

# An assessment of responsible tourism behaviour among beach tourists in Durban, South Africa

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## Abstract

The attitudes of tourists towards environmental issues as well as the environmentally responsible behaviour of tourists is an important area that is under-researched. This article presents the results of a survey undertaken during the summer season (2015/2016) along Durban's Central Beachfront (the main beachfront tourist location). The focus of the survey was to obtain a better understanding of possible tourism related impacts, especially in relation to the behaviours and attitudes of tourists. Additionally, respondents were asked about their level of awareness of environmentally responsible tourism practices and the extent to which they engaged in these practices. This includes whether environmental considerations influenced tourism-related decisions, specifically choice of accommodation. Furthermore, environmentally responsible practices (such as recycling as well as water and energy conservation) at home and while travelling were also examined. A sample of 500 domestic and foreign tourists visiting the beachfront were selected using a spatially-based, systematic approach whereby interviews were undertaken at specific locations during different times of the day. Primary data was analysed thematically using descriptive statistics. The results indicate that there was a positive attitude among respondents about environmental best practices in accommodation establishments. Fewer tourists engaged in environmentally responsible practices during their travel. Higher numbers (more foreign than domestic tourists) engaged in environmentally responsible practices at home. The findings show that knowledge and awareness does not necessarily translate to changes in practices. There is therefore a need for more information dissemination about how to be more environmentally responsible as a tourist. This requires that the tourist industry provides more options and awareness campaigns.

**Key words:** Responsible tourism behaviour, tourists, environmental impacts, Durban

## Introduction

Cornelissen (2005) states that in the last few decades the voluminous literature on all aspects of tourism indicates that much scholarly attention is being focused on this sector. This remains true a decade on. Lepp (2008: 9) states that tourism is a complex system with "interdependent and integrated parts" that have "political, social cultural, historic, ecological and legal variables". However, tourism research remains biased towards socio-economic impacts. Specifically, Bob and Swart (2009) and Sharpley (2014) state that economic impacts tend to dominate the literature with an increasing focus on social aspects. There is limited research on environmental and climate change considerations in relation to tourism as highlighted by Moodley and Sershen (2015). This is also in relation to research undertaken on the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of tourists. There is therefore a need for tourism research to consider environmental impacts. The attitudes of tourists towards environmental issues as well as the environmentally responsible behaviour of tourists is an important area that is under-researched. Barr, Shaw and Coles (2011: 1234) emphasise the importance of undertaking research in this area:

...understanding the ways in which behaviours are undertaken at different sites of consumption in time and space and the relationships that may (or may not) exist between these settings is crucial to appreciating the likely success of behaviour change policies focused on reducing carbon emissions to combat climate change.

The focus of this study is to obtain a better understanding of possible tourism related impacts, especially in relation to the perceptions and attitudes of tourists in relation to their level of awareness of environmentally responsible tourism practices and the extent to which they engage in these practices. Key issues under consideration include whether environmental considerations influence tourism-related decisions, specifically choice of accommodation. Furthermore, environmentally responsible practices at home and while travelling are also examined.

The next section undertakes a literature review focusing primarily on responsible tourism. This is followed by an overview of the methodology which includes a focus on the Durban Central Beachfront which is the case study location and the survey method used for data collection. This is followed by an analysis of the primary data collected. Finally, a conclusion is presented.

## **Literature review**

Hernandez and Ryan (2011) state that global economic development receives a substantial contribution from tourism, especially in developing countries that rely on tourism as a major source of income. This is supported by Sharpley (2014: 37) who states:

...tourism represents one of the world's largest discretionary transfers of wealth, thereby providing a source of income, foreign exchange, government revenues and employment, business and infrastructural development and, hence, wider economic growth and development in destination areas.

Frey and George (2010) and Lozano-Oyola, Blancas, Gonzalez and Caballero (2012) indicate that tourism has the potential to create global environmental effects linked to increased growth. Furthermore, Blanke and Chiesa (2013: xv) argue that despite "fragile economic growth, macro-economic tensions, and high unemployment, the tourism sector has remained relatively resilient in recent years". The growth in tourism, however, has several intended and unintended environmental, social, cultural, economic and political consequences. Within this context, there is a need for "alternative and more environment and host friendly practices in development, planning and policies" (Saarinen, 2006: 1121).

