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CHAPTER 6

THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PROCESS REGARDING BRANDING AND POSITIONING OF ZIMBABWE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

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CHAPTER 6

THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PROCESS REGARDING BRANDING AND POSITIONING OF ZIMBABWE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters 2 and 3 presented an overview of the literature on branding within the context of destination marketing, whereas chapter 4 discussed the approaches to destination branding that have been applied in several countries. The Zimbabwean tourism situation is contextualised in chapter 5. The aim of the literature review in tourism was to define the term branding and establish its relevance to destination marketing as well as to discuss international best practices in branding and position.

In this chapter, the literature reviewed is used as the basis for the development of the instruments for an empirical investigation. The aim of the empirical investigation was to assess stakeholders' attitudes, expectations and perceptions regarding the branding and positioning of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. The research questions for the study were articulated as follows:

- To what extent can branding be used as a strategic tool to reposition a tourism destination; and

- What lessons can be learnt from the Zimbabwean situation regarding the branding and positioning of a destination?

In order to answer these broad questions, the following objectives were formulated for the empirical investigation:

- To develop a research strategy for conducting the empirical study;
- to identify the research tools to be used in the study;
- to discuss the tools used to collect data regarding the stakeholders' attitudes, expectations and experiences regarding branding and positioning of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination;
- to explain the structure and layout of the questionnaire and its appropriateness as a data gathering tool;
- to discuss the data collection, processing and analysis procedures; and
- to outline and measure the level of validity and reliability of the survey instruments.

Several key components of the empirical investigation are covered in this chapter: The section on the research approach provides an outline of the research process by explaining the research approach that was followed and outlines how the empirical investigation was conducted. The research approach and design are discussed, with particular reference to the outline and layout of the questionnaire that was used; testing of the survey instruments; validity and reliability of the instruments; population size and sample frame; and the method used in distributing the questionnaire.

6.2 THE RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

A research design involves the selection and use of a variety of techniques and methods that are scientifically verifiable. According to Churchill & Lacobucci (2002:90),

''*a research design attempts to reduce the influence of the researcher to an absolute minimum, while establishing the highest possible degree of objectivity and quantifiability of phenomena''.*

It is a systematic enquiry that permits the researcher to report the findings scientifically. A research design is a specification of the methods and procedures to be used in acquiring the information that is required. Malhotra & Birks (2003:58) expand on this view by explaining that ''a research design situates the researcher in the empirical world and links the research questions to the investigation''. It is a plan of action that includes four main ideas, namely strategy; conceptual framework; the question regarding who or what is to be studied; and the tools and procedures to be used in the empirical study.

A distinction is usually made between two types of research, namely pure research and applied research (Gummarson & Norberg, 2002). Pure research is primarily concerned with contributing to a particular area of intellectual enquiry. Applied research is concerned with finding a solution to a specific problem that has direct practical implications for industry, commerce or other spheres of life, while its potential contribution to academic enquiry is of a secondary nature. Based on the statement of the problem being investigation in this project, the present study can be described as being applied research. It is intended to contribute positively and meaningfully to the tourism industry and in particular to the tourism marketing field by attempting to develop a framework for destination branding and positioning.

6.2.1 Developing a research strategy

A research strategy is a preliminary plan for conducting research (Tustin *et al*, 2005:82). Its format depends on the nature of the study. At this stage of this study, the research objectives that were formulated in chapter 1 are translated into specific requirements by specifying the sources from which the data will be obtained. Witt and Moutinho (1994:301) consider ''a research strategy to be a blueprint or map that is used to obtain and collect the data that is required to solve a particular problem''. A research strategy is considered to be an overall operational pattern that highlights how the research process is to be undertaken (Churchill & Lacobucci, 2002:90). In the case of this project, a descriptive research design was selected to identify and explore the ways in which branding could be used as a tool for repositioning a destination.

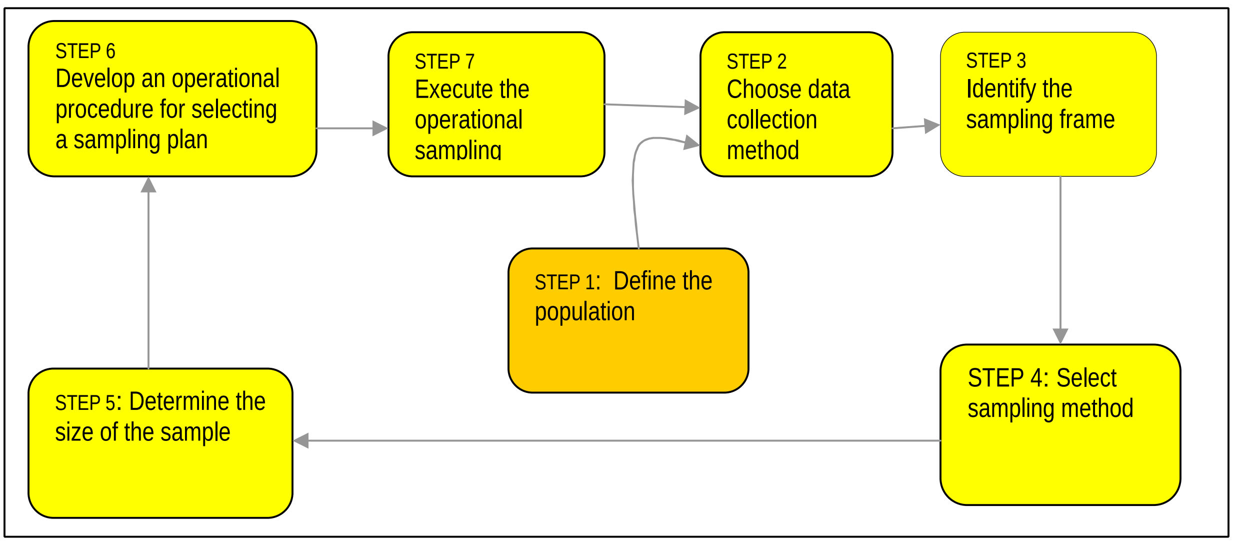
6.2.2 The sampling design

According to Churchill & Lacobucci (2002:448), ''a sample is an individual person or a social group of the chosen population or individual units of analysis that form the basis for sampling''. A sample refers to all the elements from which the information is gathered in order to solve a particular research problem. When conducting a research investigation, it is important for the researcher to select respondents who are a true representation of the population (McDaniel & Gates, 2001:328). Sampling is a process of selecting a small portion of the study population for data collection and analysis in order to draw conclusions for the study (Tustin *et al*, 2005:337). However, because the population of the survey was known, it was possible to divide it into smaller samples or strata. In the case of the current project, the study population was divided into manageable groups within the tourism industry.

6.2.3 Developing a sampling plan

The failure to develop a thorough operational plan could hamper the success of the entire sampling process. A sampling plan was drawn up in accordance with the seven steps that are outlined by Tustin *et al*, (2005). These steps appear in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1 The sampling plan



Source: Tustin *et al*, 2005:339

The research process applied in this investigation followed the procedure proposed by Tustin, *et al.,* (2005) and that appears in the diagram above.

These steps are common to all research processes. They are discussed individually in this in the following subheadings:

6.2.4 Selecting a sampling method

The selection of a sampling method is dependent on the objectives of the study, time, financial resources and research problem under review. However, other factors, such as non-responses and the value of the information provided by the persons included in the sample, should also be considered (McDaniel & Gates, 2004:278; Malhotra & Birks, 2003:206; Tustin *et al*, 2005:342- 343). The type of sample that is used, determines what the respondents are required to do. This step is of greater importance in the process of selecting a probability sample than in selecting a non-probability sample (McDaniel & Gates, 2004:278). In this study a stratified random sampling was used for selecting a sample for questionnaire distribution.

The sampling methods can be grouped into two broad categories, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling refers to samples in which all the subsets of the population have a known non-zero chance of being selected, while non-probability sampling is used when certain subsets of the population have little or no chance of being selected for the sample (Tounsend & Cairns, 2002; Churchill & Lacobucci, 2002:453).

The various methods of probability and non-probability sampling are shown in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Methods of probability and non-probability sampling

PROBABILITY SAMPLING	NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING
Simple random sampling	Convenience sampling
Systematic random sampling	Judgemental sampling
Stratified, random, proportionate, disproportionate sampling	Quota sampling
Cluster /Area sampling	Snowball/Internet sampling

Source: Adapted from McDaniel & Gates, 2004:277

A non-probability sampling method can yield good estimates of the population's characteristics (Malhotra, 2004). It involves the use of personal judgement. A judgemental sample is defined as an approach in which the researcher attempts to draw a representative sample of the population by using a judgemental procedure (Churchill, & Locobucci, 2002:454). This type of sampling was used in this study to select the in depth interview participants after a careful consideration of its limitations such as high level of bias.

6.2.5 The population sample frame

Whilst the first stage in sampling is to identify the relevant population which includes all the relevant units, the most important consideration is to select a sample frame that is representative of the target population (Malhotra & Birks 2003:767). The sample frame refers to the number of respondents who are included in the investigation. The size of the sample frame usually affects the quality and the generalisation of the results. If the sample is too small, then the data that is obtained may not be representative. A total sample of 995 participants was deemed adequate considering the data collection methods used. To determine the sample size, the following sample size formula was used:

$$S = \frac{x^2(np)(1-p)}{d^2(n-1)+x^2p(1-p)}$$

Where s = the required sample size

n = the given population size

p = the population proportion assumed to be 0,5

d = the degree of accuracy which is 1,96

x^2 = the table value of chi square which is 3,841

$$S = \frac{3,841 \ x\ 3980 \ x\ 0,5\ x\ 0,5}{1,96^2(3979) + 3,841 \ x\ 0,5\ x\ 0,5}$$

= 0,250008068

Therefore s x n = 995

For the purposes of this study, a directory of all the registered national and international tourism and hospitality operators in Zimbabwe was used. The register contains the name, physical address, e-mail address and contact details of each of the registered tourism operators in Zimbabwe. A sample frame was drawn from the population that the researcher intended to investigate, as shown in table 6.2 below. While the researcher does not claim to have used a representative sample frame, the sample comprised 990 people in the tourism industry, five of whom were key informants who participated in in-depth interviews. The key informants were made up of Mr N. Chikudza (Quality Assurance Manager at ZTA), Mr E. Nyakunu (Former CEO at ZCT), Mr A. Musonza (Deputy General Manager at Elephant Hills Hotel), Mr J. Manjengwa (Marketing and Communications Manager at ZTA) and Mrs L.Banda (Training Manager at Zimbabwe Sun Hotels). The sample distribution is shown on the following table below.

