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**BRANDING AS A STRATEGIC TOOL TO REPOSITION  
A DESTINATION: A SURVEY OF KEY TOURISM  
STAKEHOLDERS IN ZIMBABWE**

By

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## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to develop a destination branding and positioning framework, with particular reference to the Zimbabwean experience. The theoretical underpinnings and concepts used in this study were destination marketing, destination branding and positioning, image and destination competitiveness.

To provide a strategic context to the study, branding as a key element of destination marketing was clarified; the strategic role of branding /re-branding in the positioning/repositioning of a destination was outlined; international trends and best practices in branding and positioning were evaluated; and the destination marketing situation in Zimbabwe, with particular emphasis on the status of branding and positioning, was determined.

To determine key stakeholder attitudes, experiences and expectations regarding the branding and positioning of Zimbabwe as a tourism destination, a stakeholder survey was carried out during 2006 and 2007. Stakeholder groups included in the survey were key industry representative bodies, national tourism authorities, publicity associations, tour operators and airlines flying into Zimbabwe.

The study concludes that the concept of branding has varied interpretations in destination marketing. While branding can be used as a strategic tool to reposition a destination, the study notes that there are a number of non-tourism factors which can erode brand equity rendering a destination brand obsolete. It observes that unless and until these non-tourism factors are addressed the destination brand may not perform optimally. Any destination that needs to re-brand has to deal with the image issues before any meaningful re-branding activities can take place. The consistent use of well focused promotional and public diplomacy strategies as well as proactive crisis management should be used to pull the destination from its negative equity.

A key outcome of the study is a strategic framework for branding and positioning a destination in crisis. It sets out guidelines for the stakeholders on how to implement the branding process. In addition, the framework adds value to destination marketing since it can be applied as a frame of reference in understanding the complexities of destination branding. While the framework has been developed in a Zimbabwean context, it can be applied to other destinations which have a need to brand or re-brand.

An integrated marketing and communication strategy is recommended since branding alone may not yield positive results under a crisis situation. At the same time the destination needs to address political and economic issues, design strategies that can bring together all the stakeholders, while encouraging alliances and joint ventures among tourism operators. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge regarding destination marketing, particularly destination branding.

### **Key Words**

Destination branding, positioning, destination marketing, market segmentation, competitiveness, brand communication, brand identity, image, brand equity.

## DECLARATION

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## DEDICATION

While PhD studies are an individual effort, this could not have been achieved was it not for the unconditional support and love of my wife Belinda and my two boys Mqalisi and Mbusi.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AZTA</b>	Association of Zimbabwe Travel Agents
<b>BOAZ</b>	Boat Owners Association of Zimbabwe
<b>CAMPFIRE</b>	Communal Areas Management Programme For Indigenous Resources
<b>CASS</b>	Centre for Applied Social Sciences
<b>CNN</b>	Cable News Network
<b>CRS</b>	Computer Reservation System
<b>CSO</b>	Central Statistics Office
<b>CTB</b>	Ceylon Tourism Board
<b>DMO</b>	Destination Marketing Organisation
<b>DTB</b>	Destination Tourism Board
<b>HAZ</b>	Hospitality Association of Zimbabwe
<b>HOA</b>	Heart Of Africa
<b>ICT</b>	Information Communication Technology
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>ITOZA</b>	Inbound Tour Operators of Zimbabwe Association
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MICE</b>	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events
<b>NCF</b>	National Consultative Forum
<b>NEDPP</b>	National Economic Development Priority Programme
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>NPWAZ</b>	National Parks and Wildlife Authority of Zimbabwe
<b>NTO</b>	National Tourist Office
<b>POSA</b>	Public Order and Security Act

<b>RETOSA</b>	Regional Tourism Organization of Southern Africa
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
<b>TAG</b>	Tourism Action Group
<b>TALC</b>	Tourism Area Life Cycle
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>WTO</b>	World Tourism Organization
<b>ZANU PF</b>	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
<b>ZAPU PF</b>	Zimbabwe African People's Union Patriotic Front
<b>ZATSO</b>	Zimbabwe Association of Tour and Safari Operators
<b>ZCT</b>	Zimbabwe Council for Tourism
<b>ZIPHGA</b>	Zimbabwe Professional Hunters and Guides Association
<b>ZNCC</b>	Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce
<b>ZTA</b>	Zimbabwe Tourism Authority
<b>ZTDC</b>	Zimbabwe Tourist Development Corporation





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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

## **1.2 BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION OF THE RESEARCH THEME**

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

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



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

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

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

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

### **1.3 THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

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

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

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

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

**Source: Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2005.**

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

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

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

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

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

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

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



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

## 1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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

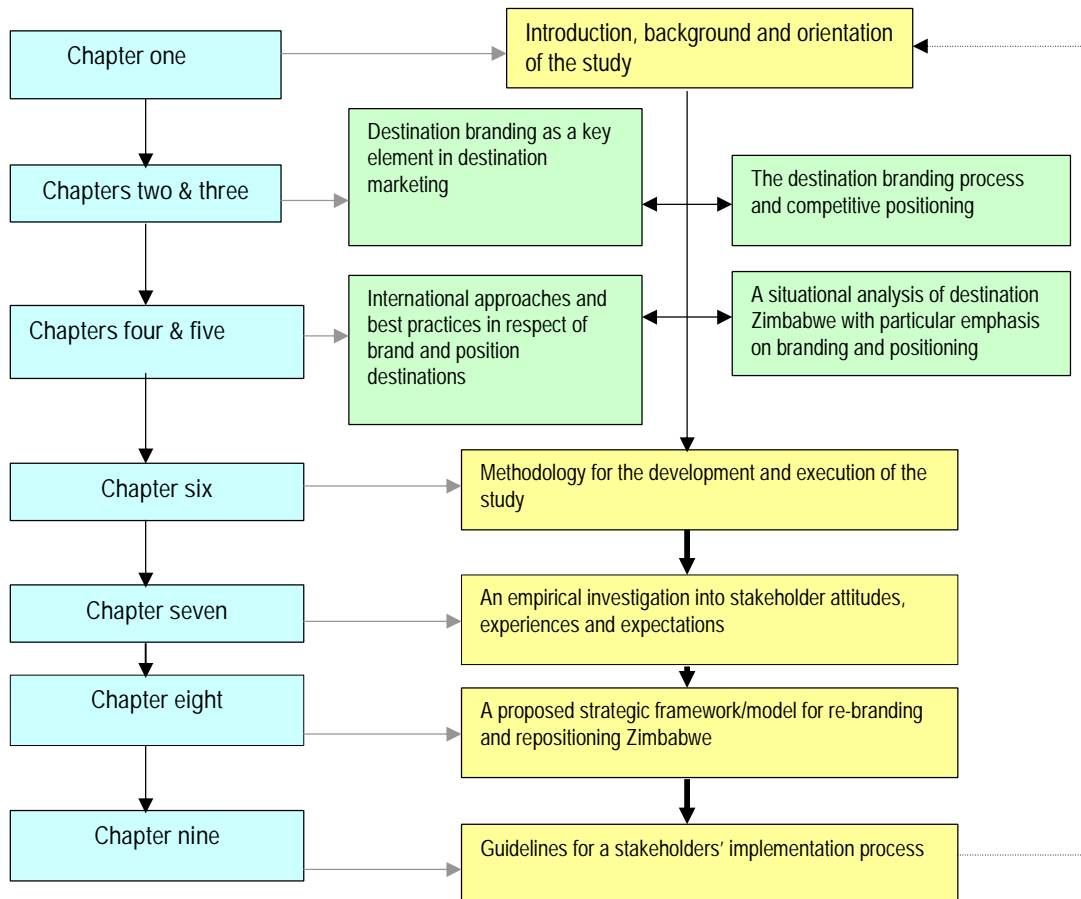
- a) What is the level of awareness of the destination brand and what are the attitudes of stakeholders towards it?
- b) How strong is the brand position relative to key competitive brands and what are the major perceived challenges and opportunities in respect of Zimbabwe's branding and positioning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

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

### 1.8 THE RESEARCH STRUCTURE

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

**Figure 1.1 The research framework for the study**



Source: Researcher's construction, 2009

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

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

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

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

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

## **1.9 METHODOLOGY**

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

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

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

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

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

## **1.10 LIMITATIONS**

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

## **1.11. DELIMITATIONS**

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

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

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

## 1.12 DEFINITION OF TERMS

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

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

### 1.13 SUMMARY

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



## CHAPTER 2

### DESTINATION BRANDING AS A KEY COMPETITIVE POSITIONING STRATEGY IN DESTINATION MARKETING

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2.6 SUMMARY.....

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## CHAPTER 2

### DESTINATION BRANDING AS A KEY COMPETITIVE POSITIONING STRATEGY IN TOURISM MARKETING

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

## **2.2 ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN A DESTINATION**

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

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

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

- Lastly, tourism can encourage entrepreneurial activity.

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

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

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

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

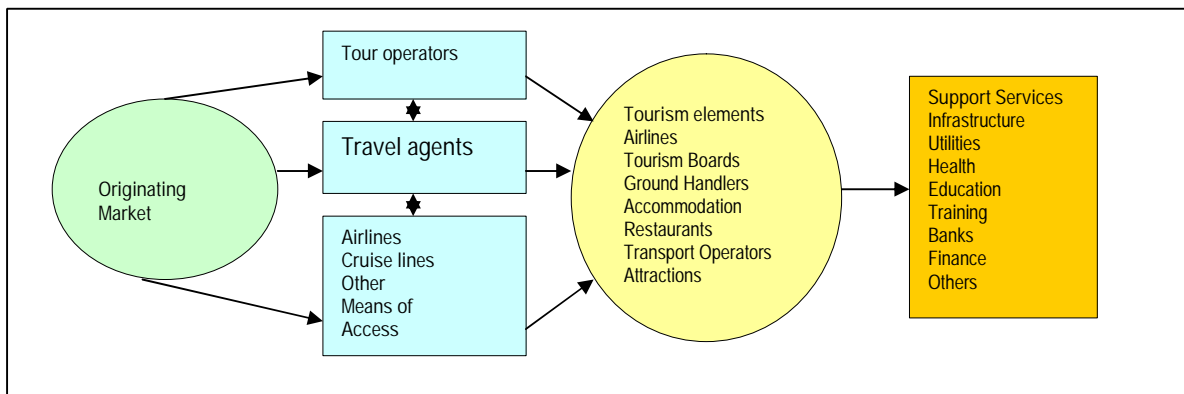
Tourism could be particularly attractive to the governments of developing countries and poor economic regions, because it could bring the badly needed foreign currency into the country (George, 2007: 298). Developing countries like Zimbabwe often have a trade deficit as a result of the failure to generate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

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

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

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

**Figure 2.1 Income generation and sharing in the tourism industry**



Source: Adapted from Li, 2005:267

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

### **2.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE AND ROLE OF DESTINATION MARKETING**

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

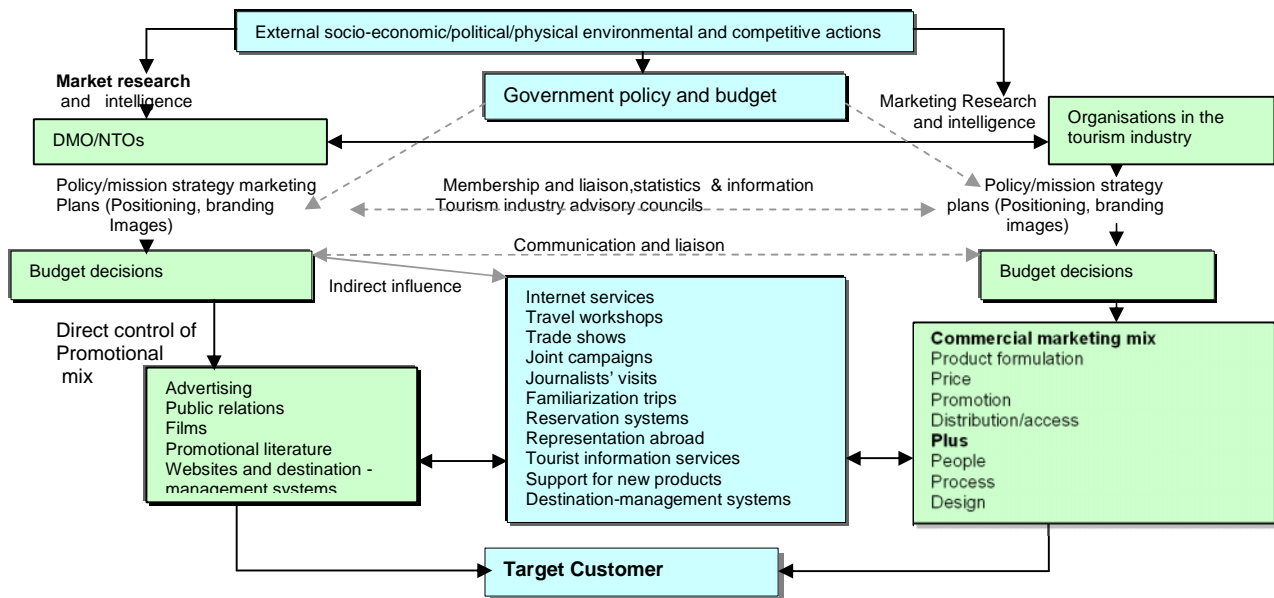


A strategic destination-marketing process involves an analysis of the current situation of the destination; identification of the products; setting of objectives; improving on the promotional strategies; and evaluating the results of the marketing efforts (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong, 1996:86).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

### 2.3.1 Destination marketing organisations

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

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



Source: Adapted from Middleton & Clark, 2001:338

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

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

### **2.3.2 The role of intermediaries in destination marketing**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **2.3.3 Support systems for destination marketing**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **2.3.4 Characteristics of tourism destinations**

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

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



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

### **2.3.5 Destination marketing**

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

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

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

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

### **2.3.6 Market segmentation as an element of destination marketing**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **2.3.7 Target marketing**

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

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

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

### **2.3.8 Developing a marketing-mix strategy for a destination**

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

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

**a) Product**

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

**b) Price**

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

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

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

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

**c) Promotion**

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

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

**d) Place**

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



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

**e) *People***

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

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

**f) Process**

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

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

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

**g) Physical evidence**

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

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

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

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

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

### **2.3.9 Marketing and communication for a destination**

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

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

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

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

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

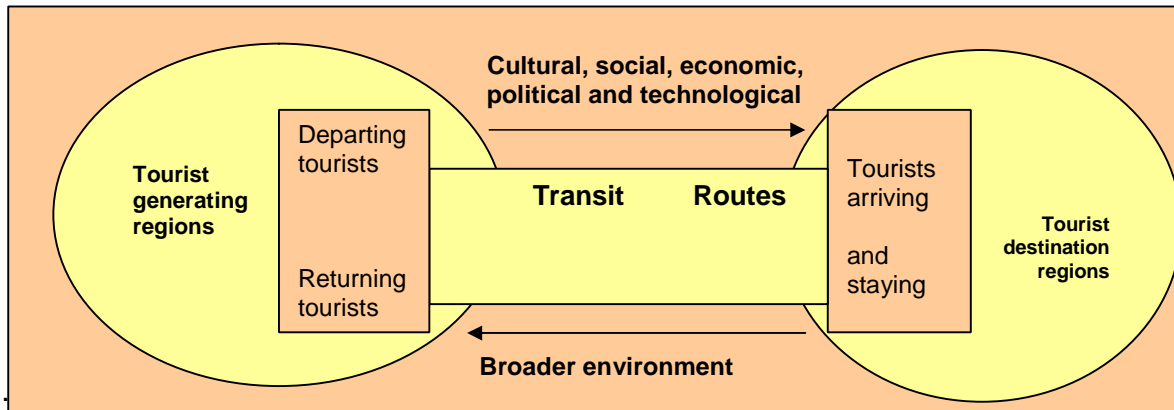
### **2.3.10 Crisis and its impact on tourism marketing**

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

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

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

**Figure 2.3 The tourism system**



**Source: Adapted from Bennett, 1995:37.**

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

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

**Table 2.1 Key potential impacts on national destination marketing**

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

**Source: Adapted from Heath, 2007: 264**

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

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

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

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



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

**Table 2.2 Key challenges and concerns in international destination marketing**

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

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

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

## **2.4 ORIGINS AND KEY FEATURES OF BRANDING**

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

### **2.4.1 Branding as a key strategic function**

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

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

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

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

#### **2.4.2 Key features and characteristics of a brand**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Figure 2.4 Product and service brands**



Source: Morrison & Anderson, 2002: 3 - 6

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

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

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

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

### 2.4.3 Definitions and orientation of destination branding

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

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

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

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

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

#### **2.4.4 Alternate definitions of brands**

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



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

The following table contains alternative definitions of brands.

**Table 2.3 Alternative definitions of brands**

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

**Source: Modified from Roth, 2003**

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

#### **2.4.5 Benefits of destination branding**

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

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

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

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

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

#### **2.4.6 Dimensions of branding**

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

##### **2.4.6.1 *Mind-share branding***

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

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

#### **2.4.6.2 Emotional branding**

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

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

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

### **2.4.6.3 Viral branding**

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

### **2.4.6.4 The cultural branding**

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

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

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

#### **2.4.6.5 Nation branding**

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

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

##### **a) Country branding**

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

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

**b) *Tourism branding***

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

**c) *Export promotion and investment***

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

**2.4.7 Public diplomacy as an element of destination branding**

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

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

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

Table 2.4 illustrates the levels of public diplomacy:

**Table 2.4 Levels of public diplomacy**

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

**Source: Adapted from Leonard, 2002**



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

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

## **2.5 SYNTHESISING THE NATURE OF BRANDING IN DESTINATION MARKETING**

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

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

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

### **2.5.1. Destination branding as a marketing task**

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

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

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

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

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

### **2.5.2 Tools for destination branding**

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

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

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

**Figure 2.5 An array of brands of leading destinations**



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

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

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

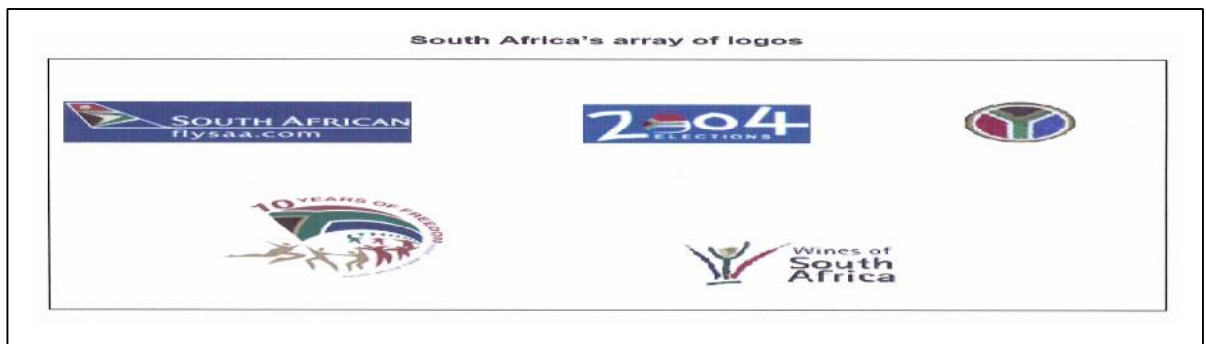
**Figure 2.6 South Africa's Umbrella logo**



**Source: Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006**

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

**Figure 2.7 South Africa's array of Logos**



**Source: IMC, 2003**

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

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

## 2.6 SUMMARY

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

## CHAPTER 3

### THE DESTINATION BRANDING PROCESS AND COMPETITIVE POSITIONING

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## CHAPTER 3

# THE DESTINATION BRANDING PROCESS AND COMPETITIVE POSITIONING

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

It is a worldwide trend that destination branding is increasingly becoming a competitive tool for repositioning destinations. In this chapter an exposition is given of the destination-branding process and an attempt is made to synchronise several branding, positioning and destination-image models that are used in the branding and positioning process. Destinations should continuously differentiate their offering in order to remain competitive. Chapter 3 also discusses the concept of destination image as being an important element of destination branding.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned aim of this chapter, the following objectives were formulated to:

- explicate the destination-branding process and illustrate its strategic role in positioning a destination;
- explore the challenges of destination branding in destination marketing
- discuss the benefits of re-branding a destination
- highlight the importance of destination-brand equity and indicate how it relates to brand identity;
- detail the strategic brand-management process and its impact on the health of the brand;
- provide examples of the manner in which a destination can effectively and sustainably be branded on the web;
- discuss the role of positioning and re-positioning as an element of destination branding; and

- discuss and explore the strategic role and impact of image as an element of destination branding and positioning.

### 3.2 THE DESTINATION-BRANDING PROCESS

Destination branding commences with the asking of the following cardinal questions:

Where are we now?

Where would we like to be?

How will we get there?

How well are we doing in comparison with the competition? (Heath, 2007:19).

A destination should have a vision. Fabricius (2006b: 6) states that "a vision that is shared by all the stakeholders and potential consumers should be clearly expressed in the core values of the brand at the launching of the brand". Ooi (2003:5) emphasizes the actions of monitoring, evaluation and review, which can assist the destination to communicate a clear identity, consistency and a unique brand identity.

Destinations should therefore transcend brands in order to create "trust marks", a name or symbol that links a destination emotionally with the desires and aspirations of its tourists and ultimately creates "love-marks" (Morgan *et al.* 2002). The first stage in the process of building or rejuvenating a destination brand is to establish the destination's core values, which should be durable, relevant and salient for the potential tourist (Heath, 2007:176). The values should also represent matters that are deliverable, differentiating and enthusing and should resonate with the consumers (Morgan *et al.* 2004:70).

### 3.2.1 The phases in building a destination-brand

The decision to use a branding approach to destinations, similar to what is done in respect of products, means that it is accepted that, for marketing purposes, destinations can be treated similar to products such as Coca-cola or McDonalds' burgers (Laws, 2002:204). This acceptance implies that the rules of mass communication could be followed and applied to tourism-destination marketing in the same way as these rules are applied to products.

