



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The popularity of a tourist destination can be described as being fragile, which means that a tourist destination can forfeit its popularity if it is struck by a disaster or if the tourist product loses its favourite position within the existing market. When tourists learn about such occurrences, they soon find alternative destinations.

Zimbabwe has lost its popularity as a tourist destination and the tourism industry in that country is facing hardships as a result of a political imbroglio. The tourist industry in Zimbabwe experienced rapid growth after the country gained independence in 1980. During the past decade, tourist arrivals increased at an average annual rate of 17, 5%, whilst tourist receipts increased at an average annual rate of 18% in US\$ terms and 25% in Z\$ terms (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2002:3). However, due to the economic, social and political situation that prevailed in Zimbabwe after the turn of the century; the tourism sector has produced its worst performance in the ensuing period than during any period since the country gained independence (Muleya, 2002:1). The country experienced an 11% drop in tourist arrivals in the period 1999-2000 and an 8% drop in foreign currency receipts within the same period (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2002:4).

Although the tourism industry has experienced a negative growth rate, the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority argues that the industry is reviving and that the growth rate cannot be compared to the rate that prevailed in the 1980's and 1990's (ZTA, 2004). The negative growth rate can be ascribed to both the economic and the political situation that has prevailed in the country (Greer, 2003). The economy and the politics of the country are inextricably interwoven. Therefore, it cannot be

expected of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to restore or stimulate the economy when the political role players continue to bicker over the way forward (Muleya, 2008:2).

This chapter provides the background and orientation of the research that is being reported. It reviews the problem as well as its setting. Initially, the problem is stated and its investigation justified. The motivation for and purpose of the study is discussed in the context of destination branding in developing countries. This discussion is followed by an exposition of the envisaged significance and contribution of the study. Thereafter the objectives of the investigation, the research framework and the methodology applied are contextualised and justified. Finally, the limitations, delimitations and research outline are discussed and a summary is provided.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION OF THE RESEARCH THEME

Zimbabwe is endowed with unique tourism products and the country has been described as Africa's paradise (RETOSA, 2004:8). It is home to the majestic Victoria Falls and magnificent wildlife reserves and is blessed with an extraordinary landscape. The country is situated on a high plateau in southern central Africa, between the Zambezi and the Limpopo rivers. It is a landlocked country that is bordered by Mozambique to the east and Zambia to the north, South Africa to the south and Botswana to the south west. Being a unique and fascinating holiday destination, Zimbabwe's tourism industry has the potential to become one of the most important pillars of the country's overall economic development, if all the available resources are fully utilised (ZTA, 2004).

During the 1980s, after Zimbabwe had gained its independence, the new government decided to maintain the status quo as far as tourism was concerned. It continued to target the Western tourism market, which is characterised by high-spending tourists (Child, 1990:4). During the period between 1980 and 1999, the tourism industry grew rapidly. This growth was reflected in the increase in the number of tourist arrivals and receipts from Western markets and also in the construction of many hotels, lodges and restaurants. A considerable number of tour operators and

travel agents were operating in the country (The National Consultative Forum, 2001:6-10). It was only in 1999 that, as a result of its controversial land reform policy, the country began to experience a sharp decline in the number of tourist arrivals. The decline was particularly marked in respect of the major Western markets. Consequently, the country suffered a major decrease in its tourism receipts (Sachikonye, 2005) due to an increase in negative publicity on the international media. This trend led to the closure of many hotels, lodges and restaurants. Some tour operators decided to relocate to other countries (Muleya, 2002). It should be noted that, although there was a significant increase in tourist arrivals between 2004 and 2008, this increase was mainly in respect of the Eastern and Asian markets. These tourists are low spenders and their presence can not produce a complete revival of the tourism industry (ZTA, 2008).

As a tourist destination, Zimbabwe has experienced an evolutionary cycle that is similar to the life cycle of a product in which sales increase as the product evolves through the stages of launching, development, maturity and, finally, decline. Unemployment has reached the 70% level, while those persons who have jobs complain that their salaries have not kept pace with inflation. Transport expenses, in particular, have escalated disproportionately as a result of fuel surcharges (Greer, 2003:2). Additional factors have contributed to creating a “perfect storm” in the Zimbabwean situation. These factors include the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2003, which caused Europe to ban the import of Zimbabwean beef; the international market price of tobacco fell drastically; the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank suspended their loans to the country; and the cyclical drought decreased the national agricultural output (Greer, 2003:2). These factors and their effects resulted in severe economic problems that have affected the image of the Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. There is therefore a need to re-brand and reposition Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. The purpose of re-branding and repositioning is to attract visitors, because the survival of every tourist destination lies in its ability to lure visitors. The key to luring visitors is to differentiate the destination and to market it to potential visitors (Nworah, 2006:13).

The concept of branding has been widely utilised to sell products to consumers (Hankinson, 2005:115; Munthre *et al.*, 2006:160; Alhemond, 2006:4). Branding involves the development of new products, positioning and repositioning of the new or existing products in respect of new or existing target markets and thereby reviving the destination's image in order to appeal to the existing or new markets (Kotler *et al.*, 1999:284). It was a major aim of this study to investigate whether the concept of branding is equally applicable to tourism destinations. Furthermore, the study sought to evaluate international best practices in the branding and positioning of destinations.

Recognising the importance of branding, the study sought to establish the current situation in Zimbabwe regarding branding and to examine stakeholders' attitudes and experiences regarding branding and the positioning of a destination. The study took cognisance of the importance of product branding as a useful marketing tool in general and demonstrated that, with a few adjustments, it could also work well in respect of tourism destinations (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998:95). Because branding has not been widely used in respect of tourism destinations (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003:65) little is known about the manner in which and the extent to which the branding process could be implemented to the benefit of Zimbabwe as a tourism destination.

1.3 THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

The people of present-day Zimbabwe first entered the region in the latter part of the Iron Age, approximately 1000 AD (Loper, 1996:10). They were involved in activities such as hunting, agriculture, mining and trade. They had access to the resources of land, wildlife and minerals and traded in ivory and gold with Arabian and Portuguese traders. The Portuguese explorer, Antonio Fernandes, confirms such trade in his writings (Gould & White, 1974:50).

The writings of explorers, particularly the Portuguese in the 16th century, reveal that the people who live in the present-day Zimbabwe had access to a variety of resources. Fernandes, the first

known European to find Monomotapa and to enter Zimbabwe in the 16th century, documented the activities of the Zimbabwean people about three centuries before the British settlers arrived in the country in pursuit of raw materials to satisfy the demands of the industrial revolution in Europe (Gould & White, 1974). The description by Boucher (in Gould, 1974:45) indicates that, at the turn of the century, the country was a wilderness of bush and native timber, filled with game of every kind with ample feeding ground in the rich valleys. The grasslands, the mineral resources, the flora and fauna that abound in all parts of the country confirm that the people of Zimbabwe had access to many resources (Gould & White, 1974:60).

Traditional societies in Zimbabwe practiced and enforced wildlife conservation through seasonal hunting, avoidance of indiscriminate killing and the fostering of selectivity in hunting. Societies believed that wanton killing of wild animals was punishable by the spirits and, consequently, a control mechanism was established in the form of traditional taboos, totems and customs (Gould & White, 1974:60). Colonialists acknowledged that the people of Zimbabwe lived in harmony with nature, attempting not to disturb the balance between themselves and their environment (Haw, 1949:20). Land is central to social, economic and ecological issues in Zimbabwe, rendering it critical in respect of the pressures being exacted on the environment (Chadenga, 2000:8) and influencing not only its state, but also any responses, that may be taken from the micro and the macro levels to the regional and the global levels. The land reform programme which was undertaken by the government in the year 2000 was intended to redress the prevailing colonial land ownership imbalances. However, the programme contributed extensively to the problems that are currently being experienced in Zimbabwe.

Although the growth of tourism in Zimbabwe had initially been phenomenal, certain occurrences saw its decline in particular periods. The droughts of 1982/3 and the Civil War, which was concentrated in Matabeleland and the Midlands province from 1984 to 1987, impacted negatively on tourist arrivals during those periods. The policy of reconciliation adopted by the Government in 1987 produced positive results by creating an image of Zimbabwe as a peaceful destination. In

1995, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) rated Zimbabwe as the fourth most-favoured destination in Africa (WTO, 2005:15). Various organisations in Zimbabwe concurred with this ranking. The National Consultative Forum (2001:15) estimated that, in 1995, tourism contributed 1.8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Centre for Applied Social Sciences (1998:10) argues that the birth of CAMPFIRE has seen the involvement of rural people in tourism and that it has created the possibility that tourism could grow and be practised by various “new farmers” in different ways. Upon the inception of the land reform programme in 1999, the tourism industry experienced a sharp decline in tourist arrivals due to the negative publicity that the country received in the international media. Some Western governments even issued travel warnings to their nationals on safety and security issues in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has failed to counter these negative sentiments and consequently tourism receipts have continued to decline. This deterioration is in sharp contrast to the land that was once known as the “African jewel” because its agriculture was capable of feeding the rest of southern Africa and also of exporting some surplus production. This accelerated deterioration of the socio-economic situation in the country has led some observers to call for the re-branding of the Zimbabwe as a tourist destination (Greer, 2003:3) as a result of new reforms.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Zimbabwe’s popularity as a tourist destination has declined as a result of bad image in source markets. This trend has resulted in a decrease in the number of tourist arrivals and the extent of tourist receipts. Political and economic developments in Zimbabwe since the year 2000 have had an extremely negative effect on the number of tourist arrivals. When tourism ceases to be a pleasurable experience as a result of actual and/or perceived risks, tourists exercise their freedom and financial power to avoid the situations or destinations concerned (Tarlow, 1999:1). When tourists choose to visit alternative destinations, the effects can be profound. The figures contained in Table 1 below indicate that negative perceptions of Zimbabwe’s image and of its reputation as a tourist destination have damaged its ability to compete at optimum capacity in world markets,

encourage investment and attract tourists, especially from its traditional source markets, such as the United Kingdom, United States of America, Germany, Ireland, France and South Africa.

Table 1.1 Tourist arrivals in Zimbabwe from its major source markets in 2004 and 2005

Region	2005	2004	% Change
South Africa	279 014	347 417	-20
United States of America	32 785	56 943	-42
Germany	12 964	25 477	-49
United Kingdom	3 553	8 912	-60
Asia	8 655	24 722	-65
France	4686	15254	-69
Total	341657	478725	-29

Source: Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2005.

If the image of a tourist destination becomes negative or tarnished, it loses its attractiveness for the potential tourist. If it is also considered unsafe, it brings the entire tourism industry into jeopardy (Tarlow, 1999:1). Since 2000, the rate of increase in tourist arrivals in Zimbabwe has lagged far behind the rates that applied prior to 2000 (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2006:5). There is a great deal of hostility towards the Zimbabwean tourism product, prejudice against Zimbabwe as a country as well as apathy towards and ignorance about Zimbabwe's product offering. In a globalised world, there is a real danger to smaller destinations such as Zimbabwe of being ostracised instead of being integrated into the global village where it could receive recognition and even empathy in times of adverse trading conditions (Cai, 2000:740).

Every destination endeavours to compete with all other destinations for a share of the world's wealth, talent and attention. A destination may at times become the focus of attention for the wrong reasons (Buhalis, 2000:6). When that occurs, the reputation of that destination needs to be

changed so that it builds on the qualities that are positive, attractive, unique, sustainable and relevant to many different people around the world (Gellantly, 2001:4). The historical relationship of the country between ancient Zimbabwe and contemporary Zimbabwe is negligible, but the emotional relationship is close.

Zimbabwe, like any famous city, region or country, faces the challenge of finding ways to sell its products and services at a profit; recruit the best people; attract visitors, investment and events; move in the right circles; and play a prominent role in world affairs. However, experience has revealed that nation-branding programmes seldom achieve anything useful or do not even get off the ground unless they are backed by the solid commitment of both the government and the exporting companies (Anholt, 2005:13). The question that therefore arises is: To what extent can branding be used as a strategic tool to reposition Zimbabwe as a tourist destination?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Branding in tourism has become a very important issue, because it has the potential to contribute to the success of destinations. The concept of branding has been in existence for many years and is addressed in a wide array of academic fields (Hankinson, 2004:112). These fields include Geography and Urban Planning, which approach the subject from the perspective of political economy (Hankinson, 2004:118; Ashworth & Vogt, 1990:45, Hall, 1999:279). It has also been viewed from the perspective of development strategies (McCarthy & Norris, 1999:272). Surprisingly, many cities and industries in Europe and the United States of America have invested in branding and have successfully regenerated their economies in this manner (Hankinson, 2004:118). Whilst there is general agreement that branding does also apply to tourism destinations, there is less certainty about how the concept translates into practical marketing activities and there are few empirical studies that have investigated the complexities and realities of the branding of destinations (Morgan & Prichard, 1998:147).

The application of the branding process in destination marketing remains a topical issue. The management of branding and the topic of branding of both products and services have been focal areas for marketing academics and practitioners in the past decade (Hankinson, 2001:128). The unique nature of the tourism industry (for example its intangible products, experience-based products, inconsistent delivery of the product, human error, politics, image, perceptions and the perishable nature of the product) implies that the branding process for tourism destinations is not likely to be the same as that for other industries. This view is confirmed by Gellantly (2001:14) in whose view there are possibilities for destination branding through the use of the concept of the product application of branding.