The environmental impacts of tourism is particularly important to consider since the greatest ecological threat that any form of mass tourism creates is linked to demands on the infrastructure (particularly the accommodation sector) and transport arrangements required to support it, which can result in substantial, often irreversible, environmental degradation (Davenport & Davenport, 2006). The main negative environmental impacts of tourism are associated with (Ahmed & Pretorius, 2010; Davenport & Davenport, 2006; Roper, 2006):

- Changes in land-use and the destruction of the natural environment
- Emissions to soil, air and water
- Releasing carbon emissions contributing to climate change
- high consumption of energy and water during the event
- Generation of large amounts of waste

- Bringing pollution and waste into some of the world's most biologically and culturally diverse areas
- The consumption of non-renewable resources and utilisation reserves of irreplaceable natural capital

The main drivers of environmental impacts associated with tourism are demands on energy and water resources by tourists/ visitors, increased waste generation (including carbon emissions), travel patterns (especially in relation to long-haul travel and the dominant use of motorised means of travel), increased consumptions of goods and services and infrastructural development (Ahmed & Pretorius, 2010; Davenport & Davenport, 2006).

Prior to discussing responsible tourism, it is important to briefly discuss sustainable tourism which is linked to sustainable development. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987: 43) defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. More recently, this concept has been expanded to focus on “poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns and managing the natural base for economic and social development rather than purely ecological matters” (Jabareen, 2008: 188). Sustainable tourism specifically is well encapsulated by Akama and Kieti (2007: 735):

The concept of sustainable tourism strives to harmonise and reconcile issues of intergenerational equity, and the goals of economic growth, environmental protection and social justice. It recognises fairness between local individuals and groups, and between hosts and guests.

Thus, the above discussion underscores managing tourism and tourist activities in a manner that current patterns of consumption do not compromise the economic, social and ecological/ environmental benefits. Klein (2011) states that the principles of sustainable tourism is similar to that of sustainable development which includes meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions, and simultaneously safeguarding future opportunities.

Responsible tourism is related to sustainable tourism and has three broad areas of concern: “tourisms impact on the environment, the equitable distribution of economic benefits to all segments of a tourist destination and minimising negative socio-cultural impacts” (Klein, 2011: 108). Harrison and Husbands (1996: 1) provided one of the earlier definitions, stating that responsible tourism is a “a way of doing tourism planning, policy and development to ensure that benefits are optimally distributed among impacted populations, governments, tourists and investors”. Spenceley (2008) asserts that the aim of responsible tourism practice focuses on reducing or mitigating the negative effects of mass tourism sector on the environment. Spenceley (2008) further notes that responsible tourism seeks to address issues of global warming, social inequality and decreasing natural resources. Husbands and Harrison (1996: 5) further indicate that responsible tourism “can be practiced in ways that minimise and mitigate obvious disbenefits”. Caruana, Glozer, Crane and McCabe (2014: 115) state that responsible tourism “is typically understood as a broad set of tourist interactions that engage with and benefit local communities and minimise negative social and environmental impacts”. Caruana *et al.* (2014) further assert that research on responsible tourism has tended to adopt a top-down approach with the voices of tourists being generally absent. Caruana *et al.*'s (2014) study adopted a qualitative approach with indepth interviews while this study uses a quantitative, survey approach.