According to Heath (2007:176), there are five phases in the brand-building process. These phases are differentiated as follows:

**Table 3.1 The five phases in destination branding**

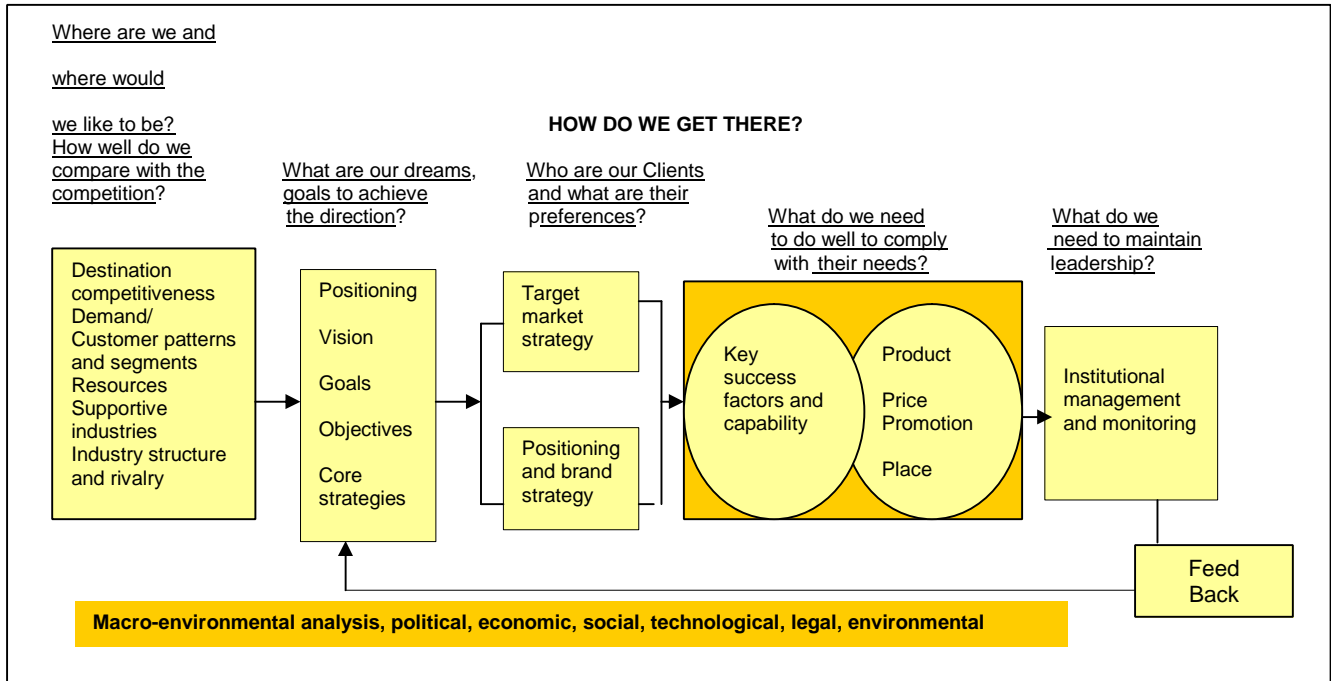
Phase one:	Market investigation, analysis and strategic recommendations
Phase two:	Brand identity development
Phase three:	Brand launch and introduction, i.e. communicating the vision
Phase four:	Brand implementation
Phase five:	Monitoring, evaluation and review.

**Source: Adapted from Heath, 2007:176; Morgan, Prichard & Pride, 2004:69.**

The branding of a country should not commence with the country itself, but with the consumers and the marketplace (Morgan *et al.* 2004:36). Furthermore, consideration should be given to how relevant the brand is for the contemporary tourism consumer and how it compares with the brand of key competitors. Because branding involves the creation of mental structures and the assistance given to consumers to organise their knowledge about the products and services concerned, it tends to simplify the customer's decision-making and provide value for the destination. Therefore, in determining the destination's competitiveness, resources available and the customer-demand segments, it is important to comprehend the quality of the experiences that are offered at the

destination level. There is a close relationship between the five phases of destination-brand building and the branding key links identified by Fabricius (2006a:4), as stated in Figure 3.1.

**Figure. 3.1 Branding key links**



**Source: Adapted and modified from Fabricius, 2006a:4**

Table 3.2 below shows how target marketing and the brand strategy can be linked to identity in the brand-building matrix while communication can be linked to the four “P”s. However, Cai (2000) warns that destinations should attempt to convey a sense of experiencing the brand, rather than merely delivering the encounter with the site. Similarly, Buhalis (2000:102) notes that successful brands never atrophy, but reflect and respond to changes in the consumer's life. While the brand's core values remain the same, its personality continues to evolve.

Therefore Morgan *et al.*, (2002:26) recommend that destinations should use research to ascertain the particular benefits that consumers associate with in the establishment of brand equity. As shown on Table 3.2, the brand building process should take cognisance of experiencing, identity, communication and quality. These four components are very important in developing a brand

architecture. Table 3.2 presents a brand-building matrix that has four important components, which should be considered in the brand-building process.

**Table 3.2 The brand-building matrix**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p>Customer expectations Customer service Actions of sales delivery staff and other staff Brand evolution over the years, changes to any aspect of the brand should reflect the changing market demands Seeing and believing/disbelieving</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMUNICATION</b></p> <p>Public relations and advertising strategies Quality letterheads and writing materials Internet presence News releases, sponsored press and articles etc Other verbal and non-verbal means of communication Road shows and events</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IDENTITY</b></p> <p>Strong and visible Memorable names Logos and colours /packaging Sponsorships Shelf position/display Vehicle displays/branding Corporate uniforms</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>QUALITY</b></p> <p>Tastes and level of service Ingredients and raw materials Product durability Guarantees Cutting-edge technology Country of origin effect</p>

**Source: Adapted from Olins, 2002:244 & Nwurah, 2005:3**

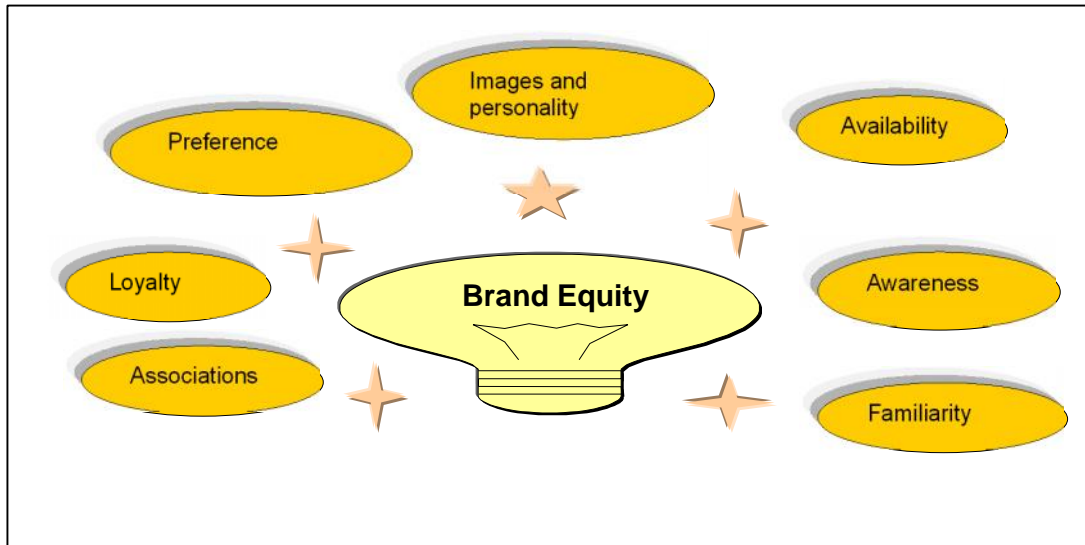
### 3.2.2. Destination-brand equity

Brand equity is the value of the brand. It is based on the extent to which the brand is accompanied by high brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, strong brand associations and other assets such as patents, trademarks and channel relationships (Srivastava & Shocker in Hart, 2003:297; Vicente, 2004b:3).

The concept of destination brand equity is concerned with the emotional value that results from the consumer's association with the destination. Fundamentally, the concept of brand equity emphasises the importance of branding in the development of marketing strategies. According to Joachimsthaler & Aaker (1997:10), the role of visibility in creating brand equity is often underestimated, because the mere recognition of a product can affect perceptions. The brand

equity concept involves the design and implementation of marketing activities and programmes that can be used to build and measure the brand's performance. The components of brand equity appear in Figure 3.2 below.

**Figure 3.2 The brand equity model**



**Source: Adapted and modified from Brandt & Johnson in Fabricius 2006b: 6**

According to Aaker (1996:7) "brand equity is a set of assets that are linked to the brand's name and symbol, which add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and that firm's customers". Ritchie & Ritchie (1998: 95) "argue that brand equity is the total accumulated value or worth of a brand". Brand equity includes the tangible and intangible assets that a brand contributes to the destination. These assets can either be financial or their value could lie in their ability to leverage brand equity. To develop brand equity, the destination should carry out a brand audit. A brand audit is a comprehensive examination of the brand that involves the various activities that are meant to assess the health of the brand, while uncovering its sources of equity and suggesting different ways to improve and leverage that equity (Keller, 1998: 266). A brand audit requires an understanding of the sources of brand equity from the perspective of both the destination and the tourist. The true value and future prospects of a brand usually rest with

consumers and their knowledge of the destination (Keller, 1998: 267). Therefore, if the power of a brand lies in the minds of the consumers, depending on what they have experienced and learnt about the brand over time, DMOs should use this knowledge (utility function) to build on the destination brand equity (Hart, 2003: 299). But to what extent is this relevant to the Zimbabwean brand?

Brand equity attempts to provide marketers with a vital strategic bridge that links the past to the future. Thus, it is the *quality* of the investment made in brand building that becomes the most critical factor and not necessarily the *quantity* of the investment that is made beyond some minimal threshold (Keller, 2003). If a customer has a high level of awareness of a brand, familiarity with the brand and holds some strong favourable and unique brand association, he or she is likely to purchase that brand (Aksoy, Atilgan & Akinci, and 2006:75). However, if the brand has some salient unique negative associations for the customer, then the customer's response could be different.

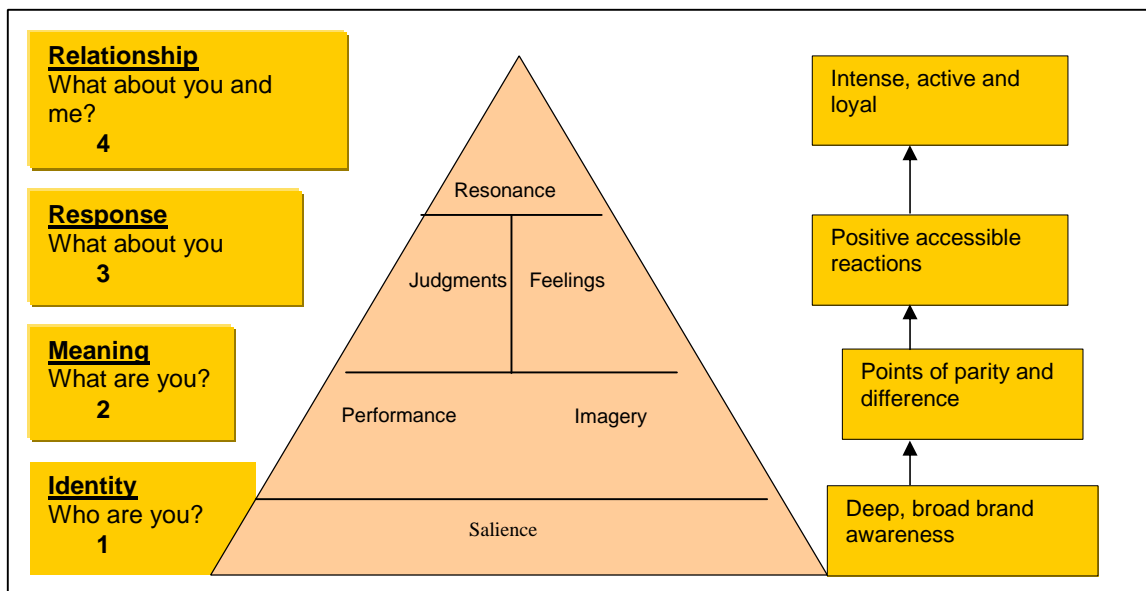
Evans & Berman (1990: 110) emphasise that "the key to brand equity is to ensure that tourists do not form the opinion that all brands in a certain category are the same". For example, consumers' preference for wine that is produced in a particular region has been linked to their interest in travelling to that particular wine-producing region (Heath, 2004). In most cases, tourist destinations enjoy strong brand equity that has been built over time on the basis of the products and services that they produce. For example, the lesser known wine pinot noir featured in the movie entitled, "Sideways", brought a number of visitors to the sleepy California town of Santa Barbara (Chan, Leung & Chan, 2005:40). Similarly, Switzerland has been associated with Rolex watches, while Kentucky is known for its bourbon (Heath, 2004). Therefore, product association could play an important role in the development of a destination's brand equity. It is understandable that consumers will attach themselves to products or brands that bear cultural meanings that match their cultural self-concept. Other related studies (Aaker, 1999:48; Hogg, Cox & Keeling, 2000:645) have revealed that consumers match their self-concept with consumer goods. Such matching

relates to the categories, such as class, status, age, gender and occupation, with which the customers associate the goods. This view strengthens the cultural branding school which shows the appropriateness of these models in destination branding. The essence of developing destination-brand equity is to have a sustained competitive advantage over one's competitors. Keller (2003:76) suggests that there should be four steps in the development of destination-brand equity, namely:

- Ensure that the consumers identify the brand by clearly understanding the product's image and the factors that influence it;
- establish the totality of the meaning of the brand in the minds of the customer and select a strategic direction through the use of points of parity and difference;
- elicit customers' responses to the identification and meaning of the brand and convert responses to the brand to create an intensely active loyalty relationship between customers and the brand; and
- convince as many stakeholders as possible to align with the strategic direction.

Figure 3.3 illustrates the process of developing brand equity.

**Figure: 3.3 The customer-based brand-equity pyramid**



Source: Adapted from Keller, 2003:76



Keller (2003:76) explains that destination-brand equity is epitomised in a hierarchy, as shown in Figure 3.3 above, with salience being the foundation of the hierarchy. Salience may represent the level of awareness of the destination brand. The consumer is aware of a number of similar brands. At the first level, the tourist is able to select the most appealing destination, based on personal reasons. Salience is also closely related to an association with importance, which is a cardinal aspect of identity. An association is a direct result of the benefits and attributes of a given holiday destination as perceived by the customer/tourists. Salience alone may be insufficient especially if there is no resonance with the brand in terms of visitation or intended visitation, in this case the brand may not have any meaning to the tourist.

The second stage in the development of destination-brand equity is the establishment of the meaning of the brand. This stage is concerned with the consumer's understanding of the points of difference and points of parity in respect of brands, such as the performance and reliability of various brands (Donald & Bettina, 1999:48). The third stage in development of destination-brand equity is the eliciting of customers' responses, Consumers are invited to judge the brand in terms of rational ("their heads") and emotional ("their hearts") criteria. Consumers judge brands in terms of criteria such as credibility, expertise, trust and worthiness. Their feelings at this stage could be divided into two categories, namely, experiential and enduring. At the top of the hierarchy, which is the final stage, loyalty to the brand is established. This last stage could be represented by word of mouth communication and repeat visits by tourists, which builds lasting relationships with the destination. This last stage is also referred to as the resonance, intense, active and/or loyal stage. The loyal stage is the one in which the customer feels a connection or sense of community with the brand and would miss it if it were no longer there (Keller,2003).

The belief that a destination brand is a totality of perceptions that consumers hold about their experiences that are associated with a particular place should give rise to effective management of these perceptions and experiences (De Cherntony, 2006). These perceptions should secure enduring value for the destination, its partners and customers (Keller, 2003). Therefore brand

equity should be built at every point of contact between customers and the destination. Each of these points, whether during or after the visit has a vital role in building the experience embodied in the brand. Brand equity should be managed effectively in order to build a destination-brand identity.

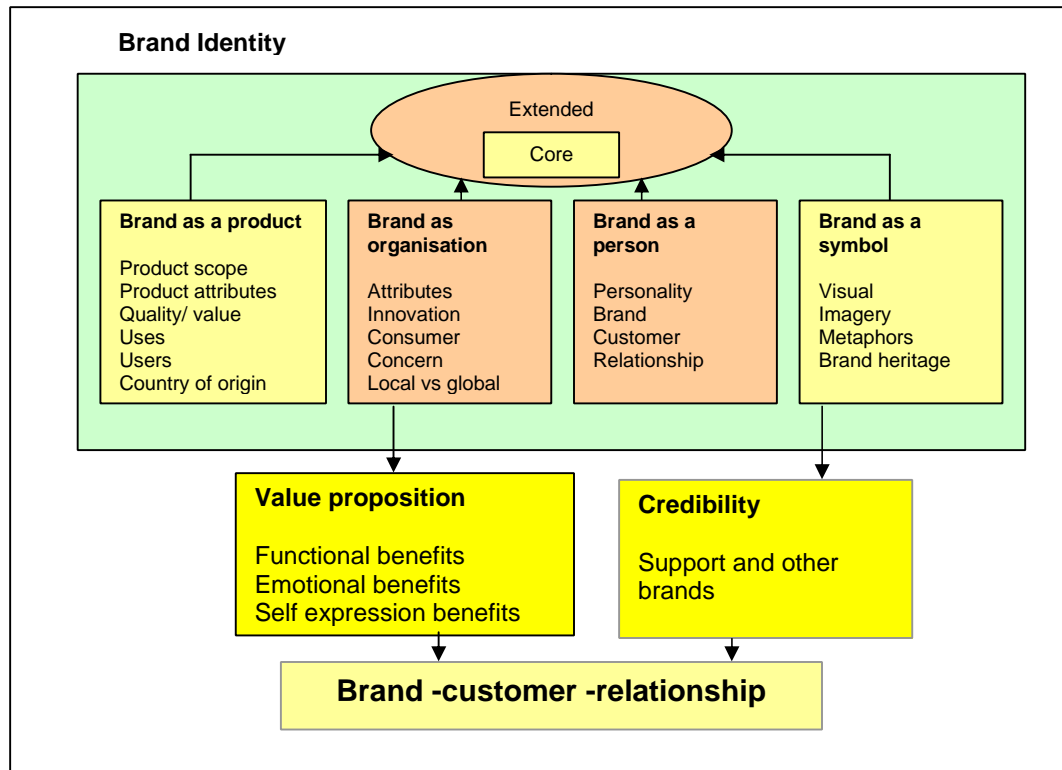
### **3.2.3 Destination-brand identity**

Brand identity has been used prolifically by many scholars (Keller, 2003; De Chernatony, 2006 & Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2003) and consultants as a concept in branding (Keller, 2003). Identity gives direction, meaning and purpose to the brand as it drives the strategic vision of the brand. According to De Chernatony (2006:45), “brand identity is a unique set of associations that the brand aspires to create or maintain as well as the manner in which the brand communicates these ideas to its stakeholders”.

These associations imply a promise to customers from the members of the organisation (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2003:3) and they become a representation within an organisation of what the brand stands for and means to its customers. Therefore, in order to achieve optimum brand strength and to derive the maximum benefit from a brand strategy, the scope of brand identity should be broadened, thereby avoiding common identity traps. These identity traps include excessively restrictive, dysfunctional and ineffective brand association. The most common mistake that is made with the establishment of a brand identity is the fixation on attributes, in which case the organisation assumes that the foundation of competitive dynamics and customer decisions are based on attributes alone. The fallacy of this myopic view is premised on the fact that attributes can easily be copied and that attributes are perceived rationally by customers. These assumptions limit strategic flexibility.

Aaker (1996) presents four broad perspectives from which a brand can be viewed. These perspectives are the brand as a person, brand as a symbol, brand as an organisation and brand as a product. These perspectives can assist in clarifying brand identity. They are summarised in figure 3.4.

**Figure: 3.4 The brand identity system**



**Source: Adapted from Aaker, in Grillot, 2007**

From a product point of view, a brand is considered to be the most important feature of brand identity, despite the risk of the fixation trap. The product-related associations that are made are directly related to the user's experience and choice (Grillot, 2007), which in turn is closely related to the character of the product. A brand identity involving a single product type can occur when an organisation attempts to dominate a particular market by positioning its brand to users by using the country of origin as the basis for the credibility of the product (Grillot, 2007). From an organisational point of view, a brand focuses on the organisation rather than on the product or service. It is

concerned with cultural matters such as innovation and consumer care or concern and this strategy could provide a link to consumers. The use of a brand from an organisational point of view may result in a greater understanding of customers' needs.

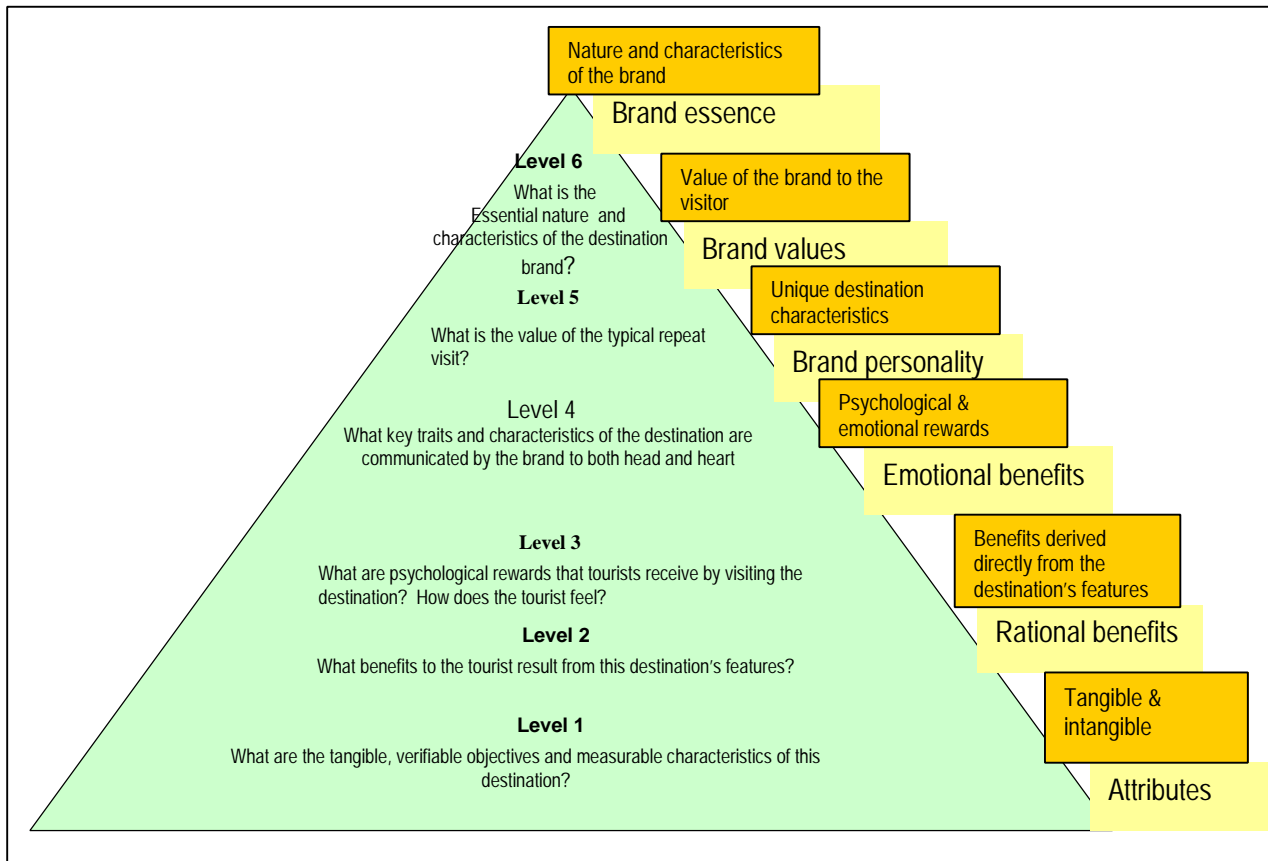
A brand as a person is concerned with personality issues and brand-customer relations, which form the soul of the brand. A brand as a symbol provides structure and strength to brand identity. The symbol relates to the image of the brand. The aim of the symbol is to reinforce the customer's recall and recognition. The purpose is to enhance customer-brand relations (Grillot, 2007). Although all these perspectives can not be used in destination branding, they should be considered when developing a brand identity and they should be linked to the brand personality.