Branding is based on the building of relationships. The maintenance of customer loyalty ensures the sustainability of a brand. The brand creates an image that is aligned with the product (Aaker, 1996:27; Middleton & Clarke, 2001:134). As such, branding is a tool that can influence the positioning of the brand (Aaker & Shamsby, 1982:308) in the minds of tourists. The creation of a unique and genuine brand results when visitors to a destination perceive that destination to be one of a kind. The destination acquires a real brand only when its customers (visitors) say that it is distinctive (Papadopoulos & Helsop, 2002:250; Nworah, 2006:3). However, brands have various degrees of functionality and representation for their users. These are very important factors to be considered by Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) in the brand-building process (Middleton & Clarke, 2001:135). This study could therefore benefit the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), which is the major marketing arm of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination.

The findings of this study contribute to the dimensions of image building and destination branding. The research is important in a theoretical context too, because it applies validated theories of branding to products, services and destination marketing. It reviews differences in respect of this concept in varying contexts. The study develops a comprehensive, value-laden and market-linked explanation of destination branding and positioning as well as their importance in destination marketing. The research is also significant from a practical point of view as it identifies the

components of destination-brand identity, which are important attributes in the positioning of a destination brand. It identifies the destination-brand attributes that should be the focus of the branding process. These attributes are used in the development of a tourism-destination brand at both the local and the international levels.

The study could benefit the private sector in Zimbabwe and also the country at large. The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) could use it to evaluate its own strengths and weaknesses when assessing the ZTA's current strategies to revive the tourism industry. It could also use the study as a baseline for the development of branding strategies. When the tourism industry has been revived, it could earn more foreign currency and contribute to economic development. In this way it could contribute to the reduction of the high unemployment rate and to the improvement of standards of living. On the whole, the study is intended to establish an ideal destination brand framework that could reposition Zimbabwe in the tourism marketplace. Such repositioning could lead to the creation of a recognisable brand identity for the destination. Should the recommendations of the study be implemented, it could assist the destination to attract foreign tourists in the face of negative perceptions.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The absence of clear, comprehensive, rigorous and empirically tested destination branding and positioning frameworks can hinder a more consistent conceptualisation of destination branding strategy. As a result it handicaps destination marketers in developing effective destination branding strategies to improve the destination's performance. The following are the main objectives of this study:

- a)** To provide the context, background and general orientation to the problem.
- b)** To clarify the context of branding within destination marketing and to outline the strategic role of branding or re-branding in the positioning or repositioning of a destination.

- c) To evaluate international trends and best practices in branding and the positioning destinations.
- d) To determine the current situation in Zimbabwe regarding destination marketing with particular emphasis on branding and positioning strategies.
- e) To discuss and determine the methodology that should be followed in executing the study.
- f) To determine stakeholder attitudes, experiences and expectations regarding the branding and positioning of Zimbabwe as a tourism destination.
- g) To refine the proposed framework and provide strategic guidelines for sustainable development and implementation of branding and repositioning strategies to achieve destination competitiveness.
- h) To contribute to the body of knowledge in this field by developing a framework that would provide stakeholders with guidelines for implementation and identify areas for future research.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the broad objectives of the study, the following research questions were investigated:

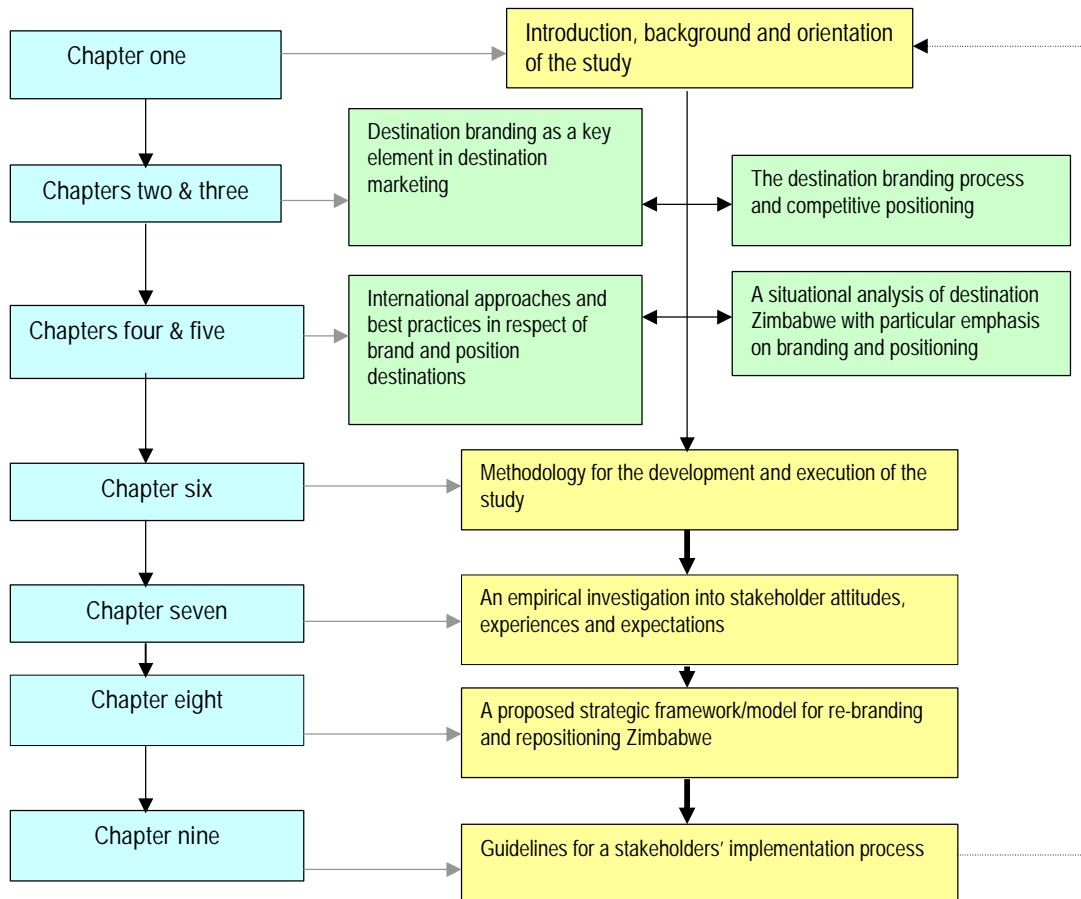
- a) What is the level of awareness of the destination brand and what are the attitudes of stakeholders towards it?
- b) How strong is the brand position relative to key competitive brands and what are the major perceived challenges and opportunities in respect of Zimbabwe's branding and positioning efforts?
- c) What are the attitudes of stakeholders (in the private and public sectors) towards collaborative destination branding?

- d) What are the critical success factors for the successful re-branding and repositioning of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination?
- e) What is the most suitable framework that could be employed in branding and repositioning Zimbabwe as a tourist destination?

1.8 THE RESEARCH STRUCTURE

The outline of this thesis follows an unambiguous structure that provides for greater clarity and communication with the reader (Marzano, 2007). The research framework that was developed and utilised in this study is outlined in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1.1 The research framework for the study



Source: Researcher's construction, 2009

Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter. It focuses on the background and orientation of the study as well as on the research problem. The purpose and the objectives of the study are outlined. This is followed by a brief description of the methodology that was employed in the study. The significance of the study is also discussed.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on the framework for destination marketing. It also focuses on destination, its context, functions and benefits. Chapter 3 focuses on the factors that could lead to competitiveness and on the key roles of branding and positioning. It deals with re-branding and repositioning approaches, trends and developments. Chapter 4 reviews the literature on international practices in respect of destination branding. It also reviews international approaches, best practices and trends regarding re-branding, positioning and destination marketing, including frameworks, models and tools.

Chapter 5 provides a broad situational analysis of Zimbabwe's destination-marketing strategies, approaches and structures with particular emphasis on the challenges, constraints and opportunities that are related to the branding and positioning of Zimbabwe. Chapter 6 outlines the research approach, the research planning process and the research population. It focuses on the development of a questionnaire and an interview guide for data collection and processing. The object thereof is to ensure the reliability and validity of the research process. Chapter 7 presents the results of the empirical study, which seeks to build on the key elements and outcomes of chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, in order to contextualize the branding and positioning framework developed in chapter 8.

Chapter 8 refines and describes the proposed model or framework that is based on the outcomes of the preceding chapters including the empirical findings. It builds and provides guidelines for developing and implementing repositioning strategies for sustainable destination marketing and branding. Chapter 9 provides a synthesis of the study and presents conclusions and recommendations. It also summarises the implications for and contributions of the study in respect

of the relevant body of knowledge. It provides stakeholders with guidelines for the implementation of the destination-branding process and concludes the study with recommendations and areas for further research.

1.9 METHODOLOGY

In order to enable the researcher to answer the research questions that are outlined above, the approach that was adopted for the study is discussed briefly below. Both desk and field researches were carried out. Desk research was used in examining the literature, while field research was used in the case study, which examined how Zimbabwe has evolved as a tourist destination through the positioning and branding processes. The sampling frame comprised the registered tourism operators whose details are published in the Zimbabwe Tourism directory. The directory contains the telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of all registered operators. These details enabled the researcher to select the respondents. A sample population of 995 was selected from 1500 tourism operators who had fax numbers, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses listed in the directory. An effort was made to include international airlines, including those that had withdrawn their services from Zimbabwe. The study population was 3980 and was justified for the study.

Appointments with the representative bodies were made telephonically. Questionnaires were designed to collect data from the various representatives of the tourism sector. The information collected was then presented in tables in order to indicate the trends in the development of the tourism industry. The data were then presented in a user-friendly manner to render it easy to read and to interpret the results. As most of the stakeholders were assumed to be knowledgeable practitioners in destination marketing, hence they comprised the most ideal sample for the study.

The researcher was of the opinion that, if the possibilities for re-branding Zimbabwe are to be appreciated and evaluated meaningfully, the views and ideas of the major bodies should be recorded and analysed. The pitfalls and prospects of the process could only be appreciated by understanding the views of all the stakeholders that are involved in tourism marketing. The inclusion of all stakeholders would contribute to creating a sense of ownership, which is an important part in branding. The survey instruments were e-mailed to tour operators, travel agents, airlines, hotels, lodges, hunting safaris, conference organisers and car hire organisations. In order to ensure a high response rate, a reminder was sent out on four occasions. A response rate of 15% was achieved and it was found to be significant in comparison with other researcher studies that used similar methodologies (Jonker, 2004). The decision to use a variety of respondents was based on the objective of increasing the validity and reliability of the findings. Guided interviews were conducted with five key informants in the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, Zimbabwe Sun Hotels and the Zimbabwe Council for Tourism.

Through using a grounded-theory scheme of analysis, patterns and concepts emerging from the data were identified. Concept cataloguing and the linking of ideas were undertaken and justified. The analysis of data was then executed with the use of a computer programme called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis of the quantitative data was done mostly in the form of frequencies and cross-tabulations with the use of the SPSS. Due to the size of the sample, most of the tabulations were quantitative in nature.

The Chi-square statistic was applied to quantify the cross-tabulations and significant differences were noted. The qualitative data were separated by means of the use of themes and the researcher then identified the common thread by grouping similar words and phrases. The use of this method was intended to identify any similarities in the data being analysed and to relate them to the literature in order to obtain a thread in drawing conclusions. The details of the research methodology are presented in chapter 6 of this document.

1.10 LIMITATIONS

Guided interviews with representatives of the ZTA and other private sector bodies, such as the Hospitality Association of Zimbabwe (HAZ), were conducted, but some of the representatives did not provide the much-needed information due to their poor record-keeping. In some instances, the information provided was suspect, because the data were subject to political influence and could not be depended upon to reach a balanced conclusion. Above all, some of the respondents did not have adequate time or the required knowledge to respond fully to the questionnaires.

1.11. DELIMITATIONS

The research that was undertaken comprised an investigation into branding as a strategic tool in repositioning a destination. This meant that a random sample had to be selected from the public and the private sector organisations within the tourism and hospitality industry throughout the country. Most importantly, a sample of the international stakeholders was also selected. It comprised airlines, international tour operators and travel agents, especially those that have an international tourism product and that focus on Zimbabwe, because they are the important stakeholders who also contribute to the marketing of the destination.

The major role players that were included in the data collection process were the National Tourist Organisation (ZTA), which falls under the Ministry of Environment and Tourism; private sector bodies such as the Hospitality Association of Zimbabwe (HAZ); Boat Owners Association of Zimbabwe (BOAZ); Association of Zimbabwe Travel Agents AZTA; Zimbabwe Association of Transport Services Organisation (ZATSO); and Inbound Tour Operators of Zimbabwe Association (ITOZA). The study did not include politicians, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civic groups and representatives of other business and economic interests that might have contributed

to the extent of some of the problems that arose in the destination since the study only targeted the tourism stakeholders.

1.12 DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Brand architecture:** refers to the design and make up of the brand in order to achieve brand equity.
- **Brand Character:** refers to the internal construction of the brand and how it is perceived in relation to its promise to deliver expected experiences in terms of trustworthiness, honesty and integrity.
- **Brand equity:** denotes the total value of the brand and its subsequent performance.
- **Brand identity:** refers to the unique sets of brand associations that represent what the brand stands for, with the aim of establishing and achieving a relationship between the brand and its customers.
- **Brand management:** relates to the deployment of the management strategies in order to keep the brand relevant, competitive, responsive and real without over promising.
- **Brand orientation:** is concerned with the mind set of the targeted tourists to ensure that they recognise the features and choose the destination brand when faced with a purchase cue.
- **Brand personality:** is the set of human characteristics that are associated with the brand such as gender, age, socio-economic class as well as the human personality traits such as warmth, and sentimentality (Aaker, 1996:141).
- **Brand positioning:** refers to a process that involves the management of the brand and the manipulation of its components to create an image and a position in the minds of the visitors.
- **Brand repositioning:** this is a process of adapting the destination brand's market position in the tourists originating destinations in order to create a new image about the destination.
- **Crisis management:** is defined as the short and long-term strategies developed in order to mitigate the impact of a crisis on a destination by deflating the negative equity.

