" (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994, p.249). This technique, combined with interview methods (Howe, 1988), is able to compensate for the weaknesses of each and to complement their strengths through triangulation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

The researcher could watch, listen and observe the behaviour and the actions of others, which was embodied in the research strategy. It was also important to obtain first-hand data uncontaminated by factors standing between the researcher and the informants as this data was used for cross-referencing with the interview and survey

data in data analysis. Equally important for the researcher was the provision of detailed descriptions of the observed phenomena as they occurred in their 'natural' setting, as the nature of the research was exploratory. Although observation data is usually considered unscientific, "*observational methods can garner precise and reliable information about naturally occurring events and episodes, often unobtainable by other means*" (Lee, 2000, p. 60).

Likewise, for observation findings to be incorporated into the scientific body of knowledge, Nichmias (1976, p. 95) insists on the following:

*One's observations must be carried out with reference to three crucial queries: (1) what to observe, (2) where and when to observe, and (3) how much to infer when recording observation.*

The participant observation technique is adopted to gauge influences on guest satisfaction in the natural environment. The observation strategy was aimed at gathering "*first-hand information about social processes in a natural context*" (Singleton, et al., 1988, p. 11), in this case, the phenomena of the ecolodge context and the behavioural aspects of the guests. The researcher personally witnessed the phenomena from the perspective of those being studied, and this contextualism was vital for the present research. Moreover, the observations produce a high level of rigour when combined with other methods, serving as a valuable alternative source of data for enhancing consistency or cross checking (Douglas, 1976) or triangulation (Denzin, 1989) against information gathered through other means.

One of the research questions focuses on guest behaviour during participation in the riverboat cruise which includes observation of physical signs, expressive movements, physical location, use of language/quotes and time duration. Using observation techniques allowed the researcher to immerse herself in the lives and activities of the informants and understand the interactive-adaptive nature, reflecting the complex relationship between field observation and emerging theory and the impact of this relationship. This was underlined in the research strategy. This technique is relevant as the present research question is concerned with human meanings and an

interaction viewed from the insiders' perspective and the phenomenon of inquiry is observable within the situation and setting so that the researcher was able to gain access to the setting.

In this research, data collection was in the form of overt participant observation. This is based on the importance of both actions and words in this context. Observation methods refer to data gathering techniques that focus on experience by providing real-world impressions in authentic surroundings (Grove and Fisk, 1992; Adler and Adler, 1994). In the present research, field participant observation was the relevant form outlined in the research strategy and objectives. The researcher adopted an overt observation participation technique, and the researcher's presence was made known to the group being studied to minimize the problem of role pretending while attempting to establish a close relationship with members of the group. It is recognized that maintaining the observer–observed relationship is difficult. The nature and purpose of the research requires the researcher to be active in the fieldwork to gain a better understanding of the phenomena. In doing so, the researcher attempts to share the worldview and to adopt the perspective of the people in the situation being observed.

In the present research, the researcher had to decide not only what is to be studied, but also where and when the observation is to take place and what should be noted and recorded during the observation period since observation is selective and purposive (McCall, 1984). The researcher constructed observation variables encompassing behaviour and actions in term of verbal and non-verbal communication as well as including the spatial dimension (movement). This technique permits the description of physical setting and the use of focused observation of a small sample of guests to capture their behaviour and feelings in a closed context.

The observational data was gathered during the riverboat cruise trips held in the mornings and evenings using observation sheets and written field notes for each trip. Two observation trips served as familiarization with the physical setting and were

also used to operationalise the observation sheet before the actual data collection. A total of 10 observation sheets were completed as presented in Table 5.4. The verbal and non-verbal communication indicators were then categorized as either positive or negative experience. The researcher spent one month immersed in the field in order to gain a full understanding of the ecolodge context phenomenon, and the observation involved systematically describing events, interactions between informants and their behavioural aspects at the study site. This provides a key way for the researcher to hear, see and experience reality. The observation data sheet is shown in Appendix 1. Dimensions lead to happy/positive and unhappy/negative experience emerged from the observational data collected from both verbal and non-verbal behaviour as reported in 7.2.2 (Table 7.2.1) and 7.2.3 (Table 7.2.2) whereby the recurring actions and reactions of informants became the basis for the final interpretation of their behaviour.

#### **5.4.2.2 In-depth Interviewing and Procedures**

Interviewing is commonly used in qualitative research as an effective and powerful method of collecting data. It allows the researcher to conduct one-to-one interaction with the informant, hence allowing the opportunity to ask for clarification if an answer is vague or to provide clarification if a question is unclear. Clark et al., (1998, p. 132) note that: *“Interview is a form of research and a method of collecting qualitative data is at its most useful when it gives us insight into how individual or groups think about their world or reality of that world.”*

The researcher is able to obtain additional comments or observations from the informants, and identify and assess emotions, values and attitudes (Clark et al., 1998). Specifically, it helps to answer the basic questions of “why” and “how”, explore topics and meanings in-depth and gather facts, opinions and insights (Yi, 1990). This method is considered superior than using self-completion forms in terms of response rates. Self-completion may produce high quality responses for those who take the time to think before they write but give a lower response rate, and ambiguities cannot be easily checked with the informants. The efficacy of the



interview approach in the ecolodge environment is supported by the fact that English was widely spoken among the guests. From practical and theoretical perspectives, therefore, an in-depth interview strategy was justifiable. Also, interpretive research is based on the belief that people create and maintain meaningful worlds, and an interview strategy assumes that information about these social worlds is achievable through in-depth interviewing (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997).

In-depth interviewing serves as an oral assessment by the informants and allows the informants' voices to be heard. In-depth interviewing was adopted in this research to identify "key or important moments" in the guests' experience that leads to happy/good and unhappy/bad moments. It enables the researcher to identify behaviour that contributes to the satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions of guests in the ecolodge context. This allows the identification of key moments or incidents as described by the workers in job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1962) and, in this research, it is used to determine the good and bad experiences of the guests in the ecolodge context. The informants were asked to express their satisfaction/dissatisfaction in terms of their overall attitudes in the ecolodge context rather than being asked to rate their experiences numerically. Also, the informants were asked to describe how, when and why they felt exceptionally good or bad about their stay. The researcher could then discover the kinds of situations leading to their negative or positive experiences. This approach provides the ability to capture the voices of the informants and contributes to a more meaningful understanding of consumer satisfaction. The researcher is able to determine their quality of experience in positive and negative terms. The informants were given relative freedom to select the kinds of moments (experiences) that they wished to report. Similarly, this approach of identifying responses to key moments in relation to positive or negative experience is used to describe favourable and unfavourable service encounters in restaurants (Kivela and Chu, 2001).

In the same manner, the validity of investigating positive and negative experience in an experiential phenomenon in the consumption of tourist services has been established by researchers, such as Prentice et al. (1998), who argue that the core

product of tourism is the beneficial experience gained. Milman (1998) investigated the travel experience of senior travellers' psychological well-being or happiness when taking escorted tours and gained better understanding of ecotourists behaviour from a holistic and emotional perspective as it is the voices of ecotourists which were heard and captured (Chan and Baum, 2005).

In-depth interviewing is an intensive technique often described as 'conversation with a purpose'. The researcher explored and uncovered the informant's meaning. The informants were asked to describe times when they felt exceptionally good or bad during their visits, intended to lead to the discovery of what kinds of situations lead to negative or positive feelings about their consumption experience. The researcher had the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to clarify any points that were unclear or to elicit additional information and thus reduce ambiguity. There is a distinction between survey interviewing and creative interviewing. The role of the researcher in the former is to control her/himself and not to interfere with the passive subject. The interview situation must be managed and directed to avoid the "*pull conversation*" in order that the "*push of inquiry*" is predominant (Converse and Schuman 1974, p. 26). This approach was considered unsuitable, given the differences and power relations extant between the researcher and the interviewees. Hence, creative interviews (Douglas, 1985) were conducted, in which the interviewer's role is to establish a climate that facilitates mutual disclosure.

May (1997) presents four types of interviews used in social sciences research: structured, semi-structured, unstructured and group interviews. The semi-structured interview format was adopted to ensure that all of the informants were asked the same questions, but was flexible in terms of the order of questions and the words or sentence structure used to accommodate the varied situations. It offers an active process and interaction ingredients, and the interviewer must consciously and conscientiously attend to the interview process and specifically the role of the interviewer. Asking the same questions of all of the informants also means reducing interview bias compared to unstructured interviews. Likewise, it allows a certain amount of flexibility in that this research particularly focused on contexts within

which satisfaction occurred and the state of mind of the guests on-site and their reflections. This is also supported by May (1997), who suggests that semi-structured interviews allow people to answer in their own words, while still providing a greater structure for comparability over the unstructured interview, which indicates that they are ideally suited to the aims of this research. The use of unstructured interviews allows the researcher room for improvement, but produces a risk of losing continuity, straying from the major theme, or omitting additional information. Furthermore, moving questions around may cause confusion and distraction, and it is also time-consuming.

Since the objective measures of this research were subjective and based upon the nature of the research objectives and questions, open-ended questions were deemed more relevant. The interview questions were developed from the research questions and adapted with modifications (rewording and new questions relating to ecolodges) from Herzberg's original study. Semi-structured and open-ended questions allowed the respondents to express their views/opinions in their own way and capture rich information on the issues of guest satisfaction. The open-ended format of the interview questions gave the informants freedom in replying to or elaborating on the questions. The interview protocol was divided into four sections as shown in Appendix 2. The in-depth interviews were conducted using the interview guide approach with a combination of open-ended and semi-structured formats. The interview guide approach enabled the researcher to identify the topic and issues in advance and to sequence and word the questions during the course of the interview. This ultimately provided consistency in the conduct of the interviews. The use of the interview guide ensured comprehensive data and enabled data collection in a systematic manner for each informant.

To this end, each interview was prefaced by an introduction that explained salient details about the interviewer and the research project. This introduction was intended to relax and reassure the interviewees, to clarify their role and importance in relation to the research, to explain what was required of them in the interview, and to address specific ethical issues. At the end of the introduction, each interviewee was

asked if they understood what had been said, and if they were still willing to be interviewed, to be tape-recorded or if they wished to withdraw from the interview.

During the interview process, the aim of the researcher was to foster rapport between herself and the informants for the development of mutual trust and a free flow of information. The interviewer-interviewee relationship is important in elucidating information, and should be a social one. The rapport was developed through exploration, during which the questions focus on the respondents' holiday in terms of their purposes, followed by the main questions that became more challenging, requiring the interviewee to express personal feelings, opinions and considered judgements. The interaction between the researcher and the informants was vital, as the purpose was to obtain valid, reliable information. This method assumed that the informants' perspectives on the social phenomena of interest should unfold as the participants' views rather than those of the researcher (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). It is important to ensure that the interviewer's approach conveys the idea that the respondent's information is valuable. This method permits the swift collection of a large amount of data, allowing for a wide variety of information on a large number of subjects, when the sample size is relatively small. It also allows for immediate follow-up questions and clarification.

The in-depth interviewing was conducted on the guests' last day at the ecolodge. The interviews were held at the convenience of the respondents after dinner and lasted 45 – 60 minutes depending on the answers provided. Although, ideally, the transcripts should be verified later, this is subject to time limitations (it will take time for the respondents to reply) and the response rate is uncertain. Furthermore, the information gathered is more about personal feelings and emotions than highly sensitive issues that might require verification. Although tape recording interviews may be convenient for the researcher, as the in-depth interviews about critical incidents are likely to be time-consuming, the interviewee may shy away from the questions. It is argued that tape recording may create tension or invade the privacy of the informants. However, only one of the 29 informants raised any concern by asking the researcher if she could refuse to be tape-recorded. After the researcher replied that

the interview would have to be terminated, she agreed to proceed, since she felt that the information provided was not confidential and the questions did not cover sensitive issues or invade privacy. All of the informants were very participative and open, as the researcher had clearly explained the aims of the research and properly addressed them by name to establish close rapport. Hence there were few problems in recording the interview sessions. Moreover, the informants were told that the information gathered was to be used for academic purposes. The actual sampling frame of in-depth interviewing is presented in Table 5.5

It was also recognised that bias could result from the respondents' answers because their voices were being recorded and their anonymity was not completely preserved. Arguably, even if the respondents do not accept being tape-recorded, there could be some bias in their responses and therefore the researcher was cautious that such a method did not result in biased information (Sekaran, 2000). The researcher was also aware of possible bias during the interview process. The researcher could unintentionally affect the responses of the interviewees through her gestures, mannerisms or verbal feedback. Also, the researcher might show subtle signs of agreement with the statements or responses.

#### **5.4.2.3 Profile Accumulation Technique (PAT) Survey Questionnaire**

The PAT is a free response and self-written data collection technique, highly flexible text assessment to assess service experience (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1995; 1997). This technique is considered superior to closed ended survey questionnaires that are often ambiguous, less relevant and their answers convey a general impression rather than referring specifically to what was asked. It is believed that different people have different interpretations and survey questionnaires are rigidly set and offer no in-depth answers as well as containing biases.

PAT has been used to assess the quality of various customer services, including hotels. Its appropriate for "experience-oriented" services (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1995). PAT offers great flexibility for informants to assess their service experiences

and hence allows the collection of more authentic data from the informants through their own written text. This means that the informants respond “freely” and “flexibly” by saying exactly what they want. Thus, the data is not tainted by possible irrelevant assumptions of the service providers or by any prompts on the part of the researcher (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1995). Although bias can arise from the social politics of the informants and related issues, that may affect their interpretation of reality, it is argued that this could happen with any data collection technique. For instance, in a quantitative survey, one can never be sure that the respondents give true answers, and the interpretations of these responses are then dependent on the respondents’ ability to interpret the question. This technique at least provides freedom for the informants to answer more freely without restriction. Arguably, any data collection technique will depend very much on the mood of the informants. PAT was adopted in its initial study as a research tool for a pilot study and its findings were subsequently translated into a closed ended questionnaire (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1997).

In this research, the researcher replicated the Profile Accumulation Technique (PAT) survey questionnaire forms that were originally developed by Johns and Lee-Ross (1995) to collect service experience as reflected in the research question and objective. Specifically, PAT has been adapted as one of the qualitative research tools for data collection. This technique was a feasible and practical way to collect data and its use gained good cooperation from the ecolodge operators. The PAT survey form is a three-paged open-ended questionnaire format focusing on: a) Things the things you have been most satisfied with during your stay in this ecolodge, b) The reasons why these things most satisfied you?, c) Thing most dissatisfied with during your stay in this ecolodge, d) The reasons why these most dissatisfied you? (Appendix 3). The sampling frame of a total sample size –53 informants are presented in Table 5.6.

However, it is noted that data analysis for PAT may be time-consuming for the researcher; the data is collected via open-ended questions. This also means that coding and data interpretation can become complicated. On this basis, one can say

that PAT is ideal when working on a small sample with research focused on a specific context. It may not be an ideal technique for collecting large sample size data and for studies of a comparative nature, as the coding and data interpretation may become unduly complicated and raise questions of data validity and reliability.

## **5.5 Research Design and Strategy**

The researcher was concerned about the design, relevance and rigour of the research method. It was crucial to employ and appropriately implement the most suitable methods for the topic of the research. The elements of the research design looked explicitly at the behavioural and experiential aspects in the consumption of service experience. Thus, the present research adopts an experiential perspective, behavioural approach and interpretative paradigm to explore guest satisfaction. It adopts an exploratory qualitative research model guided by a structural framework adapted from Herzberg's study and methods to explore guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction, whereby behaviour is the consequence of feelings and experiences.

An inductive approach is adopted based on the research subject and the research questions are subjective in nature within an interpretative paradigm (Goulding, 1999) and offer the opportunity to be immersed in and exposed to the natural setting.

Specifically, the main elements under investigation in the present research are:

- a) An exploration of the attitudes leading to positive/ negative experiences and overall feelings in terms of positive/negative experiences.
- b) The perception of service attributes.
- c) The consequences of attitudes and feelings in relation to their social psychological benefits

### **5.5.1 Strategy of Inquiry**

The approaches in qualitative research can be categorised into three genres (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 60):

*The many nuanced traditions of qualitative research can be categorized into (a) those focusing on individual lived experience, (b) those focusing on society and culture, and (c) those with an interest in language and communication.*

Marshall and Rossman (1999, p. 60) further suggest that “*explicating the logical and compelling connections-the epistemological integrity-between the genre, overall strategy, research methods, design and methods*” is an integral part of the research planning process. The present research focuses on individuals’ life experience and perceptions. As a consequence, the unit of analysis, “*the unit of observation: things examined in order to study the chosen topic*” (Hart, 1998, p 50) was determined to be guests who have stayed in ecolodges.

As in this case, qualitative research is primarily real world observations emerging from the interplay of the researcher’s direct experience, interest in practice and growing scholarly interests. The author first visited ecolodges in 1995 as a lecturer in charge of a tourism and hospitality student observation field trip, and subsequently visited two ecolodge operators to assist in environmental projects — lake cleaning and tree-planting; and a community tourism business project in three villages in Lower Kinabatangan. The researcher then had substantial discussions with the ecolodge operators on ecotourism issues from the guests’ perspective — their needs, motivations and satisfaction.

Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 40) indicate that, “*it is impossible for an investigator to cover all aspects of a problem*”. Wolcott (1990, p. 62) suggests that researchers should “*do less more thoroughly*” by identifying manageable units on which to focus. Hence, the researcher made several difficult decisions with respect to time dimensions, sampling methods and the geographical focus of the research.

### **5.5.2 Sampling Considerations and Method**

An appropriate sampling technique and type of sample are crucial to the generation of accurate findings in terms of validity. Sampling involves clear decisions not only about which people to observe or interview, but also about the sampling parameters.



Qualitative sampling parameters are determined by four possible choices: setting, actors, events and social process, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). More fundamentally, the sampling parameters are linked to the research questions and stress their relevance to the conceptual framework and research questions. The proper sampling frame enhances the generalisability of the findings through conceptual power rather than representation.

The time and financial constraints of the present study made it impossible to interview guests of different nationalities, which mean that there may be a lack of broad statistical data in this study. Hence, the researcher had to determine the relevant non-probability sampling design from the three major designs. Purposive sampling (also known as judgmental sampling) allows researchers to select sampling units subjectively. Purposive sampling does not provide simple approval of the selection of any unit, but demands that samples be carefully selected to reflect the parameters of the population, as noted by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 202):

*Many qualitative researchers employ...purposive and not random sampling methods. They seek out groups, settings and individuals where... the processes being studied are mostly likely to occur.*

The present research adopts the key feature of qualitative research, a small sample size (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1998) and purposeful sampling (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 28), and presents the typology of sampling strategies in a qualitative inquiry based on Patton (2002) and Kuzel (1992).

The logic of purposeful sampling is the utility and credibility of a small purposeful sample. Patton (2002, p.245) states that:

*The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the informant richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size.*

This is further echoed by Bryman (1988), who contends that qualitative research should follow a theoretical, rather than a statistical, logic, and that sampling consideration should be based on the potential of generalisability to theoretical propositions, rather than to populations or universes. Qualitative samples tend to be purposive rather than random (Morse, 1989; Kuzel, 1992), and are also often theory-driven either '*up-front*' or progressively. Developing a theoretical sample entails three key choices: geographical setting, the research focus (unit of analysis) and the degree of further generalisability (Silverman, 2000).

Given that this research seeks theoretical explanations, a theoretical sampling approach was appropriate. The purposeful sampling method was chosen as suitable for the purpose and rationale of the research — capturing a specific group that is also the primary market target for ecolodges in Sukua, Sabah. As with all other aspects of a qualitative inquiry, it is judged according to the context and permits in-depth study, unlike random probability samples. The geographical setting and research focus are explained in Chapter Four and the degree of generalization of the present study is justified by the nature of the qualitative approach with its theoretical sampling method.

The exploratory nature of the research determined that the sample was based only on its potential to elucidate satisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge context. For the research findings to have practical applications and be significant to ecolodge operations, the selected sample had to be a meaningful and important market segment for ecolodges. Hence, the sample selection is related to the important market segments of the ecolodges and their records of guest arrivals. At the initial stage of planning the fieldwork, the market segments and expected guest arrivals of three ecolodge operators were determined. However, the actual data collection was conducted at two ecolodges only, due to the lack of guest arrivals during the fieldwork period.

The sample selection was primarily based on the lists of expected arrivals provided by the respective ecolodge head offices in Kota Kinabalu. Subsequently, contacts

were made with the managers and receptionists at the ecolodges in Sukau, as well as with the local tour guides. Gaining co-operation was not a major problem, as the ecolodge operators had been well briefed on the research aims and objectives. Nevertheless, problems occurred with the arrival of guests from another inbound tour operator. A branch office in Kota Kinabalu deals with their European arrivals from Sarawak where the headquarters of the company is located. Last-minute bookings were also accepted from the other small inbound tour operator in Kota Kinabalu. Thus, the given arrival guest list often changed.

### **5.5.3 Sample Size**

This qualitative inquiry focused in-depth on relatively small samples. Patton (2002, p. 228) states: *“There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, purpose of the inquiry, what will be useful, what can be done with available time and resources.”*

The sample size for in-depth interview was limited to 29 informants, which is considered legitimate for an exploratory qualitative study. Walker (1985) suggests that 20–40 in-depth interviews are necessary for qualitative research. There are no strict rules about how the number of incidents or the sample size can form the basis of useful qualitative research. The criterion to determine sample size was based on the saturation of information or theoretical saturation (merely hearing the same information repeated). *“Saturation means that no additional data is being found”* (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p.61). Also, the resources available for primary research determined, in part, the final sample size. The researcher chose to capture the depth of the data rather than its breadth. It is also recognised that the time frame to complete the data collection and the difficulties of in-depth interviewing dictated a small sample size.

### **5.5.4 Sample Informants**

All the sample informants were guests who had experienced similar structural and social conditions i.e. they had been exposed to the ecolodge context and

consumption of the service experience in Sukau, Lower Kinabatangan. The sample informants were limited to English-speaking Europeans. There were two justifications for the selection of the sample informants. Firstly, Europe is the primary market for ecolodges in Sukau and also the major market segment for long-haul guests to Sabah. Ecolodge operators have aggressively promoted Sukau in Europe as a place for viewing wildlife and experiencing the tropical rainforest. Secondly, this research specifically chose English-speaking European guests in order to maintain the authenticity of the data by avoiding translation into other languages, since nuances may be lost in this process, possibly resulting in bias and loss of meaning. Furthermore, English is spoken by many Europeans and it is more meaningful to research this main market segment. Arguably, as the sample is restricted to English-speaking Europeans, it could yield results of limited generalisability. However, the aim of this research is to explore and describe rather than represent the population and thus the sample informants are not a limitation to the present research.

The sampling frame for participant observation techniques is presented in Table 5.4. It consisted of 10 riverboat cruise trips (five morning and five evening cruise trips) to watch, listen and observe the behaviour of the participants as well as their actions and reactions through their verbal and non-verbal communication. The data collection is described in section 5.4.2.1. The sampling frame for in-depth interviewing is presented in Table 5.5 that consisted of 29 informants (European guests) and the interview venues consisted of two ecolodges in Sukau and hotels at Kota Kinabalu. The in depth interviewing procedures are described in section 5.4.2.2. Finally, The PAT survey-sampling frame is presented in Table 5.6, and consisted of a total sample size of 53 informants. PAT forms were distributed to informants who stayed at the two ecolodges in Sukau during their check-in by the receptionists as described in section 5.4.2.3. The profile analysis is described in section 6.3 and summary of informant profiles and demographic information is reported in Appendix 7.

**Table 5.4: Sampling Frame for Participant Observation Techniques**

<b>Date/Groups</b>	<b>Morning Trips</b>	<b>Evening Trips</b>	<b>Internal Observations</b>
23 -25/11/03 Familiarization riverboat trips to develop observational data sheet	1	1	One night at Sukua River Lodge, One night at Sukua Proboscis Lodge
29-30/11/03 British Group – 4 persons Italian Group –4 persons	1- Riverboat trips to Lower Kinabatangan River and Oxbow Lake	1- Riverboat trips to Lower Kinabatangan and Small side river – Mengakong River	Sukua Proboscis Lodge
6-10/12/12/03 -Swedish Group –4 persons -British Group-6 persons	2	2	Sukau River Lodge
19/01/04 -British and German- 2 persons	1	1	Sukua Proboscis Lodge
26-27/01/04 -Italian and German- persons	1	1	Sukua Proboscis Lodge
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	

**Table 5. 5: Actual Sampling Frame for In-depth Interviewing**

<b>Sequence in In-depth interview with date</b>	<b>Name of Ecolodge</b>	<b>No. Informants interviewed</b>	<b>Interview Place</b>
29-/11/03	Sukau Proboscis Lodge	1	SPL
30-31/11/03	Sukau Proboscis Lodge	2	SPL
3-4/12/03	Tanjung Aru Beach Hotel in Kota Kinabalu	2	UK Group-stayed in Sukua River Lodge
5/12/03	Sukua Proboscis Lodge Interview at Sutera Harbour Resort In Kota Kinabalu	2	Guests visited Sukau Proboscis Lodge on 29-30 November 03, unable to conduct interview at the ecolodge, arrangement made for interview to be conducted in KK

**Continue Table 5. 5: Actual Sampling Frame for In-depth Interviewing**

Sequence in In-depth interview with date	Name of Ecolodge	No. Informants interviewed	Interview Place
6/12/03	Sukua Proboscis Lodge but interviewed at Sutera Harbour Resort In Kota Kinabalu	3	Guests visited Sukau Proboscis Lodge on 29-30 November 03 Arrangement made for interview to be conducted in KK
7-8/12/03	Sukau River Lodge	2	
9-12/12/03	Sukua River Lodge	2	
No in-depth interview	Heavy flood in Sukua, all lodges closed	NIL	NIL
20/01/04	Sukua Proboscis Lodge	2	SPL
28/01/04	Sukua Proboscis Lodge	3	SPL
30/01/04	Sukau River Lodge Interviewed at Nexus Karambunai Hotel, Kota Kinabalu	3	UK Groups-Stayed in Sukau River lodge
2/02/04	Sukau River Lodge Interviewed at Tanjung Aru Beach Hotel in Kota Kinabalu	2	UK Groups
4/02/04	Sukau River Lodge Interviewed at Tanjung Aru Beach Hotel in Kota Kinabalu	2	UK Groups
7-8/02/04	Sukua River Lodge Interviewed at Tanjung Aru Beach Hotel in Kota Kinabalu	3	UK Groups
Total		29	

\* All UK Mature Group Informants preferred to be interviewed at Kota Kinabalu-right after their trips from Sukua, when they had more leisure time. Interviews were conducted at the exclusive Saga Lounge in the respective resort hotels in Kota Kinabalu.

**Table 5. 6: Sampling Frame for PAT Survey**

Name of Ecolodge	Number of Survey
Sukau River Lodge	30
Sukua Proboscis Lodge	23
Sukua Rainforest Lodge	Low season and no European guests
*Total	53

\* 50 informants are European nationality, 3 informants are New Zealand nationality

## 5.6 The Qualitative Data Analysis Process

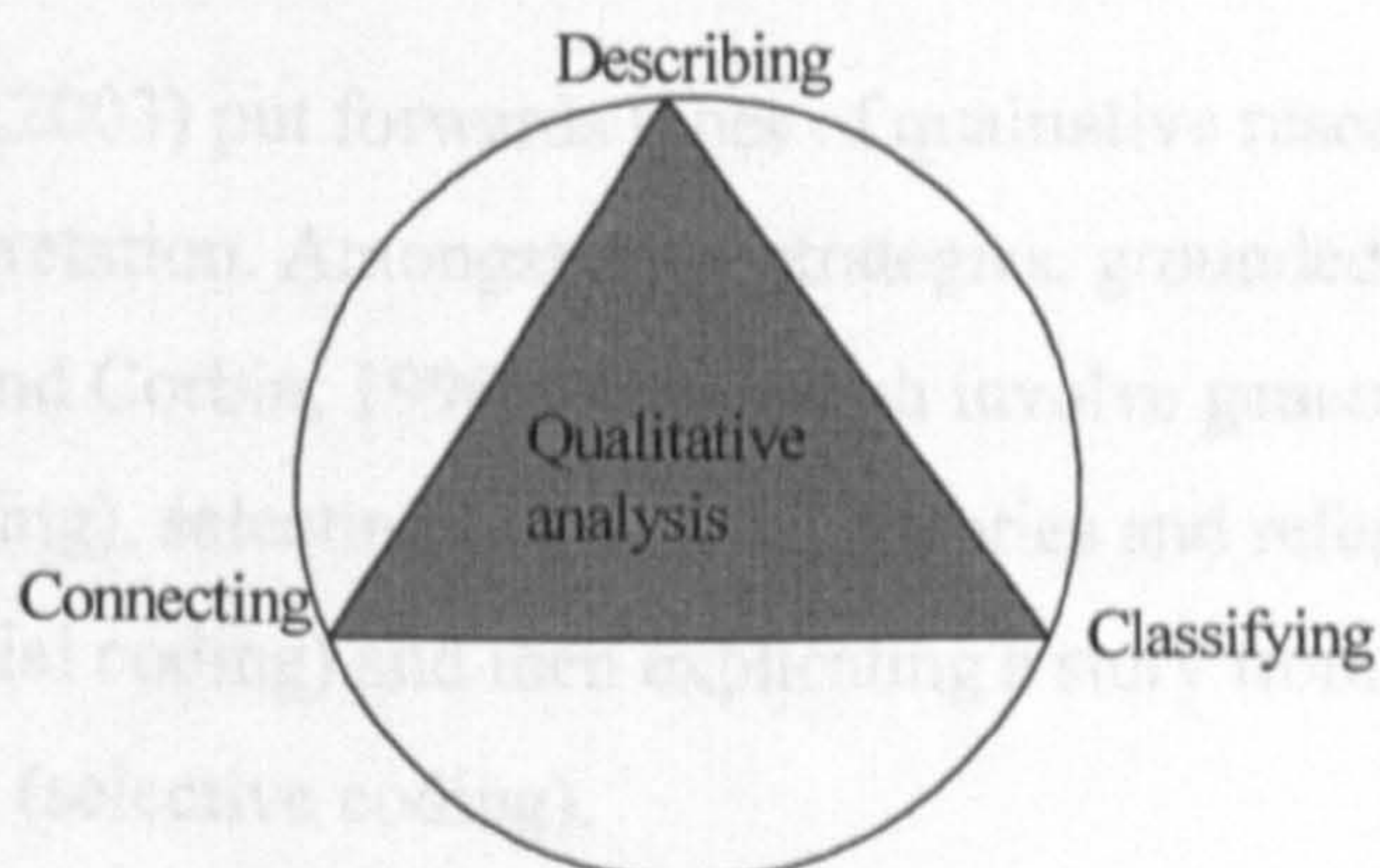
This section provides an overview of the approaches adopted in qualitative data analysis from the literature and the process of data analysis in the present research.

### 5.6.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

The aim of data analysis is to accumulate knowledge through the formation of ever-more informed and sophisticated constructions (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Silverman (2000) stresses the importance of the researcher defining his/her analytical position before commencing data analysis. It is noted that qualitative data analysis is not simply classifying, categorizing, coding or collating data or identifying forms of speech or regularities of action, but “*is concerned with the representation or reconstruction of social phenomena*” (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, p. 108). This means that the researcher is reporting the accounts of the social life and constructs versions of the social worlds and the social actors that we observe. Likewise, in well-designed research, it is crucial to have rigorous answer –finding procedures in solving research questions and understanding social phenomena. This means that both the methodological and data analysis processes must be transparent and apparent to the readers, including their methodological rigour and systematic processes (Miles and Huberman, 1994). According to Dey (1993), qualitative data analysis is an iterative spiral that evolves from data to an account, which consists of describing, classifying and connecting in a circular process, as shown in Figure 5.3 below. Essentially, in this way, a large amount of rich data (coded) can be linked to meanings and categories.

**Figure 5. 3: Qualitative Analysis as a Circular Process**



Source: Dey (1993, p. 31)

The first step involves the description of the phenomenon under study, which often encompasses the context of action, the intentions of the actor, and the process in which action is embedded (Dey, 1993), known as “thick description” of the data. Classifying data is necessary so that the researcher knows what is being analyzed and can also make meaningful comparisons between different parts of the data. It also enables the researcher to lay the foundation for identifying substantive connections. One common method of connection identifies the associations between different variables. This means that regularities, variations and singularities in the data are recognised and possible inferences can be made from data connections.

Qualitative analysis is diverse in nature and there is no clear, standardised approach to this analysis. The literature documents various qualitative research traditions or approaches which result in different strategies for dealing with the data that has been collected (Tesch, 1990; Dey, 1993; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Tesch groups these strategies into four main categories:

- Understanding the characteristic of language
- Discovering regularities
- Comprehending the meaning of text or actions
- Reflection

The first two approaches demand highly structured procedures associated with analytical strategies that require greater structure and set procedures to follow in comparison with the two latter approaches. This means that data categories and codes for analysing the data are derived from theory and a predetermined analytical framework.

### **5.6.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Creswell (2003) put forwards types of qualitative research strategies for data analysis and interpretation. Amongst these strategies, grounded theory uses systematic steps (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998) which involve generating categories of information (open coding), selecting one of the categories and referencing it within a theoretical model (axial coding) and then explicating a story from the interconnection of these categories (selective coding).



Phenomenological research uses the analysis of significant statements, the meanings of these statements, the themes of the meanings, the generation of meaning units, and the development of an “essence” description (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenological approach involves the proposition and examination of theories. It may maintain or reject them according to their usefulness in explaining phenomenon and their transferability between different situations. This fits well with the present research as indicated in the objectives and the aims. Also, phenomenology is regarded as the ‘natural’ way to research the human environment (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1998). Thus, an inductive process is used within the present research as the fundamental means by which human individuals set about understanding their environment. Narrative research restores the participants’ stories using structural devices such as plot, setting, activities, climax and denouement (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

### 5.6.3 Methods of Analysing Qualitative Data

Hussey and Hussey (1997, p. 249) present seven methods of analysing qualitative data, both quantifying and non quantifying, as noted in the Table 5.7 below.

**Table 5. 7: Main Methods of Analysing Qualitative Data**

Quantifying methods	Non-quantifying methods
Informal methods Formal methods: •Content analysis •Repertory grid	General analytical procedure Cognitive mapping Data displays Grounded theory Quasi-judicial methods

Source: Hussey and Hussey ( 1997, p.249)

It is noted that the choice of methods is dependent on the selected research paradigm, and the positivist researcher is likely to use the formal quantifying methods, whilst researchers of the phenomenological paradigm tend to adopt an informal quantifying method or a non-quantifying method.

Content analysis is recognised as a means of analysing qualitative data (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991) and is referred to as: “*the diagnostic tool of qualitative researchers, which they face with a mass of open-ended material to make sense of*” (Mostyn, 1985, p. 117). On the other hand, Remenyi et al. (1998) regard content analysis as being quantitative in nature, as it counts the number of occurrences of different concepts that are mentioned in the data. The authors further elaborate that content analysis can be used to formulate a theoretical conjecture, and its analysis can corroborate the basic theoretical framework. It is a way of systematically converting text to numerical variables for quantitative data analysis within a clear procedure and system (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). It is noted that data that is collected according to non-structured or semi-structured interview methods using open-ended questions can be content analysed. This method has often been used to analyse newspapers and advertisements to quantify the data in terms of the frequency of the words or themes that appear in the text (Silverman, 1993). Silverman (1993, p. 59) points out that the problem associated with content analysis is that “*its theoretical basis is unclear and its conclusions can often be trite*”. However, this method may lose the richness of the data during the analysis process, so it is important that this is maintained. Furthermore, the nature of this research topic is subjective, interpretative and requires an inductive approach, as content analysis is inadequate as the data analysis method.

Generally, in analysing qualitative data, the researcher condenses a large amount of raw data into systematic information and displays it as diagrams and illustrations. Researchers are often faced with several prominent challenges when analysing qualitative data, including data reduction, structure data and detexualising the data. In fact, there are no clear guidelines about analysing qualitative data. Several researchers have proposed some useful systematic and clear processes for analysing qualitative data, as presented in Table 5.8 below.

**Table 5. 8: Comparisons of Qualitative Data Analysis Processes**

<b>Miles and Huberman (1984)</b>	<b>Hussey and Hussey (1997, p.258)</b>	<b>Easterby-Smith et al (1991)</b>	<b>Creswell (2003, p. 190)</b>
<b>Data analysis</b>	<b>General analytical Procedure</b>	<b>Seven Stages of data analysis</b>	<b>Analytical Generic steps</b>
Data reduction: process raw data into "written-up" format	Convert rough field notes into written records and properly reference all raw data collected	Familiarisation – read and re-read for thoughts, ideas and further questions	Organise and prepare the data for analysis-sorting, arranging
Data analysis steps: contact summary sheet, document summary Codes and coding Pattern /Memoing Site analysis Interim site summary Data accounting sheet	Data Coding Codes assigned to each variables, concept, and themes. Group codes into smaller categories according to patterns / themes that emerge	Reflection: establish relationships between your data with previous research or academic work	Read through all data-general sense of information and reflect overall meaning
Data display Conclusion drawing and verification	Writing summary of findings, construct generalisation based on existing theories / new theory Repeat process of construction & sufficiently robust to withstand the analysis of existing theories/ construction of a new theory	Conceptualising – need to think about the concepts or variables which seem to be important for understanding what is happening	Detailed analysis – coding process
		Cataloguing concepts	Coding process to generate description of setting, categories/ themes for analysis, generate themes/ sub-categories
		Recoding - process of refining and redefining, further interpretation and analysis take place, new categories and sub-categories.	Advance description or themes represented narrative passage, events, visual aids-figures, tables / descriptive information for discussions
		Linking, patterns /concepts emerge, draw useful generalisation and relate to other theories, models and academic literature	Data interpretation or meaning of data-comparison made with past studies, confirm or diverge from theories
		Re-evaluation, on - going process, re-labelling of concepts, the meanings inferences draw from data	

The above table shows that Hussey and Hussey (1997) present procedures that are similar to Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) and Creswell (2003). On the other hand, Miles and Huberman (1984) note that the three main streams for analysing qualitative data are analysis episodes following each other or as concurrent activities involving data reduction (transforming raw data into transcripts or written up field notes); data display (compressed information in charts or graphs, network); and conclusion drawing and verification (regularities, patterns, explanations, causal flows, propositions).

Meanwhile, Kwortnik (2003, p.125) proposes that the data analysis process: *“begins with the researcher rereading the transcribed interview several times to become as familiar as possible with the informant’s perspective of the discussion”*, supported by Creswell (2003) and Easterby-Smith et al. (1991), as indicated in Table 5 above. These point to the general steps in qualitative data analysis. Also, it is apparent that the procedures can be summarised into four main processes: data managing, data coding and classifying, data interpreting and data display and presentation.

Using these four processes, the present data analysis was adopted and conducted in a clear and systematic manner. Also, it is important not to lose the richness of the data while ensuring a rigorous analysis in order to establish the generate conformability and trustworthiness of the analysis. The following section outlines the process of data analysis. Table 5.9 presents the data analysis method and processes for each data collection process.

**Table 5. 9: Data Analysis for the Present Research**

Types of data collected	Research strategies for data analysis & Interpretation	Data analysis Method /Process
Participant Observation Transcript (Appendix 4) Interview Transcript (Appendix 5) PAT Survey Responses (Appendix 6)	Phenomenological approach -Significant statements -Meanings - Meaning themes -General description of the experience	Qualitative method of analysis: General analytical procedure which involves: - Data managing, data coding and classifying, data interpreting and data display and presenting
PAT Survey Responses (Appendix 6)	-To develop a Perception Profile of an Ecolodge	Informal quantification method of analysis (-Pragmatic approach) -Frequency counts of responses -Alternative way to present qualitative data

The following section presents the systematic procedures for managing and organising the raw data collection and subsequently the coding themes. The researcher’s perspective in the data analysis is to find answers to the research questions, and the quality of the analysis and interpretations are paramount to the quality of the findings.

#### 5.6.4 Qualitative Data Coding and Analysis

The data for this research was gathered using three different techniques: in-depth interviews, participation observation data sheets as field notes, and a PAT survey written text. The raw data was properly labelled (date, time and place), and then sorted and arranged into three different categories of sources of information. The data analysis began by the researcher typing up the data recorded on observation data sheets during the observation trips, and transcribing a total of 29 audio tapes from the in-depth interviews *verbatim* in order to secure the authenticity and richness of the data. A *verbatim* transcription was considered the most relevant option for the present research. All of this data was processed into a computerised form along with the 53 survey forms data. During the fieldwork, the researcher was unable to transcribe or computerise any field notes or observational data immediately. This was due to the eco-friendly environment, the limited supply of electricity at the ecolodges and the nature of the environment (rainy weather and bumpy road

conditions), which led to high risks for a laptop computer. However, this data were processed as soon as possible.

The three different kinds of data collected in the present research are field notes, interview audiotapes and written open-ended survey data. The basic and raw data from the field notes, the observational data and the audio tapes were processed before they could be used for analysis. Thus, the field notes and observational data were converted into transcripts so that the researcher could read and possibly “*augment some missing content when it is remembered from the field*” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p 51). The interview audiotapes were transcribed *verbatim*. These processes of transforming the qualitative data were time consuming (Walsh, 2003). All data sets were analysed using systematic procedures which involve four main procedures as mentioned earlier, involving the major tasks of coding, finding patterns and themes, making sense of the data and interpretation (Walsh, 2003; Patton 2002).

The researcher then read through all the data to obtain a general overview of it, and also to reflect on its overall meaning. In order to manage these rich data sets, they needed to be coded in order to link the meanings and categories (Tesch, 1990; Walsh, 2003). Thus, each transcription and field note and open ended survey data were carefully read and re-read several times and the researcher was totally “immersed” in the data. Various codes were assigned according to their thematic meaning in addition to the processed data. Codes are labels or abbreviations of labels that assign units of meaning to the description of information gathered from the study (Tesch, 1990; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). In this case, codes were yielded that address the research questions or objectives, research theoretical perspectives (Saunders et al., 2003) and also codes that do not fall into these categories as shown in Table 5.10. The unit of coding was mostly based on a single phrase or several significant statements that are meaningful and generate themes that are related to the present research questions, for example the statement of “Happy feelings because of seeing the wildlife in wild” where “wildlife in wild” was coded as “satisfaction dimension ” with code (GUS-SAT-DIM) and also “true satisfier” (with code (SAT-DIMEN-SATIS-INT) as described in Table 5.10. As the nature of

the present research is exploratory, the initial codes developed from all three data sets were categorised, based on the research framework presented in Figure 5.1 and were also related to the research questions. The data was reviewed several times and codes were allocated to it in two stages. The first stage of coding and analysis was conducted on the basis of forming the descriptive themes, (based on satisfaction concepts, definitions, dimensions and service quality dimensions), where codes were developed from the data with reference to the research questions in Chapter one and also in Table 5.10. These descriptive themes were also referenced to the existing literature in terms of concepts and theoretical framework. Both the coding and analysis involved the components of key themes and the process. Following this, analytical themes (for example, satisfiers/motivator factors and dissatisfiers/hygiene factors based on Herzberg's theory and definition) were identified from the principal conceptual components with reference to the theoretical framework adopted for the present research.

Key themes and patterns emerged from the coding process. Thus, attaching codes to the data and generating concepts have an important function in rigorously reviewing what the data means. For this reason, the analytical procedures that underpin the coding process establish links of various sorts. They link to different segments or instances in the data, and also create categories of data that share common properties or elements – theme. The coding links all these data fragments to a particular idea or concept. It is important to identify the relevant concepts, and Seidel and Kelle (1995, p.52) note that “ *codes represent the decisive link between the original “raw data”, that is the textual material such as interview transcripts or field notes, on the one hand, and the researcher’s theoretical concepts on the other*”. In fact, the data coding process consists of breaking down the contents of the text into units of analysis (words, phrases, themes) and integrating them into categories that are determined by the purpose of the present research and research questions.

It then classifies the unit of analysis based on the same categories that have either similar meanings or shared formal characteristics. The researcher started by reviewing and recoding where necessary in order to establish the reliability of the coding, which is of great concern. In this case, the researcher attempted to reduce this

by referring to its stability (coding results are the same when the same data is coded more than once) because a small sample size is involved. It also involved the synthesis and reorganisation of the data, leading to the development of themes and patterns that refer to the research questions and also link to the theoretical research framework adopted.

The second stage of coding involves making sense of the data. Each transcription in each category developed at this stage was reviewed and interpreted for meaning. The researcher was constantly moving back and forth between data discovery and data interpretation. As a result, she became closer to the subjective world of this research. The researcher then identifies meaningful data and sets the stage for interpreting and drawing conclusions. This was done through selecting relevant phenomena, and then using examples of these phenomena to find commonalities, differences, patterns, structures and process, based on the conceptual framework and research questions on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction from the three different data sets. In the process of moving from coding to interpretation, i.e. transforming the coded data into meaningful data, the researcher looked for patterns, themes and regularities as well as contrasts, paradoxes and irregularities before moving toward generalising and theorising from the data. The researcher also worked from “negative “exceptions and “positive” patterns as a continuum - a crucial way to offer descriptions through explanatory tactics which was adopted by Miles and Huberman (1994). Also, a coherent justification is manifest in different sources of data (checking consistency from three data sets for certain concepts and themes) and trustworthiness of qualitative findings is established through triangulation.

The researcher then followed the conceptual framework of the consumer consumption process to write a report of the empirical findings from this exploratory research. These findings, data interpretation and discussion are reported in Chapter Six, relate to the pre-consumption stage; Chapter Seven relates to the consumption stage; and Chapter Eight addressing the post-consumption process, focusing on the issues listed in Table 5.10, and subsequently covering any emerging issues that resulted from the empirical evidence in order to gain a more holistic view of the



research phenomena. Subsequently, the data interpretation and discussion was developed based on the findings reported in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.

**Table 5. 10: Codes Developed From the Three Empirical Data Sets**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description/Research Questions (Chapter One)</b>	<b>Chapter Section</b>
	<b>What are the motivational and decision-making factors for guests visiting ecolodges in Sukau</b>	
M-F & DECI	Motivational and decision making factors	6.3
	<b>How are guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions perceived and constructed in the ecolodge context?</b>	
GUSAT- CONS- NEX-PROCESS	Satisfaction process-initial expectations	6.4
GUSAT –CONS- UTIL-PROCESS	Satisfaction process-utilitarian aspects	7.5.1
GUSAT –CONS- EXPR-PROCESS	Satisfaction process-expressive/affective aspects	7.5.2
GUSAT- CON- POST-BEH- PROCESS	Satisfaction at post-consumption stage in terms of guest behaviour reactions –positive reactions	8.2
	<b>How do guests react in relation to their “happy” and “unhappy” moments during participation in riverboat cruise trips?</b>	
POS-REA	Elements leading to positive reactions	7.2.1 7.2.2
NEG-REA	Elements leading to negative reactions	7.2.3
	<b>What are guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge context?</b>	
GUS-SAT -DIM	Guest satisfaction dimensions	7.3.1
GUS-DISAT-DIM	Guest dissatisfaction dimensions	7.3.2
	<b>What are satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions that can be termed “satisfiers” and “dissatisfiers” in accordance with Herzberg’s theory?</b>	
SAT-DIMEN- SATIS-INT	Satisfaction dimensions can be termed as satisfiers /motivators in Herzberg’s theory	7.4.1
DISSAT-DIMEN- DISSATIS-INT	Dissatisfaction dimensions can be termed as dissatisfiers / in Herzberg’s theory	7.4.3
NO-DISAT	The reasons for no dissatisfaction	8.4
NEU-FACT	Neutral factors	8.5

**Continue from Table 5.10: Codes Developed From the Three Empirical Data Sets**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description/Research Questions (Chapter One)</b>	<b>Chapter Section</b>
	<b>What are the perceived service attributes that lead to the satisfaction/dissatisfaction of guests and can be described as “satisfiers/motivators” and “dissatisfiers/hygiene” factors?</b>	
SAT-DIM-SATIS-PAT	Satisfaction dimensions from positive service quality aspects can be termed as satisfiers	7.4.2
DIS-DIM-DISATIS-PAT	Dissatisfaction dimensions from negative service quality aspects can be termed as dissatisfiers	7.4.4
SAT-DIM-SATIS-PAT	Positive service quality dimensions analysed using informal simple descriptive analysis	7.6.1
DIS-DIM-DISATIS-PAT	Dissatisfaction dimensions from negative service quality aspects can be termed as dissatisfiers analysed using informal simple descriptive analysis	7.6.2
	<b>How can ecolodge operators better manage and improve guests’ satisfaction?</b>	
BET- MANG	Areas for improvement	7.6.4 7.6.5
ISS-NEG-COM	Negative comments	8.3
ISS-SUG	Suggestions for improvement	8.3
EME-ISU	Emerging issues on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction	8.6 9.3

### **5.6.5 Informal Quantification Method for Data Analysis**

Despite the small sample of 53 PAT surveys, it is possible to analyze the qualitative data using an informal quantification method - a simple descriptive statistical analysis as the PAT survey permits qualitative and quantitative analysis. The sample size of a PAT of a minimum of 50 is sufficient to generate meaningful information (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1997).

Data collected from PAT was also analyzed using simple descriptive statistics as alternative data presentation in section 7.6. This is an attempt to make research more accessible and more understandable for practitioners by relating it to numbers. The analysis involves counts of repeat responses and percentages in terms of total positive and negative responses. These data were then translated into forms of tables, bar charts, radar webs and comparison between positive and negative responses were made as supplementary presentation and interpretation of data. This form of data presentation was deemed as more practical and having benefits for end

users (ecoldoge operators) to gain better understanding as compared to qualitative analysis, a form of “story telling” which tends to project less significant value for end-users. These informal ways to quantify data were also used to develop the perception profile of ecolodges. However, one must note that this analysis is an “informal way” of quantifying data. It does not account for any validity and reliability as in the quantitative method. This presentation is simply a transformation of qualitative data into a pragmatic form for understanding by using numbers to represent the meaning.

### **5.6.6 Using Computer for Data Analysis**

The researcher initially considered using computer software, such as NUD.IST, which is widely adopted for qualitative data analysis. The use of software has certain advantages, especially when dealing with a large amount of data, as it reduces the amount of work needed to sort it efficiently. The researcher was aware that handling coding and analysis inevitably involved creative and selective action, and that the use of computer software may reduce the creative ability to gain insights from the data. Software can be a key aid in qualitative data handling and analysis, but it cannot substitute for the interpretative skills of the researcher (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991).

Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p. 169) note limitations in using software: *“It is vital to identify ones’ analytic goals and interests and to use computer software accordingly. There is no one software package that will do the analysis in itself”*. Most computer packages alleviate the manual work of sorting words, concepts, phrases and passages contained in transcripts, but the identification of themes, patterns and categories is still performed by the researcher. Also, the researcher felt that using software would not contribute many substantial benefits to the analysis. Firstly, the raw data is kept on tapes that are transcribed, allowing the researcher to become familiar with the concepts and meanings, so that the data analysis actually proceeds in tandem with the data collection. The researcher has no intention of breaking the meaning of texts into quantitative units because computer-assisted

analysis fails to take into account important situational and contextual factors (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The researcher's task as an analyst is to bring out the hidden meanings in the text, particularly since the nature of the present research is exploratory. In the same vein, many practitioners express reservations about using computer software, assuming that it will result in quantitative analysis of qualitative data and a time consuming learning curve for new users (Maclaran and Catterall, 2002). Another concern is that researchers may adapt their research to the software they use, rather than the other way around (Lonkila, 1995; Coffey et al., 1996; Kelle, 1997). This means that the software will impose a methodological or conceptual approach, implying that software developers bring assumptions, conceptual frameworks and sometimes even methodological and theoretical ideologies to the development of their products.