#### **3.2.4. Destination-brand personality**

Kaplanidou & Vogt (2003:3) assert that "brand personality is the set of human characteristics that are associated with a brand". These characteristics include gender, age, socio-economic class as well as personality traits such as warmth and sentimentality. A brand's personality has both a head and a heart; its head refers to the logical attributes of the brand features, while the heart refers to its emotional benefits and associations (Heath, 2007:178; Morgan & Prichard, 2004:70). Therefore, the success of any destination brand is critically dependent on the extent to which the destination's personality interacts with the target audience on the emotional and the rational level (Morgan *et al.* 2004:70; De Chernatony, 2006:236).

Furthermore, Morgan & Prichard (2004) argue that the main challenge in branding is to develop a destination brand that has a rich personality and yet is complex and appealing to the target audiences. Such branding is rare, because attributes are mostly arbitrarily and superficially constructed. The destination brand pyramid that was developed by Cleverdon & Fabricius,(2006:9) and Kaplanidou & Vogt, (2003:2) is outlined in Figure 3.5 below and discussed thereafter.

**Figure: 3.5 The destination brand pyramid**



**Source: Adapted from Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006:9 and Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2003:2**

The destination brand pyramid has six levels. Level 1 represents the tangible, verifiable, objective and measurable characteristics of a destination. When these characteristics are delivered to the visitor, they should underpin the brand. On the first level, the destination wants to identify unique experiences that enable it to deliver on its promise. These experiences should be linked to the positive market trends and matched with the people that desire them. Levels 2 and 3 mainly focus on the benefits that the visitor derives from the destination's features. The destination considers the psychological rewards or emotional benefits that the visitor derives from visiting that particular destination. Levels 4, 5 and 6 are concerned to a greater extent with repeat visitors and the essential nature and characteristics of the brand. That is why Morgan *et al.*, (2002:33) propose that the branding process should be accompanied by the development of a positioning statement that is

a unique selling proposition and that can be achieved through socio-demographic criteria such as age, sex, occupation and income. In reality, these socio-demographic criteria could be very helpful, but the most favourable means of achieving a high rate of repeat visitors could be the use of a combination of predictive behaviour modes such as values, lifestyles and attitudes in order to match the nature and characteristics of the brand with the target audience.

### **3.2.5 Destination-brand architecture**

Brand architecture can be defined as a blueprint that guides the brand building, development and marketing that should reflect all the key components of a destination brand (Heath, 2007:179). Brand architecture should reflect the positioning selected, which can offer either rational or emotional benefits to the tourists. The brand architecture should take cognisance of the destination's composition (National, Regional, City and Town) and should facilitate synergy. The synergy should include the identification of supra-brands and sub-brands that are based on geographical and product differences (Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006: 6; Heath, 2007: 179).

The brand architecture can be reflected on the destination's trade marks (logos), marketing collaterals and advertising concepts. A case in point is the campaign regarding the branding of Australia (Brand Australia), which has a logo comprising a yellow kangaroo against a backdrop of a red sun and a background of green and blue sea. The brand is epitomised as being youthful, energetic, optimistic, genuine, and open and it promises fun.

The brand personality is projected as being youthful, stylish, vibrant, diverse and adventurous. The colours and inferences that are used in the brand architecture of this campaign include red earth, a desert, a blue-sky, the sea, endless green bush, a rainforest and a clean environment. Its construction is combined with a yellow background, which represents warm nights, life, energy, sun, youth and friendliness (Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006:8).

Cousins (n.d.) notes that the “Brand Australia post-Olympics campaign wanted to portray the destination in a different light by projecting the brand with a futuristic image”. Through its combination of light colours, the brand was intended to position Australia as a youthful, energetic and friendly country with a focus on the future. Another relevant example of a good brand architecture is the campaign involving Britain, which is summarised in Table 3.3 below.

**Table 3.3 The brand architecture of Britain**

Area	Positioning	Rational benefits	Emotional benefits	Personality
Britain	Traditional heritage & the unconventional	Heritage, landscape, arts, culture & people	I feel stimulated by the crunching, often paradoxical, experience of Britain. At ease in the open and friendly culture	Great, solid, yet accessible. Cold in appearance, yet friendly. Traditional, yet innovative
England	Bush, green, discovery	Afternoon teas, quaint pubs, cathedrals, rivers, canals and lakes	I feel fulfilled by experiencing the quaint culture, relaxed by the harmonious countryside and soothed by the outdoors	Conservative, pleasant, refined, harmonious and approachable
Scotland	Fire and stone	Ragged, unspoilt, wilderness, dramatic, scenery, romance, heritage, folklore, warmth & feisty people	I feel in awe of the elements in Scotland. Embraced and rejuvenated by the warmth of the people	Independent, warmth, mysterious, ragged and feisty
London	Pageantry and pop	Diverse culture, arts, glamour, pageantry, nightlife, music, cosmopolitan and fashionable	I feel liberated by the vibrancy of London, the wealth of heritage and culture.	Open minded and casual. Unorthodox, vibrant and creative.
Wales	Nature and legendry	Natural, dramatic beauty, poetry & song, legend and mystery	I feel inspired by the lyrical beauty of Wales. I am uplifted by the spirituality of the environment	Honest, welcoming, romantic and down to earth

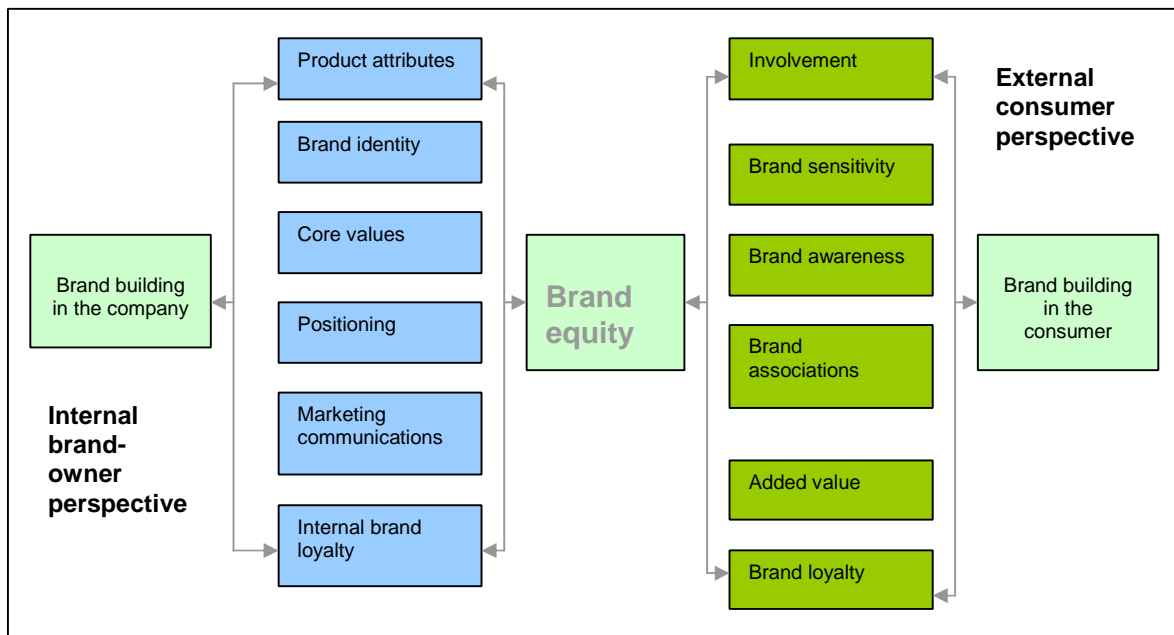
**Source: Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2002:34-35.**

Destinations that have sound brand architecture are likely to attract the customers and remain competitive over a long period of time (Morgan *et al*, 2002). The development of sound brand architecture requires the usage of a unique combination of product characteristics and added value, which could be both tangible and non-tangible. These characteristics should have a relevant meaning that is inextricably linked, consciously or intuitively, to destination awareness.

### 3.2.6. Strategic brand management

Melin, in Grillot (2007:42), developed a brand management model that focuses on the brand-building process. The model has two distinct perspectives, namely the internal brand-owner perspective and the external consumer perspective. The model, featured in Figure 3.6, illustrates brand building as a value-creating process that occurs in the minds of consumers and within the organisation itself.

**Figure 3.6 The destination-brand management process**



Source: Adapted from Melin in Grillot, 2007:43.

#### 3.2.6.1 The external customer brand perspective

The main aim of a brand-building process is to establish a broad perspective on the level of brand loyalty (Grillot, 2007). From a consumer perspective, brand loyalty comprises six steps, namely; involvement, brand sensitivity, brand awareness, brand associations, added value and brand loyalty, as set out in Figure 3.6 above. These concepts represent a value-creation process and are interconnected. At the involvement stage, the destination wants to encourage the consumer to be



involved and encourages an active interest in the product. A high level of customer involvement could result in the establishment of their brand loyalty and increase their brand sensitivity (Grillot, 2007). If a customer is brand sensitive, the result could be that he or she would use known brands as the primary source of information when faced with a choice when purchasing. Therefore, if consumers are well aware of a brand and its competitive advantage, their awareness could result in them associating the brand with quality. Brand association is an important aspect in branding as it is a prerequisite of brand awareness. Brand awareness has an influence on the brand-image dimension and it could contribute to the creation of a positive perception of the destination in the customer's mindset (Grillot, 2007). All these factors could contribute towards brand equity forming the basis of trust, which was discussed in the previous subtopic in this chapter.

### **3.2.6.2 *The internal brand perspective***

Viewed from a company perspective, brand equity represents accumulated knowledge. Within the organisation, the branding process may proceed in a sequence that involves the following: product attributes; brand identity; core values; positioning; marketing and communication; and internal brand loyalty. These issues may lead to the development of a strategic brand platform, which is a potential source of competitive advantage.

The brand attributes should be linked to the brand. As long as the brand is not linked to the product, there is no (functional) value creation. It is the functional brand value that could result in brand identity. The name of the product fulfils a significant role in brand identity and it is considered to be a primary carrier of identity. Some secondary associations could result from the identity. These secondary associations, which play a supportive role, include the type of logo, marketing communications and packaging. The activities of the identity makers should be co-ordinated to carry and create a uniform identity (Grillot, 2007).

Melin, in Grillo (2007), discusses the identity-reinforcing factors that include distinctiveness, communicability, credibility, potential for extension and potential for internationalisation. These factors are differentiated from identity-developing factors that include name, origin, personality, function and distribution. Melin furthermore alludes to the core values of the destination which are essential factors in a destination that are communicable and valuable to the consumer and these factors can not be imitated by competitors because of their uniqueness to the destination.

### **3.2.6.3 Other branding models**

In their study, that is similar to Melin's, Tasci & Gartner (2006:300) developed a destination-branding model. They recommend that brand researchers should conduct more empirical studies that involve both the supply and the demand perspective. They advocate that the branding of a destination involves positive image building with the use of several elements of a destination such as terms, names, logos, designs, symbols, slogans, colour, packages, architecture, photographic styles as well as heritage, language, myths and legends. As such, destinations should develop brand meanings and assets on both the supply side and the demand side of the market. The branding process could therefore be enhanced through the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Some of the most recent destination-branding exercises are analysed and discussed in Table 3.4 below. These exercises have been reported by Olins (2000); Buhalis (2000); Kotler & Gartner (2002); Brymer (2003); Baker (2005); Fabricius (2006b); and the WTO (2007).

**Table 3.4 An analysis of other destination-branding frameworks and approaches**

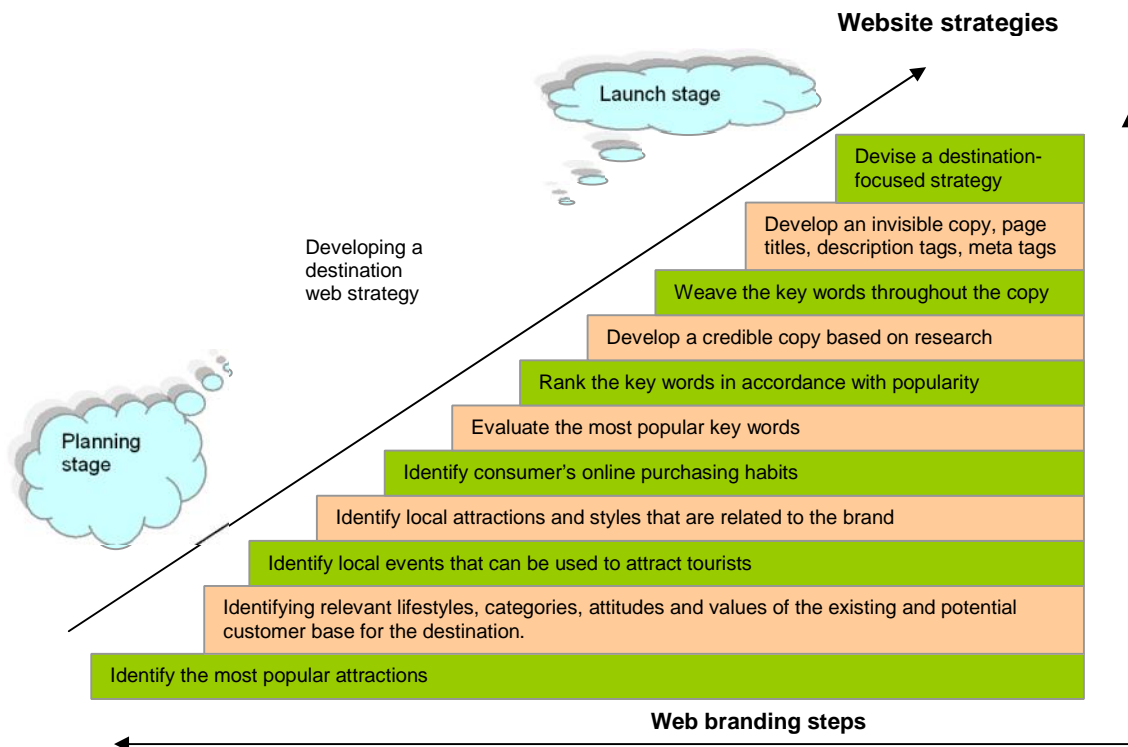
<b>Destination brand building steps</b>									
<b>Author</b>	<b>Principle</b>	<b>Destination vision in consultation with all stakeholders</b>	<b>Strategic resource analysis</b>	<b>Brand image analysis</b>	<b>Brand development</b>	<b>Brand positioning</b>	<b>Brand promotion and integration</b>	<b>Brand management</b>	<b>Brand monitoring and evaluation</b>
Olins (2000)	Seven- point brand-building plan	X		X	X		X	X	
Buhalis (2000)	Four principles for destination brand building	X				x	X		
Kotler & Gartner (2002)	Practical steps in branding			X	X		X		
Brymer (2003)	Branding process	X	x	X	X		X	X	x
Baker (2005)	Ten successes of destination Branding	X			X	x	X	X	x
Fabricius (2006)	Brand strategy framework	X		X	X	x	X	X	
WTO, (2007)	Brand-building process	X		X	X				

**Source: Researcher's own construction**

### 3.2.7 Destination branding on the website

A web strategy for destination branding could contribute to leveraging the popularity of a destination by making that organisation the hero of a destination of choice (Price & Starkov, 2003). Branding on the web can take many forms, including the use of a destination section or page, destination web pages, destination website or destination web portal. The web strategy could mainly be achieved mainly by providing valuable and relevant information to enable online travellers and search engine spiders alike to find value on the website beyond the destination brand content (Price & Starkov, 2003). A destination website should turn the organisation into the gravitational centre of the destination (Price & Starkov, 2003). The following diagram portrays a step by step process in the construction of a website for a destination:

Figure 3.7 Steps in developing a website strategy



Source: Adapted and modified from Price & Starkov, 2003

According to Kaplanidou & Vogt (2003:5), “the use of the internet is increasing and people continue to turn to this communication vehicle for more information regarding destinations”. There has been a significant increase in the number of people who use websites for travel planning. Therefore, effort should be put in communicating the destination brand with the target audience through the consistent use of websites. Websites should reflect all the components of a destination while communicating the destination’s brand identity to the potential visitor (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2003:4).

### ***3.2.7.1 Benefits of a destination website strategy in tourism***

A destination website strategy strives to enable the visitor to the website to view and read highly informative content. In cases in which it is difficult to choose among brands, consumers are likely to pick the brands that they prefer or that they are familiar with (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2003:5; Kania, 2001: 122). Therefore, website users spend more time visiting their favourite sites than they do visiting new sites. To create a website that becomes one of the travellers’ favourites is very important, because it encourages repeat visitation while increasing opportunities for choosing the destination described on that website.

The website can be a base for the cardinal communication that moves a customer’s perception from brand awareness to brand preference (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2003:4). Tourists’ use of a particular website could also lead them to develop loyalty towards the brand concerned. Because destination websites differ from most product websites, they should offer a pleasant first-time visit and portray a distinct and clear image of what the destination represents. Visitors could be attracted to visit the website again by sending them e-mail messages on new and existing information about the destination (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2003:5). The website brand strategy could eventually lead visitors to speak to others about the destination and its website.

In order for the website to be effective, the mistakes identified by Temporal in Kaplanidou & Vogt (2003:5) should be avoided. These mistakes include the inclusion of time-consuming downloads; poor quality of the content on the website; failure to ensure ease of navigation; and failure to use direct and relevant language that is capable of evoking immediate responses and feedback.

The key element in the establishment of brand loyalty on a website is to measure its impact by using any of the following key measures that have been proposed by Kaplanidou & Vogt (2003:5), namely website conversion rate, customer satisfaction, repeat visitation numbers and commitment to the brand. Most destinations particularly Zimbabwe has not established brand loyalty measures as proposed by Kaplanidou & Vogt (2003). Vicente (2004b:31) advocates a:

*“one-stop country website or official gateway because it could contribute to consistency for a country’s brand allowing the country to showcase its brand graphics and consequently leverage itself in the process”.*

Websites are equally important for reflecting the country’s commitment to customer service. Internet users could visit one website to obtain all the information they would need about the destination. Therefore, if all the country’s brands are presented on a website, such presentation could increase the level of visitation by internet users and simultaneously shape the users’ perception about the destination (Price & Starkov, 2003). Several countries are still to launch such websites (Morgan *et al*, 2002). South Africa launched its website through the International Marketing Council in 2001 (IMC, 2003). The use of a website has internationalised the importance of branding on the web. It has made South Africa a world-class competitor in this area.

### **3.2.8 The role of government in destination branding**

The government as a major stakeholder in this study plays a significant role in developing and sustaining a tourism destination brand (Rijksen & Gillemore, 2000:8). Every government has political ambitions, agendas and development strategies and therefore it is the government that ultimately determines and controls the image of a destination. A Government plays a co-ordinating role in destination branding. Olins (2002:243) outlines the following roles of a government in destination branding:

- It maintains a record and profile of all the visitors that come to a destination;
- it controls all the marketing and communication activities, including the messages that are sent out to the global village;
- it co-ordinates all the branding efforts, from the local and regional to the national level;
- it controls the tourism environment, making it conducive for visitation; and
- finally, it is responsible for the maintenance of all the natural and man-made attractions, local culture and heritage.

A government can, however, also act as a challenge to the branding of a destination, especially if there is no or little consultation with the other stakeholders. If a government's political ideologies are in conflict with tourism objectives, it could have a very negative impact on the brand. This is perhaps an important challenge for a place like Zimbabwe.

### **3.2.9. Stakeholder power in destination branding**

According to Cheong & Miller (2000:381), "power is everything in tourism". Viewed from a macro perspective, power is an important component of the development of policies,

planning and, analysis. Power is also related to tourism in terms of political economy and development (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). At a micro and image perspective, power in tourism shapes the development of a gaze that projects a tourism destination as a combination of symbols and images (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2004:30; Pike, 2004:6). The tourism system is structured around a core that comprises an assemblage of structures, goods, services and other resources that contribute directly to tourism. The system includes, the social, economic, geological, geographical and ecological components, along with the processes and functions that complement its totality, which is essential to its sustainability (Marzano & Scott, 2005:205).

In order to comprehend the power structure within the tourism industry, it is essential to realise that it is a complex system and that it is fragmented. In this study stakeholders comprise the Government, Tourism service providers, Tourism authority and Tourism representative bodies, who have separate values and interests. Yet, the decision-making processes in tourism are dependent on collaboration. Therefore, destination branding will always be at risk of being influenced by power imbalances, which can inhibit both its initiation and its success (Trist, 1983:252; de Araujo, & Bramwell, 2002:1143; Keogh, 1990:452; Ladkin & Bertramini, 2000:79). Viewed from an image perspective, tourism manifests its self in the form of power in society, operating as a mechanism in respect of inequalities are articulated and validated through different cultural discourses (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998:7). Power is also manifested through communication, because the use of images, language and representations is a clear demonstration of political, intellectual, cultural and moral power.

According to Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott (2002), the creation and management of a destination brand requires collaboration among stakeholders. The destination brand is considered to be a common good, which is the outcome of an ongoing process of collaboration amongst stakeholders (Hardy & Philips, 1998:220). Mundt (2002:341) "labels



destination branding as both a myth and a fallacy due to the lack of ownership of the brand and states that it is therefore beyond the responsibility of destination management”.

Despite these incongruences, the concept of destination branding is widespread. Collaboration amongst stakeholders should be balanced, because the various stakeholders have different roles and agendas and even benefit from tourism in different ways (Aas, Ladkin & Fletcher, 2005:34). Although destination branding has positive outcomes of unity and collaboration for the various stakeholders, an assessment of the roles of individual stakeholders is likely to reveal how power influences the collaborative process (Prideaux & Cooper, 2002:37; Laws, Scott & Parfitt, 2002:50; Marzano & Scott, 2005:205). Power particularly in the Zimbabwean context has affected the tourism marketing process especially on the branding context.

Collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders in a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared values, rules, norms and structures, or act or decide on issues related to that domain (Reed, 1997:570; Wood & Gray, 1991:142). Since the collaboration process is not universal, it can be either constrained or enhanced by the definition of a problem that exists within a domain and through collaboration. Stakeholders are inclined to influence the course of action that is taken in respect of certain issues (Savage, Nix, White, & Blair, 1991:64-65). Therefore power in destination branding can be described as the ability of various stakeholders to bring their competing values and interests to the process of branding in order to influence the manner in which the destination is perceived and portrayed. Such conflicting views, interests and power bases will always remain a challenge to the branding endeavour. As it is the case in Zimbabwe, the political and ideological principles of the current government have resulted in the creation of conflicting interest groups and this has tended to challenge and impact negatively on the tourism marketing domain.

### **3.2.10 The role of the media in destination branding**

Worldwide, the tourist customer is exposed to newspapers and travel supplements; magazines; television travel programmes; and guidebooks (Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006:10). He or she is bombarded with information that can convey a positive or a negative message about a destination. A destination can itself also improve its collection of data and undertake an analysis of data that appears in the media. Managing a destination is different from managing a product. Whereas a product can easily be taken off the market, destinations can not. It is therefore important not to underestimate the potential harm that a crisis can cause for a destination or the scope of the influence that the media can have.

According to Bianchi (2003:18), "a destination should be prepared for any eventuality; it should have a crisis plan and update the plan regularly". The plan may involve the setting up of communication centres as sources of information during and after a crisis. Above all, as Marzano & Scott (2005:205) advise that during a crisis, a destination should act speedily by providing regular updates on the prevailing situation. In such a case, the media can be used to rebuild the destination. Such preparedness calls for the training of the spokespersons of the destination on how to deal with the media. In addition, the crisis should be contextualised, without attempting to cover up the seriousness of the situation, while simultaneously remaining positive about the outcomes (Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006:9). The media remain potentially harmful, but nevertheless powerful channels for a destination and can be used in respect of the image-modification process.

### **3.3 CHALLENGES IN DESTINATION BRANDING**

Morgan *et al.*, (2002:13) suggest that "political pressures, external environmental changes and product issues should all be successfully combated if a destination brand is to prosper

and grow”.

They argue that “global brands could be the ultimate distributor of wealth... even the smallest nations could benefit from branding, partnerships and promotion”. But does branding ultimately provide all these benefits?

Szondi, (2006:12) is of the opinion that “most tourism destinations have limited budgets and yet they are expected to market globally, competing with other destinations as well as with other global brands”.

The failure to acquire adequate funding for marketing and branding activities may render the brand obsolete. If brands have to be used as strategic tools, the approach should change. Cai (2000:750) notes that:

*“branding should be about achieving a balance between applying cutting-edge advertising and public-relations approaches to the marketing problem, which is the essence of managing local, regional and national politics”.*

Some destinations have no defined tourism strategy (Badal *et al*, 2008:5), which usually results in such a destination going through the usual stages of the destination lifecycle, namely exploration, fame, familiarity and fatigue, especially during a crisis situation (Heath, 2007:162).

According to Hill, Osborn & Plumptre (2002:10), the following factors can erode a destination brand:

- Friction and unnecessary competition amongst the tourism organisations and businesses;

- hostile and unfriendly attitudes of the local residents towards visitors;
- damage or permanent alteration of natural features or historical resources;
- loss of cultural identities, pollution, overcrowding and traffic problems; and
- stoppage of unique local-level events and festivals; loss of market share; and high seasonality.

The effect of the external environment may be difficult to control, especially when the media focus on the negative aspects of a destination. A brand may be well developed, but the destination may still face some challenges regarding the delivery of the promise as a result of product complexity and a focus on short-term results (Baker, 2007:1). While it is accepted that a brand should be deliverable, sustainable and believable, a destination may attempt to differentiate itself from competitors and end up over-promising and neglecting the customer's needs. Failure to base the brand on its strongest and most distinctive proposition can lead to brand ambiguity (Baker, 2007:2). It may also occur that a destination may fail to understand what is being branded as a result of its lack of adequate research and stakeholder support (Badal *et al*, 2008:5).

The efforts and inputs used in developing a brand remain invisible to the consumer. The promises, values and experiences created by the brand may not be credible, because consumers are increasingly becoming more confident, sophisticated and marketing literate (De Chernatony & McDonald, 2003:394).

Brand decay may begin if the brand is overextended into new products (deliverable) or after a merger or takeover that damages its essence. In such a case, brand revitalisation and repositioning becomes a priority. There are many other factors that may erode a brand's franchise and profitability. Some of these factors would include market decline, new technology, changing tastes, rising costs and new competition (Harsha & Chacko, 1991).

### 3.4 RE-BRANDING A DESTINATION

Hedberg in Bennett & Savani (2003:71), state that “place re-branding could be implemented to revive a pre-existing, but outdated, place image, in order to make it more relevant to the market”. Re-branding can be defined as a change to a brand in order to stimulate a change in consumers’ attitudes, perceptions and behaviours with the goal of generating positive market growth (Badal *et al.*, 2008:4). The benefits of re-branding lie in the opportunities created by the new or revived brand image. Re-branding tends to be descriptive and it uses short phrases to persuade the target audience about the brand. It furthermore tends to summarise and translate the intention of a marketing programme in a few short words or phrases. This statement of intention could assist tourists to internalise the meaning and the value of the destination in terms of what the brand stands for and what makes it unique and special (Lewis & Chamber, 2000).

Re-branding brings about awareness and helps to reinforce the brand positioning and desired points of difference. In fact, changing any of the tangible elements of the brand can be considered to be re-branding, whether advertising through corporate stationary and sales literature; packaging; design; staff uniforms; delivery vehicles; or corporate identity trademarks (Badal *et al.*, 2008:4).

Re-branding acts as an image builder and carries meaning and relevance to the tourists (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). It can therefore be used as a base for developing a public catchphrase. Re-branding could lead to customer loyalty, which could ultimately result in increased commercial value. It could furthermore serve as a basis for the co-ordination of the private sector’s efforts through the establishment of a link between communication tools and the promotion of other products.

### **3.5 POSITIONING AS AN ELEMENT OF DESTINATION BRANDING**

Positioning is widely accepted as a central process in destination marketing. The process of positioning is applied in respect of consumer products; services, business to business relationships (Keller, 2001:149); marketing of hotels (Bramwell & Rawding, 1996:396); images of regions or countries as tourism destinations; as well as in political campaigning (Ries & Trout, 1986:26). Theoretical understanding and grounding of positioning is still rudimentary. There is a scarcity of documented empirical studies on positioning and an absence of tested frameworks that could provide a convincing exposition of the concept of positioning. The subject is therefore wide open to academic enquiry (Im, 2003:100).

Nevertheless, there is some evidence that positioning plays a major role in marketing (Prideaux & Cooper, 2002:36). Recognising the value of positioning, some positioning strategies have emerged in firms, organisations and even in place marketing, since place marketing is increasingly becoming an important element in the strategic destination-management process. At first it was used as a strategy for developing effective communication, but it has grown to include all aspects of the marketing mix. Whereas Lovelock (1996:160) refers to copy positioning that uses simple imagery or vague promises, De Chernatony & McDonald (1992:144) consider the positioning process to represent the most important decision and action that management has to take in regard to a destination.

#### **3.5.1 The definition of positioning**

Positioning is a form of marketing communication that plays a vital role in enhancing the attractiveness of a tourism destination (Chacko, 1997:5) by “modifying the tangible characteristics and intangible perceptions of a marketing offering in relation to the competition” (Arnott in Blankinson, 2004:317). It is important to note that positioning is not

determined by the product's image or the support that it seeks to elicit but it is rather the perception or image (that occupies a distinctive place) in the customer's mindset (Kotler, 1996:100). Positioning is a communication strategy, involving the development of a marketing mix, which forms the natural flow of information from market segmentation through target marketing (Morrison & Anderson, 2002:2; Payne, 1993:376; Pike, 2004:1). It is the act of formulating a competitive position for a tourist destination and subsequently enhancing its attractiveness (Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006:1; Harsha & Chacko, 1991:2). Positioning does not primarily concern what you do to or with the product, but it is concerned with what you do to the prospective customer and how the customer perceives you (McDonald, De Chernatony & Harris, 2001:340).

The perception of the customer is central to effective positioning. An organisation's position should not be considered in isolation, but should rather be perceived in relation to the organisation's competitors (Blankinson & Kalafatis, 2001:36). A brand position in the customer's mind is a relative concept to the extent that it refers to a comparative assessment by the customer of how the brand is similar or different from competing brands (Blankinson & Kalafatis, 2001:36). Therefore, in order to succeed in our over-communicated society, a destination should create a position that takes into consideration not only the destination's own strengths and weaknesses, but also the strengths and weaknesses of competitors (Blankinson & Kalafatis, 2001:37). Successful positioning requires consistency, an attribute that may take many years to solidify in the consumer's mind.

Lewis & Chamber (2000) argue that positioning is about the optimum location of a brand and its competitors in the mind of the consumers in order to maximize the potential benefits to a destination. They point out that brand positioning guides marketing strategies by clarifying what the brand is all about, how it is unique, how it is similar to competitive brands and why consumers should choose the destination concerned. It enables a brand to fight through the

“noise” in a market and enables the brand to occupy a distinct and valuable place in the target customer's mind (De Chernatony, 2006:239).

### **3.5.2 Internal destination positioning**

In order for a brand to be authentic and deliver on its promise, the local community and stakeholders should believe in the brand and, in essence, live it. A destination-marketing organisation should therefore develop a strategy for the communication and promotion of the brand internally. In the case of the positioning of a country, the best brand champions are the citizens within that country, but they could also be its worst enemies if they do not subscribe to the brand. Positioning a brand internally involves the development of practical ways to instil the brand values within the destination's citizens.

The core brand values and brand mantras emphasise the importance of internal branding, which should ensure that members of an organisation or destination are properly aligned with the brand and with what it represents (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004). If the brand positioning is explained and communicated internally in line with what the economy experiences, customers' desires can be reflected in the service economy (De Chernatony, 2006:270). A thorough explanation of the internal destination position to the people working within the tourism and hospitality industry is very important, because it enables them to gain a clear understanding of the basic branding notions and how these notions could promote or detract from the destination brand equity in the long run (Keller, 2003). The internal destination positioning should therefore be a high priority with the top management and the necessary resources should be allocated to it. Although the name chosen to reinforce the initial position of a brand may facilitate brand association internally, it may also make it harder to link the brand to new associations when it has to be repositioned at a later stage (Jensen & Kormeliussen, 2002:321). Ideally, the positioning of a destination is associated with



particular benefits and it is highly suggestive of the product class. These benefits should be meaningful and transferable to a wide variety of product settings or geographic conditions; have enduring meaning and relevance over time; and be strongly protectable, both legally and competitively (Keller, 2003:181). They should be inherently full of fun, interesting and have rich, creative potential.

### **3.5.3 Benefits of positioning a destination**

A tourist product's position occupies a particular place in a given market as perceived by the relevant group of tourists who are known as the target market. A position evokes an image of the destination concerned in the minds of the customer (Domingo, 1988:60). It projects the idea that differentiates the destination from the competition and projects it as a place that can satisfy the needs and wants of the tourist (Domingo, 1988:61). An effective positioning provides a competitive edge to a destination that is attempting to convey its attractiveness to the target market.

If a destination has no clear identity or has a negative image in the customer's mind, it is difficult for its management to create customer demand (Harsha & Chacko, 1991:3). When a position for a destination is being established, the creation of an identity should not be confined to visual images only, but should attempt to create an emotional relationship between a destination and the potential visitor. The positioning process uses the marketing mix variables. The process of positioning a destination includes both a consideration of the products and services that are offered to the customer and how these products and services are presented and communicated to the target audience. Instead of attempting to appeal to a wider constituency with the use of a variety of positions, which may confuse the consumers and conjure up a fuzzy image of the destination, destination marketers should focus on specific target markets (Aaker & Myers, 1996:60). Therefore destinations like Zimbabwe need to focus on a specific target market by occupying a specific position in the marketplace.

### 3.5.4 Positioning strategies

Various positioning strategies require different resources and skills. In addition, an organisational structure can affect the implementation and control of the chosen positioning strategy, as summarised by Porter (1980:40-41) in Table 3.5 below:

**Table 3.5 Generic positioning strategies**

Generic Strategy	Key strategy element	Resources & organisational requirements
Cost leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in scale-efficient plant design of products for ease of operation,</li> <li>• Control of overheads, R&amp;D, avoidance of marginal customer accounts.</li> <li>• High market share, substantial capital investment in modern technology, efficiency in process engineering.</li> <li>• Intense supervision of labour and low-cost distribution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to capital, process engineering skills</li> <li>• Frequent reports, tight cost control</li> <li>• Structured organisation and responsibilities</li> <li>• Incentives to achieve quantitative targets</li> <li>• Frequent detailed reports</li> </ul>
Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on branding and brand advertising</li> <li>• Design service and quality</li> <li>• Strong marketing skills</li> <li>• Efficient product engineering with high creative flare</li> <li>• A strong market-research base coupled with a destination's reputation for quality and innovation</li> <li>• Technological leadership with a strong co-operation from channels of distribution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing abilities, creativity and capability in research</li> <li>• Subjective rather than quantitative measurements and incentives to attract highly skilled and creative labour.</li> <li>• Strong inter-functional co-ordination across R&amp;D, production and marketing</li> <li>• Responsive organisational structure that allows for initiatives.</li> </ul>

**Source: Adapted from Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006; and Grant, 1995:168.**

The above table can be summarised in three points in relation to Zimbabwe as follows:

- Zimbabwe as a destination should occupy a unique position in relation to competitors when it is differentiated in terms of its distinctive offering, cost offering or specialised forms of offering;
- its destination positioning should also be consistent with the market requirements when it is based on cost and value for money; market trends and preferences; convenience of purchase; and even demographic trends; and
- the destination's positioning should be consistent with the available resources, features and capabilities to deliver on requirements.

Kotler & Gartner (2000:250) offer a novel alternative strategy for organisations to pursue in their attempt to position their destinations. They suggest that an organisation should position itself as part of an exclusive club in which the products in the club will be perceived by customers to be different from competing brands. An alternative strategy is to position the competition relative to the destination's own offering. Ries & Trout (1986:26) see this strategy as the creation of an open position that the company can fill in. Organisations do sometimes position themselves through the use of comparative advertising (Framke, 2002:95). However, positioning strategies should also emphasise either the functional or the symbolic attributes of the product (Hall, 1999:230).

### **3.5.5 The positioning process**

The positioning process comprises various approaches, such as effective positioning; market positioning and psychological positioning, that are needed to develop an effective positioning strategy (Harsha & Chacko, 1991:). The process should be continuous in order to keep pace with changes in the environment, including the changing needs of the customer and changes in the competitors' tactics (Harsha & Chacko, 1991). The positioning approaches are discussed in greater detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### **3.5.5.1 Effective positioning**

Effective positioning is based on the basic principles of marketing. Products and services are created to solve consumers' "problems", including the satisfaction of their needs and wants and they are also promised various benefits (Harsha & Chacko, 1991:2). If positioning is to be effective, it should promise the benefit that the customer will receive and should create the expectation that it holds the solution to the customer's problem (Harsha & Chacko, 1991:2). If at all possible, the solution should be different from and better than the solution being offered by competitors. For example, Israel was considered to be a third-world country, a desert, a place for religious fanatics only and a war zone (Beirman, 2003:50). These perceptions did not lead to a total rejection of the possibility of holidaying in Israel. As a result of the peace process that was initiated in 1993, holidaying in Israel has been made possible. In its positioning, Israel branded itself as a quality beach holiday destination that offers the atmosphere of the Mediterranean and has a rich heritage and exotic overtones. Its strap line reads "HAV" A great holiday in Israel" (Morgan *et al.*, 2002:40).

Positioning is an encompassing concept. It functions as an umbrella that encompasses everything in the destination. Properly targeted, single-minded positioning affects everything that a destination does or stands for. It is not driven by advertising only, but by the totality of its promotional efforts (Harsha & Chacko, 1991:2). The benefits that it promises comprise everything that the attributes of the destination can do for the visitor. For instance, it could undertake to deliver a sensation of grandeur, an aura of prestige or the gaining of knowledge.

The credibility of these benefits may diminish rapidly if the expectations that are created are not fulfilled. The architecture is soon forgotten if the tour bus breaks down on the return trip and the impression of grandeur can be replaced by loss of credibility if visitors feel that their personal safety is threatened (Harsha & Chacko, 1991:3; Buhalis, 2000:101)

### **3.5.5.2 Market positioning**

Market positioning is defined by some authors listed in this study as a process of identifying and selecting markets or segments that represent business potential (Harsha & Chacko, 1991:3). It is based on thorough knowledge of the needs, wants and perceptions of the target market together with the benefits offered by the destination. To achieve the desired market position, answers to the following questions should be provided:

- What is important to the target market?
- How does the target market perceive the destination?
- How does the target market perceive the competitor?
- What attributes should the destination use to differentiate itself in order to make the best use of its limited resources? (Kotler *et al.*1996:156).

Market positioning research is called for when evaluating the image that customers have of a tourism destination. The research process is used to identify the vital elements that can highlight the benefits of the destination. The beauty of a destination, the architecture of its buildings and the historic artefacts in a museum are examples of attributes that may produce a benefit, irrespective of whether they represent a tangible representation of an intangible benefit. These features should be evaluated and benchmarked with the features of competing destinations.

### **3.5.5.3 Psychological positioning**

Psychological positioning utilises communication to convey the destination's identity and image to the target market (Harsha & Chacko, 1991:4). It converts the customer's needs into images and positions a destination in the visitor's mind. Psychological positioning is a

strategy employed to create a unique image of a product with the objective of creating interest and attracting visitors (Kotler *et al.*, 1999:245). Since it exists solely in the mind of the visitor, it can occur automatically without any effort on the part of the marketer and its outcome could be unpredictable (Harsha & Chacko, 1991:4). For example, two very different destinations may be perceived as being similar and two similar destinations may be perceived as being different. The marketer's task is to control the positioning and not to permit it to follow its own course. Moreover, failure to select a position in the marketplace and failure to achieve and hold a position may lead to undesirable consequences. There are two types of psychological positioning in marketing, which are discussed individually in the following paragraphs:

**a) Objective positioning:** According to Harsha & Chacko (1991:5), "objective positioning is concerned entirely with the objective attributes of the physical product". Objective positioning attempts to create an image of the destination that reflects its physical characteristics and functional features (Harsha & Chacko, 1991:5). If a destination has some unique features, those features may be used to objectively position the destination, create an image of it and differentiate it from the competition. One of the first rules of objective positioning is uniqueness (Harsha & Chacko, 1991:5) and therefore objective positioning is less successful when the features of the destination are not unique.

**b) Subjective positioning:** Harsha & Chacko (1991:5) note that "subjective positioning is concerned with the subjective attributes of a destination". It concerns the image perceived by the tourist rather than the physical and other attributes of the destination.

Aaker & Shamsby in Harsha & Chacko (1991:5) propose the following five approaches to the positioning process:

**c) Position through price:** Some international destinations may be positioned on the basis of price, with lower prices being perceived as being linked to lower quality. For example, Malaysia has positioned itself in regard to the promise of more natural value and has charged competitive prices (Morgan *et al.* 2002). Its positioning is intended to appeal not only in terms of more value for money, but also in terms of its natural attractions.

**d) Position with regard to use or application:** In this regard, a destination is positioned in terms of the reasons for visiting it. Bermuda positions itself to the American meetings market with the slogan “Something you have to leave the country for to get any work done”, which promises productive meetings in a relaxed environment. Cancun, Mexico is positioned as “The meeting place of sun worshippers” (Kotler *et al.*, 2002:258).

**e) Positioning in accordance with the users or class of users:** In this case, positioning features the people who should visit the destination (Harsha & Chacko, 1991). Hong Kong appeals to the incentive travel market with its statement that “When they have reached the top, send them to the peak”. The statement refers to Victoria Peak, a major tourist site in Hong Kong. Fisher Island, a luxury residential development in Florida, positions itself as the place “where people who run things can stop running” (Morgan *et al.* 2002).

**f) Position with regard to a product class:** The technique of positioning with regard to product class is often used to associate a destination with experiences that are extraordinary or unique. For example, the Principality of Monaco is positioned as “The fairly tale that does not end at midnight”; the holding of a convention in Thailand is as “Smooth as silk where the sky is the limit’ or “If you are looking for an ideal meeting place, here is one that is close to heaven” (Morgan *et al.* 2002).

**g) Positioning versus competition:** The technique of positioning versus the competition is mainly meant to meet the competition head on by differentiating the destination’s offering

from its competitors through the use of various strategies (Harsha & Chacko, 1991). However, this approach is not used frequently in international tourism destination marketing, because it could involve negative statements about another country or region. Therefore it is not appropriate in destination branding.

### 3.5.6 Steps in positioning a destination

George, (2001: 124 -125) differentiates the following steps in positioning. These steps are similar to those advocated by Kotler *et al.*, (1999:259).

- **Step 1: Identify a set of competitive advantages**

The first step involves the identification of a set of competitive advantages upon which to gain a market position. These advantages could include price, high level of service and particular benefits such as a unique, additional or alluring extra service that is delivered to the customer.

- **Step 2: Selecting the most appropriate competitive advantages**

Choose the most unique advantage that will lead to the destination occupying a distinctive position in the marketplace by asking the following question: Which competitive advantage should the company promote? For example, a destination in Africa could use its wildlife to gain a competitive advantage over European and other Western destinations.

- **Step 3: Communicating and delivering the chosen position**

The third step is for the marketer to communicate and deliver the selected position to the target segments by devising a marketing mix. The marketing mix is a set of tools that is used by marketers to achieve a strategic position or positions. Use highly trained staff and charge a premium price that is based on the value of the service delivery.



### **3.5.7 Positioning the destination by using points of parity and points of difference**

Creating a strong competitive brand position requires the establishment of the most appropriate points of parity and points of difference. The most successful strategy is to develop a destination brand that performs well on both the negative and the positive attributes. Similarly, the success of the marketers of the BMW car was to establish the image of the car as occupying the position of straddling the luxury car and performance vehicle niches. The success was due in large part to product design and the fact that the car was positioned to be both luxurious and high performance (Keller, 2003:140). There is therefore a need to separate attributes by using two different marketing campaigns, each devoted to different brand attributes or benefits. One way of achieving this goal could be to leverage the equity of the destination by using well-known personalities and celebrities to lend credibility to one of the negatively correlated benefits. In order to achieve such credibility, it is necessary to redefine the relationship by convincing the consumer that the negative relationship between the attributes and benefits that exists in the minds of the consumers is in fact positive (Payne, 1993:376). In order to achieve this objective, the consumer should be provided with different perspectives about the destination by suggesting that he or she may be overlooking or ignoring certain factors or other considerations (Keller, 2003:145).