Table 6.2 The sample distribution of tourism businesses

TYPE OF BUSINESS	Population	Sample
Boats cruises, camping and caravans	88	22
Conference organisers	8	2
Camps and camping facilities	120	30
Hotel, lodges & guest houses	744	186
Incentive travel organisers and motor vehicle hire	480	120
Photographic and non-consumptive safaris and hunting operators	680	170
Restaurants	320	80
Tour operators	340	85
External operators	1000	250
Airlines and aircraft	120	30
National Tourist Offices and Tourism representative bodies	80	20
Total	3980	995

The sample size was influenced by the data collection methods used. Since interviewing is a very expensive method of gathering data, the researcher complemented this method with the use of 990 questionnaires that were distributed by means of e-mails to the tourism business operators. The respondents completed and returned a total of 152 questionnaires, which represents a response rate of 15%. This rate was deemed acceptable, given the disadvantages associated with the data-collection method used (Jonker, 2004) for example, poor response rate.

6.2.6 Data collection methods

Although both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used in the investigation to obtain the elusive information and comprehend the complex problem, it was relatively easy to manage and control the information in a systematic way without including ambiguous, cause and effect relationships between single variables. More specifically, because the research was conducted by means of a case-study approach (Churchill & Lacobucci, 2002: 105), it was possible to use in-depth interviews and questionnaires to maximize the richness of the discussions and data collection. Whilst the in-depth qualitative interview method is interactive, and often used in a case-study research, questionnaires provide data that is normally beyond the reach of the researcher.

A measuring instrument can be constructed on the basis of the research objectives that are formulated (McDaniel & Gates, 2001). The usefulness of a measuring instrument is determined by the analysis and interpretation to which it will be subjected. The instruments used in the present investigation were primarily questionnaires and interview guide. They were selected on the grounds that they are convenient and cost effective. The interview guide was used during a face to face communication and is defined as a two-way conversation that is initiated by an interviewer to obtain information from a participant. If a face to face interview is conducted successfully, it is an excellent technique for data gathering. The measuring tools and techniques were adopted from the branding studies that were undertaken by Gearing *et al* (1974).

6.2.6.1 Research survey

A survey is a form of data collection in which the interviewer interacts with the respondents to obtain facts, opinions and attitudes (McDaniel & Gates, 2000:30). It can be conducted by a researcher when he or she visits a respondent's office, arranges for a personal interview, telephones a respondent, mails a questionnaire or even uses e-mails.

In order to reach the diverse population involved in the present study, the researcher had to consider several factors, including time, financial resources and the size of the population. The researcher decided to use the e-mails and personal interviews with key informants.

Personal interviews involved communication with each respondent by telephone to arrange an appointment. Questionnaires were also distributed to the respondents by e-mail. The main reason for the selection of these methods was to limit travelling costs (McDaniel & Gates, 2001:185). Since a combination of personal and e-mail surveys were used, it was important to design a questionnaire to suit each of the two types of surveys (see appendix 1).

6.2.6.2 In-depth interview guide

An in-depth interview is less structured, but more intense and probing, in comparison with other methods of data gathering, such as questionnaires. The intention with an in-depth interview is to collect rich, detailed data while giving individual attention to the interviewee. Berg (1998:61) proposes that:

''*the in-depth interview could assist a researcher to engage in dialogue with the real person being interviewed and to relate to the interviewee as a human being and not merely as a study subject''*.

As is the case with the use of a questionnaire, the interviewer uses a guide that contains both structured and unstructured questions (Tustin *et al*, 2005:391). In an interview, questions may be asked in any manner, without following a prescribed format. In addition, the interviewer may verify the information provided, cross-examine the interviewee and probe for information that lies beyond the question posed (Churchill & Lacobucci, 2002:275).

The use of interviews in the present study permitted the interviewer an opportunity to probe and cross-examine the interviewees concerning the marketing strategies that the destination marketing organization has employed under turbulent and inflationary conditions. The interviewer also had the opportunity to control the discussion and thereby concentrate on the major areas under review (Malhotra & Birks, 2003:61). The use of key informants ensured that very rich and in-depth information was obtained, because the researcher was in a position to repeat some questions, rephrase them and also to clarify some issues that were raised by the interviewees. The interview was unstructured, which permitted the interviewees to articulate arguments, present bare facts concerning the destination branding strategies that have been used in Zimbabwe as well as their impact on destination marketing.

6.2.6.3 The questionnaire

According to Malhotra & Birks (2003:326*):*

''a questionnaire simply comprises a list of questions that are similar and usually presented to respondents in the same way or order to ensure that the same information is collected from every member of the sample''.

A questionnaire is a common instrument for observing data that is beyond the physical reach of the researcher. For the purposes of the present study, questionnaires were compiled in the form of open and closed questions. The questions were structured in such a manner that they elicited certain responses from the respondents. This approach is supported by Churchill & Lacobucci (2002) who state that a questionnaire consists of questions that are carefully designed to obtain responses that could help in achieving the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was selected as an instrument for the empirical study, because it could assist the researcher to convert into information the data that is collected from the respondents. The responses were summarised in order to gain information on the respondents' knowledge of the subject, their perceptions and expectations. The participants were enabled to respond freely and to give neutral answers when they preferred to do so.

Questionnaires are often used to gather data because they are easy to quantify and analyse. However questionnaires should not be too long or complicated and they should make it easy for the respondents to give answers that reflect their true opinions (Maholtra & Birks, 2003).

According to McDaniel & Gates (2001:295), open-ended questions require respondents to reply in their own words, while closed questions guide the respondents to choose between two or more responses that are provided. Some of the close-ended questions include non-comparative scales (Cant, Gerber & Kotze, 2003:112). These questions list a series of attributes of an object that are assigned numerical values that range from favourable to unfavourable and from agree to disagree (McDaniel & Gates, 2001). All these factors were considered in the selection, design and distribution of the questionnaire that was used in the present study. However the researcher felt that the questionnaire was rather too long considering the quality of responses received. The following measurement scales were used to measure perceptions, attitudes, preferences and other characteristics (Malhotra, 2004:236-237).

- Ordinal scales: These are numbers that are assigned to indicate the relative positions of objects, but not the magnitude of the differences between them (preference ranking);
- interval scales: These are the differences between objects that can be compared. A zero point is arbitrary (i.e. attitudes); and
- ratio scales: The zero point is fixed and the ratio of the scale values can be compared (i.e. costs).

When the questionnaire was developed, great care was taken to ensure that the wording of the questionnaire was clear, simple and easy to comprehend without compromising the objectives of the study. An essential step that was taken before the collection of the data was pilot testing. This step was intended to increase the effectiveness of the instruments and provide an opportunity to make modifications and corrections. The aim of this step was to increase the reliability and validity of the study. The pilot test was conducted in May 2007. It was undertaken in order to validate the study instruments. A total of 20 people were used in the pilot test. Out of this group, ten people were from the industry (experts) these people resembled the sample population as closely as possible. Another group was made up of ten academics who also assisted with the pilot test and the review of the instruments. The following significant matters were identified and agreed upon:

- The participants noted the time taken to complete the questionnaire, while simultaneously considering the phrasing of the questions. All these factors were noted and discussed, thereafter corrections and modifications were made;
- the respondents also considered the structure of the questionnaire. They noted its length, the quality of questions asked and whether there were omissions. They therefore reviewed whether the questions did indeed ask what they were supposed to ask; and
- the respondents furthermore noted the appropriateness and relevance of the questions. They also sought to determine the validity of the questionnaire as a measuring instrument.

Some mistakes and omissions were identified during the pilot phase. Based on the feedback received from the pilot test, changes were effected.

6.2.6.4 The layout of the questionnaire

In the development of the questionnaire, precise instructions and guidelines were given in respect of each question (see appendix 1). The layout of the questionnaire was as follows:

Section 1: Survey of destination branding with particular reference to Zimbabwe

Section 1 requires the respondents to provide information regarding their awareness of destination branding as a marketing concept. It also presents several definitions and requests the respondents to select the one definition that they consider to be the best description of destination branding. Question 1.1 requests respondents to select one destination that is the best match of their comprehension of what destination branding is (Li, 2003). Question 1.2 requests respondents to justify their answer to question 1.1. Question 1.3 requests respondents to select a definition of destination branding, while question 1.4 requests them to rate their comprehension of destination branding on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 points.

Section 2: Zimbabwe as a tourist destination

Section 2 of the questionnaire comprises questions regarding the respondents' awareness of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. Question 2.1 is an open question that requests the respondents to express their views on Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. Question 2.2 requests respondents to choose the most appropriate components of a tourist destination from a visitor's perspective. Question 2.3 is a closed question that requests respondents to select the key features that differentiate Zimbabwe as a tourist destination from its competitors. Questions 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 are closed questions that request respondents to choose the most appropriate response in respect of negative comments which were made concerning Zimbabwe as a destination.

Section 3: Stakeholder attitudes towards Zimbabwe's branding and competitive positioning

Section 3 of the questionnaire is concerned with an investigation into stakeholders' attitudes towards Zimbabwe's branding efforts and its competitive position in the global marketplace. Question 3.1 requests the respondents to rate the level of application of destination branding in Zimbabwe. In questions 3.2, respondents are asked to choose the key elements that are emphasised in the Zimbabwean brand, while questions 3.3 and 3.4 concern the identification of the brand's selling points and respondents' rating of these selling points. Question 3.5 is a closed question concerning the respondents' knowledge about Zimbabwe's positioning strategy relative to competing destinations. In question 3.6, Respondents were asked to briefly describe the positioning strategy. Question 3.7 requests the respondents to state their opinion regarding the most commonly used methods to communicate branding and positioning in Zimbabwe and rate the tools on a five-point scale. Question 3.8 is concerned about comparing three popular destinations in Southern Africa and bench mark them against Zimbabwe.

Section 4: Challenges and considerations in respect of Zimbabwe's future branding and positioning

Section 4 of the questionnaire is concerned with the challenges and envisaged constraints in respect of Zimbabwe's future branding and positioning efforts. Question 4.1 is an open question that requires the respondents' to express their expectations regarding the future branding of Zimbabwe. Questions 4.2 and 4.3 are closed questions that request the respondents to choose the most appropriate strategy that could be used to reposition Zimbabwe as a tourism destination. Question 4.5 requires the respondents to rate statements on their appropriateness regarding the future branding of Zimbabwe. Question 4.6 is a closed question that requires the respondents to express an opinion on the review of the status of the Zimbabwean brand. Questions 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9 are open questions that require the respondents to make suggestions and recommendations regarding the future branding of Zimbabwe.

Section 5: General information.

Section 5 of the questionnaire requires respondents to provide general details that are required in respect of the administration of the questionnaire, such as the type of organisation that they represent, their relationship with the destination and the length of time for which their organisation has been involved with the destination. Questions 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 are questions of a demographic nature. Questions 5.4 and 5.5 enquire about the type of business that the respondents represent and the level of business that is generated. Question 5.6 enquires about the period that the business has been in operation.

6.3 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The data collection procedure comprised the sampling process that is discussed in a preceding section as well as the controlling of the process to ensure that it followed the prescribed procedures. This can be compared to field work. At this stage the researcher collected the data by distributing the questionnaires by means of e-mails and by conducting in-depth interviews with the key informants. The survey methodology and the data-gathering instruments were applied at this stage. Appointments by telephone with key informants were made and interviews lasting for approximately 20 minutes were conducted with each of the five respondents.