- **Destination brand:** denotes a visual signs, logos, symbols, statements or slogans and or graphics designed to represent the destination and its offering.
- **Destination branding:** refers to the process of capturing the distinct elements of the destination in the brand and communicating these elements by using the brand's key components.
- **Destination image:** it refers to the key components in the formation of a clear and recognisable brand identity in the tourists' minds.
- **Destination marketing:** is concerned with the deployment of the marketing mix strategies in to create a sustainable competitive advantage of the brand in the market place.
- **Stakeholders:** it refers to individuals and/or organisations that directly or indirectly interact with the brand and share common goals within the destination.
- **Tourism:** denotes the extent to which the destination sells its natural and man made attractions for the purposes of gaining income from travel and leisure activities.

1.13 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the introduction of the study, which provided an overview of the research. It was followed by an exposition of the background to the study, which outlined the events that lead to the problem under investigation. Thereafter a statement of the problem was presented to highlight the focus of the study. It was followed by a statement and justification of the purpose of the research and orientation of the study and the statement of the objectives of the study. In order to achieve the stated objectives, several research questions were posed. A research framework was developed in order to direct the research process. Finally, the limitations and delimitations of the study were articulated. The next chapter reviews the available literature on destination branding and positioning.

CHAPTER 2

DESTINATION BRANDING AS A KEY COMPETITIVE POSITIONING STRATEGY IN DESTINATION MARKETING

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2.6 SUMMARY.....

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CHAPTER 2

DESTINATION BRANDING AS A KEY COMPETITIVE POSITIONING STRATEGY IN TOURISM MARKETING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The image that is communicated by branding has been identified as one of the five cardinal components of the overall tourism product. It is also a vital element of the augmented product development, which is marketed by the individual businesses in the tourism industry (Middleton & Clarke, 2001:13).

Branding has long been a popular practice in respect of the marketing of consumer goods and has also become a powerful force in destination marketing (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 1999:283). In this project, the concept of destination branding will be compared to product and service branding with a view to differentiating it from the other branding practices.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the concept of destination branding in order to clarify its strategic role in tourism marketing. In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives for this chapter were formulated:

- To discuss the significance and role of destination marketing;
- to identify the role of branding;
- to clarify the major aims of destination branding and illustrate the importance of destination branding as a strategic tool in destination marketing;
- to determine the relationship between destination branding and positioning in destination marketing;

- to discuss the importance of image in destination marketing and to establish the link between destination image and destination branding; and
- to establish the major challenges that a destination marketing organisation faces in the branding of a destination.

2.2 ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN A DESTINATION

Tourism contributes to the economy of a country in several ways. According to George (2007:291), tourists contribute by paying for their accommodation in hotels, going on safaris, eating in restaurants, buying curios, paying for their travelling, visiting attractions and even participating in recreational and adventure activities. Therefore virtually all the activities in which tourists participate have an impact on the economy, either directly or indirectly. The impact can be either positive or negative. The positive impacts of tourism may be manifested in the form of employment creation or maintenance of jobs (directly or indirectly), payment of taxes to the local and regional governments and generation of income for the local businesses that are service providers (Bennett, 1995:322-325). The government may gain from tourism in terms of the taxes that are levied on the tourists who visit attractions and world heritage sites.

According to George (2007: 296), the growth in tourism does not only have a positive impact on the tourism industry, but also influences many other sectors of the economy. Tourism can result in job creation across various industries. These industries could also include the agricultural, manufacturing and retail sectors (George 2007:296). The permeating influence of tourism is explored in greater detail by Lickorish & Jenkins (1997:212) who identify the following economic benefits of tourism:

- Firstly, the generation of income for the local economy.
- Secondly, it can lead to the creation of employment opportunities.
- Thirdly, it can lead to an improvement in the country's balance of payments.

- Lastly, tourism can encourage entrepreneurial activity.

Successful destination branding and marketing has also been considered to be a tool with which to target unemployment and create employment. As the number of tourists increase, the labour force also increases, thereby increasing the propensity to generate more employment than in other sectors. George (2007:295) argues that it is generally difficult to measure in exact terms the extent to which tourists' consumption of local goods and services supports domestic activities.

According to Li (2005:266), tourism has a threefold expansionary effect on employment, namely:

- Because it is a labour-intensive sector, it does not require highly professionalised skills. Tourism provides a large number of jobs for unskilled persons who would probably not find other appropriate employment.
- Tourism relies heavily on the supply and co-operation of many other related fields such as agriculture, the food industry and banking. Therefore, all these sectors could be stimulated by the ripple effect of an increase in the number of tourists who arrive and the money that they spend.
- On a macro-economic level, the investment that is stimulated by the demands made by the expanding tourism sector and the tourist-related sectors increases the gross domestic product and stimulates the creation of new jobs.

The government could receive revenue directly or indirectly from tourism. An example of direct revenue is the levies paid by tourists, such as departure taxes, while indirect revenue could include the taxes levied on the income generated by businesses from tourists (Gilmore, 2002:287). Tourism can also give rise to infrastructural development by the local government, improvement on transport networks and superstructure and could even improve the general quality of life of the local residents.

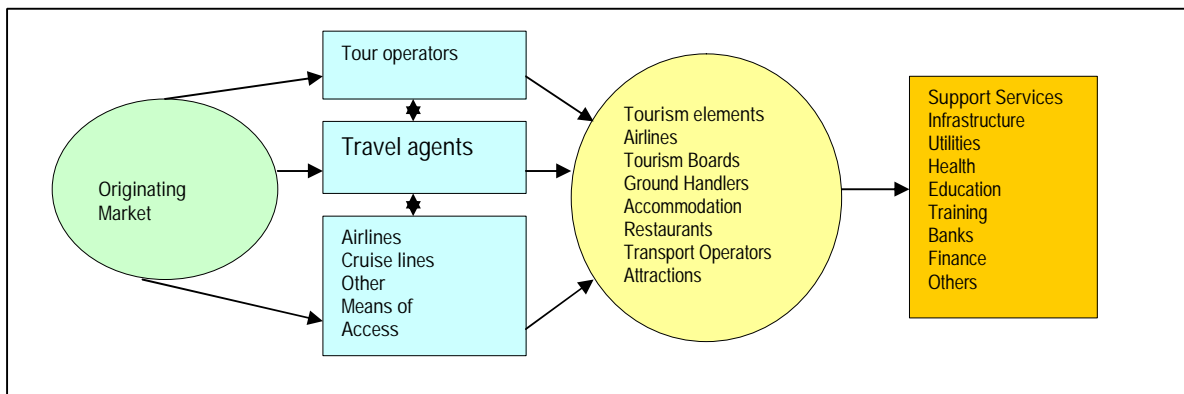
Tourism could be particularly attractive to the governments of developing countries and poor economic regions, because it could bring the badly needed foreign currency into the country (George, 2007: 298). Developing countries like Zimbabwe often have a trade deficit as a result of the failure to generate goods and services for export. Destination marketing can lead to a significant increase in the number of tourist arrivals, which would have a cumulative effect on tourist expenditure. As more and more tourists travel to a particular destination, a positive effect ensues for that country's foreign exchange situation (Li, 2005:267).

Tourism could have a negative impact if a destination or region is overly dependent on tourism as a form of economic activity. As more tourists visit a destination, their spending could result in the inflation of costs, because the local businesses could increase the prices of goods and services in accordance with the growing demand (Page, 2007:390). This trend could also lead to overdependence on the importation of labour, goods and services at the expense of those that are available locally. Tourism could also bring about a low return on investment as a result of seasonality. In most cases, income generated by the host country is usually low, because most of the tourists' expenditure (leakages) is undertaken in their home countries (Li, 2005:265). Li furthermore states that the leakage of tourism expenditure is more pronounced when there is an overdependence on expatriates. In economic terms, tourism is price sensitive and income elastic, which means that it is easily influenced by changes in the price of the product and the disposable income of the consumer (Page, 2007:393). It is for this reason that the demand for tourism can be readily influenced by external factors (such as political unrest, unusual climatic change and environmental conditions) that are beyond the control of the destination areas (Page, 2007:393). This situation applies particularly in cases in which tourists travel in groups. In such cases, the transport costs are usually not included in the income of the host country. In this study the demand for tourism is influenced by the internal political crisis which has resulted in a tourism decline hence the need for re-branding.

Tourism makes a significant contribution to the economy of the tourist destination areas and to the income of the hosts (Bennett, 1995:322). It is considered to be a new wave of economic activity in several respects. The income received from the tourists could be used to create employment and could also be translated into wages and salaries; interest, rent and profit. The amount spent on wages accounts for the largest expenditure in tourism. On the other hand, tourism creates a range of employment opportunities. These opportunities could be either direct, indirect or induced (Bennett, 1995:325). In Zimbabwe a lot of tourism operators have closed down due non-viability of their businesses which has resulted in the poor performance of the tourism industry.

Direct employment in tourism occurs in the sphere of accommodation, attractions, restaurants, travel agents and tour operations, while indirect or induced employment occurs in respect of an increased demand for houses, lodges, hotels, clothing and agriculture (George, 2007:294 & 296). Employment in the latter industries will therefore also increase as a result of a growth in tourism. The tourism industry is dependent upon the expenditure of tourists. As tourist arrivals increase, the demand for labour in the tourist industry and related industries will continue to rise (Page, 2007:395). The increased income of the labour force leads to a greater demand for manufactured goods and, consequently to increased revenue for local wholesalers and manufacturers. They then expand their capacity by increasing employment, which stimulates the levels of income of the labour force (George, 2007:294). These relationships are illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1 Income generation and sharing in the tourism industry



Source: Adapted from Li, 2005:267

There are several costs associated with tourism. According to Mathieson & Hall (1995:228), there is an opportunity cost when resources that are used for tourism purposes could have been utilised in other industries. The destination could become overly dependent on tourism and thereby increase its vulnerability to change in the demand for tourism. Another cost that is particular to tourism is its seasonality, which makes planning difficult. The perception that tourists are wealthier than the local population could motivate retailers to increase the prices of goods and services. This trend has an inflationary effect on the economy, because the local residents are required to pay the same price as tourists for goods and services (Yale, 1995:264). On occasion, tourism brings about foreign direct investment, causing the locals to experience both the political and the economic powers that are snatched from them. The cost of maintaining tourist facilities, roads and other tourist amenities may increase to the extent that the standard of living becomes unaffordable for the locals. Such physical, environmental and social factors may have a negative effect on the sustainability of tourism in a particular destination (George, 2007:299-300). However, in this study the inflation, unemployment and expensive goods and services is a result of non tourism factors such as the political crisis in Zimbabwe.

2.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE AND ROLE OF DESTINATION MARKETING

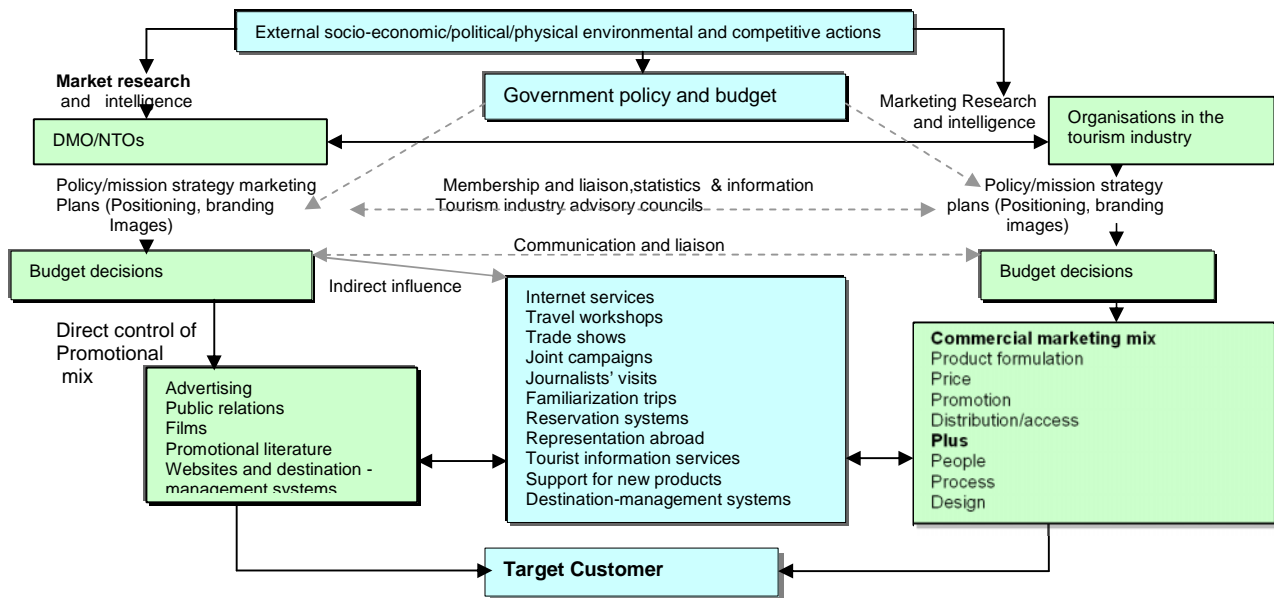
The success of any tourist destination relies to a large extent on the performance of its Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) (Pike, 2004:40). The word performance in this context covers all the activities and processes of the DMO to bring “buyers” and “sellers” together. The DMO focuses on the responses of suppliers to the customers’ needs and on the competitive positioning of the destination (Kotler, 1996:156). Since destination marketing is a continuous process, all the activities associated with the effective distribution of products should be co-ordinated by DMOs. Such co-ordination involves the making of decisions about products; branding; determination of the price; segmentation of the market; promotion, distribution and the other marketing-mix processes.