Responsible tourism is also associated with pro-environmental behaviour which Stern (2000: 408) states is “behaviour that is undertaken with the intention to change (normally, to benefit) the

environment” and “the extent to which it changes the availability of materials or energy from the environment or alters the structure and dynamics of ecosystems or the biosphere”. Mihalic (2016) states that responsible tourism behaviour is based on the concept of sustainable tourism. Environmentally responsible behaviour specifically is examined by Lee, Jan and Yang (2013: 3) who cite the following pertinent definitions:

- Actions by individuals/ groups to remedy environmental problems
- Environmental preservation/ conservation actions
- Actions by individuals to minimise any negative impacts on natural and built environment
- Individuals who seriously consider future consequences of their actions by behaving sustainably and making sustainable choices

Lee *et al.* (2013) also state that in tourism research, environmental attitudes are crucial to determine a person’s environmental behaviour. Lee, Choi, Kim, Ahn and Katz-Gerro (2012) focus on environmental concerns which refer to a wide range of indicators including beliefs that the environment is under threat, the adverse results of environmental degradation and concerns for the problems caused by humans on the environment. Their review of the relevant literature reveals that environmental concerns impact on behavioural practices to reduce problems in the environment, positively influence and promote ecologically responsible behaviour, encourage individuals to make sacrifices in their habits and are linked to intentions to purchase and use greener products and services. Lee *et al.* (2012) also assert although individuals may express environmental concerns, few are willing to make sacrifices in their lifestyles and change their behaviours substantially.

The global importance of promoting responsible tourism was underscored at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (held in Johannesburg in 2002) and the first International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations which was held in Cape Town in 2002 (Klein, 2011; The Responsible Tourism Partnership, 2002). Klein (2011: 107) asserts that “the conference shared the same concerns as sustainable tourism (that is, a focus on environmental, economic and socio-cultural impacts), but was grounded in ethics and human rights”. The Conference concluded with the acceptance of the Cape Town Declaration which highlighted the following characteristics of responsible tourism that should be encouraged (Klein, 2011; The Responsible Tourism Partnership, 2002):

- minimises negative economic, environmental, and social impacts;
- generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities;
- improves working conditions and access to the industry;
- involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances;
- makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world’s diversity;
- provides more enjoyable experiences for the tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues;
- provides access for physically challenged people; and
- is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts, and builds pride and confidence.

Guiding principles as well as incentives, regulations and multi-stakeholder strategies were formulated at the Conference to promote economic, social and environmental responsibility (The

Responsible Tourism Partnership, 2002). The Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism was endorsed at the 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations (Sustainable Tourism Alliance, 2015). Mensah (2012) also notes the importance of environmental education in relation to responsible tourism.

An important aspect of responsible tourism is fair trade. The European Fair Trade Association (EFTA, 1996 cited in Cleverdon & Kalisch, 2000: 173) note the functions of Fair Trade as supporting efforts of partners in the South who by means of co-operation, production and trade strive for a better standard of living and fairness in the distribution of income and influence; and taking initiatives and participating in activities aimed at establishing fair production and trade structures in the South and on the global market. While fair trade in tourism is not widespread, it is increasingly becoming more prominent.

Spenceley (2008) asserts that attitudes and behaviour of tourists to an area differ. Tourists who behave responsibly and take the initiative to protect the environment and act in an environmentally-friendly manner, would contribute to responsible sustainable tourism (David, 2011). Research indicates that attitudes and behaviours of tourists in relation to the environment differ. For example, Budeanu's (2007) study revealed that that even though tourists may declare positive sustainable attitudes only a minority took action. In his study, only 5% of the tourists engaged in environmentally-friendly behaviours and practices such as taking action by "purchasing responsible tourism packages, used environmentally friendly transport or purchased locally produced goods" (Budeanu, 2007: 499). This is supported by Weeden (2005) who claim that claims of environmental concerns by tourist do not result in actual behavioural changes. Hares, Dickinson and Wilkes (2010: 467) argue that the incongruence between attitude and behaviour can be referred to as the "attitude behaviour gap". The attitude behaviour gap in sustainable tourism is also highlighted by Juvan and Dolnicar (2014). Reid, Sutton and Hunter (2010) also illustrate that that even though tourists may hold pro-environmental attitudes, their behaviour may not be displayed. Reid *et al.* (2010) further state that the the majority of the public are still not convinced that they should undertake sustainable environmental practices. Moodley and Sershen's (2015) study on environmental knowledge and pro-environmental behaviour among delegates (at the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol was held in Durban (South Africa) from 28 November to 8 December in 2011) noted differences in levels of environmental knowledge and behaviours among males and females. They found that although the delegates had a good knowledge of the various aspects related to climate change, this was not clearly evident in the results on their engagement in environmental best practices and their intention to offset carbon emissions. Similar issues are raised in Juvan and Dolnicar's (2014) study that examines why people who actively engage in environmental protection at home engage in vacation behaviour which has negative environmental consequences (that is, the attitude behaviour gap) while travelling, although often unintentionally. Carauna *et al.* (2014: 127) found that the concept of responsible tourism from the perspective of tourists is "not stable and fixed, but fluid and contingent, suggesting a market with considerable heterogeneity".