## **5.7 Limitations of the Research**

Despite efforts by the researcher to minimise the weaknesses of the qualitative approach and data collection techniques for sound qualitative research, the findings of the present research, like those of any empirical investigation, were subject to several limitations.

The limitations arose, in part, from the qualitative approach itself to enhance its generalisation and usefulness. The research recognises the shortcomings of qualitative exploratory research in that a study of this nature cannot achieve the same outcomes, in terms of generalisability, as quantitative methods. Limitations include the small sample size that was limited to European soft ecotourists.

Although sampling was based on purposive techniques, the selection of informants was based on the guest arrival lists, and the availability and ease with which the researcher could access them when the research was being conducted. A serious flood caused the closure of the ecolodges for a month in the middle of fieldwork so the informants were selected, on the basis of convenience criteria, depending on their availability and willingness to participate but were still confined to Europeans

for in-depth interview except for the PAT survey, where three of non Europeans nationality were included (PAT survey was delivered by the lodge receptionist). The researcher was also constrained by time because the fieldwork had to be completed within a three-month period.

The observation data collected in this research primarily focused on the riverboat cruise trips. The present research did not cover all possible eco- environment experience dimensions such as jungle trekking and contact with local people that are possibly provided by other ecolodges in other sites. Specifically, this research primarily emphasised the internal experiences of the lodge and the main external experiences provided — riverboat cruise trips are the main activity provided to allow guests to view wildlife in close proximity. This may have generated shortcomings in terms of adequate coverage of all possible natural environmental experience dimensions. The absence of activities, such as educational tours, contact with local people and environmental conservation efforts, implemented by the ecolodges, may have impacted on the findings.

With regard to data collection techniques, even though there was good co-operation between the interviewer and interviewees in the in-depth interviews, the researcher recognised that bias could result from the informants' answers because their voices were being recorded and their anonymity was not completely preserved. Arguably, even if informants did not accept being taped, there could be some bias in their responses. Therefore, the researcher was aware that this method could result in biased information (Sekaran, 2000). The researcher was also aware of possible bias during the interview process, and that she could unintentionally affect the responses of the interviewees through gestures, mannerisms or verbal feedback. Also, the researcher might show subtle signs of agreement with statements or responses.

Likewise, the researcher was aware that PAT is an open-ended questionnaire and requires more time for the informants to respond as compared to conventional closed-ended forms with a likert scale provided. It is perceived that informants may be reluctant to present long responses. Thus, this could have setbacks in terms of

receiving good responses or may end up with no responses provided. Measures were taken to reduce such problems by ensuring the informants have sufficient time and by providing a proper introductory note on the PAT survey form to secure good written responses. For those informants who were also involved with in-depth interviews, the researcher took the opportunity to brief them again immediately after their interview ended.

The research specifically focused on guests in the ecolodge context. The use of cross-sectional data methodology focused only on the periods of primary investigation and provided a 'snapshot' of one particular group at one moment in time. Thus, it is limited in a temporal context. The research described and explored the lives of guests in the ecolodge context and the phenomenon of guest satisfaction only during the periods of fieldwork, while a longitudinal study might produce different or better results. Likewise, "snapshot" data is specifically focused on on-site experiences rather than on the different phases of travel process pre and after travel. This limitation is important because of the dynamic nature of satisfaction in the hospitality sector. Arguably, the use of data collection methods in the present research (in-depth interviewing, participation observation technique and PAT survey) was capable of producing data to illuminate more directly the interconnection between actions and consequences. Hence, the data itself is descriptive of social relationships and interchanges that reveal the succession of actions and events in which the actors are engaged.

## **5.8 Quality of the Research**

The issues of validity, reliability and generalization were considered at the research design stage, and these are a great challenge in any research. The researcher recognised the limitations of this exploratory qualitative approach to the data collection in comparison to the quantitative approach. Thus, as the nature of the research was exploratory qualitative interpretative, developing a sound rationale for the choice of methods with regards to data quality, in terms of logical, 'truthful' and unbiased views of both interviewer and interviewees, was crucial. As a result, it was

necessary to establish evidence of the quality and credibility of the research from the data collected. This was done by providing a transparent approach to the research, where decisions made by the researcher are open and explicit to the readers, so that they can judge the research on its own merit. This also allows the researcher to argue that the choices are “reasonable” and the justification was “fit for purpose”, while also retaining the “authenticity” of data collection.

In brief, the term ‘validity’ in qualitative research means that the researcher has gained full access to the knowledge and meanings of the informants (Remenyi et al. 1998). Gummesson (1991) treats validity as a ‘good fit’ between theory and reality, the evaluation of which is based on the description of a process and further suggests a triangulation that draws upon multiple evidences from multiple methods to demonstrate the fit between theory and reality. Other researchers define validity in qualitative data as the ‘truth’ — the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers (Hammersley, 1990; Neuman, 2000) — and that there are multiple truths in qualitative research. Thus, some researchers in qualitative research are more interested in authenticity; an honest and balanced account of social life from the perspective of one who lives it every day (Neuman, 2000), rather than validity. The researcher in the present research regards validity as ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘authenticity’, whilst reliability refers to ‘theoretical generalisability’ and the ‘consistency’ of the findings.

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (Hammersley, 1992). Silverman (1993) states that ‘authenticity’, rather than reliability, is often the issue in qualitative research. In this case, it is concerned with the bias of the interviewer and the interviewees. Biases could be an issue in subjective areas, and the interviewees could have given biased answers in this case. However, the techniques adopted by the researcher were deemed to be capable of eliciting trust in the relationship with the interviewees, with a proper introduction to establish good rapport and making them feel comfortable during the interview session. With regard to data interpretation, the use of a tape recorder during the

interviews permitted the researcher to consider the responses in the full context rather than making assumptions at the time of the interview.

Likewise, consistency through dependability imposed difficulties on the data collection. It was noted that the present research provided a 'snapshot' of one particular group at one moment in time in the ecolodge context, which is a dynamic environment. Thus, whilst the methods of gathering data may be considered effective, the results could vary due to environmental dynamics. Thus, there was a systematic gathering and recording of all the data — all of the in-depth interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed into a written format prior to analysis rather than the researcher relying on her memory. The researcher adopted acceptable general analytical procedures for the data analysis, thus enabling others to inspect the data collection methods.

The internal consistency of the in-depth interview data was established through other sources of information collected (observation and PAT data), which allowed the researcher to check the information provided by the informants to a certain extent. Furthermore, the interpretative paradigm in this research was concerned with whether similar observations and interpretations can be made on different occasions and/or by different observers (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Accordingly, interpretive paradigm research aims to capture the essence of the phenomena and extract data rich in explanation and analysis. It has been argued that such qualitative research findings are interpretative and that the researchers are engaged participants, performing reconstruction. Therefore, issues such as the credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of the research are dependent on data collection methods and analyses, which are detailed and explicit in essence (Walsh, 2003).

In other contexts, it has been noted that there are problems with generalisability in qualitative research due to its unstructured nature and the difficulty of replicating the operation and instrumentation of results with low reliability (Gill and Johnson, 2002). Arguably, by its nature, a qualitative study cannot be replicated because the underlying assumption is that the real world changes over time and this may well be



an avenue for future research. Generalization is simply not part of “idiographic research”, whose purpose is openly and explicitly to focus on the specifics of a particular case and how these reflect the localised context (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Williams (2000), however, claims that interpretive researchers inevitably engage in some form of generalization and this can be related to a key feature of theory rather than representation. This implies that the generalization of the qualitative method can be referred to determine whether the patterns, concepts or theories that have been generated in a particular environment can be applied in other environments. The present research was concerned with theoretical generalization rather than representation of the population as expressed by its research aims and objectives in Chapter One. The research framework follows the theoretical discourse; thus, theoretical generalization in the present research can be made with reference to the original theoretical framework to show how the data collection and analysis were guided by concepts and models. The theoretical parameters of the research were clearly stated and multiple sources of data were adopted to establish the research’s generalisability. Data from different sources (observation, interview and PAT survey) can be used to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate the research in question (Rossman and Wilson, 1985).

The researcher did her best to ensure that the information collected was valid and reliable. The trustworthiness and methodological rigour in the present research were established by devoting considerable time and effort to building up a rapport between the researcher, ecolodge operators/staff and the informants. The researcher presented herself to the friendly ecolodge manager and local guides at the field site. Subsequently, arrangements were made for the local guides to effect the necessary introductions to the respondents. Then, the researcher employed an open and relaxed approach with the use of an interview guide to keep the discussions on track during the interview sessions. The researcher was able to probe complex issues in a relaxed atmosphere at the ecolodge. Probing the interviewees for more information ceased when they became uncomfortable or unwilling to supply information. This ensured that information provided was ‘naturally and comfortably offered’ rather than forced from the interviewees. Also, a coherent justification is manifested in sources of data

and the trustworthiness of the findings is established through data sources triangulation; a more reliable, valid approach and well-founded results on guest satisfaction.

The researcher had the opportunity to become immersed on site while the observations were recorded in the ecolodge context and she became more knowledgeable about it. As a participant observer during the riverboat cruises, the researcher was able to gain a real understanding of the context and process of behaviour through multiple observations at different time periods. Although a researcher may 'go native' in such a situation (Remenyi et al., 1998, p.111), during each riverboat cruise trip (which lasted for three hours) there was limited interaction between the researcher and ecolodge guests as the purpose of the trip was to view wildlife in a natural context. Hence the researcher did not have much chance to develop relationships with group members during the trips. This provided an opportunity for the researcher to concentrate on the actions and reactions of the members and to capture the information in the natural setting. Furthermore, observational data for each trip was recorded systematically on observation sheets and also field notes. The researcher used multiple observations and a search for negative cases to increase the trustworthiness of the data. The repetition of observations of the morning and evening trips across various conditions – sunshine or rain and different times – was used to strengthen reliability.

PAT survey data for assessing service experiences was collected in written form from the informants on the survey form during their free time at the ecolodge. The informant validation or verification through a second form was considered impractical for the present research, due to time limitations. However, the information collected from different data sources was cross-examined and used to build a coherent justification of the themes. Hence, the issue of validity and reliability can be remedied (Sommer and Sommer, 2002). Nevertheless, this also requires careful analysis of the type of information provided by each method, including its strengths and weaknesses.

## **5.9 Ethical Issues**

At the initial stage of this research, considerable effort was made to identify any ethical issues that may arise, so that these could be dealt with in the design and implementation of the research. The major areas of ethical concern were identified as informant consent, confidentiality, data ownership, storage and access, withdrawal and reciprocity (Patton, 2002). The ethical issues were an integral part of the present research.

It was considered important to ensure that all of the respondents were well informed about and fully understood the research, as this might affect their willingness to participate. The ecolodge operators were contacted via e-mail to request their participation in the present research and a similar letter seeking approval and consent for their guests to participate was later sent by post to the three-ecolodge operators in Sukau. The local guides introduced the researcher to the informants. The researcher then gave a detailed introduction and explanation about the research. Before each interview commenced, the informants were asked to participate voluntarily and given the option to withdraw.

It was imperative that all of the informants were well informed about the type of information requested and the planned use of the research findings. Nevertheless, giving full details about this research could potentially contaminate informants by giving them too much information (Silverman, 2000). In view of this, the informants were given a moderate amount of information considered essential for them to be sufficiently aware of the consequences of participating.

Even though the informants were on holiday and were willing to participate in this research in their leisure time, it was critical for them to participate voluntarily as they were required to express their feelings and share valuable personal information. The researcher not only safeguarded the voluntary participation of the informants in the present research, but also obtained consent prior to tape recording the interview sessions. Throughout the whole research process, seeking co-operation and full

participation was not a problem through the proper introduction and intermediaries involved — staff at the lodges and local guides assisted in gaining better access to and co-operation from the informants.

All of the interviewees were very participative and open as the researcher clearly explained the aims of the present research and properly addressed them by name to establish close rapport. Moreover, they were told that the information gathered was to be used for academic purposes. However, two elderly women withdrew from the interview as they did not want to be disturbed during their holiday time and their decision was fully accepted by the researcher. Most of the interviews were conducted during the informants' leisure time, especially after dinner at the ecolodges or during teatime in the Saga Lounge at Tanjung Aru Beach Resort for informants from the UK Mature Group. However, in one instance, the informants requested that their interviews were conducted at the beach, while they were sunbathing in the late afternoon at Nexus Hotel, Karambunai, and the researcher complied. Although the interviews progressed steadily, there were instances when the informants were less committed about questions relating to happy and unhappy moments. Such questions also required time to consider and answer.

There were no problems in recording the interview sessions. Although tape recording interviews may be convenient for the researcher since in-depth interviews about critical incidents are likely to be time-consuming, interviewees may shy away from certain questions as they may create tension or invade their privacy.

The disclosure of the identity of the informants in the present research caused no problem; in fact they were most likely to be candid about their information. The information provided was at a personal level and was valuable to the ecolodge management and thus feelings of willingness, happiness and privilege to be involved were expressed. There was a free flow of information. Most of the ecolodge guests had recorded their feelings and personal comments together with their names in the lodge guest book that was easily accessible. The ownership of information was not a concern and the researcher offered access to the respondents and the ecolodge operators.

Winchester (1996) proposes that interviewers who adopt a supportive empathetic style of interviewing should expose something of themselves and give something back to those being interviewed. Bourke and Edwards (1998) highlight the principle of reciprocity inherent in many cultures. If one person or group gives to another person or group, something is expected in return. As the researcher is from an Asian culture, she was aware that it would be both culturally and ethically appropriate to offer some form of reciprocity to those who participated in the data collection, although this may not be the case for the interviewers of European culture. Upon completion of their interview, each interviewee received a small handicraft item—a bracelet woven by local tribes with the word ‘Sabah’, an appropriate form of appreciation for the time they contributed to the present research.

Wolcott (1990, p. 59) notes that practitioners are often interested in research outcomes. Accordingly, *“The bottom line for practitioners is always, ‘so what?’ A qualitative researcher’s effort to convey non-judgemental objectivity is likely to be perceived instead as a typical academic cop-out”*. It was appropriate to offer a copy of the findings to the participating ecolodge operators and inbound tour operators who supported the present research by assisting in providing information and access to their guests.

## **5.10 Chapter Conclusion**

The methodology described above was detailed and carefully considered. The methodological choices follow the research questions and problems, whilst the appropriateness and fit depend on the research questions, problem statements and the context. The complexity of the phenomenon under investigation, and the challenges associated with the present research in terms of the triangulation in methods and data, especially the unforeseen occurrence of flooding which caused serious problems in the fieldwork within the time frame for data collection, all contributed to this methodological process.

The next step was to produce robust and relevant research and to carry out the data analysis and interpretation and subsequently discuss the empirical findings. These are presented in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. Analysis and interpretation of data was based on research questions outlined in Chapter One. Each data set was analysed separately and subsequently three data sets were cross –checked for consistency in exploring guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions. Following this, findings and discussion of satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions were referenced to “satisfiers/motivator” and “dissatisfiers/hygiene” factors in accordance with Herzberg’ theory. Subsequently, interpretation of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction is made based on Herzberg’s theory. The presentation of findings and discussions followed the three stages of consumption process in the service experience (pre-consumption, during consumption and post consumption) based on the consumer behaviour model. Thus, Chapter Six present findings and discussion on pre consumption stage by presenting profile analysis, motivational factors and initial expectations. Findings and discussion of informants’ behaviours during the riverboat cruise trips, satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions, satisfiers and dissatisfiers as well as measurement and construction of guest satisfaction from the three data sets (observation, interview and PAT) were reported in Chapter Seven as during consumption stage. Finally, Chapter Eight reports findings and discussion of guest behavioural intentions in the post service consumption stage.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Finding and Discussion of Pre –Consumption Stage: Motivations and Initial Expectations**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

These research findings are based on consumer views. It is noted that the style of presentation of research findings is related to the overall characteristics of the research and the motivation for the research demonstrates the interest and value to ecolodge management of information relating to guest satisfaction. It is pertinent in the presentation of research findings to demonstrate transparency in terms of how and by what route the conclusions have been reached (Baum, 1999) and also to assess the “reasonableness” of the conclusions that are reached.

The empirical findings of the study are data collected through “on site experience” and are reported in term of the following three categories of the consumption process: pre-consumption, consumption and post-consumption. Consequently, these empirical findings and related discussion are reported in three separate chapters. Chapter Six reports the findings and discussion of motivation factors and initial expectations at the pre-consumption stage. Chapter Seven presents the findings and discussion on satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions during the consumption process and linkages are made to satisfiers and dissatisfiers in accordance with Herzberg’s Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory. Subsequently, the chapter also presents and discusses the measurement of guest satisfaction and the presentation of PAT findings as an informal quantifying method followed by the suggestion on how ecolodge management can improve guest satisfaction. Finally, Chapter Eight presents and discusses the behavioural intentions and the consequences for the post-consumption stage, the neutral factors, and this is followed by comments and suggestions.

The present research findings are presented in “story-telling” form. In addition, simple descriptive statistical analysis is used to present the Profile Accumulation Technique data presented in Chapter Seven.

This chapter begins with presentation of the informants' profile for the study in section 6.2, and then is followed by motivation factors in section 6.3. The initial expectations of the informants are presented and discussed in section 6.4.

The findings of motivation factors and initial expectations are responses derived from interview informants' responses to the open-ended interview questions (Appendix 5) and PAT responses to the open-ended survey form (Appendix 6).

## **6.2 The Profile Analysis**

Table 6.2.1 below presents a summary of the sample profiles for the three methods adopted in the present research. The summary of informant profiles and demographic information is reported in Appendix 7. Participant observation in this research consisted of a total of ten riverboat cruises of which there were five-morning riverboat cruises and five evening riverboat cruises. The duration for each riverboat cruise trip was three hours. These riverboat trips were operated by two ecolodges, namely Sukau River Lodge and Sukau Proboscis Lodge both located along the Kinabatangan River. These riverboat trips are the main eco-activity for the guests to relax and appreciate the natural environment as well as for wildlife viewing. The group size ranged from two persons to eight persons per riverboat cruise trip. The nationality of participants was mainly European - British, German and Swedish.

The total number of interview sample informants was twenty-nine of five different European nationalities – British, Swedish, Spanish, Italian and German. A majority of the informants were from an older age group – many were retired senior citizens. The duration of their stay was, an average, two nights and these informants stayed in the two ecolodges in Sukau. The sample informants for Profile Accumulation Technique (PAT) were mostly European guests. A total of fifty-three informants included three informants who were non-Europeans. Twenty-four of the PAT informants were also interview informants.



**Table 6.2. 1: Summary of Informant Profiles**

<b>Methods/ Profile of Informants</b>	<b>Participant Observation</b>	<b>In-depth Interview</b>	<b>Profile Accumulation Technique Survey (PAT)</b>
<b>Number of Informants</b>	Five Morning Riverboat and Five Evening Riverboat Cruise: Group size 2 to 8 people per boat trip	29	50 (European) 3 (New Zealand)
<b>Nationality</b>	British: 22 German: 8 Swedish: 8	British-22 Swedish-3 Spanish-1 Italian-1 German-2	British- 34 Italian-1 Spanish-1 Swedish-4 Dutch- 6 Danish-2 German-2 New Zealand -3
<b>Gender</b>	Female-19 Male-19	Female: 15 Male: 14	Female-29 Male-24
<b>Age range</b>	25 – 56	25-77	25-72
<b>Employed status</b>	N/A	Employed: 16 Retired: 13	Employed: 34 Retired: 19
<b>Highest Level of Education</b>	N/A	University	University
<b>Duration of stay</b>	3 hours tours per trip	Two nights	Two nights
<b>Number of trips</b>	First time	First time	First time
<b>Name of ecolodges and number of informants</b>	Sukau Proboscis Lodge, Sukau Rainforest Lodge	Sukau River Lodge: 17 Sukau Proboscis Lodge: 12	Sukau River Lodge: 30 Sukau Proboscis Lodge: 23

Table 6.2.1 shows that Britons form the majority of informants followed by Germans, Swedes, Danes, Dutch, Italians and Spanish. Britain is identified as the primary market segment for nature-based tourism or ecotourism in Malaysia and this is also the case in Sukau, Sabah as outlined in the National Ecotourism Plan in Section 4.6.2. Likewise, Europe is identified as a primary target market for Sabah as outlined in the Sabah Marketing Plan. This is because the European market segment, especially Northern Europe, shows consistent interest in nature tourism and a high standard of sustainability in tour packages purchased (Epler Wood, 2002). Thus they are an important nature tourism outbound market and they also have shown high demand for environmentally friendly products (Page and Dowling, 2002). Previous empirical research consistently indicates that ecotourists tend to be in an older age group than general tourists (Page and Dowling, 2002; Meric and Hunt,

1998). Nevertheless, the findings of the present research show that the age group of the informants ranged from 25 to 77 -- a mixture of young, middle and older age as presented in Table 6.2.1 above. The informants in the present research can be also termed as “ecotourists”. This corresponds with the classification of ecotourists as a diverse and yet distinct series of tourist groups by Mowforth (1993) who presents a threefold classification of ecotourists as rough, smooth and specialist that show range of age from young, middle and old.

Explicitly, in terms of age group, the present research finding seems to contradict the empirical findings documented in the literature that ecotourists tend to be in the category of middle-aged to senior travellers (Ballantine, 1991; HLA and ARA Consulting, 1994; Wight, 1996a). It seems that ecotourism no longer attracts only middle-aged and senior travellers. Equally, the younger age group shows an interest in ecotourism and trends towards environmentalism in gaining tourism experience. This can be explained by the three factors put forward by Eagles and Higgins (1998) in terms of the changes in attitude of the younger age group towards the environment, development of environmental education and impact of the mass media.

The findings of interview and PAT data from Table 6.2.1 show university as the highest level of education. In general, a majority of informants have either college or university education (Appendix 7). Thus, informants can be described as highly educated people, which is consistent with empirical findings on ecotourists’ profile in Canada by Ballantine (1991) and Wight (1996a). With regard to informant occupation, a significant number of informants have professional occupations for example, medical and dental practices, engineering, teaching, law practices and IT consultancy. Other informants hold managerial or administration positions either in the private or public sector. A few informants are housewives in the older group category (Appendix 7). The findings of those informants’ occupations are consistent with the profile of ecotourists described in previous research in Australia by Blamey (1995) and in America by Backman (1994) as well as findings from other researchers (Page and Dowling, 2002).

In terms of numbers of visits to Sukau, all informants were recorded as first-timers. Some of the informants had been exposed to similar places prior to coming to Sukau. The literature indicates that the duration of ecotourists' trips varies according to the destination and activities — 1–12 days depending on the activities of the trip. Findings of this research reveal that the normal duration of trips to Sukau was two nights, based on the tour package purchased. This may be considered a relatively short duration, but it is regarded as normal for soft ecotourists who are interested in wildlife viewing and appreciation of the natural environment. Visitors to Sukau are mainly in tour groups and the average packaged nature tour in Sukau ranges from 2 - 4 nights. In this case, it was found that informants were recommended to purchase a two-night tour package mainly because Sukau is one of their multi-stop tourism experiences in Borneo. This implies that these informants do not have an intense, personal and prolonged encounter with nature like hard ecotourists (Page and Dowling, 2002). It also means that informants stay for the duration of their tour package. Furthermore, Sukau is promoted as a soft ecotourism destination by the local tour operators and the ecolodge operators. The place is endowed with rich natural attractions within the gazetted wildlife sanctuary and tourism zone. The place aims to cater for soft ecotourists who just wish to experience and be exposed to nature and open learning about sustainability within a short period. Sukau is also regarded as a place in a natural setting with easy access. Ecolodges in Sukau provide a high level of personal interaction with friendly and efficient service as well as quality facilities, which are often desired by soft ecotourists, and these descriptions fit well with the description of soft ecotourists as described in the literature (Laarman and Durst, 1987; Weaver and Opperman, 2000). Based on the above information, these informants can be termed as “inexperienced and soft ecotourists” in Sukau.

In terms of travelling group size, the findings show a wide range of group size from one to twenty persons. However, the majority of the informants travelled in a small party (average from two persons to fewer than ten persons), as shown in Appendix 7. It was found that the majority of informants travelled with a partner, especially in the middle or older age group. This provides an explanation of the good mix of gender in terms of male and female informants. Those in the young and middle age groups

travelled as individuals; their group size ranged from four to twenty persons. The small group size found in this research is in common with the group size description of ecotourists from previous studies (HLA and ARA Consulting, 1994; Wight, 1996a, 1996b). In short, the informants' profile and characteristics in the present research are similar to previous findings on ecotourists in terms of level of education, group travel size and general interest in literature (Boo, 1990; Fennell and Eagles, 1990; William, 1992; Wight, 1996a; 1996b).

### **6.3 Motivation Factors**

The findings on motivation factors from the in-depth interviews and PAT survey are presented in Table 6.3.1. These motivation factors are categorised as three themes in terms of destination attractions as pull dimensions; fulfilment of needs/ wants; and escape as push dimensions and its respective sub themes. These themes and sub themes emerged from the responses of the two different data sources and the findings of the motivation factors show consistency between these two set of responses. The three motivation themes and their sub-themes that emerged from both interview and PAT responses are: destination attractions (pull factors) and escape and self-fulfilment (push factors). Interestingly, these motivation factors also emerged as satisfaction expressive dimensions in the service experience context in Chapter Seven (section 7.5).

**Table 6.3. 1: Motivations Themes and Sub-Themes from Interview and PAT Responses**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes From Interview</b>	<b>Sub-themes From PAT</b>
<b>Destination attributes: Pull Factor (seeking)</b>	<b>Natural attraction:</b> -Wildlife, rainforest and jungle -Nature and wildlife conservation -Local lifestyle	<b>Natural attraction:</b> -Wildlife and nature environment and rainforest -Nature and wildlife conservation -Borneo experience -Eco-site and learning experience - Local people and local lifestyle
	<b>Eco-activities:</b> -Riverboat cruise trip -Jungle walk	<b>Eco-activities:</b> -Riverboat cruise to see wildlife -Jungle trekking, -Photographing wildlife
<b>Escape (Push Factor)</b>	<b>Normal daily life:</b> -City life -English winter -Opportunity to do something different - Work life	<b>Normal daily life:</b> - English winter -Opportunity to do something different - Work life
<b>Self fulfilment: Push Factor (Seeking)</b>	-Needs and wants -Goals and expectation to see wildlife	-Wants -Goals

The following section presents evidence of the themes that emerged from in depth interview and PAT responses. Responses from both the interview and the PAT survey show that attractions in their natural surroundings are the main motivating factor for informants to visit ecolodges in Sukua. A majority of the informants stated that seeing wildlife is the main motivation for them as indicated by the following informants.

### **Exhibit 6.3. 1: Wildlife**

We came here to look at wildlife and that's was our aim, we like to see wildlife and hoping to see wildlife I never see before –so I was hoping wild monkeys, snakes, birds and things I only see in TV and read from books. (Interview informant 19)

To see wildlife. (Interview informants 2 &3, PAT 2 & 3)

What attracted to me was the opportunity to see the wildlife and to experience the different setting to the rest of the tours. (Interview informant 25)

The very motivation for being there in the first place was to see wild animals in wild environment and it has been satisfying to see things you never seen before! (Interview informant 18)

Within the context of seeing wildlife, a significant number of informants expressed the wish to see specific wildlife - orang utan and monkeys - as the motivating factor.

### **Exhibit 6.3. 2: Orang Utan and Monkeys**

Purely to see wildlife particularly the orang utan. (Interview informant 9)

The main object was to see monkeys. Borneo is specific in the world which type of monkeys –long-tailed monkeys. Monkeys are so unique to Borneo. (Interview informant 26)

To experience the Borneo Rainforest and to see the wildlife –especially the primates (Proboscis Monkeys) (PAT 20)

Specifically, seeing wildlife in the wild and its variety is the stated motivation of some informants.

### **Exhibit 6.3. 3: Wildlife in Wild and Its Variety**

To see wildlife in its own way of life and its variety. (Interview informant 1, PAT 1 & 25)

The main things we wanted to go and see is the orang utan, I have always been interested to see wildlife in wild. (Interview informant 6)

My main motivation is to see the wildlife, to see a good variety of wildlife, ah... which I was aware that Kinabatangan River probably a better alternative than Dannum Valley. (Interview informant 18)

To see animals /bird life in the Borneo jungle /rainforest in the natural habitat. (PAT 47)

A majority of the informants expressed seeing wildlife with their own eyes as the main reason. Also, this was viewed as positive word of mouth in relation to benefits (Chapter 8, section 8.1)

#### **Exhibit 6.3. 4: Seeing Wildlife with Their Own Eyes**

We saw monkeys many times on TV and documentary but with wildlife you never know how lucky you are going to be, ... things we seen on TV and read about we now personally experienced all these. See them with my own eyes! (Interview informant 25)

See wildlife in the natural environment, to consolidate and see for myself what I have learned and read and seen on TV and books. (PAT 7)

Nature and wildlife conservation is regarded as another motivation for some of the informants. They wish to see and appreciate nature before it is destroyed.

#### **Exhibit 6.3. 5: Nature and Wildlife Conservation**

We were both very interested in wildlife and we also very concern about ecology. I fear that in future that we will not have these beautiful things to see, rainforest is disappearing and animals are losing their habitats and I have four grand children who and I hope and pray will see these in the future but in the meantime we go to see and then we can tell them about it. (Interview informant 7)

See wildlife in its natural habitat, appreciate the lifestyle of other cultures, to see and appreciate what can be done to preserve nature for future generation (PAT 27)

Wildlife is considered as part of the combination of natural attractions so that the jungle together with the rainforest and local lifestyle attracted the following informants.

#### **Exhibit 6.3. 6: Natural Attractions and Local Lifestyle**

I wanted to mainly see different animals and see the rainforest and I knew it will be quite untouched rainforest and that's what I like. (Interview informant 17)

I wanted to see people living along the riverbank and to see the wildlife and to see some rainforest! (Interview informant 25)

See wildlife in the natural environment before rain forest destroyed and to meet local people and see how life on the river is lived. (PAT 3)

In addition, consistency was found in these responses from the interview and PAT surveys by the same informants.

**Exhibit 6.3. 7: The Consistency of Findings Between Interview and PAT**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Interview Informant 15</b>	<b>PAT 35</b>
<b>Local Culture and wildlife</b>	We want to ...the whole trip we took to Sukua, we wanted to see how the real people live, you know in their village, what they eat and how they work and see the animals, the river. We want to see the proper Borneo, the animals and how real people live.	To see wildlife and to experience the rainforest and how local people live by the riverbank
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Interview Informant 16</b>	<b>PAT 16</b>
<b>Wildlife and forest</b>	the purpose was really to see something of Sabah other than seaside, to see rainforest, jungle and hopefully some animals	to see something of Sabah-forest and animals.

It is interesting to note that there was real fulfilment in relation to informant needs, wants and goals to see and to experience specific wildlife as the push factor for the following informants.

**Exhibit 6.3. 8: Fulfilment of Needs, Wants and Goals**

The mammals, birds and flowers are the ones that I wanted to see, which can also be considered as my motivation. (Interview informant 5)

We knew that there was a lot of wildlife and in particular we want to see orang utan and proboscis monkeys. (Interview informant 7)

We want to see animals and like so much! (Interview informant 12)

I have not ever seen wild monkeys for example and I wanted to see that. (Interview informant 17)

Within the context of natural attractions, eco- activities (riverboat cruise trips and jungle walks) provided by the ecolodge operators were regarded as the main motivation for the following informants.

**Exhibit 6.3. 9: Eco -activities: Riverboat Cruise and Jungle Walk**

Riverboat trip to see wildlife (PAT 11, 16, 33, Interview informant 22)

We were there because of the riverboat cruise to see wildlife mainly. (Interview informant 21)

We were there because of boat trip and jungle walk to see different animals living there. (PAT 34)



Interestingly, reasons such as escape from the city, the English winter, to do something different and to celebrate a special occasion “birthday” away from home emerged from the informants as motivation factors. These factors were related to the escape from daily life for the following informants.

### **Exhibit 6.3. 10: Escape from Daily Life**

To experiences in the countryside which is very much different from a big city like London. (Interview informant 4)

Have a holiday, see different culture, and see different animals and be away from English winter. (Interview informants 23, PAT 39)

Opportunity to do something - by himself to see wildlife in wild. I always been interested in wild and looking for something different, doing something different. (Interview informant 16, PAT 36)

To celebrate Owen’s birthday somewhere else. (Interview informant 12, PAT 15)

To release from work, get away from the busy life of work. (Interview informant 1)

To have a rest from work and peace far from the noise and the occidental society (PAT 1)

#### **6.3.1 Discussion of Motivation Factors**

In summary, motivation factors that emerged from responses are related to destination attributes (natural attractions, wildlife, local lifestyle, eco- activities) and also escape from daily life as well as fulfilment of needs and wants. It was found that seeing wildlife was the main attribute of the natural attraction. Informants were generally motivated because of the variety of wildlife seen in the natural environment and the opportunity to see this with their own eyes. From the themes and sub-themes of informants’ motivational factors it can be concluded that informants are mainly motivated by destination attributes and activities rather than the ecolodge attributes. This implies that the ecolodge (accommodation) was not the primary motivator as reflected in the motivation themes and sub themes.

The empirical evidence of these motivation factors means that informants are generally attracted to the unique setting of ecolodges - a pristine landscape with

excellent wildlife viewing opportunities and environmental conservation practices that contribute to eco-experiences and fulfil needs. These informants are sensitive to environmentally friendly conservation efforts to preserve natural resources. This corresponds with previous research findings (Boo, 1990; Ryle and Grasse, 1991; Whelan, 1991; Eagles, 1992; Wight, 1996b).

Likewise, these findings are also supported by several studies, for example, Blamey's study (1995) found that Australian ecotourists were motivated by destination attributes and activities, a conclusion also supported by Eagles (1992) and Epler Wood (2002). This confirms observation and appreciation of natural features and cultural assets as main motivational factors. Wight (1995; 1997) confirms that natural environment and type of experience are profound motivations. From the empirical findings, it seems that seeing wildlife was the main attribute of the natural attractions and forms the main motivation. This is similar to North American ecotourists as noted by Wight (1996b) and also Australian ecotourists as reported by Blamey (1995).

Indeed, these motivational factors are linked indirectly to the activities engaged in by informants in Sukau. From the motivational factors, one can conclude that the activities include appreciation of the natural environment, attractions and local lifestyle, relaxation as well as leisure activities related to nature. Explicitly, nature-based tourists, as documented in previous research findings, also engage in these activities. Activities engaged in by informants are sufficient to categorize them as ecotourist or nature-based tourists based on the loose descriptions by Mowforth and Munt (1998) and Page and Dowling (2002). This means that there is a similarity between ecotourists and nature-based tourists in terms of activities. Thus, one can conclude that ecotourism resembles nature-based tourism and therefore it is difficult to differentiate between the ecotourists and nature-based tourists in this research. This has been documented in other empirical findings (Priskin, 2003; Palacio and McCool, 1997; Hvenegaard and Dearden, 1998). Likewise, these informants can be termed solely nature-based tourists, as there is a growing awareness that ecotourists are not readily identifiable in the ecotourism and sustainable tourism literature.

Furthermore, some researchers advocate that ecotourism is a segment of nature-based tourism and these ecotourists thus resemble nature-based tourists (Valentine, 1992).

Motivator factors can be further categorized as general and specific motivations (Holloway, 1994). In this context, the general motivation (push factors) for the informants aims to achieve a broad objective of an individual such as a need to get away from work or to enjoy a different natural environment. Specific motivation (pull factors) refers to specific needs to be met, such as the desire to see wildlife, in particular the orang utan and proboscis monkeys, and to engage in the Borneo experience. Generally, findings of motivation factors can be explored in three different ways: using the pull and push framework, seeking and escaping (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991) and Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

The concept of pull and push factors have been widely accepted to explain tourist behaviour. Hence, these motivational factors can be categorized based on the "pull" and "push" factor framework. These two dimensions of push and pull factors have been widely accepted to explain travel motivations (Crompton 1979; Uysal and Hagen 1993). Motivation findings are examined closely with reference to the need to travel (push factors) and also in terms of the attractions in Sukau (pull factors). Based on this framework, pull factors are regarded as external factors that may consist of features, attractions or attributes of the destination. These destination attributes can be regarded as tangible elements (Kozak, 2002) and also serve as an extrinsic source of motivation. Therefore, natural attractions, including wildlife, natural environment, the rainforest, the Borneo experience, local people and learning experiences, are regarded as important factors in attracting informants. These factors have a great influence on the informants' decision making in terms of choosing the destination. This means that informants were specifically interested in these attributes.

On the other hand, push factors are defined as relating to the needs and wants of the informants and also include escape. Push factors are considered internal factors instilled by a desire for travel and therefore aim to satisfy various psychological

needs. Escape from normal daily routines and sense of self-fulfilment in terms of needs and desire to see specific wildlife are regarded as “push” factors that are intrinsic desires of the informants. These are intangible elements that motivate informants, also known as intrinsic motivation. These findings are consistent with other ecotourist motivation empirical findings (Boo, 1990; Fennell and Eagles, 1990; Williams, 1992; Eagles, 1992; Whelan, 1991; Ballantine, 1991; Blamey 1995; Wight, 1996b). In terms of the dimensionality of guest’s motivations, the empirical findings provide some evidence to correspond with other comparable studies. The escape (daily and work life) as the motivation factor in this research is commonly found in other studies on tourist motivation.

On the other hand, tourism is widely accepted as a social psychological experience in the literature (Iso-Ahola, 1983; Mannle and Iso-Ahola, 1987). By this notion, informants’ motivational factors can be explained from the leisure behaviour perspective. Explicitly, the findings on motivational factors indicate that there are two different motivational forces among the informants. These two forces can be explained by employing “seeking” and “escaping” as motivational dimensions of leisure behaviour (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991). Two sources of motivational factors were evident in the empirical findings, namely one from the destination (pull factor); one from social-psychological desire (push factor). Pull factors resulting from the destination attribute can be termed attraction motivators whilst social-psychological push factors can be termed social attractions that are related to personal goals and socialization with others. In this context, destination attributes (attraction motivation) can be termed “seeking”, whilst escape from work life and normal daily life (social attractions) can be termed “escape”. These forces act to motivate informants to visit Sukau. The findings from the present research show similarity with findings from Eagles (1992) and the leisure motivation scale developed by Beard and Raghed (1983). These two dominant motivational forces, however, are interwoven and conclude that informants are: “*seeking by escaping and escaping by seeking*” (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991).

In the same vein, these two motivational factors of “escaping” and “seeking” are useful in relation to Herzberg’s theory as discussed in Chapter Two. This conforms with the underlying principle of Herzberg’s theory that it is possible for people to conceive their experiences as made up of two diverging parts and yet be motivated by two opposing needs, known as the concept of the dual nature of man. The two categories of needs, known as growth and avoidance, affect behaviour in different ways. In this context, “growth” can be conceptualised as “seeking” while “avoidance” as “escaping” in the presence of informant’s motivation.

Explicitly, needs, goals and motivation are concepts used to understand tourism behaviour (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991) and motivation is also related to needs and personal goals. Building from this, motivation can be also explained based on the needs of informants. Hence, these motivation factors can be categorized into socio-psychological motives and cultural motives (novelty and educational) as put forward by Crompton (1979) as motives for pleasure vacation behaviour. Socio-psychological motives in this case are present in self-fulfilment in term of needs, wants and goals, whilst the cultural motives are related to the learning experiences from the destination and the escape. Conclusively, the findings correspond to the motives for pleasure vacation behaviour described by Crompton (1979).

Motivation arises out of the felt wants or needs of the individual. Within the context of needs and wants of informants, some of these motivation factors can be related to Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs. The need for relaxation (escape from work life) as expressed by the informants can be termed a physiological need, the participation in riverboat cruises and jungle walks can be termed safety/ security, close contact with wildlife and nature can be termed love and belongingness, sense of achievement from the jungle walk due to hardship and old age can be termed self-actualisation. Correspondingly, the findings also reveal that motivational dimensions — natural attractions, local lifestyle and eco- activities (riverboat cruise and jungle walk) in Table 6.3.1 also emerged as satisfaction dimensions as reported in Table 7.4.7 This implies that motivation and satisfaction are positively related to one another but one can conclude that they both emerge at different times, motivation happens before

ensuing experience, while the presence of satisfaction after the consumption of experience is consistent with the findings of Ross and Iso-Ahola (1991). Thus, it seems that these motivation forces can be used to explain satisfaction as evidenced from the development of Herzberg's theory.

Likewise, the findings reveal that informants in the present research were seeking new experiences, enjoyed new learning experiences and the sense of discovery with close contact with wildlife in Sukau. Most of the informants also intended to inform friends about their positive experiences in Sukau, as indicated in Section 8.1 (Exhibit 8.1.1). Implicitly, informants with such characteristics can be described as "allocentric" tourists in terms of Plog (1974).

The findings also reveal that ecotourists have multi-dimensional types of personality. Informants in this study can be described as visitors who desire to appreciate and experience closeness to nature. This is consistent with Eagles and Cascagnerter (1995). The informants can be termed naturalists or nature-based tourists who are motivated to visit natural attractions, which is similar to the findings of Valentine (1992), Blamey (1995) and Palacio and McCool (1997), as escapists who want to escape from work life or normal daily life to do something different (Whelan, 1991; Weiler and Davis, 1993; Palacio and McCool, 1997) and also can be portrayed as recreationists (Wearing and Neil, 1999; Fennell, 1999; Ryan, 2000) who are engaged in riverboat cruises and jungle walks. Indeed, these descriptions have been used to define ecotourists by a range of previous researchers. Likewise, the multi-dimensional personality of informants also means those informants' needs are varied, ranging from the natural environment, participation in leisure activities and needs derived from the basis of human nature and relationships. The needs may be related to accessibility, happiness from involvement and leisure and also to educational or cognitive that in a way that may be related to natural attractions. The desire to learn about nature is one of the key characteristics of ecotourism (Blamey, 1995; Weaver and Lawton, 2002). Likewise, many informants in this research participated in activities closely linked to nature appreciation such as wildlife viewing, jungle trekking, and relaxation and watching the river water flow, the scenery of Lower

Kinabatangan River in the morning and evening. This implies that ecotourists are generally engaged in a variety of activities. Although empirical findings suggest that tourist motivations are multiple, natural motivation and social motivation are the two common motivational factors for ecotourists as documented in the literature. In the present research, natural motivations are the key and crucial motivation factors for coming to Sukau. This can be explained from the sample informants' perspectives in that these are soft ecotourists who have a strong interest in natural and cultural attractions. Sukau is endowed with rich natural attractions and has been promoted as a destination for wildlife and natural attractions. This means, perhaps, that there is a need to ensure the proper management and conservation of natural attractions in Sukau for long-term success and sustainability.

Empirical evidence on motivational factors not only depicted the multi-dimensional role of ecotourists (naturalist, recreationist, and escapist), they also provide an understanding of the ecotourists' travel decisions and consumption behaviour. In this case, natural attractions and environment are crucial factors in influencing travel decisions and consumption. The ecolodge is an important part of ecotourism facilities and also contributes a substantial part to the ecotourist experience via the "added on" activities. The present research findings reveal that the ecolodge is not the primary motivational factor for informants. Similarly this was found by Wight (1997). Indeed, the findings provide an important understanding in terms of the motivational dimensions of informants in the ecolodge context. They also highlight the similarity between nature-based tourist and ecotourists in terms of activities and the closeness of motivational factors. More importantly, ecolodge operators can benefit if they recognize the importance of promoting and providing for guests' preferred activities based on motivational factors, matching their needs and personality.

However, the present research findings assume that there is no difference in terms of motivation factors in relation to demographic profile since findings reveal guests have shown similar specific preference and interest in this context, as also acknowledged by Ayala (1996b) and Hvenegaard and Dearden (1998). Nevertheless,

there may be differences in relation to psychographic variables of the informants that are beyond the scope of the present research.

#### **6.4 Initial Expectations**

Tourists or guests, like other customers have initial expectations of the type and quality of services to be offered in a particular destination. These expectations are formed mainly through prior knowledge or experiences and information provided via several sources such as brochures, advertisements, mass media and informal information from friends and relatives.

It is interesting to note that there was a wide range of initial expectations from the in-depth interview responses. The range covers “no expectations”, “low expectations” and “with certain specific expectations”. These subsequently emerged as initial expectation themes for informants when coming to visit ecolodges in Sukau as summarized in Table 6.4.1 below.

**Table 6.4. 1: Different Level of Initial Expectations**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Themes of Initial Expectations</b>
1	No expectation
2	Low expectation
3	Told to set low expectation
4	Certain expectation

The present research findings reveal that a majority of the interview informants indicated that they had no expectations when coming to ecolodges in Sukau. Likewise, it was found that many of the informants had low expectations because they were warned in advance by the tour company due to the nature of the environment they were in. These were older age informants and classified as senior citizens. Nevertheless, those informants with previous experience in the ecolodge context knew what to expect and thus they had certain expectations. These range of initial expectations are presented and supported by the following informants.



### **Exhibit 6.4. 1: No Expectations**

We have no expectations. It is difficult but I find it is better to look at everything come along is a bonus. (Interview informants 2 &3)

We did not know much about this place, we don't have any expectation, yes, and we are taking the risk. (Interview informant 12)

I don't know, unexpected! We were hoping to see monkeys but no guarantee as ever, but we were very successful in seeing it. (Interview informant 26)

I did not know what exactly to expect because I really don't know what animals would be there, so I found during my stay and then and I saw a picture of that birds and I wanted to see it. So, yes, it did raise my satisfaction. (Interview informant 17)

Likewise, there were informants who expressed the view that they did not have high expectations with reasons stated in Exhibit 6.4.2.

### **Exhibit 6.4. 2: Low Expectations**

I don't expect high or good service here – not a five star service but friendly people. (Interview informant 1)

I think we went with not too many expectations or high expectations, so when I got there, it heightened my expectations because it was probably more luxurious than I imagined. When you...ah...you know when you go on this sort of trip, you don't expect a lot! (Interview informant 7)

The evidence for low expectations expressed by the majority of informants is reported in Exhibit 6.4.3.

### **Exhibit 6.4. 3: Told to Set Low Expectations**

On this tour they (tour operators) told us it was basic and at the end of the tour, I told them that was not basic I called it a surprise. (Interview informant 6)

We were told it was more than basic than it was. Saga group (Tour Company) explained and they actually put it down a bit more than it is, so you expect a bit less and you were pleased when there is a little more. (Interview informant 24)

We have been told to have low expectation and we were told it was not five stars and therefore you come to expect what you were told. (Interview informant 26)

We were told that our chalet was primitive but we have air conditioning, water and shower in .I meant what else do you expect you are going to jungle trip. You know so... Actually I I feel the accommodation was higher standard than I expected. (Interview informants 28 and 29)

Others informants who had previous experience in the same context indicated certain expectations as shown in Exhibit 6.4.4.

#### **Exhibit 6.4. 4: Certain Expectations**

Well, I stayed in this sort of place before I knew pretty much what to expect, (interview informant 23)

Ya, we kind have got use to it (Asian hospitality) and expecting of that kind of friendliness. (Interview informant 10)

As I said before we go with expecting perhaps to see nothing because wildlife is wild and they come and go. (Interview informant 7)

It was found that many informants commented that they were expected to see wildlife.

#### **Exhibit 6.4. 5: Wildlife as An Expectation**

Ecotourists always has hope to see fairly large animals so whether you are doing in African safari hope to see elephants in live and obviously you come to Malaysia you hope to see orang utan and proboscis monkeys, so it will be disappointing not to find them. (Interview informant 11)

I will be unhappy if I don't see any animals during the river trip, we want to see animals of course but it is ok to see few, some animals. (Interview informant 13)

I expected to see them (monkeys) and if I have not seen them then I will be very disappointed! (Interview informant 27)

One informant had some degree of expectation of the riverboat cruise experience and further pointed out that the expectation exceeded what was expected.

*It (riverboat experience) was exactly what we expected, slightly better than what we expected. (Interview informant 24)*

#### **6.4.1. Discussion on Initial Expectations**

Overall, the empirical findings reveal that a majority of the informants have no expectations or a low level of expectations when coming to ecolodges in Sukau. Simply, these informants were first-timers to Sukau and they are also considered “inexperienced soft ecotourists” who just want to experience and learn about nature and be physically active (wildlife viewing). Most informants stated that they did not

know what to expect because they had little knowledge about the place and the types of wildlife available. Also there was no guarantee they would see the wildlife, especially in its natural habitat. This means that informants realised the nature of the environment they were in. Thus, this also implies that informants were unable to form expectations prior to exposure or consumption in the service experience context, and it can be said that, in the experiential nature of service consumption such as the present research, consumers find it difficult to form expectations prior to consumption due to a lack of knowledge or prior experience. The dynamic aspect of service delivery, the consumers' interactions and emotions/ affective responses are likely to affect the expectations of the consumer during the process of service consumption. Within the experiential nature of services consumption, it suggests that consumers learn and adapt their attitudinal and behavioural responses. Thus, it is unlikely that expectations are generated during the pre-consumption stage and are formed prior to consumption, and then remain unchanged during the process of consumption as claimed by the SERVQUAL model and expectancy disconfirmation theory. Arguably, these expectations are taken forward to consumption and post consumption stages by consumers (Wilkie, 1994).

Also, the findings indicate other informants had been told to set low expectations by the tour company. This seems to be one of the business strategies to reduce dissonance as pointed out by Wilkie (1994). Older age group informants were told to set low expectations by the tour company from which they had purchased the tour package. It was the tour company's policy to inform customers to set low expectations, especially regarding the ecolodges, before coming to Sukau. This is a strategy used by tour companies to avoid high hopes and disappointment that may arise upon arrival at Sukau. Subsequently, informants will be more satisfied. Consequently, the findings reveal that informants' experiences exceeded their initial expectations and there was virtually no disappointment expressed by these informants. In the same vein, low expectations not only relate to the nature of the environment and the place, but also to the intention of the informants. This is to avoid any disappointment when they were on site or simply seek to raise their expectations later.

On other hand, those informants with previous experience in ecotourism came with certain expectations. Their expectations were closely associated with wildlife, especially orang utans and proboscis monkeys. In addition, others informants related their expectations of the riverboat cruise trip experience with friendly and helpful service, as part of Asian culture. These were informants who have experienced Asian hospitality before.

## **6.5 Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter has presented and discussed the informant profiles, motivation and initial expectations as at pre consumption stage. The empirical findings reveal that destination attractions (pull dimensions), the fulfilment of needs/wants and escape (push dimensions) are the main motivational factors to visit Sukau. This seems to conclude that guests are attracted by its destination attributes (natural attractions, wildlife, local lifestyle and eco-activities) and also by the desire to escape from their normal life routine. Ecolodge (accommodation) is not the primary motivator, but the destination attributes and eco activities are regarded as the main motivational factors. It seems that a majority of guests generally had no expectations when coming to ecolodges in Sukau. Likewise, many of the informants had low expectations because they were warned in advance by the tour company due to the nature of the environment they were in, in particular the older age group of guests (senior citizens). These findings and discussions are pertinent to the understanding of the guests' behaviour for the ecolodge management as well as guest satisfaction management.