### **3.5.8 Updating the position of a destination over time**

Even in the case of established brands, competitive forces often detect a shift in the positioning of the brand over time. The process involves two main issues. The first issue is concerned with deepening the meaning of the brand in order to tap into the core brand values or other more abstract considerations (laddering) (Keller, 2003:155). The second

issue is concerned with the response to competitive changes that threaten the existing positioning (reacting) (Keller, 2003:155). Laddering, therefore involves a progression from attributes to benefits and to more abstract values or motivations. It involves constantly asking what the implication of an attribute or benefit is for the consumer. Some of the strongest brands deepen their points of differences to create benefits and value associations.

A competitive advantage often exists for only a short period only, i.e. until competitors attempt to match the offering (Lewis & Chamber, 2000). A destination has to go on an offensive if competitive actions appear to be potentially damaging. It may be necessary to take a more aggressive stance and reposition the brand in order to address the threat (Keller, 2003:156). One approach could be to launch a product extension or an advertising campaign that fundamentally changes the meaning of the brand.

### **3.5.9 Crafting an umbrella position for the destination**

A position is concerned with occupying a certain position in the marketing. This position starts with the development of an umbrella concept or core message that is rooted in reality and that can convey a message that is consistent with the destination brand. Positioning is a process that precedes branding and is based on the competitive advantage of the destination. It is based on the consideration of resources, strengths and other elements in a destination that could affect the brand (Keller, 2003:157). While segmentation and target marketing entail the identification of potential markets, the creation of an umbrella position involves the occupation of a certain position within the market itself. In addition, crafting an umbrella position entails the placing of continuous emphasis on those traits of a destination that are more appealing to each specific market category. These actions require an understanding of how the destination is perceived over space and time. Such understanding makes it easy to review and change the message over time.

### 3.5.10 Destination competitiveness as a positioning tool

Competitiveness is a key word for any destination manager. The concept of competitiveness is relative and multi-dimensional in that it should be consistent with international economics and business literature (Dwyer, Forsyth & Rao, 2002:344). To remain competitive as a destination includes the objective measurement of the number of visitors, market share, tourist expenditure, employment and the value added by the tourism industry. Subjective variables such as the culture, heritage and quality of life are also included in destination competitiveness.

Competitiveness is linked to the ability of a destination to deliver goods and services that are better than those of other destinations. Such perceptions concern, in particular, those aspects of the tourism experience that are perceived by travellers to be of superior value (Dwyer, Forsyth & Rao, 2002; Reisinger, *et al*, 2006:4). Competitiveness exists wherever customers have a choice between various alternative destinations regarding environmental factors, competition, destination and consumer considerations. While competitiveness is a tool for gaining a competitive advantage, it is not a guarantee for success. To achieve a competitive advantage, a destination should ensure that its overall appeal and the tourist experience offered is superior to that of and cannot be easily imitated by the competitors.

A destination may attain a competitive advantage by responding to external changes that bring opportunities, such as currency fluctuations in one destination or new technology in service delivery. In such a case, a destination should respond quickly to the external opportunity in order to enjoy a first-mover advantage and speed is therefore a critical factor. Responsiveness also includes anticipation of changes on the basis of a competitive advantage that may be due to changes in consumers' taste, technology or even competition.

If a destination is to take advantage of environmental changes that could produce a competitive advantage, it should gather information via environmental scanning. Competitive advantage can also result from innovation that overturns the competitive advantage of other destinations, for example, through the development of unique and novel attractions. Innovation is not limited to the technical development of new products and processes, but also includes new approaches and strategies for doing business (Dwyer *et al.*, 2002:345). Once a destination attains a competitive advantage, the competitive advantage becomes subject to erosion by the actions of a competitor who imitate or introduce further innovation. For a competitive advantage to be sustainable over time, there should be barriers to imitation, also called isolating mechanisms, such as the use of copy rights or the complexity of products. If the isolating mechanisms are strong, the competitive advantage survives for longer (Porter, 1985:112).

A destination could imitate the strategies of another destination, usually a competitor, in order to erode the other destination's competitive advantage. According to Grant (1995:157), certain conditions have to exist for imitation to take place. The imitating destination should identify with that which the rival possesses as a competitive advantage. Having identified that the competitor has a competitive advantage as evidenced by its above-average profitability; the imitating destination should believe that it could achieve a similar advantage by investing in innovation.

### **3.6 REPOSITIONING STRATEGIES FOR A DESTINATION**

When providing brand-knowledge structures to guide the repositioning process, it is important to accurately and completely characterise the breadth and depth of brand awareness; the strength, favourability and uniqueness of brand association; the brand responses held in the consumer's memory; and the nature of brand relationships (Keller, 2003:653). Lewis & Chamber (2000) claim that, as the name implies, it constitutes the

changing of the position or image of the destination in the marketplace. Repositioning is concerned with the removal of the old positioning image and moving along a continuum with a back to basics at one end and reinvention at the other.

Repositioning of a destination is based on changing its image. Strategically lost sources of brand equity can be refurbished and new sources of brand equity can be established by leveraging new secondary associations. The repositioning process may include the bolstering of any positive association that has faded; neutralising of any negative association that has been created; and creating additional positive associations (Lewis & Chamber, 2000).

Revitalising a destination requires the establishment of more compelling points of difference. It could merely involve the reminding of tourists of the virtues of the destination's brand that they may have begun to take for granted. Repositioning is meant to create nostalgia and heritage in the consumers mind. Sometimes brands should be repositioned in order to establish a point of parity on some key image dimension (Keller, 2003:654), as discussed above. Repositioning requires an understanding and specification of the target market, its nature and level of competition. These issues determine the competitive frame of reference (Keller, 2003) for repositioning. Segmentation of the market should be done on the basis of demographic variables or other means of identifying neglected segments in order to make the brand viable (Heath, 2007). Another option could be to simply abandon the tourist group that previously supported the brand and choose a market segment that is completely new (Heath, 2007). On the other hand, the destination could create different marketing campaigns for each segment. However, if that is done, the results could be that conflicting messages are communicated, which could in turn lead to incompatible positioning. Heath (2004:99) has summarised the product portfolio strategies in repositioning. He looks at repositioning from four dimensions, namely: star marketing, cash cows, dog and the problem child. His summary appears in Table 3.6.

**Table 3.6 Summary of product portfolios**

<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>REPOSITIONING STRATEGY</b>
<b>Star marketing</b>	Maintain market share by improving the destination's differential advantage relative to that of competing offerings. Use the star to defend yourself against competitors
<b>Cash Cow</b>	Harvesting the product probably involves draining cash from it as much as possible before withdrawing from the market. A cash cow no longer has the potential to capture a large market. This strategy may not be applicable to a destination's product, because these products may not be changed or possibly be drained of cash as much as possible before withdrawing them completely from the market.
<b>Dog</b>	Withdrawal of a product can take place when the product is faltering in the destination's portfolio. Withdraw the product as quickly as possible in order to keep the losses to a minimum or prevent further losses
<b>Problem child</b>	Build market share by making the significant investments desired to increase the product's relative market share. This could be done through quality improvement or an increase in the promotion campaign.

**Source: Modified from Heath 2004:92 – 93**

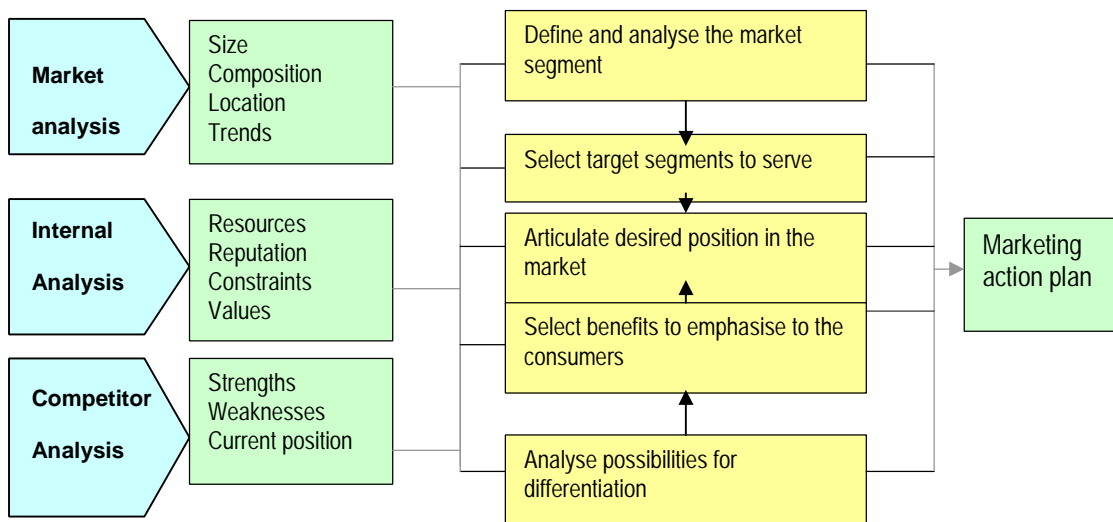
In order for a destination to compete effectively, it should formulate strategies on how to translate the current situation in the destination to the desired situation. Porter (1985:13) identifies three scenarios in regard to competitive strategies. These scenarios involve the application of the overall cost leadership, differentiation and focus strategies. Heath (2004:88) has concluded that:

*‘this model provides clear guidance for decision-makers on how to reposition their offerings in order to improve their destination’s competitiveness (as discussed earlier), but it fails to address the specific needs of tourism and particularly the scarcity of resources at the destination level’.*

### 3.6.1. Steps in repositioning a destination

Heath (2004:131) advocates that: “once a target market has been selected, a repositioning strategy should be selected taking cognisance of other suppliers of similar tourism offerings that serve the same target market”. The process involves the development of a market and competitive analysis, which entails an analysis of the size of the competition, location and trends. The repositioning process is illustrated in the diagram below.

**Figure 3.8 Developing a strategy for marketing the repositioning of a destination**



**Source: Lovelock and Wirtz, 2004**

Developing a repositioning strategy requires that an internal analysis be undertaken in which a destination considers its resources, reputation, constraints and also to what extent it offers value for money. The process includes the selection of target segments, appropriate position in the marketplace and benefits to be emphasised to the tourist. A competitor analysis should include a review of the strengths, weaknesses and current positioning of the competitor and identification of areas for possible differentiation.

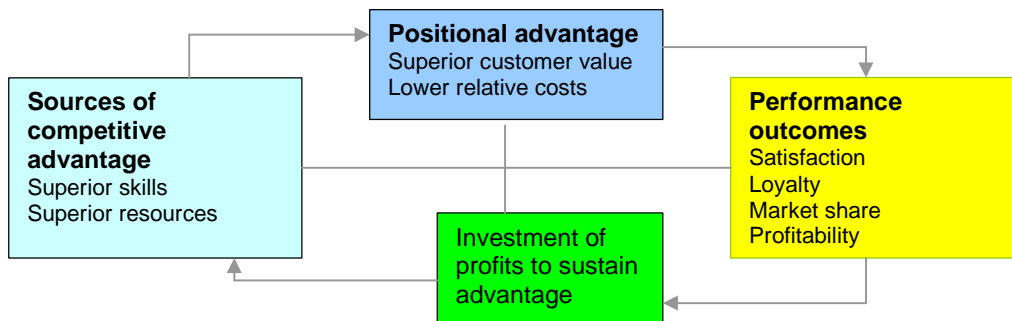
An internal analysis is concerned with resource allocation and measuring the reputation, constraints and values held by the nationals. A competitor analysis is concerned with the strengths, weaknesses and current position, as has been alluded to above. The aim of the analyses is to assist the marketer to identify the possibilities for differentiation. When all the analyses have been done, the marketer selects and articulates the desired position and develops a marketing action plan (Kaczynski, 2003; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004).

### 3.6.2 Sustaining a competitive position for a destination

In order to sustain a competitive advantage, an appraisal should be undertaken of the sources of competitive advantage, positional advantages and performance outcomes (Doyle, 2000).

Figure 3.9 below illustrates the creation and sustaining of a competitive advantage.

**Figure 3.9 The creation and sustenance of a competitive position**



**Source: Evans and Berman, 1990.**

Sustaining the chosen destination includes the use of a unique selling proposition, which is both exceptional and appealing to market needs in comparison with that of the competitors (Evans & Berman, 1990). The process of sustaining competitive position can either be broad based or focused or it could be a combination of the two scenarios. If a competitive



advantage is based on skills and resources, the destination should continuously invest in superior skills and resources to make it difficult for competitors to imitate the advantage. The destination-repositioning process should be consistent with market trends and preferences (exploration, experiential, romanticism, and relaxation), demographic trends (family/individual, age groups etc) and resources (capability to deliver, features and requirements) (Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006:3). The sustaining of a competitive advantage should also be aligned with the image of the destination.

### **3.7 IMAGE AS AN ELEMENT OF DESTINATION BRANDING AND POSITIONING**

A destination image can be defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has about a destination (Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal., 2006:641; Aaker, 1996:71). Blichfeldt (2003:21) propounds that a destination image is something that tourists generate in their minds by means of selecting and compressing multiple associations and brand elements into a brand gestalt.

The image of a destination differentiates it from all other destinations and it is also an integral and influential part of the travellers' decision-making process (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997:12). Image has cognitive and affective states and comprises beliefs, ideas, impressions and expressions (Ryglova & Turcinkova, 2004:356). The definition of an image in this context varies from scholar to scholar, because there is no universal definition of and consensus on the term. However, it generally refers to the composition of beliefs and impressions that are based on information processed from a variety of sources over time and that result in an internally accepted mental construct. Therefore any success in promoting a destination is premised on attempts to differentiate it in terms of what it possesses over its competition or

how it is positioned in the minds of the customer (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991:7; Hosany *et al.*, 2006:639).

Consumers do not readily respond to hype, but want to know what they will get for their money. Repeated exposure to a brand could increase its familiarity and create brand awareness (Aaker, 1997), but the building of an awareness campaign is often enhanced by the development of a slogan, visual symbols, tone of voice, design style and a jingle. Brand awareness actively pairs the brand and the appropriate purchase cues, which then create a positive image and effectively promote and communicate the brand (WTO, 2007:40) in the process.

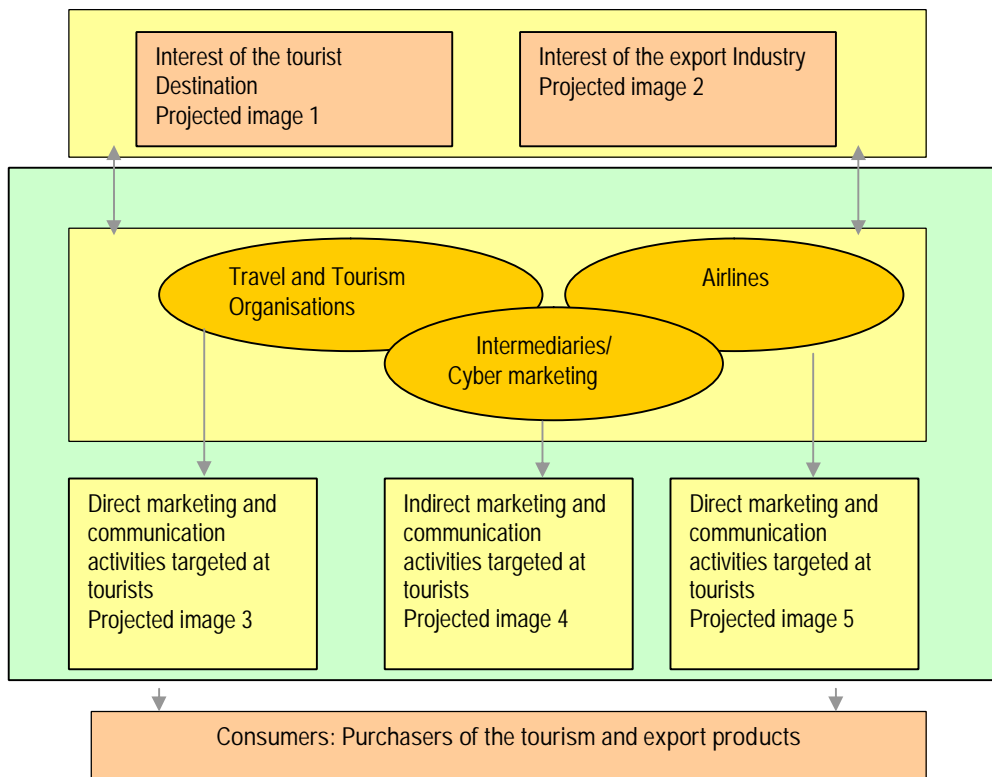
### **3.7.1 Developing a destination-brand image**

An image is an important attribute that influences the traveller's decision-making process about a destination (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997:14).. Riege *et al.* (2001:2), however, view the marketing efforts of a destination as being directed at two sectors, namely the tourist-demand side and the supply side. A brand image is related to how the brand is currently perceived by customers (Aaker, 1997:339). In other words, people ask about the reputation of a destination brand in the marketplace before they make a decision to travel to that destination.

Image fulfils an important role in stimulating travel and generating expectations regarding travel destinations and host communities. Figure 3.10 illustrates the marketing partnership-based system in travel and tourism.

The partnership-based system results in two different types of projected and perceived images as reflected in the figure below.

**Figure 3.10 Marketing partnership-based system in travel and tourism.**



**Source: Riege *et al.*, 2001:4.**

The above diagram illustrates the two images that emerge when the destination has either the interest of the tourist (projected image 1) or the interest of the exporting industry (projected image 2) in mind. The image is transferred to three stakeholders, namely the travel and tourism organisations; the intermediaries or cyber marketers; and the airlines. An image can be transferred to the consumer through direct marketing and communication activities that are aimed at tourists (projected image 3); indirect marketing and communication activities (projected image 4); and direct marketing, communication and activities (projected image 4). These images are not usually the same due to a lack of coordination between the supply side and the demand side.

An image has both organic and induced components. These components include the components that are overtly induced and those that are, covertly induced (Beerli & Martin,

2004:660; Cai, 2002:760), as illustrated in table 3.7 on the typology of image-formation agents.

**Table 3.7 Typology of image-formation agents**

Type of agent	Explanation
Overtly induced 1	Consists of traditional forms of advertising used by destination-area promoters in the form of television, radio, brochures, billboards and the printed media.
Overtly induced 2	Consists of information obtained from tour operators, wholesalers and organisations that have vested interests in travel-decision processes, but who are not directly associated with a particular destination area.
Covertly induced 1	Consists of the destination images that are supported by the credibility of a celebrity spokesperson.
Covertly induced 2	A person influenced by this agent is aware that destination promoters are involved in the development of a projected image, i.e. reports or stories.

**Source: Adapted from Gartner, 1993.**

Gartner (1993) furthermore expands these image components into a continuum of eight image-formation agents. The image-formation agents have been further differentiated into the following categories: unsolicited organic, autonomous, solicited organic and organic images (Chen & Morrison, 2005:50). Viewed from the demand perspective, brands create images that reside in the mind of the tourist or customer. The true destination identity should be anchored in local heritage as this heritage contributes to the authentic stories of the locals and that may create a distinct competitiveness for a destination brand (Fabricius, 2006a). According to Gartner (1993), a gap occurs when the imagined, pre-visit images are not in line with the initially projected image as a result of the intervention of different image-formation agents. A gap may also arise when the tourism experience is not congruent with the tourists' expectations. In order to minimise this gap, a destination should co-ordinate the various images that are produced and desired by the various stakeholders (Klooster & Go, 2004:15). According to Gartner (1993:195):

*“the organic image is the most important component in destination branding, because individuals appear to hold an image of a destination even if they have never visited it or been exposed to commercial forms of information on it”.*

These images may be primarily based on general information; assimilated forms; and non-tourism and non-commercial sources, such as newspapers, magazines, books, movies and opinions (Wan & Hui, 2003:307), family, friends and even education. However, whenever an event in a particular destination is publicised, the publicity in various media generates or influences an image of the destination in the mind of potential visitors of what that destination would be like to visit (Etchner & Ritchie, 1991:6). According to Tarlow & Santana (2002:426),

*“stories that have a negative tone, or depict a violent situation, are often judged newsworthy and thereby steer the public towards the formation of a certain opinion about the place concerned”.*

While visitor-determined images reflect individual differences in respect of information processing and interpretation, destination-determined images mirror the actuality of a destination. Although an image is formed subjectively, through the evaluation of the external stimuli (Gartner & Shen, 1992:49), it is important to determine what the kind of stimulus is projected by the destination marketers by means of their promotional material.

### **3.7.2. The influence of image on a destination brand and on positioning**

A destination image is influenced by several variables, which include education, personal contacts, advertisements, brochures, websites, experience, people, culture, economy and the quality of products with a comparative advantage (Embacher & Buttle, 1989:5). In a number of cases, the image of a destination is influenced by the category within which it is classified, i.e. a developed or developing country or an African, Asian or American country

(Eugene & Israel, 2001:20). The image of a destination is formalised at a very early age by means of education, the media, travel, product purchases and even stereotypes and clichés that do not conform to contemporary reality of the destination (Kotler & Gartner, 2002:254). Although the image of a destination is not a static phenomenon, it is usually enduring and very challenging to change. It is therefore necessary to have a continual image-management process that utilizes research on the destination's image dimension.

### **3.7.3 Factors that impact on the image of a destination**

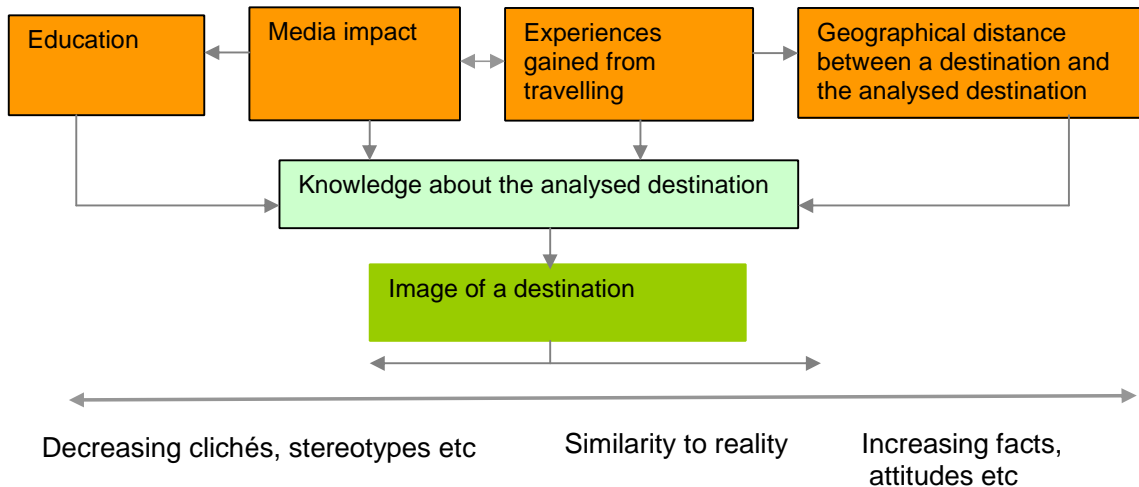
By analysing its image, a destination can identify its unique selling proposition (Morrison & Anderson, 2002:3). A destination that has clear, strong, positive and generally accepted associations engenders trust, quality and integrity and these qualities provide the producers or service providers with a competitive advantage (Ryglova & Turcinkova, 2004:357; Cleverdon & Fabricius; 2006:6). There are, however, several factors that can impact on the image of a destination, including education, media, travel experiences and geographical distance that generate knowledge of the country concerned. The image of a country is also affected by clichés, stereotypes and attitudes.