In South Africa, the White Paper on Tourism proposes responsible tourism as the guiding principle for tourism development which is regarded as a proactive approach to "develop, market and manage the tourism industry in a responsible manner, so as to create a competitive advantage" (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism [DEAT], 1996: 18). DEAT (1996) further stipulates that responsibility implies responsibility to the environment; responsibility of government and business; responsibility to respect, invest and develop local cultures; responsibility to visitors in terms of their health, safety and security; responsibility of both

employers and employees in the tourism system; and responsibility on the part of the tourist which is the focus of this research. DEAT (1996: 19) also identifies key elements of responsible tourism:

Avoid waste and over-consumption; use local resources sustainability; maintain and encourage natural, economic, social and cultural diversity; be sensitive to the host community; involve the local community in planning and decision-making; assess environmental, social and economic impacts as a prerequisite to developing tourism; ensure communities are involved in and benefit from tourism; market tourism that is responsible, respecting local, natural and cultural environments and monitor impacts of tourism and ensure open disclosure of information.

The literature review indicates that considering the environmental impacts of tourism is critical. Yet, there is a paucity of research in this area, especially in relation to tourists' behaviours, perceptions and attitudes which this study focuses on. The methodological approach adopted for this study which addresses this gap in knowledge is presented next.

## **Methods**

This study is linked to beach tourism since it focuses on the Durban Central Beachfront. Hyman (2014) asserts that beach tourism is extremely sensitive to climatic and environmental variables. In the context of this study, the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Master Plan (Department of Economic Development and Tourism - DEDT, 2012) highlights the importance of beach experiences and tourism as well as the strategic significance of the province focusing on beach, scenic and wildlife experiences. The overall methodological approach adopted in this research is the case study approach using Durban's Central beachfront area which is a key tourism destination and is also one of the main recreational spaces (Bob & Maharaj, 2015). Durban is the largest city in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and the third largest city in South Africa with a population of 3 442 361 living in a warm sub-tropical climate with hot and humid summers (average temperature 28°C) and mild winters (average temperature 23°C) (eThekweni Municipality, 2011). Being a coastal city, the climate makes Durban an ideal beach tourism destination. The value of the economic impact of tourism on the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 8% per annum (eThekweni Municipality, 2011).

The Durban Central Beachfront is viewed by the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority (TKNTA, 2003) as a primary tourism development node as well as forming the gateway to the rest of the province. Bob and Maharaj (2015) state that Durban's Central Beachfront area is a key tourism destination and is also one of the main recreational spaces for local residents. Odhiambo and Van Zyl (2012) state that the Durban beachfront is ranked as South Africa's 6<sup>th</sup> main tourism attraction in the country. The DEDT (2012) indicates in the Tourism Master Plan that the vision for KwaZulu-Natal is to be internationally famous as Africa's top beach destination which the primary focus area being the Durban beach experience. The Tourism Master Plan also indicates that the focus is to improve the Durban experience aimed at making "Durban THE beach destination, the African 'Miami' that appeals to all markers – with the negative crime and grime perception erased" (DEDT, 2012: 21).