The next chapter focuses on the findings and discussion of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction during the consumption stage in the service experience. First, the chapter reports the positive/happy and negative/unhappy experience during the riverboat cruise trips and dimensions leading to both positive and negative experiences are identified. These dimensions supplement and complement interview findings. Following, the findings and discussion on satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions from interview and PAT data were presented. Then, the identified

satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions of three data sets were cross-checked for consistency. Subsequently explanation of guest satisfaction dimensions was made with reference to “satisfiers/motivator” and “dissatisfiers/hygiene” factors in accordance with Herzberg’s theory. Thus, new interpretation of guest satisfaction is achieved.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Findings and Discussions of Guest Satisfaction Dimensions During the Service Experience Consumption Stage**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents empirical findings and discussion of guest satisfaction dimensions during the service experience consumption stage. It begins with presentation and discussion of positive and negative experiences from riverboat cruise trips in section 7.2. Guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions are presented and discussed in section 7.3. These are then followed by identification of satisfiers and dissatisfiers in accordance with Herzberg's theory in section 7.4. The measurement and evaluation of satisfaction is presented and discussed in section 7.5, and finally the development of a Perception Profile of the Ecolodge and improvement of guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context are presented in section 7.6.

#### **7.2 The Positive and Negative Experiences Arising From the Observed Riverboat Cruise Trips**

This section presents the empirical findings of the informants' reactions in terms of positive/happy and negative/unhappy during the riverboat cruise trips from observation data. Subsequently, the discussion focuses on these empirical findings. This empirical evidence was recorded during and at the end of the riverboat cruise trips. These findings complement and supplement the in-depth interview findings in section 7.3. The recorded statement quotes from participation observation transcript (Appendix 6) that can be categorized as happy moments and positive experiences from guests are presented in Table 7.2.1 and evidence on unhappy or negative experiences is presented in section 7.2.2.

The riverboat cruise trips operate in two separate time frames:

- a) The three hour daily evening riverboat cruise departs from the ecolodge at 3:30pm to view wildlife along Lower Kinabatangan River and Menanggul

River – fresh water swamp forest to discover the proboscis monkeys, birds, reptiles and other wildlife.

- b) The three hour daily morning riverboat cruise departs from the ecolodge at 6:30am and cruises along Lower Kinabatangan River and a channel into the Kelananap Oxbow Lake from the Kinabatangan River – to experience freshwater lake scenery, freshwater fish, otters and a jungle trek through secondary forest for wildlife viewing.

The morning and evening riverboat trips aim to provide the opportunity to view wildlife in the natural environment via the river, jungle, and lake in two different time frames; the natural physical attractions (jungle and river) contribute to a unique experience and scenery in the morning and evening. Guests are generally interested in seeing some of the wildlife and interacting with the natural environment as part of the learning experience about the wildlife, eco-system, and local people's daily lives along the river.

### **7.2.1 Positive Experiences and Satisfaction Dimensions Arising From Verbal Communication**

In general, the riverboat cruise trips encompass the elements of guide, boatman, wildlife, group interactions, and weather, and all of these elements affect the overall riverboat experience. Several factors contributed to a positive experience of the riverboat cruise trip and emerged from both the verbal and non-verbal communication collected during participation in the observation trips.

During the riverboat cruise trips the verbal behaviour of the informants was recorded in their own words. These statements can be categorized as positive experiences gained and were regarded as happy moments, as shown in Table 7.2 above. The source is mainly external to the ecolodge environment. The natural environment (wildlife, natural experiences and weather), the skills of the guide and boatman, and positive interactions with the guide and the group members emerged from these statements as elements that lead to happy moments. The informants generally

reacted positively and were happy to see and come into close contact with the varieties of wildlife during the observed riverboat cruise trips. Also, they were amused and excited about the varieties of wildlife and wildlife performance they saw in the trees along the riverbank during these trips.

**Table 7.2. 1: Dimensions lead to Positive Experiences from Riverboat Cruise Observation Trips**

Item	Satisfaction Dimensions from Observation Data
1	Wildlife (in wild, variety, performance)
2	Natural environment and atmosphere
3	Interaction with guide
4	Boatman skill/navigation
5	Riverboat cruise
6	Group member interactions

The following section presents evidence of the positive dimensions that emerged from observation. Observational data reveals that wildlife and the natural environment are factors leading to positive experiences and happy moments. This evidence is reflected in the following quotes made during the observation trips.

**Exhibit 7.2. 1: Positive Reactions to Wildlife and the Natural Environment**

What a beautiful performance! As the monkeys were jumping from one tree to another continuously. (Observation Trip 3).

They (the monkeys) are free and not like in the zoo. I like to see them in this way! (Observation Trip 5).

Wonderful! I am seeing what I wanted to see-orang utan, proboscis monkeys, snakes, birds! (Observation Trip 6)

In the same vein, significant positive comments and reactions by the informants were recorded at the end of the riverboat cruise trips. Contributory factors leading to positive experiences related almost exclusively to the wildlife (variety, close contact, in wild environment) and the natural environment, as shown in Exhibit 7.2.2.



## **Exhibit 7.2. 2: Positive Comments about Wildlife and the Natural Environment at the End of the Riverboat Cruise Trips**

That was great! I am glad that I have seen so many varieties of wildlife! (Observation Trip 1)

It was a worthwhile cruise, we saw (wildlife) more than what we expected, which is a bonus! (Observation Trip 2)

Well, I have seen wildlife in the wild and its variety is amusing! (Observation Trip 7)

I am thrilled, I never had any opportunity to see monkeys, snakes and varieties of birds in a natural setting, I am so contented! (Observation Trip 10)

In addition, the peaceful environment was expressed as one of the indicators of a positive reaction during the riverboat cruise trip: *"Listening to the sounds of birds, I like it so much and the sound of jungle, see the river water flow, a peaceful environment to be in"*. (Observation Trip 4)

In a few instances, rain and weather also contributed positively to the informants' experiences, as presented in the following observation comments in Exhibit 7.2.3.

### **Exhibit 7.2. 3: Positive Reactions to Rain and Weather Conditions**

Oh! I like the rain, what an experience, I cannot find it back home. (Observation Trip 5)

This is nice weather in which to watch wildlife in the natural environment. (Observation Trip 8)

We are lucky to have nice weather, no rain, although I don't mind if there is rain, just like to feel it. (Observation Trip 9)

The guide and boatman were also found to affect the riverboat cruise experiences. Generally, the guides played an important role in spotting wildlife, explaining and narrating and directing the boatman to get closer to the spot for informants to photograph wildlife or obtain a closer look. The boatman coordinated with the guides in terms of the duration to stay in one particular spot and getting the right angle for guests to photograph the wildlife. The guides also added to a positive atmosphere with some interesting jokes; attempt to catch informants' attention by pointing to the wildlife; providing binoculars to guests during wildlife viewing; informing them of the best way to view the wildlife; showing bird reference books after seeing each

type of bird to create a better understanding; or making sounds to attract wildlife during the search. In addition, the boatmen also played an important role in spotting wildlife due to their expertise and familiarity with the environment. The role of guides as information providers, and as good communicators with expertise was acknowledged by the informants. Experienced and knowledgeable guides acted as good communicators to impart information and spot wildlife. They were viewed as one of the most important dimensions that contribute to a positive experience and happy moments and were also identified as one of the key service experience attributes. Several instances indicated that the interaction with the guides was crucial in contributing to a positive experience, as reported in several observation trips in Exhibit 7.2.4.

#### **Exhibit 7.2. 4: Interactions with Guide**

I am so happy now. At least I have the opportunity to see the orang utan...after the efforts by the guide to show me- moving the boat to the right angle and kept showing me till I got it! It is a marvellous experience for me! (Observation Trip 1)

The same informant further commented that:

I will be disappointed if I don't see it, it was right in front of me! (Observation Trip 1)

Not a good day to view but we enjoyed it as well with the good guide who tried to show us the wildlife; it is something you can't control – the weather and the appearance of wildlife, said the informants. (Observation Trip 3)

The provision of proper equipment to enable the informants to better view wildlife, to stay for a longer period of time to view wildlife on sunny days and search for wildlife using different routes during bad weather were considered as “ extra efforts/services” by the guide. This, subsequently enhance the positive experiences of the informants. This was revealed during the following observation trips.

*“Do you want the binoculars to see?”* The guides approach to a female guest. (Observation Trip 8)

The guide attempted to find wildlife by taking different river routes in bad weather and giving instruction to the boatman for different routes to search for wildlife.

*“There is no wildlife here...we are going by different routes...and hope to see some monkeys”* said the guide who tried to spot the wildlife. (Observation Trip 4)

Likewise, there were instances of positive interaction between the guides and guests in relation to wildlife and sharing information and reference books to enhance the informants' learning experiences. This was revealed in the following observation trip. The guests paid attention when the guide was explaining and providing information and guests interacted by asking questions, seeking clarification and with responses: *“yeah! Oh, yes”* (Observation Trip 2). *“Interesting to see so many varieties of birds”*, a conversation between a guest and the guide. The guide then provided a reference book on birds in Borneo (Observation Trip 7). One guest commented during a riverboat cruise trip: *“Interesting to see so many varieties of birds!”* and at the same moment the guide handed him a reference book on birds in Borneo and explained further to enable the guest to understand more and create a good environment. (Observation Trip 8)

There was a significant positive interaction between guides and guests when the guide spotted the wildlife.

#### **Exhibit 7.2. 5: Positive Interaction between Guide and Informants Regarding Wildlife**

“Look! ...Look ...there are several monkeys at a 45-degree angle from this tree. You have to move to this side for better viewing,” as the guide was pointing to the monkeys on the trees. One of the informants got excited and stood up quickly and moved to the side indicated by the guide. (Observation Trip 5)

“More monkeys here.... and they are going to jump. “Look! They are jumping from one tree to another, lets see the special performance!” said the guide.

“Oh! I like this, something exciting here! One informant in response (Observation Trip 5)

“Can you see over there, groups of monkeys—some family members are playing and others are resting?” said the guide. “Oh, look at those monkeys, aren't they cute and lovely?” (Observation Trips 8 & 9)

In general, the informants reacted positively towards the riverboat cruises. Individual positive experiences emerged from the opportunity and access to see wildlife and its variety, with physically close contact with wildlife in the wild environment. The riverboat cruise trip was regarded as a first time experience, a comfortable way to view more wildlife in the natural environment and an opportunity to cruise along the Lower Kinabatangan River as expressed in the following exhibit.

#### **Exhibit 7.2. 6: Positive Comments on Riverboat Cruise Trips**

This is the first time we are watching wildlife using a boat cruise. A brilliant way and less hassle compared to walking in the jungle, which probably won't be able to see many wildlife and so close to the animals! (Observation Trip 1)

What a great way to view wildlife in a comfortable way, an opportunity to cruise along the longest river in Sabah to see the rainforest and I really enjoy it! (Observation Trip 5)

This is an excellent way to view wildlife and unique experiences for us to cruise along the Kinabatangan River. (Observation Trip 2).

It was a fantastic riverboat cruise tour! (End of Observation Trip 1)

I have enjoyed it very much, the cruise was nice and variety of wildlife and close contact with them, something that I will never forget! (End of Observation Trip 2)

#### **7.2.2 Satisfaction Dimensions from Non-Verbal Behaviour**

Likewise, the non-verbal behaviour of the informants indicated positive experiences gained. Body movement, such as hand gestures by pointing to the wildlife and taking photographs of the wildlife, was observed on Observation Trips 1, 5 & 6. Good visual contacts with wildlife were noted on Observation Trips 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 & 10. Many pleasant facial expressions were recorded on Observation Trips 1, 2, 3, 6 & 8 and there was also consistent viewing of the wildlife on all of the observational trips. There were attempts to spot wildlife using binoculars on Observation Trips 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. Paying attention to local guide explanations of wildlife was found on Observation Trips 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 & 10. Indicators of happy moments and positive experiences were through major non-verbal communications. Also, it was found that there were several instances where the boatman navigated the boat to an angle to

enable informants to see clearly and take photos of wildlife, thus enhancing the experience positively on all observation trips. The boatman was an expert in snakes, and spotted them on several occasions, and the informants were excited and showed happy facial expressions (Observation Trips: 1-5, 8, 9 & 10).

In addition, the observational data (verbal and non verbal) during the riverboat cruise trips reveals that group interactions was an important element contributing to happy moments and positive experiences. Group members interacted well during the riverboat cruise trips. For example, members spoke to each other when seeing a nice butterfly: *“Look! Here is a beautiful one to see”* (Observation Trip 3). Positive interactions among the group members added an enjoyable moment and affected the satisfaction levels. On several observation trips (1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10), group members assisted each other to view wildlife from a better angle, sharing information and knowledge about wildlife in Borneo, group member sharing and looking together at the reference book, members interacting well with the local guide by paying attention to the guide’s explanation and pointing to the wildlife. Social interaction became more obvious after the riverboat trip in the lounge and during dinner and breakfast. The group members shared their previous eco-tour experiences and similar interests in the lounge and over drinks together after dinner.

### **7.2.3 Negative Experience and Dissatisfaction Dimensions During the Riverboat Cruise Trips**

The observation trips reveal that there was less negativity or evidence of dissatisfaction recorded than was the case with positive perspectives. The evidences of dissatisfaction dimensions were recorded in both verbal (quotes) and non-verbal communications (body language: facial expressive, body movements, group interactions) during the observation trips. Dissatisfied behaviour reactions occurred when the informants saw pollution in the eco-system, such as riverbank erosion, rubbish floating on the river and the noise and fumes caused by the boat engines, boat congestion, lack of wildlife, hot sun, the poorly maintained jetty and the boat in relation to safety issues. These dimensions emerged from verbal and non-verbal communication during the observations trips as reported in Table 7.2.2 below. The

lack of wildlife was regarded as the key dimension that led to dissatisfaction during the observation trips. It is interesting to note that bad weather was not a negative factor, but treated as a “common” thing in the rainforest /jungle.

**Table 7.2. 2: Dimensions lead to Negative Experiences from Riverboat Cruise Observation Trips**

Number	Theme
1	No wildlife
2	Noise and fume pollution (boat engines)
3	Rubbish floating
4	Riverbank erosion
5	Boat congestion
6	Hot sun
7	Poorly maintained jetty

It seems that the informants were not only interested in viewing wildlife and experiencing the eco-environment but they also showed concern for the eco-environment in relation to the particular issues of environmental pollution – waste and noise. These were related to rubbish floating in the river, erosion found along the riverbank, noise pollution and fumes from the boat engines. There were several instances where the informants expressed unhappiness when they were unable to see any wildlife during the bad weather. The themes emerged from negative instances as recorded during the following observation trips.

One informant was annoyed by the noise caused by the boat engines:

*I hate to listen to those noises coming from the boats... cannot they do something about it? (Observation trip 1)*

and further commented about the erosion along the riverbanks.

*Or I wonder if anything has been done on that part of erosion, or actions should be taken soon? (Observation Trip 1)*

There was an instance where informants came to see specific wildlife (individual preferences) and indicated disappointment when they were unable to see what they came for. For example, one informant expressed disappointment at not being able to spot any wildlife after half an hour cruising by saying: “No luck!” (Observation Trip 2), while another informant stated that: “*If I hadn’t seen any orang utans, I would be so disappointed.*” (Observation Trip 2)

The observation field data reveals that more negative or unhappy moments emerged through non-verbal behaviour than the verbal behaviour during the riverboat cruise trips. The sources of negative experiences or unhappiness were shown by the informants' facial expressions when there was no wildlife to see after half an hour of cruising on Observation Trips 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8. Rain causing bad weather conditions for wildlife to appear was found on Observation Trip 3 and 4 and the moments when wildlife went into the jungle were classified as the disappearance of wildlife on Observation Trips 3 and 5. Noise from the boat engines was reported on Observation Trips 1, 9 and 10 and boat congestion during wildlife viewing happened on Observation Trips 2 and 8. Hot sun resulting in sweating and feeling uncomfortable was found on Observation Trips 4, 7 and 8, and trees falling across the river preventing boats moving forward to view wildlife were noted on Observation Trip 3.

#### **7.2.4. How do Guests Behave During the Riverboat Cruise Trips?**

This section discusses guest behavioural reactions during the riverboat cruises provided by the ecolodges in Sukua based on empirical evidence presented in previous section.

The riverboat cruise trip is a primary eco-activity for wildlife viewing and experiencing the natural environment. Specifically, the riverboat cruise trips are provided by the ecolodge operators for their guests as part of the eco-experience and activities in Sukau, Lower Kinabatangan. The riverboat cruise offers an opportunity to view varieties of wildlife in close proximity without any physical disruption. It also enables the guests to experience cruising along the longest river in Sabah and offers rainforest scenery on both sides of the river.

The empirical findings from the observational trips show that informants react positively towards the riverboat cruise trips. These were regarded as an unique experience to view and gain close contact with wildlife in the natural environment, which was well acknowledged by the guests, with quotes shown in Exhibit 7.2.6.

This echoes the work of Holden and Sparrowhawk (2002) who also stress the sense of closeness to nature.

The observational findings show that informants generally react positively and are happy to see and have close contact with varieties of wildlife during the riverboat cruise as supported by the quotes, facial expressions and body language of the guests. This evidence was gathered from multiple observations at two different times (morning and evening) and under different weather conditions to achieve consistent reactions from the guests.

The dimensions leading to positive experiences are presented in Table 7.2.1 and those leading to negative experiences in Table 7.2.2. These dimensions emerged from the statements of the informants during both the verbal and non-verbal communication during the riverboat cruise observation trips (Exhibits 7.2.1 to 7.2.6, Section 7.2.2. and 7.2.3).

Indeed, the dimensions that contributed to the informants' positive reactions or happy moments during the riverboat cruise trips can be further classified into two categories: a) tangible elements – wildlife, and b) intangible elements – natural environment and experience (riverboat cruise trips), guide services, boatman skills and group member interactions (showing similar interests in wildlife viewing and social interaction). These findings are congruent with some of the findings found in the literature (Chapter Four), and Page and Dowling (2002) also report the importance of the guides' knowledge of both product and surroundings, and that environmental awareness contributes positively to guest experience to a significant degree.

Group interaction is another important element contributing to happy moments and positive experiences gained in this context. The observed data shows how group members interact well during the riverboat cruise trips and it is consistently recorded, for example, that group members assist each other to view wildlife from a better angle, sharing information and knowledge about wildlife in Borneo, and group



members share and look together at the reference book. Group members also interact well with local guides by paying attention to their explanations and pointing to the wildlife. Social interaction becomes more obvious after the riverboat trip, with group members sharing their previous tour experiences and similar interests in the lounge and drinking together after dinner.

Likewise, there were also several elements that caused negative reactions and subsequently led to unhappy moments during the riverboat cruises. These elements are related to wildlife (no wildlife seen), noise and fume pollution from the boat engines (environment pollution), boat congestion, riverbank erosion, hot sun and the poor maintenance of jetties. This evidence was recorded in Section 7.3.2.

This suggests that both riverboat cruise trips and wildlife viewing are regarded as important activities for the guests in Sukua. It seems that both wildlife and the natural environment (pristine and protected environment) are important elements that may contribute to a positive reaction. The importance of wildlife and the natural environment are consistent with the findings on the ecotourists' behaviour from previous studies. Meric and Hunt (1998) addressed this by observing that wildlife viewing is an important activity. Crossley and Lee (1994) indicate the importance of unspoiled nature and increased guests' knowledge of wildlife and Backman et al. (1994) asserts that the aim is to learn about nature and meet people with similar interests.

The findings also show that positive reactions are attributed to more intangible elements, while negative reactions are attributed to more tangible elements during the riverboat cruise trips. This confirms that the guests' positive reactions are attributed to both human (guides/boatman, groups members) and physical dimensions (destination attractions). As Baum (1997, p. 92) stresses, "*Experiences of the consumer is highly intense and intimate in the interaction...with those providing services*". Based on the above findings, it seems that the dimensions that contributed to positive experiences can be termed as satisfaction dimensions, while the dimensions of negative experiences can be termed as dissatisfaction dimensions.

The satisfaction dimensions are: a) access to wildlife and close contact with the natural environment; b) the skills, knowledge and roles of the guide and boatman in spotting wildlife; c) good weather conditions resulting in more frequent appearances of wildlife (for example, rainy days cause less wildlife to come out for food as the monkeys do not like wet days); d) the overall natural environment and experience of riverboat cruise trips, and e) the positive group interaction among the guests and guide during the cruises. The dissatisfaction dimensions are: a) pollution in the ecosystem, such as riverbank erosion, rubbish floating on the river and the noise and fumes caused by boat engines, b) boat congestion, c) lack of wildlife, d) hot sun and e) poorly maintained jetty and the boat in relation to safety issues.

### **7.3 Satisfaction Dimensions from Interview and PAT Responses**

This section presents the dimensions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction that emerged from interview responses and the PAT responses. It then presents a discussion of these satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions.

#### **7.3.1 Satisfaction Dimensions from Interview Responses**

Table 7.3.1 below reports satisfaction dimensions that emerged from interview responses. These satisfaction dimensions were sourced as both internal and external to ecolodge environment. Those dimensions sourced from the external ecolodge environment consist of physical attributes (wildlife, natural environment and local lifestyle) and the experiences derived from these attributes, leisure activities inclusive of riverboat cruise trip and jungle trekking, guide and boatman and the positive interaction among group members. Those dimensions derived from the internal ecolodge environment encompass the lodge itself and the lodge service staff. These satisfaction dimensions can be categorized as several service dimensions from Geva and Goldman (1989): instrumental aspects (lodge, staff), social activities (group dynamics), performance of the guide and boatman (expertise, skill) and personal experience and interaction with the natural environment. Wildlife and the

natural environment are considered the most significant dimensions followed by the guide as leading to satisfaction.

**Table 7.3. 1: Satisfaction Dimensions Themes from Interview Responses**

Service dimensions	Personal Experiential	Social activities	Performance of guide and boatman	Instrumental
<b>Ecolodge External Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wildlife</li> <li>• Natural environment</li> <li>• Local lifestyle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Riverboat cruise</li> <li>• Jungle trekking</li> <li>• Positive group dynamic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge, experience and skill</li> </ul>	N/A
<b>Internal Ecolodge Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodge atmosphere and environment</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodge - expectations and minimum standard</li> <li>• Lodge staff - friendly</li> </ul>

It seems that there are more service dimensions that are external to the ecolodge environment than internal ecolodge environmental factors leading to satisfaction. This implies that the importance of the external environment contributes significantly to guest satisfaction. The following exhibits present evidence that emerged from responses that contributes to satisfaction dimensions. A significant number of informants identified natural environment (wildlife) and personal experiences as the leading factors for happy moments and satisfaction as illustrated in the following exhibit.

**Exhibit 7.3.1. 1: Natural Environment and Personal Experiences**

Happy feelings because of seeing the wildlife in wild. Beautiful animals and surroundings/wildlife and very satisfied. (Interview informant 1)

I understand how precious wildlife is for instance how beautiful. the silent, or better to say... the only noise you hear is that of the nature, it is magical –I think you feel this excitement and satisfaction. (Interview informant 21)

Yes, it is a very positive experience for me! Because I feel close to nature, yes, it is different from usually what I see, and don't see at home .So, yes, it did raise my satisfaction. (Interview informant 17)

Significantly, a majority of informants stated that seeing the wildlife in the wild were regarded as positive and happy moments and subsequently led to satisfaction. One informant particularly noted that the ecolodge is not the prime factor contributing to

satisfaction. Many informants indicated that the opportunity to see wildlife in the wild with your own eyes was a reality that made the informants happy and satisfied. Correspondently, these positive and happy moments are also presented as emotional components in satisfaction expressive dimensions in section 7.5.3.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.1. 2: Seeing Wildlife in Wild with Own Eyes**

To see them (wildlife) in their own habitat, we saw a family group of monkeys, can't beat that, that's increase my satisfaction – it is nice to see these animals in wild, you know before I only see them in TV or in the zoo.” (Interview informant 20)

Seeing the wildlife satisfied me the most...I went there to see wildlife and that was the experience. Accommodation is by far the on least priority of going there, seeing the wildlife is the main priority. (Interview informant 9)

It is nice to see them (wildlife) in wild and I cannot explain it. It increases my satisfaction because I saw them with my own eye in wild, not in zoo. It is special. (Interview informant 13)

It probably I meant to spot the large monitor lizard, which I enjoyed and I spotted it myself. Yes, it was definitely a rewarding against spotting it by you rather than pointing out. It was exciting to be able to see it and impressive creature! (Interview informant 9)

One informant particularly expressed that seeing wildlife in the wild in close proximity increased satisfaction.

*Seeing wildlife so close to you and made you feel that there is something going on ... you are preserving these wonderful animals you got! This actually increases my whole experience in the lodge and increases my satisfaction.* (Interview informant 20)

One informant stated that seeing wildlife was something special and personal.

*Seeing the otter up the river cruise last night. I have not seen the river otter since I was a child. It increased the level of my satisfaction. It is definitely a real bonus.* (Interview Informant 2)

A significant number of informants stated that seeing wildlife especially monkeys, contributed to a positive, enjoyable experience and to satisfaction.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.1. 3: Monkey and Orang Utan as An Important Wildlife**

It gave us happiness when we saw the monkeys and we feel happy and satisfied. (Interview informant 14.)

Because orang utan are the nearest primitive to human; 97% of the gene is comparable to human. I always wanted to go, this is the lifetime opportunity. Yes, I felt exceptional good when I saw orang utan. (Interview informant 6)

Likewise, a majority of informants expressed the view that seeing specific types of wildlife met their wants/needs and led to happy moments and satisfaction. This evidence was also shown in Chapter Six (Exhibit 6.3.10) as motivating factors. The lodge was also regarded as part of the service dimensions that contributed to happy moments.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.1. 4: Lodge Performance and Environment**

Lodge is in good condition, more than what I expected, room was clean and neat...you can't over emphasize the maintenance. I just walk into the room, you can just go into a room and say this is good, or you can say this is ok...everything was nicely lay out and yes, a minimum standard one can expected. (Interview informant 8)

We were satisfied with the lodge – we have the view of the river, ah... we were very closely to rainforest, monkeys in the trees surrounding so very close to rainforest. (Interview informant 25)

Overall cleanliness and comfort and the basic like –clean sheet, clean bed in the lodge. Cleanliness is up to my expectation and my standard; clean towel, clean water to drink (Interview informant 4)

Another dimension that contributed to informants' satisfaction was the personnel. Interaction with staff and guides contributed to happy moments and subsequently affected satisfaction levels. The friendly and welcoming feeling of staff leads to happy moments felt by informants.

*When I arrive at the lodge, we are welcomed and feel happy. I came here for my wildlife holiday. Now, I am happier than when I arrived –because there were good people working here, all people who talking to us are very friendly people like tour guide (Morris). (Interview Informant 1)*

Another informant stated that friendly staff, cleanliness and facilities were up to expectations.

*The service in the lodge- people was very friendly and taking care of us. I woke the lady already gone to bed and but she looked at it and she was very friendly and ask for it next day ....so she was very caring and it was nothing bad but I was a bit worry. She (staff) was really took care and that was really important to me! Good food and friendly people and they really take good care of us. Yes, all facilities and cleanliness were up to my expectation. (Interview informant 17)*

The knowledgeable, informative and experienced guide during the riverboat cruise trips contributed significantly to the informants' level of satisfactions.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.1. 5: Knowledgeable and Experienced Guide**

He (guide) told us so much about the animals and explains it very well and we understand. The guide is important and he increased my satisfaction, other wise the tour we do and he did not explain, then you don't learn anything you should not see animals/cannot see the animals. Yes, guide is important element to increase my positive experience because he can tell us the animals and the river and the jungle, all about what we saw, we are learning from him. (Interview informant 13)

Guide was important to our satisfaction...he made us feel happy, he is very knowledgeable about animals, spotting the animals and the history, ya... that is good. (Interview informant 14)

The oldest informant (77 years old) expressed that staff and guide services contributed to her happy moments.

*When my only trouser was lost. ...and, I felt very happy when they (guide and staff) found me my trouser... ha.ha...(interview Informant 4)*

A majority of informants commented that guides services have enhanced informants' satisfaction level significantly.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.1. 6: Guide Services Contributed to Satisfaction Level**

The guide, he was our live to our success and enjoyment and his knowledge. Without the guide, it won't be the same journey because though it would still be enjoyable but we would not have seen all these things, we might have seen a hornbill but we would never know what sort it was, we would never have seen orang utan building a nest, we would never spot the... snakes, you know because his expertise is so good and he's eyes so acute and it make a short visit so valuable...ah... because we would not see all those things, so yes, the guide made it very ...successful and that actually increase my satisfaction, beside good explanation of wildlife's, pointing out ... (Interview informant 7)

Guide is a major factor for satisfaction. He pointed out a lots of animals and he filled lots of background history, not only the history of animals but history of river, villages around it, ah...he was incredibly knowledgeable about the birds, birds calls, had quite a lots of entertainment stories and it helps as well when time you cannot find anything. (Interview informant 9)

The things contribute to my satisfaction was having a good guide, very good guide and change our trip, he explains things to you and he gave you insights –the history of the area, what has been happening the wildlife, telling you about the various aspects. (Interview informant 28)

In addition, guide skills in spotting wildlife contributing to positive experiences was widely acknowledged by the informants

#### **Exhibit 7.3.1. 7: Guide and Boatman Skill in Spotting Wildlife**

The guide could see this tiny little animal on the tree when we were in the river. We had good very knowledgeable guide, he was good spotter of animals and birds, and had so much information, and it really made a great deal of differences! (Interview informant 15)

They (Guide and boatman) were very good handling the boat, and directing the boat to the animals. They increase my satisfaction level; it was the boatman spotted the wild animals during several of the trips.... (Interview informant 20)

The riverboat cruise trip and jungle trekking are the two main leisure activities provided by ecolodge operators for their guests to view wildlife and to explore the eco-environment in Sukau. Within these contexts, it was found that group member interactions were regarded as positive experiences, resulting in group pleasure and close friendships. This increased informants' satisfaction

#### **Exhibit 7.3.1. 8: Interactions with Group Members**

You know we socialize much more and we finally knew each other well. Yes, it increases my satisfaction level- I think once you get to know all other people, you are at easy at them, you open up to each other, and the whole thing is much better, you enjoy the meal time more, you feel not like seven complete strangers! You feel you were among the friends. (Interview informant 16)

I think a lot is the experience –travelling in the boat and as a group. It is group joy! You have group of people the same or familiar is nice and can be close as well. (Interview informants 28 &29)

The responses reveal that riverboat cruise trips contributed to a unique, happy experience and memorable moments for many informants. Likewise, riverboat cruise trips also emerged as hedonic and novelty constructs in satisfaction expressive dimensions.

### Exhibit 7.3.1. 9: Riverboat Cruise Trip Experiences

The river trip was the reason why we went to Sukau; I meant that was memorable items. (Interview informant 11)

The river trip and seeing animals- monkey made me feel extremely happy. I like the boat trip very much because there were animals (Interview informant 12).

Sitting on the boat coming back up from the walk, ah.... in the middle of great river, I am getting absolutely fresh—heavy rain! Pouring rain –being in that great big wide river. Yes, riverboat cruise trip increased my satisfaction –you put on your cargo and you up your foot, you.... are in your own world so that holistic world (Interview informant 25)

The whole cruise, that was an experience –it still in my mind- the whole trip still in mind because we added in the river cruise and was a very unique experience. Experiencing the river cruise was the positive experience and overall the whole trip contributes to my satisfaction because it was a wonderful experience. . (Interview informants 28 and 29)

### 7.3.2 Dissatisfaction Dimensions from Interview Responses

The following section presents the empirical evidence on dissatisfaction dimensions that emerged from interview responses. The dissatisfaction dimensions are derived from both the internal and external ecolodge environment. These dimensions can be categorized as two service dimensions (a) instrumental, b) social activities) and one personal experiential.

**Table 7.3. 2: Dissatisfaction Dimensions Themes Emerged from Interview Responses**

Context	Personal Experiential	Social activities	Instrumental
External ecolodge environment	Environmental degradation: disappearance of forest, falling trees	Wildlife –seeing specific type of wildlife	Riverboat cruise – Noise & fume from boat engine -Boat congestion
	*Leeches (during jungle walk) /neutral factor	Negative group interactions	Public toilet facilities (sanitation)
	*Mosquitoes nets and bite/neutral factor	N/A	Road and journey to lodge
	N/A	N/A	Unsafe jetty
Internal ecolodge environment	N/A	N/A	Room maintenance and facilities (meeting expectation and minimum standard)

\* These factors also emerged as neutral factors in section 8.5



The dissatisfaction dimensions in the context of the riverboat cruise trip were attributed to the noise and fumes resulting from riverboats engine causing noise and air pollution and the boat congestion that disturbs the peaceful eco-environment and the wildlife observation. Thus, evidence of dissatisfaction is presented in the following exhibit.

### **Exhibit 7.3.2. 1: Noise and Fumes from Boat Engines**

There been noisy on other boats- the motor and the fume was being everywhere. It is not just looking at the wildlife, we are hearing it and you know when you got huge engine and making all those noise and create lots of fume. It seem not fair to us, we don't want to hear the noise and to get fume on us and we have not come to the so call a clean pristine rainforest for all that noise. (Interview informant 3)

I think we would have gone further on but then the tree was blocking the river, we have to go back, it was very frustrating and then ya, there was other boats and was behind us and that was quite sometime we have to wait again, it was traffic jam on the river and the motors are very annoyed (Interview informant 22)

One informant was angry about the effect of noise and fumes caused by the boat engine on the pristine environment and this led to dissatisfaction.

*I was angry when other boats came and they were in front of us and they left over the petrol smoke, I did not like that and there were other boats.....the smoke of the boat, the only negative thing I can remember. This is a negative experience and it decreases my level of satisfaction. I felt this is untouched rainforest and I am the only one and I am exploring and there were others and suddenly it smells of petrol and it was like this is not a nature anymore! For a moment the dream was not there anymore! (Interview informant 17)*

One informant indicated that boat congestion caused distraction and frustration for him during wildlife observation.

*Detraction from the nature, boat congestion, ...on one of the boat trip –when we sort of going slowly and looking at the wildlife and was very happy that we are going slowly, but then over taken and found our self being in the middle of other boats from other lodges which was a little frustrating because it detracted from the ideal being you know how it travel long way and getting into this remote area. (Interview informant 18)*

In addition, long waiting times resulted in frustration because of boredom that affects satisfaction levels.

*Ah...I also found a bit frustrating the fact that was such a big gap between the boats cruises, ah... with nothing else we need to do! It decrease my satisfaction which I could have done something else. Yes, it affects my satisfaction level and I felt they could have improved upon. (Interview informant 18)*

One informant was disappointed at not having a longer riverboat cruises.

*There were some nice parrots in the trees which if we stay longer we could have been enjoyed. The riverboat trip-did not stay longer and I was a bit disappointed. (Interview informant 7)*

Suggestions for riverboat cruise trips improvements were recommended by the same informant and that is presented in section 8.3.

Several other informants indicated that seeing wildlife was important and they would have felt sad or disappointed if not able to see the wildlife during the riverboat cruise trips.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.2. 2: Seeing Specific Wildlife**

Other animals we like to see –crocodile and we had seen on TV but we have not seen it yet and feel sad. I really want to see crocodile. I want to see – monkey and snakes, snake looks very scarcely and the colour they have it was very green and red eyes- very colourful. But if I don't see any at all, then I will be very unhappy; we come here for the animals and are in the jungle. (Interview informant 13)

If we have not see orang utan, we were be very unhappy and not given up. (Interview informant 14)

Two informants clearly stated that poor sanitation in the toilets outside the lodge resulted in discomfort and contributed to dissatisfaction.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.2. 3: Poor Public Toilet Sanitation**

The toilets during the trip made me feel uncomfortable, like Chinese toilets, I am not use to it and lots of places lack of hygiene, not in the lodge. (Interview informant 4)

The sanitary conditions – the toilet there, it was old with the door, it wasn't that special thing... could imagine and could be different and also as women; door which was not closing and stingy and not that good. This is the only thing that I am not happy! The main disappointment is the toilet outside the lodge. Yes, it decreases my satisfaction. (Interview informant 21)

Likewise, in the jungle walk context, leeches were the main factor resulting the unhappy moments for most informants. One informant echoed the dislike of leeches.

*I don't like the leeches, no, I don't want leeches jumping on me and sucking in my blood. Yes, it decreases my satisfaction. (Interview informant 23)*

Another informant was disappointed with the jungle walk experience due to bad conditions in the jungle including leeches, mud and bugs.

*In the jungle walk was bad, many leeches, muddy and be careful on where we step. Jungle trip is a negative experience for me and in jungle mostly are bugs and I don't like bugs and leeches! (Interview informant 12)*

Informants were disappointed with the disappearance of the forest and the palm plantation along the road to the lodge contributed to negative experiences because of the reduction in wildlife.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.2. 4: Disappearance of Forest**

I think probably the disappointment as I just said the driveway you go through just vast oil palm plantations, you just aware how little forest is left, that just disappointed. Miles of palm oil plantations reduce the wildlife and no scenery to enjoy. (Interview informant 11)

Those palm plantations contribute to our negative experiences. Because in many ways it had done quite thoughtlessly what they have done, ...they could have left some of forest on either side of the road, it would be much more interesting to drive down. (Interview informant 10)

One informant complained about the uncomfortable road access to the lodge due to his health.

*The journey down to the river lodge, you go 42 km on gravel road. Basically is the bad road making me bad. I had bad spin problems and the road was bumpy. (Interview informant 6)*

In the internal ecolodge context, there were several dissatisfaction dimensions that emerged from responses relating to maintenance and safety standards. One informant complained at the lack of properly maintained monitoring systems in the lodge.

*You don't need to have a shower that is blocked. It is so easy to fix and that sort of thing was disappointing. Because you are hot and smelly and you just want a good shower...I did not see any bookings that you could inform or opportunity to inform the lodge. (Interview informant 8)*

One informant complained about disturbed sleep in the lodge caused by spiders and a noisy fan.

*It got to be my sleep was quite disturbed which for two factors really, the spider woke me up! I was asleep and it crawl on my hand, ha...it was big enough to woke me and touch me and made me nervous and other thing was the fan was very noisy, it rattled and it was quite irritating through the night. I am tired; I don't enjoy things as much. This actually affects my experience indirectly, yes, it actually affects my satisfaction. (Interview informant 9)*

Several informants indicated that discomfort and safety relating to mosquitoes leading to unhappy moments. These included partial mosquitoes netting in the room, and mosquitoes' bites causing discomfort.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.2. 5: Discomfort and Safety Related to Mosquitoes**

From our point of view, we were little bit concern with mosquitoes because malaria is a major problem in lots of area including the area we were in the moment. So we like accommodation if nothing else to be 100% mosquito or mosquito net is the easy way. The lower window were 100% protected and upper level window has 9 inches of hole, anything can come through and so that why I said just a little more on sort of... is relatively simple to cure, ah.... (Interview informant 10)

Well I supposed you just hope would not to be bitten by mosquitoes. Yes, Mosquitoes is a dangerous thing. (Interview informant 4)

Mosquitoes- bite. Unpleasant feeling and I hate it (Interview informant 1)

One informant indicated that he had achieved what he came for. To see orang utan and proboscis monkeys made him happy and he commented positively about the lodge and but also complained about lodge maintenance.

*We stayed in places like that before but in this places are getting a little tired- it needs probably more maintenance, although we like to go and see the wildlife we don't like to sleep with it (spiders)! (Interview informant 11)*

Room facilities were seen to be not properly maintained which led to discomfort and dissatisfaction.

*The bathroom facilities when you were out in the tropics is actually quite nice to have a cold shower but then you need reasonably water pressure and ideally you don't let the rest of your bathroom to be completely wet, so it just depend where they place shower curtain that already has to be moved 4 inches and keep the water in the shower tray. But where in our situation the water went up all on the floor, so everywhere was always wet! (Interview informant 10)*

One informant specifically stated his worries about the unsafe jetty for his partner.

*The only reservation we have that I was worried about the getting in and out of the boat for Dianne (his partner) and not for myself, she is not a swimmer, nothing else was really. (Interview informant 28)*

### **7.3.3 Satisfaction Dimensions from PAT Responses**

The PAT survey was used to identify the service quality aspects that lead to satisfaction in the ecolodge service experience context. The responses on things liked most are termed “the positive aspects” of the service experience that consist of service quality attributes leading to satisfaction. These positive service quality attributes can be linked to motivating (satisfier) factors that are capable of influencing guest satisfaction with their presence. In this case, the positive service quality attributes are considered as the motivating quality factors that increase guest satisfaction with their presence (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1995).

Five positive service quality aspects emerged from the responses, which are derived from the environment, both internal and external to the ecolodge. These positive service experiences are categorized and themed in accordance with three service dimensions: a) instrumental (lodge core services), b) social activities (riverboat cruise and jungle walk, group dynamic, c) performance of guides and boatman (knowledge, experiences, skills) and personal experiential as reported in Table 7.3.3

Likewise, these themes or aspects are echoed in the satisfaction dimensions from the interview responses in Table 7.3.1.

**Table 7.3. 3: Satisfaction Dimensions Themes on Positive Service Quality Aspects**

Satisfaction Context	Satisfaction Dimensions Themes (Positive Service Quality Aspects)
Internal Ecolodge Context	<b>Instrumental aspects: Lodge Performance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly, cheerful staff and caring services</li> <li>• Lodge location and aesthetic</li> <li>• Minimum standard of cleanliness</li> <li>• Availability of food and beverage</li> </ul>
Internal and External Ecolodge Context	<b>Personal Experiential: Natural atmosphere &amp; Experience:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peaceful and relax atmosphere from lodge</li> <li>• Learning experience from informative and experience guide</li> <li>• Experience the natural environment rainforest</li> <li>• Jungle walk experience</li> <li>• Riverboat cruise experience: relaxing environment</li> <li>• Experiencing and videoing the wildlife</li> </ul> <b>Wildlife:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varieties</li> <li>• Easy access</li> <li>• Proximity with wildlife in wild</li> </ul>
External Ecolodge Context	<b>Performance of Guides and Boatmen:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and experiences on wildlife and local information</li> <li>• Wildlife spotter</li> <li>• Information provider</li> </ul>
External Ecolodge Context	<b>Social activities: Riverboat cruise:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well organized and better way to view wildlife</li> <li>• Social interactions with other members</li> </ul>

Significantly, a majority of the informants noted that the lodge service attributes such as friendly service by the lodge staff, cleanliness, hygiene and food were the things liked most as these attributes contributed to their comfort and enjoyable stay as well as their feeling of welcome.

### **Exhibit 7.3.3. 1: Friendly Staff and Services**

Friendly and cheerful staff made my stay more pleasant. (PAT 2).

The staffs are cheerful, helpful and friendly, they always singing and made you happy. (PAT 9)

Friendliness of the lovely staffs, I felt welcomed and comfortable. (PAT 50)

A majority of the informants liked the lodge location because of its proximity to nature and wildlife. Others liked the lodge aesthetics due to its landscape and its natural characteristics and design.

### **Exhibit 7.3.3. 2: Lodge Location, Characteristics and Design**

I like the location of the river lodge-at the edge of riverbank, close to forest and rainforest. (PAT 36)

The way in which the lodge had been built and not intrusive in its surrounding. Natural materials have been used and blend in beautifully whilst still remaining practical (PAT 27)

Beautiful place, nice accommodation, well-prepared garden and lake area, and friendly people. (PAT 34)

Other informants noted that the combination of the clean lodge room and good food were the things liked most and enjoyed as these are regarded as expected and of minimum standards (Exhibit 7.3.3.3).

### **Exhibit 7.3.3. 3: Clean Room and Good Food**

Food is so delicious, clean rooms with attached bathroom that is well maintained and function toilet with umbrella in rooms. They make the stay comfortable and enjoyable and these are what I expected (PAT 24).

Lodge is clean and the room is spacious with friendly amenities. Good access to water/tea/coffee and good food, I think it offers a reasonable minimum standard as one can expect. (PAT 20)

A significant number of informants stated atmosphere and experience gained were the most satisfactory things. These experiences were derived from the lodge and its external environment. The informants felt the “peace and rest” and a relaxing environment were closely associated with friendly and cheerful staff and the unique setting of the lodge. In addition, the informants commented on the external environment of experiencing the sounds, forest, wildlife in the wild; learning experiences from the informative and experienced guides; the relaxation during

riverboat cruise and social interaction with other members during jungle trekking attributed to informants' satisfactory experience.

Significantly, a majority of the informants found that the lodge contributed to the peaceful and relaxed atmosphere and regarded it as the thing liked most. These attributes were also identified as emotional components of satisfaction expressive dimensions in section 7.5.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.3. 4: Peaceful and Relaxation Atmosphere**

Friendly staff made you feels at home and make holiday extremely relaxing. (PAT 29)

Lodge is in excellent setting-peaceful and beautiful, quiet and its scenery is outstanding. (PAT 40 and 41)

Our work is very stressful so we look for scenery totally different from London where we live. The peace and quiet is precious to us. (PAT 40)

In the same manner, there were several informants who commented positively about nature; and indicated that they like to experience the natural environment and wildlife and further noted that it was a good experience.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.3. 5: Natural Environment and Wildlife**

We like to hear, see and experience the sounds, smells and terrain of the rainforest. (PAT 37 and 38)

Nature is very beautiful and very different from Sweden and very peaceful, animals in real wild not in zoo or in TV. See animals like monkeys very similar to human. The trip is a lifetime experience to me. Everything is so special and different form what I used to do. See how people live- it is very different from Sweden. (PAT 15)

Wildlife experiences are part of the reason why we wanted to go to Borneo (PAT 24)

Other informants liked the riverboat cruise trip experience as evidenced from the following exhibit.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.3. 6: Riverboat Cruise Trip Experiences**

River trip and its environment make a unique experience to see wildlife. (PAT 36)

Riverboat trip gives you the feeling really exploring the wild. (PAT 29)

Relaxed and pleasant riverboat trip and also close to wildlife. (PAT 17)



Informants also noted the jungle walk experience as an event liked most in order to develop friendship and to see wildlife.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.3. 7: Jungle Walk Experience**

The whole experience though sometime very uncomfortable-the mud and rain during the walk in jungle but establish good friendship and everyone enjoyed the atmosphere (PAT 36)

Walking in the rainforest, seeing lots of wildlife by walking through the jungle. (PAT 35)

Significantly, a majority of the informants were particularly satisfied with the knowledge of the experienced guide who acted as information provider and wildlife spotter during the riverboat cruise enhancing the informants' wildlife learning experiences.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.3. 8: Knowledgeable and Experienced Guide and Boatman**

Guide was pivotal to our finding the animals and spotting the birds/reptile, without his skills we would missed so much and probably have gone away frustrated. (PAT 12)

Superb guide and good to spot different animals. I learnt a lot from guide on wildlife and the local people as learning experiences and increase knowledge-wildlife and local people. (PAT 14)

Our guide, Papa Bear made this trip a trip to remember. He worked very hard to ensure this trip all we hoped for and more. (PAT 40 & 41)

Similarly, informants found the experienced boatman searching for wildlife was the thing they liked most. One informant described: "*River cruise trip with a very good boatman... he was a good wildlife spotter. It was enjoyable trip. Boatman knew a lot on wildlife.*" (PAT 6) and another two informants echoed the same response:

*"Afternoon riverboat rip to Menangkong River and the boatman was very skilled in driving close to wildlife and he spotted snakes for us!"* (PAT 51 & 52)

Significantly, a majority of informants identified seeing wildlife as a memorable experience. Informants enjoyed seeing its variety in the wild and commented on the easy access to wildlife.

### **Exhibit 7.3.3. 9: Wildlife**

Watching birds and animals and vegetation, seeing the proboscis monkey's family and long tailed macaques finding their way to settle in family groups in their respective trees These provide unforgettable experience. (PAT 44).

Wildlife in natural environment and Ox Bowl Lake.... good and unforgettable experience on wildlife. (PAT1, PAT 50)

Wildlife ...easy and more access to wildlife than expected. Access to wildlife means can see as much as in short period –in one boat trip. Travel far way and not particular cheap holidays and so would disappointed if not see wildlife. (PAT 3)

A number of informants stated that the riverboat cruise was the thing they liked most for a variety of the reasons such as its good organization, effective way to view wildlife, varieties of wildlife seen, experience of being close to nature and knowledgeable guides. The relaxing way to experience the natural environment during the riverboat cruise trip is described in exhibit 7.3.3.10.

### **Exhibit 7.3.3. 10: Riverboat Cruise Trips**

Rive cruises were well-organized, ideal way to see abundant wildlife, not much disturbances to the environment and with good and knowledgeable guide. (PAT 9)

We especially came here to the ecolodge to take river cruise trips to see wildlife. Good location to see big variety of wildlife and easy to do than jungle trekking and we have a very good and knowledgeable guide. (PAT 13)

Going along the river in boat and very relaxing we saw many variety of wildlife and enjoy the surroundings, seeing the monkeys, birds and other flora and fauna. (PAT 45 & 46)

### **7.3.4 Dissatisfaction Dimensions From PAT Responses**

The things disliked most are termed negative service quality attributes. They lead to dissatisfaction in the ecolodge service experience consumption. These negative service quality attributes can be termed as hygiene quality factors (dissatisfiers). In this case, the negative service quality attributes are considered as hygiene quality attributes (being the hygiene factors) and contribute to decreasing guest dissatisfaction with their absence (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1995).

These negative responses can be themed into two service experience dimensions: a) instrumental, b) social activities and personal experiential as presented in Table 7.3.4 below. Likewise, these negative aspects and attributes are also echoed in the informal quantification method of analysis. Interestingly, there are significant negative responses related to lodge maintenance and facilities whilst positive responses were significantly related to atmosphere and experiences as discussed in the previous section. There are fewer responses to things they disliked most in comparison to responses about the things liked most (Section 7.3.3 Satisfaction Dimensions from the PAT).

**Table 7.3. 4: Themes that Emerged As Negative Service Quality Aspects And Their Attributes**

<b>Negative Themes on Service Quality Aspects</b>	<b>Attributes</b>
<b>Internal Ecolodge Environment</b>	<b>Instrumental: Lodge Maintenance and Facilities</b> -Poor bathroom maintenances: toilet seat broken, low water pressure for shower, no shower curtain. -Discomfort: hard pillow, disturb sleep by spider and noisy fan. -Cleanliness: brown water, poor quality -No hot shower -Mosquitoes net (Malaria) and food hygiene -Walkway: broken lights along and slippery -Other facilities and information: no snack shop, laundry to dry clothes; no information on wildlife and local
<b>External Ecolodge Environment</b>	<b>Personal Experiential: Natural Environment</b> -Waste/rubbish /litter -Strong sun -Less wildlife seen  <b>Natural attraction</b> -Scarcely leeches
<b>External Ecolodge Environment</b>	<b>Instrumental: Riverboat Cruise trip</b> -Short duration -Long gap /wait for next riverboat cruise trip -Boat congestions -Noise and fume from boat engines -No proper life jacket -sun factor
<b>External Ecolodge Environment</b>	<b>Road access and journey to lodge</b> -Bumpy road -Palm oil plantation.