The errors that could occur at this stage are referred to as non-sampling errors. Such errors may occur due to the following reasons that are outlined by Cant *et al*, (2003:50): selecting the wrong sample elements to interview; securing subjects who subsequently refuse to participate or are not at the office when the interviewer arrives or phones; interviewing subjects who intentionally provide incorrect information and, finally, hiring interviewers who cheat and fill out fictitious survey questionnaires. In order to minimise this type of error, 20% of the e-mailed surveys were back-checked by the researcher, which involved telephoning the respondents after the receipt of the questionnaires in order to verify one or two questions. The researcher took great care to avoid the occurrence of such errors. The researcher downloaded the completed questionnaires from the internet, "edited" and/ or "checked them for errors. Thereafter the questionnaires were analysed.

6.4 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Data preparation is the process of extracting data from questionnaires so that it can be read and manipulated by the software that is used. The SSPS 11.0 programme was used to perform the analyses after the questionnaires had been edited and validated. Because the Likert scale had been used in the elicitation of responses, it was possible to perform statistical analyses on the responses received (Malhotra, 2004:237). The data were edited to check for omissions and consistency of responses in order to ensure the integrity of the data and wholesomeness of the questionnaire. A confirmatory analysis was conducted to test and support the convergent and discriminate validity of the measuring scales (Reisinger *et al*, 2006). The quantitative data analysis comprised the use of frequencies and cross-tabulations. Due to the sample size, most of the cross-tabulations were quantitative in nature. A chi-square test was used to quantify cross–tabulations. No significant differences were noted. The chi-square test is an approximation, but it can nevertheless provide some useful information on the relationship between categorical variables (Churchill & Lacobucci, 2002:620).

In analysing the data, the researcher had the choice of using descriptive statistics or inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics tend to describe the characteristics of the sample. Inferential statistics permitted the researcher to make inferences about the true differences in the population on the basis of the data of the sample. In most instances, statistical inferences make it possible for numbers to be different in a mathematical sense, but not to be significantly different in a statistical sense (McDaniel & Gates, 2001: 413). Statistical differences are therefore defined by a selected level of significance. The smaller the chosen level of significance, the smaller the degree of risk that the researcher will be willing to accept in respect of the findings. A 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance is used by most researchers when performing statistical tests. In this study, the 0.05 level of significance was considered to be adequate (see appendix 3).

A chosen level of significance should always be compared with a P-value statistic. This statistic indicates the probability that the test statistic of the possible outcome of the research question is equal to the observed value of the test statistic or is more extreme in the direction suggested by the alternative outcome (Tustin *et al*, 2005:597). Therefore if the P-value were low, the evidence against the stated statistical findings would be stronger (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2002:146). When testing for statistical significance, the appropriate test should be used, because not all tests are equally relevant. In this study, a chi-square test was chosen and used as the most appropriate test.

6.4.1 The chi-square

According to McDaniel & Gates (2001: 413)

''when a relatively large number of observations of a stochastic variable are represented in a one-way contingency table, a chi-square is used to decide whether the frequency distribution can be reconciled with the assumed theoretical distribution''.

The chi-square(X^2) statistical test, tests for statistical differences by examining patterns of responses within and between categorical random variables, which is outlined as follows by Maholtra (2004)

- Tests for independence of association between two categorical variables;
- tests for the quality of proportions between two or more populations; and
- goodness of fit test.

In this study, the chi-square test was used to test for the homogeneity of proportions (goodness of fit). A large value of x^2 indicates that there is a large difference between the observed and the expected frequencies. Usually, the calculated value is compared to a value read from the chi-square table. If the calculated value is larger than the value read from the table, the null hypothesis should be rejected. The calculated chi-square value was 243.368. It is very large and indicates that there is a large discrepancy between the observed and the expected frequencies. This discrepancy indicates that the respondents are not uniformly distributed across the categories. This conclusion was supported by a P-value of 0.000. This P-value indicates the likelihood of obtaining a chi-square value that is as big as or more extreme than 243.368 when the null hypothesis (H_1) can be accepted as being valid. The P-value (0.000) was very small and indicated that it was not possible to obtain such a large value if the H_o can be accepted as being valid.

6.4.2 Chi-square test for independence

A chi-square test for independence of variable association between two categorical variables was also used. The calculated value of the Pearson chi-square test was 9.718. The P-value of 0.783 indicates that this value is not significant.

6.4.3 Correlation analysis

McDaniel & Gates (2001:448) state that ‘’correlation analysis is an analysis of the degree to which changes in one variable are associated with the changes in another variable’’. This analysis determines whether a linear relationship exists between variables. It is mostly measured by the use of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (McDaniel & Gates, 2001). There are two or more scales that are used to measure this on an interval or ratio scale. The descriptive measure known as co-efficient of correlation is a measure of the degree of association between two variables and indicates the estimated extent to which changes in one variable are associated with changes in another variable on a range of +1,00 to -1,00 (Christopher, 2001). A correlation of +1, 00 indicates a perfectly positive relationship, whereas a correlation of 0, 00 indicates that there is no relationship and a correlation of -1, 00 indicates a perfectly negative relationship (Christopher, 2001). In the event that there is a positive correlation between two variables, a higher score on one variable tends to indicate a higher score on the other. If the correlation is negative, a higher score on one variable tends to indicate a lower score on the other variable. In this study, a very low Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.068 was determined. The results are in line with the conclusion that was made on the chi-square test of independence.

As codes were used to classify the information obtained in the survey, the responses were given numerical values. The Spearman rank order correlation coefficient (V) was used to assess the degree of association between variables. Cramer's (V) was selected, because it is appropriate for a contingency table in which variables are interdependent. Cramer's (V) has an advantage over other measures of association, because other co-efficiencies are only applicable in 2 x 2 tables and in some cases the upper limit of the coefficient was above 0.05, which warrants further investigation.

6.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Reliability and validity are the hallmarks of good measurement and the key to assessing the veracity of research findings. In order for the results to be trustworthy, it is important for the data to be reliable and for the measuring instruments to be valid. Validity and reliability are the most common terms used in research and are often encountered when dealing with research methodology.

6.5.1 Validity of the instruments

Validity is the extent to which the measurement produced by a particular instrument is free from both systematic and random error (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2002:33). In this study, validity was achieved by selecting the right sample elements for the interviews and by securing subjects who subsequently participated in the survey. The subjects, who were interviewed, supplied the correct information and the researcher did not hire any interviewers who might have cheated by filling out fictitious survey questionnaires.

Validity attempts to determine whether that which the researcher attempted to measure was actually measured (Churchill & Lacobucci, 2002:407). This determination was achieved by undertaking a pre-test and a post-test of the survey instruments. Validity is furthermore concerned with the soundness of the question. It seeks to establish whether the instrument that was used, does indeed measure what it is intended to measure. In determining validity in this study the following questions were asked:

- Did the instrument measure what it intended to measure?
- How appropriate, accurate and effective was the instrument in measuring what it was intended to measure?
- To what extent did the instrument comply with the criteria listed below:

a. Content Validity

Content validity is concerned with the extent to which the measurement scale appears to measure the characteristics that it is supposed to measure. Agreement between expert and non-expert judgments regarding the suitability of the measure was used to establish content validity. Two steps that were undertaken in establishing content validity were to specify the content of the discussion and to develop indicators in respect of all the areas of the content in the description. Professionals in both the industry and the academic field were used to test the content validity of the instruments that were used.

b. Criterion Validity

This type of validity examines whether the measure performs as expected in relation to other variables that were selected as being meaningful criteria. An examination of the relationship between the measure and the criterion was used to establish criterion validity. An indicator was compared with another measure of the same construct in which the researcher had confidence. This examination was further differentiated into concurrent-criterion validity and predictive validity.

c. Construct validity

This measures the extent to which the measure behaves in a theoretically sound manner. Construct validity is often determined by means of an investigation into the relationships between the measure concerned and measures of other concepts or characteristics within a theoretical framework. In this study, validity was established through pilot testing of the measuring instrument. Two tactics were employed to test construct validity. One was to use multi-sources of evidence to establish a chain of evidence and another was to have key informants review the draft report and interviews thereafter questionnaires were used as sources of evidence.

The documentation of responses was only considered to be complementary to the interviews and data collection was included in the analysis. In this study, content validity, criterion validity and construct validity were determined. In order to increase all three forms of validity, the research instruments were pre-tested on a group of 20 people, including academics and industry practitioners within the tourism industry. These people were chosen after consultations had been held with senior managers and academics in the tourism industry during the pilot survey that is discussed in a preceding section.

d. Internal validity

Internal validity is mainly concerned with the matching of patterns in order to build explanations for a phenomenon. It is concerned with a time-series analysis that is based on the conclusions of the study, which are based on the actual results obtained from the study. It is not based on an opinion that has been influenced by research bias.

e. External validity.

In order to increase external validity, Yin (1993) emphasises the importance of using replication logic in multiple-case studies. He states that ''a theory should be tested by means of the replication of the findings in similar surroundings in which the theory has specified that the same results should occur''. Once such replication has been done, the findings can be generalised to a greater number of surroundings. In this study, external validity was mainly based on an intensive literature review (Chapters, 2, 3, 4 & 5) that was undertaken in order to develop a branding and positioning framework.

6.5.2 Reliability of the instruments

Malhotra (2004:267) states that ''reliability is the extent to which the measure produces consistent results when repeated measurements are made''. Reliability in this study should indicate whether the questionnaire measured what it was intended to measure and whether it would yield the same results if it were repeated on a population with similar characteristics. According to McDaniel & Gates, (2001:255) there are four tests for reliability, namely test-retest, equivalent form, internal consistency and test or coefficient alpha reliability. Reliability is concerned with how well and how consistently an instrument fulfils its purpose. In this case, reliability was enhanced through a pre-test.

Reliability is also concerned with the tactics that are employed in order to increase the reliability of the research project. Yin (1993) suggests that ''a case study approach should be used to develop case study databases''. The purpose of such a database is to ensure that the researchers can repeat the same study with the use of similar procedures and then arrive at the same findings and conclusions. The procedures were carefully explained in the execution of the study. An interview guide, which answers the research questions, was designed. However, it is nevertheless possible for personal bias to manifest itself when personal interviews are conducted.

a. Test-retest reliability

This measure determines whether the instrument measures the same phenomenon when it is used for a second time under relatively similar conditions. A correlation between the results of the first test and the second test is then determined. Test-retest reliability was established in the study.

b. Equivalent form reliability

In determining this form of reliability, two instruments that are as similar as possible are used to measure the same object during the same period. In this study equivalent form reliability was achieved through the use of the questionnaire and the interview guide.

c. Internal consistency

A test for internal consistency reliability compares different samples of items that were used to measure a phenomenon during the same period. The reliability can be determined by means of a split-half reliability test or a coefficient alpha. In this study, all the above procedures were followed by the researcher in the form of an intensive literature study (see chapters 2, 3, 4 & 5) and a pilot survey that was conducted among senior managers and academics in the tourism industry. The pilot study was meant to ensure test-retest reliability, equivalent form reliability and internal consistency reliability and these forms of reliability were confirmed in the study.