A strategic destination-marketing process involves an analysis of the current situation of the destination; identification of the products; setting of objectives; improving on the promotional strategies; and evaluating the results of the marketing efforts (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong, 1996:86). The success of this process can be achieved through the use of the marketing fundamentals, such as image, brand positioning and the establishment of a vision for the destination.

2.3.1 Destination marketing organisations

The term destination marketing organisation (DMO) is an all-encompassing term for a convention visitor bureau (CVB), provincial tourism authority, regional tourism organisation or national tourism organisation (George, 2007:3355). Destination marketing organisations are non-profit making organisations that aim at generating tourist numbers and visitation for a given area. According to Pike (2004:14), a DMO is any organisation at any level that is responsible for the marketing of an identified destination. This role is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 The role of the destination marketing organizations (DMOs)



Source: Adapted from Middleton & Clark, 2001:338

The role of DMOs is to market cities, areas, regions, provinces and countries; co-ordinate the activities of the public and the private sector tourism players; and provide information to tourists (George, 2007:158). In most cases, DMOs market cities, regions, provinces and countries to both the intermediaries and the individual tourists. However, they face numerous challenges as a result of the complexity of destination marketing (Lubbe, 2003:144). These challenges include the management of tourists' expectations, confronting new levels of competition, finding new means of success and adapting to new technologies (Middleton & Clark, 2001:330 - 331).

The primary role of DMOs is to market destinations. This role includes the elements of advertising, promotion, public relations and publicity (Fyall & Garrod, 2005:159). DMOs monitor the implementation of standards of service quality, co-ordinate the tourism industry and enhance community relations. Accordingly, they establish and monitor internal and external offices in source markets. They also devise the marketing and promotional strategies for the destination (Lubbe, 2003:158). The DMOs produce the marketing collateral and participate in travel trade shows such as the Tourism Indaba in South Africa, Internationale Tourismus Borse (ITB), World Travel Market (WTM) and IMEX (Germany) (Fyall & Garrod, 2005:160). The DMO sponsors and guides the business tourism community in trade seminars, shows and other promotional activities. Their functions are to devise marketing strategies that target the travel trade through familiarisation trips and attendance at trade shows (George, 2007:160). In so doing they also manage tourist information centres and regional and area tourist boards and provide a network of tourist contact points (Page, 2007:353). The majority of DMOs are not producers or operators within the tourism context, but seek to influence the images that visitors and potential visitors may form of the country or region and provide general advisory services for the industry (Middleton & Clarke, 2003:346).

2.3.2 The role of intermediaries in destination marketing

An intermediary in this study is a person who liaises between tourists and the tourism service

provider. The concept of intermediation is complex, because principals and intermediaries can switch roles (disintermediation) in the distribution system (George, 2007:125). Intermediaries determine how the tourism offering is taken through the distribution system from the tourism provider to the consumers. These offerings are distributed through a number of intermediaries who link the tourism suppliers (depending on the nature of the tourism offering to be distributed), to the various types of tourism organisations and types of customers (George, 2007:125). Intermediaries can either be wholesalers (tour operators) who buy in bulk or retailers (travel agents) who form the link in the chain of distribution by selling individual offerings or bundled packages to consumers (Yale, 1995:22). The channels of distribution vary in accordance with the type of product on offer. The use of intermediaries has a greater number of benefits than buying directly from the wholesalers. These benefits include saving on costs, reduced risks, greater convenience, wider choice, and even greater consumer protection (George, 2001:198 - 199). Based on the current situation in Zimbabwe, a lot of intermediaries have moved to neighbouring countries and are no longer selling the destination as a result of its negative image in source markets.

The distribution chain can be broken down into two main role players, namely tour operators and travel agents. Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, & Steven, (1998) describe tour operators as intermediaries in the distribution chain that link producers and consumers by providing a link between the tourist-generating region and the tourism-destination region. Tour operators usually appear in one of three forms: an independent company; a unit within an airline or a travel agency; and a motor-coach operator (Lickorish & Jenkins, 1997:114 - 115). As a result of the increasing significant role that tour operators fulfil for tourists, there has been an increase in the number and variety of specialist tours that are offered. These tours include outdoor and adventure tours; historical-archaeology tours, eco-tourism tours; and honeymoon packages in addition to a long list of traditional packages. Some tour operators even permit their tourists to customize their packages. Yale (1995:1) acknowledges that tour operators are important middlemen in the travel-distribution system and that they are the first and most influential role players in the tourism flow chain.

Tour operators either sell long-haul or short-haul holidays either directly to tourists or through Travel agents in exotic destinations. They can be viewed as the wholesalers of the travel industry. They fulfil this role by assembling the main elements of a holiday (transport, accommodation and ancillary services) into a single package/product and sell it to the travel agents, airlines, hotels and car rental enterprises (Yale, 1995:1). Tour operators also conduct research, contract suppliers, cost the package and sell a holiday package (George, 2001:200). Some of the other subsidiary roles that the tour operators fulfil include organisation of a holiday within a country, arrangement of outbound activities and specialisation in a particular aspect of an operation. Tour operators permit tourism principals, such as holiday and or transport providers, to sell their offering well in advance. In order to make a profit, tour operators rely on economies of scale in which regard they capitalise on bulk buying at heavily discounted rates (Page, 2007:135). By reserving large blocks, it is easier for a hotel to function at full occupancy and high usage rates as well as to reduce the cost on promotional material (Bennett, 2000:62). Block purchasing is used when a tour operator buys units from the supplier before the tour is fully booked and actually shoulders all the risk of having to absorb any loss if the block-booked rooms are not all utilised (Mill & Morrison, 1992).

Destinations also benefit from tour operators' international network, especially in developing countries that have a limited budget for tourist marketing (Cooper *et al.*, 1998). The dependence of developing countries on tour operators derives fundamentally from the expertise of these operators as producers and wholesalers of tourism-related services. The expertise of the tour operators is associated with their knowledge of the market, particularly the international market, and their access to relevant complementary services by means of which a total package of tourism-related services can be provided. Moreover, tour operators offer information about the destination to tourists, even if the tourists do not eventually use their services (Yale, 1995:2; Lickorish & Jenkins, 1997:113). This type of information can be referred to as an induced image of the destination, which is crucial in shaping the tourists' perceptions of the destination. Holloway & Taylor (2006:72) acknowledge that, in their role as intermediaries, tour operators fulfil several roles that are not limited to the carrying of traffic out of the country, but that can also influence the choice of

consumers, the practices of suppliers and the development of specific buying patterns in a destination.

According to Holloway & Plant (1992:122), the activities of tour operators on the one hand have substantial benefits for the suppliers of travel-related products; consumers; travel agents; and the destination to which they belong. It is therefore imperative for destination marketers to maintain a good relationship with all the stakeholders in tourism since the growth of the custom of holiday-taking is being partly influenced by the success of inclusive holidays and the ability of tour operators to market and distribute the tourist products. In essence, tour operators should be able to market and distribute their packages effectively and ensure that a sufficient number of holidays are sold at prices that enable them to make a realistic profit.

Travel agents, on the other hand, act as the retailing arm of the tourism industry and are an important source of distribution within it (Yale, 1995:21). Whilst the Travel agents are an important link in creating travel opportunities, in Zimbabwe the DMO seem to underplay their significant role. According to Holloway & Plant (1992:122), an agent is quoted an approximate percentage of the tourist package price as commission for selling a tour. They stock a wide range of brochures, plan travel itineraries and calculate ticket prices. They act on behalf of principals as well as other intermediaries. Their services range from the booking of accommodation, transportation to a hotel and arrangement of packaged tours. There is a significant relationship of interdependence between tour operators, tourists, travel agents, destination-marketing organisations and other tourism service providers.

2.3.3 Support systems for destination marketing

Support systems for destination marketing comprise information technology, management-information systems, physical infrastructure, healthcare centres, educational institutions and a solid base of financial institutions (Heath, 2007). Given the complexity of destination marketing, the

availability of a sufficiently high quality of information is cardinal for the formation and maintenance of collaborative partnerships at the tourism-destination level (Fyall & Garrod, 2005:158). The dissemination of information can be either intra-organisational or inter-organisational. The dissemination of information involves the collection, assimilation and analysing of a range of data pertaining to various stakeholder groups that are bound together by their collaboration. The data may include the economic status of the destination; distribution and control of tourism resources; stakeholders' opinions and aspirations; and tourism development (Seaton & Bennett, 1996:233). The findings of visitor surveys are particularly important in supporting the marketing of a destination. These findings can assist the destination marketers to decide on the market segments on which they should focus on. Of equal importance is networking and the encouragement of stakeholders' support.

The changing role of information technology has led to a decrease in the complexities of decision making in the management of tourism organisations. The structure of the management and the decision-making process should match the size of the organisation. Management should set clear performance targets and should monitor their achievement (Bennett, 1995:416). This strategy could motivate members of staff. Motivated members of staff are the core element of effective marketing and brand management. Due to the varied problems faced by the workers in Zimbabwe, it has become very difficult for the management in tourism organisations to set performance targets and monitor the achievement of results. This in turn has affected the level of motivation amongst the workers. Low levels of workers' morale can also affect the destination brand in a negative way.

The use of database marketing can assist management to understand its customers' profiles and behaviour. The use of a database has been simplified by the modern computer reservation system (CRS), which provides an information base that is relevant to the strategic and operational decisions that have to be made in organisations of all sizes. There are no parallels in the history of travel and tourism for the efficient use of a CRS. The battle for customers and market share will

therefore be fought by DMOs that are reliant on the speed and quality of information that was unthinkable a decade ago (Seaton & Bennett, 1996:433). DMOs in a destination could use interactive databases to obtain information that is important for branding and positioning purposes (Seaton & Bennett, 1996:433). Databases could enable principals and travel agents alike to acquire information about their markets. According to Bennett (1995:414), the powerful developments that have occurred in the field of information technology are influencing the management and marketing of destinations. The following are examples of these technological developments:

- Global communication via satellites enable computerised reservation systems to operate on an international scale and facilitate the management of global corporations.
- The development of optic cable networks for high-density communication facilitates the development of databases through networking and the interfacing of computers with telephones and other forms of telecommunication technology instruments.
- The development of powerful customer and other databases that have the power to greatly improve marketing efficiency and the quality control of products.
- The growing relevance of the CD/Rom that is associated with the power and widespread use of PCs in developing countries for communicating product and other information directly to users and customers.
- The growing need for the use of the CRS that is led by the airlines, accommodation sector and car rentals enterprises means that the importance of support systems will continue to increase (Bennett, 1995).

The packages currently being used include SABRE, AMEDEUS, ATLAS, NEWTRACS, TIS, Galileo/APOLLO and WORLDSPAN (Seaton & Bennett, 1996). The central reservation system (CRS) has a number of advantages that range from improved customer choices and convenience; increased operational efficiency; and reduced costs in dealing with bookings; to improved

efficiency in generating marketing data about customers' characteristics (Bennet, 1995). Advances in information technology have changed the face of the tourism industry to the extent that technology has become more than an access system and is now also a primary channel for promotion. The increasing use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) has changed the tourism marketing landscape which has helped in the development of destination branding frameworks. Whilst a few types of computer packages are used in Zimbabwe, branding on the website has remained the greatest challenge.

2.3.4 Characteristics of tourism destinations

Middleton (cited in Bennett, 1995:7) defines the tourism product as an amalgam of many components, including the attractions, facilities, image, price and accessibility of a destination. A local tourism destination is a physical space in which a tourist spends at least one night. It includes the tourism products such as support services, attractions and tourist resources that a tourist enjoys within one day's travel of the destination. It has physical and administrative boundaries that define its management as well as, images and perceptions that define its market competitiveness (Fabricius, 2006:4a).

Local destinations involve various stakeholders and often include the host community. These elements of the local destination can network to form larger complex systems (Fabricius, 2006:6a). However, due to the varying views on tourism products that are held by the stakeholders as a result of their rivalry, professional jealousy, irreconcilable personalities or opposing political philosophies, tourism marketing faces several challenges. These challenges are discussed in section 2.3.10 of this chapter. Due to the intangibility, inseparability, perishability and variability of the tourism product, destination marketing is a complex issue and represents a very difficult function for the destination-marketing organisation (Pender, 1999:31-32; Yale, 2001:6–7). It is therefore essential for destination marketers to address these complexities through the use of

continuous monitoring of tourist satisfaction levels, the attitudes of host communities towards tourists and the host-tourists interaction (Heath, 2007:3).

2.3.5 Destination marketing

Destination marketing comprises a range of activities that are designed to identify and satisfy customers. It focuses on the ways in which customers' needs can be identified and addressed in a manner that builds loyalty and profitability (George, 2007:265). Destination marketing therefore demands that consumer's behaviour should be understood. Such understanding includes comprehending why people buy holiday packages; what influences them to buy these packages (their motivation); who the customers are (such as market segments); and where they come from (Bennett, 1995:75; Fyall & Garrod, 2005:43). According to Seaton & Bennett (1996:6),

“destination marketing is an analytical orientation that involves knowing what questions should be asked and answered in order to determine the business potential of a tourism enterprise in relation to its past, present and predicted customers' behaviour; the business environment in which it exists; and the societal environment in which the business must operate”.

It is a directed, goal-oriented activity that balances the objectives of the tourist destination, or the supplier within it, with the needs of the tourist (Seaton & Bennett, 1996:7). In addition, Smith (in Seaton & Bennett, 1996:7), argues that tourism marketing should involve the resident population of a country and take its needs into account in order to avoid negative environmental and socio-cultural effects. This balance is essential, because the image held by the locals about the destination often differs from the tourists' perceptions. Therefore, destination marketing should seek to provide a product that meets the needs of visitors while improving the quality of life for the citizens.