Significantly, many informants reported that lodge maintenance, services and facilities were the things disliked most. Several informants reported concerns about accommodation due to poor maintenance.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.4. 1: Poor Accommodation Maintenance**

Bad maintenance in the accommodation and could do with a little up-dating particularly the bathroom. (PAT 13)

Maintenance –not a priority in the lodge-toilet seat broken, broken outside lights, shower with little waters-washing hair is impossible, no shower curtain- floor wet, pillows were very hard, information is inadequate in the lodge on wildlife and areas. (These responses found to be consistent with responses from interview, PAT 9 & 10)

Hard beds. Only thin mattress on slat bed, it is hard enough to sleep in the heat without a comfortable bed. (PAT 21)

Conditions of walkways and broken light bulbs caused concern with informants for safety reasons.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.4. 2: Walkway and Broken Light Bulbs**

The walkway from the lodge to the boat... Seemed dangerous and unsafe for people with different capability (PAT 37)

The walkways but cannot know how to improve on them. I appreciate concrete is impractical and alien to the surroundings especially it has to be raised. I went through the boardwalk at one point where it had rotted. The wood became very slippery at times. (PAT 27)

Couples of light bulbs not functioning properly and for safety reason. (PAT 19)

Two informants had broken sleep and this affected their next day's enjoyment due to noisy fans and small animals found in the room.

*Spiders woke me up and the fan was noisy. (PAT 11)*

*Rats or some small animals in my room and woke us up at 3:am. (PAT 12)*

Several informants were very concerned about safety because of malaria and food safety in the ecolodge and noted a lack of safety measures taken by the ecolodge operator.

### Exhibit 7.3.4. 3: Safety and Hygiene

Windows without mosquito nets and concern of malaria diseases for safety reason. (PAT 11)

The food hygiene- there flies and no food cover on the food. (PAT 11)

I am most careful to protect myself against malaria, dingo fever, and net is a good condition and reassuring for safety. Mosquito netting-torn on the upper lowers in the large hut. (PAT 12)

Informants disliked the brown water in the showers and were also concerned about cleanliness and water quality.

*Sanitation –the quality of the water – brown colour. The water come from the river, problem during showering –keep your mouth shut because of the river water –not safely and unhygienic to swallow. (PAT 36)*

A majority of the informants were disappointed with cold showers. They expected hot showers to be provided by the ecolodge.

### Exhibit 7.3.4. 4:No Hot Shower

No hot water in the lodge for shower. After a long river cruises, a hot water would have made us feel better (PAT 32 & 35)

No hot shower in the room. Hot shower made you feel nice and comfortable, fresh (PAT 42)

My shower was cold. I was hoping for a hot shower for a change, I missed the hot shower for 3 days. (PAT 50)

The lack of laundry facilities to dry wet clothes as expressed by one informant created dissatisfaction.

*Soaking wet in the rain and clothes not dry on time. We quite understood that rain is a necessary experience in a rainforest but we were touring to another lodge after our trip. We would appreciate being able to dry these (clothes and boots) on day 2-hour visit before travelling to Mountain lodge. (PAT 41)*

One informant was disappointed that there was no small shop selling snacks for guests who wanted light snacks after the evening cruise trip.

*No small shop to sell snacks to tourist (PAT15)*

Two informants were disappointed with the lack of local wildlife information in the lodge.

*The information is inadequate in the lodge on wildlife and areas. I would like to have seen more of it, what was available and on what you were likely to see. A small selection of books on birds, mammals and reptiles would be very advantages especially on the wildlife you are unlikely to see. (PAT 9 & 10)*

Several informants regarded leeches as a negative experience and described them as scarcely, disliked and awful.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.4. 5: Leeches**

The leeches because it was scarcely. (PAT 14)

Leeches in the rainforest though looking back it was a wonderful experience, but I don't like the creepy crawly animals. (PAT 35)

The leeches. Awful too most European. (PAT 36)

Although the riverboat cruise was regarded as the best way to view wildlife as compared to jungle trekking, nevertheless, it was emerged as one of the negative service quality elements which influenced the dissatisfaction of the informants due the noise and fumes from the boat engines causing pollution to the eco- environment. The responses of long waiting times, boat congestion, less wildlife seen, short duration of trip and no proper life jacket contributed to the dissatisfaction of the informants.

A majority of informants indicated the dislike of loud noises and fumes from the boat engines during the riverboat cruise, causing eco –environmental pollution. Others were disappointed with the waste and rubbish in the river, which caused pollution in the river. These informants were very eco-environment conscious guests who were expecting a clean and un-polluted natural environment in a pristine eco-site to view wildlife with no disturbances.

#### Exhibit 7.3.4. 6: Riverboat Cruise Trips

Extremely noisy during the river boat cruise caused by other boat engines, huge diesel fume generated and also the rubbish and litter on the river. This caused the pollution and damaged the nice eco-environment... This because the noise detracted from the eco-wildlife experiences. Although not many litter but there is no attempt to clean it. (PAT 2)

Other boats in front of us with heavy smoke. Destroyed the feeling of experiencing untouched rainforest. (PAT 28 & 34)

Noise, pollution from other tour boats, boat noise interfered with animal sounds and pollution from engines and fumes caused cough and unpleasant environment to enjoy/seeing wildlife. (PAT 3)

Two informants have made further suggestions and these suggestions are reported in Chapter Eight (section 8.3).

One informant noted the dislike of long waiting times and short boat cruise durations.

*Long time gaps between the safaris –a little bore for waiting. I like wildlife so much that I found long gaps between them, frustrating, interested in longer boat ride in morning. (PAT 29)*

One informant expected to see more animals during the riverboat cruise, leading to dissatisfaction.

*Small amount of animals during the day trips. We expected to see more wildlife. (PAT 30)*

One informant was disappointed with the short riverboat cruise trip due to fallen trees in the river.

*End of the boat trip due to fallen tree crossing and blocking the river. (PAT34)*

Another attribute that led to negative experiences was the poor condition of the life jacket in the boat. One informant was quite unhappy with this for safety reasons.

*The life jacket were not very good, there was no zip and very old. (PAT 10)*

Two informants reported that the only dissatisfaction was from the riverboat cruise due to the sun factor. And the informants provided further suggestions described in section 8.2 (Chapter 8)

*If I had to mention anything it was the river cruise, which took place at 3:00 pm in the afternoon. We went upriver with the sun look in the sky. The sun was in our eyes so we could not see as well as I could have liked. (PAT 40 & 41)*

Several informants responded that they were dissatisfied with the road access to the lodge and complained about the bumpy road, which caused discomfort while the long journey with palm oil plantations meant that little natural scenery was seen.

One informant noted medical problems as a discomfort.

*Travelling on rough road to lodge. Because of being uncomfortable due to having spine troubles. (PAT 8)*

A few informants expressed discomfort caused by the road access to the lodge.

#### **Exhibit 7.3.4. 7: Road Access to Lodge**

Bumpy road. Road is really bad and create discomfort. (PAT 5)

Accessibility to the lodge, isolation and long journey. Whilst I realize that isolation is a good thing, as only the really interested travellers will endure discomfort, the journey to Sukau was very tiring and painful and would it be possible to access it by river. (PAT 9 & 10)

The journey to lodge was rough and uncomfortable long bumpy road. (PAT 17)

#### **7.3.5 Discussion of the Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Dimensions**

The present research aims to explore satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions from the behavioural and experiential perspective and to see whether their predominant determinants subsequently can be explained in accordance with true satisfiers (motivators) and dissatisfiers (hygiene factors) from Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory. One of the objectives of the present research is to explore the satisfaction dimensions using qualitative multi-methods for a holistic view and authentic data and multi-data sources to achieve consistency. Hence, the findings of the satisfaction dimensions are discussed based on the three data sources



(observational data in section 7.2, in-depth interview data and PAT data in section 7.3). The findings of satisfaction dimensions that emerged from three sets of data are presented in Table 7.3.5 below.

**Table 7.3. 5: Summaries of Satisfaction Dimensions and Context from Three Data Sources**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Satisfaction dimensions from Observation Data</b>	<b>Satisfaction dimensions from Interview Responses</b>	<b>Satisfaction dimensions from PAT Responses</b>
External Ecolodge Environment	Wildlife (in wild, variety, performance)	Wildlife	Wildlife
	Natural Environment and Experiences (natural experiences, scenery, rain, weather)	Natural atmosphere and environment	Natural attractions and environment
	Interaction with guide	Guide services: knowledge and experiences	Guides services: knowledge and experiences
	Boatman skill/navigation	Boatman skills	Boatman skills
	Riverboat cruise	Riverboat cruise	Riverboat cruise
	N/A	Jungle walk	Jungle walk
	Group member interactions	Group member interactions	Group member interactions
Internal	N/A	Lodge atmosphere & environment *Lodge /room	Lodge atmosphere & environment *Lodge/room
Internal	N/A	Lodge friendly staff	Lodge friendly staff

\* These elements emerged as satisfaction dimensions but they are not regarded as “true satisfiers”

The findings from Table 7.3.5 above show significant consistency across the three sets of data in terms of satisfaction dimensions. Likewise, the findings from the observational data supplement and show consistency with the findings of the in-depth interview data. The findings of the three data sources reveal that these satisfaction dimensions can be termed: a) instrumental (lodge /room), b) social activities (riverboat cruise, jungle walk, and group dynamics), c) performance of guide and boatman (knowledge, experience and skills) and personal experience (natural environment and experiences and lodge environment). However, the instrumental aspect of the lodge and room is regarded as meeting expectations and minimum standards of informants, and are not regarded as true satisfiers as they did not contribute to satisfaction. These empirical findings of satisfaction dimensions can be referred as “functional components” and personal experiential as “emotional

components” in accordance with Berry and Haeckel (2002) in the discussion of the service experience. This shows that the satisfaction dimensions are not a single aspect of the service experience in the ecolodge but relate to the products and services being offered, the environment and employees (Sasser et al., 1978; Berry et al., 1985 and Johnston and Lyth, 1991). In the same vein, these satisfaction dimensions can be divided into human and physical elements. It seems that guests interact with human and physical elements and both are equally important in this context and contribute to satisfaction.

Likewise, empirical evidence of these satisfaction dimensions is derived from interaction with destination attractions and staff and participation of activities rather than from the facilities and services as mentioned by Kozak and Rimmington (2000) and in the wider literature. One can conclude that satisfaction is dependent upon the service output that was represented by substantial tangible components – wildlife, natural attractions, lodge /room, staff. By this notion, service output is expressed as more of an association of the tangible and activities even though service is often described as “intangible” (Johns, 1999a). Indeed, those services that rely on sensual and psychological benefits can be termed as intangible dominant or emotional components, but in reality, satisfaction with service is often associated with some form of tangible elements.

The findings show wildlife viewing and natural atmosphere and experiences contributed most significantly to satisfaction dimensions. In the same vein, the guide and boatman services contributed significantly to the success of wildlife viewing and subsequently satisfaction. This highlights the importance of the natural environment and the experiences gained, the interaction of the guests with the physical/ environment and human dimensions, and participation in eco- activities (wildlife viewing, riverboat cruise and jungle walk), which concurs with empirical evidence in the leisure literature. Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987) state that activities are a key influences in the leisure experience, whilst Lounsbury and Hoopes (1985) find that vacation satisfaction is predominantly affected by vacation activities and experience. One can infer from the empirical findings that the ecolodge context can be addressed

as a social psychological experience, just like tourism (Iso-Ahola, 1983; Mannel and Iso-Ahola, 1987) and that experiences can be defined as “*the subjective mental state felt by participants during a service encounter*” (Otto and Ritchie, 1996, p.166).

Likewise, guests’ experience in this context is indeed influenced by individual, environmental, situational and personality–related factors, as well as by communication with other people. This concurs with other researchers such as Graefe and Vaske (1987) and Page et al., (2001).

Although the satisfaction dimensions are attributed to both the internal and external lodge environment, the findings reveal that more of the factors are derived from the external lodge environment: wildlife, natural atmosphere and environment, riverboat cruises, guides and boatman services, as compared to internal lodge factors. One can conclude that the external lodge environment seems to be an important dimension that contributes to satisfaction. This means that external experiences gained contribute significantly to guest satisfaction. This findings also corresponds consistently with the claim made by Wight (1997) that it is the activities and not the accommodation (ecolodge) that determine and contribute significantly to the outcomes of the experience, and activities ought to be the main motivator and attraction and not the ecolodge (Wight, 1997). This also indicates that ecolodges are distinct from other types of accommodation and traditional lodges, as Russell et al., (1995) asserts.

The service encounter attributes in the ecolodge context can be divided into core services (internal ecolodge facilities and services) and support services (external activities and services) and guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context is influenced by both the core services and support services. Core services can be regarded as hygiene factors, which do not contribute to satisfaction but they serve only to keep the informants from being dissatisfied with the eco- service experience. Core services are perceived as standardised and predictable by the informants and informants are not impressed by these services. It is the support services (sourced from the external ecolodge environment) that impressed the informants most as well as contributing to the unpredictability of the service experience. It is reasonable to claim that

satisfaction with the eco-service experience is predominately driven by support services that consist of natural attractions, including wildlife, atmosphere and environment and riverboat cruises. These are the prime motives for informants to visit the ecolodge as evidenced by the empirical findings. Thus, support services can be considered as motivators or true satisfiers that stimulate and affect the satisfaction level of the informants. The consistency of dissatisfaction dimensions emerged from three data sources are presented in Table 7.3.6 below.

**Table 7.3. 6: Summaries of Dissatisfaction Dimensions and Context from Three Data Sources**

<b>Service Experience Dimensions</b>	<b>Dissatisfaction dimensions from Observation Data</b>	<b>Dissatisfaction dimensions from Interview Data</b>	<b>Dissatisfaction dimensions from PAT Data</b>
<b>Personal Experiential</b>	<b>Environmental degradation:</b> - Riverbank Erosion - Rubbish floating - *Hot Sun	<b>Environmental degradation:</b> -Disappearance of forest, falling trees  <b>Natural attraction</b> *Leeches (during jungle walk) /neutral factor *Mosquitoes nets and bite/neutral factor	<b>Natural Environment</b> -Waste/rubbish /litter - Strong Sun  <b>Natural attraction</b> -Scarcely leeches
<b>Instrumental</b>	<b>-Poorly maintained jetty</b>	- Room maintenance and facilities - Unsafe jetty	<b>-Lodge/room maintenance and facilities</b>  -Walkway: broken lights along and slippery  -Other facilities and information: snack shop, laundry to dry clothes; information on wildlife and local
<b>Instrumental</b>	<b>Riverboat cruise</b> -Noise and fume Pollution (Boat engines) - Boat Congestions	<b>Riverboat cruise</b> - Noise &fume from boat engine -Boat congestion	<b>Riverboat cruise</b> -Short duration -Long gap /wait for next riverboat cruise trip -Boat congestions -Noise and fume from boat engines -No proper life jacket
<b>Instrumental</b>	N/A	-Road access and journey to lodge -Bumpy road -Palm oil plantation.	<b>-Road access and journey to lodge</b> -Bumpy road -Palm oil plantation.
<b>Social activities</b>	<b>- No wildlife</b>	<b>-Unable to see specific types of wildlife</b>	<b>- Less wildlife seen</b>

\* Also as neutral factors

Clearly, Table 7.3.6 above shows the consistency with which the dissatisfaction dimensions emerged from the three data sets. These dissatisfaction dimensions are related to the operations/condition of the riverboat cruise, seeing specific wildlife, environmental degradation and pollution, poor sanitation of public toilet facilities, leeches, mosquito's bites, the road and journey to the lodge, room maintenance/facilities and the unsafe jetty. These dimensions are related to interaction with the physical environment and physical facilities. These dimensions are regarded as present and generated dissatisfaction in guests, with the exception of leeches, road and journey to lodge and mosquitoes' bites that also emerged as neutral factors, as presented in Chapter Eight (Section 8.5). These factors are considered as "unavoidable" due to the nature of the context in which the informants were. The findings also conclude that dissatisfaction dimensions are more tangible elements with the exception of negative group interaction.

Thus, one can conclude that satisfaction determinants in the consumption of experience in ecolodges are influenced by the guest's physical involvement (being in the natural environment; seeing wildlife with one's own eyes, experiencing the tropical jungle), participation in leisure eco- activities (riverboat cruise trip, jungle walk); social interaction (guide/positive interactions with other members and destination site attributes (physical setting: wilderness) as well as fulfilment of their motivation in terms of needs, wants and goals. The dissatisfaction dimensions are derived from different sets of constructs that are related to the basic facilities, maintenance and operations of the ecolodge context. These dimensions are capable of increasing dissatisfaction if they are not present and their presence will not affect satisfaction.

From the empirical evidence of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions, it is perceived that both the internal and external ecolodge environment contributed to determining and creating satisfied and dissatisfied guests. However, other related factors such as involvement, disposition and mood may also affect informants' experience (Baker and Crompton, 2000). In the present research, guests' engagement in activities, such as the riverboat cruise and jungle walk, enhanced the level of

satisfaction, as these activities were regarded as enjoyable and giving excitement that contributed to the hedonic experience which is also acknowledged in literature (Bowen, 2001). The empirical evidence indicate that destination factors, such as the weather (strong sun) and crowding on the riverboat cruise trips, affected guests' feelings toward negative experiences or dissatisfaction are also mentioned in the literature (Manning and Ciali, 1980; Graefe and Vaske, 1987).

In essence, the empirical findings of guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction also imply that service quality attributes and guest dimensions were identified as highly significant in constructing satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions. These dimensions can be furthered distinguished as two types –“objective and subjective” as has been suggested in the study of home-hosted accommodation where the host-guest interaction is a central role and contributes to guest experience and satisfaction (Lynch, 2003; Tucker and Lynch, 2004). In the present research, the objective can be referred to as the physical products of the ecolodge and the demographics of guests (gender, age, professions, type of guests). The subjective refers to aspects such as experience gained, service orientation, interaction, socialization within the context. The empirical evidence of the present study indicates that both the objective and subjective contribute equally to guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction, where physical products play the important role in ecolodge operations and can lead to dissatisfaction of guests if they are not present and the subjective contributes to guest experiences and subsequently lead to their satisfaction.

The next section presents and discusses the satisfiers and dissatisfiers in accordance with Herzberg's theory.

#### **7.4 Findings and Discussion of Satisfiers and Dissatisfiers in The Ecolodge Service Experience Context**

The previous section has presented empirical evidence on the satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions with consistency across the three data sets. This section reports satisfiers and dissatisfiers that emerged from the responses and subsequently

are related to Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory. Satisfiers and dissatisfiers are explained by employing the concept of motivator factors (satisfiers) and hygiene factors (dissatisfiers) from Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory.

#### **7.4.1 Satisfiers from the Interview Responses**

Both of the responses from the interviews and the PAT survey reveal that there were various satisfaction dimensions that can be treated as true satisfiers. These satisfiers are derived from satisfaction dimensions and they are also associated with informants' satisfaction and motivation (section 6.3). The present research defines true satisfiers as dimensions that lead to satisfaction conditions by increasing the informant's satisfaction, meeting or exceeding expectations or needs and motivation of informants. Likewise, these satisfaction dimensions contribute to positive experiences and enhanced satisfaction levels (Section 7.5.3). True satisfiers and their reasons that emerged from interview responses are summarized in Table 7.4.1 below.

**Table 7.4. 1: Summary of True Satisfiers and Its Reasons from Interview Responses**

<b>Items</b>	<b>True satisfiers</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
1	Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling happy, good experience and increase satisfaction to see specific types of wildlife (monkeys, orang utan, river otter, hornbills, monitor lizard)</li> <li>- Motivation to see endanger species and conservation efforts</li> <li>- Personal achievement and fulfilment of wants, and needs to see variety of wildlife, and conservation efforts</li> <li>- Meet and exceed expectation and as motivation to see wildlife in the wild</li> </ul>
2	Natural atmosphere and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lifetime experience and increase satisfaction</li> <li>- Happy feeling</li> <li>- Good experience</li> </ul>
3	<b>Combination of dimensions:</b> -Wildlife and friendly people  -Wildlife, meeting local people, guide and boatman skills  -Whole experience (nature, wildlife & rain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling happy and increase satisfaction</li> <li>- Increase satisfaction, feeling exceptional good</li> <li>- Motivation factors</li> <li>- Memorable experience, feeling happy</li> </ul>
4	Riverboat cruise trip -Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increased satisfaction, wonderful experience</li> <li>-Motivation</li> </ul>
5	Guides and Boatman -Knowledge, experience & skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increase satisfaction</li> <li>-Learning experience and happy feeling</li> </ul>
6	Jungle walk Experience	- Achievement, increase satisfaction
7	Group interaction	- Increase satisfaction
8	Lodge atmospheres and environment	- Enjoyable and increase satisfaction

Satisfaction dimensions that can be identified as true satisfiers from interview responses are: wildlife as this increased their satisfaction and met informants' wants, need and expectation. Within this context, wildlife is also regarded as one of the important motivation factor (Section 6.3) and satisfaction dimensions for the



informants (Section 7.3). In addition, wildlife combined with natural experience was considered as enrichment “for the soul” and subsequently increased the level of satisfaction for some of the informants. Variety of wildlife and conservation efforts also increased the satisfaction of the informants. Seeing wildlife in the wild with their own eyes and opportunities to see specific wildlife were regarded as true satisfiers as these were considered as good experiences and increased satisfaction.

The natural atmosphere and environment were reported as a lifetime experience and they increased the satisfaction of many informants. In addition, there was a combination of satisfaction dimensions that were regarded as true satisfiers for the informants as this increased satisfaction and met expectations of the informants. The combinations dimensions are wildlife and friendly people; wildlife, meeting local people and the guide and boatman skills; whole experience include nature, wildlife and rain. The riverboat cruise is identified as a true satisfier as it contributed to wonderful, memorable experiences as well as acting as a motivation factor for informants and increased informants’ satisfaction. Within this context, guides were identified as one of the significant satisfiers that enhanced the satisfaction level of the informants. Specifically, the informants expected to see some wildlife and felt disappointed if not able to see them so a guide was important to spot them. There were two informants who regarded the jungle walk as the true satisfiers’ for them, as they had achieved something and thus increased their satisfaction level. In addition, the jungle walk was revealed as an opportunity to develop friendships among the group members and subsequently increase informants’ satisfaction. Interestingly, the condition of the lodge and its minimum basic facility was regarded as contributing to informant’s expectations of what serves as expected basic comforts. Thus, these factors are not termed as satisfiers. However, the lodge’s atmosphere and environment contribute substantially to informants’ satisfaction and are termed as satisfiers.

Likewise, true satisfiers can be categorised as tangible and intangible elements that increase satisfaction, fulfil needs and wants and meet the expectations of the informants as well as being either controllable or uncontrollable by the ecolodge

operators. These true satisfiers that emerged from the interview responses are presented in Table 7.4.2 below and are sourced from both tangible and intangible elements provided by the ecolodge operators in the eco-environment. From the responses, all true satisfiers are categorized as intangible elements with the exception of wildlife and natural attraction. Likewise, true satisfiers can be themed as, a) personal experiential aspects from natural attractions (wildlife and its varieties, rain, local people, natural conservation) and lodge (atmospheres and environment; b) eco-activities: riverboat cruise trips and jungle walk; and c) personnel: lodge staff and guides.

**Table 7.4. 2: True Satisfiers Emerged from the Interview Responses**

No.	Satisfaction Dimensions (Satisfiers)	Tangible/Intangible Services *Controllable/Uncontrollable
1	Nature atmosphere and experiences (wildlife riverboat cruises, jungle walk, nature and rain)	Intangible/uncontrollable
2	Eco activities (wildlife viewing, riverboat cruise trips, jungle walk – achievement)	Intangible/uncontrollable
3	Lodge performance (atmosphere and environment)	Intangible/controllable
4	Friendly lodge staff	Intangible/uncontrollable
5	Guides & boatman knowledge and services	Intangible/uncontrollable
6	Natural environment and attractions (wildlife, forest and jungle)	<b>Tangible/uncontrollable</b>
7	Meeting local people	Intangible/uncontrollable
8	Positive group interaction	Intangible/uncontrollable

\* Definition of controllable and uncontrollable is based on ecolodge operators' perspective, where these elements are regarded within or beyond their means and ability to manage in the ecolodge context.

#### **7.4.2 Satisfiers from Service Quality Perspective based on PAT Responses**

The satisfaction dimensions from PAT data emerged from the things liked most by the informants. These satisfaction dimensions are termed as service quality aspects that can be treated as satisfiers or motivating factors for the informants that also contribute positive experiences. There are five positive service quality aspects that emerged from responses. These positive responses can be categorized under the themes: a) The lodge services and location, b) Leisure activities: Riverboat Cruise and Jungle Trekking, c) The wildlife, d) Natural attractions and Environment, e) Guides and Boatman. These satisfiers are capable of generating positive experiences and subsequently also increase satisfaction (Table 7.4.3).

**Table 7.4. 3: True Satisfiers Emerged from the PAT Responses**

<b>Positive Service Quality Aspects</b>	<b>Positive Service Quality Attributes (Satisfiers)</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
Lodge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cleanliness/sanitation</li> <li>-Food and beverage</li>   <li>-Friendly, cheerful and caring services</li> <li>- Peaceful and relax environment</li> <li>-Location close to nature and wildlife</li> <li>-Design and landscape</li> </ul>	<p><b>Meeting expectation and minimum standard (not actually increase satisfaction)</b></p> <p>Pleasant stay and good experience Feeling comfortable</p>
Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Knowledge and experiences</li> <li>-Wildlife spotter</li> <li>-Information provider</li> </ul>	Increase satisfaction
Boatman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Skills and wildlife spotter</li> </ul>	Increase satisfaction
Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Varieties</li> <li>-Easy access</li> <li>-In wild and in close contact</li> <li>-Seeing with own eye and videoing</li> </ul>	<p>Memorable experience</p> <p>Excitement and increase satisfaction</p>
Natural attractions and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Experience the sound, feel the rainforest</li> </ul>	<p>Feeling good, unique experiences</p> <p>Increase satisfaction</p>
Riverboat cruise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Well organized and better way to view wildlife</li> <li>-Relaxing environment</li> <li>-Learning experience from informative and experience guide</li> </ul>	<p>Memorable experience</p> <p>Enjoyable experience</p> <p>Increase satisfaction</p>
Jungle walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Seeing wildlife</li> <li>-Challenging experience</li> <li>-Positive group dynamics</li> </ul>	<p>Memorable experience</p> <p>Increase satisfaction</p>

These satisfiers emerged from positive service quality attributes relating to functionality of the riverboat cruise, the lodge and the bedroom. Aesthetic aspects refer to the lodge and cleanliness and comfort relates closely to both the lodge and the bedroom. Tasty is strictly related to the food served. Access is related to wildlife and location while variety refers to both food and wildlife. Friendly, responsiveness and care are associated with staff, services and welcome. Knowledge of wildlife and local information relates to guides and boatman. Finally, availability relates to natural environment and attractions. These satisfiers or service quality dimensions

are consistent with some of the service quality dimensions found in the work of Johns and Lee-Ross (1997), Johnston and Silvestro (1990), Johnston (1995) and Parasuraman et al., (1985).

### 7.4.3 Dissatisfiers from the Interview Responses

This section identifies dissatisfiers from the dissatisfaction dimensions that emerged from the interview responses. The interview responses reveal that the contexts that lead to dissatisfaction moments for the majority of the informants are from the operational and technical aspects of riverboat cruise trips and jungle walks, the lodge/bedroom and other facilities. Dissatisfiers are attributes that lead to negative feelings and experiences for the informants including discomfort and these subsequently caused dissatisfaction.

**Table 7.4. 4: Dissatisfiers and the Reasons from Interview Responses**

Item	Dissatisfiers	Reasons
1	Mosquitoes' bites	Feeling uncomfortable and hate it Feeling not safe, dangerous, feeling concern
2	Riverboat cruises	Increase dissatisfaction, negative experiences  Don't want Negative things Decrease level of satisfaction Dreams is not there anymore Frustration, detraction and disappointed Feeling uncomfortable
4	Toilet facility outside lodge	Feel uncomfortable, not use to it -toilet Disappointment and dissatisfaction
5	Leeches during jungle walk	Feeling aggravated and afraid Don't like and negative experiences Decreases my satisfaction
6	Bumpy road to lodge	Uncomfortable due to health problem Increase dissatisfaction
7	Room	Uncomfortable and disappointed Disturb sleep, feeling tired and affect satisfaction because of not enough sleep Feeling unsafe (broken mosquitoes net)
8	Wildlife (crocodile)	Have not seen and feel sad
9	Unsafe jetty	Worried and feeling unsafe

Table 7.4.5 below presents the dissatisfiers from the interview responses. It is interesting to note that the dissatisfiers are tangible elements as compared to satisfiers that relate to intangible services.

**Table 7.4. 5: Dissatisfiers from the Interview Responses**

<b>Dissatisfaction Dimensions (Dissatisfiers)</b>	<b>Tangible and Intangible Services *Controllable /Uncontrollable</b>
Riverboat trip: -Short duration -Long waiting time -Noise and fume -Boat congestion	Tangible and controllable
Room maintenances - Bathroom facilities - Cleanliness of room (insects)	Tangible/controllable
Road and journey to lodge	Tangible/controllable
Toilet facility outside lodge	Tangible/controllable
Unsafe lodge walkway	Tangible/controllable
Mosquitoes and leeches: discomfort	Tangible/uncontrollable
Wildlife: availability	Tangible /uncontrollable
Environmental degradation (falling tree/disappearance of forest and rubbish)	Tangible /controllable

\* The definitions of controllable and uncontrollable are based on the ecolodge operators' perspective, where these elements are regarded as either within or beyond their means and ability to manage in the ecolodge context.

In the context of the riverboat cruise trip, factors leading to unhappy moments were the noise and fumes resulting from riverboats engine causing noise and air pollution; disturbing the peaceful eco-environment and wildlife observation; waste pollution in the river and the degradation of the eco-system (falling trees). These negative factors caused dissatisfaction for informants. For example, one informant was angry at the air pollution to the environment caused by the boat engine. Boat congestion caused frustration during wildlife observation. In addition, long waiting times resulted in frustration and boredom. Informants also revealed that seeing wildlife was important and they would feel sad or disappointed if not able to see wildlife during the riverboat cruise trips. Another informant felt frustration and negative experiences with fellow group members. Poor sanitation in the toilets outside the lodge resulted in discomfort and contributed to dissatisfaction. Likewise, in the jungle walk context, leeches were the main factor resulting in unhappy moments and creating negative feelings of dislike. In addition, they were frustrated when unable to see much

wildlife and when faced with problems relating to mud and bugs. These, therefore caused dissatisfaction among informants.

Disappearance of the forest and the vast acres of palm plantation along the road to the ecolodge contributed to negative experiences because of the reduction of wildlife. Also, uncomfortable road access to the ecolodge for guests with health conditions contributed to dissatisfaction.

In the ecolodge context, there were several dissatisfaction dimensions that emerged from the responses, which were related to issues of hygiene, safety, comfort and minimum standards. Those elements are regarded as “controllable” that are within the means of the lodge operators in terms of their skills management and ability. One informant specifically stated his worries about the unsafe jetty for his partner. Lack of a proper maintenance monitoring system in the ecolodge resulted in dissatisfaction. Disturbed sleep in the ecolodge caused by a spider and a noisy fan led to discomfort, safety concerns and unhappy moments as did only partial mosquitoes netting in the room, all causing dissatisfaction with the ecolodge. The room facilities were not properly maintained including no hot shower, leading to discomfort and dissatisfaction for a majority of the informants.

#### **7.4.4 Dissatisfiers from the PAT Responses**

The things disliked are the things that guests found most dissatisfying with in the ecolodge service experience consumption context. They are also treated as negative service quality aspects that lead to dissatisfaction with their presence.

The responses to things disliked most from the PAT data are identified as negative service quality aspects. Dissatisfiers were identified from each negative quality aspect as shown in Table 7.4.6 below. These negative aspects that emerged from the responses can be themed into nine aspects with their negative attributes. These service quality aspects are tangible elements.

**Table 7.4. 6: Dissatisfiers from the PAT Responses**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Dissatisfaction Dimensions (Dissatisfiers)</b>	<b>Tangible and Intangible Services Controllable/Uncontrollable</b>
1	Riverboat cruise: technical and discomfort	Tangible/controllable
2	Lodge/room maintenance and facilities: functionality, comfort and cleanliness	Tangible/controllable
3	Other facilities and information-“extra”	Tangible/controllable
4	Road and journey to lodge: discomfort	Tangible/uncontrollable
5	Lodge walkway: technical	Tangible/controllable
6	Natural attraction: leeches: discomfort	Tangible/uncontrollable
7	Wildlife: availability	Tangible /uncontrollable
8	Natural environment: noise/fume and rubbish	Tangible /controllable

The dissatisfiers that emerged are functionality/performance, comfort, cleanliness and availability from the negative service quality aspects. Again, these dissatisfiers, also known as negative service quality attributes, correspond well with service quality attributes found in the work of Johns and Lee-Ross (1997), Johnston and Silvestro (1990), Johnston (1995) and Parasuraman et al., (1985). The responses show that functionality from the riverboat cruise, bedrooms and walkways contributed significantly to dissatisfaction followed by discomfort caused by leeches in the natural environment and attractions, road access and journey to the lodge. Availability was related to hot showers, other facilities and information provided by the ecolodge as well as wildlife. Cleanliness was associated with the natural environmental and attractions and the bedroom.

In conclusion, the findings from both interview and PAT responses provide evidence that both the internal and external ecolodge context contributed to satisfaction and dissatisfaction. It is interesting to note that responses from both interviews and the PAT indicated that satisfiers are intangible services whilst dissatisfiers are more tangible elements. There is consistency between both interviews and PAT responses in relation to the satisfiers and dissatisfiers as presented in the Table 7.4.7 and Table 7.4.8 below. The satisfiers in both the PAT and interview responses correspond well with each other responses. Table 7.4.8 below shows the crosscheck of dissatisfiers from the PAT and interview responses where consistencies are found.

**Table 7.4. 7: Consistency of Satisfiers Emerged from the PAT and Interview**

Items	Satisfiers (PAT Responses)	Satisfiers (Interview Responses)	Tangible and Intangible Services
1	Atmosphere and Experience	Nature atmosphere and Experience	Intangible
2	Riverboat cruise (viewing wildlife)	Riverboat cruise	Intangible
3	Lodge aesthetics and environment	Lodge atmospheres and environment	Intangible
4	Wildlife: variety, access and in wild	Wildlife in natural habitat: variety, access and proximity	Intangible
5	Staff: friendly, helpful and cheerful	Friendly staff	Intangible
6	Services and welcome: welcome, responsiveness and efficient	Services and welcome: welcome, responsiveness and efficient	Intangible
7	Guide services: knowledge and experience	Guide services: knowledge, experience, skills	Intangibles
8	Jungle walk experience	Jungle walk experience	Intangible
9	Natural environment and attractions: availability	Natural environment and attractions (forest, jungle)	Tangible
10	Boatman services: knowledge and experiences	Boatman services: skills and experience	Intangible

**Table 7.4. 8: Consistency of Dissatisfiers Emerged from the PAT and Interview**

Items	Dissatisfiers (PAT Responses)	Dissatisfiers (Interview Responses)	Tangible & Intangible Services
1	Riverboat cruise: -Functionality and comfort	Riverboat trip: -Short duration -Long waiting time -Noise and fume -Boat congestion	Tangible
2	Bedroom: -Functionality, comfort and cleanliness	Room maintenances: - Bathroom facilities -Cleanliness of room (insects)	Tangible
3	Road and journey to lodge: -Comfort	Road and journey to lodge: comfort	Tangible
4	Other facilities and information-“extra”	Toilet facility outside lodge	Tangible
5	Lodge walkway: Functionality	Unsafe lodge walkway	Tangible
6	Natural attraction: -Leeches (comfort)	Mosquitoes& leeches: -Discomfort	Tangible
7	Wildlife: availability	Wildlife: availability	Tangible
8	Natural environment: -Noise/fume and rubbish	Environmental degradation: -Falling tree, disappearance of forest, noise/fume and rubbish	Tangible



#### **7.4.5 Findings and Discussion of Motivators and Hygiene Factors in the Ecolodge Context**

In the ecolodge context, guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction are derived from the experience and consumption of services consisting of both tangible and intangible elements. Elements leading to positive experiences can be termed as motivators /satisfiers, while elements leading to negative experiences where the absence will not contribute to positive experiences can be termed as hygiene factors or dissatisfiers. It is postulated that guest satisfaction is linked to satisfaction - a function of two types of conditions (Herzberg, 1962): a) hygiene factors/ (dissatisfier) leads to conditions of dissatisfaction; b) motivators/ (satisfier) leads to condition of satisfaction. The emergent satisfiers from the interview and PAT informants are termed as “motivators” whilst the emergent dissatisfiers are termed as “hygiene /maintenance” factors in accordance with Herzberg’s Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory. The satisfiers and dissatisfiers are identified from the service quality aspects of the PAT responses and the interview responses in relation to increase satisfaction, motivations and fulfilments of needs/wants of the interview informants.

These satisfiers and dissatisfiers are determined from service experience consumption consists of services derived from both internal and external aspects of the ecolodge. The satisfiers are identified as content of the ecolodge environment, which consists of intangible elements. Primarily, the content of the ecolodge consists of atmosphere and experience derived from riverboat cruises, wildlife viewing, lodges environment and staff service orientation.

The dissatisfiers in this context refer to the context of the ecolodge environment that relates to its maintenance and operational condition. These are peripheral elements such as the facilities, physical natural environment, skills, technical and functional parts as well as standards and minimum comfort within the ecolodge environment. Hence, the dissatisfiers are more tangible products and less the intangible services as shown in section 7.4.3 which also concurs with the views of Balmer and Baum (1993). The empirical evidence indicates that satisfaction in the ecolodge context is

derived from satisfiers while hygiene factors, which are crucial for maintaining minimum levels of quality of opportunity in this context, will not affect satisfaction but without them dissatisfaction levels will increase.

However, it is noted that these motivator and hygiene factors are context related and are subject to variation due to differences in the content and context of a particular environment. Nevertheless, in the case of the ecolodge environment, it is argued that content and context are universal regardless of the location. The categorization of motivators and hygiene factors in the ecolodge environment was found to correspond well with the Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory. The satisfiers that emerged link well to the ecolodge environment content whilst the dissatisfiers emerged are linked to the ecolodge context, which can be seen to be consistent with Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory where the satisfiers or motivators are from the job content and the hygiene factors relate to job content or job environment.

The present research seeks to draw out empirical confirmation of application of Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory to the realm of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction, something that has been neglected as an area of empirical study. Building from the above empirical findings in relation to the satisfiers and dissatisfiers in accordance to the Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory, these findings are presented in Table 7.4.9 below.

**Table 7.4. 9: Satisfiers /Motivators and Dissatisfiers /Hygiene Factors in the Guest Satisfaction in the Ecolodge Context**

<b>True Motivators/Satisfiers (Intangible Services)</b>	<b>Hygiene/Maintenance Factors (Tangible Products)</b>
Atmosphere and Experience	Riverboat cruise: operation
Experiences gained from participation in eco-activities: Riverboat Cruise, wildlife viewing, Jungle walk)	Room facilities and cleanliness Lodge walkway
Aesthetics feature and lodge environment	Road and Journey to lodge
Proximity and diversity of wildlife	Other facilities and information: "Extras"
Knowledge & experience of guides & boatman	Public toilet facilities
Service Orientation	Seeing specific wildlife
-	Pristine environment

Therefore, satisfaction and dissatisfaction of guests are derived from the consumption of eco-experiences (both internal and external environment) in the ecolodges that are linked to two motivational forces as specified in Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (Motivator and Hygiene).

The dissatisfiers are tangible dimensions that lead to dissatisfaction. Evidence was found in the present research that the dimensions for satisfaction and dissatisfaction are quite different since they are caused by different facets of interaction between their experiences and attitudinal consequences for the individual. Hence, different unrelated dimensions result in guests being simultaneously satisfied and dissatisfied, which means the level of satisfaction is independent of the level of dissatisfaction, unlike traditional one factor theory that postulates satisfaction and dissatisfaction as opposites on a single or bi-polar continuum (Maddox, 1979). Ostensibly, these forces are two separate areas of motivational factors. Motivation ("satisfiers") leads to a positive event experience, and hygiene factors ("dissatisfiers") are important maintenance factors. Hygiene factors will not lead to a positive experience; however, in their absence, negative experiences will increase. Therefore, Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory is arguably a relevant motivational theory and is applicable to the measurement of guest satisfaction in the ecolodge environment. The satisfiers and dissatisfiers that emerged from the empirical data are linked to the social-psychological benefits (motivation) and their attitudes exposed to the eco service experience. Thus, conclusively, Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory can be applied to guests satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions. Arguably, adopting Herzberg's theory of using "satisfiers/motivators" and "dissatisfiers/hygiene factors" to investigate guest satisfaction provides a better explanation than Maslow's hierarchy of needs' explanation, a better understanding of guest motivation and guest expectations in the accommodation environment. Simply, the customer expectations (needs and wants) increase and change over time (Balmer and Baum, 1993). Explicitly, the original work of Maslow's hierarchy of needs was part of a clinical experiment rather than a foundation for a theory of motivation that explains why people take holidays. This empirical evidence captured from the Profile Accumulation Technique also converges with the proposition made by Johns and

Lee-Ross (1997) that motivating quality attributes (satisfiers) are capable of increasing satisfaction in proportion to their presence and are capable of decreasing satisfaction if they are absent whilst hygiene quality attributes (dissatisfiers/maintenance factors) lead to dissatisfaction as they are never completely satisfied and need to be continually maintained.

#### **7.4.6 Discussion of the Satisfier and Dissatisfiers for Guest Satisfaction in the Ecolodge Context**

The findings of the satisfaction determinants from Table 7.4.7 and dissatisfaction determinants from Table 7.4.8 are translated into satisfiers and dissatisfiers, as presented in Table 7.4.9 above and Figure 7.4.1 below. It is noted that these determinants are identified by using a combination of both rational and critical incident approach. The findings about satisfiers and dissatisfiers clearly show that these are different constructs that lead to satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The satisfiers are constructs that are related to the areas of attractions/series of leisure activities/natural atmospheres that lead to unique experiences. These can also be termed as destination attributes or “ seeking” and are derived more from the external features of the ecolodge, which consists of the various components in the ecolodge experience derived from participation in activities – riverboat cruise trips, the jungle walk, and the peaceful and relaxing environment as evidenced from the empirical evidence.

The dissatisfiers are constructs that relate to the physical environment and sites, ecolodge facilities, amenities and infrastructures and information necessary as a foundation for the ecolodge to operate. They are also related to maintenance/operation (functionality), comfort, cleanliness and availability. For example, the conditions of the physical environment – pristine environment (free from noise and fume pollution) are noted by informants in several instances across the three data sources (observational data, in-depth interviews and PAT). Likewise, the operation of the riverboat cruise trips, expressed as a condition, led to dissatisfaction due to noise and fumes from boat engines as well as boat congestion. These are different from satisfiers in the sense that they contribute to dissatisfaction

and will not affect satisfaction with their presence. They are simply regarded as certain expectations and a minimum requirement in order for the ecolodge to operate properly. Although the satisfiers and dissatisfiers are clearly shown as separate constructs, there are three factors – “leeches and mosquitoes’ bites”, “road and journey to the lodge” and “water quality” – that are found to be dissatisfiers and also neutral factors for informants. It is concluded that the neutral factors do not affect guest satisfaction or dissatisfaction, but are simply regarded as part of the situation and condition of the ecolodge context. It is interesting that the critical factors were not revealed by the present research findings, and these factors lie beyond the scope of the present research. These empirical findings are presented in Figure 7.4.1 below.

**Figure 7.4. 1: Findings Satisfiers and Dissatisfiers in the Ecolodge Context**

<b>POTENTIAL TO DISSATISFY</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Dissatisfiers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Riverboat cruise (operation)</li> <li>•Room facilities /cleanliness</li> <li>•Other facilities /information (“extras”)</li> <li>•Pristine Environment</li> <li>•Specific wildlife</li> <li>•Public toilet facility</li> <li>*Mosquitoes &amp; leeches</li> <li>*Road &amp; journey</li> </ul>	<b>Critical Factors</b>  <b>Not emerged from the findings</b>	
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Neutral Factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Mosquitoes &amp; leeches</li> <li>*Road &amp; journey</li> <li>•Weather condition</li> <li>•Water quality</li> </ul>	<b>Satisfiers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Atmospheres &amp; Experience</li> <li>•Leisure activities</li> <li>•Aesthetic features &amp; lodge environment</li> <li>•Proximity/Diversity of wildlife</li> <li>•Experience &amp; knowledge of guides &amp; boatman</li> <li>•Service orientation</li> </ul>	
	<b>Low</b>	<b>POTENTIAL TO SATISFY</b>		<b>High</b>

#### 7.4.6.1 Satisfaction Dimensions As Satisfiers

The empirical findings show that satisfaction dimensions can be termed as satisfiers as these tend to lead to satisfaction if they are present, but will not lead to dissatisfaction if they are absent. Knowledgeable and experienced guides and boatman skills contribute significantly to satisfaction with wildlife viewing. These findings are shared by Weiler and Davis (1993) and Page and Dowling (2002) who

recognized that guides play an important role in the tourist experience and enhancing the quality of visitors' experience, both through information and the way in which it is imparted.

It is interesting to note that jungle walk experiences contribute to satisfaction levels in terms of "self-achievement" and constitute a challenge for older women to complete the hard and slippery muddy walk, while another older guest indicated that the jungle walk was an opportunity for him to make friends with the group members and subsequently increase his satisfaction. It can be concluded that the determinants of satisfaction (satisfiers) are linked to motivator factors since these contribute to guests' satisfaction, while their absence will not create dissatisfaction. This means that these are sets of motivating factors that offer to increase satisfaction as evidenced from the findings presented in section 7.4.

The findings also reveal that there were situations where informants commented positively about the condition of ecolodge and acknowledged the importance of maintenance, cleanliness of ecolodge as well as having the basic facilities in the ecolodge. However, these aspects or attributes did not clearly lead to their satisfaction.

#### **7.4.6.2 Dissatisfaction Dimensions As Dissatisfiers**

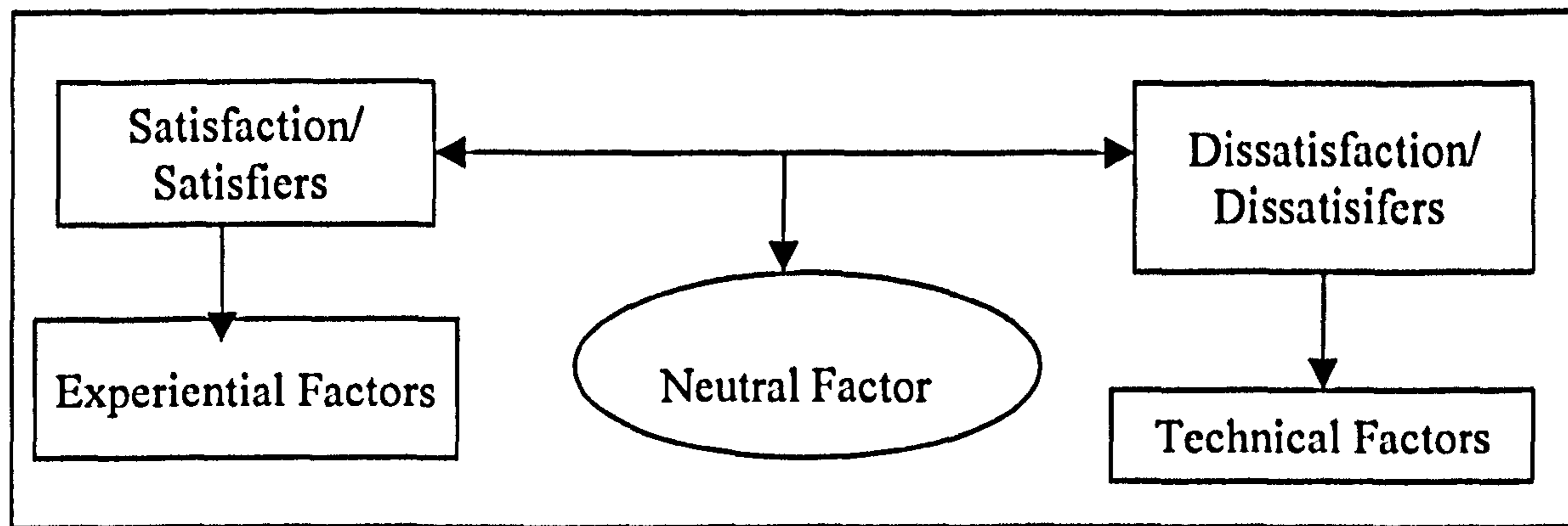
The determinants of dissatisfaction are sourced from different sets of factors which act as maintenance factors in order to function properly and are also regarded as minimum expectations or standards by the guests; for example, the maintenance of the room in terms of basic comfort (properly operated showers and fans, mosquito netting, and cleanliness) and expected hot shower or types of wildlife to be seen as well as a pristine natural environment, proper walkways, and the minimum sanitation standard of public toilets. The presence of these dimensions did not contribute to satisfaction but without them, dissatisfaction will occur because these are considered as maintenance factors or as minimum expectations that guests have. They can be associated with low performance or absence of desired features (Cadottes and

Turgeon, 1988b). Thus, these are termed as dissatisfiers and they require management control to prevent poor performance. These elements of dissatisfaction are sourced from the functionality, maintenance and conditions of the physical facilities and environment, the availability of the “extra” facilities and information and attractions (specific wildlife that they expect to see) and these contribute to the context of the ecolodge, which is similar to job context termed as dissatisfiers in job satisfaction in Herzberg’s theory.

#### **7.4.6.3 Discussion of Satisfiers and Dissatisfiers in Accordance with Herzberg’s Theory**

More importantly, the evidence demonstrates that that these constructs (satisfiers and dissatisfiers) of guest satisfaction are from two different motivational forces. They can be represented in two extremes of two different continua similar to the way that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in Herzberg’s theory are on one continuum – the motivation continuum — satisfaction versus no satisfaction, while on the other hand there is — the hygiene continuum — dissatisfaction versus no dissatisfaction. Herzberg advocates that those variables, the presence or absence of which cause satisfaction or no satisfaction, are different constructs from ones that cause dissatisfaction or no dissatisfaction. The empirical evidence suggests that guest satisfaction can be explained as extremes of two different continua –one extreme, satisfiers, are constructs related to personal experiential aspects derived from the range of natural environment and attractions attributes, physical sites and leisure activities which are sourced from the external ecolodge environment, and at the other extreme, dissatisfiers are constructs related to the performance and availability of facilities, amenities and maintenance of the ecolodge context as presented in Figure 7.4.2 below.