6. 6 SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed the research design, procedures and tools used in the study. A research plan and the sample population were discussed and this was justified. This discussion was then followed by an exposition of the research methods employed in the study as well as the identification of the research instruments. These instruments were further differentiated into two categories, namely in-depth interview guide and the questionnaire. The advantages and limitations of using each instrument were discussed. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the survey instruments, a pilot study was undertaken. The undertaking of the full investigation was justified and contextualised. The population size and procedures were analysed and the sample frame and sample size were identified. The data gathering and processing procedures were also discussed. This discussion was followed by a detailed analysis of the tests that were applied in the study.

The next chapter focuses on the results of the empirical research and discusses the challenges and considerations in respect of Zimbabwe's future branding and positioning.

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CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY REGARDING ZIMBABWE'S BRANDING AND POSITIONING

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CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY REGARDING ZIMBABWE'S BRANDING AND POSITIONING

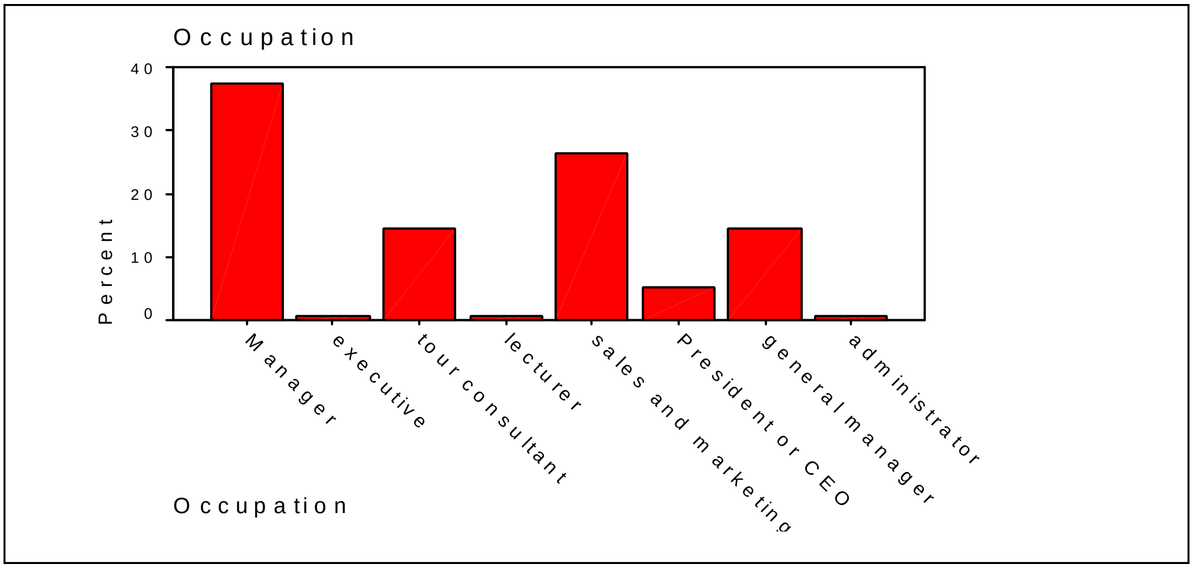
7.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings that emanate from the empirical study supported by the theoretical framework. The chapter is divided into five sections in which the following matters are presented: a review of the general information on the respondents; respondents' level of awareness of destination branding; respondents' views regarding Zimbabwe as a tourist destination; an evaluation of the stakeholders' attitudes towards Zimbabwe's branding and competitive positioning; and challenges and considerations in respect of Zimbabwe's future branding and positioning.

7.2 GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE RESPONDENTS

When conducting a study of this magnitude, it is important to select the most appropriate sample population. An accountable selection of the sample population assists in validating the study and illustrating the generalisation of the findings. Of the 995 questionnaires that were distributed, 152 usable completed questionnaires were returned. This figure represents a response rate of 15%, which is considered to be satisfactory (Jonker, 2004). The sample comprised professionals from several fields in the tourism and hospitality industry. Figure 7.1 which appears below, describes the distribution of the occupations of the respondents who were included in the sample. The highest response rate was obtained from managers in the various tourism enterprises, followed by respondents in the sales and marketing field.

Figure 7.1 General information on the respondents



7.2.1 Type of organization

The following general information on the organisations within which the respondents operate is outlined. The organisations that were chosen for inclusion in the study were the tourism representative bodies, which constituted 6.5% of the sample; destination marketing organisations, 6.5%; overseas tour operators, 5.2%; accommodation sector, 20.3%; attractions/camps, 1.9%; game lodges, 15.1%; tour operators/travel agents/safari operators, 32.8%, airlines, 3.3%, land transport, 10%; and conference/training facilities, 1.3%. The sample was considered to be adequate and justifiable vis-à-vis the purpose of the study, because there was equitable distribution of the questionnaires across the tourism industry.

7.2.2 Type of private sector stakeholders

The advantage of quantitative research is that it renders precise results. The selection of a representative sample is very important for the achievement of the study objectives. The participants in the survey that was conducted included various types of private sector stakeholders. For example, the stakeholders in the private sector comprised representatives of tourist attractions (2%), accommodation facilities (20.4%), conference facilities (1.3%), game lodges/nature reserves (15.1%), Tour operators (32.9%), airlines (3.3%) and land transport (6.6%).

Table: 7.1 Types of organisations included in the survey [n=152]

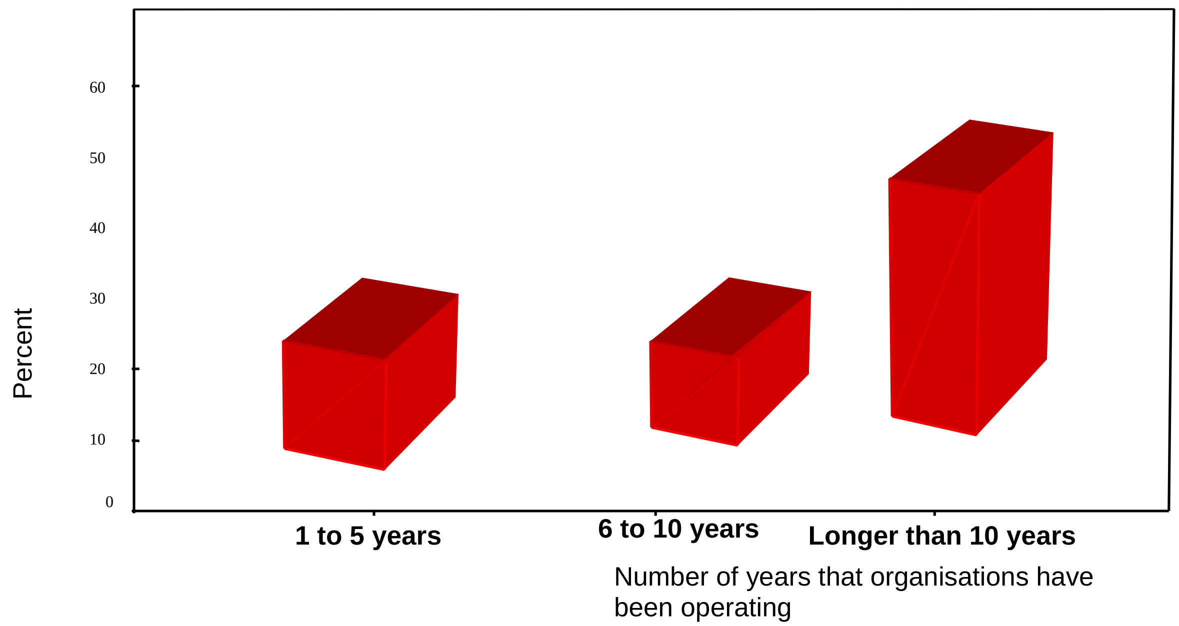
Type of organization	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Tourism representative body	10	6.6	6.6
Destination-marketing organisation	10	6.6	13.2
Overseas tour operator	8	5.3	18.5
Accommodation	31	20.4	38.9
Attractions/camps	3	2.0	40.9
Game lodges	23	15.1	56
Tour operators/travel agents/safari operators	50	32.9	88.9
Airlines that concentrate on Zimbabwe	5	3.3	92.2
Land transport	10	6.6	98.8
Conference/training facility	2	1.3	100
Total	**152**	**100.0**	

The response distribution was fairly distributed even though in some cases it was extremely low due to the data collection used (e-mail).

7.2.3 Number of years for which the organisations have been operating

As outlined in table 7.2, the largest number of organisations (56%) that participated in the survey have been in operation for more than 10 years; 20% of the organizations have been in operation for 6 to 10 years, while 24% have been in operation for only 1 to 5 years. It implies that all the participating organisations have been in operation for a relatively long period and they were therefore able to express a considered opinion on the matters addressed in the survey.

Figure: 7.2 Years that organisations have been operating in the tourism industry



7.3 AWARENESS OF DESTINATION BRANDING

Destination branding can benefit the destination concerned in several ways. The benefits are both tangible and intangible and they also bring value to the country.

Therefore, destination branding is becoming an increasingly important component in a destination marketing strategy. This section deals with the views of the respondents regarding their awareness of destination branding.

7.3.1 Destination (country) that is the best example of branding

A destination brand is defined by Blain, Levy & Richie (2005:334) as ''a name, sign, logo, trademark or the graphics that identifies and differentiates a destination''. Furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with a particular destination. It also serves to consolidate and reinforce the tourist's pleasurable memories of his or her experiences of a destination. A destination brand should be considered to be a live asset. The efforts and inputs that contribute to the development of the brand are invisible to the consumer, while the promises, values and experiences that are created should be credible.

Respondents provided various reasons for choosing a particular destination as the best example of destination branding. The reasons they stated, ranged from the uniqueness of the attractions in the destinations to the uniqueness of the branding strategies that are used in that particular destination. A total of 25% of the respondents chose South Africa as the best example of branding. In the second position is Australia, which was chosen by 21.7%; New Zealand, 15.8%; Spain, 11.8%; New York, 8.6%; while India and the Seychelles were chosen by 4.6% and Hong Kong by 3.3%. A total of 4.6% choose other destinations. The following table lists the responses obtained from respondents who were asked to identify a destination (in this instance, a country) that, in their opinion, is the best example of destination branding.