Donaldson & O'Toole, (in Fyall & Garrod 2005:30), argue that considerable change is taking place in the world of business and management and that traditional marketing is now inadequate to meet the demands of a more dynamic and complex marketplace. The use of traditional marketing tools is inadequate to compete effectively in the market place. It is now essential that destination marketing should focus on the minds and hearts of the target market and such emotional appeal can be achieved through branding (Heath, 2007).

2.3.6 Market segmentation as an element of destination marketing

The more an organisation knows about its customers and prospective customers as well as about their needs, desires, attitudes and behaviour, the more it will be able to design and implement the marketing efforts that are required to stimulate their purchasing habits (Middleton in Bennett, 1995:254; Fyall & Garrod, 2005:100). Because consumers vary in respect of their demands for products whilst the needs of the tourist destination also differ, the total market should be differentiated into homogeneous segments. Market segmentation could assist the destination to choose the best or most attractive segments and to design strategies to achieve profitability by serving the chosen segments in a more effective way than its competitors do. According to Bennett (1995:256),

“market segmentation is the process of classifying heterogeneous customers that have different needs, characteristics and behaviour into homogeneous groups that have similar needs and behaviour and that therefore require similar marketing mixes”.

These segments should be measurable, substantial, accessible, differentiated, actionable, cohesive, discrete and specified (Fyall & Garrod, 2005:44). The guidelines provided by Seaton & Bennett (1996:30) reveal that there are four basic assumptions that underlie segmentation. Firstly, the product or service should comprise particular segments in which members have distinct needs and preferences. Secondly, tourists should be grouped into segments of which the members have

similar and identifiable characteristics. Thirdly, some tourism offerings may appeal more to some segments of the market than to the others. Lastly, organisations should direct their marketing efforts at developing specific offerings for specific segments of the market.

When segmenting a market, it is important to understand the unique needs and desires of tourists, while bearing in mind that each individual tourist is a potential market (Bennett, 1995:204). There is no single correct way of segmenting the market. However, marketers should look for broad groups or classes of buyers that have different needs or buying responses (Seaton & Bennett, 1996:256). Seaton & Bennett (1996) suggest the following broad categories that could be used in segmenting consumer markets:

- Geographic categories, which include region, city or metro size, density and climate.
- Demographic categories, which include among other things age, gender, family size, family lifecycle, income, occupation, religion, race and nationality.
- Psychographic categories, which include social class, lifestyle and personality.
- Behavioural categories, which would include occasions, benefits and user status, usage rate, loyalty status, readiness stage, attitude towards the product and the ability to offer satisfactory service in the selected segment.
- Product-related segmentation categories would include the extent of competition within the segment as well as the level of investment required to develop the services required in order to attract the segment and the cost of marketing to the segment.

George (2007:269) recommends that the following strategies should be used to select a market segment:

- adoption of an undifferentiated strategy in which market differences are ignored;
- use of a differentiated strategy in which several market segments are targeted, but separate marketing offerings are designed for each of them;

- implementation of a concentrated strategy in which the selected segment and the offering focus exclusively on the needs of the particular segment; and
- use of a customised strategy in which a one-to-one marketing strategy is used.

Whilst Seaton & Bennett (1996) and George (2007) focused on the consumer segmentation process, Seaton & Bennett were more inclined towards product segmentation and George's recommendations are more appropriate in destination branding. In order to implement George's recommended strategies successfully, a destination should have a sustained competitive ability to achieve an advantage in the delivery of superior value in the market place over a prolonged period of time.

2.3.7 Target marketing

A target market consists of a set of buyers who share common needs or characteristics that the organisation or the destination decides to serve. Kasper, Helsdingen & Gabbott (1999:128) consider a target market to be drawn from a segment, while Evans & Berman (1990:150) view it as a particular group of customers that an organisation proposes to serve or whose needs it proposes to satisfy with particular marketing programmes. Keller (2003:121) notes that the real or perceived customers (such as tourists in this case) have sufficient motivation and opportunity to visit a destination. Target marketing involves the evaluation of each segment's attractiveness and selecting one or more of the market segments as the target. According to Bennett (1995:204), these market segments may overlap, but, after a careful analysis of the market segments, target market selection will produce the best results. The identification of the consumer target is very important, because various consumers may have differing brand knowledge (Li, 2005:266) as well as structures, perceptions and preferences regarding the brand. Since a market is generally a set of all the actual and potential buyers who have sufficient interest and income to access a destination (Keller, 2003:121), consumers' choices often depend on the perceived uniqueness of

the brand. Branding decisions should commence with an understanding of the target markets. In fact, target markets should also be considered when making other branding decisions, because target marketing occurs when the marketer develops marketing mixes that attempt to appeal to one or more market segments by using tailored products for each selected segment. For example, McDonalds developed its salad line to address the needs of diet conscious diners (Kotler, 1992:51; Laws, 2002:197).

Kotler *et al.*, (1996:240) advocate that target marketing should include segmentation, thereby dividing the market into distinct groups of buyers who might require separate products and or marketing mixes. The identification of a target market could contribute to the development of marketing mix strategies that are targeted at a specific audience. For destination branding to be successful, there is need to develop a brand that would appeal to a specific target market.

2.3.8 Developing a marketing-mix strategy for a destination

The marketing process involves a continuous evaluation of how well a destination operates both internally and externally with a view to fulfilling the customers' requirements. A marketing mix may be defined as "the mixture of controllable marketing variables that the destination uses to pursue the sought level of tourist arrivals in the target market" (Holloway, 2004:52). The choice of a brand strategy has implications for the destination's marketing mix. Similarly, the destination's brand popularity and level of patronisation by tourists can be affected by these marketing-mix variables. There are four basic "Ps" that should be harnessed. The "Ps" are product, price, promotion, and place (Page, 2007:312; Fyall & Garrod, 2005:105). Three other marketing-mix variables have been added to this list, namely people, physical evidence and process (Middleton & Clarke, 1998:87; Fyall & Garrod, 2005:50). It can therefore be argued that the tourism demand at a destination can be determined by how the destination-marketing managers manipulate the marketing-mix variables to make a destination attractive. The determination of a strategy requires a continuous review of

the marketing variables in order to align them with the prevailing market conditions, especially with regard to the actions of competitors. The seven marketing-mix elements that Kotler *et al.*, (1996) differentiate, namely product, price, promotion, place, people, process and physical evidence, are discussed briefly in the paragraphs that follow.

a) Product

The product is the cardinal element of the marketing mix. It is also the core aspect of the marketing process. The product encompasses a multitude of factors such as attractions, destination facilities, accessibility, and image. A product can either be the core element of the destination; a facilitating and supporting feature of the destination; or something that augments the destination. By conceptualising the product in terms of these three roles, the destination marketers are enabled to appraise the comparative advantage that the product has and to assess its consumer appeal in comparison with other products (Seaton & Bennett, 1996:121). According to Bennett (1995:263), an analysis of the product in these terms presents an opportunity to differentiate the destination's products from the products of the competing destinations. Hence products have both a symbolic and a physical form. Product formulation and articulation is a means of adapting the product to the changing needs of target consumers. The presentation of the product includes basic design, ambience, texture and all the other components that are collated as an offering to customers. The product should be assessed on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that it continues to meet the changing needs of the customers and that the popularity of the destination or product on offer at the destination is maintained. To ensure that the product continues to appeal to the changing needs of the tourists branding should be used as a key element of the product, because it bears the identity of the product.

b) Price

Price reflects the published or negotiated terms that producers and customers agree upon for a product. The producers aim to achieve a predetermined sales volume and revenue objective,

while prospective customers seek to maximise the receipt of value for money as they choose between alternative products.

The price that is charged is the most visible element of the marketing mix and plays an important role in satisfying the needs and desires of customers (Fyall & Garrod, 2005). Although the product is usually argued to be the most valued and crucial aspect of the marketing mix, the price is becoming more significant as a result of the increasing complexity of the market (Fyall & Garrod, 2005). Price is inseparable from the perceived identity of the product in the marketplace. Price is particularly important in the tourism context, because the high degree of the intangibility of the product reduces the number of alternative bases that customers have for comparing products. However, Bennett (1995:213) argues that occasionally the importance that is attached to the price is influenced by the destination's emphasis on price competition. Pricing may be used as a throttle to increase or slow down the volume of sales in accordance with market conditions. A destination could offer expensive products as a means of discriminating against certain categories of tourists. An example thereof is the high-volume, but low-spending tourists from China. Similarly, a destination may offer cheap products to attract a high volume of tourists. Therefore prices should be determined with circumspection in order to ensure that the destination retains its popularity while attracting the required number of tourists. The price should represent the brand and resonate with the tourists' perceptions about the destination.

According to Fyall & Garrod (2005), destination marketers can use pricing to reflect on their overall strategies, such as market-growth objectives, and to communicate their chosen position, image and branding. Pricing can be used to communicate to prospective customers the expectations they could have regarding product quality, status and value (Bennett, 1995:213). Furthermore, pricing reflects the stages in the product's lifecycle and determines the destination's long-term revenue flows. It can also be used to build long-term relationships with customers by offering special price arrangements to selected customers (Heath, 2004).

c) Promotion

Promotion fulfils a significant role in the growth of modern-day mass tourism. Promotion has often been linked to marketing and communication in a broader sense, but it generally refers to the link that exists between the producer, intermediary and the consumer. Marketing and communication can either be push or pull in nature (Fyall & Garrod, 2005). The main reasons for undertaking the promotion of a destination may include the intention to increase in the target group the awareness of, interest in and desire to purchase a particular product. These objectives could be achieved by strengthening or altering the image or positioning of the destination (George, 2007:272). Promotion may also aim at changing the relative importance of the criteria for buying. It can contribute to the shifting of buyers' behaviour patterns and to the generation of prospects for new business opportunities. According to Fyall & Garrod (2005), promotion has the potential to encourage word of mouth recommendation; increases referred business; and stimulate repeated usage and additional purchases.

Promotion includes advertising; direct mailing; sales promotion; merchandising; use of sales force; brochure production and distribution; internet communication; and public relations exercises (George, 2007:274-97). Promotional techniques are used to make prospective customers aware of the product, whet their appetites, stimulate demand and generally provide incentives to purchase. Destination marketers should use promotional techniques to position the destination in the minds of the target market, because each element of the promotional mix has the capacity to achieve a different communication objective.

d) Place

A place is defined as an element of the marketing mix in which a tourist accesses, books, confirms and pays for the tourism product (Seaton & Bennett, 1996). Place means the locations of all the points of sales that provide prospective customers with access to tourist products.

A destination makes its products conveniently accessible to its customers by establishing travel agents in the target market place so that prospective customers can access the promotional information about the activities on offer and the range of products available at the destination. Tourism managers choose the intermediaries that are most likely to reach their target market (George, 2007:274). Intermediaries perform a number of distinct roles in respect of a destination (as discussed in section 2.2.3). They act as co-producers of a service. In this capacity they provide sales service support and offer a wide range of services, including those offered by competitors. The choice of a distribution channel varies in accordance with the type and the size of the organisation. Lumsdom in Fyall & Garrod (2005:115) notes that the distribution channel in tourism differs from that in most other services in that it enables the customer to be enticed to come to the destination. When determining the most suitable strategy in respect to the choice of a place, the destination marketer should consider the characteristics of the market (as discussed in section 2.2.8); commitment of resources; nature and intensity of competitor activity; and the balance to be achieved between cost and control. The fact that channel intermediaries are now at the forefront of thinking about tourism marketing, is testimony to the extent to which many of them have capitalised on collaborative and electronic agencies.

e) *People*

The element of “people” is that element of the marketing mix that contributes most to the variability of the tourism product from a service-encounter perspective. This element comprises the interaction and relationship between visitors or tourists; employees within the destination; and the host community. The attributes of the visitors or tourists have a significant impact on the level of product satisfaction and service delivery (Fyall & Garrod, 2005). The people component comprises individuals who are at a destination and these individuals can be categorised as visitors, the individual consumer of the product and the other tourists present at the same time and place. Employees at the destination and the host community (the residents of the destination) affect the total experience of a tourist at the destination. It is therefore of extreme importance to consider this

variable when branding a destination. Due to the poor quality of service delivery and the breakdown in systems, the people element has impacted negatively on the Zimbabwe's brand hence badly eroding its equity.

f) Process

Process includes matters such as bookings, payment systems, visitor-flow techniques and the interpretation of perceptions. The process has an influence on the final service-delivery encounter. As tourists' perceptions are based on perceived quality, marketers should identify those incidents that are of critical importance in engendering a positive experiential outcome for tourists (Fyall & Garrod, 2005:122).

The effectiveness of a process can be achieved through service blueprinting. George, (2007:80) recommends that the service blueprint should facilitate the process by improving service delivery in respect of all service-point encounters; improving the activities that are visible to the customer; improving support services; standardising operational procedures so that services are directionally linked to the flow chart; identifying points in the service encounter that can cause failure; cutting down on bottlenecks; and identifying evidence of service that could aid positioning and consumers' evaluation of quality.

The outcome of the service-delivery process is an important variable in the marketing mix process. For customers the outcome is often an intangible benefit such as a sense of well-being; mental and physical recuperation; and the development of personal interest such as a culture-revived relationship (Heath, 2007). Customer satisfaction depends to a large extent on the quality of the service delivery as perceived by the customer, which makes it important to ensure that customers receive exactly what they perceive the destination brand to be.

g) Physical evidence

The last component of the marketing mix is that of physical evidence. It relates to the experiences of the five senses of sight, sound, scent, touch and taste. Tourism products are characterised by inseparability, because the visitors are present at the production premises and their perception of the physical setting of the delivery process is a vital part of the product. In view of the fact that tourism products are intangible, physical evidence is used to “tangibilise” the offering in order to influence purchasing in a setting that is removed from the place of consumption, especially at the point of sale. (Fyall & Garrod, 2005). In order to ensure its popularity, the physical environment should be appealing to the target market.