**Figure 7.4. 2: The Two Extremes of the Two Different Continua of Guest Satisfaction**



Satisfiers and dissatisfiers are thus two different motivational forces or conditions in guests' satisfaction, where satisfiers can be regarded as "growth" or "seeking" (social psychological /intrinsic), and dissatisfiers as "avoidance", termed as "escaping" (destination attributes /extrinsic). This proposition is consistent with "two unipolar traits" in defining job satisfaction, where satisfaction is a function of motivator/satisfier factors, and dissatisfiers are a function of hygiene factors, which is also evidenced in guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Hence, there is also congruence with the basic principle of the contribution of knowledge about human nature: people live at two separate levels – feeling pain and happiness concurrently in Herzberg's theory. This implies it is possible for people to conceive their experiences which are made up of these two divergent parts and yet be motivated by two opposing needs, known as the concept of the dual nature of man demonstrated in real-life situations (Herzberg et al., 1962). Thus, the present empirical findings provide a profound insightful into the factors that lead to guest satisfaction and needs and can be explained by using these specific constructs (satisfiers and dissatisfiers).

The empirical evidence of satisfiers and dissatisfiers points towards the importance of the two aspects in the management of the ecolodge context – physical/facilities components as the "hard dimensions" and the ecolodge setting and environment as the "soft dimensions" leading to conceptualisation of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In fact, soft dimensions have been given less attention in terms of managing guest satisfaction due to their intangibility that makes them difficult to



manage by the hospitality management. However, the empirical evidence from the present study explicitly shows that the ecolodge setting (soft dimension) is important as it contribute to guest experiences and act as satisfiers that lead to guest satisfaction. In the same vein, the significance of soft dimension (home setting) has been recently recognized and reflected in literature as an important element in commercial home management (Lynch and MacWhannell, 2000). It has been confirmed in home-hosted accommodation that host-guest relationships, as part of the “soft dimension”, is a central product experience (Tucker and Lynch, 2004). This leads us to assert that forces that lead to satisfaction are different from the forces that lead to dissatisfaction. This can be seen from the fact that the elements that contribute to satisfaction are sourced from “soft dimensions” derived from the ecolodge setting (atmosphere and experiences), whilst dissatisfaction is caused by “hard dimensions”- the physical facilities of the ecolodge.

The confirmation of Herzberg’s theory through this empirical evidence also clears the question posed by Cadotte and Turgeon (1988a) whether consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction can operate under extremes of two continua. However, one must also note that these classifications are not static and constantly change and are subject to the types of services and the context.

In conclusion, these empirical findings confirm that Herzberg’s Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory can be used to investigate guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the ecolodge context. The present empirical findings confirm that job satisfaction is a function of two types of condition, known as hygiene (dissatisfier) that is related to the job context (environment) and leads to the condition of dissatisfaction (prevention); and motivator (satisfier) that is related to job content and leads to a condition of satisfaction. The satisfaction that guests expect to derive from the consumption of eco-experiences (both internal and external environment) in ecolodges is linked to two motivational forces as specified in Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory (Motivator and Hygiene). In the present research, motivators (“satisfiers”) lead to a positive event experience, and hygiene factors (“dissatisfiers”) are important maintenance factors. Likewise, these constructs for

satisfaction and dissatisfaction are driven by quite unrelated and different forces since they are caused by different facets of interaction between their experiences in different directions, as indicated in the Figure 7.4.2 above. These different unrelated constructs can result in guests being simultaneously satisfied and dissatisfied, which means the level of satisfaction is independent of the level of dissatisfaction, unlike the traditional one factor theory which postulates satisfaction and dissatisfaction as opposites on a single or bi-polar continuum (Maddox, 1979). It is argued that the concept of guest satisfaction is similar and closely related to job satisfaction theory since both the two dominants (satisfaction and dissatisfaction construct) are closely related and both contribute to an individual's life satisfaction (Andrews and Withey, 1974; Maddox, 1976).

This leads to the conclusion that guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction can be theorized as satisfiers and dissatisfiers that, according to Herzberg's theory, operate at two extremes of one continuum. These are supported by the strong empirical evidence that emerged from the responses gathered by each instrument in earlier sections and also the consistency (cross checking) of the three data sources (observational data, in-depth interviews and PAT).

This evidence indicates that the two different sets of constructs that constitute satisfaction/dissatisfaction operate independently and contribute different motivational forces or conditions in the ecolodge context. However, it is noted that the variables that contribute to satisfiers and dissatisfiers may not be universal as these variables are subject to variation and change in accordance with the different types of services outlet or company due to the different context of each. For example, there are more variables found in satisfiers in the ecolodge context, as compared to other types of hotel or accommodation; it is simply that the context of the ecolodge is different from other types of hotels based on the types of services provision and the service experience.

The empirical evidence in the present research shows that satisfiers are intangible elements while dissatisfiers consist of a series of tangible elements. Thus, this

confirms the proposition by Balmer and Baum (1993) that motivator /satisfiers can be described as “intangible items” whilst hygiene/dissatisfiers can be described as the “tangible elements” provided in the accommodation sector in the literature.

Tables 7.4.10 and 7.4.11 present comparisons of satisfiers and dissatisfiers relating to job satisfaction (Herzberg’s theory), guest satisfaction (Balmer and Baum, 1993) and the findings of the present research. It seems there are some similarities exist with regard to both satisfiers and dissatisfiers. For example, service orientation as satisfiers in the present research is also found in Balmer and Baum (1993) and could be equated to increased responsibility in job satisfaction. The findings of a pristine environment as a dissatisfier could be equated to working conditions in job dissatisfaction. The findings of the dissatisfiers from the present research are room facilities and cleanliness, other “extra” facilities and information, which also concur with the ones proposed by Balmer and Baum (1993). The tentative comparison of both motivators and hygiene factors across the three different contexts is not to make comparison directly against each factor. The aim here is not to make a direct comparison between the motivators and hygiene factors across the three different contexts, but to seek any commonality of characteristics between the factors. Thus, it seems that one common thread that can be drawn from these findings, as presented in Table 7.4.10, is that the satisfiers can be termed as the “soft dimensions” and the dissatisfiers as the “hard dimensions” in that particular environment.

**Table 7.4. 10: A Tentative Comparison of Motivators between Herzberg's Theory, Balmer and Baum (1993) and the Present Research Findings**

<b>Herzberg's Dual Factor Theory (Hersey &amp; Blanchard, 1982,p.58)</b>	<b>Balmer &amp; Baum, (1993, p.33) Guest Satisfaction</b>	<b>Guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context</b>
<i>Motivators</i>	<i>Motivators</i>	<i>Motivators</i>
<b>The Job Content</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Ecolodge Content</b>
N/A	*Recognition by Staff	*Atmospheres & Experiences
*Achievement	*Sense of Belonging	*Leisure activities (Wildlife viewing, riverboat cruise, jungle walk)
*Recognition for accomplishment	*Flexibility by Hotel	*Aesthetic
Challenging work	N/A	N/A
*Increased responsibility	*Service Orientation	*Service orientation
*Growth and development	N/A	*Proximity & Diversity of Wildlife

\*These elements /motivators across the three different context of the studies can be described as “soft dimensions” that lead to satisfaction or can be termed as “true satisfiers”.

**Table 7.4. 11: A Tentative Comparison of Hygiene Factors between Herzberg's Theory, Balmer and Baum (1993) and the Present Research Findings**

<b>Herzberg Dual Factor Theory (Hersey &amp; Blanchard, 1982,p.58)</b>	<b>Balmer &amp; Baum, (1993, p.33) Guest Satisfaction</b>	<b>Guest dissatisfaction In the ecolodge context</b>
<b>Hygiene Factors</b>	<b>Hygiene Factors</b>	<b>Hygiene factors</b>
<b>Environment</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Ecolodge Context</b>
*Supervision	*Pricing	*Riverboat cruise operations
*Policies and administration	*Facilities- cleanliness, size, variety	*Room facilities & cleanliness
N/A	*“Freebies” /Extra	*Other facilities & information (“extra’)
*Working conditions	N/A	*Pristine environment
Interpersonal relations	N/A	Specific wildlife
*Money, status, security	N/A	*Road & journey to lodge

\*These elements/hygiene factors across the three different contexts of studies can be termed as “hard dimensions” that lead to dissatisfaction or can be termed as “dissatisfiers.”

Explicitly, one can also conclude that Herzberg's theory is superior and offers a better explanation of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction by presenting satisfaction

in terms of satisfiers and dissatisfaction in term of dissatisfiers, in comparison with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The latter faces a problem in determining guest satisfaction as it is recognized that needs, motivation, and expectations of individual guests are different (Stover & Garbin, 1982; Beard and Raghed, 1983) and also individual needs and expectations are dynamic and change over time. Exploration of guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction by reference made to tangible and intangible elements provided in the ecolodge context as "satisfiers" and "dissatisfiers" rather than service quality dimensions offer a clearer and more meaningful way to understand guest satisfaction for ecolodge operators. The empirical evidence as satisfiers and dissatisfiers also points to the importance of the dysfunctionlity of ecolodges that lead to guest dissatisfaction, but equally importantly the ecolodge setting and its surrounding environment also lead to guest satisfaction. Hence, from the guests' perspective, the ecolodge context is identified as not only a physical construct, but also other constructs such as temporal, social, culture, personal and emotional construct with aesthetic (environment and landscape). These views echo those of Lynch (2005) in the study of commercial home stay.

These findings clearly portray the specific factors that lead to satisfaction and dissatisfaction. They support the superiority of Herzberg's theory in comparison to service quality and expectations as constructs for measuring satisfaction since both SERVQUAL and expectancy disconfirmation theory suffer from theoretical limitations. Likewise, by proposing behavioural and experiential approaches to exploring guest satisfaction, the present study suggests that ecolodge managers may be able to see and understand better the "workings of the guests' mind" and thus in doing so they may be better able to satisfy guests in a more consistent manner.

Although Malsow's hierarchy is not able to identify satisfaction dimensions adequately, these empirical findings can be explained by referring to the categories of needs. This means that these empirical findings can be interpreted by using Malsow's hierarchy, where in this case, hygiene can be linked to physiological, security and social needs, while motivators can be linked to high categories of needs

such as esteem (achievement), self-actualisation (personal fulfilment from experiences and knowledge gained).

These empirical findings are also congruent with previous studies that adopted Herzberg's theory even though the study contexts are in different service environments of the tourism and hospitality industry. Jensen's (2004) study applies Herzberg's theory to explain tourists' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with tourist attractions on the Danish Island of Funen, which covers castles, animal parks and museums, and the study confirms that satisfiers/motivators are sourced from the experience itself (entertainment, educational events, socializing) and peripheral elements (toilet facilities) as hygiene factors, showing that these are two different set of constructs affect satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

The present findings also show consistency with Howard and Crompton (1980), who adapted Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Theory to explain the key ingredients in visitors' satisfaction with experiences in recreation facilities. The physical attributes of tourism and recreation facilities or special event sites are termed as maintenance attributes and they are the tangible physical environment that is a necessary prerequisite for an event, as a foundation on which a meaningful event is developed and not a sufficient condition for visitors to report a satisfying experience at an event. The psychological environment is the satisfier, which also depends upon hygiene factors or dissatisfiers in contributing to satisfaction. This implies hygiene attributes cannot secure a positive recreational experience and can only reduce the probability of a negative experience.

The present empirical evidence also concurs with Crompton (2003) who conceptualises Herzberg's theory in explaining the relationship between hygiene maintenance attributes and motivator attributes that facilitate the delivery of social-psychological benefits in the context of festivals, the maintenance/hygiene attributes refer to a site's physical environment — parking space and cleanliness of restrooms — while the motivator attributes are the distinctive differentiating features of an event and act as satisfiers. Similarly, the present empirical findings seem to conform

with Cadotte and Turgeon's (1988a) attempt to measure guest satisfaction based on compliment and complaint elements by relating them to the concept of attributes as satisfiers and dissatisfiers in the context of the restaurant and lodging industry, where they show dissatisfiers require management control to prevent poor performance while satisfiers suggests areas of opportunities for further improvement (Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988b).

In conclusion, these empirical findings confirm that Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory can be used to investigate guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the tourism and hospitality context. These empirical finding conclude that what makes guest happy is very different from what made them unhappy. Drawing from this, one can conclude that the ecolodge service experience can be termed as satisfier/ motivator and hygiene/dissatisfier factors in terms of Herzberg's (1966) claim that all aspects of an experience can be classified as either motivator or a hygiene factor.

In short, the empirical findings have provided evidence to answer the main research questions and sub research questions in relation to identifying satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions as satisfiers and dissatisfiers in accordance with Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory. The identified satisfiers described "happy feelings and increase satisfaction" are closely related to the fulfilment of needs, wants, motivation and meeting or exceeding expectations, which is consistent with several definitions put forward by previous researchers.

The findings show that these satisfiers correspond well with the description of satisfaction on the basis of needs based definition whereby it is seen to be closely related to motivation (satisfaction is perceived as resulting from meeting corresponding needs or motives). It is conceptualised as being the result of fulfilment of drives, motives or needs (Stankey, 1972; Brady et al., 2002) or as "appraisal satisfaction" and refers to a form of assessment or evaluation based on the extent to which an individual's perceived reality meets with his or her current expectation (Stankey, 1972; Brady and Robertson, 2001). The satisfaction

expressive dimensions from Table 7.5.2 seem to be related to psychological outcomes and benefits (Mannell and Kleiber, 1997) and are also consistent with Bultena and Klessign (1969) who define satisfaction as a comparison process between the expected and perceived experience derived from participation in activities.

It is interesting to note that the findings of true satisfiers can significantly be attributed to the external ecolodge environment, the activities and the experiential aspect, and least affected by the condition of the ecolodge and its minimum basic facilities. This points to the importance of proper eco-resources management for the ecolodge operators in terms of planning, wildlife conservation and preservation of a pristine environment and that guests are attracted to a well protected setting of biodiversity, wildlife and pristine landscape. It also indicates that the majority of the guests in this context prefer comfortable basic needs but not too comfortable, and it seems the guests are more willing to accept and appreciate local conditions, as suggested by Eagles (1992) and Boo (1990) who state that guests generally do not require luxurious accommodation.

The next section presents and discusses the measurement and evaluation of guest satisfaction.

## **7.5 Findings and Discussion of Measurement and Construction of Satisfaction Dimensions in the Ecolodge Context**

### **7.5.1 Introduction**

This section presents and discusses the empirical findings of measurement of satisfaction and dissatisfaction from both interview and PAT responses.

The empirical evidence shows that informants evaluate and measure their satisfaction and dissatisfaction based on both functional/utilitarian and emotional/expressive aspects. The utilitarian transaction dimensions are derived and linked to service quality attributes or perceptions of performance as delineated in expectancy disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1980) to describe the perception of satisfaction and



dissatisfaction. These dimensions are also related to the antecedent factors of expectations and performance in Chapter 6 (section 6.4).

On other hand, expressive dimensions in relation to satisfaction and dissatisfaction are driven by the atmosphere and experiences gained by the informants. These dimensions are a subjective mental state felt by the informants. They form the basis of the quality of the service experience that has often been ignored to explain variance in satisfaction evaluation.

Thus, satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions emerge from the responses in the present research and are measured in two categories, namely: a) satisfaction with the service performance- as utilitarian dimensions and b) satisfaction with the service experience in the context of ecolodge environment- as expressive dimensions. This means that satisfaction and dissatisfaction in ecolodges are two dimensional - that is utilitarian dimensions, which result from the ecolodge service performance whilst the expressive dimensions result from the service experiences gained in this context. Interestingly, utilitarian aspects tend to refer to the lodge/bedroom itself and the facilities aspect while expressive dimensions tend to associate with the experiences from natural environment and attractions. The satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions emerged from the utilitarian and expressive dimensions in the interview responses and are also echoed consistently in the PAT responses.

The following section present evidence of satisfaction dimensions based on the utilitarian transaction and is followed by expressive dimensions.

### **7.5.2 Satisfaction Dimensions Based on Utilitarian Transaction**

Predominantly, the extent to which guests' expectations are met will eventually determine the level of guest satisfaction. If the overall performance while or after visiting a destination exceeds or meets the initial expectations, then the guest is considered satisfied, which is underpinned in the expectancy disconfirmation theories. However, if the perceived performance falls below these expectations, then

the guest may be dissatisfied. This confirms the view that satisfaction and dissatisfaction emerge from evaluation based on the guests' perceptions and expectations of the service performance, as asserted in the expectancy confirmation and disconfirmation paradigm.

The utilitarian satisfaction dimensions that emerged were sourced from ecolodge service performance, which can be categorized into service components: room, food, facilities, staffs, lodge locations and landscape, natural attractions, the eco-activities and the natural environment (section 7.3) and summarized in Table 7.5.1. These service components can also be further characterized into two dimensions: technical and functional as advocated by Gronroos (1984). Technical quality is defined as the service outcomes that are tangible or measurable whilst functional quality is defined as the service delivery process that is intangible and less observable.

**Table 7.5. 1: Utilitarian Satisfaction Dimensions Themes Based on the Expectation and Performance**

Number	Main Utilitarian Satisfaction Dimension Themes	Sub-Themes
1	Lodge	Cleanliness, basic facility, food, comfort, lodge setting and aesthetics, self-service style
2	Lodge staff, Guide and Boatman	Friendly and helpful
3	Natural Environment	Wildlife, natural setting and experiences
4	Safety	Mosquitoes net in room Jetty for riverboat cruise trip

The following section records the satisfaction dimensions that emerged from the responses when the performance met the informant's expectation or exceeded the informant's expectations.

From the responses, there were significant number of informants who highlighted the lodge performance such as cleanliness, comfort, service and friendly staff as satisfaction dimensions because they met the informants' expectations and standards. This evidence is presented in following exhibit and was also discussed in Chapter Six (section 6.4).

### **Exhibit 7.5.2. 1: Utilitarian Dimensions: Expectations and Minimum Standard (Lodge Performance)**

The trip met up to my expectations, the river lodge was really how I pictured it really. The room was very clean and met my minimum standard. People were so friendly, they never get annoyed, so you know the people always happy and smiling to me, you cannot. (Interview informant 16)

I think the actual accommodation itself was very good, I think the restaurant area was very good. Yes, it was up to my minimum standard and was very good, staffs were friendly, there were first name term with us and looked after us very well. (Interview informant 18)

Lodge was we expected and with minimum comfort, staffs are helpful and there were plentiful and hot food. (PAT 35)

Food was good and lodge was set in different surroundings. Standard of lodge was much better than we expected and been before. (PAT 45 & 46)

One informant highlighted the comfort of the lodge and it's setting in the rainforest, the natural experiences and wildlife, which met the informant's expectations.

*Because you don't expect a hotel like this in the middle of rainforest, you know and we use to comfortable lifestyle at home and here... and to go and stay in the place like that it was brilliant! It was an extremely good trip and it live up to our expectation. It was very good... Yes, it met up my expectation. I described as a Tarzan camps, it was right at the edge of the river, a big river and you hear all the noises at night, the animals and the crowd, the squirrel and you know really was living in the jungle with the full forbia! (Interview informant 15)*

Informants also regarded dimensions such as wildlife, friendly people and a clean room as meeting the informant's expectations and subsequently leading to satisfaction.

*It is more than what I expected. I imagine it is very little animals, very near river and Small River. The experience gained is bigger than what I expected. Seeing monkeys made me happy, much more than I expected. Wildlife and people-friendly, clean room. I felt satisfied and what I expected. More important is to see the wildlife. (Interview informant 1)*

One informant particularly noted that seeing wildlife met expectation.

*It meets my expectation, seeing the river otter and satisfied me. (Interview informant 2)*

A majority of informants were satisfied with food quality, clean room, basic facility and the lodge setting, wildlife seen, friendly staff, the guides and boatman services. Such evidence was supported by the following informants.

*Yes, the room was clean and boatman was good, and everything went well, is very good. When we got there, we had a shower, air conditioning and it tidy and spray with mosquitoes and we have nets and so everything we need was there... and we saw all the wildlife—everything we need to see we saw. We enjoyed the whole thing- we like the whole set up, ya because it was exactly what we expected, slightly better than what we expected, accommodation was slightly better than we anticipated, we were told it was more than basic than it was, the food quality was very good and ....the guide was excellent, so they all put together very well! (Interview informant 24)*

There were few informants who believed that the service performance exceeded their expectations and were satisfied with wildlife access, lodge setting, self service style and the value for money as supported by the following informants.

*Much better than what I expected and everything the wildlife was absolutely superb because we obviously we having a good time. This is been probably the accessibility, ya definitely much better than what we expected. I certainly never expected to see five-orang utans in morning, ha.ha.... I meant you know that was something. ....I like about it is the help yourself on the drinks you know available, and it just make you feel more comfortable. You know, I prefer to do what I like. It all makes you feel more at ease. (Interview informant 3)*

One informant with previous experience in the same context came with certain expectations and was satisfied with guide services, friendly staff, food and safety.

*It met up my expectation and probably better than what I expected. The things held together were that we have two very good leader-guides. The food was perfectly good, the staffs were friendly – they talked to us, the staffs were friendly and we said good morning to them and they said good morning to you, ah...they were helpful in getting us in and out of the boat, I meant I am slightly... I have two hip replacements, so occasionally I am unstable on my legs and they were very carefully to make sure I don't fall into the river. That's good thing. (Interview informant 23)*

Those informants who had previous exposure to Asian culture of friendly people found the friendly service from the lodge staff met their expectations. In short, empirical evidence reveals that satisfaction and dissatisfaction emerged from the

process of evaluation and was based on the perception and expectation of the informants, which corresponds well with consumer behaviour theories and the marketing literature. Thus, the utilitarian dimensions are related to lodge (cleanliness, basic facility, food, comfort, self-service style, setting and aesthetics); staff (friendly and helpful lodge staff, guide and boatman) and the natural environment (wildlife, natural setting and experiences), key dimensions that contribute to satisfaction. Safety was considered by three informants who were quite conscious about safety in relation to the room (well protected from mosquitoes) and jetty for riverboat trip (one because of a hip problem).

### **7.5.3 Satisfaction Expressive Dimensions in the Ecolodge Context**

The evidence of expressive dimensions of service experience in relation to satisfaction is evidenced from interview responses and are explained by employing the six constructs of service experience dimensions proposed by Otto and Ritchie (1996). These are intangible elements that contribute to guests' experience positively and lead to satisfaction. It is noted that emotional aspects contributed significantly to the service experience and these are displayed in Table 7.5.2 below. This summary is of the themes of expressive satisfaction dimensions with examples that emerged from the three responses (interview, the PAT and observation fieldwork) during the consumption of service experience in the ecolodge context.

**Table 7.5. 2: Themes of Satisfaction Expression Dimensions**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Satisfaction Expression Dimensions</b>	<b>Attributes /elements</b>
1	Hedonic	Excitement, enjoyment and memorable experiences related to wildlife (Exhibit 7.5.3.1, Exhibit 7.3.3.9, Exhibit 7.3.1.1 & 7.3.1.3) Nature environment (Exhibit 7.3.1.1), Riverboat cruise (Exhibit 7.3.3.6, Exhibit 7.3.1.9, Exhibit 7.2.2) and memorable experience of Jungle walk (Exhibit 7.3.3.7)
2	Interactive	Guests' interaction with the service environment (Exhibit 7.5.3.2; Exhibit 7.5.3.3 and Exhibit 7.3.1.4.)  Being part of the process to see and spot wildlife and to fulfil wants and needs (Exhibit 7.3.1.2, Exhibit 6.3.8)  Intention to repeat the experience to see wildlife (Exhibit 8.1.2. and Exhibit 8.1.3)  Positive interactions between guests and the lodge staff, guides and groups members (Exhibit 7.5.3.2, Exhibit 7.3.3.8, Exhibit 7.3.2.1, Exhibit 7.3.1.5; 7.3.1.6; 7.3.1.7)  Opportunity and meeting people other people -staff and group members (Exhibit 7.3.1.8, Exhibit 7.3.3.1)
3	Novelty	Something new, unique and different experiences (never been before, first -time see wildlife in wild, lifetime experiences, something that I could never do due to old age) (Exhibit 7.5.3.4, Exhibit 7.5.3.6, Exhibit 7.3.3.9 and Exhibit 7.3.3.5)  An escape from the normal daily life or work (Exhibit 6.3.10) in Chapter Six
4	Comfort	Physical and relaxation in the natural environment and lodge (Exhibit 7.5.3.5, Exhibit 7.3.3.3)  Experiencing the peaceful, tranquillity of the natural environment (Exhibit 7.3.3.5, Exhibit 7.3.3.4)  Riverboat cruise trip offered relaxation and physical comfort (Exhibit 7.3.3.6, Exhibit 7.3.1.9)
5	Stimulation	Information and knowledge gained from the knowledgeable and experienced guides as a learning experience and an understanding of the natural environment which ultimately a valuable education (Exhibit 7.3.1.5, Exhibit 7.3.1.6 and Exhibit 7.3.1.7)  Challenging experiences to complete the jungle walk in risky condition -rainy weather, muddy and leeches (Exhibit 7.5.3.6).
6	Safety	Personal safety into and out of boat and riverboat cruise trip safety (Exhibit 7.5.3.7)

The informants' responses support six constructs of service experience dimensions by Otto and Ritchie (1996) as revealed in Table 7.5.2 above. Hedonic dimensions were found among all interview informants in the service experience. These correspond to the high level of satisfaction in a number of happy moments from interview responses and observation behaviour during the riverboat cruise trips. The key attributes emerged from interview responses and observation field work during service experiences and can be categorized as hedonic dimensions include excitement, enjoyment of seeing wildlife and memorable experiences. Excitement, enjoyment and memorable experiences are closely related to wildlife and the natural environment and riverboat cruise trips in the hedonic dimensions. Wildlife is the main element that is addressed in the hedonic dimension that is consistent with the positive dimensions found in the "happy moments" from the observation data.

Likewise, wildlife also emerged as one of the themes for guest motivations in Chapter Six (Section 6.3) and in exploration of satisfaction dimensions in section 7.3. In addition, significantly, a majority of the informants expressed themselves that the natural environment led to enjoyment. Consistently, natural environment emerged as one of the satisfaction dimensions from the three data sources. The whole experience gained in the ecolodge context contributed to a memorable experience and as part of the hedonic dimensions. Interestingly, bad experiences of the jungle walk were regarded as excitement and a memorable experience for an elderly informant as presented in the exhibit.

#### **Exhibit 7.5.3. 1: Hedonic Dimensions: Enjoyment of Wildlife, Natural Environment, Riverboat Cruises and Jungle Walk**

I considered it (experience of seeing wildlife) as memory and I bet my children will tell their children that grandma has seen these things. (Interview informant 5)

Most impressive thing was to see the nature overall, We have the chance to do it. It was a nice feeling and last forever! (Interview informant 22)

Experience on the river cruise was the positive experience and overall the whole trip contributes to my satisfaction because it was a wonderful experience. (Interview informant 28)

We couldn't do that in England; it come to country like this and do a walk like that something we didn't expect we would never do it (jungle walk). It was a good experience that we always remember till to the day we die I think! Because I thought we never do it again. (Interview informant 15)

Interactive is addressed as the second important dimensions that emerged in the service experience. One of the characteristics of service is that guests are part of the production and consumption process in the service delivery process. Thus, this means that the interaction between guests and the service environment, which consists of tangible and intangible elements, are part of the service evaluation in the ecolodge context. The presence of guests as part of the process in service experience consumption contributed to the positive experience.

The positive interactions between guests and the lodge staff, guides and groups members and local people emerged from the following informants. These attributes are also regarded as the positive and memorable experience, leading to satisfaction dimensions and the related informants' responses are presented in section 7.3 and in the following.

#### **Exhibit 7.5.3. 2: Positive Interactions with Lodge Staff, Guides, Group Members and Local People**

The staff are cheerful, helpful and friendly, they always made you happy (PAT 9)

Seeing wildlife during the riverboat cruise which I know I would never see without having the guides who constantly pointing and explaining and interacting with us. (Interview informant 19)

We (group members) really could not stop laughing, that was when the group really makes friends with each other! (Interview informant 16)

I also enjoyed very much meeting with other people- the local people. I met the local people and just being polite and saying how are you today and exchanging good feeling. I always happy to exchange opinions and feelings with other people and again I feel very humble. (Interview informant 7)

Others concluded that presence in the environment offers positive experiences that were associated with their ability to see wildlife as part of their own experiences and the closeness to the wildlife and natural environment. The informants' responses on these attributes are reported for satisfaction dimensions. One informant regarded physical presence in the environment to see the wildlife as a happy and enjoyable moment.



*My happy moment was when I sat on the boat to watch monkeys running along and jumping from bark to bark that was during the river boat cruise (Interview informant 5)*

Being in an eco-environment context enabled the guests to experience the reality of seeing wildlife as a special and emotional one.

### **Exhibit 7.5.3. 3: Physical Interaction in Service Experience Context**

Special, rare and seeing nature environment and animal that I could never ever see at home, it is something very exotic; I think that was made it so special. (Interview informant 17)

It is such a privilege out there and to see these wild animals, and they are wild animals and privilege just to be close to them .To see them in their own habitat – open. (Interview informant 20)

We witnessed and we saw with our experience, I can't express it. if we were not there and we won't be able to witness it...that gave us the benefit of being able to participate it and enjoyed it, if we were not there and we won't be able to witness it. (Interview informant 26)

To us, it is a different experience during the day and night because of the sound and the types of wildlife and seeing the different birds, you got to look at it and not saying it to people! (Interview informant 29)

Likewise, the informants' presence in the process contributed substantially to the positive experiences, as the informants were able to fulfil their wants and needs to see wildlife.

Novelty is the third important dimension in the service experience. A majority of the informants regarded novelty as unique and unusual experiences that one encountered. Most of the interview informants regarded novelty as new and different experiences (never been before, first – time to see wildlife in wild, lifetime and rewarding experiences, an achievement, a challenging task, something that I could never do due to old age) as well as an escape from normal daily life or work. From the responses, novelty is regarded as an escape from work life for one informant and as an escape from normal life for another informant. According to the responses, these informants were looking for a new environment to relax and be away from work and normal daily routine. This evidence is revealed in Chapter Six (Section 6.3, Exhibit 6.3.10) as one of the motivators and also as evidence in section 7.3 as satisfaction dimensions.

### **Exhibit 7.5.3. 4: Novelty Experiences**

I am glad I did it and because it is a great experience and no one I know had done this, I have been lot of countries and this was different...I never stay on the river lodge near the river and in the jungle I can't explain it. Well, this is my first time. (Interview informant 4)

I feel close to nature, yes, it is different from usually what I see, and don't see at home. (Interview informant 17)

It was unusual and exciting; also the sun was shining after the rain, the colour and everything. The environment we were in –fresh and nice weather and beautiful... new things and it has to do with feeling good and feeling in the soul with the nature, and nature is more close to them, it is mainly this! (Interview informant 21)

You really have the scenery like seeing in the TV that you haven't realize. We always try to see new things. (Interview informant 22)

It was just different and unique experience for us; we have not done anything like this before, so we really enjoyed it. (Interview informant 24)

You are in your own world so that holistic world... we were very closely to rainforest, monkeys in the trees surrounding so very close to rainforest. the rainforest. Ha... Yes, it increased my satisfaction –(Interview informant 25)

Comfort in relation to physical relaxation is another dimension that emerged from the service experience encountered in the natural environment and ecolodge. The physical environment contributed to relaxing experiences as revealed in Exhibit 7.5.3.5 below.

### **Exhibit 7.5.3. 5: Comfort in Physical Environment**

You know the elements of excitement and the element of peace and tranquillity, all these made it a very special experience. (Interview informant 7)

Holiday relaxing feeling because it is so different in the environment that one comes from! So, it is an interest and relaxing and that as well as that motivation and satisfaction come from. (Interview informant 18)

We sit outside and listen and look at the monkeys, ah.... it was just wonderful! Very peaceful and quiet and we saw lot of things which is wildlife and special for us. (Interview informant 19)

It was also very relaxing atmosphere and felt very satisfied inside, ah... it was very good experiences. (Interview informant 22)

In the middle of Great River, I am getting absolutely fresh—heavy rain! Pouring rain –because being in that great big wide river. (Interview informant 25)

It is so quiet and peaceful ...and the boat trip was good and seeing the monkeys went along and in the trees and in nature. (Interview informant 27)

Besides experiencing the peaceful tranquillity of the natural environment, informants also found that the riverboat cruise trip offered relaxation and physical comfort as indicated by the following informants.

*Overall, it was a very pleasant experience; it (viewing wildlife using riverboat cruise) was relatively easy to do, ah... (Interview informant 10)*

*The boat trip was very nice.....I supposed relaxed and nice, doing nothing and just sitting there.... good environment to be in. (Interview informant 27)*

One informant further elaborated that the riverboat cruise trip offered better opportunities and a more comfortable way to view wildlife compared to the jungle walk. Some of the informants' responses on the riverboat cruise trip are one of the satisfaction dimensions reported in section 7.3 and also in the following.

*Riverboat trip was a comfortable way to view wildlife. I just sit back and relax ah.... is a comfortable angle, if I am walking through the jungle that is always up there and straight above your head. Now, whereas this is more much more easily ah... seeable angle. Where if you on jungle trail, you are looking at jungle if you have not been you are looking 20- to 30 inches, that's your visibility at the end of the road. See when I was on the river, I could easily looking, ya... you got 360 degree vision if you wanted, anywhere you wanted to. (Interview informant 8)*

Also, there was the physical comfort of the lodge and the room. There were two informants who noted the physical comfort of the lodge they stayed: "*Pay attention to my needs and clean room.*" (Interview informant 1) and also: "*Neat and clean room to sleep. We did not get bitten by mosquitoes .We have a comfortable night sleep.*" (Interview informant 8)

Most interview informants regarded the service experience as stimulating based on the information and knowledge gained from the guides and saw this as a learning experience. Informants' positive experiences were enhanced by knowledgeable, skilful and experienced guides to spot and explain wildlife and local history and thus offer better understanding of the natural environment. This informant evidence is described in Section 7.3.

There were few informants who regarded it as challenging experience for them to complete the jungle walk in risky conditions - rainy weather, muddy and leeches.

### **Exhibit 7.5.3. 6: Jungle Walk Experience**

The rain, too much rain and, rain and muddy and afraid of slipping in the strange place. The danger of slippery and muddy in a tropical rain heavy rain. I am glad I did it! I am glad I have the experience. (Interview informant 4)

Because it was hard, wet and therefore the ground was slippery as we brush pass by the bushes we were getting the leeches on us, it was an achievement when we did!  
(Interview informant 15)

Well, at my age of 69...I did not expect to do something like that, it was totally different, I meant I even don't think of it. Ha... I have achieved something! As I get older, I still achieved something like this and I feel happy and satisfied. (Interview informant 27)

One interview informant regarded that viewing wildlife in the wild was a challenge because.

*Wildlife is difficult to spot in a totally natural situation, is usually well scatted and hunting out wildlife, probably before you even have a chance to spot yourself* (Interview informant 11).

Interestingly, safety appeared to be the least significant dimension that emerged from the responses. It is therefore regarded that safety is least likely to affect the evaluation of service in relation to satisfaction in eco-lodge environment. This means that guests generally know what to expect in the environment. Safety is related to personal safety in the lodge in relation to poor maintenance (cleanliness) and riverboat cruise trip as presented in Exhibit 7.5.3.7 below. Generally, informants raised safety in the service experience as a concern.

### Exhibit 7.5.3. 7: Personal Safety

There was a little bridge outside, two lights on it and both of them did not work. It was quiet dangerous because it was quiet slippery. Well, those two lights were I thought safety issues because you could have slipped because you just could see, was not much light. (Interview informant 8)

I think the boatman – very good and they coach you on the boat and give assistance on and off the boat, they also take care of my luggage and collected it and was always there and was significantly quickly done. (Interview informant 4);  
I know for fact it was 14 meters high of water level and it was a dangerous level for riverboat cruise. The boatman was taking the boat across the river in full flat, it was an experience and I was afraid! The boatman was very good and safe and they were fantastic. The guides and boatman they will 150% you feel secure with them and that's why we felt very satisfied. (Interview informants 28 & 29)

### 7.5.4 Dissatisfaction Expressive Dimensions

This section presents dissatisfaction expressive dimensions that emerged from observation data and interview responses. There are eight different expressive dimensions that emerged from observational fieldwork and interview responses that can be categorised as dissatisfaction expressive dimensions as shown in Table 7.5.3 below. These themes describe the negative feeling and experience of the informants and subsequently affect dissatisfaction levels.

**Table 7.5. 3: Dissatisfaction Expressive Dimensions Themes**

Item	Dissatisfaction Expressive Dimensions
1	Don't want/ don't like/hate
2	Uncomfortable/Unpleasant
3	Negative things/ Negative experiences
4	Frustration
5	Detraction
6	Decrease satisfaction
7	Feeling sad/unhappy
8	Disappointment

Attributes of dissatisfaction dimensions are closely related to wildlife, noise and fumes from boat engines, boat congestions, long waiting gap in between riverboat cruise trips, negative group interactions, poor maintenance of lodge and public toilet and poor hygiene on water quality as well as safety (mosquitoes bites).

The negative expression of “don’t want”, “dislike” or “hate” from the responses were closely associated with the attributes of noise and fumes from boat engines.

Uncomfortable and unpleasant dimensions are dissatisfaction dimensions expressions that relate to mosquitoes bites and also the sun factor during the riverboat cruise.

Negative things and negative experience are related to jungle walks and fumes from boat engines during the riverboat cruise trips.

Expressed frustration is associated with boat congestion during the riverboat cruise and loud noise from boat engines. It was also regarded as the informants are detracted from nature. Likewise, anger due to petrol smoke caused by the boat engines and subsequently causes dissatisfaction for a few informants. The informants who did not see specific types of wildlife that they wished such as crocodiles, monkeys and orang utan expressed feeling of sadness and unhappiness.

Disappointment emerged a number of times from the responses and it was related to the disappearance of forest, the palm plantation along the road to the lodge and the sanitation conditions of public facilities such as the toilet.

#### **7.5.5 Discussion of Measurement of Guest Satisfaction in the Ecolodge Context**

In summary, the empirical evidence presented in the previous section reveals that the approach used to evaluate satisfaction in the ecolodge context is embedded in the combination of both cognitive and emotional responses. The cognitive response is based on the guests’ satisfaction with service performance and evaluated based on service attributes, and the emotional/affective response is derived from the consumption of the service experience (psychological environment). This indicates that guests’ satisfaction responses to a satisfactory consumption experience contain both emotional and behavioural elements. These findings have congruence with findings from the literature on consumer satisfaction.

The empirical evidence shows that guest satisfaction evaluation can be categorized as a) satisfaction with the tourism experiences and b) satisfaction with the ecolodge service, which are regarded as multi-faceted concepts of satisfaction and are consistent with the literature (Otto and Ritchie, 1996). The satisfaction with tourism

experience is related to experiences gained from interaction with the environment and nature, experiences from riverboat cruise trips and jungle walks, and interaction with guides and other group members, and these are related to the individual's positive feelings and emotions, interactions, and sense of relaxation and peace, stimulation (learning from guides) and novelty. Negative feelings such as "don't like, hate, frustration, detraction, feeling sad and disappointment" indicate dissatisfaction. Satisfaction with the consumption experience, which refers to the total consumption experience, may be influenced by a variety of factors, such as involvement, motivation, social interaction, and programme or site attributes. This means that satisfaction with the tourism experience is largely driven by the involvement and motivation of customers, which consist of affective responses that are derived from the feeling and emotion of the guests. Thus, they are more difficult to manipulate (Mannell and Iso -Ahola, 1987).

Satisfaction with ecolodge services is associated with the performance of lodges in relation to their core services and facilities, which can be controlled by the ecolodge operators. In this case, satisfaction with service performance is a judgment that is driven by product and service quality of a transaction whereby service meets guests' expectations (quality of performance /opportunity) and can be controlled by the service provider (Baker and Crompton, 2000).

This implies that guests evaluation of satisfaction and dissatisfaction is based on two different approaches, namely satisfaction with service performance and satisfaction with the service experience which is congruent with those proposed by Otto and Ritchie (1996). These dimensions are constructed from both the internal and external environment of the ecolodge. This means that satisfaction in the ecolodge is two dimensional - that is utilitarian dimensions that result from the ecolodge service performance whilst the expressive dimensions result from the service experiences gained in this context.

This highlights the relative importance of the cognitive and affective aspects of the construct of the consumption experience as is also noted by Dabholkar (1995). It

means that guest satisfaction is constructed based on both cognitive judgment and affective responses. This also confirms that both the functional component and the experiential or psychological benefits are presented in the evaluation of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the ecolodge context. This provides clear evidence to support the service management and service experience context, satisfaction results from the experiential nature of consumption and contains both perceptions and experiences (Otto and Ritchie, 1996) and for the informants, it is a memorable experience that influenced or shaped their satisfaction.

It does seem that guests tend to express or evaluate satisfaction more on the consumption of service rather than satisfaction with service performance based on the performances and expectation of the guests derived from the physical facilities, lodge and natural environment and attractions. This could imply that satisfaction with service performance is secondary in terms of satisfaction evaluation or that the outcome of satisfaction tends to place importance on the service experience that guests have since the ecolodge is perceived as a service experience consumption context. By this notion, guests are likely to place more emphasis on satisfaction with the service experience; they tend to evaluate and express their satisfaction through socio-psychological benefit outcomes and are less dominant in relation to cognitive ones. Satisfaction in ecolodge service experience consumption is perceived more as psychological outcomes and the ecolodge service experience consists of eco-activities regarded as recreation that is *"a state of mind and behaviour or activity"* (Pizam and Ellis, 1999; Oh, 2000) rather than just a cognitive evaluation as underpinned by expectancy disconfirmation theories.

Experience is regarded as a core output from service performance and service experiences that consist of both tangible products and intangibles and satisfaction dimensions are strongly constructed in intangible elements in the ecolodge context, while dissatisfaction dimensions are constructed more on tangible elements. Likewise, it is believed that experiential value offers both extrinsic (functional aspects) and intrinsic (personal experiential) benefits. Extrinsic benefits are derived from buying experiences that are utilitarian in nature, while intrinsic value is derived



from the appreciation of the experience itself or the social-psychological benefits (Knutson and Beck, 2003).

Similarly, the empirical findings on satisfaction/ dissatisfaction dimensions of the present research can be constructed into the two opposite but complementary terms of “escaping” from the daily routine and “seeking” psychological (intrinsic) rewards proposed by Mannell and Iso –Ahola (1987) and which are commonly found in most tourism experience frameworks. For example, the expressive dimensions of “novelty” and “interactive” can be termed as “escaping” and the utilitarian satisfaction dimensions, as shown in Table 7.5.1, are related to the service performance and attributes of destination, and thus, can be also termed as “escaping”, Expressive dimensions of “hedonic, comfort, stimulation, safety” can be termed as “seeking”. In fact these dimensions are also closely related to motivational factors.

These empirical findings of dimensions are also similar to Moutinho (1987)’s two ways to evaluate product performance known as instrumental performance and expressive performance. By this, instrumental performance of a physical product is related to alternative evaluation - an individual’s perceived reality meets with his or her current expectation based on a rational approach (Stankey, 1972; Brady and Robertson, 2001), whilst expressive performance corresponds to a psychological performance relating to fulfilment of needs that is based on the incident approach. Thus the expressive dimensions are constructed based on the incident approach that is associated with their feelings/emotion and experiences gained in that particular incident context.

It is recognised that satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions in the present research are investigated based on “on site experience” and perceptions of guests within the service experience phenomena, where the findings are confined within these parameters and also the time framework. Thus, it is conceivable that the findings may vary according to the study context and the travel phases of the guests.

Based on the empirical evidence provided in the previous section, one can conclude that the ecolodge is perceived as service experience consumption accommodation in ecotourism, in which it predominantly offers experience through an interaction with environments composed of wildlife, nature and indigenous cultures as asserted by Holden (2000). In the service experience context, arguably, both experiential elements and performance of service attributes contribute to the evaluation of satisfaction in this context as acknowledged by Page and Dowling (2002) when they argue that experience is an important element. Ryan (2000) highlights emotional attachment, tourists' roles and tourists' experience as important in tourist satisfaction.

The ecolodge context contributes to guests' experiences in a number of ways and can be perceived as both tourism and leisure/recreation activities. In tourism, from the business and marketing perspective, the satisfaction and dissatisfaction evaluation are commonly based on utilitarian transactions, whilst in the recreation perspective, visitor satisfaction is central to the recreational experience and hence an experiential expressive dimension. Expressive/hedonic factors act as a central feature in satisfaction evaluation for leisure and tourism researchers. This implies that experience is regarded as an important element in influencing satisfaction. The experiential expressive dimensions are derived from the intensity of the interaction of guests/ecotourists with the physical site/environment that is also pointed out by Ryan (2000). At the same time, holistic experiences gained by guests during the trips contribute to their evaluation of satisfaction.

The utilitarian transaction dimensions are derived from and linked to service quality attributes or perception of performance as delineated in expectancy disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1980) to describe the perception of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. These dimensions are also related to the antecedent factor of expectations and performance in Section 6.4. These service components can also be further characterized into two dimensions: technical and functional as advocated by Gronroos (1984). Technical quality is defined as the service outcomes that are

tangible or measurable whilst functional quality is defined as the service delivery process that is intangible and less observable.

The themes of satisfaction expression dimensions presented in Table 7.5.2 show that guest expressed these dimensions that are related to the affective or emotional responses and dissatisfaction expressive dimensions. Expressive dimensions are expressed as personal feelings and emotions that lead to individual social-psychological benefits. The expressive dimensions are driven by the atmosphere and experiences gained by the informants. The experience of leisure and tourism can be described as the subjective mental state felt by the guests. There are six satisfaction expressive dimensions revealed in this research from the interview responses. These expressive dimensions are closely associated with the positive feeling and interactions with natural attractions and physical sites, stimulation from the wildlife viewing and knowledgeable and experienced guides. Affective or emotional elements form the basis of the quality of the service experience, which is often ignored, to explain variance in satisfaction evaluation.

Six expressive dimensions associated with positive experience are hedonic, interactive, novelty, comfort, stimulation and safety as shown in Table 7.5.4 below. These six constructs of satisfaction expressive dimensions emerged from the responses show congruence with dimensions identified by Otto and Ritchie (1996) as described in Table 3.1.

**Table 7.5.4 Satisfaction Expressive Dimensions in The Ecolodge Context**

<b>Satisfaction Expressive Dimension</b>	<b>Examples/Evidences</b>
<b>Hedonic</b> - Excitement, enjoyment, memorable	-Excitement, enjoyment and memorable experiences related to wildlife, nature environment, riverboat cruise and experience of jungle walk
<b>Interactive</b> - Meeting people, being part of the process, having choice	-Guests' interaction with the service environment -Being part of the process to see and spot wildlife and to fulfil wants and needs -Intention to repeat the experience to see wildlife -Positive interactions between guests and the lodge staff, guides and groups members -Opportunity and meeting people other people -staff and group members
<b>Novelty</b> - Escape, doing something new, new experience	-Something new, unique and different experiences (never been before, first -time see wildlife in wild, lifetime experiences, something that I could never do due to old age) -An escape from the normal daily life or work
<b>Comfort</b> - Physical comfort, relaxation	-Physical and relaxation in the natural environment and lodge -Experiencing the peaceful, tranquillity of the natural environment -Riverboat cruise trip offered relaxation and physical comfort
<b>Stimulation</b> - Educational and informative, challenging	-Information and knowledge gained from the knowledgeable and experienced guides -Learning experience and an understanding of the natural environment which ultimately a valuable education -Challenging experiences to complete the jungle walk in risky condition -rainy weather, muddy and leeches
<b>Safety</b> - Personal safety, Security of belongings	-Personal safety into and out of boat, riverboat cruise trip safety.

Hedonism is found among all of the interview informants, arising from the high level of satisfaction during the riverboat cruise trips. Key hedonic expressive statements include excitement and enjoyment that are closely associated with both wildlife and the natural environment, as confirmed by Meric and Hunt (1998). 'Memorable experience' describes the whole experience gained in Lower Kinabatangan that "excitement" corresponds with Fluker and Turner's (2000) study into white water rafting and "memorable experience" is found in river rafting (Arnould and Price, 1993).

Interaction between guests and the service environment contributed to the positive experience and the intention to repeat the experience. Others considered that being part of the process enabled them to spot the wildlife. The interaction component is also supported by Ryan (2000) who stresses the intensity of the interaction with the site.

Novelty is associated with new and different experiences, such as seeing wildlife in the wild for the first time, as well as an escape from normal daily life. These findings correspond with Weiler and Davis (1993) who recognized that ecotourists like to experience change and do something different. Similarly, Whelan (1991) also noted that ecotourists are looking for a new environment to relax away from work and also as the reasons that have contributed to the growth of ecotourism in Section 4.2.

Riverboat trips offer relaxation and physical comfort whilst stimulation was closely related to the information and knowledge gained from the knowledgeable and experienced guides. The guides were able to spot a variety of wildlife and provide an excellent explanation of wildlife and local history (Page and Dowling, 2002).

Safety appeared to be the least significant dimension and is related to personal safety. It is the least likely factor to affect the evaluation of service in the ecolodge environment. This means that guests generally know what to expect in the environment and they are generally well briefed and prepared for coming to the remote area. In addition, safety and security for visitors is one of the major criteria considered for ecotourism development as highlighted in the National Ecotourism Plan (WWFM, 1996c) and Malaysia is generally perceived as a safe tourist destination for foreign tourists

The empirical evidence points out the importance of experiential aspects in addressing satisfaction in the service experience context and also demonstrates an experiential approach in service consumption as reviewed in literature. Similarly, these findings are also corroborated in the literature that points to a growing recognition of the importance of tourists' experience in various tourism sectors and

the experiential approach has been used as a vehicle to describe the meaning of various leisure and tourism activities and events. For example, Johns and Gyimothy (2002b) adopt expressive dimensions (hedonic experience) to capture customer perceptions of visits to Legoland in Denmark. Likewise, Arnould and Price (1993) adopt an expressive dimension approach to the context of white-water rafting and reveal that experiential themes – personal growth, self-renewal, communities and harmony with nature - are significant in explaining overall satisfaction. Thus, experience benefits remain a critical part of the process of evaluation of leisure and tourism products and this can be claimed in the context of ecolodges as well. A memorable, lifetime experience and enjoyment are related to satisfaction in the consumption of service experience, and these findings confirm that the psychological environment – the subjective personal reactions and feelings experienced by guests when in ecolodge context – has been found to be an important part of guest evaluation and satisfaction with services experience as noted by Otto and Ritchie (1996). The affective component of service experience in the ecolodge context has been shown to consist of subjective, emotional and highly personal responses to various aspects of the service delivery, and a specific service transaction, such as contact with people who contribute to the actual experience (Baum, 1997).

Elements of the physical environment (the servicescape) have a strong potential to elicit emotional and subjective reactions and influence the behaviour of guests. Guests are “feelers as well as thinkers” especially in the consumption of products that have subject symbolic meaning, as described in the behavioural approach to consumption. For example, the natural environment contributes to psychological benefits that transcend peacefulness for guests. Human interaction in the service provision is an emotionally charged process. Interactions can lead to experiential reactions and subsequently affect the quality of the service experience. Thus, this seems to conclude that both behavioural and experiential approaches that determine guest satisfaction are of relevance in the ecolodge context. It implies that guests evaluate satisfaction based on the consumption of experiences involving both comparison components (utilitarian) and behavioural components (affective /emotional responses). This indicates that both components (expressive and

utilitarian aspects) are important components in exploring satisfaction. Based on the findings about the satisfaction dimensions, it appears that guests express their satisfaction via their affective/emotional state. This leads to socio- psychological benefits with six satisfaction expressive dimensions and dissatisfaction expressive dimensions (Table 7.5.2 and Table 7.5.3) and also utilitarian dimensions based on expectation and performance (Table 7.5.1). It is found that both expressive and utilitarian dimensions refer to similar elements, which are identified as satisfaction determinants. It appears that one can conclude that expressive and utilitarian aspects contribute to a more holistic way of understanding consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, as they involve comparison and experiential components from service quality attributes; from the desired social-psychological benefits (motivation) and their attitudes exposed to experiences.