Table 7.2 Destination (country) that is the best example of destination branding

Destination		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
A1.1	South Africa	38	25.0	25.0
A1.2	Australia	33	21.7	46.7
A1.3	New Zealand	24	15.8	62.5
A1.4	Spain	18	11.8	74.3
A1.5	New York	13	8.6	82.9
A1.6	India	7	4.6	87.5
A1.7	Seychelles	7	4.6	92.1
A1.8	Hong Kong	5	3.3	95.4
A1.9	Others	7	4.6	100.0
Total		**152**	**100.0**	

Most respondents appeared to have some comprehension of the concept of destination branding. A total of 52% describe the key role of branding as the consolidation and reinforcement of the collection of pleasurable memories of the experiences provided by a destination.

They associate such branding with the intention of creating an image that is accurately perceived by visitors. These findings reinforce the definition of destination branding that is propounded by Arnold (1992:5) and supported by Ritchie & Ritchie (1998). South Africa was chosen as the destination with the most successful branding due to its public diplomacy campaigns, use of its website portal and its positioning of itself as a country that is ‘’alive with possibilities’’, similar to the discussion in chapter 3 of this report. In addition, South Africa is a neighbour of Zimbabwe and has a significant influence on Zimbabwe’s economy.

7.3.2 Key features of destination branding

A destination brand is the most powerful marketing tool available to contemporary destination marketers (Heath, 2004:166). As such, it represents capitalized value between the destination and its target customers. Brands project a strong identity for the destination and signal certain benefits from which the target audience derives desires and expectations (Morrison & Anderson, 2002:1).

Respondents agree with the key features of destination branding as proposed by some other academics (Olins, 2000; Fabricius 2006; Brymer, 2003; Kotler & Gartner, 2002; Keller, 2003; & Baker, 2005) that are discussed in chapter 2 of this report. The results of the survey indicate that respondents view a destination brand as being a strategic tool for a destination. A destination brand is considered to create a symphony that harnesses the power of many messages and influences those who have influence. They therefore agree that a brand is more than an advertising campaign and that all the stakeholders should be involved in the branding process.

The following table 7.3 presents the responses in respect of what constitutes the key features of destination branding.

Table 7.3 Respondents selection of key features of destination branding

	Possible key features of destination branding	1 Disagree	2 Agree to some extent	3 Agree	4 Largely agree	5 Strongly agree	Mean
A3.1	Branding involves buy in from the start, ensuring that all the stakeholders are involved in the building process from an early stage.	0	0	7.9	39.5	52.6	4.6
A3.2	It is more than an advertising campaign and requires constant internal and external reminders and messages in order to win the minds and hearts of visitors.	0	0	8.2	28.7	63.1	4.5
A3.3	It assists in influencing the influencers and maintains good communication with those who control messages, while minimizing negative impacts.	0	0	15.8	14.8	69.4	4.5
A3.4	It creates a symphony to harness the power of as many messages, partners and stakeholders as possible within a region to be the strongest umbrella brand.	0	0.6	8.5	11.2	80.3	4.5
A3.5	It is concerned with alignment by constantly doing what is correct.	0	3.9	12.8	27.9	55.4	4.4
A3.6	Branding helps to identify products and to distinguish them from the products of competitors.	0	0	3.2	30.3	66.5	4.6
A3.7	Branding is used in a marketing segmentation strategy and provides focus for the integration of stakeholders' efforts.	0	0	3.2	38.8	58	4.7
A3.8	It is a strategic tool for long-range planning in tourism.	0	0	2.7	20	77.3	4.7

Some of the respondents strongly agreed with the following key features of branding. It is concerned with alignment by consistently doing what is correct (55.4%); it is undertaken to identify products and contributes to distinguishing them from the products of competitors (66.5%); and branding is used in a market-segmentation strategy and provides focus for the integration of stakeholders' efforts (58%). Lastly, branding is considered to be a strategic tool that is used for long-range planning in tourism (76.3%). These views are in line with the position stated by Ambler & Styles

(1996:10) who consider branding to be the sum total of all elements of the marketing mix. They state that the product is merely one element and it should be complemented by price, promotion and distribution. All the respondents had a strong understanding of branding in Zimbabwe.

7.4 RESPONSES REGARDING ZIMBABWE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION.

The majority of respondents viewed Zimbabwe as a magnificent tourist destination that has been caught up in a political quagmire and greed of the political leadership. However, in some cases the views echoed by the respondents reflect their varying emphasis on cultural richness; wildlife; scenery; natural attractions; and world heritage sites.

The findings reinforce the views expressed in the literature review, namely that Zimbabwe has a total of 664 species of wild animals, approximately 7% of the world's known species and 0.26% of the world's land surface, as discussed in chapter 5. The features of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination that are expressed most often in the survey include its uniqueness; that it offers fascinating holiday experiences; is a land of extraordinary beauty; and has rich and diverse wildlife.

Respondents were asked to rate several matters in Zimbabwe that could provide visitors with either pleasant or unpleasant surprises. The following table analyses the respondents' views regarding the matters that are responsible for pleasant and unpleasant experiences in the destination.

Table 7.4 Matters that are responsible for pleasant and unpleasant experiences in a destination [n = 152]

Components		Pleasant surprises	Percentage	Unpleasant surprises	Percentage
B2.1	Attractions and parks	126	82.9	26	17.1
B2.2	Road infrastructure and communication	77	50.7	75	49.3
B2.3	Superstructure	81	53.3	71	46.7
B2.4	Quality of service and people	85	55.9	67	44.1
B2.5	Peace and safety	78	51.3	74	48.7
B2.6	Culture and events	142	93.4	10	6.6
B2.7	Recreational activities	109	71.7	43	28.3
B2.8	Value for money	79	52	73	48

NB Some respondents selected some statements more than once.

Most respondents indicated that Zimbabwe provides its visitors with pleasant attractions, good superstructure, peace and security. The country is considered to provide the tourist with good recreational facilities and value for money. While Zimbabwe has boasted that it offers friendly and pleasant service, its service could be compromised by factors such as the massive brain drain (discussed in chapter 5), high inflation (230 million %), low salaries, high standard of living, shortages of fuel, dearth of foreign currency and the government's lack of political will to promote tourism (discussed in chapter 5 in the SWOT analysis). There was a high rate of responses preferring attractions and parks (82,9%), culture and events (93,4%), recreational activities (71,7%) and value for money (52%) on the pleasant experiences. The road infrastructure (49.3%), peace and security (48.7%) and value for money (48%) were seen as unpleasant due to the prevailing circumstances in the destination.

Table 7.5 contains an analysis of respondents' perception of the key factors that differentiate Zimbabwe as a tourist destination from its competitors.

Table 7.5 Key factors that differentiate Zimbabwe from competing destinations [n=152]

	Differentiator	Frequency	Percentage
B.3.1	Facilities	37	24.3
B.3.2	Geographical location	45	29.6
B3.3	Infrastructure	30	19.7
B3.4	Attractions	149	98.0
B3.5	Ambience	18	11.8
B3.6	Hospitality and service	143	94.0
B3.7	Accessibility	21	13.8
B3.8	Value for money	104	68.4
B3.9	Other	0	0

NB. Some of the respondents chose some variables more than once

The most important matters that differentiate Zimbabwe as a tourist destination from its competitors are, according to the respondents, its attractions (98%); hospitality and service (94%); and value for money (68.4%). However, the land reform programme that commenced in 1999 and the continuing political turmoil that has resulted in economic hardship and social unrest, may cause the advantages of the differentiating factors to be forfeited soon (Chan & Primorac, 2004).

7.4.1 Adequacy of marketing resources

Respondents were asked to indicate whether the resources that are allocated to the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority for marketing purposes are adequate. A total of 90.8% of the respondents indicated that the resources that are allocated are inadequate. This finding strengthens the position stated in the literature consulted on marketing. According to ZTA (2003, 2004,2005), the Authority had identified inadequate funding of its local and external operations as a weakness that is compounded by other problems such as the lack of equipment and human resources and the continued decline of the value of the Zimbabwean dollar. This issue has also been raised by Fyall & Garrod, (2005), Page, (2007) and Bennett (1995) who express concerns regarding the limited budget that is allocated to DMOs for the key aspects of destination marketing and branding.

The respondents' views on the adequacy of the resources allocated for marketing and branding are listed in Table 7.6 below.

Table 7.6 Adequacy of resources allocated for the marketing of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination [n=152]

	Marketing resource allocation	Frequency	Percentage
B4.1	Adequate	6	3.9
B4.2	Inadequate	138	90.8
B4.3	Do not know	8	5.3
	Total	152	100

The majority of the respondents indicated that there were both national and international marketing teams in Zimbabwe to market the destination. Nevertheless the destination has suffered a significant setback since the DMO has been suffering from a shortage of skilled staff to drive its marketing initiatives, as alluded to above. Respondents were of the opinion that the marketing resource allocations were inadequate (90.8%). This scenario poses a threat to the destination since the success of any destination branding strategy hinges on marketing and promotion.

7.4.2 Negative comments regarding Zimbabwe as a tourist destination

Due to the political, social and economic problems experienced in Zimbabwe, the destination has faced many challenges that range from a lack of foreign currency, fuel shortages, unemployment and decreased tourist arrivals (due to the negative travel advisories of foreign countries). Reports in foreign media have portrayed a negative image of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. Generally, the matters that have a negative impact on the image of the country include bad publicity, its over dependency on international tourists and its lack of aggressive marketing in source markets. Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with the negative comments in the local and international media concerning Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. The responses are shown on table 7.7 that follows below.

Table 7.7 Extent of agreement with negative media comments regarding Zimbabwe as a tourist destination [n = 152]

Statements		Strongly disagree	%	Strongly agree	%	No comment	%
B5.1	Bad publicity in source markets	54	35.5	72	47.4	26	17.1
B5.2	Poor service delivery	84	55.3	67	44.1	1	0.7
B5.3	Not delivering on the brand promise	61	40.1	74	48.7	17	11.2
B5.4	Over dependency on international tourism	33	21.7	117	77	2	1.3
B5.5	No defined tourism destination marketing strategies	17	11.2	134	88.2	1	0.7
B5.6	No aggressive marketing in source markets	33	21.7	110	72.3	9	5.9

A total of 47.4% of the respondents indicated that they agreed that Zimbabwe has had bad publicity in source markets, while 55.3% strongly disagreed that the destination is guilty of poor service delivery. A total of 48.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that the destination does not deliver on the brand promise and 77% strongly agreed that the destination is dependent on international tourism. The destination has faced negative publicity in source market and has failed to deliver on its brand promise hence its long dependence on international tourism. Therefore the destination has to embark on an image rebuilding process while developing strategies to increase its domestic tourism to support its dwindling international markets.

Most African countries that depend on international tourism have not yet developed domestic tourism strategies that can sustain the destination in times of adverse trading conditions (Heath, 2004). Altogether 88% of the respondents strongly agreed that the destination has no defined tourism marketing strategies, while 72.3% strongly agreed that the destination does not have aggressive marketing and crisis-management strategies in source markets and that that is the reason for its failure to counter negative publicity.