A product should be presented tangibly to shape the tourists perceptions of it. According to Ooi (2003: 6),

“...to overcome the effects of political dynamics you need brands which have a strong advertising heritage, consistent but at the same time evolving more with the times and appear continually contemporary”.

According to Morse *et al.* (2003:4), Ireland has been consistent with its message of “live a different life” as a strap-line while Morocco has reinforced its positioning by means of its strap-line of “a feast for senses”. Such reinforcing was also observed by Morgan *et al.* (2002:20) regarding the Virgin Islands, which was positioned as “out of this world...not out of reach”. Morse *et al.*, (2003:160) add that the “essence of good destination branding is that it should be original and different, but ...sustainable, believable and relevant”. A good example is India, which uses the strap-line “India changes you”. A good brand should convey an essence or a spirit such as that which Morgan *et al.* (2004:160) capture in “amazing Thailand” and “100% New Zealand” as being successful campaigns. These presentations can contribute to making the product tangible and to shaping tourists’ perceptions of the destination. Whilst Zimbabwe has branded itself as “Africa’s

Paradise”, the brand equity has been badly damaged by political chaos which has negatively affected the tourists’ perceptions about the brand.

2.3.9 Marketing and communication for a destination

Vicente (2004:30) acknowledges that branding is a communicative process that is undertaken over a long period if the branding campaign is to stand a chance of success. The campaign usually relies upon integrated marketing and communication strategies. In carrying out the overall responsibility for a country’s marketing efforts, the campaign should involve the public and the private sector, too. The International Marketing Council (IMC) (2003:2) of South Africa has demonstrated this endeavour in an appropriate way, because:

- It has used an integrated approach to the marketing of the national brand, which ensures continuity beyond the terms of office of particular political office-bearers.
- It has enlisted the largest possible consumer support and contribution from all the relevant stakeholders, such as the government agencies at the national, regional and local levels; universities; and other tertiary institutions, to co-operate with it within and beyond the country’s brand proposition and marketing tools
- It has used a multi-stakeholder, buy-in approach that guarantees the subsequent use of the country’s brand.

The above notions demonstrate that a marketing campaign, if properly executed, could have a positive effect on the morale, team spirit and sense of purpose of a country, for example of South Africa (Vicente, 2004a:33). It is important for a country’s marketing authority, irrespective of its composition, to interpret and co-ordinate the available communication channels, for example advertising, communication, direct marketing and public relations, in order to present a comprehensive, coherent and compelling message about the country. This enterprise requires the

development of a communication campaign that targets different countries and regions, because the national brand is perceived differently by different countries. However, in successful destination marketing, it is consistency that is the key factor. Consistency means that all graphics and messages used in each marketing dimension should blend with the country's umbrella brand concept (Vicente, 2004a:33) which is not the case in Zimbabwe.

Marketing a destination is an introspective arrangement that could best be accomplished through partnerships that are formed amongst all the stakeholders (Heath, 2007). Neither companies nor government can do it on their own. Each partner has a very important task to fulfil in order to achieve this reality. Their contribution can either be to provide finance or, leadership; effect co-ordination; support the private stakeholders; and/or develop the legislative enabling environment for the public sector (Keller, 2003).

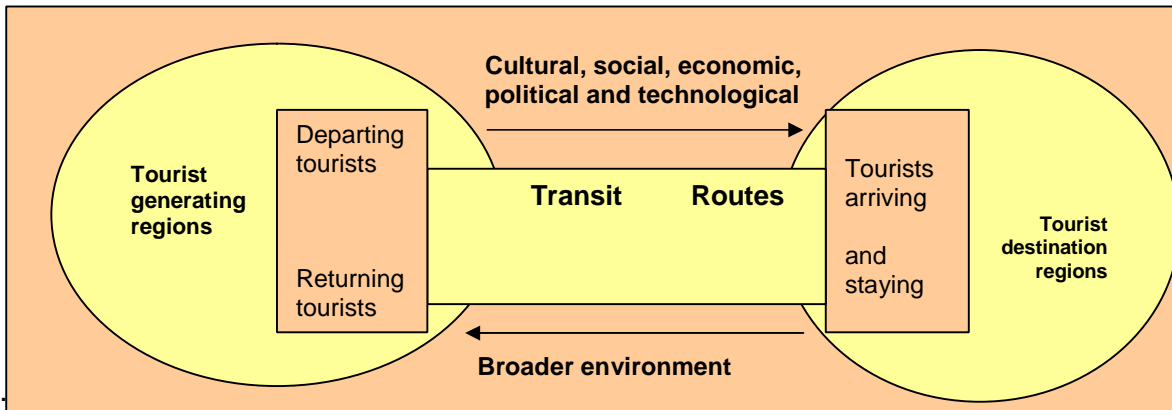
2.3.10 Crisis and its impact on tourism marketing

The tourism industry operates in a complex and changing environment that is characterized by several challenges (Heath, 2007:263). Tourism is serviced by both the public and the private sector and it is highly dependent on these sectors, with each having its own varied interests and agendas. Political influences could be exerted in the process. On the one hand a destination could be a single product, which comprises every kind of tourism operation in its geographical area, but on the other hand it can also be a composite product that comprises a mix of various components (the destination mix) (Morrison & Anderson, 2002:10).

According to Heath (2004), a "destination represents a mental picture in the minds of current and potential visitors". Perceptions often overshadow reality such as cheap versus exclusive; safe versus dangerous. In most cases, destination marketers have little control over the elements of the destination mix that they are branding. Hence, a destination can be affected by the current events

that are occurring within its boundaries just like in Zimbabwe, but it can also be affected by events that are occurring elsewhere, for example an economic crisis (Heath, 2007). A destination can also be affected by current and real events or by previous events, myths or fictitious events. There is a diverse range of organizations and partners involved in the crafting and delivery of the brand. Often there is a lack of funding for branding efforts (Morgan *et al.* 2002). The tourism system proposed by Leiper (1979), which has been revised by Middleton, (1994), Bennett (1995) and Page, (2007), identifies the five main elements that represent an open system as shown in Figure 2.3 below. These elements influence and impact on the broader environmental factors:

Figure 2.3 The tourism system



Source: Adapted from Bennett, 1995:37.

The generating regions are the permanent residential base of the tourists, such as the places at which all tours generally begin. The transit routes are the links to the generating regions, including the stopover points along the routes. The destination regions are the locations that attract tourists to stay temporarily in the destination. In this case, the tourists are those people who undertake discretionary temporary tours that involve staying away from their normal place of residence. The broader environment referred to in the diagram above comprises all the uncontrollable elements within which the tourist system works. The increasing complexity of tourism marketing has an effect on the uncontrollable variables, both within and outside the destination. According to Heath

(2007:263), change is the one certainty that exists in the system. Change in Zimbabwe is undoubtedly consistent and continuous and can manifest itself at all levels of the political, environmental and economic spheres. Both the private and the public sector present challenges to destination marketing. Heath (2007:263) has discussed these challenges and identified possible responses to them. The responses are summarised in table 2.1

Table 2.1 Key potential impacts on national destination marketing

Crisis challenge	Possible strategic tourism response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political transition and international focus. 	Develop a positive and innovative strategy that is focused on integrated marketing in order to maintain the momentum achieved and revitalise the industry to achieve the next level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unfavourable exchange rates 	Place emphasis on value for money experiences. Build brand equity based on the brand value rather than on the price
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-operation and co-ordination amongst all the stakeholders 	Package products, routes and themes with a regional and national focus, using branding and promotion strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing tourism market trends (trends towards smaller groups, escapism, adventure, back to nature, etc) 	Develop current and potential travel offerings that are in accordance with global trends. Encourage the development of packages that encompass the rural areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of technology (internet, virtual reality, etc.) that shape the future of tourism 	Invest in the intensity of technology by using internet marketing strategies and ensure the integration of the initiatives being undertaken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global environmental concerns 	Develop responsible environmental practices from the national to the local levels and promote the uniqueness of the environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government's lack of commitment to priorities in respect of tourism 	Build current public and private sector positivism and commitment to tourism through the implementation of innovative and integrated strategies and action plans

Source: Adapted from Heath, 2007: 264

With reference to Table 2 above, Heath (2007) discusses the impacts of the various challenges to destination marketing and the possible strategies for responding to the challenges. Table 2.1 indicates political transition and political focus as major challenges. Heath (2007) advises that destination marketers should develop positive and innovative strategies that are focused on

integrated marketing in order to maintain the momentum achieved in tourism and to revitalise the industry to achieve the next level. He also discusses unfavourable economic rates, the lack of co-operation and co-ordination amongst stakeholders, impact of technology, changing market needs, global concerns and lack of commitment by governments concerning priorities in tourism. Heath (2007) proposes a number of response strategies to these challenges, which include the placement of emphasis on value for money experiences; building brand equity that is based on brand value rather than on price; and the development of current and potential travel offerings that are in accordance with global trends. He furthermore proposes the encouragement of the development of packages that encompass the rural areas; investing in the intensity of technology by using internet marketing strategies and ensuring the integration of initiatives being undertaken; development of responsible environmental practices at the national and local levels; building of current public and private sector positivism; and commitment to tourism through the implementation of innovative and integrated strategies and action plans. These recommendations if adopted by the DMO in Zimbabwe can further strengthen the destination brand.

Heath (2007) has also considered the challenges and concerns regarding international destination marketing. Some of the impacts that he differentiates as being critical to destination marketing are perceived security and safety issues; health; disasters and unforeseen political incidents; international competition; and image fragmentation. These issues can have a negative impact on the destination if they are not properly managed. Heath (2007:264) proposes several strategies that could be used to counteract these challenges. He proposes that destinations should develop an integrated and co-ordinated strategy; develop communication strategies and contingency plans; address investment issues; and utilise available opportunities.

Destinations should monitor key competitor strategies; develop global, international, regional and local marketing strategies; and encourage the composition of guidelines for strategic, participative destination marketing. In order for destination marketing to be successful, marketers should continuously evaluate the global, regional and national issues that may have an impact on their

marketing strategies. Such evaluation entails an assessment of both the micro and macro levels within a destination. Table 2.2 summarises the key challenges in international marketing and the possible strategic responses to them.

Table 2.2 Key challenges and concerns in international destination marketing

Crisis impact	Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived and real safety and security issues 	Develop an integrated and co-ordinated strategy at the national and regional levels and create a realistic balance between reality and perceived safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived health issues (e.g. malaria, aids, etc) 	Develop information and communication strategies to address these fundamental issues on a continuous basis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disasters and unforeseen incidents 	Develop contingency plans and proactive public relations measures for immediate implementation when the unforeseen incidents occur
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of investment as a result of political incidents 	Address the investment issues and open opportunities. Use this as a competitive advantage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International competition 	Monitor and evaluate key competitor strategies as a key input into strategy formulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of a global village 	Develop tourism marketing strategies by thinking globally, planning regionally and acting locally
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Image fragmentation in certain overseas markets 	Create strategic participative destination marketing frameworks that can serve as references for all stakeholders

Source: Adapted from Heath, 2007: 264 - 265.

However, the development of strategic, innovative, seamless marketing plans and strategies, in which branding plays an important role by creating brand equity and maintaining brand identity, remains the key to successful destination marketing.

2.4 ORIGINS AND KEY FEATURES OF BRANDING

Branding has its roots in economic history. It has evolved as a concept of ownership and identification (Blichfeldt, 2003:8). In its physical form, branding has been, and still is, used on livestock to identify and differentiate the owner's livestock from the livestock of other farmers (Middleton & Clark, 2001:132; Howie, 2003:152). Its use has since evolved to include other uses and meanings, for example the family names of well-known ranchers have become guarantees of the quality of their beef or breeds. During the medieval period, trade marks and signs were used on crafts and other guilds (Keller, 2003). As a result of the increased production and distribution channels in the latter half of the 18th century, branding became widely used as a form of identity. The latter half of the 19th century saw the introduction of brand management standards (Keller, 2003) that related to consumer goods and product brands. In some countries, the sheer power and influence of some global brands has resulted in increased political and environmental backlash against local products. However, in tourism it is fair to say that the use of branding is still in its infancy (Howie, 2003:152). Nevertheless, there is already a plethora of literature that focuses on destination branding as more and more countries have begun to offer holiday destinations to tourists (Gould & Skinner, 2006:1).

2.4.1 Branding as a key strategic function

Branding has evolved a great deal over the past six decades. It evolved as a communication strategy together with an awareness of the might of the mass media (Joachimsthaler & Aaker, 1997:3). Branding is now considered to be a marketing communications effort, which is done through advertising, sales or exhibitions and many organisations continue to place strategic emphasis on branding. Today the strategic importance of branding is also emphasised by most leading academics and consultants (Blichfeldt, 2003) as a result of the complexities that prevail in the marketplace. There has, however, been a shift of emphasis from mere branding to brand

management, which takes a more strategic stance regarding the brand management scene (Keller, 2003).

According to Aaker (1997:349), the most important reason for engaging in strategic branding efforts is to protect the company's profits from erosion. On the one hand, consumers have continued to become increasingly price sensitive, shopping for price and quality. Manufacturers are also able to copy or imitate the (branded) products and innovations of other manufacturers and thereby easily gain entry into the markets concerned. On the other hand strong branding remains the only weapon that can be used by companies to obtain a sustainable competitive advantage (Aaker, 2001:321).

Brands are powerful entities, because they blend functional, performance-based values with emotional values (De Chernatony, 2006:5). Several scholars have advocated the use of branding as a management tool. Such branding would comprise everything that a company does and the company should make its marketing-mix decisions with due regard for the brand, while focusing on long-term goals. Heath (2007:176) states that branding should be a top management priority and it should be part and parcel of the company's strategy and mission.