Three measurement scales can be used to assess the image of a destination brand. These scales are the familiarity and favourability scale, the semantic differential and evaluative maps. These scales can be used to reveal the image situation within a destination (Fabricius, 2006b). If the image is positive, the destination marketer can focus on amplifying and delivering the image to the target groups. If the image is weak, then it is better not to promote the destination, especially if it is too small and has inadequate attractions. If the image is negative, it requires a strategic change prior to image redevelopment (Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006:6). The image could be contradictory due to opposing images being formed by different groups. In such a scenario the marketer could stress the positive factors to groups who hold negative perceptions (Genest & Legg, 2001:10). When the image is

ambivalent, there is a need to emphasize selected aspects, while rectifying incorrect or negative impressions.

The factors that could impact on the image of a destination are summarized in figure 3.11 below.

**Figure 3.11 Factors that impact on the image of a destination**



**Source: Adapted from Ryglova & Turcinkova, 2004:357.**

Dore & Crouch (2002:142) note that “the majority of publicity for a destination is incidental”. It is not planned or deliberate, but occurs in the natural course of news events that are noted and transmitted by the general media and usually has nothing directly to do with tourism, but nevertheless has an impact on tourism. As long as the reported event has a bearing on the destination, the perception that the publicity creates influences the image that potential visitors develop about what it would be like to visit that destination (Chen & Morrison, 2005:53). The publicity that is created could emanate from world events, movies or even from celebrities who originate from the destination. In most instances, it is not the objective of the media to steer the general public towards pleasurable experiences. On the contrary, the media generally focus on negative issues that are believed to be newsworthy and gear reporting towards enlightening the public about certain situations.

According to Chen & Morrison (2005:52), “a story is often judged to be newsworthy as a result of its startling qualities, which means that many publicised stories have a negative tone and often incorporate some form of violence”. In this light, the image of a destination is a vital factor in shaping the customer’s perception of it. The image of a country should be rooted in reality and should connect with people internally and externally. It should therefore strive towards striking a balance between its image and its identity (Keller, 2003). The term “brand image” gained popularity as evidence began to mount that the feelings and images associated with a brand are powerful influences in respect of purchases made as a result of brand recognition, recall and brand identity, (Gartner, 1993). Consumers do not only buy a product, but they also buy characteristics such as power, wealth and sophistication that are associated with the users of the brand (Keller, 2003).

Brand images can be reinforced through brand communication such as packaging, advertising, promotion, customer service, word of mouth and other aspects of the brand experience (Cai, 2000:768). According to Ooi (2003:7), “brand images are usually evoked by asking consumers to cite the first images that come to mind when a certain brand is mentioned (sometimes called “top of mind”)”. When the responses are highly variable, not forthcoming or refer to non-image attributes such as cost, it indicates a weak brand image. For example, Singapore managed to develop a sound destination image and was perceived by a broad selection of travellers and tourist agents from the USA, Japan, India, Germany, Australia, U.K. and Sweden to be clean, modern and safe (Morgan & Prichard, 2004). China’s dominant image is that of being multicultural; Malaysia, which comprises many “cultures”, is perceived to be a multicultural destination that has many beaches (Morgan *et al.* 2004:160). Thailand has a brand image of predominantly “exotic, fun and friendly people.”

If the image of a destination is unfocused or hazy, it could affect the destination’s formal advertising and promotion of itself as a tourist destination in other countries. In such an instance, the destination will have difficulty in competing with the image established by



competing countries. Advertising, public relations and promotion should complement the informal information that the prospective tourist obtains through word of mouth and personal recommendations. It could complement the informal information by either building upon the latter or by correcting negative perceptions that may be based on incorrect facts (Kotler *et al.* 1996:283). Above all, the success of the development of a brand image depends on the extent to which a customer is encouraged to believe that one destination is different and better than its competitors. According to Morgan *et al.* (2004:160), “Wales had an image problem for many years, but its identity deficit has been transformed into an identity premium”. In the context of this matter, Morgan *et al.* (2002) argue that:

*“the environment of a destination almost always has political overtones and that much pressure is exerted to satisfy the aspirations and demands of a wide range of industry sectors, as occurred in Wales”.*

Attempts to satisfy all such demands could lead to a compromise. Furthermore, the communication in Wales was focused on a destination rather than on market segments and highlighted those matters that make the destination special. Wales managed to re-brand itself as a destination with the slogan, “in Wales you will find a passion for life – Hyl”, and by basing its marketing messages on a set of truths (Morgan *et al.*, 2002:115).

Boorstin in Morgan & Prichard (1998:18) comments that, “in the long run, advertising and the media contribute to a process whereby the images that are generated in different gazes come to constitute a closed, self-perpetuating system of illusion”. Naturally, the attractiveness of a destination also contributes to the image-formation process. The latter matter is discussed in the ensuing section.

#### **3.7.4. Attractiveness of a destination as an attribute of image**

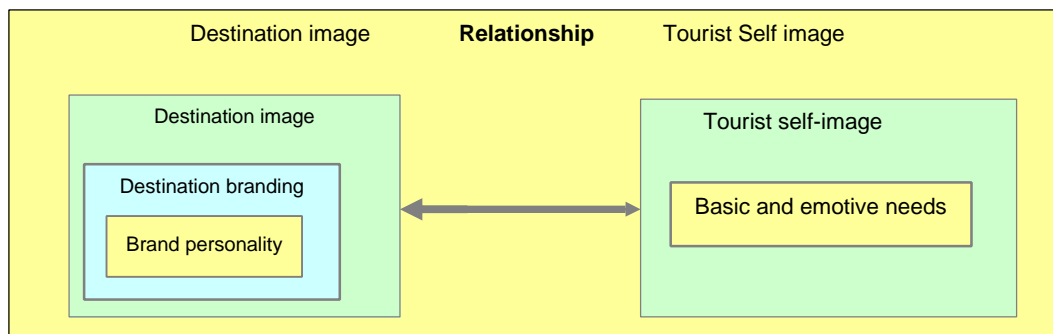
Tourists select destinations that have components that have the greatest appeal for them. Several attributes contribute to the attractiveness of a destination (Genest & Legg 2001:12). Tourism attractions are the primary sources of a tourist's motivation to travel (Etchner & Ritchie 1991:8). As the attractions become more diverse and unique, the more appealing and attractive the destination becomes (Reisinger, Vengesai & Mavondo, 2006:6). The attractiveness of a destination is also enhanced by its ability to provide tourists with facilities and services that are efficient and effective. It has also been noted that support services, although essential, are secondary considerations in a tourist's motivation to travel to a particular destination. The attractiveness of a destination also includes the residents' support of tourism and the availability of professionally trained personnel who contribute to the attractiveness of the destination. Reisinger *et al.*, (2006:6) concluded in their study of the attractiveness of destinations that "tourists have a higher regard for the people-related factors than for the support services when rating the attractiveness of a destination".

Balabanis & Diamontopoulos (2004:85) emphasise that "the factors that render a destination attractive have an important implication for the building of destination brand images". As a person (i.e. a prospective tourist) reflects on a destination and the information related to it, the more the existing brand knowledge is developed and the stronger his or her brand association becomes. In order to choose a favourable and unique association to link with, a marketer should analyse thoughtfully the characteristics of tourists and the competition in order to determine the optimum brand position. Accordingly, Lewis & Chambers (2000) advocate for "the establishment of associations that are convincing to consumers". Such associations are established with the relevant attributes and benefits of brands that satisfy their needs to the extent that they form positive overall judgements of the brand.

### 3.7.5. The relationship between destination brand image and personality

There is a close relationship between the image of a destination and its personality. The image of a destination is premised upon the tourist's self-image and his or her basic and emotive needs. These matters are, in turn, determined by the destination personality. The diagram below sketches the relationship between destination image and the tourist's self-image.

**Figure 3.12 Destination image and destination branding**



**Source: Adapted from Murphy 2005**

According to Murphy (2005) "brand personality is a mindset of human characteristics that are associated with the brand". These characteristics are applicable and relevant to what the brand represents. Following Murphy's rationale, brand personality implies that consumers have certain personality traits, which Aaker (1997) categorise into five broad dimensions, namely sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. Studies by Ekinci & Hosany (2006) have tested the applicability of Aaker's personality dimensions to tourism brands and found three rather than five valid dimensions. These are the excitement, competence and sophistication. The findings of these studies have led to the conclusion that brand personality models that have been developed for the field of consumer goods are not entirely applicable to tourism destinations.

### 3.7.6. Perceived risk and its impact on the image of a destination

Destination marketers and decision makers should not underestimate the importance that the general public places on risk identification and risk management. According to Hang, Nunes & Dioko (2005:150), "the spread of SARS in 2003 had a devastating effect on the tourism industry globally, but particularly in the Asian countries". This incident illustrates that risks do not only have an impact on the environment, but also on politics and economics, at both the local and the international level.

Slovak & Weber (2002:4) have defined "risk as a hazard, a probability, a threat, an uncertainty and a feeling of loss". Roehl & Fesenmaier in Hang *et al.* (2005:151) applied to travelling for pleasure a common typology of seven risk components that are commonly mentioned in consumer-behaviour literature. The seven risk components are equipment risk (equipment problems or failures), financial risk, physical risk, psychological risk (the possibility that the destination may not reflect one's self-concept, image or personality), satisfaction risk, social risk and time risk (the possibility that the destination will be a waste of time). These risks can influence a prospective tourist's choice of travel and behaviour. Hang *et al.* (2005:151), view these risks as "applicable in most circumstances, because individuals place differing measures of importance on each component of each travel risk". Individuals adapt their behaviour in accordance with their assessment of the risk component, which in turn is influenced by both the extent of risk and the nature of the past travel experiences. These authors even suggest that personal experiences may exert more influence on travel decisions than the information acquired from external sources (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998:115).

The past experiences that an individual has of a destination may ultimately influence his or her general preference for travel to a particular destination (by confirming or eliminating the risk factor) (Sonmez & Graefe, 1986:117). Travellers are likely to assess each destination on

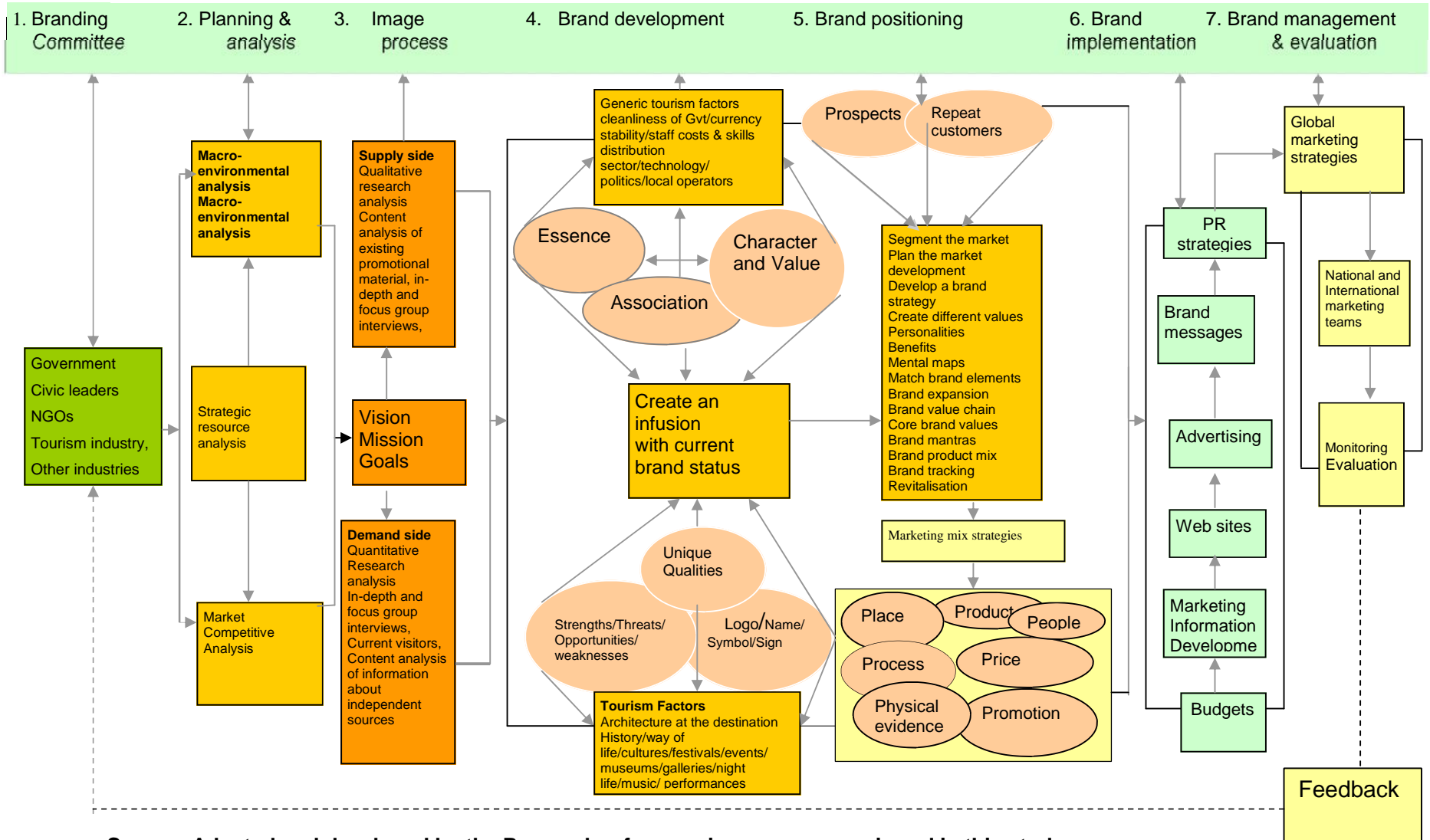
the basis of the risks associated with that particular destination (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998:117). Tarlow & Santana (2002:426) propose that, “in evaluating risks, a traveller would consider the following characteristics: How great the risk is perceived to be in terms of control, potential for catastrophe, fatal consequences and inequitable distribution of consequences; and whether the risk is known, observable, new and delayed in its manifestation of harm”.

In their study of perceived travel risks, Hang *et al.*, (2005:154) concluded that “man-made risks such as robbery, theft, cheating, corruption, and transport-related accidents, whose effects are random and not group specific, tend to be the most innocuous and least negative in their effect on the likelihood of visitors’ future visitation”. However, the perception of risks in destinations, such as terrorism, bombings and kidnappings, whose effect are aimed to a greater extent at tourists and certain identifiable groups, tend to result in a reduced likelihood of future visitation. On the other hand, if a tourist has visited a destination before, the likelihood of future visitation increases, regardless of the type of risk associated with the destination. Destinations like Zimbabwe should therefore, use prior visits as a point of departure in destination marketing and branding.

### **3.8 PROPOSED FLOW CHART REGARDING DESTINATION BRANDING AND POSITIONING**

A destination branding and positioning flow chart was developed after an intensive review of the relevant literature, The flow chart has seven components, comprising a branding committee; planning and analysis; image process; brand development; brand positioning; brand implementation; and brand management and evaluation. The flow chart that appears in the following table exposes the relationship of these concepts in brand development.

**Figure 3.13 Proposed destination branding and positioning flow chart**



Source: Adapted and developed by the Researcher from various sources reviewed in this study

### 3.8.1 Destination branding committee

The process of branding a destination should commence with the appointment of a national branding committee that comprises representatives of the government; civic society; non-governmental organisations, especially those involved in conservation issues; and the tourism industry. The committee should also include representatives of other related sectors such as industry and commerce, agriculture and mining.

### 3.8.2 Destination planning and analysis

The first step in destination branding should be an analysis of the macro and micro environments, strategic analysis of resources and competitive analysis of the market.

The following table is a summary of destination planning and analysis.

**Table 3.8 Summary of destination analysis**

Macro and micro environmental analysis	Resource analysis	Competitive analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lack of corruption in government</li> <li>○ Stability of currency</li> <li>○ Staff costs and skills</li> <li>○ Sound distribution sector</li> <li>○ Level of technology</li> <li>○ Market potential</li> <li>○ Strategies of local operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Architecture at destination level</li> <li>○ History</li> <li>○ Local way of life</li> <li>○ Various cultures</li> <li>○ Festivals and events</li> <li>○ Museums and galleries</li> <li>○ Night life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Safety and security</li> <li>○ Tourism infrastructure</li> <li>○ Sports tourism &amp; agro-tourism</li> <li>○ Rural &amp; cultural tourism</li> <li>○ Shopping &amp; merchandising</li> <li>○ Accommodation &amp; amenities</li> <li>○ Internal transport</li> <li>○ Regional strategy</li> <li>○ HR development</li> </ul>

**Source: Researcher's construction from various sources reviewed in the study**

### **3.8.3 Destination brand image analysis**

When carrying out an analysis of the image of a destination, it is important to define the beliefs, ideas and impressions that a tourist has about the destination. The analysis of the image of the destination should take two forms, namely it should focus on both the supply side and the demand side. The supply-side analysis involves the conducting of qualitative research in the form of content analysis. It involves the analysis of the existing promotional material and in-depth and focus-group interviews with the tourism stakeholders. The demand-side analysis involves quantitative research in which in-depth and focus interviews are conducted with the current visitors as well an analysis of the current information that is undertaken by independent sources. This information should contribute to the articulation of a vision, mission and goals for the destination.

### **3.8.4 Brand development process**

The destination-brand development process involves the review of tourism and generic tourism factors in order to create a fusion of ideas. These factors include the brand essence, brand character and the existing association. The review of tourism factors involves the determination of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the current brand. Included in this review is an analysis of the existing logos, names, signs and/or symbols. The understanding of the brand development process should create a fusion of ideas that could see the birth of a new brand that has its own personality, brand character, values, brand identity and brand architecture.



### **3.8.5 Brand-positioning process**

The brand-positioning process is a very important facet of destination branding. It involves a review of the prospective tourists and repeat customers. It is concerned with the market-segmentation process. The process is aimed at the development of a marketing plan. It involves the drafting of a brand strategy by establishing the various values, personalities and benefits of the brand in order to outwit the competitors and to drive competitive advantage. To achieve these objectives, the management of the destination should develop mental maps by matching various brand elements. Other strategies used in the brand positioning include the use of the marketing mix ingredients.

### **3.8.6 Brand implementation**

The brand-implementation process involves the compilation of budgets to support the marketing programmes; development of marketing information; and launching of e-marketing strategies, advertising and brand messages. The process also includes the use of public relations to counter negative equity and to advise and inform tourists about certain events.

### **3.8.7 Brand management and evaluation**

The last step in destination branding is to develop global marketing strategies and form both national and international marketing teams that act as representatives or attachés. At this stage the brand is evaluated and benchmarked against other

competing brands in order to devise unique brand-management strategies. The aim is to protect and consolidate the brand's dominance. The destination branding and positioning flow chart developed after an intense literature study sets the basis for the development of a branding and positioning framework for this study.

### **3.9 SUMMARY**

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature on the destination branding and its impact on competitive positioning. It considers the concept of brand equity and the importance of establishing a brand awareness campaign. The chapter has furthermore discussed the significance of destination positioning. The exposition of this matter is followed by a detailed outline of destination-positioning guidelines. Thereafter, positioning is closely linked to market segmentation and target marketing. The chapter also discussed the points of parity and points of difference that can act as measures of competitive advantage. Finally, several re-branding and repositioning concepts were reviewed, including various frameworks that could be used for developing marketing strategies and sustenance of competitive advantage. The influence of an image on a destination brand was discussed and the competitiveness factors that are associated with a destination, including the destination's attractiveness. The next chapter focuses on the international best practices in destination branding.

## Chapter 4

### APPROACHES TO DESTINATION BRANDING AND POSITIONING IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

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## CHAPTER 4

### APPROACHES TO DESTINATION BRANDING AND POSITIONING IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

While taking cognisance of the complexity of destination branding, the aim of this chapter is to examine and evaluate trends and best practices in various countries regarding branding and positioning of destinations.

The objectives of this chapter are to:

- Examine the role of the media in marketing a destination during a crisis;
- discuss the methods used by destinations in diversifying their markets during a crisis and how these strategies are used to counteract bad publicity;
- demonstrate the importance of a slogan and its role in repositioning a destination;
- analyse the strategies used by destination marketers in repositioning a destination;
- discuss the significant role of a public-diplomacy campaign and its impact in respect of influencing perceptions about a destination; and
- learn some lessons from various countries that have applied branding and positioning strategies in order to mitigate the impact of a crisis.

## 4.2 APPROACHES TO DESTINATION BRANDING IN SEVERAL SELECTED COUNTRIES

Marketers of tourism destinations in various countries have used a variety of approaches to shape public perceptions of their destinations, especially under challenging circumstances. They have among other things packaged their destinations in a series of seductive images. These images are intended to create an association with the destination by asserting its identity and brand vision in order to position the brand in the global tourism market. Chapter 4 reviews the strategies adopted by Denmark, the United States of America, Israel, Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Fiji to garner domestic and international support and shape tourism experiences during and after the crisis.

### 4.2.1 Denmark



When the Denmark Tourism Board launched a new brand in 2000, called “Denmark. Enjoy,” the brand was intended to modify the general perception of Denmark (Ooi, 2003). The objective of the campaign was to rid Denmark of its traditional association with romantic images, sex and drugs. The new brand set out to present an attractive and coherent image of Denmark. In order to communicate its new image, three brand values were used: unpretentious design, talent and oasis free. The new image was aimed at telling a story about Denmark and its people. A visual logo was

introduced, namely a Danish flag superimposed upon a heart and the words “Denmark. Enjoy” were used as a strap-line.

The brand and its values were crafted and chosen after lengthy and intensive discussions with various stakeholders; local tourism authorities; and the managers of tourism businesses and attractions (Ooi, 2003:5). The promotion of tourism in Denmark is decentralised and each of the role players in the tourism industry functions relatively independently as they are supported by different agencies.

Despite the existence of various regional boards, all the stakeholders were consulted in the course of the search for a new brand for Denmark. The Destination Tourism Board (DTB) also invited travel reviewers to visit and write about Denmark as a destination. The website that was created was not only used by tourists, but also by the press, conference planners and professional travel agencies. The DTB sought the help of independent travel writers for credibility. The brochures produced by the DTB reflected the key features of honesty and credibility in their candid descriptions of Denmark (Ooi, 2003).