7.5 STAKEHOLDERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ZIMBABWE'S BRANDING AND COMPETITIVE POSITIONING

There is wide recognition that a branding strategy is a source of competitive advantage in both the domestic and foreign markets. According to Styles & Ambler (1997:5), ''a brand that is properly deployed can contribute to the achievement of a competitive advantage''.

In addition, De Chernatony (2001) considers ''brand equity to be a set of memories, habits and attitudes formed by the consumers of a destination''. It is this brand equity, together with the input of associated agents and technologies, which enhance future profits and long-term cash flow.

7.5.1. Stakeholders' attitudes towards the Zimbabwean brand

Destination branding should involve the "buy in" of all the stakeholders from the onset. The holistic view of branding emphasizes the brand rather than the product and this view is particularly relevant in destination branding. A brand has a synergistic effect on all the marketing efforts that attempt to perpetuate an image in the mind of the tourist.

In the survey, an attempt was made to determine the stakeholders' attitudes towards the Zimbabwean brand. Table 7.8 contains an analysis of the extent to which stakeholders consider that the concept of destination branding is being applied in Zimbabwe.

Table 7.8 The application of destination branding in Zimbabwe

The extent to which the concept of destination branding is being applied in Zimbabwe	**Stakeholders' rating of branding application**				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Not at all	To some extent	Reasonably significant	Largely significant	Absolutely
Frequency	20	32	84	6	10
Percent	13.2	21.0	55.2	3.9	6.6

A total of 13.2% of the respondents were of the opinion that the concept of destination branding is not being applied at all in Zimbabwe. Altogether 55.2% of them indicated that the concept of destination branding is being applied to a reasonable extent, while 21% indicated that the concept is being applied to some extent and 6.6% indicated that it is being applied to a large extent. While the application of branding is reasonable, the health of the destination brand has been eroded by political, economic and social aspects that have become the basis for negative publicity.

There are several factors that militate against the application of the branding concept in Zimbabwe. The brand may be so weak as a result of the negative image that the country has in source markets such that the brand no longer represents the offering of the destination. A brand should consolidate and reinforce the collection of favourable memories of the experiences provided by the destination and it should have the intent of creating an image that is accurately perceived by visitors, which means that it should be representative of its claims. This study has revealed that the brand tends to over promise and under deliver. The key elements emphasised in the Zimbabwean brand are shown below.

Table 7.9 Key elements that are emphasised in the Zimbabwean tourism brand [n=152]

	Elements emphasized in the brand	Frequency	Percentage
C1.1	Emotional appeal	74	48.7
C1.2	Nostalgia	41	30
C1.3	Key attractions	115	75.7
C1.4	Outdoor activities	44	28.9
C1.5	Scenic and adventure	89	58.6
C1.6	Services and facilities	10	6.6
C1.7	Infrastructure	5	3.3
C1.8	Peace and safety	21	13.8
C1.9	Other- Friendly people	2	1.3

From the perspective of luring tourists, the focus of a destination brand should be to instil in the potential and actual tourist a single strong value proposition. It should be done quickly and with clarity and it should avoid confusion, ambiguity and controversy (Baker, 2007:2). The respondents were asked to select the key elements that, in their opinion, are emphasized in the Zimbabwean brand. The following table lists the key elements that the respondents selected. A total of 75.7% of the respondents indicated that the brand represents key attractions. Altogether 58.6% chose the scenic and adventure option; and 48.7% chose the emotional appeal option. Nostalgia 30% and Peace & safety 13.8% were rated lowly on the Zimbabwean brand since there are strong negative perceptions about the country and its governance, hence the feeling of insecurity.

The results confirm that destination branding should be representative of the destination's offering and that the brand should be appealing to the target audience. According to Heath (2007), future destination branding will be a battle for minds rather than for hearts. It is clear that branding initiatives in Zimbabwe have not yet fully captured the essence of the destination branding concept.

7.5.2 Selling points of the Zimbabwean tourism brand

Respondents were asked to rate the most compelling selling points of the Zimbabwean destination brand. It is apparent from table 7.10 that 53.2% of the respondents agree that the brand represents the image of the destination. The responses are in line with the conclusions drawn by Crompton (1979), Baloglu & McCleary (1999) and by Kotler & Rein (1993) who explored the concept of image and concluded that it comprises the beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination. Consequently, the brand image acts as a stimulus to travel and generates expectations of travel destinations and host communities. In addition, the brand should act as an image modification tool. Branding carries to the marketplace the promise that the product or service has a certain quality or several characteristics that make it special or unique. The quality and characteristics should be consistent, unique and complementary (Badal *et al*, 2008:4). The relationship that exists between a brand and a customer can be considered to be a bond that represents awareness, perceived quality, associations and loyalty.

The responses to this request are summarised in table 7.10.

Table 7.10 The selling points of the Zimbabwean brand identity

	Branding identity selling points	**1** Disagree	**2** Agree to some extent	**3** Agree	**4** Largely agree	**5** Agree to a great extent	Mean
C2.1	Image (perception about the brand in the visitor's mind)	3.4	32.8	53.2	5.9	4.7	2.73
C2.2	Personality (human characteristics associated with the brand)	22.3	53.2	18.4	3.2	2.9	2.10
C2.3	Essence (emotional elements and values of the brand)	25.0	36.1	34.2	3.2	1.5	2.19
C2.4	Brand culture (how the brand will live up to its promise to visitors)	8.5	61.8	19.0	7.8	2.9	2.34
C2.5	Brand blueprint (architecture of the brand that outlines various messages that will communicate the promise)	34.2	31.5	28.9	4.6	0.8	2.05
C2.6	Brand character (how the brand is perceived and constituted internally i.e. integrity, trustworthiness and honesty)	40.1	28.9	26.9	0	4.1	1.98
C2.7	Other. Specify	0	0	0	0	0	0

The continued decline in tourist arrivals in Zimbabwe is a sign of poor brand-image management. The results of the survey indicate that 53.2% of the respondents agreed to some extent that the Zimbabwean brand identity has some personality traits that are a selling point. In view of the growing need to use a unique combination of characteristics that are relevant and inextricably linked to destination awareness, which may be conscious or intuitive (Fabricius, 2006b), the use of personality in destination branding is increasing in importance. Altogether 36.1% of the respondents indicated that they agreed to some extent that the essence or emotional elements and values of the brand are selling points of the brand, while at 61.8% of them rated the brand culture to be important to some extent. These figures indicate that these two elements are currently inadequate in view of their importance in the brand architecture. In respect of the blueprint of the brand, 34.2% of the respondents indicated that they disagreed that the Zimbabwean Tourism brand has a brand blueprint. This implies that Zimbabwe has no defined strategy to communicate messages to its target audience.

However, 40.1% of the respondents disagreed that the brand has some character as a form of identity. This finding signals an error in the Zimbabwean brand architecture. In the context of modern marketing, the destination brand should offer the consumer an added value and a superior position that is distinctive from that of the competitors and it should impart meaning that transcends financial considerations (De Chernatony & McDonald, 1992).

Fundamentally, destination branding is premised on the conception that country names amount to brands and that therefore they convey certain images, values and cultures and contribute to the evaluation of products and services (Vincent, 2004a). As such, destination branding should assist in drawing a distinct line between the present and the past. Considering the events that have been unfolding in Zimbabwe and the responses provided in the survey, respondents concluded that the brand is tired and that it therefore lacks a brand blueprint and brand character.

7.5.3 Impressions about Zimbabwe's tourism brand

In this regard the respondents were asked to state their impressions regarding the Zimbabwe tourism brand. As reflected in Table 7.11, a total of 61.1% of the respondents agreed to some extent that the Zimbabwean brand has measurable objectives; 61.8% of them agreed that the Zimbabwean brand has tangible characteristics; and 54% agreed that the tourism brand is unique and novel. The statements that the respondents selected about Zimbabwe's tourism brand are contained in table 7.11 below:

Table 7.11 Statements about Zimbabwe's tourism brand

Statements about Zimbabwe's tourism brand		1 Disagree	2 Agree to some extent	3 Agree	4 Largely agree	5 Strongly agree	Mean
C3.1	The tourism brand has measurable objectives	9.8	59.5	25.6	3.2	1.9	2.27
C3.2	The tourism brand has tangible characteristics that are representative of the destination	4.6	16	61.8	15.7	1.9	2.94
C3.3	The tourism brand is unique and novel	0.6	34.8	54.9	7.8	1.9	2.76
C3.4	The tourism brand promise is in accordance with experiences offered to tourists	0.6	19.0	45.3	33.5	1.6	3.15
C3.5	The brand has an emotional appeal	0	15.7	58.8	15.7	9.8	3.19
C3.6	The brand can be used to achieve market leadership	0.6	54.8	21.0	19.7	3.9	2.71
C3.7	The brand has a distinctive advantage over its competitors	5.2	15.1	38.8	36.3	4.6	3.22
C3.8	The brand has a strong character and identity	0	22.3	73.0	1.5	3.2	2.85

In addition, 45.3% of the respondents acknowledged that the destination brand is in accordance with the experiences that tourists are offered at the destination. More than half (58.5%) agreed that the brand has an emotional appeal, while 56.6% agreed to some extent that the brand can be used to achieve market leadership.

In comparison with a destination such as South Africa, which has taken branding seriously and moved a step further by developing branding campaigns, logos and strap lines that are targeted at different target markets, the Zimbabwean brand may not stand a chance of survival, as evidenced by the low level of branding application. Even Zambia has taken advantage of the chaotic situation in Zimbabwe by aggressively marketing the Victoria Falls and promising tourists peace and stability.

7.5.4 Positioning and benchmarking Zimbabwe

The destination was benchmarked against competing destinations such as South Africa, Zambia and Mozambique on three factors, namely brand image, market penetration and tourism potential. Zimbabwe was benchmarked against South Africa on brand image, the Zimbabwean brand was found to be good (39%). However, in view of the 2008 political violence, the brand faces many challenges.

On market penetration, the Zimbabwean destination was found to be fair (57%), while on tourism potential it is found to be very good (42.1%). Whilst South Africa has continued to position itself in a positive light by acknowledging the high rate of crime and assuring that something is being done about it, Zimbabwe has failed to acknowledge the existence of a crisis and has preferred to attempt to defend its stance against all odds. The result is portrayed in Table 7.12 below.

Table 7.12 Comparing Zimbabwe with and benchmarking it against South Africa, Zambia and Mozambique

COMPETING DESTINATION	Brand image					Market Penetration					Tourism potential				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent
C4.1 South Africa	18	30	39	12	1	23	57	15	2.4	2.6	0	3.2	16	42.1	32.2
C4.2 Zambia	0	27	41	26	6	3	40	35	22	0.6	0	1.2	7.8	25.6	66
C4.3 Mozambique	0	27	51	17	6	0	42	41	14	3	0	0	3.6	48.4	48

In comparison with Zambia, the brand image of Zimbabwe was rated as good (41%); market penetration was rated as being fair (42%) and tourism potential was rated as excellent (66%). Compared to Mozambique, the Zimbabwean brand image was rated as good (51%); market penetration as fair (39.4%) and tourism potential as very good (48.4%). It is interesting to note that, in the opinion of the respondents, Zimbabwe's image has continued to decline but as compared to its neighbours it has demonstrated a huge potential for growth. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that the competing destinations have continued to take stringent measures to revive their tourism marketing strategies.