A sample of 500 domestic and foreign tourists visiting the Durban's Golden Mile (the main beachfront tourist location) was selected using a spatially-based, systematic approach since the beachfront is an open area. Survey interviews were undertaken at specific locations during different times of the day. Fieldworkers were placed at different locations along the beachfront during different times of the day. The first person interviewed for the day in the specific location

at a specific time was chosen purposively by the fieldworker. Thereafter, every 20<sup>th</sup> person was chosen after the completion of the interview. While local residents were also interviewed during this research project, this article only focuses on the responses derived from 500 international and domestic tourists who were interviewed. Thus, attempts were made to reduce bias and ensure a geographical (along the entire beachfront) and temporal (during different days and times during the day) spread. The research was undertaken during the 2015/2016 summer season. A structured survey was implemented aimed at collecting quantitative data using closed-ended and Likert style questions. Key aspects covered in the survey include the socio-demographic profile of tourists, accommodation choices, environmental best practices at accommodation and distance from accommodation, and, most importantly, engagement in responsible environmental behaviour while travelling as compared to practices at home. Primary data employing descriptive statistics was analysed thematically using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

## Results

In terms of the demographic profile of the respondents, the average age was calculated to be 38.4 years and ranged from 18 to 72 years. The majority of the respondents were middle aged being in the 35-39 year (33.4%) and 45-49 year (27.2%) age cohorts, comprising 60.6% in total. The majority of the respondents were male (61.2%) compared to 39.8% females. This (age and gender) is not reflective of the profile of tourists but may be biased as a result of adults in a family (usually the male) responding to the survey. The education levels of respondents are important to consider in relation to responsible tourism since, as Mensah (2012) states, knowledge and information influences and shapes behaviours, including environmentally responsible behaviours among tourists. Most respondents had had post-secondary education, having either certificates/diplomas (15.2%), undergraduate degrees (59.2%) or postgraduate degrees (12.8%). The majority of respondents (68.4%) earned more than R20 000 per month with an average income of R43 251. Income per month ranged from less than R10 000 to more than R100 000 per month. Ahmed, Moodley and Sookrajh (2008) note that education and income levels influence general tastes and preferences for environmental attributes, amenities and activities. Furthermore, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2013) states that tourists from areas with large disposable incomes and different consumption patterns and lifestyles often spend large amounts of money and behave in ways that are likely to positively or negatively impact on destination areas.

**Table 1: Province where domestic tourist was from (n=500)**

	Percentage
Not applicable (international tourists)	32.2
KwaZulu-Natal	12.8
Gauteng	31.6
Western Cape	8.2
Eastern Cape	5.2
Free State	2.2
Northern Cape	1.2
Limpopo	3.2
Mpumalanga	2.2
North West	1.2

Most respondents were domestic tourists (67.8%) compared to 32.2% who were foreign tourists. Foreign tourists were mainly from Africa (10.6%) followed by Europe (10.2%), Asia (6.6%), North America (2.8%), Australia (1.4%) and South America (0.6%). The Table above indicates the place of residence in relation to domestic tourists. Most respondents were from Gauteng (31.6%)

followed by KwaZulu-Natal (12.8%) and Western Cape (8.2%). Gauteng is the main source market for domestic tourists who visit Durban.

In terms of the environmental impacts, accommodation usage is a major aspect that impacts on the environment. Among the respondents interviewed, hotels (30.2%), bed and breakfasts (11.4%) and guesthouses (9.8%) were the main types of accommodation used together with staying with friends and relatives (28.8%). The rest stayed in backpacker establishments, campsites and rental accommodation. The average number of nights stayed by visiting delegates was 7.1 nights and ranged from 1 to 32 nights. As indicated by Budeanu (2007), tourists' attitudes and behaviours differ and although they express positive environmental attitudes, few generally take action. The study therefore examined whether respondents were aware of environmental best practices at accommodation establishments used and whether they considered this aspect in their choice of accommodation. Table 2 indicates responses in relation to awareness of selected best practices that respondents observed at accommodation establishments or where they resided during their stay in Durban (including if they stayed with friends and relatives). The highest levels of awareness were noted for encouraging showering rather than bathing (72.2%), conserving energy/ electricity (72.6%), use of locally-based labour (68.6%), promoting green behavioural change (58.2%) and conserving water (52.6%). There were proportionately higher non-responses for green building standards (77.2%), use of green products (51%) and use of Light Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs (41.6%). In terms of the non-responses, this could be attributed to respondents not fully grasping what these were. This was not probed during the research undertaken but is an important area for further examination since conceptual understanding of key environmental aspects need to be critically assessed to inform environmental education programmes that promote responsible behaviours. Govender, Munien, Pretorius and Foggin (2012) state that the lack of awareness about environmental best practices in accommodation establishments used by tourists could be linked to these facilities not making their guests aware of the environmental practices they engage in.