2.4.2 Key features and characteristics of a brand

Heath (2004:166) considers a brand to be the most powerful marketing tool available to contemporary destination marketers. A brand is the capitalised value of the trust between a company and its customers. The aim of the establishment of a brand is to secure repeated purchases by means of some degree of brand security. Branding aims at creating an image that is appealing, yet truthful in style and contemporary Lumsdom in Fyall & Garrod (1997: 169). It has more to do with an advertising agency's attempts to generate image-oriented advertising than with the launching of new products (Blichfeldt, 2003:10).

A brand projects a strong identity for the product and signifies to the target audience that the product has certain benefits that address their desires and expectations (Baker, 2007:1; Morrison & Anderson, 2002:1; Laws, 2002:63). By means of consistent and clear brand positioning that is supported by periodic product improvements, a brand can remain contemporary without distorting its fundamental promise (Heath, 2007).

A brand creates a certain degree of awareness, reputation and prominence for the product in the marketplace. Baker (2007:2) states that the element that distinguishes a brand from its unbranded commodity counterpart and gives it equity is the sum total of the consumers' perceptions and feelings about the product's attributes and how it performs. Brands create a competitive advantage through non product-related means and they create consumer motivations and desires that are mostly concerned with visualisation and symbolism (Szondi, 2006:5; Badal, Bahl & Sabhlok., 2008:4). By creating relevant and appealing images that surround their products, organisations come to occupy a niche position (Keller, 2003) and the creation of such images entails the blending of all the various elements together in a unique way (Howie, 2003:153).

A product or service that is to be branded should be of high quality and appropriate to the consumers' needs. The brand name should be appealing and in tune with the consumer's (Kollman & Suckow, 2007:25) perception of the product. The packaging, promotion, pricing and all the other relevant elements should similarly fulfil the criteria of appropriateness and differentiation. In addition, Keller (2003: 8) advocates that perceived differences between a branded product and other products should be achieved by developing a loyal consumer franchise. By doing so, marketers create value that can translate into financial profits for the organisation because brands are value-intangible assets that should constantly be handled with circumspection (Baker, 2007:2). A brand's strength is influenced by the extent to which the internal and external components of the brand triangle (functional, emotional and promised experiences) are congruent (De Chenartony, 2006:9).

Brands identify the service or producer of the product and permit consumers to assign responsibility to a particular manufacturer or producer (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2003:2). However, managers who wish to achieve exceptional success should not focus solely on characterising their brands externally, but should rather gain staff commitment and consider how the brand triangle translates into the internal environment (De Chernatony, 2006:9). Their focus should be on projecting the strongest value proposition from the customer’s perspective with clarity and speed and on avoiding confusion, ambiguity and controversy (Baker, 2007:2) while devising strategies to enable staff to understand better the desired brand promise (De Chernatony, 2006:9).

Branding carries to the marketplace the promise that a product or service has a certain quality or characteristic that makes it special or unique and this quality or characteristic should be delivered consistently (Badal *et al.*, 2008:4). Figure 2.4 contains examples of key features and characteristics that have been developed for several product and service brands to reflect their identity.

Figure 2.4 Product and service brands



Source: Morrison & Anderson, 2002: 3 - 6

Due to their past experiences with a product and its marketing programmes over the years, consumers learn about the brand concerned (Holverson, 2006:50). The relationship that results between the brand and a consumer can be seen as a bond. As a result of customers' awareness of a brand, the concomitant perception of quality, the associations that customers form and customer loyalty, a brand is usually the most powerful asset that an organisation possesses (Aaker, 1996). When consumers are loyal, they trust the brand implicitly to behave in a certain way and to be consistent. This loyalty is achieved to the extent that consumers realise the advantages and benefits of purchasing the brand. As long as they derive satisfaction from the consumption of the product, they are likely to continue buying it (Keller, 2003).

According to Zeithaml & Bitner (2000), brands are symbolic devices that allow consumers to project their self-image. Certain brands are associated with their use by certain categories of consumers. These preferences reflect differences in values and traits.

Joachimsthaler & Aaker (1997:6) argue that a clear and effective brand can only exist if there is an understanding throughout the organisation of what the brand entails. Such understanding should be linked to the business vision, its organisational culture and its values. In tourism, brands are used to help people to define who they are by conveying memorable experiences that are uniquely associated with the destination (Heath, 2007:168) and then to help them to communicate that definition to others.

Keller (2003:10) claims that brands can also play a significant role in signalling certain product characteristics to consumers. Brands can therefore reduce risks in respect of decisions that have to be taken regarding products, because consumers prefer well-known brands, especially those brands with which they have had favourable experiences in the past. According to Laws (2002:84), many tourism organisations have adopted a branding strategy that enables them to offer particular services to various segments of the market.

2.4.3 Definitions and orientation of destination branding

A destination brand can be defined as a name, term, sign, design or a combination of these matters that is intended to identify the goods and services of a seller or group of sellers of a destination and to differentiate them from those of the competitors (Krishnan & Hartline, 2001:55; Keller, 2003:3). The point of departure is the identity of the product and service, which helps the customer to make an informed decision about purchasing.

Morgan *et al.* (2002:30) highlights the difference between a brand and a logo. A logo design is the visual representation of the brand and encompasses the image, identity, perceptions and changes in behaviour. The designing of a logo/symbol is one of the key components of branding, but branding itself involves more than just having a logo (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998:103; Middleton & Clark, 2001:133; George, 2001:272; Kotler *et al.*, 1999:284; Bennett, 1995:265).

Schmitt & Simonson (1997) argue that the use of a design that incorporates a name, a logo and/or a slogan that attract attention to a product is commonly mistaken for branding. Their argument is based on the notion that branding is more than just a logo, design, name and/or slogan (Morgan *et al.* 2002). This view is supported by Davidson in Middleton & Clarke (2001:132) who refers to the frequently encountered use of labels that are attached to “me too” products. He considers the use of such labels to be a primary management error in branding, because it is based on an over reliance on the name as the differentiating device, rather than on the development of the genuine comparative advantage. What differentiates brands from logos, symbols and/or trademarks is the presence of emotional and functional values (De Chernatony, 2006:14).

A destination brand in the modern marketing sense offers the organisation added value over and above the destination’s characteristics and a superior position that is distinct from its competitors, because it imparts meaning that is above and beyond financial consideration (Stanton, Etzel, Walker, Abratt, Pitt & Staude, 1992:234; De Chernatony & McDonald, 1992:29; Vitic & Ringer,

2007:3). A destination brand is a unique combination of both tangible and intangible product characteristics and added value that has characteristics that are inextricably linked to the destination. The awareness of a destination brand can be conscious or intuitive. The branding presents a total entity through the integration of resources, processes and marketing decisions (WTO, 2005: 45). Destination branding is a process that can be likened generically to destination image management. It requires the development of a destination image that is well positioned in relation to the needs and wants of the target market, image of competitor destinations and, of course, the deliverable attributes of the destination (Laws, 2002:63). In this study, destination branding is viewed as a strategic tool for repositioning a destination through use of an image modification process.

2.4.4 Alternate definitions of brands

Due to the complexity of branding, some scholars listed on Table 2.3 have viewed the concept of branding from different perspectives. They have viewed branding as providing the customers with choice and value; an asset; providing economic benefits; representing best quality; and delivering psychological benefits. These scholars consider brands to provide assurance and satisfaction. The term brand acts as a mnemonic for a vast and detailed amount of information. Ritchie & Ritchie (1998:103) have presented a more encompassing definition of destination branding. They define destination branding as "...a name, symbol, logo, trademark, or the graphics, which identify and differentiate the destination; furthermore it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the collection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience". Such brands are categorised into eight categories, namely the brand as a sign of ownership; differentiating device; functional device; symbolic device; risk reducer; shorthand device; legal device; and strategic device (De Chernatony & McDonald, 1992:41-49). It is nevertheless important that a brand should not only be

defined from the producer's perspectives, but also from the consumer's perspectives (De Chernatony, 2006:14).

The following table contains alternative definitions of brands.

Table 2.3 Alternative definitions of brands

Author	Definition	Key focus
Aaker (1991) Blackston (1992) Nagel (1979)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A set of brand assets and liabilities that are linked to a brand, its name and symbol and that add to or detract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value and choice provided to the customer. Brand is an asset to the organization. Economic benefits. Brands represent the best quality.
Prasad & Dev (2000) Levy (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A brand symbolizes the essence of the customers' perceptions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The term brand acts as a mnemonic for vast and detailed information. Brands result in customer satisfaction. Perceptions result in buying behaviour. Psychological benefits.
Inter-brand Group (1992) Ambler (1997) Keller (1993) Agres & Dubitsky(1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A brand is a simple thing. It is in effect a trademark, which, through careful management, skilful promotion and wide use, develops in the mind of consumers to embrace a particular and appealing set of values and attributes, both tangible and intangible ... it is also much more than merely a label. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brands enable people to identify/gain esteem with various types of social groups. Brands represent value and choice. Brands enable consumers to gain from their use. Brands represent both psychological and economic benefits.
Farquhar (1989) Bulmore (1991) Gardner & Levy (1992) Fanning (1999) Faircloth <i>et al</i> , (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The added value with which a brand endows a product, the brand being a name, symbol, design or mark that enhances the value of a product beyond its functional purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brands represent quality and innovation. Brands serve as a short cut to a vast range of detailed information. They represent more than functional benefits. They represent psychological benefits. Brands represent differentiation and best quality. Brands provide insurance and satisfaction.

Source: Modified from Roth, 2003

These definitions have been formulated from a product or service perspective. However, the authors listed on Table 2.3 above agree that a strong brand reflects and guides the development of core functional, emotional, economic and psychological values in respect of the product, with staff and within the organisation. These are the core elements used in destination branding. Although in practice a strong brand exists in the minds of consumers as a fusion of readily understood values and benefits, and is experienced by tourists in the fulfilment of their perceived needs, most branding statements are drawn up from the producers' point of view.

2.4.5 Benefits of destination branding

Brands have benefits beyond being merely a sign or a symbol. They bring awareness and demand a reaction by persuading customers to take note of the destination. This characteristic of a brand could result in customer loyalty as customers become strongly associated with the brand values, tangible assets and emotional benefits (Heath, 2007:169). The effect thereof could be an increase in commercial value as the brand becomes a catalyst for the intention to travel.

Branding can be used as a base for co-ordinating private sector efforts. If the public and the private sectors ascribe to the same brand values and identity (such that if trade partners are enthused about the destination, the brand would resonate with visitors), the brand becomes more efficient than the individual efforts could be (Morrison & Anderson, 2002:5; WTO, 2005:46). Branding can become a footprint through which all destination promotions and materials could be communicated to the target audience, thereby enhancing the image of the destination and becoming a seal for other industries and products (George, 2001:172; Bennett, 1995; Middleton & Clarke, 2001:46).

On the one hand a brand that is high on the functionality dimension should concentrate on continuous product research, maintaining product superiority in respect of relevant attributes, developing strong quality control systems and utilising consumer promotions that emphasise the functionality benefits. On the other hand, a brand that is high on the representational dimension

should concentrate on undertaking qualitative research into consumers' lifestyles and the communication of symbolic meaning to users and prospective users, while indicating the endorsement of relevant reference groups (Middleton & Clark, 2001:135).

While brands are regarded as being real phenomena, the reality is that they are entities that supervene products. Successful product branding is determined by arbitrary, constraining conditions, because the equity of a brand is determined by the degree to which that brand occupies a defensible niche within a product category (Blichfeldt, 2003:16). Brands are valuable, but they are also vulnerable.

2.4.6 Dimensions of branding

In the course of the past four decades all branding efforts have been focused on the creation of consumer awareness, the management of brand equity and ensuring the consistent communication of the brand's value proposition. Several branding models have emerged, namely mind-share branding, viral branding, emotional branding, cultural branding and nation branding. Each of these models is discussed briefly in the following paragraphs. This is with a view of tracing the origin and the root of the branding paradigm.

2.4.6.1 *Mind-share branding*

According to Holt (2004:14), the "mind-share branding dates back to the advent of mass media". Its main goals were to generate brand equity and to manage it through brand identity that is consistent and timeless. In terms of this model a brand is viewed as a company's treasured asset. According to Aaker (1996:274 – 275), strong brands command attention, attract customer loyalty and reduce consumers' search costs. As a result of the recognition of the name, customers are prepared to pay a premium for the brand. According to Aaker (1996), there are four categories of brand equity that should be managed in terms of the mind-share branding model, namely brand

name awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand associations. These categories are discussed under the heading of brand identity in chapter 3 of this study.

2.4.6.2 Emotional branding

Emotional branding aims at forging meaningful, strong and effective bonds between the consumer and the product. These bonds become part of the customers' life stories and memories and an important part of their social network. This model emphasises the act of selling the brand as being the building of a desirable relationship with the consumer. Emotional branding is consumer centric, story driven and creates new "touch points" and design features with which to convey emotions through the senses. It engages the consumer through emotions and forges a deep-rooted, lasting, intimate relationship that connects consumers to the brand. This model is categorised as a subset of experimental marketing; it uses sensory media to enable the consumer to encounter an experience that is more applicable in destination branding. According to Lindstrom in Fyall & Garrod (2005:41), consumers should be able to smash the brand and yet be able to recognise it from the pieces of the product, which means that emotional branding is also visually oriented and considers many dimensions in its attempts to position the brand in the consumer's consciousness. This model therefore concentrates on bringing about a paradigm shift in the marketplace and in consumers' tastes. The model is mostly applied in destination branding.