While Zimbabwe has enjoyed a steady growth in market share at the expense of Zambia and Mozambique in previous years, this trend appears to have been short-lived, because Zambia and Mozambique are taking advantage of the crisis situation in Zimbabwe to market their destinations aggressively in source markets. As shown in the responses, these destinations are now considered to be a direct threat to the Zimbabwean tourism industry. But some respondents were of the opinion that Mozambique was not a big threat to Zimbabwe considering their background and the level of development in that country.

7.5.5 Most commonly used methods to communicate branding and positioning

The respondents were requested to identify the methods most commonly used in Zimbabwe for marketing and communicating the tourism brand. The findings were as follows: Website (57.1%), word of mouth (88.6%), electronic media (44.6%) and printed media (85.4%).

Whereas direct sales are important in tourism marketing, it was found that in Zimbabwe such sales are minimal (3.8%) and public relations was rated at only (9.8%). Travel expos were rated at 97.2%, which indicates that this approach is widely used in Zimbabwe.

In contrast, road shows were rated at 18.2%. Even if the website is mostly used in communicating the destination brand, this website is seldom updated; moreover the information published usually is politically inclined and is meant to defend the actions of government. The details of the findings are contained in Table 7.13.

Table 7.13 The most commonly used methods to communicate branding and positioning in Zimbabwe

Information source		Most commonly used in destination branding	Applied to the Zimbabwean situation	Zimbabwe's rating of tools				
				1	2	3	4	5
				Not at all	To some extent	Reasonably significant	Largely significant	Absolutely
C5.1	Direct sales	152	3.8	0	0.6	2.6	0	0.6
C5.2	Website	152	57.1	0	0	15.7	15.1	26.3
C5.3	Electronic media	152	44.6	0	0	11.1	7.2	26.3
C5.4	Printed media	152	85.4	0	0	21.0	17.7	46.7
C5.5	Public relations	152	9.8	0	2.6	0	0	7.2
C5.6	Word of mouth	152	88.6	0	6.5	4.6	13.1	64.4
C5.7	Travel expos	152	97.2	0	2.6	7.8	29.6	57.2
C5.8	Road shows	152	18.2	0	0.6	11.8	3.9	1.9
C5.9	Other. Specify	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

In Zimbabwe, the most commonly used methods for communicating branding and positioning, as reflected in the highest rating received, are word of mouth (64.4%), travel expos (57.2%), printed media (46.7%), electronic media (26.3%) and websites (26.3%).

Overall the use of word of mouth could be a danger to the brand since it can not be controlled. In Zimbabwe, the DMO relies mostly on the print and electronic media to communicate the brand hence these media are government own and controlled. However the credibility of such media is questionable, most tourist do not watch, read or listen to news on state media as a result of biased reporting.

7.6 CHALLENGES IN RESPECT OF BRANDING IN ZIMBABWE

Morgan *et al* (2002:339) suggest that ''it is necessary to deal successfully with political pressures, external environmental changes and product issues if a destination is to prosper and grow''. This position is supported by Cai (2000:750) who claims that ''branding should be about achieving a balance between the application of cutting-edge advertising and public relations approaches to the marketing problem''. Branding is fraught with challenges that could impede the achievement of success in branding initiatives. These challenges include political interference with branding priorities and could even include a lack of understanding of the concept of destination branding.

7.6.1 The use of a logo as a key element in Zimbabwe's branding in future

When asked whether a specific logo should be part of Zimbabwe's branding strategy, 98% of the respondents indicated that the destination should indeed use a logo in its future branding strategy. Only 1.3% of the respondents disagreed, while 0.7% said that they do not know. On the strength of these responses, it is apparent that Zimbabwe should consider the use of a logo as a brand-identity strategy in future.

According to Keller (2003), if you have created a sign or a symbol for a new product, you have created a brand. A brand distinguishes a destination from its unbranded destination counterparts and gives it equity over its competitors (Baker, 1996). Lovelock & Wirtz (2004) note that brands create consumer motivations and desires

(Payne, 1993, Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003, Joachimsthaler & Aaker, 1997) and the use of a logo can assist tourists to recall the destination quicker when they are faced with a purchase cue.

7.6.2 The most appropriate strategy that could be used to reposition Zimbabwe as a tourist destination

Brand repositioning refers to the adaptation of the market position of a destination brand to a position that is relevant in the mind of the target market. Consideration is usually given to the repositioning of a destination brand as a result of competitive pressures and changing customer needs that may erode the brand's position of strength in the target audience's country of origin.

Re-branding involves the use of a number of strategies, including changing the product's features and packaging and the use of advertising language in foreign markets. However, branding in a broader context includes the creation and entrenchment of a desired brand image in the mind of the target customer. Several strategies can be employed to achieve such entrenchment, including image rebuilding, increased brand awareness, establishing points of difference, identifying new target markets and launching separate marketing campaigns for different segments. The following table lists the strategies that could be used to reposition Zimbabwe as a tourist destination.

Respondents indicated that the most appropriate strategy that could be used by Zimbabwe to reposition itself as a tourist destination would be image rebuilding

(49.3%), while 23% of the respondents stated that there is a need for a brand awareness campaign. Another 23% of them said that the destination should establish its points of difference, while 3.9% indicated that the destination should identify new markets and 0.7% stated that the destination should create separate marketing campaigns for different segments.

The breakdown of key opinions is shown on table 7.14 below.

Table 7.14 Opinions expressed on the most appropriate strategy for repositioning Zimbabwe as a tourist destination.

	Most appropriate strategy	Frequency	Percentage
D1.1	Image rebuilding	75	49.3
D1.2	Increased brand awareness	35	23
D1.3	Establish points of difference	35	23
D1.4	Identify new target markets	6	3.9
D1.5	Launch separate marketing campaigns for different segments	1	0.7
D1.6	Other.	0	0
	Total	**152**	**100**

While all the other strategies like increased brand awareness and establishing points of difference could be ideal for Zimbabwe, the destination brand image is a key component in the formation of a clear and recognisable brand identity in the marketplace.

A brand image is related to the manner in which the brand is perceived by the customers. No matter how good a brand strategy might be, if it is not supported by an image modification process, it is not likely to yield good results.

7.6.3 Key matters to be addressed in Zimbabwe's branding

According to Ooi (2003), ''branding and marketing campaigns are aimed at shaping people's perceptions about tourism destinations''. Aesthetically presented campaigns highlight the attractive attributes of a destination by using the power of customer-perceived quality and brand loyalty. Such campaigns are used to modify the world's image of a country (Buhalis, 2000). As stated in Table 7.15, a total of 78.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that in order for Zimbabwe to develop a strong and appealing brand in future, there should be intensive collaboration between the government and the stakeholders. In discussing the collaboration of stakeholders, Marzano and Scott, (2005) emphasise that ''the tourism system is very complex and is structured around a core that comprises an assemblage of structures, goods, services, and resources that contribute directly to the sector''. To this system should be added the processes and functions that complement its totality and are essential to its sustainability. Morgan *et al*., (2002) state that the creation and management of a destination brand requires collaboration amongst stakeholders. If destination branding is not well co-ordinated, it remains a myth and a fallacy due to its lack of ownership (Mundt, 2002). Since destination branding is an ongoing process and is dependent on collaboration between stakeholders, there should be a balance between the agendas of the various stakeholders.

Respondents in the survey indicated that Zimbabwe's future branding initiatives should display congruency between the brand's physical and social values at the destination level. This view implies that the brand architecture should take all the factors within the destination into consideration. The following Table 7.15 lists the respondents' views on the key consideration in the future branding of Zimbabwe.

Table 7.15 Key branding future considerations

	Various key matters that should be addressed in the development of the Zimbabwean destination brand in future	1 Disagree	2 Agree to a limited extent	3 Agree	4 Agree to a Large extent	5 Strongly agree	Mean
D2.1	There should be collaboration between the government and stakeholders at the destination.	0	0	4.6	16.5	78.9	4.32
D2.2	There should be congruency between the brand's physical and social values at the destination level.	0	0	2.7	33.5	63.8	4.61
D2.3	The brand should support the vision of sustainable destination development.	0	0	3.4	23.6	73.0	4.72
D2.4	The brand should project a simple, appealing, believable and distinct image.	0	0	11.8	11.1	77.1	4.64
D2.5	There should be an umbrella concept that incorporates the country's separate branding activities.	0	0	11.8	14.4	73.8	4.60
D2.6	The Zimbabwean brand should focus on definite target markets.	0	0	11	22	67	4.55
D2.7	The brand should identify and define the destination's attributes as a basis for branding activities.	0	0	7	15	78	4.70
D2.8	The brand should have a catchy slogan, images and/or symbols.	0	0	8.5	13.1	78.4	4.69
D2.9	The brand should be used as a marketing tool at special events.	0	0	5.9	17.1	77	4.70
D2.10	It is essential that stakeholders understand and embrace Zimbabwe's tourism brand strategy as the umbrella for their respective marketing initiatives.	0	0	7.5	18.1	74.4	4.68
D2.11	A destination brand situational analysis is essential as a basis for a future branding strategy.	0	0	10	16.7	73.3	4.65
D2.12	Tourism industry stakeholders should be involved in the development of a destination-brand strategy.	0	0	9.2	6.5	84.3	4.74
D2.13	Current and prospective visitor's perceptions should be considered in the formulation of a brand strategy.	0	0	3.9	21.1	75.0	4.72
D2.14	Competitive destination branding strategies should be evaluated when developing a destination-brand strategy.	0	0	8.5	13.8	77.7	4.68
D2.15	The brand status and competitive positioning of the destination should be monitored, evaluated and benchmarked regularly.	0	0	6.5	8.5	85	4.77
D2.16	When developing a destination-brand strategy, all stakeholders should be encouraged to live and implement the brand.	0	0	5.9	17.7	76.4	4.68
D2.17	At the destination level, an umbrella brand should be created to enable private sector and regional stakeholders to link into the brand.	0	0	6.5	15.1	78.4	4.70
D2.18	A concerted effort should be made to communicate the destination's brand to citizens and local communities so that they can in turn be ambassadors for the destination.	0	0	7.8	17.1	75.1	4.65
D2.19	The destination should develop crisis management strategies in order to create a positive image for the destination.	0	0	3.9	13.3	82.8	4.48

In total, 73% of the respondents strongly agreed that the brand should support the vision of sustainable destination development. One of the main aims of destination branding is to project the vision of the destination. This vision is a created portrait or an overall picture of the desired future state of the destination (Vicente, 2004b:14). The brand should project a simple, appealing, plausible and distinct image (77.1%). Brands should act as the capitalised value of the trust between a company and its customers and it should remain contemporary without distorting its fundamental promise (Buhalis 2000).