**Table 2: Awareness of environmental best practices at accommodation used by respondent (n=500) (in %)**

	Yes	No	No response
Conserving water	52.6	38.6	8.8
Conserving energy/ electricity	72.6	20.8	6.6
Encouraging showering rather than bathing	72.2	21.6	6.2
Use of locally-based labour	68.6	26.2	5.2
Use of LED bulbs	46.2	12.2	41.6
Promoting green behavioural change	58.2	22.6	19.2
Green building standards	12.2	10.6	77.2
Use of green products	36.8	12.2	51

Lee and Mascardo (2005) illustrate that pro-environmental behavioural intentions are more evident among tourists who are more aware. To examine whether awareness informs behavioural intentions, respondents were asked whether environmental aspects were considered when choosing accommodation. In terms of rating the importance of environmental issues in choosing accommodation while visiting Durban, close to a third of the respondents (32.6%) indicated neutral and the majority (58.8%) stated that they did not consider environmental issues when choosing an accommodation. Thus, only 8.6% of the respondents indicated that they considered environmental issues when choosing an accommodation. The findings clearly indicate that while many respondents were aware of environmental best practices at the accommodation, very few considered these aspects when choosing where they would stay. This is similar to Weeden's (2005) assertion that being aware of best practices does not convert to actual behavioural changes by tourists. This supports the attitude behaviour gap highlighted by Hares *et al.* (2010) and Juvan and Dolnicar (2014).



Only a small proportion of respondents (12.4%) knew that the accommodation that they booked into was a fair trade establishment. The rest of the respondents indicated that they had no knowledge (28.8%) or did not know (58.8%) what a fair trade establishment was. The findings resonate with Cleverdon and Kalisch's (2000) assertion that generally there is limited awareness about fair trade in services such as the hospitality industry as it is intangible and currently fair trade in tourism is not prevalent.

It was also found only a few respondents (12.2%) intended to offset carbon emissions whilst the rest did not (34.8%) or stated that they did not understand what offsetting carbon emissions was (53%). Reid *et al.* (2010) state that the majority of the public are still not convinced that they should undertake sustainable environmental practices. Few are aware of how their actions, including travel and leisure decisions, impact on the environment. Furthermore, there remains limited knowledge of how one can mitigate against negative environmental impacts such as offsetting carbon emissions. Among the few respondents who stated that they plan to offset their carbon emissions, various ways to do so were identified which included travelling less during the visit, using public transport and walking whenever possible, would recycle, and purchasing carbon offsets to support forestation. These findings support Lee *et al.*'s (2012) research which shows that some tourists exhibited concern for the environment and try to minimise negative impacts associated with their actions.

Respondents were also asked whether they engaged in specific environmentally-friendly practices at home or while travelling as a tourist as detailed in the Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Whether respondents engage in selected environmentally-friendly practices at home and while travelling as a tourist (n=500) (in %, yes responses only)**

	At home	As a tourist
Use water sparingly and efficiently	52.4	45.6
Use electricity and energy efficiently	58.6	52.2
Use public transport	34.6	44.4
Recycling	55.4	68.2
Reduce consumption	32.2	12.2
Purchase green/ fair trade products	24.4	28.6
Support green projects	52.4	32.2