The first facet is labelled as satisfaction with services performance (quality of performance) in the ecolodge context and is defined as consumers' cognitive assessment based on the expectation. The second facet is labelled satisfaction with the eco- service experience (quality of experience) and is theorized to be related to consumer's affective response to the extent that their needs and wants have been fulfilled. These findings can be linked to the functional and emotional components in the service experience consumption as mentioned by Berry and Haeckel (2002 and also related to Mathwick et al., (2001) who propose that the value in the consumption experience is derived by interaction involving goods and services and also propose that it consists of both the extrinsic and intrinsic components in the experience consumption.

This implies that guest satisfaction can better be managed and improved through understanding these satisfiers and dissatisfiers. This leads to a discussion of how can ecolodge operators manage and improve guest satisfaction as the research question in the next section. The next section presents and discusses the findings of PAT in informant quantifying method of analysis.

## **7.6 Findings and Discussion of PAT Responses in Informal Quantification Method of Analysis**

### **7.6.1 Findings of Positive PAT Responses**

The empirical evidence from previous sections in this chapter have clearly demonstrated that guest satisfaction can be explained based on Herzberg's theory by relating them to "satisfiers" and "dissatisfiers". In the same vein, making an effort to understand the dimensions that contribute to guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction is paramount to the quality of management as well as contributing to sustainable resource management in the ecolodge context. Thus, the following section aims to present the findings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions from the PAT responses. These findings are used to develop a Perception Profile of The Ecolodge as one of the contributions of the present research.

The responses from the PAT survey were first categorized into three types of responses, namely positive, negative and no dissatisfaction in relation to the informants stay in the ecolodge. The positive responses are related to things informants liked the most or most satisfied them; these are identified as satisfaction dimensions. Negative responses are things informants disliked most or with which they were least satisfied and emerged as dissatisfaction dimension. No dissatisfaction means informants found nothing they did not dislike at all. This is further reported in section Chapter Eight section 8.4. Interestingly, positives accounting for 72 percent of responses, ranks the highest followed by the negative responses accounting for 20 percent and no dissatisfaction responses accounting for 8 percent. This means that a significant number of informants are satisfied with the service experience in the ecolodge context.

The positive quality service attributes are termed as satisfaction dimensions and subsequently they are considered as motivator factors or satisfiers. These attributes are capable of increasing guest satisfaction and form the foundation for ecolodge operators to maximize guest satisfaction and also serve as the motivation to visit the lodge. Each positive service quality aspect (Table 7.6.1) is expressed as a fraction of



the total positive responses to indicate the significance of each service quality aspects.

The findings reveal that these positive attributes are atmosphere and experience, services and welcome, guide services and boatman services as well as natural environment and attractions; which contribute to guest satisfaction significantly accounting for 42 percent of the total positive experience as presented in Table 7.6.1 below. Atmosphere and experience are the main satisfiers for the guest in the ecolodge environment. The guide and boatman services contributed significantly to the success of wildlife viewing. It was found that an informal and personalized style that projects a warm welcome via friendly, helpful and caring interpersonal communication are important quality elements and contribute to guest satisfaction. Nevertheless, these positive service quality attributes are intangible elements that impose more difficulty for management than tangible elements for the ecolodge operators.

**Table 7.6. 1: Positive Service Quality Aspects as Percentage of the Total Positive Responses**

<b>Service Quality Aspects</b>	<b>Positive Responses</b>	<b>*Percentage as fraction of the total positive responses</b>	<b>Tangible/Intangible Controllable/Uncontrollable</b>
<b>Atmospheres and Experiences</b> (Relax, peace and rest, Welcoming atmosphere, Wildlife experiences, Jungle trekking experience, outdoor activities, riverboat cruise experience, Learning experiences, Social interaction with other members in the group)	54	24.20	Intangible/ Uncontrollable
<b>Riverboat Cruise</b> (Experience -better way to view wildlife than jungle trekking)	26	11.70	Intangible/ uncontrollable
<b>Lodge</b> (Aesthetics, style and facilities, meet expectation and minimum comfort, clean)	25	11.20	Tangible/controllable
<b>Food</b> (plenty and variety, delicious and tasty)	24	10.80	Tangible & intangible /controllable

**Continue from Table 7.6. 1: Positive Service Quality Aspects as Percentage of the Total Positive Responses**

<b>Service Quality Aspects</b>	<b>Positive Responses</b>	<b>*Percentage as fraction of the total positive responses</b>	<b>Tangible/Intangible Controllable/Uncontrollable</b>
<b>Wildlife</b> (Access, variety and see in wild)	20	9.00	Tangible and intangible /uncontrollable
<b>Lodge staff</b> (Friendly, helpful and cheerful)	16	7.20	Tangible/uncontrollable
<b>Guide services</b> (Knowledge and experience on wildlife and local)	15	6.70	Intangibles/uncontrollable
<b>Location</b> (Close to natural, wildlife and jungle)	13	5.80	Tangible/controllable
<b>Services /welcome</b> (Feel welcome, responsiveness, efficient, caring)	11	4.90	Intangible/uncontrollable
<b>Natural environment and attractions</b> (Availability)	10	4.50	Intangible/uncontrollable
<b>Bedroom</b> (Well maintenance, clean, minimum comfort)	6	2.70	Tangible/controllable
<b>Boatman services</b> (Knowledge and experience on wildlife and local)	3	1.30	Intangible/uncontrollable
<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

\* Calculation is based on the number of responses for each positive service quality aspect divided by the total number of positive responses for all aspects

Obviously, both internal and external aspects of the ecolodge environment contributed to guest satisfaction. There are six different positive aspects sourced from the internal lodge environment: lodge staff, services and welcome, food, location, lodge and bedroom whilst there are seven aspects sourced from external ecolodge environment: atmosphere and experiences, riverboat cruise, jungle trekking, wildlife, natural environment, guide services and boatman services. Aspects such as the riverboat cruise, wildlife and natural environment are important aspects in the external ecolodge environment and lead to guests' satisfaction, whilst the internal lodge environment – the lodge, food and staff services are also the major positive aspects leading to guest satisfactions.

The satisfiers that emerged from each positive aspect category are presented in Table 7.6.2 below. There is a wide range of satisfiers found in the PAT responses. These are functionality, access, variety, knowledge of wildlife and local information, tasty, friendly, aesthetics, availability, cleanliness, responsiveness, comfort, care in the order of importance. The findings reveal that functionality of atmosphere and experience and riverboat cruise are important aspects that contribute significantly to the positive experience.

**Table 7.6. 2: Positive Attribute (Satisfiers) in Each Aspect Category**

The Satisfiers In Each Service Quality Aspect Category													
Aspects	Atmosphere & Experience	Riverboat Cruise	Lodge	Food	Wildlife	staff	Guide	Location	Bed Room	Services & welcome	Natural Environment & Attractions	Boatman skill	Total
Satisfiers (Positive Attributes)													
functionality	54	26	4						2				86
Aesthetics			11										11
cleanliness			8						1				9
Comfort			2						3				5
Tasty				15									15
Access					10			13					23
Variety				9	10								19
Friendly						16							16
Responsiveness										8			8
Care										3			3
Knowledge of wildlife & local information							15					3	18
availability											10		10
	54	26	25	24	20	16	15	0	6	11	10	3	223

**7.6.2 Findings of Negative PAT Responses**

The findings from the things disliked most are termed as negative aspects, which are referred to as the standard of the service experience in the ecolodge. There were ten negative aspects identified and these negative service quality aspects are presented in descending order in Table 7.6.3. These negative attributes are further categorized

as tangible and intangible and controllable and uncontrollable elements, which are significant for managing guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Negative aspects of service quality mainly consist of tangible elements that are controllable with the exception of natural attractions and wildlife which are tangibles but uncontrollable. The natural attractions (leeches) and wildlife though are tangible but are beyond the control of ecolodge operators. Both leeches and wildlife are part of nature in the jungle and rainforest. The natural environment is polluted by the noise and fumes from the boat engines during the riverboat cruise, which are controllable. There were many negative aspects of the riverboat cruise trip. These aspects include long waiting times with short duration of cruise, boat congestion on the river, diesel boat engines causing noise and fumes, strong sun, the poor condition of life jacket in the boat and less wildlife seen. These aspects are controllable with exception of wildlife seen. The negative aspects of the bedroom were due to poor maintenance of facilities and cleanliness, which are controllable by ecolodge operators.

Likewise, the negative aspects of other facilities and information relating to a lack of snack shop, laundry and information and these factors are controllable. The negative aspects of the walkways were due to its slippery path and broken lights. The informants expected hot showers instead of cold showers.

**Table 7.6.3: The Negative Service Quality Aspects as Percentage of the Total Negative Responses**

<b>The Negative Service Quality Aspects</b>	<b>No of Responses</b>	<b>*Percentage As fraction of the total negative responses</b>	<b>Tangible/Intangible Controllable /uncontrollable</b>
<b>Riverboat Cruise:</b> (Boat engines caused noise and fume, boat congestions, long waiting time and short duration of cruise, functionality and the discomfort of the boat cruise)	18	28.60	Tangible/controllable
<b>Bedroom:</b> (Broken toilet seat, no shower curtain, low shower pressure, cleanliness, broken mosquitoes net, noisy fan, hard pillow)	15	23.80	Tangible/controllable
<b>Other facilities and information:</b> (snack shop, laundry and local, wildlife information and lodge customs of taking shoe off)	6	9.50	Tangible/Controllable
<b>Road and journey to lodge</b> (bumpy and palm oil plantation)	6	9.50	Tangible/ Uncontrollable
<b>Walkway</b> (slippery and broken light bulbs)	5	7.90	Tangible/Controllable
<b>Hot Shower (not available)</b>	5	7.90	Tangible/Controllable
<b>Natural attractions</b> (scarcely leeches)	3	4.80	Tangible/ Uncontrollable
<b>Natural Environment</b> (Polluted by noise and fume, rubbish/litter)	2	3.20	Tangible/Controllable
<b>Food (too much bone and poor quality)</b>	2	3.20	Tangible/Controllable
<b>Wildlife (no available)</b>	1	1.60	Tangible/ Uncontrollable
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

\* Calculation is made based on the number of responses for each negative service quality aspect divided by the total number of negative responses for all aspects

The things disliked are regarded as negative aspects of the service quality that result in guest dissatisfaction. By reducing the negative service quality attributes, guest dissatisfaction will be reduced but this will not affect guest satisfaction.

Dissatisfiers (negative attributes) are explored based on each negative service quality category and are presented in the attributes chart (Table 7.6.4). There are less dissatisfiers as compared to satisfiers. There are four negative attributes identified (dissatisfiers). Functionality is shown as the highest among the negative attributes (dissatisfiers) in the riverboat cruise, walkway and bedroom. Comfort is the second highest score, which was present in the riverboat cruise, road access and journey to lodge, the bedroom and natural environment and attractions. Availability showed as highest in the hot shower category that leads to dissatisfaction whilst cleanliness relates to the bedroom and environment.

Hence, a possible solution or matter for attention for eco-lodge operators to reduce the dissatisfaction of guests is to improve the riverboat cruises, bedroom maintenance, walkways and other facilities; information; and hot showers.

**Table 7.6. 4: The Negative Attribute (Dissatisfiers) in Each Aspect Category**

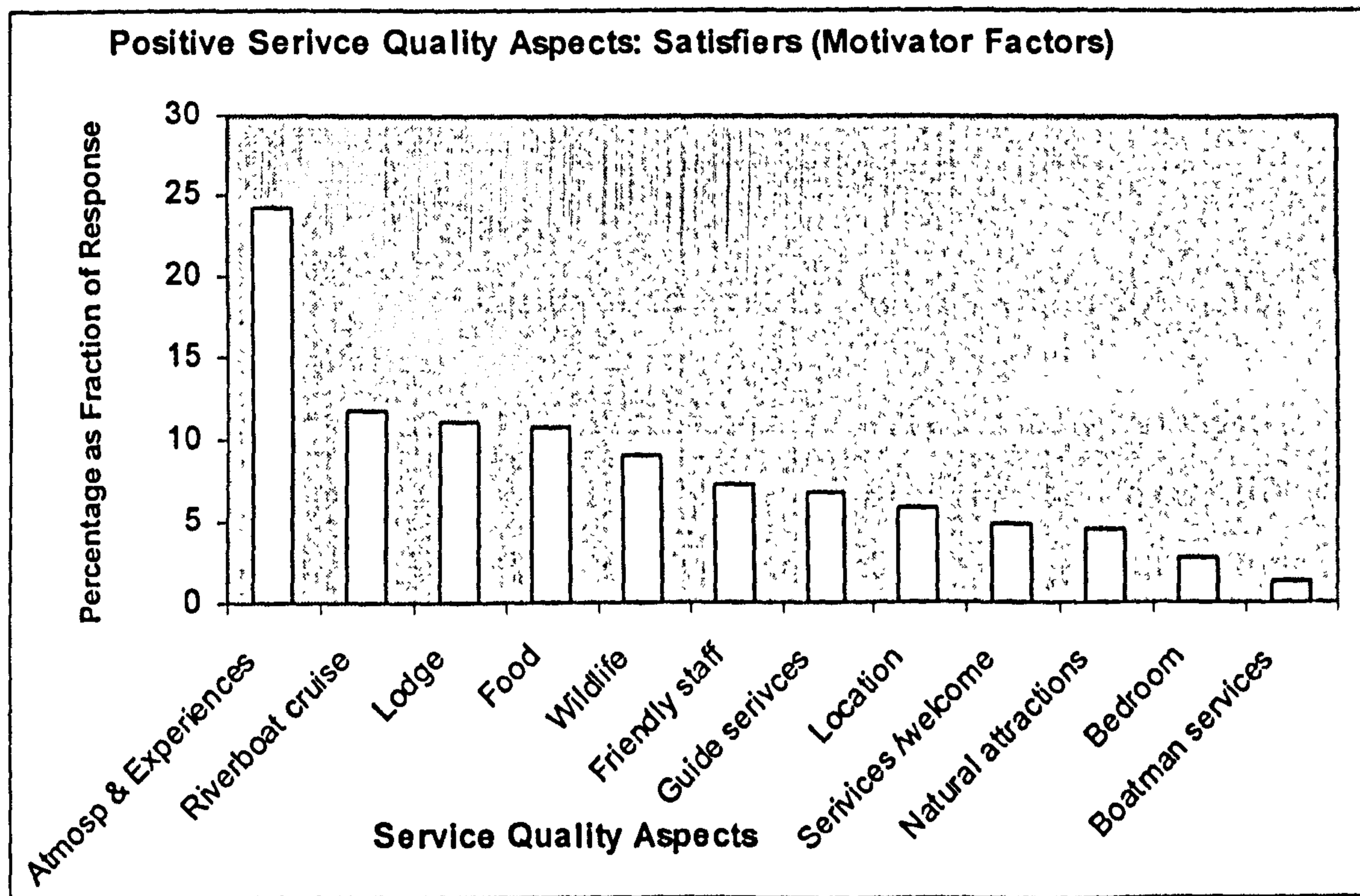
	River boat Cruise	Walk way	Food	Wild life	Road access & Journey to lodge	Bed Room	Hot shower	Natural Environment & Attraction	Other facilities & Information	Total
Dissatisfiers (Negative attributes)										
Functionality	14	5	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	28
Comfort	4	-	-	-	6	4	-	3	-	17
Availability	-	-	2	1	-	-	5	-	6	14
Cleanliness	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4
Total	18	5	2	1	6	15	5	5	6	63

In general, Pareto analysis can be used to explore both positive and negative service quality attributes that contribute to guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This can be done by calculating frequencies on each aspect of the positive and negative service quality attributes over its total positive and negative responses that emerged from the responses respectively. Then, the ranking follows from the highest to the lowest shows positive and negative service quality aspects respectively. These are presented

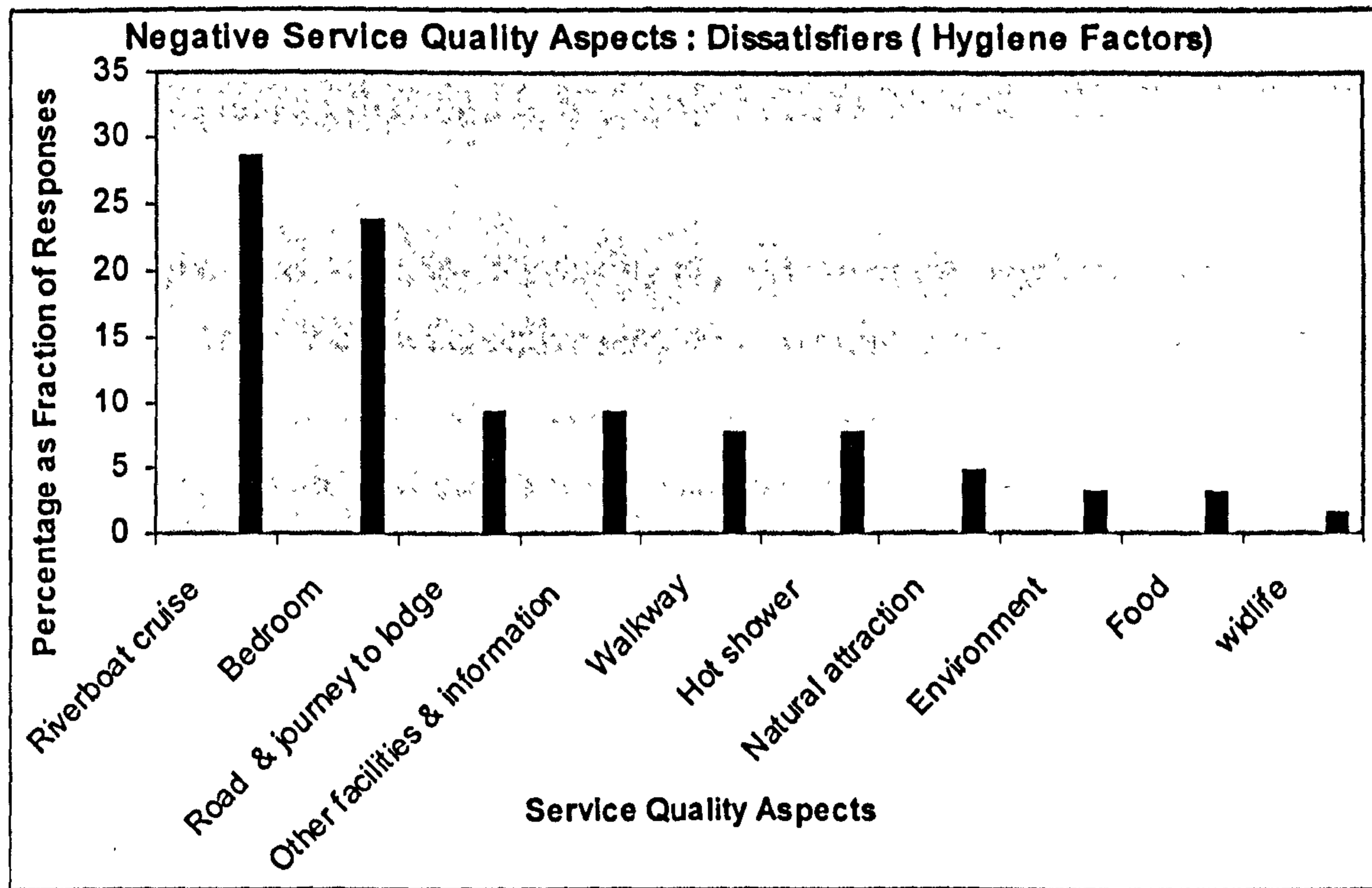
in Bar Chart 7.6.1 and 7.6.2 (Positive service quality attributes and Negative service quality attributes). Both bar charts are deemed useful information for ecolodge operators in decision making as well as to prioritise aspects of quality attributes that will contribute to quality improvement in relation to the importance and the feasibility of each category.

The positive service quality aspects from Table 7.6.1 and Table 7.6.3 are presented in descending order to show the significance of each aspect in Bar Chart 7.6.1 and 7.6.2 below.

**Bar Chart 7.6. 1: Positive Service Quality Aspects: Satisfiers as Percentage of Total Positives Responses**



**Bar Chart 7.6. 2: Negative Service Quality Aspects: Dissatisfiers as Percentage of Total Negative Responses**



**7.6.3 The Comparison of Positive and Negative Service Quality Attributes**

There were 223 positive responses sourced from 12 service quality aspects as compared to 63 negative responses sourced from nine different service quality aspects, as shown in Table 7.6.5 below. Percentage of each category of positive and negative service quality attribute is calculated based on the total responses of positive and negative respectively. Then, comparisons were made for both positive and negative service quality attributes. Both positive and negative responses were found in relation to service quality aspects: riverboat cruise, food, wildlife, natural environment, attractions and bedrooms. Within these aspects, the attributes with the highest scores for both negative and positive responses relate to the riverboat cruise. The second highest score for negative response was the bedrooms, whilst the second highest positive score was the food. This indicates that the riverboat cruise is a significant element that contributes to the guest satisfaction in the eco-service consumption context. The results also reveal that the ratio between the positive and negative responses to the riverboat cruise and lodge are roughly equal. Both of these aspects contribute significantly to guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction based on this



ratio. There were fewer negative responses regarding the natural attractions and food aspects as compared to positive responses. This means that food and natural attraction attributes are less significant as hygiene factors or dissatisfiers for the ecoguests.

Interestingly, there were service quality aspects with only negative or positive responses. There were no negative responses to atmosphere and experience, lodge and lodge staff, services and welcome, location, guide services, and boatman services. This means that guests were generally satisfied with all these service quality aspects, which are also known as satisfiers. Equally, these aspects are worthwhile for the ecolodge operators to continue investment for quality improvement and guest satisfaction. The only aspects with negative responses were: road and journey to lodge, hot showers, walkway and other facilities and information. This means that these are the aspects with which guests were dissatisfied, which are also known as dissatisfiers. These are areas that merit focus, as these are the hygiene or maintenance factors, which may reduce guest dissatisfaction in the ecolodge.

**Table 7.6. 5: Comparison of Positive and Negative Aspects as Percentage of Total Responses (Positive and Negative)**

Aspects	Positive Responses	Percentage as fraction of Total Positive Responses	Negative Responses	Percentage as fraction of Total Negative Responses
Atmosphere & Experiences	54	24.20	0	0
Riverboat cruise	26	11.70	18	28.60
Lodge	25	11.20	0	0
Food	24	10.80	2	3.20
Wildlife	20	9.00	1	1.60
Lodge staff	16	7.20	0	0
Guide services	15	6.70	0	0
Location	13	5.80	0	0
Services/welcome	11	4.90	0	0
Natural environment and attractions	10	4.50	5	7.90
Bedroom	6	2.70	15	23.80
Boatman Services	3	1.30	0	0
Road & Journey to lodge	0	0	6	9.50
Other facilities & Information	0	0	6	9.50
Walkway	0	0	5	7.90
Shower	0	0	5	7.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The Radar Web 7.6.1 below provides an overall picture of the positive and negative service quality attributes as “The Perception Profile of the Ecolodge”. It encompasses both “soft dimensions” and “hard dimensions” in the ecolodge context that contribute to both positive and negative experience. It highlights the aspects that contributes to positive and negative experience in a clearer manner and portrays the aspects that require the attentions of the ecolodge management.

**Radar Web 7.6. 1: The Perception Profile of the Ecolodge**

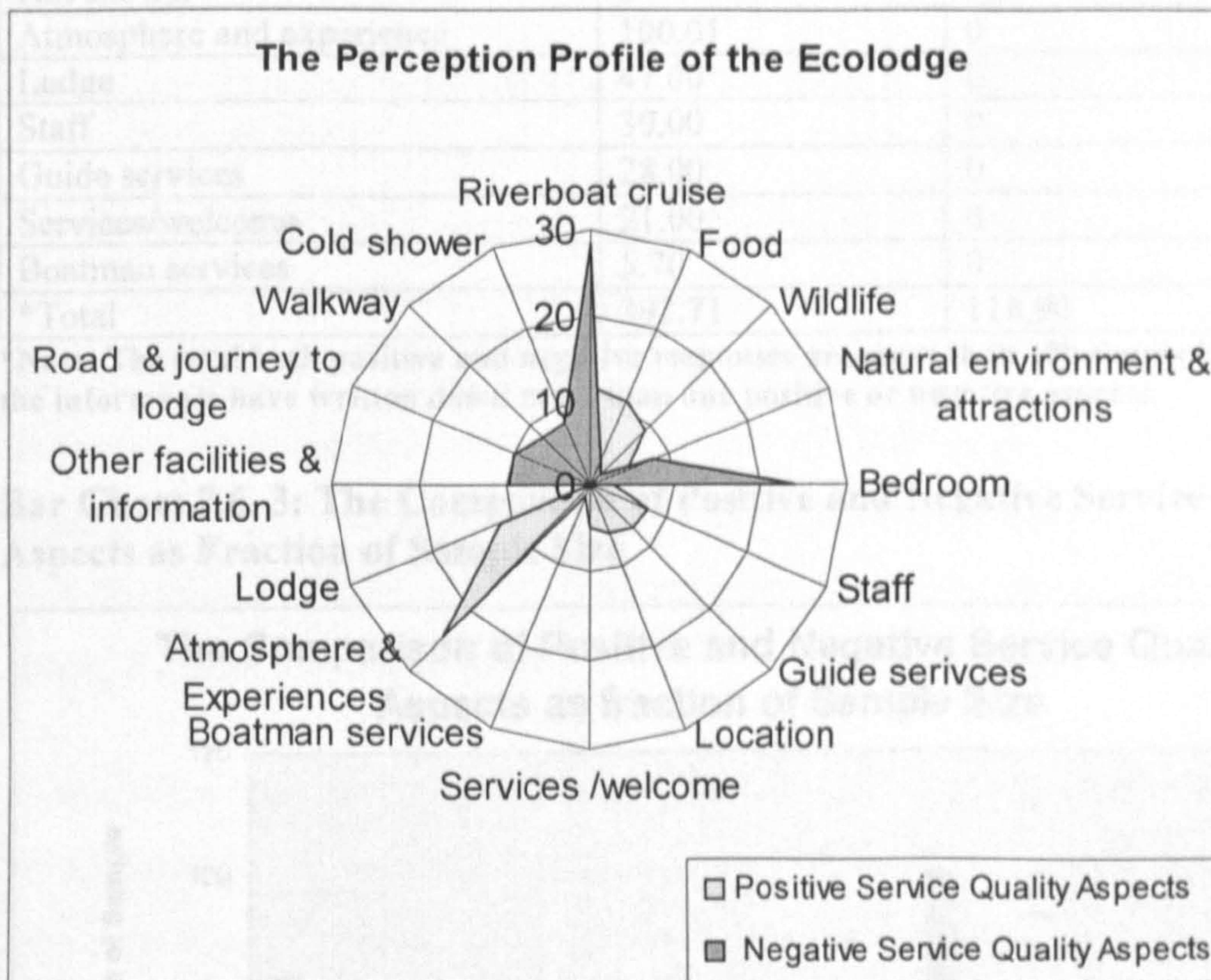


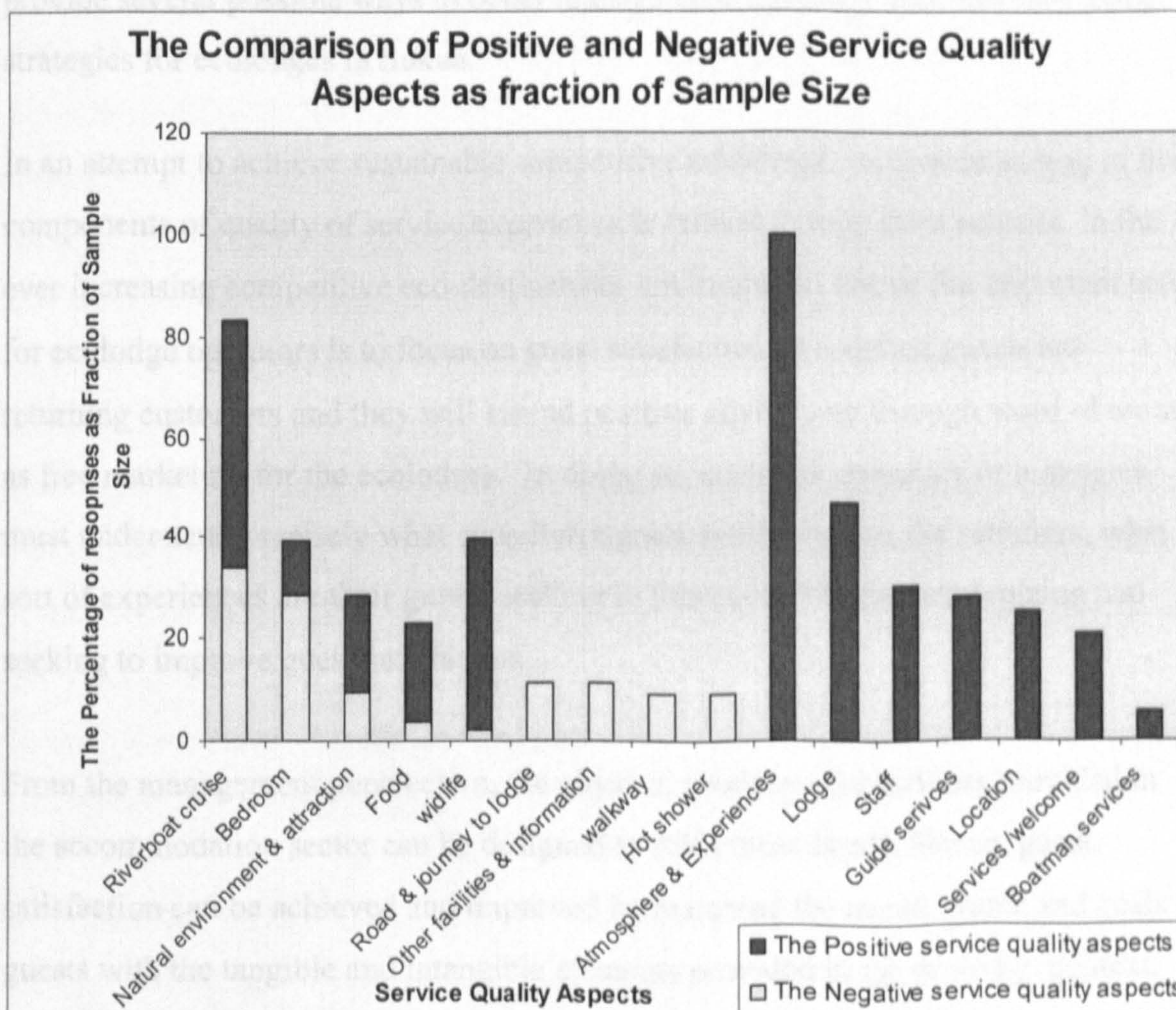
Table 7.6.6 below presents both the positive and negative aspects as a fraction of the total sample size responses (n=53). In general, the table shows that atmospheres and experience, riverboat cruise, lodge, wildlife, staff and services/welcome are addressed as positive service attributes. Informants seem to address atmosphere and experience as the most important positive service attributes, followed by riverboat cruise and lodge. Interestingly riverboat cruise is perceived to contribute both positive and negative experiences. This implies that riverboat cruise is an important element that deserves the attention of the ecolodge operators in order to improve guest satisfaction in the context.

**Table 7.6. 6: Percentage of Positive and Negative Responses as Fraction of Sample Size, n=53**

Aspects	Positive	Negative
Riverboat cruise	49.00	34.00
Bedroom	11.00	28.30
Natural environment and attraction	19.00	9.50
Food	19.00	9.60
Wildlife	38.00	1.90
Road and journey to lodge	0	11.30
Other facilities and information	0	11.30
Hot shower	0	9.40
Atmosphere and experience	100.01	0
Lodge	47.00	0
Staff	30.00	0
Guide services	28.00	0
Services/welcome	21.00	0
Boatman services	5.70	0
*Total	392.71	118.90

\*Note: The total both positive and negative responses are more than 100 simply because some of the informants have written down more than one positive or negative aspects.

**Bar Chart 7.6. 3: The Comparison of Positive and Negative Service Quality Aspects as Fraction of Sample Size**



Bar chart 7.6.3 above indicates higher positive responses to the riverboat cruise, food, wildlife and natural environment and attractions, whilst higher negative responses were formed relating to bedrooms. This means that guest service experience evaluation in the eco-environment is based on these aspects. Based on the percentage of responses generated over the sample size, this means that riverboat cruise, food, wildlife, natural environment and attractions and bedroom form important service quality aspects that influence satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

#### **7.6.4 How can Ecolodge Operators Better Manage and Improve Guest Satisfaction?**

The previous section has sought to present and discuss guest satisfaction in terms of satisfiers and dissatisfiers using qualitative method and informal quantification method of analysis. In this section, it focuses on the ways of managing and improving guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context and subsequently enhancing the sustainable use of eco resources. It is one of the present research objectives to provide several possible ways to better manage ecolodges and also find marketing strategies for ecolodges in Sukua.

In an attempt to achieve sustainable competitive advantage, an understanding of the components of quality of service experience is critical to long-term success. In the ever increasing competitive eco-destinations environment, one of the important tasks for ecolodge operators is to focus on guest satisfaction as satisfied guests are returning customers and they will spread positive advertising through word of mouth as free marketing for the ecolodges. In doing so, ecolodge operators or managers must understand precisely what constitutes guest satisfaction or the satisfiers, what sort of experiences are their guests seeking in this context before strategizing and seeking to improve guest satisfaction.

From the management perspective, the physical products and services provided in the accommodation sector can be designed to fulfil these needs. Hence, guest satisfaction can be achieved and improved by matching the needs, wants and goals of guests with the tangible and intangible elements provided in the ecolodge context. It seems that ecolodge operators have the opportunity to maximize the experience and

enjoyment of the guests by working through the satisfiers and dissatisfiers as identified in the previous section. It seems possible that ecolodge operators should also understand and focus on both the quality of experience and quality of performance; where satisfiers are deemed to contribute to the quality of experience, while dissatisfiers are deemed to contribute to quality of performance. It is suggested that satisfiers that lead to the satisfaction of guests can be an area where the ecolodge operators should continue to invest. Satisfiers suggest areas of opportunities to focus on and further improve (Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988b) in order to safeguard guest satisfaction continuously. These satisfiers (psychological environment) are paramount to the quality of management and contribute to sustainable resource management. This suggests that efforts in relation to the conservation and preservation of natural resources will contribute to guests' overall positive experiences and subsequently contribute to their satisfaction.

Dissatisfiers/hygiene factors are maintenance factors that will lead to dissatisfaction if below the minimum expected standard are lodge maintenance (cleanliness, safety, discomfort and minimum standard), the riverboat cruise (boat engine causing environmental pollution), environmental issues (noise and air pollution and waste management) and long journey along a bumpy road to the lodge. This means that dissatisfiers act as a maintenance foundation for the lodge and facilities that involve that commitment to nature conservation and preservation by the ecolodge management. They have the responsibility to establish eco-experiences derived from natural attractions and environment. At the same time, this is the opportunity to contribute and support the protection of a natural resource for conservation benefits that can be realized by efforts to reduce for example noise, fumes during the riverboat cruises and rubbish/waste pollution to protect a pristine environment. In many ways, ecolodge operators are able to better accommodate their guests' needs without destroying their eco-resources and maintaining the right eco-experiences that their guests are seeking.

It is likely that some of the factors that affect guests' experiences in the ecolodge context are beyond the control of the ecolodge operators. This is true for intangible

elements sourced from the external ecolodge environment and also ecolodge operators have no control over how, when and where the guests consume the services. Furthermore, in the service consumption context, guests are part of the service production and delivery.

The identification of satisfiers and dissatisfiers leads to an understanding of the dimensions that contribute to guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction in the ecolodge context, which has implications in terms of the marketing and management of ecolodges. In other words, satisfied guests will be likely to recommend and develop positive word of mouth marketing based on the satisfiers. These satisfiers as “areas to shrine of uniqueness” can be capitalized as selling points and as sources of competitive edge for the ecolodge context in Sukau. Also, it may generate repeat visits as well as attracting more guests.

#### **7.6.5 In What Areas Should Ecolodge Operators Invest or Seek to Improve?**

In attempting to seek solutions to improve guest satisfaction and reduce dissatisfaction, ecolodge operators can make reference to positive service quality attributes (satisfiers /motivator factors) and negative service quality attributes (dissatisfiers/hygiene factors) that emerged from the responses. They subsequently also formed the perception profile of the ecolodge context. More importantly, these attributes were identified based on the voices of the guests. The empirical findings presented in the bart charts and radar web in the previous sections sought to provide a clear picture and pragmatic way to indicate the significance of each aspect in both positive and negative service quality attributes. This presentation of findings is considered as a useful guide in decision making in term of which areas/aspects one needs to focus in terms of investment and control or to maintain in order to safeguard guest satisfaction.

The findings reveal that the main satisfiers indicate that atmosphere and experiences resulting from the interaction with the physical environment and wildlife and the participation of the eco-activities are the main satisfier for guests in the ecolodge context. This means that the external environment and eco- activities are key

ingredients to guest satisfaction and also the motivating factors, thus highlighting the need for ecolodge operators to preserve and conserve the surroundings, including its natural environment and resources in order to safeguard guests' experiences. The guide and boatman services contributed significantly to the success of wildlife viewing. This means local guide training in terms of knowledge of wildlife, local information and English language are essential in order to secure guest satisfaction, and so are ideal areas for investment.

In addition, the empirical findings on the post consumption stage show positive experiences leading to satisfaction as indicated in Table 8.1 in the next chapter. The natural environment and experiences that are gained by guests, wildlife viewing and their benefits sought and personal achievement has contributed significantly to the positive experiences. Subsequently they lead to their intention to return, possible with friends, a result of positive word of mouth from their memorable experiences. Again, this implies that guests are attracted to visit Sukau simply based on its natural surrounding and natural attractions and need fulfilment rather than the physical product of the ecolodge itself. These attributes enhance the satisfaction of guests and form the foundation for ecolodge operators to maximize guest satisfaction but are considered difficult to manage due to intangibility.

The dissatisfiers are tangible elements related to the generic facilities, infrastructure and amenities as a foundation for the ecolodge context to operate, including the availability of facilities and proper maintenance, comfort and cleanliness, as well as a pristine environment in the ecolodge context. It is suggested that the ecolodge operators need to focus on the poor performance of facilities that contributes to the dissatisfaction of guests, since these require effective management to prevent poor performance.

Meanwhile, the ecolodge operators may apply the concept of quality as "fitness for use". This is a universal concept for both manufacturing and services as conceptualised by Juran (1974) in an effort to improve service quality from the management perspective. This can be done by applying the concept of a Pareto

analysis to explore both the positive attributes and the negative service quality aspects, as shown in Table 7.6.5. The Pareto analysis is a scientific tool often used to solve quality problems. By applying a Pareto analysis, aspects such as riverboat cruises, bedrooms, other facilities and information, walkways and hot showers should be the main focus, since these aspects are essential areas that can increase guest satisfaction and account for over 77 percent of dissatisfaction responses. This means that by improving these aspects, ecolodge operators may reduce the level of guest dissatisfaction significantly. Road access and the journey to the ecolodge caused much discomfort and it is essential for ecolodge operators to improve these. However, it is beyond the scope of the ecolodge operators as this is a public road, which falls under federal government jurisdiction and it also entails substantial finance.

The empirical findings suggest that in order to reduce guest dissatisfaction, ecolodge operators need to pay attention to lodge maintenance (bathroom facilities, unsafe walkways), the polluted environment caused by the noise and fumes from the boat engines and rubbish in the river. Likewise, the empirical findings of negative comments and suggestions in Chapter Eight lead to generation of valuable information in terms of managing and improving facilities to enhance guest satisfaction. These findings are presented in Table 8.2 in Chapter Eight and indicate five areas that may draw the attention of the ecolodge operators for further improvement. It seems that the ecolodge operators need to provide extra facilities, such as laundries, small libraries and information relating to the locality and its wildlife in order to reduce guests' dissatisfaction substantially. River management, meanwhile, in terms of sanitation and protecting the environment presents difficulties to the individual ecolodge operators, since these areas require greater cooperation both with the local stakeholders and among the ecolodge operators themselves.

In addition, the findings of the PAT responses contribute to the development of a useful Perception Profile of the Ecolodge (Radar Wed 7.6.1). Its development in 7.6.3 provides an alternative way for ecolodge operators improve guest satisfaction by considering the dimensions and its overlapping areas. These findings provide a



better understanding of what, why and how to better manage service quality and to improve guest satisfaction.

## **7.7 Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter has interpreted and discussed empirical findings in relation to exploration of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the ecolodge context. The empirical findings demonstrate that guest satisfaction encompasses both utilitarian and expressive aspects and concludes that guest satisfaction is both process and outcomes driven, where emotional components tend to dominant the technical components. This implies that the ecolodge context is perceived as more of the service experience consumption where satisfaction is constructed based on social-psychological benefits.

The empirical evidence shows that guest satisfaction /dissatisfaction can be explained by using Herzberg's theory and can be theorized with satisfiers and dissatisfiers as termed in this approach. Satisfiers and dissatisfiers were identified from the empirical findings, where satisfiers are related to ecolodge content that include the experiences gained from relating to the attractions/environment and activities. On the other hand, dissatisfiers are more directly related to the ecolodge context.

It seems that guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction can be presented as two extreme of the two different continua known as satisfiers and dissatisfiers. These are two different sets of constructs (experiential factor/soft dimensions and technical factors/hard dimensions) that are derived from different facets of interactions between guest experiences. They are derived from two different motivational forces, known as "motivator factors" and "hygiene factors" in accordance with Herzberg's theory. Thus, it is likely that the guest satisfaction dimension is unipolar. This also means that the satisfaction dimension in the ecolodge context is two-dimensional. This implies that guest satisfaction is also underpins the basic principles of Herzberg's theory – the concept of dual man and also life satisfaction. This offers a better way to

explain and understand guest satisfaction in the sense that the constructs are developed and reflected in the life of satisfaction of people rather than sets of service quality dimensions that only inform us “what”. The discussion leads to confirmation of the application of Herzberg’s Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory in the ecolodge context. Moreover, the findings are interpreted in a more practicable way for ecolodge management consumption, in term of both satisfiers /dissatisfiers and the development of Perception Profile of the Ecolodge.

This leads to the presentation, in the next chapter, where it presents empirical findings and discussion on post consumption stage in relation to satisfaction which include neutral factors, comments and suggestions from the informants. These findings are pertinent and valuable to the ecolodge management in term of satisfaction improvement. It offers insightful understanding of guest behaviour in relation to satisfaction after the consumption of service experience.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Findings and Discussion of Guest Behavioural Intentions in the Post Service Consumption Stage**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter reports and discusses empirical findings based on the post consumption stage in the consumer behaviour model. These findings are reported from observation fieldwork, interviews and the PAT responses. The findings and discussions are divided into four parts follows the themes: a) positive experiences leading to satisfaction; b) negative comments and suggestions for improvement; and c) neutral factors and d) the perceptions of service quality levels.

Section 8.2 describes and discussion positive experiences leading to satisfaction and several sub-themes that emerged from these responses. Section 8.3 presents negative comments and valuable suggestions from the responses. No dissatisfaction and its reasons are presented and discussed in section 8.4. Neutral factors are presented and discussed in section 8.5 and finally perceptions of service quality levels in the service experience context are explained in Section 8.6.

#### **8.2 The Positive Experience leading to Satisfaction from Interview Responses**

It is interesting to note that there are several ways how satisfied informants express their satisfaction at the service experience post consumption stage. Positive benefits lead to intentions to come back and positive word of month emerges from the interview responses of the satisfied informants and is categorized as themes.

Intention to come back and positive word of mouths that emerged from the responses after the consumption process are closely associated with the wildlife and natural environment experiences and are considered as an achievement. These informants regard the natural experience gained as a positive and memorable one. Table 8.1 presents the themes that emerged from the interview responses.

**Table 8. 1: Themes on Positive Experience leading to Satisfaction**

Item	Themes on Positive Experience
1	Positive word of mouth: seeing wildlife with own eyes
2	Intention of coming back: experience, see more wildlife, clean environment
3	Intention of coming back & positive word of mouth: talk friends
4	Good Experiences and memorable
5	Benefit sought: achievement and best trip

A majority of the informants expressed positive word of month intentions in relation to the benefit of seeing wildlife with one's own eyes, which are associated with satisfaction. This evidence is found in Exhibit 8.1.1 below and also in Chapter 6 (Exhibit 6.3.5).

**Exhibit 8.1. 1: Positive Word of Mouth: Seeing Wildlife With Own Eyes**

I have seen it myself and I can go away and tell my friends. I just e-mailed my family in England and I told them what I have seen. (Interview informant 5)

I will tell friends and look at the picture and enjoyed... and think back all the time, so it is a very special memory, and always made me feel happy. I will tell my friends that we live so close to jungle and the animals and outside your lodge, you can see the garden and river and monkeys, live so close to the animals (Interview informant 13)

I will first tell them (friends) what a beautiful it is, I would tell them how fantastic the wildlife, the scenery, the beautiful place we, show them our photos. (Interview informant 19)

There were a few informants who expressed their intention of coming back for a variety of reasons (Exhibit 8.1.2 below).

**Exhibit 8.1. 2: Intention of Coming Back: Pleasant Experience, Wildlife and Clean Environment**

Yes, I like to come back tomorrow again and to go through the whole experiences again and make sure it is raining. (Interview informant 6)

I just been reading an article on somebody being there several times and still wanting to go back, I just feel very much the same, you could never have too much! We will go back there is because of wildlife and in the hope to see more and different wildlife, for me to see elephants will be very special. (Interview informant 7)

We will go again because we feel sure we will see some more interesting things and we have the intention of coming back (Interview informant 11)

We will go back to again and we go back during dry season and I like to see may see elephants and slow lorries. I will definitely do it again! (Interview informant 8)

The clean environment of the lodge that was one of the reasons I would go back-it was nice and clean and friendly. (Interview informant 9)

Other informants expressed their intention to come back and to talk positively to friends (Exhibit 8.1.3).

### **Exhibit 8.1. 3: Intention to Come Back and Positive Word of Mouth**

When we go back I will say probably proboscis monkey is fantastic and you must go and see in Malaysia...our experience will be positive enough to advise friends to go and may be we may go with them again! (Interview informant 10)

Yes, I will tell my friend because something exclusively also. I will recommend people to Sukua. It is enrichment for them for the person and soul... would be something they should do. I think you got nearest to the nature and you can understand it in a (Interview informant 21)

One informant clearly pointed out that, recommendations will be made for certain people because not everyone has the same interests and preferences as indicated:

*Oh, Yes, I will recommend people to Sukua, I couldn't recommend to everyone because I know the friend of mine will be applause, they would not even stay in the lodge and let to go around the river, so it not for everyone!* (Interview informant 16)

Others expressed this as good experiences and memories.

*I think it was a good experience that we always remember till to the day we die I think! Because I thought we never do it again* (Interview informant 15)

Other informants recognized the benefits sought in their achievement and they also considered this was the best trip:

*It means you achieve what you hope to achieve on the holiday – seeing the wildlife.* (Interview informant 23)

*This is the best trip and that was exciting- to see rainforest and animals and not sure if you are going to see in tomorrow. Everything was different and surprised that everything we did and it was right and worth.* (Interview informant 24)

Likewise, expressions of satisfaction were also recorded in observation data collected at the end of the riverboat cruise trip. There were positive and good expressions

made at the end of the riverboat cruise trips by the informants (Chapter 7, Exhibit 7.2.2).

The empirical findings show that informants express their satisfaction through many ways such as positive word of mouth, paying compliments to the service or product provider and development of long-term loyalty to the destination. As a result, the relationship between satisfied tourists and tourist destinations is likely to be positive, for example the intention to come back or to come back again with others.

Satisfied tourists tend to recommend the tourist destination to others, and this becomes the cheapest and most effective form of marketing and promotion. Similarly, satisfied tourists tend to contribute to increased rates of retention of tourist's patronage, loyalty and acquisition, which will help to realize economic goals in term of increased number of tourists and revenue. Hence, there is a close association between tourist satisfaction and the destination's long-term economic success.

### **8.3 Negative Comments and Suggestions**

This section presents findings from responses related to negative comments and suggestions for improvement that were considered a valuable and useful perspective from informants' point of view and also may have implication for ecolodge management.

The empirical findings show that there were a few negative comments that emerged from the interview responses that did not lead to dissatisfaction. However, it is worthwhile to draw these to the attention of the ecolodge operators, as these areas will affect the overall eco- environment. Interestingly, the responses from the interview informants provided several valuable inputs and suggestions as areas for improvement, including river management, riverboat cruise operations, access to the lodge, the extra services for the eco-lodge operators and the eco-environment management as presented in Table 8.2 below.

**Table 8. 2: Themes Emerged on Suggestions for Improvement**

Item	Suggestions for Improvement
1	River management: sanitation
2	Riverboat Cruise Operation
3	Road access to lodge
4	Extra services and facilities
5	Management of Eco-environment

This evidence on suggestions for improvement is supported by the following informants who stated that river sanitation should be improved.

*Things to improve-water supply, the eco-side of the sanitation-I have seen all go into the river that something and I understand that all lodges do that. But you have to control the river. (Interview informants 25 &26)*

Suggestions emerged from the following informants with regard to having more activities and riverboat cruise trip improvement.

*I meant I appreciated is not Proboscis Lodge's fault ah... but some sort of forest trail or things for people to do rather than sit around because not everyone wants to sit around and read a book. Or another alternative would be to offer some sort of alternative longer boat trips whereby you can do a half day exploration and that way you avoid problem of bumping into other boats and you could occupy the whole morning, may be just instead of taking 2 hours boat trips to the oxbow lake and make it a 4 hours trip, possibility take breakfast with you or something, feel like you really then exploring. (Interview informant 18)*

*My suggestion would be that this cruise starts at the top of the river so the slow boat trip is taken with the sun behind the boat. (PAT 40 & 41)*

Though hot sun had caused discomfort during the riverboat cruise for wildlife viewing, this did not affect the dissatisfaction levels and instead the informant provided suggestions for improvement.

*I did not feel bad about the sunshine ... but is just a suggestion when we going on the river cruise up the river at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and you go up the river very slowly to look at the wildlife and come back by 5 o'clock, we were went up slowly and the sun was shinning directly in our eyes so we were not able to look at the wildlife, it will be better if we go up river first and come back slowly because by then the sun will be behind us. (Interview informant 19)*

Another informant suggested using electric boats to overcome the noise from boat engines.