The brand should have an umbrella concept that incorporates all the country's separate branding activities (73.8%). This is why South Africa has developed different strap lines for different target markets. Zimbabwe's branding strategy should focus on the defined target markets (67%). This view of the respondents is valid, because for marketing strategies to be successful, there should be a segmentation of the market and specific groups that have certain characteristics should be targeted (Fyall & Garrod, 2005). The failure to have a specific target group could result in a destination becoming everything to everyone, an approach that does not yield positive results in the long run (Morgan *et al.,* 2002).

A brand should identify and define the destination's attributes in order to serve as a basis for branding initiatives (78%). A brand should be a representation of the destination's character and its architecture should symbolise this reality. The fact that 76.9% of the respondents strongly agree that the destination should have a catchy slogan, images and/ or symbols confirms the need for a slogan, as discussed in a preceding section. The need for all the stakeholders to understand and embrace Zimbabwe's tourism brand strategy as an umbrella concept for their respective marketing initiatives is found to be relevant, because 77% of the respondents strongly agree with this statement.

A situational analysis of a destination is considered to be essential, because it could be used as a basis for a future branding strategy for Zimbabwe (73.3%). An extensive SWOT analysis could be used to compile a list of the destination's attributes, which could then be used as a basis for branding. The SWOT process could assist in the evaluation of the resources, attributes, challenges, perceptions, expectations and characteristics that the destination could use in the development of the brand.

The issue of collaboration between stakeholders in a destination has been discussed extensively in a preceding section. Its importance is confirmed by 84.3% of the respondents who strongly agree that the stakeholders in Zimbabwe's tourism should be involved in the development of the country's future brand. The same view was supported by 75% of the respondents who strongly agreed that the perceptions of current and prospective visitors should be considered in the development of a future brand strategy. A total of 77.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that competitive destination-branding strategies should be evaluated when a destination-brand strategy is developed. This view is supported by 85% of the respondents who strongly agreed that the destination's brand status and competitive positioning strategies should be monitored, evaluated and benchmarked regularly.

Respondents support the position that, when a brand strategy is developed, all the stakeholders within the destination should be encouraged to live and implement the brand (76.4%). What is significant about these views is that, for the brand to be authentic and to deliver on its promise, the local community and all the stakeholders should believe in the brand and live it (Palmer, 1998). The umbrella brand could enable all the stakeholders to link to the brand.

When a destination has different brands for different regions, and it targets different markets, a comprehensive brand should be broad based and encompassing (78.4%). The involvement of the destination's population is very important when branding. Altogether 75.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that the local inhabitants should be ambassadors of the destination wherever they go. Against the background of all the factors that affect branding, it is understandable why it is essential that the local community should buy into the brand and be part of the branding process, thereby positioning the brand internally (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004).

A total of 82.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that Zimbabwe should develop crisis management strategies in order to create a positive image for the destination. This strategy has been applied by other countries, such as South Africa, the United Kingdom and Sri-Lanka, to disassociate themselves from negative images of the past (Beirman, 2003). The aim of employing crisis management would be to rid Zimbabwe of the generally poor image that it has in the marketplace. The Zimbabwean destination is viewed as an abuser of human rights and an aggressor that has a corrupt government.

It should be a priority to expose the international media and the public to Zimbabwe's more attractive sides, such as its facilities, infrastructure and attractions that make it a great place to visit and to invest in.

Reviewing the destination's brand status could also promote the re-branding process and contribute to the launching of new advertising campaigns in target markets in which the positive side of the destination is projected. However, to achieve the objectives of these strategies, the destination should invest more in the battle to improve its public image through the use of public diplomacy (Hart, 2008).

7.6.4 Review of Zimbabwe's destination-brand status

The respondents generally agreed that it is very important to review the status of the destination. As indicated in table 7.16 below, 43% of the respondents stated that a review of the destination should be undertaken on a quarterly basis, while another 43% indicated that the review should be undertaken on a half-yearly basis. Only 10% of the respondents recommended monthly reviews and 4% annual reviews. Reviews at the latter two intervals may not be sustainable.

Table 7.16 reflects the respondents' opinions on the regularity of a brand performance review

Table: 7.16 Opinions on the regularity of a performance review of the Zimbabwe's tourism brand

		Frequency	Percentage
D3.1	Monthly	6.5	10
D3.2	Quarterly	28.2	43
D3.3	Half-yearly	28.2	43
D3.4	Annually	2.6	4
D3.5	Never	0	0

Heath (2007) recommends that a destination's performance should be reviewed on a half-yearly basis in order to provide for meaningful evaluation. While the views of the respondents are varied, most of them concur that the branding process should be publicised and some respondents voice the growing need to separate politics and the branding process. In addition, respondents were of the opinion that there is too much interference on the part of government concerning the operation of the tourism industry in Zimbabwe. Such interference leads to a laissez-faire attitude on the part of the stakeholders in the industry.

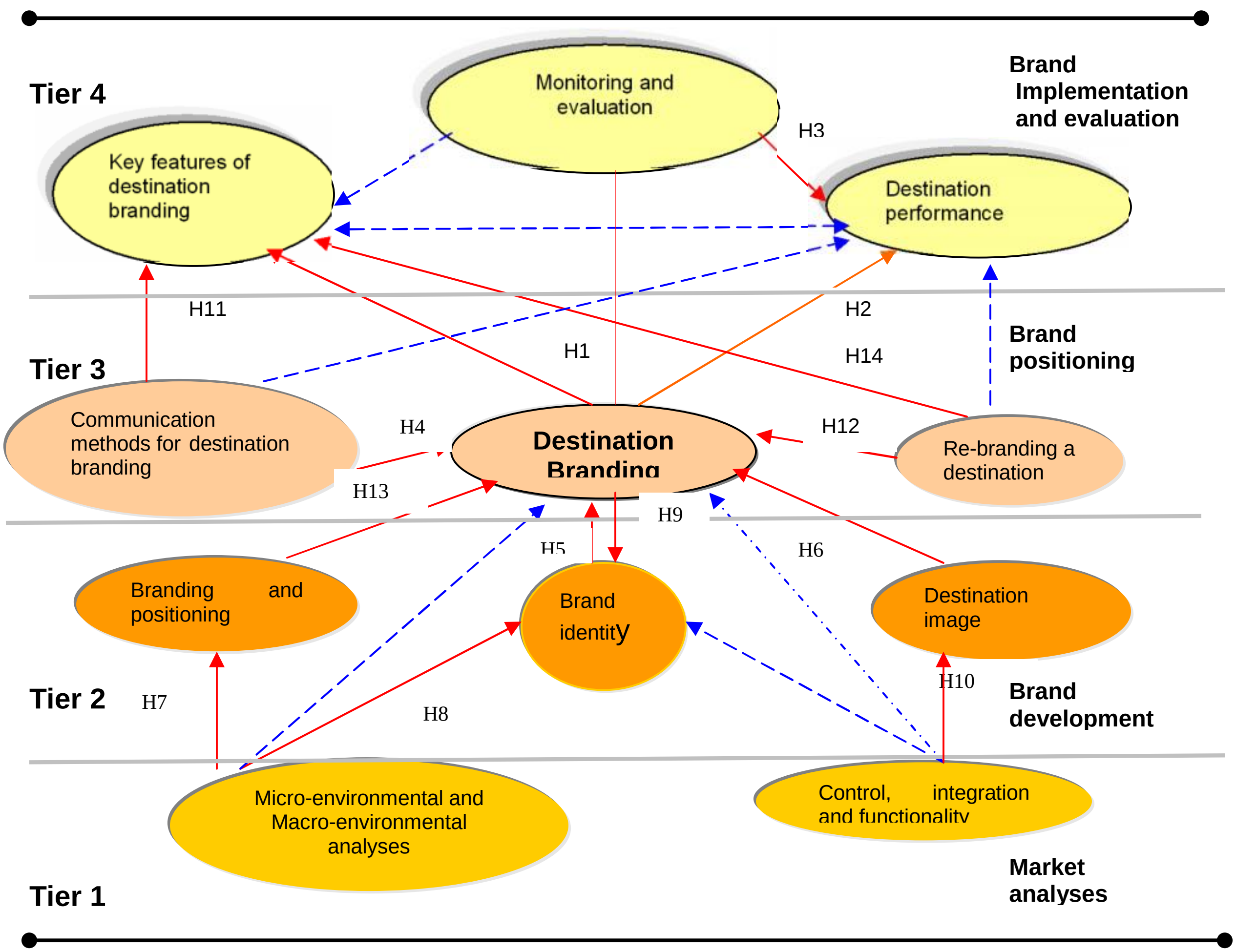
7.6.5 Development of a conceptual framework for destination branding and positioning

The study on branding and repositioning of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination provides an anchor and platform for the development of a conceptual framework for branding and repositioning. The testing of a conceptual framework is based on the flow chart of destination branding and positioning; international branding approaches and the model for international branding campaigns that are developed in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

The conceptual framework was developed from the hypotheses and tested empirically to delineate the relationships between the varying destination-branding constructs. These constructs are destination performance; key strategy links for destination branding; destination branding; communication methods for destination branding; re-branding a destination; branding and positioning; destination image ; micro-environmental and macro- environmental analyses; monitoring and evaluation; and control. The proposed framework comprises four tiers, namely brand implementation and evaluation; brand positioning; brand development; and market analyses. See appendix 2 for a detailed summary of the hypotheses. Given that this study attempts to assess the strategic role of destination branding in a logical and explicit manner, it is important to understand the relationship between the micro-environmental and macro-environmental factors.

These constructs are illustrated in the figure below.

Figure: 7.3 Constructs and the development of a framework for destination branding and positioning



Source: Researcher's construction

The first tier comprises the market analyses. The first stage of the framework is followed by the second tier, which is brand development. In the second tier, analysis is undertaken on the destination image, which affects brand identity. Brand identity determines the brand position. The third tier comprises the brand position. The brand position in turn determines the communication strategies for branding and/or re-branding. The fourth and final tier comprises implementation and evaluation. The destination brand is determined by the key features of the destination brand and consequently the performance of the destination. The inferential tests have revealed a close relationship between the performance of the destination brand and the key features of the destination brand. The conclusion may therefore be drawn that there is a need for close monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the destination brand proactively.

7.7 SUMMARY

This chapter discusses the results of the survey that was undertaken. In the presentation of the results, reference is made to the relevant literature to substantiate and validate the findings. This chapter also discusses the awareness of destination branding that prevails in Zimbabwe and the respondents' views concerning Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. It evaluates the stakeholders' attitudes towards Zimbabwe's branding and competitive positioning. The challenges in respect of branding in the future are discussed within the Zimbabwean context. Thereafter the results are justified and the chapter concluded. The next chapter focuses on framework for destination branding and positioning in order to achieve sustainable destination competitiveness.