The results indicated that the main environmentally-friendly practices that respondents engaged in were using electricity and energy efficiently (58.6% at home and 52.2% when travelling as a tourist), recycling (55.4% at home and 68.2% when travelling as a tourist), using water sparingly and efficiently (52.4% at home and 45.6% when travelling as a tourist) and supporting green projects (52.4% at home and 32.2% when travelling as a tourist). Fewer respondents stated using public transport (34.6% at home and 44.4% when travelling as a tourist), reducing consumption (32.2% at home and 12.2% when travelling as a tourist) and purchasing green/ fair trade products (34.4% at home and 28.6% when travelling as a tourist). The findings reveal that there was generally more respondents who engaged in environmentally-friendly practices at home than while travelling with the exception of using public transport and recycling. It was further noted that most respondents who were foreigners stated that they used public transport. Additionally, generally more foreign respondents engaged in environmentally-friendly practices both at home and while travelling. Furthermore, some of the respondents stated that recycling while travelling was easier since at the accommodation establishments guests are usually encouraged to separate their waste since bins were provided to do so.

The findings in this research concur with those of Dolnicar and Leisch (2008) whose comparative assessment of the pro-environmental behaviours at home and while on vacation revealed that there were higher levels of pro-environmental behaviours at home which was attributed to a difference in the infrastructure at home as compared to places that tourists visited. This could also be linked to familiarity and ability to engage in environmentally-friendly practices. A further analysis of the data from this research revealed that respondents who engaged in environmentally-friendly practices at home did so when travelling as well. This could be linked to the “spill-over effect” as identified by Barr *et al.* (2011: 1235) which suggests that in instances where respondents exhibit commitment to environmentally-friendly practices at home, this often is transferred to positive behaviours and attitudes while travelling. In only a few instances was the opposite noted, that is, engaging in environmentally-friendly practices while travelling but not at home. As stated earlier, this was the case in relation to recycling because recycling bins were conveniently available and accessible in accommodation establishments. Greater access to facilities are referred to as situational factors that impact on pro-environmental behaviours (Barr, 2003). The findings are contrary to that of Budeanu (2007) who concluded that even though tourists may declare positive sustainable attitudes, only a few (about 5%) engaged in environmentally-friendly practices. In all types of environmentally-friendly practices examined in this study, both at home and while travelling, substantially more respondents than 5% stated that they engaged in these practices.

## **Conclusion**

The findings reveal that tourists visiting the Durban Central Beachfront location generally use paid accommodation establishments. While a significant proportion of the respondents were aware of several best practices at their accommodation (especially conserving energy/ electricity, showering, the use of local labour, promoting green behavioural change and conserving water), only a few respondents indicated that they considered environmental aspects when choosing an accommodation establishment or intended to offset their carbon emissions. This study therefore reiterates a major concern in the literature that knowledge or awareness of environmental best practices does not convert to influencing decisions that tourists make to be responsible. However, the generally high levels of awareness or observation of environmental best practices in accommodation establishments suggest that South Africa’s tourism accommodation sector is progressing well in relation to the implementation of environment best practices which was also found in Sucheran and Bob’s (2015) study that focused on accommodation establishments in KwaZulu-Natal province. However, fewer tourists engaged in environmentally responsible practices during their travel when compared to their behaviours at home. Higher numbers (again more foreign than domestic tourists) engaged in environmentally responsible practices at home.

The results indicate that knowledge and awareness does not necessarily translate to changes in practices. There is therefore a need for more information dissemination about how to be more environmentally responsible as a tourist. This requires that the tourist industry provides more options and awareness campaigns. Since the Durban Central Beachfront is a major tourist location and beach tourism is an environmentally-sensitive activity, environmental education and awareness programmes could be highlighted and promoted at beach destinations and in the accommodation establishments in the area. Furthermore, accommodation establishments can also publicise more widely their fair trade and green initiatives so that tourists/ guests are knowledgeable about these issues and can make informed choices when booking accommodation. The research contributes to the body of knowledge in relation to understanding tourists’ environmental behaviours. As reinforced in the literature, responsible tourism is critical to ensure long-term sustainability. In this context, it is imperative that the attitudes and practices of tourists are highlighted and examined to promote and achieve sustainability.

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