The striking difference between the mind-share branding and emotional branding is that emotional branding goes beyond the rendering of a service or the provision of the product. Emotional branding is not a new concept, but is an extension of mind-share branding that is articulated in new terminology (Holt, 2004:14). Several authors (Aaker, 1999; Keller; 2003; Kotler, *et al.* 2002; & Holt, 2004) continue to transfer the principles of emotional branding to mind-share branding in order to strengthen the mind-share (Holt, 2004). It is important to note that there are similarities between these two models in that both models emphasise image, creation of brand awareness, brand identity and added emotional value as key objectives. The emphasis placed on these matters has

led to a new edifice brand theory with a new formula, namely brand marketing = messaging (Grant, 2006:18-20).

2.4.6.3 Viral branding

Viral branding emphasizes word of mouth, stealth marketing, guerrilla marketing, buzz marketing and cool hunt as branding tactics (Holt, 2004:14). It has been suggested that viral marketing comprises a large category of activities and that it has spawned viral branding as one of its offspring. Viral branding emphasises the use of “influentials” who are then brand advocates and are used because of their considerable authority as trendsetters (Holt, 2004:29). Viral branding was given impetus by the emergence of the internet and the major shift from cynicism to mass marketing in the 1990s. It is based on infatuation; the belief that viral campaigns will spread the message fast and cheaply through the trusted channels and the friends of the target audience.

2.4.6.4 The cultural branding

The concept of cultural branding is concerned with the establishment of identity (Holt, 2004:14). People attach value to products as a means of self-expression. These products include objects such as clothing, décor, beauty products, leisure items and food. A brand in this context is considered to be a cluster of cultural ideas (Grant, 2006:35) that provides meaning in the form of lifestyle, image and identity. Holt (2004) argues that consumers often feel that their identity-building projects are intensely “personal quests”, but in truth similar quests are shared by many people in the population. The identity goods are viewed as a subset of symbolic goods and these goods enhance self-regard.

Brand managers should be aware of the relationship between brand and identity and, in marketing and communicating the brand; they should align the brand with the relevant identity myth that is credible and appealing. The level at which the brand encapsulates the identity concerned depends on how strongly people identify with the myth. In this case the brand's main benefit does not lie in

its value proposition, but rather in the fact that people value its symbolic value. A brand is then seen to be a strategic cultural idea that is identifiable with the intention that underlies it (Grant, 2006:33). Holt (2004) notes that "it is not necessary for the brand owner to support the strategic ideas". However, it is possible to build links between prosaic brands and exciting cultural ideas. In Zimbabwe this process requires patience and the gradual re-construction of the cultural constructs must be done in phases.

2.4.6.5 Nation branding

The growth of globalisation has brought about an increase in economic competition for customers and the need for nations to brand themselves by means of the dimensions of tourism, exports and direct foreign investment. The emphasis that is placed on these dimensions varies from country to country (Vicente, 2004a). The extent of the emphasis that is placed on each of them is dependent on brand essence and the associated competitive advantage that it can bring about. However, not all countries consider all three of these dimensions when branding themselves. Nevertheless, these matters should be complementary and should reinforce one another (Leonard, 2002). If their interdependence is ignored, it could result in confusing messages being sent out to the target audience (Heath, 2004).

Vicente (2004a: 14) has provided an exposition of the three dimensions of destination branding in the context of nation branding. The essence of his exposition appears in the following paragraphs.

a) Country branding

Destination branding precedes country branding, because country branding requires a more holistic and creative approach (Szondi, 2006:7) that creates a portrait or an overall picture of the desired future state of the country. The portrait or vision presented should be aligned with the vision of the country. The vision should also integrate all the elements that are necessary for the country to become competitive. A country brand is more abstract and less controllable than a destination brand (Szondi, 2006:7) and its aim is inward investment (Gould & Skinner, 2006:5). A

country brand need not be all encompassing, but can consist of different brands (sub-brands) such as a destination brand, an export brand, an investment brand and a political brand. It is also possible for some sub-brands to be stronger and more successful than others (Szondi, 2006:7).

b) *Tourism branding*

Tourism branding involves mass marketing, including media advertising by the government, industry associations and individual organisations. It is an abstract of the destination's identity, the way in which the destination wants to project itself to the market so that it can be recognised. In this case, clients consider a tourism brand to be a promise, anticipation and an expectation. The establishment of a tourism brand is therefore very similar to the purpose of positioning (Laws, 2002:1). This model is more related to this study because of its appeal tourism.

c) *Export promotion and investment*

Exports are the amounts and values of goods and services that are produced in one place and that are sold and shipped to another place (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993:261). The activities are primarily carried out by individual exporters with the government and industry associations acting as facilitators. The government and its export-promotion agencies face a difficult task in converting non-exporters to exporters and in getting current exporters to expand their activities (Kotler *et al.*, 1999:270). Therefore the export image of most countries tends to be less consistent than that of their tourism industry, which suggests that there is an opportunity for a greater role on the part of government and trade associations in the co-ordination and promotion of the country's export brands.

2.4.7 Public diplomacy as an element of destination branding

Public diplomacy is concerned with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policy (Hart, 2003:5). Vincente (2004a:32) observes that public diplomacy encompasses the dimension of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy. The government's use of

public opinion in other countries by interacting with private groups in those countries forms the basis for engendering interest in one's own country (Hart, 2003:6). The promotion of such interest includes the reporting of foreign affairs and the monitoring of its impact on public policy. Communication of these matters is primarily entrusted to diplomats and foreign correspondents and the processes for intercultural communications (Anholt, 2002). Of central importance to public diplomacy is the transactional flow of information and ideas (Hart, 2003).

According to Leonard (2002), public diplomacy attempts to achieve four goals, namely to increase people's familiarity with one's own country, thus countering unfavourable opinions and images; to increase appreciation of one's country by creating positive perceptions; to engage people with one's country and thereby strengthen ties of co-operation that encourage people to see the country as an attractive destination for tourism, study or trade; and to influence people to invest in the country and support the position of the country while enabling the politicians to involve their people as partners in this collaborative process.

Table 2.4 illustrates the levels of public diplomacy:

Table 2.4 Levels of public diplomacy

Diplomacy Level	Communication Methods
Primary: There is high level of control	Use of official statements, press releases, press conferences, paid advertising, internal broadcasting, speeches and websites.
Secondary: There is limited control	Use of media relations, marketing, public relations, access to government officials, international broadcasting.
Tertiary: There is very little control, if any	Use of pop culture, fashion, movies, music and cultural diplomacy.

Source: Adapted from Leonard, 2002

To achieve these broad goals, public diplomacy should involve communication on day-to-day issues and align traditional diplomacy with new trends. These efforts should be supported by a strategic communication plan, which involves the management of the overall perceptions of a country (Leonard, 2002). This strategy is intended to develop lasting relationships with key partners and individuals, which can be achieved through training, formation of alliances, hosting of conferences and even the provision of access to media channels (Leonard, 2002).

The aim of public diplomacy is to increase awareness about a country, provide support in respect of foreign policy decisions and provide training for ambassadors, spokespersons and diplomacy practitioners (Leonard, 2002). Such training is intended to enable them to provide information regarding one's own country while fostering long-term relationships with the international world. There is a very close relationship between destination branding and public diplomacy and these two spheres often overlap. In this study Public diplomacy is viewed as an element of destination branding.

2.5 SYNTHESISING THE NATURE OF BRANDING IN DESTINATION MARKETING

Arnold (1992:5) suggests that branding has to do with the way in which customers perceive and buy products. Typically marketers identify three levels of a brand. The first level is the essence of the brand, which is a single value that customers can easily understand. This feature represents the personality of the brand. The second level is that of the benefit that is delivered by the brand, such as status, emotion and image that should match the needs of the customer. The third level comprises the attributes that are directly noticeable and these attributes include tangible characteristics such as shape, colour, graphics and functions.

Based on these levels, Kotler & Gertner (2002) divide brands into two segments, namely brands that are a major tool to create product differentiation and to represent a promise of value. However, from the customer's point of view, a brand is a short cut to a decision on purchasing (Vicente,

2004b:3). Although differentiation between products is based on the characteristics of the products, consumers often do not take time to compare and contrast them. Ooi (2003:4) laments that, just like manufacturers' brands, nation brands evoke certain values, qualifications and emotional triggers in the consumer's mind about the likely benefits and values of any product that comes from the country concerned. A comprehensive country brand entails more than the communication of positive messages to the world. It entails the maintenance of the brand, delivery of the product and mobilising local and international support of which destination Zimbabwe has failed to achieve.

2.5.1. Destination branding as a marketing task

According to Laws (2002:203), branding is a means of increasing the efficiency of marketing and it is appropriate for destinations that seek to create destination awareness and destination image within the consumer market. Destination branding is not new, but its importance has grown exponentially since tourism became one of the world's largest industries. Revenue in respect of worldwide tourism revenue amounted to US\$ 462 billion in 2001 (WTO, 2005:20).

Fundamentally, destination branding is premised on the conviction that country names amount to brands. Therefore the name of a country conveys certain images, values and cultures and contributes to the evaluation of products and services (Laws, 2002:203). Because brands are a combination of graphics, colour, logos/signs and images, which represent certain qualities within the destination, they contribute towards increasing brand equity (Keller, 2003).

Brands are designed in such a way that they project to the prospective customers a particular message about the destination (Heath, 2007). They influence, stimulate and motivate the customer to choose the brand in the face of competing brands (Morgan *et al*, 2002). The branding of tourism destinations requires honesty, objectivity and, above all, an empathetic understanding of consumers' mind space (Heath, 2004). According to Cai (2000:730), "destination branding

represents a paradigm shift in marketing and an emotional relationship with the consumer is central to the paradigm shift". He emphasizes that branding is not merely a rational marketing activity; but also a political act that is based on issues such as local pride and dignity. Morgan *et al.* (2002: 6), echo the same view by saying that "branding should contribute towards drawing a distinct line between the past and the present". While branding embraces a host of activities, including infrastructural development, product enhancement and protection against environmental degradation, it shapes perceptions of the destination. Therefore destination branding should be used as an image-modification process where consumer's perceptions ultimately facilitate tourists purchasing decision. When a destination has a powerful brand, it translates into a better image of the country. The improved image could in turn lead to increased exports and inward foreign investment (Vicente, 2004b:4). According to Anholt (2005:1), "country brands stand for a number of qualities, including power, wealth and superiority and they could be used as tools for economic development". Countries have branded themselves with qualities such as music, philosophy, trust, wisdom, beauty and peace. These brands act as a form of identity and differentiation from competitors.

The branding of a destination enables the customer to readily identify it and distinguish it from its competitors. A country could be associated with particular benefits or activities that are offered by a destination. These benefits act as a cue for decision-making regarding purchases (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2003:2). In particular, it indicates to a prospective purchaser what level of quality he could expect. A range of destinations that are marketed under the same category would convey similar expectations of the quality of their products, although the products cannot be seen or sampled in advance.

2.5.2 Tools for destination branding

Destination marketing organisations (DMOs) have developed a variety of tools to promote their destinations. These tools include logos, taglines, slogans, themes, country websites and many

other descriptive symbols. These tools are used in the form of visual symbols that are diverse, humorous and consistent. They exhibit design style, tone of voice and even events and deeds (Fabricius, 2006b: 4). The primary purpose of these tools is to advertise in the press, travel magazines and media.

Visual images are transmitted through pictures to maintain and build awareness. The most successful destinations are those that have brand identities that are based on enduring values and features that are unique and enduring (Howie, 2003). Figure 2.5 presents examples of the brands and logos that are used by leading tourism destinations such as Australia, South Africa, Chile, Britain, and Maldives.

Figure 2.5 An array of brands of leading destinations



Source: Morrison & Anderson, 2002: 3 – 6; Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006a:6

A number of countries have designed umbrella logos or symbols to position themselves as tourist destinations. They go to great lengths to influence tourist perceptions. In so doing, they save shoppers time, effort and concern about the product they ought to choose in the purchase

cue.(Anholt, 2005:3). South Africa's umbrella logo that appears below is a good example of a country that has branded and positioned itself as being “alive with possibility” as shown below.

Figure 2.6 South Africa's Umbrella logo



Source: Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006

Graphic variations can be developed on this logo for the specific branding activities of the country. Most countries have a specific tourism logo, but South Africa is an exception in this regard. South Africa has, however, demonstrated its determination in respect of positioning itself in terms of a particular theme, as illustrated by its array of logos that appear below.

Figure 2.7 South Africa's array of Logos



Source: IMC, 2003

A logo, as well as its features that differentiate the destination, are part of the branding process. In the South African case all the marketing tools and activities are intended to support the brand.

Together they should match the public's perception of the logo and deliver a coherent message about the destination (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997: 60). The branding process in this case uses a logo in order to influence the perceptions or images that the logo creates in the minds of people (Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006: 9). It therefore has an impact on the manner in which people interpret their experiences and ultimately evokes changes in their behaviour. Some destinations use taglines such as the following: "Spain: Everything under the sun"; Costa Rica: "No artificial ingredients"; Hong Kong: "Asia's world city"; Peru: "Land of Incas"; India: "Eternally yours"; Thailand: "Amazing Thailand", while Malaysia positions itself as: "Truly Asia" and South Africa as "It's possible" (Fabricius, 2006b: 3). Strap-lines that are used for tourism purposes are meant to be catchy, arouse interest and convey the essence of the country's brand (Morgan *et al.*, 2002). South Africa's strategic positioning contributed to it being chosen to host the 2010 Soccer World Cup tournament and it will thereby become the first African country to organise and host such an event.

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed destination branding as a key competitive strategy in destination marketing. With a view to achieving the maximum benefits from branding, the economic impacts of destination branding and the significant role of destination marketing were also discussed in this chapter. The discussion was followed by an analysis of the origins and key features of branding as well as the characteristics, definitions and key benefits of branding. Chapter 2 also reviewed branding from different perspectives, including public diplomacy and the destination branding tools. The next chapter focuses on the process of destination branding and competitive positioning.