*The idea of electric motor on the back of the boat for silent cruises which I think it would make a big difference, or you can have a little silent motor, then I think it would greatly enhance the experiences almost already a good experience! The whole point here is to get into nature and feel that you are there and it is a peaceful way of seeing animals, I think it would improve greatly with a little electric motor. (Interview informant 18)*

One informant suggested alternative ways to reach the ecolodge because of a long tedious bumpy road and were disappointed with palm plantations along the journey.

*Miles and miles and miles of oil palm trees, I think it really spoilt it by building or allowing growth of the oil palm go right to the river. Road to lodge, alternative method of getting there, may be by boat from Sandakan, not one of the river boats but something a bit more substantial. (Interview informant 8)*

Likewise another informant proposed different routes to the ecolodge.

*It is just quite hard getting there, I wonder if there is any alternative like speed boat transfer something like that from ah... Sandakan. (Interview informant 18)*

Other informants suggested facilities or 'extras services' such as a library for wildlife information, real coffee and milk, snack, rental of binoculars that could make the informants' feel better.

*Small library with books on environment, birds, mammals that will be good and "real coffee will be nice with real milk, I hate UHT milk. (Interview informant 7)*

*That is very good to have nice cold water, may be more snack, you know something you just in the evening if you come back from the boat you just want something, you know when you had a drink, so more snack. Also, hire of the binoculars will be good for guests did have perhaps they forget or they cannot carry it. (Interview informant 7)*



One informant expressed the wish to have soft pillows to improve comfort.

*I have a hard pillow but it will be nice to have soft pillow. (Interview informant 4)*

Interestingly, there were suggestions relating to eco-environment management recommended by the informants to improve existing conditions.

*I would like to think of an ecolodge as setting example for others to collaborate in future as regards regulating and reducing environmental damage and collection of any plastic from river (PAT 3)*

*Also, I wish we could have manpower rowing in the small river and Oxbow Lake instead of using engine boat caused pollution. (PAT 27)*

#### 8.4 Finding and Discussion of No dissatisfaction

It is interesting to note that there were responses indicating no dissatisfaction from both interview and PAT responses. These “no dissatisfactions” with their reasons are closely associated with informants’ level of expectations and recognise the limitations of the jungle situation as presented in Table 8.3 below. The informants regarded mosquitoes, leeches and bad road conditions are expected and are part of the situation of being in the jungle.

**Table 8. 3: The Reasons of No Dissatisfaction**

Number	The Reasons
1	Meeting the needs
2	Enjoyable stay and trips
3	Meeting the level of expectation: -No expectation -Low expectation -Exceeding expectation

One informant regarded this as the best journey and was satisfied simply that she had fulfilled her goal by seeing the real jungle and was able to relax, to gain experience in the jungle and see animals in their natural environment:

*This was the best journey so far on our vacation in Borneo. We (with her husband) like everything here- lodge, jungle, animals. (PAT 16)*

One informant felt that they had a very good experience of wildlife, an unforgettable one and found peace and rest which met their needs.

*No, nothing dissatisfied me. When you are in rainforest or jungles which is a unique environment or situation, you are expected to have some unexpected and not luxury things, of cause some negative experiences but that is different. I enjoyed everything here. (PAT 1)*

Another informant stated that it was the right experience and considered it an enjoyable trip.

*I don't think there is anything I don't felt good, I enjoyed it all, enjoyed everyday. I can't really think of anything else. Misquotes is expected in jungle...this is what you expected. Leeches were expected in the jungle. (Interview informant 24)*

One informant commented that there was no unhappy experience because he had been told to have low expectations.

*There was nothing that was not up to my satisfaction. Because, as I said, I could live with anything very basic. On this tour they told us it was basic and at the end of the tour, I told them that was not basic I called it a surprise. (Interview informant 6)*

One informant stated that the duration of riverboat cruise trip was too long and found it repetitive but still enjoyed the trip.

*Too long evening cruise in the second evening (3 hours) and see little difference from the previous. Many cruises are repetitive but all were very enjoyable. (PAT 40)*

One informant was dissatisfied with the uncomfortable road and the bed but the informant understood the situation.

*Uncomfortable road. The beds are hard. They aren't really unsatisfactory because you don't expect all the comfort of home in the middle of jungle. The remoteness and the location are so wonderful –not worry about other things. (PAT 24)*

Another informant expected some hardship but found things adequate.

*Here you are expecting some hardship in a basic lodge and in the heart of the adventure. Lodge was more than adequate for a short stay. (PAT 47)*

Although there are shortcomings to the jungle, informants seem to treat this as an expected situation and preferred it the way it was.

*We always feel happy, every moment. Things could have improved, but lots of things should be kept in that way because it is jungle. (Interview informant 14)*

One informant indicated that everything was good and there were no negative signs in relation to nature conservation.

*Lodge provides a lovely remote vacation and optimizes the facilities that nature had put on it in term of conservation; I did not see anything happening that is going to destroy the habitats. (Interview informant 5)*

Significantly, a majority of informants reported that there was nothing that really dissatisfied them or they disliked during their stay in the ecolodge with no specific reasons provided. (PAT 6, 20, 22, 23, 26 and many more)

It is interesting to note that a significant number of informants expressed the view that there was nothing that they actually disliked or were dissatisfied about simply because the natural environment the informants were in is unpredictable and uncontrollable. The three reasons that emerged from the data in relation to “no dissatisfaction” were meeting the informant’s needs, the stay and trip were enjoyable and met their level of expectations as summarized in Table 8.4 above. This seems to concur with Eagles (1992) that nature travellers seem more willing to accept and

appreciate local conditions, customs and foods and the study confirms and supports the argument made by Boo's (1990) statement that "ecotourists do not require luxurious accommodation, food or nightlife. They are willing to accept and appreciate local conditions, culture and food."

## 8.5 Neutral Experiences

Likewise, there are neutral factors leading to neutral experience that emerged from the interview responses, which are related to mosquitoes, leeches, bumpy road access to the lodge, hot climate, hot sun and rainy days, water quality and hygiene. These are perceived as shortcomings of the jungle situation but did not lead to dissatisfaction. To some extent, these complaints were regarded as "unavoidable" due to the nature of the context that the informants were in. Hence, these complaints neither contributed to positive or negative experiences nor affected the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Informants acknowledged that mosquitoes are part of the jungle and therefore they had wonderful experiences.

*We came knowing that there will be mosquitoes and if you are going to this type of tour you have to enjoy what is expected, so. ... There is no bad feeling, we were provided with mosquito net and insect repellents. (Interview informant 20)*

Other informants saw mosquitoes and leeches as part of the jungle experience and nature environment.

### Exhibit 8.5. 1 Mosquitoes and Leeches As Part of Jungle Experience

Well mosquitoes and the leeches are part of the experience in the jungle; it does not decrease my level of satisfaction. Walking through the wet forest when it is raining and the leeches are getting to us .No, it did not affect me in term of my dissatisfaction because it is part of the experience. We cannot improve on nature –can't you?  
(Interview informant 26)

The leeches but you expect that, and the pouring rain and soaking wet in the boat –but all these are ok as part of the holiday, it not decrease my satisfaction and I expected that. Leeches, mosquitoes and rain did not contribute to my dissatisfaction level because we knew that before. (Interview informant 27)

One informant stated that mosquito bites, western music and the hot sun contributed to negative experiences but these did not affect the level of dissatisfaction.

*Bitten by mosquitoes did not bore me at all. I felt that loud western music is not suitable to play western music eco-environment, but it is more of personal and you cannot take the sun off and you do come to the middle of rainforest to expecting it to be cold. You have to accept it. I meant the jungle won't be here if it wasn't hot. Just have to accepting hot weather as it is and consider as part of the experiences, it is a negative but not affecting my dissatisfaction- jungle won't be here if it is not hot. It is a negative but not a negative that could affect my decision to come. (Interview informant 2)*

One informant regarded a rainy day as a neutral experience.

*Raining day is ok, it could be hard if the sun shine all the time because it is so warm and we are not use to it, so it is ok. (Interview informant 12)*

Others informants considered that negative experiences resulting from leeches and the bad road to the lodge were part of the experience of the jungle and thus contributed to neutral experiences instead of dissatisfaction.

#### **Exhibit 8.5. 2: Leeches and Road to Lodge As Part of the Jungle Experience Contributed to Neutral Experience**

When we first got the leeches on us, I didn't like them but after a while that was all right, but that's part of the experience, but it didn't affect me at all. (Interview informant 15)

While it is to be expected you are going somewhere remote so ...you don't really we did expected you know that time the road was bad, but it doesn't worry the fact that is not a problem. (Interview informant 11)

Travel by bumpy road was the worst thing –but it is expect road like this to the jungle. (PAT29)

There were informants who showed concern about hygiene and safety measures in relation to water quality, though these factors did not contribute to the informants' dissatisfaction.

*I suppose the only minor thing that coming from Europe of course there are standards of hygiene, water and so much greater and there first time walking into the bathroom in lodge and seeing the water in the toilet coming straight from the river, was rather shock! This will not affect my dissatisfaction and I was expecting that anyway. (Interview informant 16)*

## **8.6 Perception of Service Quality Level in Relation to Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction from Interview Responses**

Interestingly, it was found that the elements of service quality that emerged from the interview responses are closely associated with minimum standards, value for money, consistency of services, and expectations. It seems that this finding confirms Boo (1990) who notes that ecotourists are generally willing to accept and appreciate local conditions but it was found that the informants generally have certain minimum levels of expected comfort such as cleanliness, hygiene, safety and food.

The following presents evidence of perceptions of service quality from the informants. Generally, informants feel happy and satisfied when service quality was what guests expected.

*The service quality meets my expectation. I don't expect good service here – not a five star service but friendly people. It is ok for the service here and people are different. More important is to see the wildlife. (Interview informant 1)*

Three informants related service quality to value for money and also minimum standards.

*The level of service quality met my expectation and bearing in mind how much cost comparing to the value, and my minimum standard here are three things I think – clean food, bathroom and bed, I think if you cover those three bases effectively. (Interview informants 2&3)*

Other informants also related service quality to their minimum standards as indicated in Exhibit 8.6.1 below

#### **Exhibit 8.6. 1: Service Quality As Minimum Standard**

Yes, it (service quality) was up to my minimum standard and was very good (interview informant 18)

I think it (service quality) was good, ya, it was very friendly, quite efficient ah.... but it was not a sort of hotel style large, more of family set up ...ah. As such it has the charm to it but there is nothing lot of facilities. That was my acceptable standard. (Interview informant 9)

The service quality level was good; they (service staff) told us the food and take away our plates ...meet my standard. (Interview informant 13 & 14)

Likewise, the informants regarded service quality as consistent and felt satisfied:

*The service quality has been consistency good through out. There was a warm welcome, the room was cleaned and well furnished and towels and comfortable seats with light and meals were wonderful. I think the service for all lodges but Sukau they provided excellent under circumstances in comparison. (Interview informant 5)*

*The level of service quality was same through out Sabah-people were so friendly, they never get annoyed, so you know the people always happy and smiling to me, you cannot. (Interview informant 16)*

One informant regarded service quality as excellent because he was told that it was basic and it was not basic for him. The informant could live with anything very basic.

*I rated the service quality excellent. (Interview informant 6)*

One informant expressed the importance of service quality and commented:

*If the service quality was not there, yes, it would be less attractive to stay in this lodge. (Interview informant 11)*

Table 8.4 below shows that majority of interview informants perceived levels of service quality to be as expected and at their minimum standard. Likewise, a majority of the informants also stated that the level of service quality was expected.

Interestingly, more of the informants rated service quality levels as good rather than excellent.

**Table 8. 4: Summary of Perception of Service Quality**

Informants	Expected level	Value for money	Minimum standard	Good	Consistent Services	Excellent
1	Y	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
2	N/a	Y	Y	N/a	N/a	N/a
3	N/a	Y	Y	N/a	N/a	N/a
5	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	Y	N/a
6	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	Y
9	Y	N/a	Y	N/a	N/a	N/a
11	Y	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
12	Y	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
13	N/a	N/a	N/a	Y	N/a	N/a
14	N/a	N/a	N/a	Y	N/a	N/a
15	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
16	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	Y	N/a
18	N/a	N/a	Y	N/a	N/a	N/a

In summary, perceptions of service quality emerged from the thirteen interview informants. The level of service quality was used to compare with their expected levels and minimum standards in relation to services provided by the ecolodges, the consistency of the services and value for money. The informants also rated the level of service quality as good and excellent but they did not specifically relate this to their satisfaction levels.

The overall empirical findings show little evidence of service quality in determining satisfaction. However, in the literature it has been confirmed that the level of service quality affects satisfaction. For example, if the service quality level is low, the level of satisfaction is assumed to be affected, which may cause dissatisfaction.

Conversely, when the level of service quality is high, it is assumed that satisfaction occurs. Nevertheless, in the present research, service quality is not shown as a significant satisfaction construct and equally this is applied to another satisfaction construct – “expectations” – which appear to have very little influence on satisfaction as indicated by empirical findings. However, there was one extreme case where the informant acknowledged that service quality met his expectation but it did not relate to his satisfaction. It was the wilderness viewing that affected his satisfaction.



Thus, one can conclude that service quality may not be an important construct or precondition to achieve satisfaction in the service experience context that consists of perception and experiential elements. It is evidenced that guest's evaluation and construction of satisfaction focuses more on expressive dimensions and less on utilitarian aspects of satisfaction. Clearly, this demonstrates the inadequacy of expectancy disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1980) to measure guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction and to determine satisfaction dimensions. This also leads to a conclusion that due to the nature of the context, the service experience consists of perception and experiential elements.

Another issue relates to the use of consumer behaviour theories and most service marketing is based on the evaluation of products' or services' physical attributes in terms of measuring consumer satisfaction. These theories and methods are developed to research product marketing and ignore the experiential/ affective emotion of consumers in the service experience. This questions the relevancy, validity and the usefulness of the findings. The literature shows there have been different theories proposed for explaining and measuring customer satisfaction. These theories are all rooted deeply in cognitive psychology due to the narrow definition of consumer satisfaction as occurring when performance meets or exceeds expectations and satisfaction post-consumption. Arguably, in the service experience, it is unlikely that guests will form expectations prior to service consumption or exposure to experience, and even though guests may have prior experience which enables them to form pre-purchase expectations, but their expectation is likely to change during and post consumption. Therefore, satisfaction occurs during and post consumption as evidenced by the empirical evidence in the present research in terms of expressive dimensions during guest interaction and participation in the wildlife viewing, riverboat cruise and jungle walk activities.

The empirical findings also show that, overall, informants were satisfied with their visits to ecolodges in Sukua. It is interesting to note that guests expressed no dissatisfaction with reasons that are closely associated with their expectation and needs, as presented in Table 8.3. This implies that informants in the ecolodge

related to their level of satisfaction, where satisfaction is conceptualised as fulfilment of needs- specifically in order to see wildlife and to escape. It is a subjective assessment that is related to service experience in the ecolodge context.

## **8.7 Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter presents and discusses empirical evidence in the post service consumption stage where the guest behavioural intentions demonstrated repeat visit and positive word of mouth resulting from positive experiences gained. The negative comments and suggestions for improvement are useful for ecolodge management and the informants also indicated that elements such as leeches, mosquitoes and poor road conditions are part of the jungle situation. It was found that the perception of service quality is rarely related to satisfaction but rather it was interpreted as minimum standards, value for money and consistent services. However, there are three main issues in relation to guest satisfaction resulting from the empirical evidence of this present research. These relate to the evidence of guest expectations and service quality as well as measuring and understanding guest satisfaction in the service experience context and will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Nine**

### **Conclusions and Implications**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

Following the presentation of empirical findings and discussion of them in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, this chapter concludes the present study by relating research outcomes to the theoretical context, followed by referencing them to the research aims and research questions. The chapter also discusses some of the issues that emerge from the research findings and presents theoretical, methodological and managerial implications. The research limitations are discussed and the direction for future research is also noted.

#### **9.2 The Theoretical Background of the Research and Measurement of Guest Satisfaction in the Service Experience Context**

As noted earlier, doing research is fundamentally a methodical process of enquiry and investigation that aims to increase knowledge (Hussey and Hussey, 1997) or understanding of certain phenomena, and research is conducted to achieve an outcome, and can explore, describe, explain, analyse or predict (Neumann, 1997). Very often, it is new knowledge is explored or developed through different perspectives and methodologies. Exploring guest satisfaction that involves evaluation and measurement of satisfaction is a complex phenomenon. It is further complicated in the service experience context simply due to the nature of service as an intangible, heterogeneous, inseparable phenomenon. The literature indicates that there is still no clear consensus about theoretical, and measurement approaches as well as constructs appropriate in researching consumer satisfaction despite extensive research in this field.

One of the underlying presumptions of the present research was that guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context consists of two facets. The first is satisfaction with the ecolodge service performance and is defined as guests' cognitive and

expectations assessment of ecolodge service performance. The second facet is satisfaction with the service experience and is related to the guest's affective response to the extent that their needs have been fulfilled or social-psychological benefits met. Satisfaction with service performance tends to be the main research focus, and the conceptualization of guest satisfaction regarding accommodation generally excludes service experience satisfaction. However, service performance and service experience (interaction with other guests/staff and the natural environment) are essential parts of accommodation (Baum, 1993). This means that research that focuses solely on either one of these facets is inadequate for addressing guest satisfaction. Also, it is important to note that in circumstances where the provision of service experience is highly personal and experiential, it is likely that satisfaction with service experience will outweigh satisfaction with service performance. In the present research context, the ecolodge is regarded as an "experiential consumption place product" where both experiential factors and utility transaction benefits are deemed important to guests. Essentially, both technical and emotional aspects contribute substantially to guest satisfaction, and both technical aspects of tourism suppliers and the psychological environment should be incorporated into the measurement of guest satisfaction.

The present research concludes that the consumer consumption approach based on the cognitive approach can no longer be deemed wholly relevant in the service experience context in terms of understanding guest satisfaction. It is suggested that guest satisfaction research must take into account behavioural approaches, where the physical environment influences behaviour and the experiential perspective, since "consumers are both feelers and thinkers". The combination of these two consumption approaches in understanding guest/consumer behaviour is deemed justifiable, since a guest/consumer is not an "automata" or simply an "input-output" concept to explain satisfaction. The notion of guest satisfaction is indeed socially constructed with interactions and in context, as noted by Williams (2002).

The present research also concluded that guest expectations actually occur during consumption and not just at the pre and post-consumption stage. The guests interact

with both the physical environment and human elements (staff/guides/other guests) and also participate in leisure activities (wildlife viewing, riverboat cruise trips, jungle walks) during the consumption process. Thus, their expectations are formed and changed over time or during the process. It is unlikely that guests' form their expectations based on the pre-purchase or pre-consumption performance of the product or experience, especially for first time guests. Even if they have formed their expectations, it is likely that these will be influenced by their interaction with the physical environment, their involvement and participation during the consumption stage and will be carried forward to the post consumption stage, as suggested by Wilkie (1994).

The complexity of guest satisfaction can be approached from an alternative perspective by extending Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory from its original context of job satisfaction. This theory, it is contended, is better able to address human satisfaction adequately compared to expectancy disconfirmation and service quality theory as the theoretical underpinning of both of these is driven by product and services. This study demonstrates both theoretical and operational limitations of expectancy disconfirmation and service quality theories in measuring consumer satisfaction in the service experience context.

This research argues that guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction can be explored and explained by using Herzberg's theory. The ecolodge is regarded as service management accommodation and its context experience can be categorised as consisting of satisfiers/motivators and dissatisfiers/hygiene factors in accordance with Herzberg's theory that satisfaction and dissatisfaction constructs, operate as unrelated constructs. This means that there are two different motivational forces that determine guest satisfaction, via two different continua. At one extreme, satisfiers are constructs related to personal experiential aspects derived from the natural environment and attractions, physical sites and leisure activities and they are sourced from the external ecolodge environment. At the other extreme, dissatisfiers are constructs related to the performance and availability of facilities, amenities and maintenance in the ecolodge context. This indicates that guest satisfaction in the

ecolodge is a two-dimensional measurement. This theory is capable of informing the two distinct constructs and of expressing service quality dimensions in a more meaningful way as satisfiers and dissatisfiers.

*One can reasonably conclude that the present research has successfully achieved its aim of exploring the underlying dimensions of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and the extent to which these dimensions can be explained using Herzberg's theory. At the same time, this research has sought to answer the research questions set out in Chapter One through the empirical evidence presented. Equally important, this research has provided fresh insights into the guest satisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge context, and used the advancement and broad application of Herzberg's theory to further understand guest satisfaction. The findings have provided answers to the research questions as outlined previously. These are presented in accordance with each research question as follows:*

**Sub-research question: 1) What are the motivational and decision-making factors for guests visiting ecolodges in Sukau?**

The research findings reveal that destination attractions (pull dimensions), the fulfilment of needs/wants and escape (push dimensions) are the main motivational factors to visit Sukau, as presented in Chapter Six (section 6.3). A discussion of the motivational factors is presented in section 6.3.1. This concludes that guests are attracted by destination attributes (natural attractions, wildlife, local lifestyle and eco-activities) and also by the desire to escape from their normal life routine. Ecolodge (accommodation) is not the primary motivator, but the destination attributes and eco activities are regarded as the main motivational factors.

**Sub-research question: 2) How are the guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions perceived and constructed in the ecolodge context?**

The empirical evidence presented in section 7.5 indicates that guests evaluate and measure their satisfaction and dissatisfaction based on both functionality and

utilitarianism, as presented in section 7.5.2, while the emotional/expressive aspects are reported in 7.5.3.

**Sub-research question: 3) How do guests react in relation to their “happy” and “unhappy” moments during participation in the riverboat cruise trips?**

The observational findings show that guests react positively and happily to seeing wildlife close-up during riverboat cruises. Several factors contributed to guests' positive reactions, including: a) the tangible element – the wildlife, b) the intangible elements – the natural environment and experience (riverboat cruise trips), the guide services, the boatman's skills and the group member interactions. Several elements that caused negative reactions and led to unhappy moments are related to “no wildlife seen”, noise and fumes from the boat engines, boat congestion, riverbank erosion, hot sun and the poor maintenance of the jetties. These findings are discussed in section 7.2.4.

**Sub-research question: 4) What are the guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge context?**

As presented in section 7.3.5, the empirical evidence shows that guest satisfaction dimensions can be divided into three categories: a) instrumental (lodge/room), b) social activities (riverboat cruise, jungle walk, and group dynamic), c) performance of guide and boatman (knowledge, experience and skills) and d) personal experience (natural environment and experiences, lodge environment). Interestingly, the instrument of lodge/room is regarded as meeting the expectations and minimum standards of the guests that did not contribute to or influence the guest satisfaction level. On the other hand, dissatisfaction dimensions are sourced from different sets of constructs and are related to environmental degradation, the operation of the riverboat cruise, the lodge/room maintenance and facilities.

**Sub-research question: 5) What are the satisfaction/dissatisfaction dimensions that can be termed “satisfiers/motivators” and “dissatisfiers/hygiene” factors?**

Section 7.4.5 presents the answer to this question. The empirical evidence shows that both the satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions can be termed as “satisfiers/motivators” and “dissatisfier/hygiene” factors. Satisfiers are regarded as the content of the ecolodge that consists of atmosphere and experience derived from the riverboat cruises, wildlife viewing, the lodge environment and the quality of the staff, whilst the dissatisfiers relate to the context of the ecolodge environment that consists of its maintenance and operational condition, as peripheral elements. These two different constructs are presented in Figure 7.4.1 and are employed as the two extremes of guest satisfaction in Figure 7.4.2

**Sub-research question: 6) What are the perceived service attributes that lead to the satisfaction/dissatisfaction of guests and can be described as “satisfiers/motivators” and “dissatisfiers/hygiene” factors?**

The perceived service attributes that lead to satisfaction and can be termed as satisfiers /motivators factors are: a) The lodge services and location, b) the leisure activities: riverboat cruises and jungle treks, c) wildlife, d) natural attractions and environment, and e) guides and boatmen. These service attributes as presented in section 7.4.2 (Table 7.4.3) increase guest satisfaction with their presence and will not affect their dissatisfaction level if absent. The service attributes that lead to dissatisfaction and are also termed “dissatisfiers/hygiene” factors, as presented in Table 7.4.6, are the functionality and discomfort of the riverboat cruise, the functionality, comfort and cleanliness in relation to the lodge/room maintenance and facilities, the availability of extra facilities and information, the road and journey to the lodge, the functionality of the lodge walkway, the natural attraction (discomfort), and the availability of wildlife and the polluted natural environment (noise/fumes/litter). These elements do not lead to satisfaction through their absence, but will increase dissatisfaction by their presence.



### **Sub-research question: 7) How can ecolodge operators better manage and improve guest satisfaction?**

This research has explored several ways of managing and improving guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context. These alternative ways of managing and improving guest satisfaction are reported and discussed in depth in sections 7.6.4 and 7.6.5. The findings about satisfiers concern areas in which the ecolodge operators should continue to invest, such as the conservation of wildlife/the need to preserve and conserve the natural resources and environment, and training courses for guides to enhance their skills and language. The dissatisfiers, meanwhile, were focussed on areas which require further attention from or improvements by the ecolodge operators, such as lodge/room maintenance and facilities, riverboat cruise operations and the pollution of the pristine environment by boat engines (noise, fumes). Likewise, there were suggestions for improvements to the riverboat cruise operations, the provision of “extra facilities” (laundries, small libraries and information points) and river sanitation (Chapter 8, Table 8.2). Likewise, the development of a Perception Profile of an Ecolodge (Radar Wed 7.6.1) would provide a useful information radar web giving lists of positive and negative service aspects. Ecolodge operators can focus their attention on the lists of negative service aspects for guest satisfaction improvement, where these aspects are tangible elements and controllable by the ecolodge operator as compared to positive service attributes.

### **9.3 Emerging Issues of Guest Satisfaction**

Although the empirical evidence has established the dimensions of guest satisfaction and also demonstrated empirically the applicability of Herzberg’s theory to the ecolodge context, this research also raised issues in relation to guest satisfaction in the service experience context resulting from the empirical evidence that has implications for the measurement of guest satisfaction.

The first issue relates to guest expectations in the service experience context. This research implies the conclusion that expectation is not a significant construct in guest

satisfaction. Guests tend to express their satisfaction through personal experiential aspects. It is difficult for them to set their expectations prior to the consumption of the service experience since the characteristics of service are intangibility and heterogeneity. Likewise, their expectations are likely to be influenced during the process of consumption. Their expectations are likely to change during and post consumption, and so satisfaction likewise occurs during and post consumption, for example in terms of expressive dimensions during guest interaction and participation in wildlife viewing, riverboat cruise and jungle walk activities. Thus, one can safely conclude that expectation seems irrelevant in the context of the service experience. Although these empirical findings are from first time visitors to ecolodges in Sukau, arguably even repeat guests would have difficulties in setting their expectations unless they were told things in advance because the nature of the context is a very fragile and unpredictable environment. Their expectations will be influenced by many other factors during the process of service consumption, and that is very different from the consumption of a product where one normally knows the expected product performance in advance and their expectations are static.

Existing consumer satisfaction theories that are often used to measure consumer satisfaction are rooted deeply in cognitive psychology based on a narrow definition of consumer satisfaction that occurs when performance meets or exceeds expectations and satisfaction post-consumption. Subsequently, this questions the relevance, validity and the usefulness of the findings by adopting these theories as the problem arises from the formation and measurement of expectation.

Another issue relates to the use of consumer behaviour theories and most service marketing is based on the evaluation of products' or services' physical attributes in terms of measuring consumer satisfaction. These theories and methods are developed to research product marketing and ignore the experiential/ affective emotional nature of consumers in the service experience.

The second issue relates to the lack of evidence about service quality in determining satisfaction. It is apparent that levels of service quality affect satisfaction. For

example if service quality levels are low, the level of satisfaction is assumed to be affected, which may cause dissatisfaction. Conversely, when the level of service quality is high, it is assumed that satisfaction occurs. Nevertheless, in the present research, service quality has not emerged as a significant satisfaction construct that is similar to expectations as addressed earlier. It was found that service quality is interpreted and referred to as a minimum or basic standard, as consistent service results in comfort rather than satisfaction. On this basis, it can be concluded that service quality may not be an important construct or pre condition to achieving satisfaction in the service experience. It is the perception and experiential elements that influence guest satisfaction (Otto and Ritchie, 1996). Thus, this seems to demonstrate the inadequacy of expectancy disconfirmation theory and service quality theory to measure guest satisfaction/dissatisfaction and also to determine satisfaction dimensions since both theories are underpinned by expectations.

Further to this explanation, in the ecolodge context, guests generally have specific motivations, needs and leisure activity preferences when visiting ecolodges and these factors actually contribute to their satisfaction, rather than to service quality. By this notion, satisfaction is thus measured in terms of the social-psychological benefits or the desire to "escape" or "seek". In the same vein, from a theoretical perspective, guests generally anticipate that ecolodges provide simple and basic facilities unlike luxury hotels services, so the notion of service quality may not be significant for guests in determining their satisfaction.

Finally, in order to adequately address and gain a better insight into the understanding of guest satisfaction in the service experience context, it seems irrelevant to focus solely on either the quality of the performance or the quality of the experience. Focusing only on the objective, technical aspects of the service experience leaves untapped a crucial resource, that is the ability to understand and manage the true nature of guest satisfaction as it occurs in the context of service delivery. It has been shown in the present study that guests evaluate their satisfaction based upon both quality of performance and quality of experience, and they behave cognitively and emotionally when expressing their sense of satisfaction. This means

that guests are “thinkers as well as feelers” during the consumption of service experience and thus satisfaction evaluation is based upon these criteria. Furthermore, the tourism and hospitality industry is regarded as including both service and experience elements (Otto and Ritchie, 1996). Hospitality services have both functional and expressive roles to fulfil. This means that adopting only service quality measures may be insufficient to assist in our understanding of guest satisfaction. Guests may be primarily concerned with the desire to satisfy basic physiological (hunger and thirst) and psychological needs (status, self-esteem, sense of belonging). In reality, they tend to evaluate both aspects. It has been noted that guest satisfaction is a complex human process involving extensive cognitive, affective and other undiscovered psychological and physiological dynamics (Oh and Park, 1997). Therefore, it is sensible to include both service performance and service experience when assessing guest satisfaction, which means adopting both quality of performance and quality of experience. In the same manner, the present research concludes that guest satisfaction derives from the quality of experience that can also be termed as satisfiers, while the dissatisfiers seem to derive from quality of performance. These findings concur with the findings from previous studies that have adopted Herzberg’s theory to determine satisfaction.

#### **9.4 Theoretical Implications**

The present research has made three important contributions to guest satisfaction research. Perhaps the most significant outcome of the present research and the major contribution of this thesis is the theoretical generalization of Herzberg’s Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory in exploring guest satisfaction in the hospitality context. It has contributed towards the formation of a model for understanding guest satisfaction from two different and diverse motivational forces known as satisfiers and dissatisfiers derived from Herzberg’s theory, and also recognised the changes in guest expectations in the service experience consumption process. The present research is regarded as original in its extension of Herzberg’s theory into the ecolodge context. The empirical evidence produced supports the theory that guest satisfaction can be addressed by using satisfiers and dissatisfiers and that these are

two different motivational forces that contribute to guest satisfaction. It is safe to conclude that guest satisfaction is underpinned by the principles of life satisfaction – the concept of the dual nature of man demonstrated in real-life situations (Herzberg et al., 1962). This research provides advancement and a possibility of broad application of Herzberg's theory into guest satisfaction, and an insightful understanding of guest satisfaction in terms of predicting and understanding the motivator/true satisfiers and hygiene/maintenance factors in the accommodation sector. This type of theoretical model permits prediction to the satisfied and dissatisfied dimensions from pertinent social psychological variables (motivations) that are associated with context and contextual factors, also noted by Hinrichs and Mischkind (1967). It also supports the use of Herzberg's theory in understanding consumer satisfaction, a theme challenged in the literature. However, it must also be noted that the dimensions that contribute to satisfiers and dissatisfiers may not be universal, as they are subject to the nature of the service context and the type of activities provided.

Secondly, the empirical findings support the notion that satisfaction with service performance and satisfaction with service experience are distinct constructs. Both demonstrate predictive efficacy with regard to guest behaviour and are important in determining guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context. The importance of guest experience in models of consumer satisfaction has been underestimated by researchers (Price et al, 1995; Johns, 1999a). In addition, previous marketing and tourism research has often ignored the experiential aspect or simply mixed up these constructs in terms of service satisfaction. The present research highlights the need for wider consideration in exploring guest satisfaction in terms of its constructs. This research opens a new direction for those who are interested in exploring consumer satisfaction and points out the importance of experiential factors in determining guest satisfaction.

From a theoretical standpoint, it appears that both researchers and practitioners in tourism and hospitality should not lose sight of the true nature of consumer satisfaction that consists of needs, motivations and subjective responses in the

service experience. The empirical evidence produced in the present research shows that these are specific dimensions that can be readily measured to better understand satisfaction. Although experiential factors are subjective and illusive in nature, Galileo once wrote, "*count what is countable, measure what is measurable, and what is not measurable make measurable*" (Edvardsson et al., 1994, p.178). The two common threads found in the experiential aspect are that it requires involvement or participation by the consumer and it is internal in nature as well as individualised. It is possible to measure such aspects, and Otto and Ritchie (1996) present a six construct domains for measuring service experience that is useful in measuring the affective subjective responses to determine satisfaction. Indeed if service quality or attribute-based measures are exclusively used in satisfaction evaluation, they may be forcing consumers to evaluate service satisfaction on more functional and utilitarian dimensions than is appropriate or even relevant. This seems to represent a multifaceted understanding of the nature of service experience satisfaction, but it does contribute to the advantage of the classification of service. It is possible to categorise service based on one's experience in order to offer experiential benefits. It is also possible to categorise experience as being functional in nature in which the delivery of service can be enhanced by the incorporation of experiential benefits. It is suggested that researchers and practitioners explore guest satisfaction from both aspects.

Thirdly, guest satisfaction cannot be understood in isolation from the social context in which it occurs. The constructs such as temporal, social, personal and emotional as well as the subjective dimensions of the ecolodge (setting, interaction and socialization) within the context constitute part of a significant ecolodge experience and these views echo those of Lynch (2005) in the commercial home but are not found elsewhere in studies on hospitality. The present research demonstrates that the context of the natural environment and setting, the interaction of guides and the group members, elicited positive experiences that contributed to memorable and exciting moments for the guests and thus enhanced their satisfaction with service experiences in the ecolodge.

Finally, the existing service literature mentions that service quality factors or dimensions can be divided into four groups: enhancing (satisfiers), hygiene, neutral and critical factors (Lockwood, 1994). But there has been little focus on these four factors to explore guest satisfaction. Thus, the present research seeks to lead and demonstrate the ability to explain guest satisfaction using satisfiers and dissatisfiers and regards these as better constructs than expectation and need or motivation factors which are widely used elsewhere to measure consumer satisfaction.

## **9.5 Methodological Implications**

This research presents an alternative approach to the measurement of guest satisfaction. Unlike previous studies that use scales for various tourism services and guest satisfaction in hospitality services, the present research adopts an exploratory qualitative inductive approach that utilizes three different techniques (participant observation, Profile Accumulation Technique (PAT) and in-depth interview) to collect “authentic” data within which guests’ voices can be heard. PAT is adapted from its original version developed by Johns and Lee-Ross (1995) as qualitative research tool to gather guests’ service experience. By these means, it was possible to achieve a more natural, unforced, honest and detailed evaluation of guest satisfaction. The study contributes an alternative to the satisfaction methodological framework by capturing a more holistic, reliable, valid approach through the use of multiple methods for data collection. This, consequently, contributes to reasonably well-founded results in relation to guest satisfaction. Methodological shortcomings from each qualitative research technique are ameliorated by compensating for the weaknesses and complementing the strengths of each technique. Consistency of empirical findings is generated by crosschecking the three sets of data sources and also achieved through data triangulation between in-depth interviews and PAT. Thus, a coherent justification is manifest in the three different sources of data and the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings is established through triangulation.

The satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions are developed through the use of satisfiers and dissatisfiers from Herzberg’s theory, which can be used by researchers

in furthering knowledge about guest satisfaction and for those who are interested in more fully understanding guest satisfaction in hospitality services. In a way, the present research has also established more reliable ways to measure consumer satisfaction in the hospitality industry, and so has contributed to filling the literature gap for the need for more reliable ways of measuring consumer satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Oh and Parks, 1997).

Finally, guest satisfaction dimensions in the present research are examined from the experiential perspective and the behavioural approach to refocus and replace the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm and the SERVQUAL model that are primarily based on cognitive aspects and ignores the experiential factors. This research examines the service experience by collecting data based on "on site experience" in order to provide as real and recent data as possible. The researcher used fieldwork and data collection in the natural setting. The interviews were also carried out as close as possible to the consumption of the actual service, as opposed to being theoretical or scenario based. This was to ensure that the evaluation remained fresh in the guests' minds so that the experiential benefits were not forgotten or replaced with more cognitively accessible functional benefits. Thus, the findings can be regarded as well founded and a valid representation of perceptions at the time that the research was undertaken.

## **9.6 Managerial Implications**

The present research contributes in several ways to tourism and hospitality in relation to consumer satisfaction. Firstly, the identification of satisfiers and dissatisfiers allows for a better understanding of guest satisfaction and the sustainable use of eco-resources by ecolodge operators. Satisfiers are derived from experiential factors that involve affective responses while dissatisfiers are derived from utilitarian transactions that are based on cognitive responses. This indicates that ecolodge managers need constantly to remind themselves that guests evaluate their satisfaction based on both cognitive and affective criteria and also to consider that what they offer are both services and experiences. Hence, satisfiers and dissatisfiers are



regarded as useful information that can be used to develop strategies for marketing ecolodges in Sukau, where ecolodge operators can capitalize on the satisfiers to preserve the area's uniqueness in terms of its experiential aspects. A clearer understanding of the guests' specific experience related to the ecolodge context in Sukua makes a contribution to more effective positioning, promotional and communication strategy. Also the need for aesthetic information and functional information by travellers has been demonstrated by Vogt et al. (1993). This implies that guests will continue to seek out information on what type of experience to expect at both the destination and ecolodge. Incorporating experiential dimensions into more functional services may offer a unique competitive edge. In the same vein, the success of ecolodge operations in the competitive environment depends on its motivating factors or satisfiers that are based on its natural environment and attractions as well as guiding services. The development of quality improvement programmes in ecolodges can be established by focusing on the satisfiers, such as focusing on training skills and language for local guides. Also, areas for further investment, such as preservation and conservation efforts on wildlife and the pristine natural environment. On the other hand, dissatisfiers are certain areas that require proper maintenance and control in order for an ecolodge to operate to minimum standards.

Secondly, the present study has developed a Perception Profile of The Ecolodge, a useful information radar web for ecolodge operators to recognize the lists of positive and negative service quality aspects that contribute to satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In this way, ecolodge operators are able to prioritise and make decisions in relation to attributes' importance and feasibility. Such a profile has never previously been presented to the ecolodge operators with regards to guest satisfaction and quality improvement.

Thirdly, the empirical evidence from the participation observation techniques shows that positive experience from the behavioural reactions of informants are related to wildlife viewing, riverboat cruise trips and the natural environment. This signals the importance of both wildlife viewing and riverboat cruise activities and suggests that

the primary focus and attention for ecolodge operators should be on these aspects rather than on ecolodge core services which will not contribute substantially to guest satisfaction. This suggests that ecolodges are more experiential than a transaction and that its main attraction and motivators for guests depend on experiential factors from its natural environment and wildlife viewing unlike other traditional lodges or other types of small hotels that tend to focus more on the human and facilities elements.

Fourthly, the present research recognises the unique contribution of the ecolodge setting, including its natural environment and wildlife, to guest satisfaction. These are crucial elements that form motivational factors and influence the decision-making of the guests. Unfortunately, these elements are not easy to manage and maintain because they are intangible and uncontrollable by individual ecolodge operators. Thus, they require good cooperation between the ecolodge operators in Sukua as well as efforts of respective governments to implement and enforce conservation strategies and control. On this basis, it seems that the only reasonable strategies for ecolodge operators to attract guests are to focus on tangible elements including good architectural design, well maintained landscape and gardens, and the tangible core services, such as food and beverages in the ecolodges. Unfortunately, these aspects will be regarded as meeting a minimum standard by most guests and will not contribute as true satisfiers for them. Likewise, ecolodge operators seem to forget the importance of maintenance in rooms and facilities, and the value of providing some basic other useful “extras” that are viewed as important by the guests, such as hot showers, a small library for wildlife information and the information about local people.

Amongst the elements that contribute to satisfiers in the present research, leisure activities such as wildlife viewing and riverboat cruises appear dominant and have the greatest effect on guest behavioural intentions. The expressive dimensions show the close association and guests expressed excitement, happiness, memorable experience, novelty, stimulation and their physical presence in the natural environment. Thus, these areas are important for both ecolodge operators and the guides to emphasise and in order to further develop guest satisfaction.

Another important aspect is group dynamics and how the relationship between guests and guides/service staff contribute to service satisfaction in the ecolodge context. This has important implications for ecolodge management. Thus, staff training programmes could be included in handling groups, and good interpersonal communication developed in order to establish a personalized and informal environment.

Likewise, there are factors – leeches, mosquito bites, road access, water quality and hot sun, which did not contribute to dissatisfaction. This means that guests are normally more tolerant to the conditions and situation in the jungle environment, but they still have certain minimum standards even though that they may have no expectations or low expectations regarding the ecolodge context. But more importantly, they are motivated by both factors of “seeking” and “escaping”, and wildlife viewing and natural environment are essential elements in these factors, that subsequently influence their social-psychological needs. Hence, it is important for ecolodge operators and guides to ensure that guests achieve what they came for and these elements are important to the outcome of guest satisfaction. Similarly, it is suggested that guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction can be achieved by matching their needs, wants or goals to the tangible and intangible elements provided in the ecolodge context, which, in this case can be referred to satisfiers and dissatisfiers. In conclusion, the present research’s implication for guest satisfaction is that it is not sufficient in a competitive environment to meet guest satisfaction in the service experience. The ecolodge operators depend upon natural resources rather than ecolodge core services to fulfil the needs of the guests. It is the ecolodge content that contributes to the overall satisfaction and the ecolodge context that maintain the efficient operation of the ecolodge and ecolodge management must recognize these differences in managing guest satisfaction. More importantly, one must realize that the life satisfaction of humans is made up of two different motivational forces that contribute to either satisfaction or dissatisfaction and these can be extended to guest satisfaction. By this notion, it is reasonably easy to achieve guest satisfaction by focusing on these two different motivational forces instead of attempting to satisfy

individual guests, who are different and from different types of market segments with different levels of diverse expectations (Beard and Raghed, 1983). These expectations change and are dynamic over time. It is common for ecolodge operators to assume that ecolodge core services are an important aspect but one must not ignore the importance of experiential factors that actually contribute significantly to guests' satisfaction.

## **9.7 Limitations**

Although the present research provides insights into the underlying dimensions of guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context and the extent to which these dimensions can be explained by using Herzberg's theory, it is not without limitations at both the micro and macro level.

At the micro level, the sampling frame developed was limited to the specific context of ecolodges and to one location in Sabah. It was also confined to the ecotourism environment and so was limited in sector. Despite the existence of many other ecolodges in Malaysia, the present research made no attempt to compare the findings from this context with other ecolodge sites due to both time and financial constraints.

Data collection was primarily focused on the one travel phase that is the "on site experience" to procure a rich understanding of actual guest behavioural aspects and the consumption of the service experience and to secure the 'freshness' of their memory of their service experiences. It is possible that the findings may have been different in the travel phase of returning home was included and was based on recollection and reflection.

At the macro level, the research's position and contribution to the guest satisfaction literature may also impose some limitations. The present research specifically focuses on guests in the ecolodge context. The use of a cross-sectional data methodology focused only on the periods of primary investigation and provided a

'snapshot' of one particular group at one moment in time. Thus, it is limited in a temporal context. The present research described and explored the lives of guests in the ecolodge context and the phenomenon of guest satisfaction was considered only during the periods of the fieldwork. A longitudinal study might produce different or better results. Likewise, "snapshot" data is specifically focused on on-site experiences rather than on the different phases of the travel process- pre and after travel. This limitation is important because of the dynamic nature of satisfaction in the hospitality sector. Arguably, the use of data collection methods in the present research (in-depth interviewing, participant observation technique and a PAT survey) was capable of producing data to illuminate more directly the interconnection between actions and consequences. Hence, the data itself is descriptive of the social relationship and interchanges that reveal the succession of actions and events in which the actors are engaged.

The use of an informal quantification method to present the findings in terms of a graphical representation shows the limitations in terms of the validity and reliability of the qualitative method, as it does not generate representation, in part due to the small sample size and the non-sampling technique. The present research also recognises the shortcomings of qualitative exploratory research in that a study of this nature cannot achieve the same outcomes, in terms of generalisability, as quantitative methods. Limitations include the small sample size, was limited to European soft ecotourists. Nevertheless, the findings have strong ecological (internal) validity and reduced bias since this data was collected in the natural setting and constitutes the voices of the guests. In addition, the empirical findings of both the satisfiers and dissatisfiers construct concur with studies conducted in the tourism sector, such as the tourist attraction context, that generates substantial tourism experiences, restaurants and other services. Consistently, satisfiers are related to experiential aspects and intangible elements, while dissatisfiers are related to physical facilities, maintenance and operations of the services and are tangible elements. This seems to suggest that across service industries, satisfiers are different constructs from dissatisfiers.

The limitation was that the research context was imposed as a contextual parameter from which it may be difficult to generalise the research findings to other ecolodge contexts and other nationalities of respondents. However, the extent of generalization can be determined through further research.

The research was specifically limited to one type of respondent: English speaking, European guests. Nevertheless, it was argued that, generally, ecoguests have specific motivations, needs, expectations and vacation activity preferences within the eco-experience context (Boo, 1990; Whelan, 1991; Ryle and Grasse, 1991; Eagles, 1992; Wight, 1996b). Hence, a possible variation may arise in a comparative study conducted in more than one eco-site. The data collection was limited to one location and comparative work in a similar context in different locations and countries would prove beneficial for the possible generalization of the findings.

The research did not specifically consider psychographic variables or lifestyle characteristics in the determination of satisfaction/ dissatisfaction dimensions in this context. Previous empirical research work of Naylor and Kleiser (2002) found no difference in satisfaction determination across consumers of a vacation experience, but found that the benefits sought by various lifestyle segments varied accordingly. Similarly, Lehto et al. (2002) in their empirical work documented that the psychographic variables (traits, attitudes and preferences) rather than demographic, socio-economic variables (age, gender, marital status, income and education) of British travellers to North America, Asia and Oceania influenced their travel philosophies, benefits sought and destination preferences. Psychographic variables are an important influence on the selection of certain destinations rather than the determination of satisfaction. Furthermore, Iso-Aloha (1982, p. 258) support the idea that “*satisfaction that individuals expect to derive from involvement in a leisure activity is linked to two motivational forces: approach (seeking) and avoidance (escape)*”. This means that an individual perceives a leisure activity as a potential satisfaction (producer of intrinsic rewards), feeling of competence or escaping the everyday environment known as avoidance. Building from this perspective, the present research adopted stratified purposeful sampling based on demographic

profile so that age and gender considerations were used to achieve a more representative subgroup.

## **9.8 Future Research**

Several areas emerged from the present research that can be addressed as the theories for future research. The nature of the present research is exploratory and limited to one location and there are problems to generalise the findings. One of the most critical areas requiring further exploration is a comparative study of different locations in Malaysia or elsewhere which would prove beneficial for the possible generalisation of the findings.

Similarly, such a study can be extended to understand guest satisfaction across different types of accommodation services in order to investigate consistent dimensions for guest satisfaction in term of satisfiers and dissatisfiers in accordance with Herzberg's theory and also to explore behaviour with different types of service experience context guests.

Also, it would be interesting to explore respondents who are repeat guests in the ecolodge context or of different nationalities to seek any differences or changes in the dimensions of their satisfiers and dissatisfiers as well as across different service sectors.

## **9.9 Final Observations**

This research has explored guest satisfaction using Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory as a theoretical and methodological framework, supplemented and complemented by PAT and participation observation techniques. It involved two phases of data collection and adopts the interpretation of data analysis from three data sets. Subsequently, the data was crosschecked for consistency and the findings were confirmed by Herzberg's theory. Satisfiers and

dissatisfiers emerged from the responses and indicated that they are two different motivational forces and constructs that are independent from each other to explain guest satisfaction. This seems to conclude that guest satisfaction is the bipolar of two different continua. The findings also indicate that guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context is multi-faceted - satisfaction with ecolodge performance services and satisfaction with service experience - and these are two different distinct constructs that both influence guest behaviour. Satisfaction with the service experience influenced significantly the desire to repeat visits and generate positive word of mouth marketing. The dimensions that contributed to satisfaction are intangible elements while the dimensions that contributed to dissatisfaction are tangible elements. The guests interacted with the physical and human dimensions, involvement and participation in leisure activities –riverboat cruise and wildlife viewings are the main elements termed as satisfiers. The physical facilities, amenities and maintenance and operations standard are regarded as main elements termed as dissatisfiers. It appears that guests' satisfaction is measured from both the cognitive and affective responses derived from two different sets of constructs. Some of the findings of the present research are deemed to be beneficial to ecolodge operators in terms of managing guest satisfaction and improving quality in the ecolodge context. The implications of the findings point to the on-going need for the sustainable use of its natural resources as key motivating factors. It also contributes to advancement in terms of understanding guest satisfaction and providing a more reliable research methodology of consumer satisfaction.

This thesis has produced empirical evidence to conclude that Herzberg's theory can be extended to guest satisfaction. It also concludes that guests evaluate their satisfaction and dissatisfaction based on the actual functioning of the tangible and intangible elements provided and that these are processed by their logical side of the brain – cognitive and personal experiential factors which are those emitted by people in the environment and the physical environment and are perceived by their senses and turned into affective responses. This implies that both the quality of performance and quality of experience in the service experience consumption process are involved in determining guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions. It is also confirmed



that guest satisfaction is indeed related to motivations but they are different in the sense that motivation occurs before consumption while satisfaction occurs during and post consumption. Likewise, guest satisfaction evaluation is seen as both process and outcome driven and it is defined as representing socio-psychological benefits in the service experience context, such as ecolodges. Ecolodges are deemed to be more of a service management experience and their service experiences contribute significantly to guest satisfaction.

The fact that the satisfaction literature has yet to explicitly or implicitly establish a general consensus definition of satisfaction limits the ability to develop appropriate measures and comparable results. This thesis presents satisfaction research through its research framework by providing an appropriate and detailed account that encompasses satisfaction responses (affective and evaluative judgment), time of determination and duration and is context –specific. These elements are crucial in establishing a consistent conceptual framework for satisfaction in terms of clear delineation and a context –specific definition of satisfaction. This approach is considered to produce a more meaningful definition and measurement of satisfaction constructs. This context –specific definition is arguably general enough to offer comparisons with other satisfaction studies since empirical studies can be compared only if similar definitions and operationlisation are employed.