The goal of the campaign was to create a specific atmosphere and scenery with which tourists could identify. The politics involved in the branding of a country involves the processes of seeking consensus as well as persuading various parties to use the brand and to present their destinations in the branded manner.

However, there are significant differences between the branding of a country and the branding of a product. In order to appeal to new markets and to satisfy a variety of customer preferences, Denmark improved the quality of its product and services and

offered complimentary products and leisure activities. It embarked on the presentation of workshops, launched advertisement campaigns, increased press collaboration and offered seminars (Ooi, 2003). The advertisement campaigns included the targeting of new markets with new products. The destination also directed itself at the corporate sector and introduced promotional marketing instruments that are based on information communication technologies. These promotional instruments included the introduction of online promotion and marketing; online advertisements; optimisation of search engines; and the conclusion of agreements with travel sites in source markets.

#### **4.2.1.1 Issues that emerged from the case study of Denmark**

The branding of Denmark was supported by strong funding and sound co-ordination. It focused on portraying the country as having a creative nation and it employed public diplomacy strategies to promote the perception of Denmark as a premier destination. Denmark also instituted and intensified its international public-relations initiatives, which emphasised that the country is also a study destination. The country was furthermore portrayed as being modernised and an investment location. Some of the other issues that emerged from the case study are summarised below.

**Figure: 4.1 Development of a destination brand in Denmark**



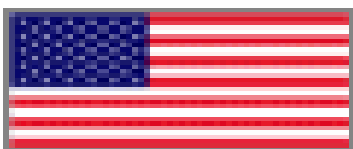
**Source: Researcher's construction from various sources reviewed in this case study**



Denmark used a logo and a strap line to promote a favourable perception of the country and its identity. These initiatives were intended to build a new image of the country. The image-building process involved the identification of new market segments while building on the new relationships. In order to position the destination in line with its new image, Denmark invited travel writers, decentralised tourism promotion and made regular updates on the website about what was happening in the country. Denmark was successful in lobbying for a new identity and lure tourists into the destination but it did not face travel warnings like what happened to Zimbabwe. Whilst the image rebuilding process was a success in Denmark, it has become a challenge in Zimbabwe considering the degree of political chaos prevailing in that country.

The situation that prevailed in Denmark differed from the situation that prevailed in the United States of America's after the September 11 crisis. The USA also dealt with its crisis in a different manner from Denmark, as discussed in the following case study.

#### **4.2.2 United States of America.**



The United States has enjoyed relative freedom from major threats to its tourists, although urban crime has been perceived to be a major factor in cities. However, the crisis that occurred on 11 September 2001 was catastrophic for the tourism industry

in the USA. The advent of the crisis led to a series of events that had a devastating impact on the American and other global airlines and on the tourism sector as a whole. The complete destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York and the damage inflicted on the Pentagon in Washington DC led to a thorough media scrutiny of the safety and security of ordinary citizens and of tourists. The damaged buildings were the centres of politics and business and also the headquarters to the world's largest media organisations, such as the New York Times (Beirman, 2003).

Never before had the USA experienced such devastation and loss of life in a single day. The issue of airline and airport security has since become the most challenging risk factor that the modern tourism industry faces. After the attack, the USA and several global industries faced a severe marketing challenge. The international tourism industry adopted a wait and see attitude, while in many parts of the world the promotion of travel to the USA was either cancelled or postponed.

#### ***4.2.2.1 Strategies for marketing the USA during 9/11 crisis***

The mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani, pleaded with all Americans and international visitors to show their support for and solidarity with New York by visiting it to spend time there and to pray there. The mayor was acknowledged nationally and internationally as a symbol of strength and determination in the face of the attack on the city (Beirman, 2003).

Local authorities put in a great deal of effort to attract tourists to come to New York. They used the sentiments of solidarity and patriotism in their efforts to lure the American people to New York. They also applied the strategy of reassuring potential

tourists of their safety in New York and backed up their appeal for solidarity with discounts, value-added incentives and subtle and varied psychological motivation. Hotel rates were reduced and promotional air tickets were made available to the travelling population. The New York City and Company used its website to promote restaurants, attractions, events and hotels. The company introduced a promotional initiative that offered to host American and foreign travel journalists to see the city for themselves and to write about it. The internet was used as a key communication tool and it was consulted as the main source of information by the media, academic researchers and consumers. NYC and Company actively sought to address the security and safety concerns that were raised by the travelling public and the travel industry (Beirman, 2003:53-56).

#### ***4.2.2.2 Major issues that emerged from the case study***

The USA capitalised on the popularity of the mayor of New York City by using him as a brand personality and also capitalised on the brand-customer relationship through brand promotion. This brand-personality approach to branding proposes that a set of human characteristics such as the mayor was associated with the City. These human characteristics were personality traits such as concern, warmth, and authority.

The strategies that were employed by the USA during a crisis were similar to those employed by Israel. Israel has been at the centre of controversy for a long period, but has nevertheless employed a number of strategies for repositioning itself as a tourist destination. The strategies employed by Israel will be discussed in the following case

study. Some of the strategies that were adopted by the NYC and Company to reposition the destination are summarised below on Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Destination brand development**

<b>Image analysis</b>	<b>Promotion strategies</b>	<b>Brand Identity</b>
Strategic shift of the target market Developed a domestic tourism strategy Used local authorities to entice tourists, based on solidarity and patriotism Established an international crisis marketing team in collaboration with tourism stakeholders	Discounted hotel accommodation, air travel and restaurants Invited travel writers from across Europe Used websites for marketing purposes	Used the Mayor of New York as a symbol of peace All national tourist boards were encouraged to incorporate peace and reconciliation in their strategies Maintained a data base for tourists testimonials

**Source: Researchers construction from various concepts reviewed in this case study**

### 4.2.3 Israel



Israel has long been perceived to be a destination of pilgrimage and tourism. The country has shores on four different bodies of water. These bodies of water include the Mediterranean Sea, Sweet Water Sea of Galilee, Dead Sea and Red Sea. It has a variety of scenery, terrain and climate that ranges from snow-capped mountains to a barren desert. Israel has an excellent tourism infrastructure, road network, accommodation and multilingual ethnic groups with varied cultural backgrounds.

#### **4.2.3.1 *Tourism crisis in Israel during the 2000 era***

The failure of the Camp David Summit in July 2000 to find a solution to the conflict in the region, led to the outbreak of violence between Palestine and Israel. The media asserted that Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount days before the outbreak of the 'Al Aqsa inti fada' was the cause of the violence. As a result of the violence, tourism became the principal economic casualty on both sides. Due to the combined blockade of the border posts in all Israel-Palestine administered territories, virtually all Western governments advised their citizens to defer travel to the areas over which Israel had authority. This advice led to a severe downturn in the number of visitors to the region and to plummeting tourism business (Beirman, 2003).

#### **4.2.3.2 *The management of the crisis in Israel***

Israel had a well-developed contingency plan for the management of the short-term impact that the crisis had on its tourism industry. The Israeli government and tourist offices provided regular updates on the situation prevailing in the country. The major challenge was to counteract the negative impressions of the country that were being generated by the news media. The media had magnified the hostilities and depicted Palestine and Israel as war zones. In the face of this situation, Israel used an isolationist strategy in which the tourists were made aware of the trouble spots, followed by the message that "overall the country is safe". Israel hired an international public relations consulting firm to assist it to reposition itself as a destination (Beirman, 2003).

### 4.2.3.3 Major issues emerged from the case study of Israel

**Table 4.2 Destination branding development**

Destination brand



**Source: Researcher's construction from various concepts reviewed in this case study**

Israel used a product-brand approach to develop its identity. This type of identity could lead to product-attribute fixation, but it was nevertheless the most appropriate strategy, because the destination was set to appeal to the stalwart markets. The aim was to appeal to the target audience with the use of product scope, product attributes, quality, users' class category and the country of origin effect (Beirman, 2003). Whilst the significance of this approach is that it tends to increase the association with the occasions on which it was used and increases users' association with the brand position, Zimbabwe has failed to adopt a product led approach in its quest for improving its image and identity.

The strategy employed by Israel was similar in principle to the response used by Sri Lanka, although it did differ to some extent in its approach. The strategies employed by Sri Lanka are discussed in the following case study.

#### 4.2.4 Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka was known as Ceylon when it achieved independence from Britain in 1948. The government of the day renamed it the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Tensions between the Tamil and the Sinhalese have become a feature of Sri Lanka's political life since the country gained independence. Since 1993 there has been a state of civil war between the Tamils and the central government, which has resulted in the death of more than forty thousand people. Despite some relative calm towards the end of 2000, there has been no lasting resolution to the dispute between the Tamils and the central government.

On 24 July 2001, the Tamil Tiger fighters launched a destructive attack on the Colombo International Airport. The attack resulted in the destruction of the greater portion of the Sri Lankan fleet of passenger aircraft. Several people were killed, including tourists. This incident derailed the significant progress that Sri Lanka had been making since the second half of the 1990s in respect of attracting tourists. International tourists who had abandoned Sri Lanka for less troubled destinations had begun to return to the country in the late 1990s when the Sri Lankan government was in a position to give tourists reliable guarantees regarding their safety, although it still warned tourists to avoid spots in the country in which political friction was occurring.

The marketing of a destination that is experiencing a crisis has not been the only challenge faced by Sri Lankan tourism. This destination has faced other challenges, such as unemployment, poverty, economic instability and various social ills for a period of more than twenty years. Although considerable effort has been made to isolate the country's political problems from its attractions as a tourist destination, there have been many instances in which the growth of tourism has been hampered and disrupted by acts of political violence. Such instances have been particularly severe when hotels, national airports and other elements of the national tourism infrastructure were targeted by political dissidents (Beirman, 2003).

#### ***4.2.4.1 Marketing Sri Lankan tourism during a period of crisis***

The marketing of Sri Lanka is under government control and is highly centralised. The marketing function is carried out by the Ceylon Tourism Board, which was established by an Act of Parliament in the 1960s. The CTB is responsible for the implementation of the tourism policies of the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation. The funds for the CTB are provided by the treasury. The CTB concentrates its marketing efforts on its key source markets abroad. It has honorary directors who are appointed in strategic growing source markets to act as conduits for promotional material (Beirman, 2003).

The Sri Lankan airlines and their general sales agents, which are located in fifty countries around the world, distribute promotional material on Sri Lanka to travel agents and their clients. The CTB's website is a very useful source of information on tourism, because it provides comprehensive destination information and current statistical and contact information in Sri Lanka and abroad. However, Sri Lanka has



failed to address the security issues and concerns that are raised by tourists, travel agents and tour operators. It could be argued that the incorporation of security issues in information sources may deter tourists, but Sri Lanka's problems are well known and have proven to be a disincentive to tourism. The failure to incorporate security issues in tourism information has led to a lack of confidence in the CTB's ability to assist travel professionals to plan viable itineraries for tourists who travel within the destination. Sri Lanka has used a denial approach to the crisis, whereas it could have benefited by publicly identifying the northern Sri Lankan area to be a no-go area for tourists, similarly to Israel's closure of the Palestinian authority areas (Beirman, 2003).

Sri Lanka established a Presidential Task Force on tourism. It comprised an honorary body of private and government representatives who were commissioned to prepare a tourism master plan for 2000 and beyond. The Sri Lankan government committed itself to an "open skies" policy for international air carriers and offered favourable tax arrangements to investors in tourism development. The marketing efforts were focused on special interest, high-yield niche markets, including the wedding and honeymoon market, health, ecotourism and soft-adventure market (Beirman, 2003).

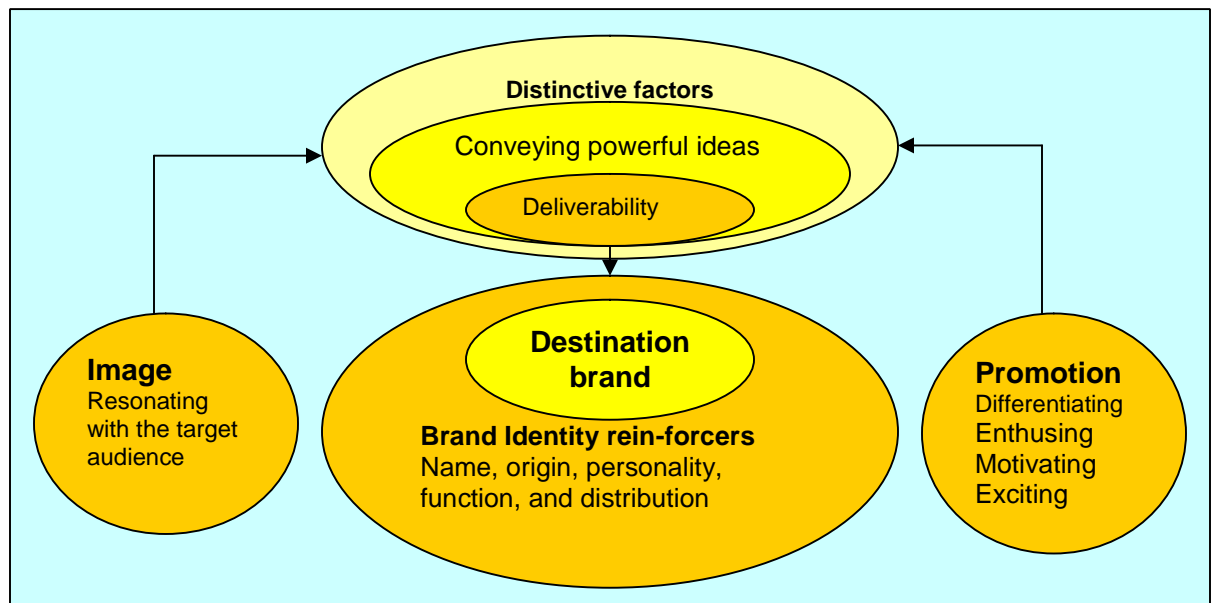
#### ***4.2.4.2 Major issues that emerged from the crisis situation***

Brand-identity factors are linked to the emotional value of a brand, which in turn embodies the functional attributes of the brand. The success of any brand-identity strategy depends on the level of communicability, credibility, extension potential and

potential for internationalising the destination brand. Although Sri Lanka used a denial strategy, which contributed to its failure to deliver credible information regarding safety and security issues, the government did form the Presidential Task Force, comprising all tourism stakeholders, to develop a tourism master plan. However, the destination’s failure to publicly counter the concerns of the consumer and the industry regarding safety and security has had a negative impact on the distinctiveness of destination.

The key lesson that emerges from the Sri Lankan case study is that, if the image of a destination is negative, the negativity ultimately affects its ability to convey and resonate with the needs of its potential audience. These relationships are illustrated below:

**Figure 4.2 Destination-brand development**



Source: Researcher’s construction from various concepts reviewed in this case study

In order to increase the competitive advantage that differentiates a destination, Sri Lanka identified its distinct competencies that were valuable and communicable to the consumers; that were deemed difficult to imitate; and were unique in relation to competitors. These distinctive competencies were then communicated to the target audiences through the use of a website. Sri Lanka lowered the price of accommodation and promoted itself as a low-price destination, while focusing on niche markets that have high yields. It also distributed promotional material through the Sri Lankan air lines, travel agents and other clients that are located in more than fifty countries.

#### **4.2.5 Nigeria**



Nigeria has a population that is estimated to exceed 130 million and is the world's 6<sup>th</sup> largest oil producer (Nworah, 2005:4). It has been labelled as one of the most corrupt countries in the world (Nworah, 2005:4) and been linked with other negative socio-political issues. These perceptions of the country have affected the global image of the destination and have had a negative impact on its competitiveness as a potential investment centre. Accordingly, the 2004 Transparency International Competition Perception Index ranked Nigeria to be the third most corrupt country in the world, based on the findings of a survey of 46 countries (Nworah, 2005:4). Other problems identified in respect of Nigeria include bribery; unemployment; poor infrastructural development; over dependency on oil; poor work ethics; large-scale dissatisfaction

and disaffection with the government and with political structures in general; and inadequate funding of education, health and other key societal sectors (Nworah, 2005:4).

Long periods of military dictatorship, which saw the country's national treasures pillaged and citizens' rights abused, have also contributed to the negative internal and external image that Nigeria has. However, for destination branding to be as efficient as product branding, there should be an integration policy which was not the case in Nigeria. The policy should address such issues as the ability to act and speak in a co-ordinated and repetitive way about different themes. The Nigerian situation is exacerbated by the multi-ethnic composition of its population, its (Nworah, 2005:5) history of the detention of opposition leaders and the lack of an integration strategy (Nworah, 2006:2).

#### ***4.2.5.1 Re-branding Nigeria as the Heart of Africa***

In July 2004, the Nigerian government, through its Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, launched the Nigerian image project, which was known as the Heart of Africa Project.

The co-operation between and involvement of all the representatives of government, business, the arts, education and the media (Nworah, 2005:6) fulfil a significant role in re-branding a destination. This judgement might have been based on several media reports, both nationally and internationally (Nworah, 2005:6).

The only campaign that has been recorded in respect of the promotion of Nigeria as a tourism destination is the “Welcome to Nigeria” commercial campaign, which ran in the Cable News Network (CNN) and featured the President, Olusegun Obasanjo, in a ceremonial role. The destination needed to create a system to link together the various organisations and departments that could form part of the brand. Co-ordination has continued to be a major challenge faced by the Heart of Africa (HOA) project (Nworah, 2005:7). The business world has not been encouraged to adopt the “made in Nigeria” logo, or the “proudly Nigeria” slogan in their branding. Hence, the project has been perceived to be a white elephant. Although there have been many economic and political reforms (Nworah, 2005:7), a great deal remains to be done to gain the confidence and faith of the citizens, potential investors and the (Nworah, 2005:7) the international community (Nworah, 2006:2) similar to Zimbabwe.

**Table 4.3 Major Issues that emerged from the case study**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Mix Elements</b>
<b>Image</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did not conduct an image analysis</li> <li>○ Stakeholders were not involved in the development of the brand</li> <li>○ No co-ordination of the Heart of Africa campaign</li> <li>○ Low coverage by the media</li> </ul>
<b>Identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The destination has not yet adopted the proposed logo</li> <li>○ Need to develop ways to articulate the central theme visually</li> <li>○ Need to restore confidence in the economic and political reforms</li> </ul>
<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need to synchronise messages through various channels to suit a particular audience</li> <li>○ Need to identify a specific target market</li> </ul>

**Source: Researcher’s construction from various concepts in the Nigerian situation**

#### 4.2.6 Fiji



The island Fiji is located in the south-west Pacific, north-west of New Zealand.

It incorporates the longest continuous stretch of coral reef outside Australia's Great Barrier Reef. The Fijians are known to be friendly and hospitable people. Brochures promote Fiji as a destination that encapsulates all the beauty and romance of the Pacific. The conflict that prevails between Fiji's indigenous Melanesian minority and the large majority of Fijians of Indian origin has been the main cause of political instability since Fiji achieved independence from British colonial rule in the 1970s. Tourism is Fiji's main source of foreign exchange earnings and the tourism industry is the major employer of Fijians. Its principal attraction as a tourist destination is its image of being inhabited by friendly and warm people (Beirman, 2003).

##### ***4.2.6.1 The impact of the coups in 1987 and 2000 on tourism in Fiji***

The coups of 1987 and 2000 in Fiji arose out of a concern among indigenous Fijians that they were being excluded from control over political, social and economic matters. The coups led to a change in the constitution that guarantees indigenous people the right to land ownership. International media gave extensive coverage to the 1987 coup. The events of the 2000 coup were transmitted instantaneously by technologically sophisticated international media and accompanied by live updates on the internet. It became a global media event. The coups were widely condemned

by the international community, which led Fiji to be suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations. The suspension was followed by boycotts of sports events, while Australia and New Zealand exerted intense diplomatic and economic pressure on the Fijian military and its indigenous leadership to crush the rebellion. Inbound tourism, especially from New Zealand and Australia, plummeted as a result of the coup.

Fiji had learnt several lessons from the effect of the 1987 coup. Fiji's visitors' bureaux had developed an effective contingency plan, which was deployed in 2000. The private and public sectors co-operated in setting the contingency plan in motion. Special deals were negotiated in respect of the prices of airfares and accommodation. However, the crisis recovery plan failed to exercise control over the travel advisory services in the key source markets. During both coups, tourism action groups (TAGs), comprising various stakeholders, were formed. The primary role of the TAGs was to formulate and co-ordinate a national crisis response and tourism recovery strategy.

The key to the success of Fiji's tourism was premised on its ability to diversify its source markets and make considerable progress in attracting a growing number of tourists from the Japanese, Korean and south-east Asian markets. Emphasis was placed on an attempt to increase high-quality accommodation and to appeal to new markets. In the case of Fiji, the perception of political instability and its ultimate manifestation threatened the desirability of the destination for tourists and tourism investors alike.

#### **4.2.6.2 *Tourism marketing in Fiji after the coups***

After the coups, the Fijian tourism industry formed a Tourism Action Group, comprising the Ministry of Tourism and major private industry bodies. The TAG decided that its original 1987 campaign slogan, namely “Fiji, the way the world should be” was inappropriate and a new slogan, “Visit the Fiji you don’t know”, was developed.

The Tourism Action Group approached the governments of its key source markets to modify the travel advisory notices that they had issued to their populations, namely to defer travel to Fiji. This step was followed by the introduction of a significant reduction in prices of airfares, tours and other land arrangements in order to lure visitors from the key source markets to return to the destination. Market research was conducted on the key markets and on potential markets.

The research findings resulted in a diversification of Fiji’s tourism markets, including the promotion of ecotourism and the identification of more inland destinations. It also included the promotion of Fiji’s “MICE” [meeting, incentives, conferences and events] markets as conference and incentive destinations. The travel industry organised an intensive programme on marketing and promotion in key source markets, which included familiarisation tours that were aimed at tour operators and travel agents; and the hosting of international media staff and travel writers. These efforts were complemented by the doubling of the marketing and promotion budget for tourism.



In the course of the period between 8 and 18 August 2001, the ban that the British, Japanese, Australian and New Zealand governments had imposed on travel to Fiji was revoked. Fiji made extensive use of the internet as a marketing tool (Guillermo, 2005) to reach the tourism trade and travellers alike. The Fiji Tourism Board launched advertisements in journals that targeted the MICE market.

It cannot be stated with certainty whether the defeat of the Speight coup attempt has resolved Fiji's political divisions. However, it is clear from the coups of 1987 and 2000 that Fiji's economy and travel industry are vulnerable in the event of political instability (Beirman, 2003).