Thus, this thesis has attempted to present a more meaningful conceptual measurement of satisfaction framework, in particular in the service experience consumption context. It incorporates the consumers' responses in relation to measurement of satisfaction (emotional and cognitive), responses in relation to a particular focus (expectations, services, service experience consumption) and responses that occur at particular times during satisfaction evaluation (during and post consumption). These can be treated as commonalities in measuring satisfaction. Thus, this conceptual framework seems to accommodate different contextual settings in measuring consumer satisfaction, and that Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory is a relevant theoretical research framework, which, with critical incident techniques is capable of capturing all these responses. Subsequently, it can

be used to explore and determine consumer satisfaction more consistently across services in other sectors.

Similarly, this thesis also sought to measure consumer satisfaction in a way that is consistent with consumers' views rather than from a service provider perspective. As noted in literature, there are clear dichotomies between service providers' and customers' views of "service" as the phenomenological nature of the service experience and the viewpoints between service providers and consumers are always different Johns (1999a). This implies both that researchers and practitioners must be aware of and recognise such differences in order to achieve a more reliable measurement of satisfaction and to gain an insightful understanding of consumer satisfaction.

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## Appendix 1

### Participant Observation Data Sheet

This protocol is aimed to guide the researcher in collecting data during observations in the closed-field context and in using the descriptive method to record data. Observational Protocol serves as a guideline for observing eco-guest's behavior during their participation in eco-activities conducted by the eco-lodge operators: (include any eco-site activities and educational tours outside the ecolodge) and the types of data to collect during the fieldwork

#### a) Demographic information:

(Preliminary data gather from the lodge operator or guide before the trip. Observation is conducted based on individual and group reactions)

Name of Ecolodge:

Date:

Time:

Nationality of guest:

Group size:

Date and duration of observation :

**Description of external environment/description of physical setting including the tour activities:**

Type of tour /activities:

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**Physical setting:**

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<b>Guest verbal expressions:</b> -Positive Statements/ quotes -Group dynamic/interaction			
<b>Guest negative statements/quotes</b>			
<b>Non-verbal Communication/Expressions:</b> -Signs -Facial expressions			

## Appendix 2

### Interview Protocol

The development of these interview questions are adopted with modification from Herzberg et al.,(1962, p. 141-142)and modified by adding questions and changes to suit the ecolodge context (\*)

**Project: PhD Research- Guest Satisfaction Dimensions in the Ecolodge Context**

**Date and time of interview:**

**Place:**

### **Part One : Demographic Information of the Eco-lodge :**

*(Structured Questions and pre-collected data before the interview commences)*

Name of ecolodge:

Location:

Main target market:

Guest Name/room no:

### **Introductory statements:**

My name is Jennifer Chan- a PhD research student registered at The Scottish Hotel School, The University of Strathclyde, and Glasgow, Scotland, currently conducting a research project entitled Guest Satisfaction in the Ecolodge Context in Sabah.

The main aim of this research is to explore guest satisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge context (ecolodge and eco-activities participated in) during your entire stay in this eco-lodge (including eco-tours/activities). You are free to express your feelings, satisfaction and dissatisfaction in relation to the consumption of these experiences and the reasons for these. The results of this study should provide insightful information about guest motivation, experiences and satisfaction in the ecolodge environment. These results will make a valuable contribution towards the completion of my thesis and to the ecolodge operators in Sabah to enable them to be more competitive in satisfying guests' needs and the sustainable use of eco-resources. In view of this, your opinion and input are highly valuable and beneficial for this research project.

This interview will take approximately one hour to discover your positive and negative experiences during your stay in this ecolodge. May I obtain your permission to use a tape-recorder to record your responses? You can be assured that your opinion /inputs and contribution will be treated in the strictest confidence. A token of appreciation will be given upon completion of the interview.

### **Part Two: Demographic Characteristics of the Guests**

(To get close to the respondent, the researcher establishes their name and address when first approaching to create a good rapport from the beginning)

1. Name:
2. Gender:
3. Nationality:
4. Age :
5. Highest level of formal educational completed:
6. Profession
7. Travelling in party:
8. First timer:
9. Duration of stay:



### **Part Three: Motivation and Attitudes towards Eco-experiences**

(Added Open-ended questions)

- 10\*) Can you tell me what are your purposes in visiting this ecolodge?
- 11\*) Can you describe to me your overall feelings about staying in the ecolodge (the lodge and any activities/trips you have participated in) during this visit?
- 12\*) What sort of experiences are you seeking in this eco-environment?
- 13\*) Can you describe the important elements in your experiences you gained in the eco-environment and how that influenced your motivation to visit this ecolodge?
- 14\*) Why do you say that? Please give more detail
- 15\*) What does eco-experience mean to you?

**I would now like to begin by asking you some questions related to your experience in this ecolodge— including any trips/activities in which you participated.**

### **Part Four – Eco-experiences that affect satisfaction**

(Semi-structured questions adopted from Herzberg with modifications\* (rewording and open-ended questions)

**Think of a time when you felt exceptionally good about the experience during your stay in this ecolodge (including any eco-trips you took provided by this ecolodge).**

- 16\*) When did this happen?
- 17\*) Where did this happen?
- 18) How long did the feeling last? Can you describe specifically what made the change of feelings begin?
- 19) Can you tell me more precisely why you felt the way you did at that time?
- 20) What did these positive experiences mean to you?
- 21\*) How did these feelings affect your stay in this ecolodge?
- 22\*) Can you give me specific examples of the way in which your satisfaction was affected?
- 23\*) Did what happened affect your satisfaction in any way?
- 24\*) Can you tell me whether what happened affected how you felt about staying in this eco-lodge?
- 25\*) How did the consequences of what happened at this time affect your satisfaction?
- 26\*) How did what happened change the level of service quality in this eco-lodge?
- 27) Is there anything else you would like to say about the positive experiences you described?

#### ***Additional questions:***

- 28\*) What experiences in this ecolodge did you like most?
- 29\*) Why? Please give more detail and provide examples.
- 30\*) Can you tell me what leads to the things you like?
- 31\*) How do these factors/causes influence your overall level of satisfaction in the eco-environment?

**I would now like to ask you about your bad experiences:**

**Think of a time when you felt exceptionally bad about the experience during your stay in this ecolodge.**

32\*) When did this happen?

33\*) Where did this happen?

34) How long did the feeling last? Can you describe specifically what made the change of feelings begin?

35) Can you tell me more precisely why you felt the way you did at that time?

36) What did these negative experiences mean to you?

37\*) How did these feelings affect your stay in this ecolodge?

38\*) Can you give me specific examples of the way in which your satisfaction was affected?

39\*) Did what happened affect your satisfaction in any way?

40\*) How did what happened affect the way you felt about staying in this eco-lodge?

41\*) How did the consequences of what happened at this time affect your satisfaction?

42\*) How did what happened change the level of service quality in this eco-lodge?

43) Is there anything else you would like to say about the experiences you have described?

**Additional questions**

44\*) Which experiences did you dislike the most in this eco-environment?

45\*) Why? Please describe them in more detail and provide examples.

46\*) What led to your dislike?

47\*) How did these factors/causes influence your overall level of satisfaction in the eco-environment?

Thank you for your kind cooperation and your valuable input as part of the contribution towards my research project. I would like to present a small token of appreciation for taking part in this research. This is a handmade bracelet designed by the local tribe in Sabah.

**Appendix 3**

**PROFILE ACCUMULATION TECHNIQUE  
SURVEY FORM ON GUEST SATISFACTION  
IN THE ECOLODGE CONTEXT**

Name of ecolodge:

Date:

Guest room no:

**BY**

**PhD Researcher: Jennifer Kim Lian Chan  
The Scottish Hotel School  
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland  
*E-mail: Jennifer.chan@strath.ac.uk***

10 October 2003

*Dear Guest,*

The aim of this PAT survey is to find out the **best/most satisfactory and worst/least satisfactory things about your stay in this ecolodge including the eco-tours/activities** in which you have participated in order for us to further improve our services; and as part of the information required for completing the PhD thesis. Kindly take time to write down how and what you feel about your stay here (the eco-lodge services and eco-activities provided in this lodge). Your comments are valuable to us and we greatly appreciate your time.

Please take time to complete this survey form and return it to the receptionist upon checking out.

**Part one: Demographic Characteristics of Guests**

- Name:
- Profession:
- Education level:
- Gender:
- Age:
- Nationality:
- Number of party travelling together:
- Number of visit:
- Duration of stay:

Purposes in coming to this ecolodge:

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**Part Two: Experiences in the Ecolodge (including any eco-tour activities):**

1) The *things I liked the most* about the stay in this ecolodge (including any eco-tours or activities participated in) are:

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2) The *reasons* why these are the best are:

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3) The *worst/least satisfactory things* about this ecolodge (including eco-tours/activities participated in) are:

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**4) The reasons why these were unsatisfactory are:**

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**5. Any *comments* on this survey:**

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.....Thank you.....

## Appendix 4

### Participant Observation Transcript

#### Demographic information

First observation on 30 November 2003- Morning cruise

River cruise trip by Sukau Proboscis Lodge

Duration: 3hours, Time: 6:30am –9:30am

Group size: 4 guests (2 British (Brenda and Peter; 2 German)

#### The Observation Context: Riverboat cruise trip

Three Hour Morning Cruise along Lower Kinabatangan River and a channel into the Kelananap Oxbow Lake from the Kinabatangan River - freshwater lake to view, freshwater fish, otters and including a jungle trek through secondary forest for wildlife viewing.)

The riverboat cruise offers an opportunity to view varieties of wildlife and rainforest scenery on both sides of the river. No bad incidents happened during the trip.

#### Description of physical setting

The pristine jungle environment offers to view many birds, proboscis monkeys, orang utan and other wildlife such as monitor lizard, butterflies. The trips provided an alternative way of viewing the wildlife in the natural environment via river, jungle and lake; all these physical attractions (jungle and river) contributed to a unique experiences and scenery in the morning scene.

It was a good weather which attracted more wildlife come out from the jungle.

#### Individual Reactions :

“This is the first –time we are watching wildlife using boat cruise, a brilliant way and less hassle as compare to walking in the jungle, which will probably won’t be able to see many wildlife and so close to the animals!” (British Guest)

“ I am so happy now at least I have the opportunity to see the orang utan after the efforts by guide to show me- moving the boat to the right angle and kept showing me till I got it!”(British Guest). It is a marvelous experience to me and the group felt happy for her as well by clapping their hands and said “ well done!”

Guests felt the excitement when spotted wildlife in a natural environment with the statement : “oh! look at that .... “ Or Ah, ha....., for example: lots of finger pointing to the wildlife and photographing when saw the proboscis monkeys resting at the tree top in groups, guests movement closer to the wildlife and paid close attention; occasionally, the enjoyment came with laughing sound saw the funny actions by the monkeys, hornbills –the largest bird in Borneo flied across the river: “oh what a great bird and a beautiful one, I am thrilled”, listening to guide for further explanation and description of wildlife and asked questions; stop for 10 minutes to spot the orang utan

and finally was able to see it – Brenda had difficulty in viewing the orang utan and the guide took times to show her and ensure that she saw it. She felt extremely happy and as extra bonus for her.

Negative reactions were recorded : saw rubbish floating , erosion found along the riverbank, noise pollution from boat engine; for example : Brenda made a statement: “ I hate to listen to those noise coming from the boats....., cannot they do something about it.” Or “ I wonder if anything has been done on that part of erosion , or actions should be taken soon ?

#### **Happy moment:**

Happy facial expression –smiling saw on British guest who felt extremely happy and appreciated after seeing the orang utan and supported with : “ I will be disappointed if I don’t see it, it just right in front of me!”

German guests stood up and took many photo shot of the monkeys and supported by : “Oh, look at that...”Guests reacted positively when saw monkeys, variety of birds and two monitor lizards, snakes and lots of photographs were taken, full attention and strong eye contact and the boat stopped for 20 minutes to watch monkeys performed on the tree.

For individual, it happened when one saw wildlife with individual preference –for instance: Brenda saw - orang utan; full of smiling facial expression noted; while Peter by touching the dead snake and offered explanation to group was a happy moment for him. Overall, seeing the wildlife was the main factor.

“Oh, yes, see the owl! called Peter and quickly position his camera at the right angle to photograph.

#### **Unhappy moment:**

Felt disappointed when saw no wildlife and everyone kept quiet and silent; continue searching and looking left and right side of riverbank. Not able to see what they came here for lead to disappointment.: “If I haven’t see any orang utan, I will be so dissappointed.”

Boat engine was too loud created noise pollution. River bank degrading, sign of erosion and rubbish floating on the river and supported by verbal statement.

“ I hate to listen to those noise coming from the boats... cannot they do something about it.” Or “ I wonder if anything has been done on that part of erosion, or actions should be taken soon?

#### **Groups dynamics:**

Good interaction during the trips among the groups members and guide- sharing the reference books, talking to each other – showing the wildlife to the back seated guests, asking whereabouts the wildlife asking the guides about the wildlife: the names of the birds saw or verify some information about the wildlife, local life and people, history, helping each other when getting out of boat. Brenda shared and pointed the wildlife to the German tourists who sat at the back.



Tour guide imparted the different types of birds found in Borneo and all group members listened carefully and asked further questions and clarification; a positive interaction among the groups.

( members share information and positive discussion about the wildlife ; questions and answers with guide )

#### **Tour guide :**

The guide is an experienced person to spot the wildlife and acted as information provider in term of detail explanation with support from reference book. Search for wildlife is the most important role of the guide during the boat cruise.

-Creating cheerful and pleasant atmosphere, which contributed to positive experiences; for example assisting those who were not able to see wildlife at the right direction or angles, allowing the boat to stop longer so that guests can have longer duration to enjoy the wildlife.

- Work closely with boatman to ensure the full enjoyment viewing wildlife.

#### **End of the tour:**

Good expression at the end of tour: “ That was great!” “ I am glad that I have seen so many variety of wildlife!” - Brenda .“It was a fantastic tour”

#### **Reflective notes:**

##### **Positive experiences:**

Accessibility to wildlife via river cruise trips enables them to see wildlife in close distance, without disturbing the wildlife and ability to see more compare to jungle trekking. Peacefully way to view wildlife , seeing wide varieties of wildlife ranges from monkeys, orang utan, different species of birds, snakes, fish, sea otter in natural environment, the felt of closeness and alive, good cooperation between boatman and guide, knowledge guide, enthusiastic and responsible in explaining, genuine friendliness In natural environment and no guarantee to see wildlife: “anything you see is a bonus” as described by Brenda, nature is so unpredictable and no guarantee.

##### **General Observation at the lodges:**

- Guests relax in the lounge with drinks and recall what they had seemed and deeper discussion with guide.
- Laughing, talking and sharing about their experiences elsewhere with others, creating a social interaction positively
- Talked about eco-environment need to preserve and enjoyed the green environment found here.
- Commented river cruise trip as a nicer way and ability to see more wildlife.
- Complaints about mosquitoes and no net, concern on the safety issue as may end up with malaria (Brenda) and a general concern for all British.

## Appendix 5

### Interview Transcript

#### **Interview informant: Anne- British Expatriate from Hong Kong**

In-depth interview tape 6 + 1 –PAT 9

Interview at Sutera Marina Boat areas – Touch of Class 5 December 2003

Stayed Sukau Proboscis Lodge

**Jennifer: Can you tell me what are your purposes in coming to the eco-lodge?**

**Anne:**

We knew that there was a lots of wildlife and *in particular we want to see orang utans and proboscis monkeys, ah....*

Also, because we have benefited and enjoyed Sabah so much and Borneo come up far distance place may be is only in my imagination.

Then I got here we *found in truth of its so much of it. We were both very interested in wildlife and we're also very concerned about ecology. I fear that in future that we will not have these beautiful things to see, as the rainforest is disappearing and animals are losing their habitats and I have four grandchildren who I hope and pray will see these in the future but in the meantime we go to see and then we can tell them about it.*

**Jennifer : Tell me about your overall feelings about your stay in the eco-lodge and Sukau?**

**Anne:**

We have the *most enjoyable visit and we are very pleased with the lodge.*

I think the individual accommodation was nice, it was *simplistic but adequate but may be a little updating is just required, you know maybe just maintenance really such as the shower, the flow of water was very very weak, you could hardly get yourself wet, and the toilet seat was broken, two lights were not working on the outside- just a little thing, but overall we were very satisfied, we thought the location was excellent.*

And the garden was nicely kept, *staff were all very friendly and helpful, the food was tasty and adequate – plenty of it.*

River Cruises was the excellent way to see the wildlife, especially at this time raining season may be it will be very wet to go through the forest, the jungle and also we felt because the boat was quiet and you probably see more wildlife than making so much noise walking through the jungle and they did not seem to show concern when we see the monkeys they are actually looking at you and you are looking at them. It was the most ahh...overwhelming in the way experience to be so close to the wildlife.

**Jennifer: What is the most exciting thing that you see in terms of wildlife?**

**Anne:**

I think to see a crocodile especially it goes into the water, where is the crocodile now?

But I think to see the wild; we saw one wild organ utan building its nest. And it was very very far...well in the distance and our guide spotted it and I think that was very exciting.

Well everything is very difficult and proboscis monkeys were very beautiful and entertaining and unusual, just everything was exciting. One disappointment and it was no fault I really want to see elephants but I understand they are too far away at this time for me to see.

But there is a concern for these groups of elephants because they are cut off from other herds and so I feel something need to be done to help them because it does not into breeding and then you might have problems.

**Jennifer: What sort of experiences are you seeking in this eco-lodge context?**

**Anne:**

To be far away from ah...ah... *from crowds*, I like, I like *real real work to be travelers of individual* but the reality is but you have sometime to go with other people, but for us we when with three other friends and we are able to go as a small group and we felt very individual and I like the idea *people that are simple and natural and I felt that this a chain really in the lodge, you know everything was adequate and we were comfortable*. We slept well; our needs were catered for without being ah...disturbance to the environment. That's. What we were searched for.

**Jennifer: Within that sort of experiences certainly there is an element in that experience gained to motivate you in Sukau?**

**Anne:**

I think my motivation is just there all the time to see and when you visited a particular part of the world, you want to experience what they have to offer specifically and I think you are either motivated or not, ahh... I think I just like being high on life, you know because so often the best thing in life is what we see around us and I think we have to be aware of that. I think some people are naturally motivated and some will never be.

So, I think ah...is my own feeling, I don't really have to be motivated I yearn to search out ... everywhere I go I like to experience the local, feelings and this goes about people, wildlife and I'm particularly concerned about Sabah how palm plantations are taking over and wildlife does seem to be considered anymore and I know all countries have to make revenues but at what cost?

You know I think more could be made of tourism ecological tour- people, caring people, people who wish to have this experience are prepared to pay for because it is a very special, ah... a special experience.

**Jennifer: What are the elements that consistute so called eco-experiences?**

**Anne:**

Oh.... Well, that is difficult, it is everything for me.

**Jennifer: Can you name a few things for me?**

**Anne:**

I think just go down to river, thus seeing some white cry staled hornbill silhouetted against the sunset make it very special moment, to see orang utan building thier nest in the tree, ahh. After dark to see crocodile's eye twinkling, you know the elements of excitement and the element of peace and tranquility, all these made it a very special experience.

**Jennifer: Can you describe to me what eco-experience means to you?**

**Anne:**

To me it is quiet *emotion*, if I see you know when I saw the orang utan in Sepilok, If I saw an elephant, it will make me cry because I just felt so privileged, even talking to you made me quite emotional because I am just so happy to be there, an honor that you know I cannot be

there. Eco-experiences swimming with dolphins in New Zealand, whale watching, taking an elephant for bath in the pool, is this what you meant eoc-experiences?

(To be with wildlife in a natural environment)

You meant in Sukau, oh.... Climbing the mountain is an *emotional experience*, I like *anything but is natural*, going to Tenom on the train and visiting people making the gongs. All these are eco-experiences.

So in Sukau, for me is *to see wildlife specially*, I went *specifically to see orang utans and also the crocodile in the river*

**Jennifer:** Think of a time when you felt exceptionally good about the experience during your stay in this ecolodge including any eco-activity participated in.

**Anne:**

I think that I probably already told you it made *me feel good just to see wildlife* to make me feel exceptionally good, I also enjoyed *very much meeting with other people- the local people, you know, exchanging just time of day just a good experiences.*

I met the local people and just being polite and saying how are you today and *exchanging good feeling, one young lady always singing, you know. I said you so happy and always singing, this made me feel happy and I'm always happy to exchange opinions and feelings with other people and again I feel very humble, you know I can only speak English you know, and they mostly can speak English so that we can exchange conversation which made it more interesting we have a little insight.* Of course for us we have a special person in our guide- Robert, he is very knowledgeable and I am sure there are many people like him but we are grateful to have him, *he spotted things we'd never have seen.*

**Jennifer:** How would guiding add to your satisfaction?

**Anne:**

Without the guide, it won't be the same journey because though it would still be enjoyable but *we would not have seem all these things*, we might have seem a hornbill but we would never know what sort it was, *we would never have seen a orang utan building a nest, we would never spot the... snakes*, you know because his expertise is so good and he's eyes so acute and *it make a short visit so valuable...ah...* because we would not see all those things, so yes, *the guide made it very ...successful and that actually increased my satisfaction, beside good explanation of wildlife, pointing out ...*

**Jennifer:** What did the guide do to increase your satisfaction?

**Anne:**

When we returned to the lodge and we have a quiet moment and we can then discuss *the things we saw and enlarge upon the information and he had some books on mammals and birds* so that we can actually looked them up and I actually made a list because I have a very short memory and I want to convey to my family what I had seen because I know that my little grand daughter, she is only three now and her parents do want to bring her here and I want to tell her all about it. In fact I have written a letter to her in a story all about my trip to Sepilok and Kinabatangan River, I just hope that by the time she is old enough to come here, there will still be wildlife for her to see.

I think from the information, I would like to see perhaps *a small library, very small that actually has books on the area, I think that would also in the evening you could actually read out and gather information by yourself on birds and mammals and also to try understand,* not the politics exactly, but I understand that some of these things like cutting down trees, plan plantations brings big revenues but it is short term. You know, they have to look to the future. Once the trees are gone, the animals are gone, and then what is it to come for? You know, Sabah is still a nice place but that made Sabah very special to have all those species, and wildlife is so diverse and very special to this area. The same with wildlife, the orang utan used be in all the way from China down to here, now Sabah and Sarawak are the only place where they are left.

**Jennifer: Can you tell me why seeing wildlife made you feel good?**

**Anne:**

Because I think when the *wildlife dies, this planet is habit, I think human beings are just like them,* I think man is destroying our planet. I think in my lifetime, so many animals birds and creatures have become extinct, and I think you know well, it is just sad to consider the future. I think once the wildlife goes, there is no hope.

**Anne:**

Very very happy...

**Jennifer: What sort of feeling do you have?**

**Anne:**

Is emotion a deep...deep.... emotion. It is just such a happy feeling, ah...

Well, *yes it is realizing your hopes,* I meant...ah.yes, I guess in a way I had I was wished that we could come here. First of all I knew of a mountain and I wanted to climb the mountain and that was, you know ...*fulfilling my dreams* if you like. Yes, we always *meant to visit and in the hope to see orang utans. Yes, it is a fulfillment.*

**Jennifer: Why is seeing orang utans so important to you?**

**Anne:**

Because that is *so rare you know, also they are so close to us as human beings, you know ...96. 4% ...is like seeing yourself and chance of seeing them are quiet small* and they should go to Sepilok and even there, there is no guarantee they will come. So, ... proboscis monkeys are endangered, most of the things we saw are endangered because there is so little jungle left.

**Jennifer: So, all these positive experiences actually influence your satisfaction?**

**Anne:**

Is positive... but the negative is that only people who are already concerned and converted are the people who visited these places.

For most.... You know... most people don't have the desire, they do not really care whether they are there or not. Is also they... the converted ... is not the right word. People who care is the one who goes there, the one who don't care will not go there, so that is negative side. I think publicity is important to give the message to those we don't see the need to save the forest and the wildlife.

Also, for you to be more satisfied is to see more much publicity to get more people coming in and not the caring people because they are going to go anyway, so it is to get people who really are not interested, this is only a doorstep soon it will be gone if we don't take care of it and look after it.

**Jennifer: Can give me few examples about good experiences you had.**

**Anne:**

Just to be *able to see the wildlife – orang utan, seeing orang utan, ah.....* you know...ah.... just to see so much, we did not, you never you go in hope that you will see something...but *we actually see so much in such a short time.but .....* as I said we before we would not have done without the guide, he was our live to our success and enjoyment and his knowledge ....Yes, he was so good and to think that he gave his time to us and we have a special circumstance at home which would have kept him there but he did not, he unselfishly still you know kept to his promise and took us.

**Jennifer: What about the level of service quality being affected by your experienced gained?**

**Anne:**

Yes, the boat was fine, but I think the life jacket very I don't were very adequate, if you could not swim, I don't think you could rely on the life jacket! Because it did not have proper exhort and if they fell off in the water they're just coming off.  
(Life jacket condition is not good and not functioning properly due to bad condition)  
*The boat seems fine and they did not leak, they were well made and are nice if the engine was a little quieter.... Ah... but it is fine....*

**Jennifer: What about the level of service quality in the lodge?**

**Anne:**

*The cleanliness of the cabins was very good. Ah.... there was insect replant, the screens on the window were well fitted. I felt we can leave you know the window open without being afraid of being bitten by mosquitoes. Just for me already already and acrepe boy, you know a consideration. ...Because I don't like mosquitoes for creepy day, ah.... The soap provided and nice big towels, pillows are rather lumpy so I think perhaps a little of upgrading there, ah.... maintenance as I said perhaps ah... not top of their priority.*

*Maintenance – things being broken –likes building being repair and toilet seats being repaired. In the middle of the night, I woke my husband up, ah.... and I know my other friends, they had..... Because the mosquito nest was not well fitted, they had mosquitoes and also quite a big spider. Ours is fine and we were very lucky and you know the situation is nice, you know you can the river but you know you are not on top of it, ah. There were some nice parrots in the trees which if we stay longer we could have been enjoyed, I think if I did it again, I would stay at least 2 nights, ah...so that was not quite so right.*

But I guess we were very lucky and we saw so many birds, snakes, crocodile and monkeys... and we were all very very happy. On the way back we went to the cave which was very interesting and enjoyable. The service staff in the lodge they were fine. You know when you ask for something, they will very helpful... cheerful and very pleasant and so I cannot fault the staff. Ah...

**Jennifer: What is the thing you liked the most in the lodge in Sukau?**

**Anne:**

Ah...I think finally *we went to see the wildlife*, so maybe my eyes were shut to anything else! But....maybe that is not a good answer. That was an honest answer.

**Jennifer: Think of a time when you felt exceptionally unhappy/bad about the experience during your stay in this ecolodge including any eco-activity participated in.**

**Anne:**

Yes, the *journey from the main road to the Sukau was very long tedious and uncomfortable*. No, within the lodge, I once felt dissatisfied, I think *went with not too many expectations*, so when I got there, *it heightened my expectations because it was probably more luxurious than I imagined*. When you...ah...you know when you go on this sort of thing, you don't expect a lot! But I think it was better than I expected.

The bumpy road maybe there is nothing that can be done. I wonder if access by river might be possible rather, we were on that road...I don't know may be nearly two hours on it, it was a long time, you hurt all over and it just but ...ah. I guess that it does sort people out –only those who really want to see it will make the journey, I suppose from that point of view, quiet selfish...I do like individuality.

**Jennifer: You mentioned that there is nothing made you unhappy? But could you give me things that could have improved?**

**Anne:**

Small library with books on environment, birds, mammals that will be good.

Ah.....what else...ah... real coffee will be nice.ha.ha... ah.with.with real milk, I hate UHT milk. That is very good to have nice cold water, Maybe more snack, you know something you just in the evening if you come back from the boat you just want something, you know when you had a drink, so more snacks, maybe.

I think to hire binoculars will be good because when not us, we did have actually binoculars, I think travelers I met other people who actually because they come for holidays perhaps they forget or they cannot carry it, ah. Binoculars are very important on that sort of tours. So maybe there is a possibility that you could hire those. I think that will improve everybody's enjoyment .....ah...what else.....ah.....I can't think of anything else.

Overall, if I've seen the wildlife and actual fact have you had a good experiences, everything even bad things do not seem so bad.

As Robert said if it's been raining, then the animals all will be been very sad too you know... and so our experiences may be totally different! I think we were very lucky.

*Yes, it is rainforest you know you expect to live with rain but if it rains all day, it won't be too good. Overall, we were very lucky. But I've just been reading an article on somebody being there several times and still wanting to go back, I just feel very much the same, you could never have too much! It was a very enjoyable experience and we both felt, my husband and myself that we could go back there.*

We go back there because of wildlife and in the hope to see more and different wildlife, for me to see elephants will be very special.

Ah... yes, to have more times perhaps to do this things, and *I also enjoy trekking* so if I came back I will probably go in the dry season to do nice long trekking to the jungle and to explore and will be nice to experience the virgin jungle. It is more on the environment in virgin jungle. I am a more adventure type.

When I went to Nepal, I was so sick but it still did put me off going back because the experiences even I was sick, I still gained such a wonderful experience.

**Jennifer: If you go home you are going to tell your family members or friends?**

**Anne:**

Yes, we did *saw wild orang utans*, then all about others and I already e-mailed them, we actually sent them photographs. For us we did take a camera, but our friends took lot of photos, which is nice because we will benefit, in fact my husband and I, we have a *memory in our head and we will never forget those experiences. Because sometime when you have your camera in front of you, you missed that moment and you don't see, you know, we prefer to capture in our imagination.* So, ah... yes, it is nice we can see somebody else's photographs, ah...but for me seeing orang utans at Sukau is so special, and I will never forget that ever if I never come back again. I don't really like zoos at all, in fact in Hong Kong, it has a very successful breeding programme with orang utans, but I went once to see them and it make me feel so sad. Because they looked so sad in the cage, you know, I thing they should be free, everything you know is their planet, why is it so greedy? You know, it got everybody- human and animals are alive.

So, I like to see things in free...I prefer to see orang utans in the wild, but without Sepilok so many will not survive, I realize the importance of having Sepilok, and hopefully in future you know as the semi-wild have young and these will grow up as well and there is a future we hope.

I have actually sent lay for the adoption, I have four grand children and I have adopted an orang utan baby for each because I think it's doing a very good job. It's the next first thing to have wild orang utans and wild site.

**Jennifer: Is there any positive experiences you want to share?**

**Anne:**

I think talking to Robert, ah. Obviously they are people like Robert and there are people in Sabah who really care, so the positive side is that maybe in the future things can be improved but I think you have to be very careful, I think corruption is still right here, things will not change until these things are sorted out.....you know. Just take an example, just rubbish, it is a big problem here in Sabah and probably in whole Asia.

We did not see any rubbish in the river. But I think future of Sabah is with the children –*you tell them why is it here and the importance, may be we cannot change the older people's attitude, the older you are, you don't change, but the young children we can change their attitude and they influence everybody else so this is the future.*

When I come back, I really live with the experience; I am still with the jungle. I think it is true for everybody that you never go and see what is on your doorstep. You may travel somewhere else, maybe go other places to see wildlife there, in fact there are so much on your doorstep. I think Sabah needs to sell this sight more strongly.

Overall, my experiences and satisfaction is actually on dependent wildlife you have seen. As I said before we go expecting perhaps to see nothing because wildlife is wild and they come and go.



## Appendix 6

### PAT Survey Responses

#### Informant No: 3 ( Brenda )

##### ***Purpose***

See wildlife in Borneo  
See wildlife in the natural environment before the rain forest is destroyed  
Meet local people and see how life on the river is lived  
Lodge was booked as part of the tours

##### ***Liked Most***

Accessibility and closeness of the wildlife  
Large variety of wildlife  
Silent boats  
Helpfulness and knowledgeable guide  
Friendly people from the lodge and locals  
Clean lodge  
Variety of food  
Very helpful and cheerful staff  
Wildlife within lodge confines itself  
Nice environment and feeling relaxed and comfortable  
Hammocks available

##### ***Reasons why best***

Travel far way and not particular cheap holidays and so would be disappointed if not see wildlife.  
Cleanliness, hygiene and health are important during holiday  
Friendly and helpful people always make pristine experiences  
Accessibility to wildlife means can see much in short period –in one boat trip.

##### ***Worst things***

Noise, pollution from other tour boats  
No mosquito nets when lots of insects  
Collection of plastic from river

##### ***Reasons why worst***

Boat noise interfered with animal sounds and pollution from engines and fumes caused cough and unpleasant environment to enjoy/seeing wildlife  
Guests comment on high malaria risks  
Would like to think of an eco-lodge as setting example for others to collaborate in future as regards regulating and reducing environmental damage

##### ***Comments***

Nothing

Appendix 7

Summary of Informants Profiles : 53

No.	Nationality	Gender	Age	Education	Employment Status	Profession	Travelling Party	First time	Lodge Stayed	Duration	Place of Interview
1	Spanish/Basilio	M	35	secondary	Employed	restaurant owner	4	1	1 SPL	2	SPL
2	British/John C	M	56	University	retired	Medical surgeon	2	1	1 SPL	2	SPL
3	British/Brenda	F	55	college	retired	nurse	2	1	1 SPL	2	SPL
4	British/Joyce	F	77	primary	retired	housewife	1	1	1 SRL	2	TRB/KK
5	British/Sue	F	61	secondary	retired	civil servant	1	1	1 SRL	2	TRB/KK
6	British/John	M	62	secondary	employed	transport manager	2	1	1 SRL	2	TRB/KK
7	British/Anne	F	61	secondary	retired	nurse	5	1	1 SPL	1	SUTERA/KK
8	British/Mike	M	64	secondary	Employed	consultant	5	1	1 SPL	1	SUTERA/KK
9	British/Thomas	M	24	University	Employed	Medical doctor	5	1	1 SPL	1	SUTERA/KK
10	British/Judith	F	56	University	retired	Teacher	5	1	1 SPL	1	SUTERA/KK
11	British/David W	M	54	Secondary	retired	Teacher	5	1	1 SPL	1	SUTERA/KK
12	Swedish/Amelia	F	39	college	Employed	social worker	2	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
13	Swedish/Piere	M	39	college	Employed	Bank manager	2	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
14	Swedish/Owe	M	29	college	Employed	factory worker	2	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
15	Swedish/Camilia	F	25	college	Employed	clerk	2	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
16	British/Peter	M	32	University	Employed	travel agent	2	1	1 SPL	2	SPL
17	German/Ulrrike	F	30	University	Employed	Laywer	2	1	1 SPL	2	SPL
18	British/June	F	56	Secodnary	retired	housewife	7	1	1 SRL	2	Nexus/KK
19	British/Anthony	M	63	secondary	retired	civil servant	7	1	1 SRL	2	Nexus/KK
20	Italian/Cristiana	F	32	secondary	Employed	Bank employee	10	1	1 SPL	1	SPL
21	German/Ralf	M	38	secodnary	Employed	Bank manager	10	1	1 SPL	1	SPL
22	British/Holtra	M	54	secondary	Employed	Electric installer	2	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
23	British/Peacock	F	53	Secondary	Employed	civil servant	2	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
24	British/Harmon	F	51	University	retired	medical doctor	1	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
25	British/Wooward	M	69	secondary	retired	engineer	2	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
26	British/Elizabeth	F	61	University	retired	medical doctor	1	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
27	British/Allan	M	58	secodnary	Employed	gardner	2	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
28	British/Diane	F	49	secondary	Employed	gardner	2	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
29	British/David Th	M	59	University	retired	Solcitor	7	1	1 SRL	2	SRL
30	Dutch/Van*	M	52	University	Employed	Medical doctor	2	6	6 SRL	2	2
31	British/Trudi*	F	35	University	Employed	Laywer	2	1	1 SRL	1	1
32	Dutch/Ronald*	M	42	college	Employed	Electrician	20	1	1 SPL	2	2
33	British/Guy*	M	37	University	Employed	Government servan	2	1	1 SRL	2	2
34	British/Irene*	F	57	secondary	Employed	Hotelier	1	1	1 SRL	2	2
35	Danish/Morten*	M	28	college	Employed	Finance Manager	1	1	1 SPL	1	1
36	British/Elizabeth Ch	F	33	University	Employed	IT consultant	7	1	1 SPL	1	1
37	British/catherine*	F	27	University	Employed	IT consultant	7	1	1 SPL	1	1
38	British/Julia*	F	32	University	Employed	Teacher	7	1	1 SPL	1	1
39	Australian/Mhalan*	F	47	University	Employed	Health administrator	7	1	1 SPL	1	1
40	NZ/Hawkins*	F	60	college	retired	nurse	7	1	1 SPL	1	1
41	NZ/Ingrid*	F	26	University	Employed	Laywer	7	1	1 SPL	1	1
42	British/Carham*	F	52	secondary	retired	housewife	2	1	1 SRL	2	2

Continue Summary of Informants Profiles											
No.	Nationality	Gender	Age	Education	Employment Status	Profession	Travelling Party	First time	Lodge Stayed	Duration	Place of Interview
43	British/Marina*	F	51	University	retired	housewife	10	14	SRL	2	
44	Netherland/Susan	F	44	University	Employed	Businesswoman	20	1	SPL	2	
45	British/Rhona*	F	72	University	retired	medical doctor	2	1	SRL	2	
46	Dutch/Fre*	M	65	college	retired		2	1	SPL	2	
47	Dutch/Marita*	F	64	college	retired		2	1	SPL	2	
48	British/Cragg*	M	56	University	Employed	Civil engineer	15	1	SRL	2	
49	British/Sheila*	F	55	University	retired	marketing executive	15	1	SRL	2	
50	British/Malcolm*	M	58	college	retired		2	1	SRL	2	
51	British/Russel*	M	62	University	retired		2	1	SRL	2	
52	British/Henderson*	F	57	University	Employed	Dental surgeon	1	1	SRL	2	
53	NZ/Nic*	M	25	University	Employed	Electrical engineer	7	1	SPL	1	
Total sample respondent: 53											
PAT respondents: 53											
Interview Respondent: 29											
*No interview : 24											
										436	

18<sup>th</sup> August 2003UNIVERSITY OF  
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Dear Mr. Teo

**RESEACH PROJECT ON GUEST SATISFACTION IN ECO-LODGES IN SABAH BY  
JENNIFER KIM LIAN CHAN**

The above individual is formally registered as a PhD student with the Department of The Scottish Hotel School at the University of Strathclyde and also a lecturer from Universiti Malaysia Sabah. She is currently embarking on research focuses on guest motivation in the eco-lodge environment by applying Herzberg's Hygiene and Motivator Theory to the field of guest satisfaction.

The results of this study should provide insightful information about the guest motivation, experiences and satisfaction in the eco-lodge environment. These results will be of valuable contribution towards the completion of her thesis and to the eco-lodge operators in Sabah in order to be more competitive in satisfying guests' needs and the stakeholders of eco-tourism. Your eco-lodge has been chosen as one of the research sites for data collection. We respectfully request that your esteem organization and your team workers find time to support her endeavours as your contribution will be most appreciated and provide important insights and assistance into her area of research. In return, a copy of research finding will be delivered to you upon completion of the data analysis.

Please be assured that any information given by your guests will be treated in the strictest confidence. It will be used for the purposes of academic research only. Similarly, information on individual eco-lodge will not be made available to any other individual or organization.

Data collection via observation and in-depth interviewing methods will be used to collect data, and to be expected to commence in November till mid February 2004. Please note that the researcher will contact directly with your organization shortly. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher or me.

Your kind co-operation is gratefully acknowledged.

Yours sincerely,

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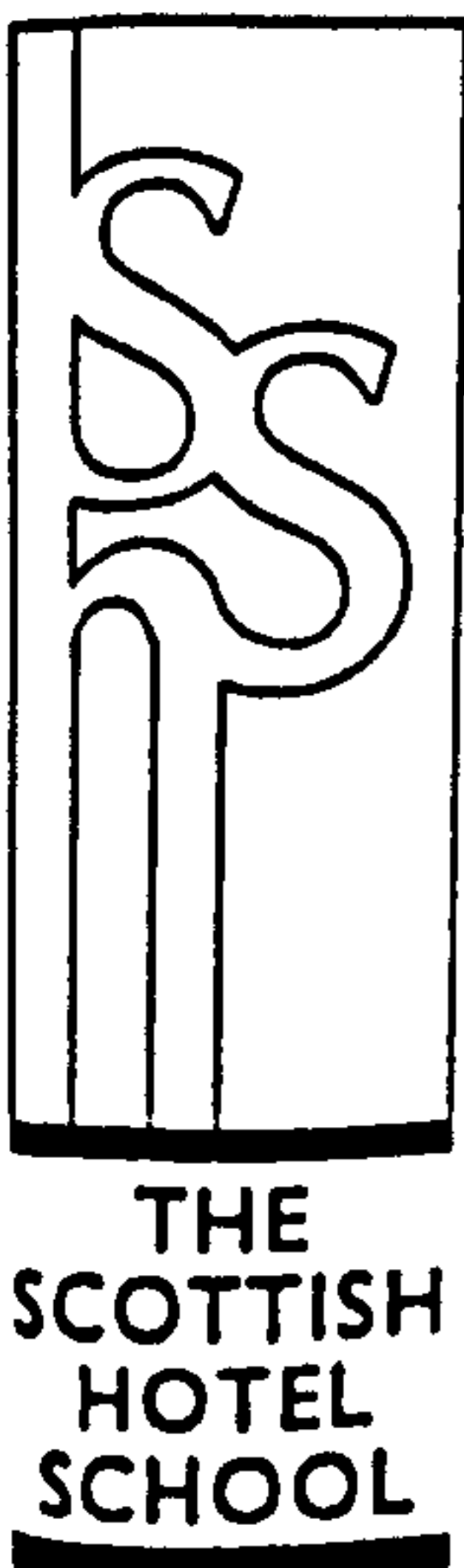
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Professor Thomas G Baum PhD  
(Head of Department)

18<sup>th</sup> August 2003

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Dear Sir/Madam

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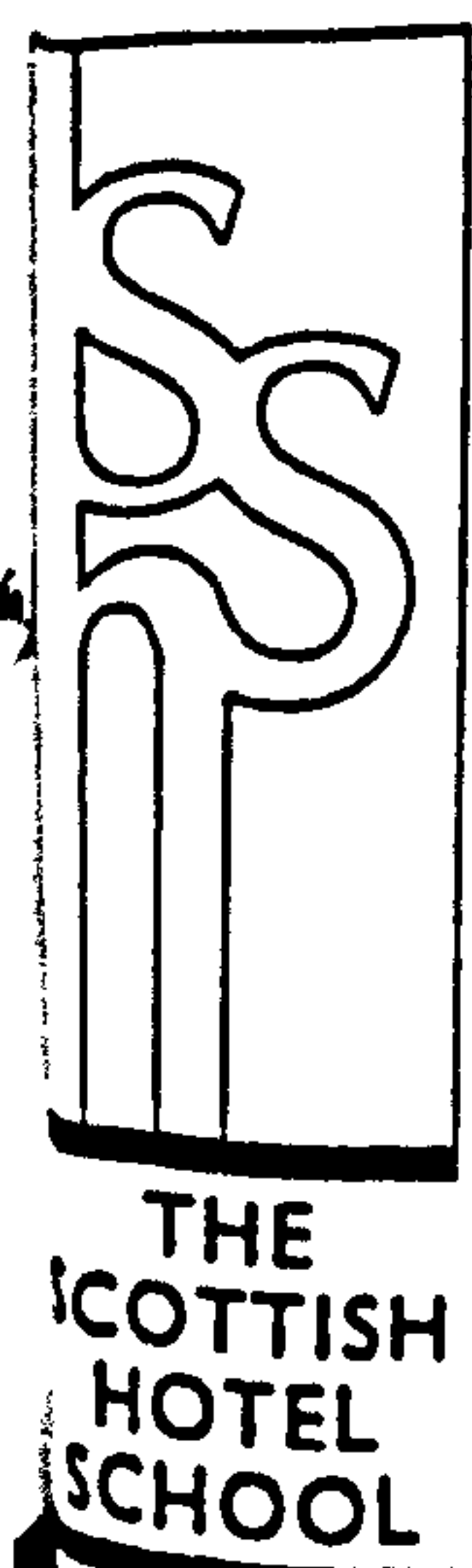
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Emeritus Professor: Carson L Jenkins PhD  
Visiting Professors: The Hon Sir Rocco Forte  
Eddie Friel  
Dr Alastair M Morrison



18<sup>th</sup> August 2003

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UNIVERSITY OF  
STRATHCLYDE

Dear Ms Chin

**RESEACH PROJECT ON GUEST SATISFACTION IN ECO-LODGES IN SABAH BY  
JENNIFER KIM LIAN CHAN**

The above individual is formally registered as a PhD student with the Department of The Scottish Hotel School at the University of Strathclyde and also a lecturer from Universiti Malaysia Sabah. She is currently embarking on research focuses on guest motivation in the eco-lodge environment by applying Herzberg's Hygiene and Motivator Theory to the field of guest satisfaction.

The results of this study should provide insightful information about the guest motivation, experiences and satisfaction in the eco-lodge environment. These results will be of valuable contribution towards the completion of her thesis and to the eco-lodge operators in Sabah in order to be more competitive in satisfying guests' needs and the stakeholders of eco-tourism. Your eco-lodge has been chosen as one of the research sites for data collection. We respectfully request that your esteem organization and your team workers find time to support her endeavours as your contribution will be most appreciated and provide important insights and assistance into her area of research. In return, a copy of research finding will be delivered to you upon completion of the data analysis.

Please be assured that any information given by your guests will be treated in the strictest confidence. It will be used for the purposes of academic research only. Similarly, information on individual eco-lodge will not be made available to any other individual or organization.

Data collection via observation and in-depth interviewing methods will be used to collect data, and to be expected to commence in November till mid February 2004. Please note that the researcher will contact directly with your organization shortly. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher or me.

Your kind co-operation is gratefully acknowledged.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Thomas Baum  
Head of Department  
E-mail: [t.g.baum@strath.ac.uk](mailto:t.g.baum@strath.ac.uk)

Jennifer Kim Lian Chan  
PhD Researcher  
E-mail: [Jennifer.chan@strath.ac.uk](mailto:Jennifer.chan@strath.ac.uk)

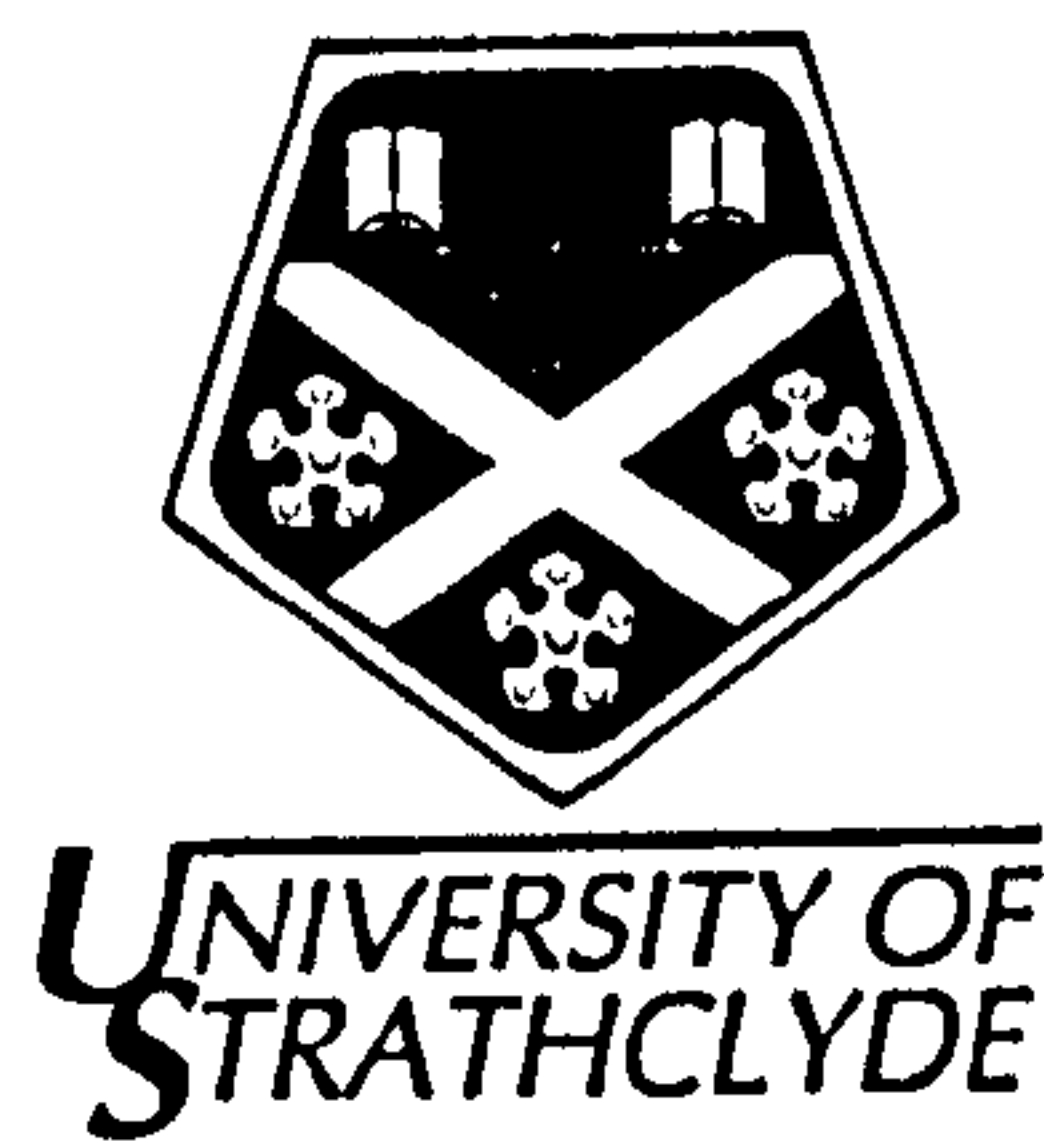
THE PLACE OF USEFUL LEARNING

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*Emeritus Professor:* Carson L Jenkins PhD  
*Visiting Professors:* The Hon Sir Rocco Forte  
Eddie Friel  
Dr Alastair M Morrison



Professor Thomas G Baum PhD  
(Head of Department)

Our ref: TGB/MMT

28 August 2003

To Whom It May Concern

**Research Project: Guest Satisfaction in Eco-Lodges in Sabah  
By Jennifer Kim Lian Chan**

I confirm that Jennifer Kim Lian Chan is formally registered as a PhD student in The Scottish Hotel School within the University of Strathclyde, and, she is also a lecturer from Universiti Malaysia Sabah. She is currently embarking on research focused on guest motivation in the eco-lodge environment by applying Herzberg's Hygiene and Motivator Theory to the field of guest satisfaction.

The outcome of this study should provide an insight into the guest motivation, experiences and satisfaction in the eco-lodge environment. These results will be a valuable contribution towards the completion of her thesis and to the eco-lodge operators in Sabah; directly in satisfying guests' needs as well as other stakeholders of eco-tourism.

Sabah has been chosen as the research site for data collection. We respectfully request that your esteemed organization and your team of workers find time to support her endeavours; as your contribution will be most appreciated and provide important insights and assistance into her area of research. Data collection via observation and in-depth interviewing methods will be used to collect data, and is expected to commence in November 2003 until February 2004. Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I would appreciate your co-operation in this matter.

Yours faithfully

Tom Baum  
Professor and Head of Department

*THE PLACE OF USEFUL LEARNING*

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