**Table 4.4 Major issues that emerged from the case study**

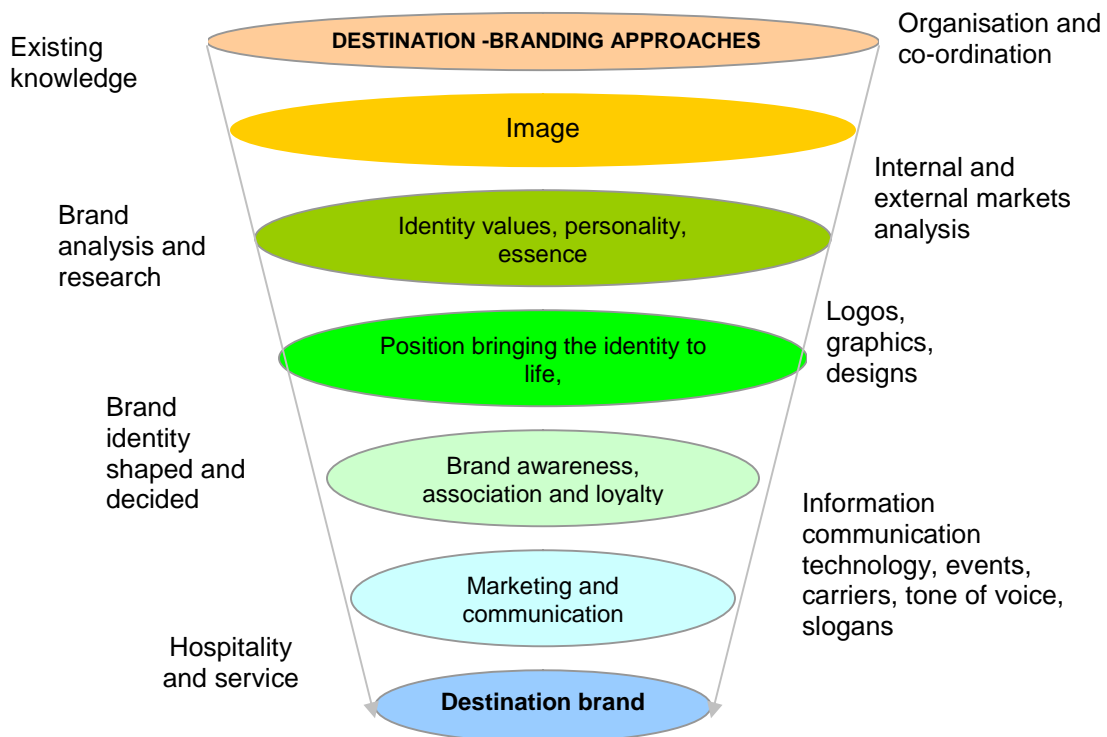
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Mix Elements</b>
<b>Image</b>	Vision and strategic analysis Policy, product design and Quality Status and distinctiveness Core values
<b>Identity</b>	Planning group Marketing events and risk analysis Comfort, relevance, slogan and signs ICT, internet and media
<b>Promotion</b>	Increased budget Price reduction Market diversification Target marketing Brand loyalty Brand association Brand awareness

**Source: Researcher's construction from various concepts in the Fiji situation**

### 4.3 A FRAMEWORK FOR DESTINATION BRANDING

This chapter focuses on approaches followed in other countries and the lessons that could be learnt from the case studies. Based on the preceding literature review of the approaches to branding that were applied in other countries, a theoretical framework could be developed that is based on the best practices that have been applied by destination marketers in their attempts to reposition a destination after it had experienced a crisis. The underlying assumption is that each destination already has a brand strategy in operation and that the major issue is to build brand equity. The action taken would then focus on four dimensions, namely image; brand identity; positioning; and marketing and communication. These matters are depicted in the destination-branding funnel below.

**Figure 4.3 Destination branding funnel**



**Source:** Developed based on the various concepts and literature reviews in this study

From the above analysis, it is evident that destination branding and positioning is encored on the target audience' existing knowledge about the destination, the image of the destination whether it is positive or negative. Successful branding is also dependent on the involvement of all stakeholders in the branding process. Therefore, carrying out an internal and external analysis serves as a basis for identifying the values, personality and essence of the destination.

The establishment of a brand identity tends to shape and direct the brand position. Positioning and identity can be enhanced through the use of logos, graphics and designs meant to reinforce brand awareness, association and loyalty. In addition, marketing and communication is meant to deliver a consistent image and project the destination in a positive note. The tools that can be used in this communicative process include, ICT, public diplomacy and slogans while service represents the promise and level quality expected. Based on the literature reviews, successful destination branding Zimbabwe should be encored on the recognition that the destination branding process may follow the steps such as those outlined in the destination branding funnel.

#### **4.4 DESTINATION-BRANDING AND DIPLOMACY CAMPAIGNS**

The purpose of public diplomacy is to seize an opportunity. Such diplomacy could also be understood to convey “soft power” and to afford nation opportunities to increase its familiarity with and appreciation by its visitors. Anholt (2003:6) recommends that public diplomacy should include the following:

*“The governments should engage with mass audiences through the embassies of various countries, because the members of staff of the embassies communicate with foreign customers; the government should change its tone of voice on public diplomacy to the extent that it concentrates less on winning arguments and more on engagement; public diplomacy should focus on countries that are relevant to the destination; and conspicuous government involvement in public diplomacy could be counterproductive, but working through third parties is more likely to build trust”.*

The actions taken in respect of the following destinations could be considered to be examples of successful destination branding and public diplomacy campaigns.

#### **4.4.1 Scotland**



The campaign of “Scotland the brand” was established in 1994 as a joint venture between industry and the government to promote Scottish trade and culture. The campaign has been hailed as a best practice in the creation and sustaining of an integrated and co-ordinated public/private sector initiative. The national logo was used as a status symbol on products that were exported to the global marketplace; encourage image cohesion and greater commercial value for Scotland; and even to contribute to the raising of the country’s profile (Vincente, 2004a).

#### 4.4.2 Britain

From 1998 to 1999, the British Malaysia Industry, Trade Association, British Council and British Tourist Association executed a joint initiative that was aimed at enhancing comprehensive cultural inflows, investment and tourism between Britain and Malaysia. A logo was launched that symbolised the partnership between Britain and Malaysia. A strap line entitled “Just between friends” celebrated the close and long-standing friendship between the two nations. These initiatives were wholly sponsored by British companies in Britain.



The United Kingdom has used this campaign as a tool for improving co-ordination between the government, private sector and non-governmental organisations by focusing on key themes. By attempting to ensure that perceptions of Britain and the world are more closely aligned with the reality in Britain, the campaign explains what it is to be British and to make the whole larger than its component parts (UK in Malaysia, 2007). The approach included the use of public diplomacy and a strategy board and also involved i-uk.com, BBC World service, British Council, scholarships and foreign journalists.

The main purpose of the public diplomacy campaign was to comprehend and improve the perceptions of the people in the Malaysia and to increasingly promote appreciation for that which is embedded in modernisation, diversity, creativity and

success, which traits are relevant to lively inclusive, open and welcoming people. The campaign was intended to underpin political and cultural influences, commercial competitiveness and the ability to attract visitors, students, investors and diverse talents from Malaysia.

#### 4.4.3. Spain



There are many destinations that compete for the attention of the tourist's mindset; therefore a one-stop website is an essential tool for a country that wants to brand itself as a niche destination. The website should be easy to use, have a user-friendly interface facility and be devised with clear objectives in mind. Countries that have designed effective websites include, Australia (<http://www.australia.com>), New Zealand (<http://www.purenz.com/>) and South Africa (<http://www.southafrica.net>).

Spain has an official website for tourism that is available online at (<http://www.tourspain.es/tourspain/home?langaugge=en>). It has been labelled a good example of destination branding for a tourist destination. Spain has been successful in conveying its image in such a way that it is conducive to changing the manner in which it is perceived by the international community. Its changing image has been accompanied by greater economic prosperity and strengthened democracy.

Spain launched its marketing campaign in 1982 during the soccer world cup. In the campaign, Joan Miro's sun design was used to symbolise the modernisation of Spain. This logo has now become the official tourism logo for Spain (Morgan *et al.* 2002).

#### 4.4.4. Costa Rica



This destination has, in the course of the past few years, experienced rapid growth in so-called “sun and beach tourism”, especially in respect of the enclave destinations in the North Pacific area of Guano Caste. The Costa Rica Tourism Board, a government institution responsible for the marketing of tourism, took the lead in the campaign to increase tourism. The Costa Rica brand is aimed at positioning the destination as being rich in biodiversity.

In the course of the period between 1994 and 1998, President Figueres deliberately fostered for the country an image of being a sustainable tourism destination. Although the branding of the destination was initiated in the mid eighties, the brand “Costa Rica, no artificial ingredients” was launched in 1996 as part of a promotional campaign in the US. It has since been adopted as the official tourism brand. The destination also has an official website.



#### 4.4.5 Central America



In order to market central America, seven central American countries collaborated to develop a regional brand and promotional materials, including a website ([www.visitecentroamerica.com](http://www.visitecentroamerica.com)). A strap line for the region, “So little...so much...”, was launched in 2002 as a regional brand meant to position the region as a Central America geo-destination that has unique characteristics. The positioning of the destination was successful due to its exuberant tropical nature; its cultural wealth of pre-Colombian and colonial cultures; and the warmth and hospitality of its people, all in a relatively small territory (Central America.com, 2009). A partnership was formed between the private and the public sectors. It comprised the ministers of tourism who served as the presidents of the chambers of tourism in the seven Central American countries. When the partnership was formed in 2003, its main aim was to plan, co-ordinate and promote the marketing of Central America as a multi-faceted tourism destination in the European and Asian markets (Central America.com, 2009).

#### 4.4.6. La Reunion



La Reunion is an island that is situated in the Indian Ocean. It has an intensely colourful landscape in which, for example, strong ubiquitous green contrasts with



delicate blue. It has positioned itself as an “intensive” island as emphasised by the logo above. Its logo bids the tourist a professional, natural and cordial welcome in accordance with Creole hospitality. It has branded its hospitality industry as possessing Reunion tourist quality (La Reunion, 2008). The Reunion tourist quality is maintained in terms of a quality charter that each member of the trade undertakes to respect. The destination has a website (<http://www.lareunion.webfronts.com>).

#### 4.4.7 South Africa



South Africa has used communication resource centres (that, for example, monitor news reports on South Africa) to keep people informed about its profile as a tourist destination. It also maintains a web portal, [www.southafrica.info](http://www.southafrica.info). Furthermore, the country has managed to position itself through advertising at trade fairs, exhibitions and international events. The destination has promoted itself through the media by means of media briefings, press conferences, feature articles and even photo opportunities for journalists and travel writers.

The main purpose of these activities is to position South Africa as a “country alive with possibility” and to counteract any negative effect for its image that may emanate from problems such as HIV/AIDS and crime. In 2003, the country launched a strategic plan for marketing itself as a tourist destination (IMC, 2003). The main aim

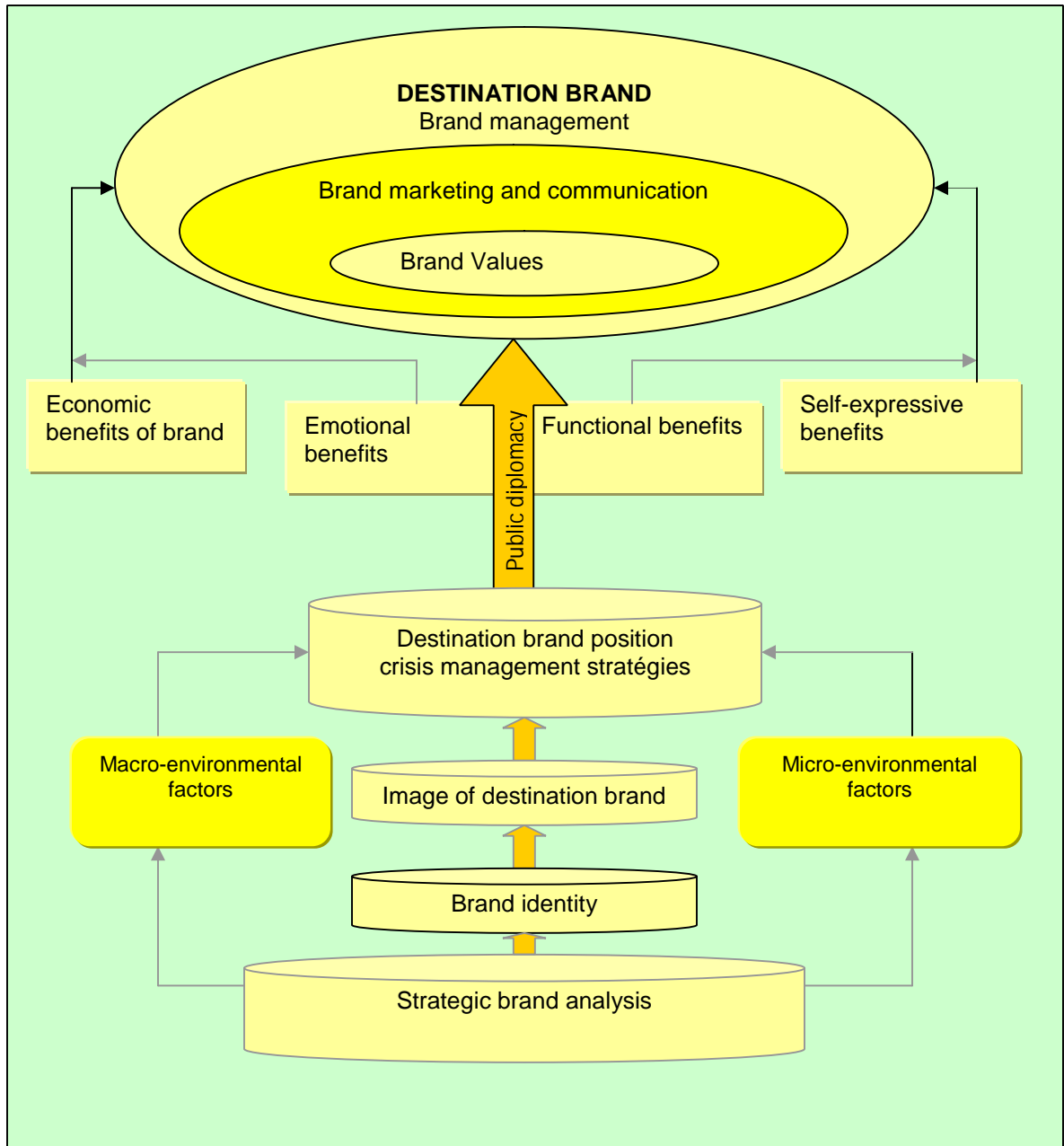
of the plan is to continuously and consistently provide stakeholders and potential customers with current information on the situation in South Africa.

#### **4.4.8 Analysis of strategies for destination branding campaigns**

Government representatives of many countries interact with private groups in other countries to gain an understanding of and to influence the public opinion in that country about the government's own country. In order to achieve the broad aims of public diplomacy, communication on current issues should be aligned with traditional diplomacy and with the salient events occurring in one's own country (Hart, 2008). Such diplomatic efforts should be supported by a strategic communication plan that involves the management of all the overall perceptions of a country (Leonard, 2002).

For the purposes of this research project, an analysis has been undertaken of the public-diplomacy strategies that have been employed by various destinations. A summary of these strategies is provided below in the context of branding-campaign strategies and with the use of a destination-branding and public diplomacy campaign model. The model has six layers, namely brand management; brand marketing and communication; brand values; public diplomacy; brand position; brand image; brand identity and brand analysis. The model that appears in figure 4.4 is a destination-branding and public diplomacy campaign model. This model has been developed from various concepts and the extensive literature reviewed in this chapter. The model is a combination of branding, positioning and public diplomacy strategies adopted by variously selected countries which were faced with an image problem similar to the Zimbabwean situation.

Figure 4.4 Destination-branding and public diplomacy campaign model



Source: Researcher's construction based on various sources reviewed this study

The bottom layer of the model comprises the elements of strategic brand analysis, brand awareness and brand identity. *Brand awareness and public diplomacy*

strategies that are developed for educational campaigns are aimed at using the local inhabitants as ambassadors to create awareness and to change negative perceptions about the destination. It involves emphasizing the brand's economic, emotional, functional and self-expressive benefits. *Brand identity and image* concern the use of symbols, names and strap lines that conjure up images, ideas, beliefs and opinions in the mind of the target audience. The objective of the brand identity can be achieved by rallying behind the brand and projecting the vision of the destination. A change in perception is needed and could be achieved by building on expectations, developing slogans/positioning and branding themes that are alluring to the target audience. The *strategic brand analysis* is premised on an analysis of the micro and macro environments. The analysis has an impact on the brand identity, brand image and brand position and has a bearing on the development of crisis management strategies.

The top layer of the model comprises brand management; marketing and communication; and brand values. *Brand management* is concerned with the creation of an environment that is suitable for the achievement of goals in a strategic manner. It focuses on the interests of the destination, diversity, culture and technology. The aim of brand management is to maintain and increase visitation. *Marketing and communication* concerns the use of the printed and electronic media to maintain relationships and convey information to various publics. It could also involve the use of embassies to influence mass audiences in other countries. The strategy is intended to foster media relations in order to gain positive publicity and control messages about the destination. *Brand value and positioning* is concerned with value creation that is aimed at maintaining relationships with individuals and customers. Its components include a changed tone of voice in public diplomacy and

international relations by providing assurance on peace and security and emphasizing tolerance.

#### **4.4.9 Lessons learnt from the branding approaches**

Several lessons could be learnt from the case studies contained in the above review of approaches to destination branding and positioning. The lessons can be applied to a country like Zimbabwe if it has to be branded and positioned as a tourist destination. These lessons are summarised below.

- The restoration and recovery of the image of a destination is largely dependent on the efforts made by the country concerned to market the destination. The recovery process comprises many elements, such as the repair of infrastructure, erection of buildings and rehabilitation of medical facilities and provision of funds. Successful recovery action demands a truthful assessment of the crisis situation.
- Failure to tell the truth could affect the integrity of the brand. In the long run the truth will be exposed and lead to the destination being viewed either negatively or positively as a result of the projected image. The lesson learnt about the open and honest management of marketing information is that it can result in short term pay for long term gain.
- A website has become an important tool in the dissemination of information and it should be updated regularly.
- Positioning a destination includes changing the strap line and/or the logo in order to develop new images, associations, awareness and values.

- Destination marketers and national authorities should work in conjunction with the private sector. In some cases, major consulting firms are hired to provide independent marketing and management advice.
- Crises have been managed with varying degrees of success. Destinations need to be pro-active in developing crisis management strategies in order to counter any negative equity.
- Strategic destination-brand management is an important element in destination branding, because it could be used to create an environment that is suitable to the achievement of goals in a strategic manner.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter has reviewed best practices in destination branding and the marketing of destinations during a crisis situation. Case studies on the actions taken in the United States of America, Israel, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Denmark, Britain, Spain, Costa Rica, Central America, La Re Union and Nigeria were used to discuss the response strategies employed by these destinations during a crisis situation. The case studies revealed that, during a crisis situation, these destinations mounted promotional campaigns by means of the media, websites and public diplomacy strategies to counteract negative equity. The media carried reliable and verifiable information concerning the security issues within the destination.

Some destinations implemented strategies for obtaining global insurance cover for international travellers. In some cases, destinations employed price-cutting strategies in respect of accommodation and transportation in order to capitalise on volumes.

Simultaneously, some destinations organised familiarisation tours to areas that were unaffected by the crisis while engaging in public diplomacy to counteract negative perceptions. In some cases, destinations developed a new identity and a new slogan in order to attract visitors. It was noted that during a crisis situation it is necessary to shift the emphasis in marketing from those countries that are critical of the destination to those countries that are more relevant to the destination's interests. In addition, it was observed that some governments changed their tone of voice when articulating matters in the public diplomacy domain.

The next chapter considers a situational analysis of destination branding and marketing in Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER 5

### A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF ZIMBABWE REGARDING DESTINATION BRANDING AND POSITIONING

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## CHAPTER 5

# A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF ZIMBABWE REGARDING TOURISM, DESTINATION BRANDING AND POSITIONING



**Zimbabwe**  
*Africa's Paradise*

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The marketing of tourism remains a mere conceptual issue in some destinations. As a result, these destinations are failing to forge marketing strategies to promote themselves as tourist destinations (Reisinger *et al.*, 2006:3). The marketing of a destination should have the direct involvement of the government; tourism industry; and both the regional and international tourism organisations (Ross, 1994:45) in order to create a synergy in the development of tourism.

The aim of this chapter is to examine Zimbabwe's experiences in respect of destination marketing and to execute a situational analysis regarding the implications for branding and positioning strategies. The objectives of the chapter are to:

- Execute a situational analysis of Zimbabwe regarding the marketing of the country as a tourist destination;
- evaluate the strategies employed by the country in marketing the destination;
- discuss the factors that affect the destination brand and how these factors have contributed to a negative image and to poor publicity;

- examine the factors that could affect the destination's future branding initiatives; and
- explain the role of the tourism industry in destination marketing, branding and positioning in Zimbabwe.

## 5.2 AN OVERVIEW OF ZIMBABWE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

Zimbabwe is a unique and fascinating holiday destination with a plethora of attractions. It is a land of extraordinary beauty, which has a rich diversity of wildlife (Lonelyplanet travel, 2007), with a total of 664 wildlife species, which represents approximately 7% of the world's known species. It has unspoilt tourist attractions that offer thrilling adventures that vary from white-water rafting, through traditional dances to bird safaris and ecotourism. This tourist destination is endowed with the magnificence of the mighty Victoria Falls, which is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The rich wildlife in the Zambezi valley includes buffaloes and elephants (Lonelyplanet travel, 2007).

Zimbabwe was known for its friendly people and a multiracial society in which people of all nationalities lived in harmony. It had strived to become the best destination in Southern Africa, but a number of circumstances have blurred this vision. Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia, is a landlocked country in southern Africa that is situated on a high plateau between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers, more than 300m above sea level. It borders South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. It has a population of 13 500 000 people (Adventure travel, 2008). It has a warm climate. The temperatures in the low veldt and Zambezi valley are hotter with up to 35° C in the

summer. Figure: 5.1 shows the location of Zimbabwe within its Southern Africa neighbours.

**Figure 5.1 Map of Zimbabwe**



Source: [www.graphicmaps.com](http://www.graphicmaps.com), 2008

### **a) Ancient History**

The country has a fascinating history that provides depth and meaning to its people and the visitor. In Zimbabwe, the past and the present are inextricably part of everyday life (Lonelyplanet travel, 2007). Bushman artistry can be seen painted on

the walls of caves and overhangs, leaving a gallery of their experiences (Lonelyplanet travel, 2007) for the tourist to see. Portuguese and British explorers in the 1800s fought for the wealth that Zimbabwe has (Adventure travel, 2008). Harare, the capital city, has a wonderful and invigorating climate. Included among its modern buildings are the country's national galleries and national archives.

### ***b) Attractions***

The Victoria Falls is probably the tourist attraction in the country that lures most tourists from around the world. The falls are inescapable close to the natural elements. Tourists are fascinated by the towering column of spray when the river is high, the thunder of the falling water and the terrifying abyss that separates Zimbabwe from Zambia (Adventure travel, 2008)

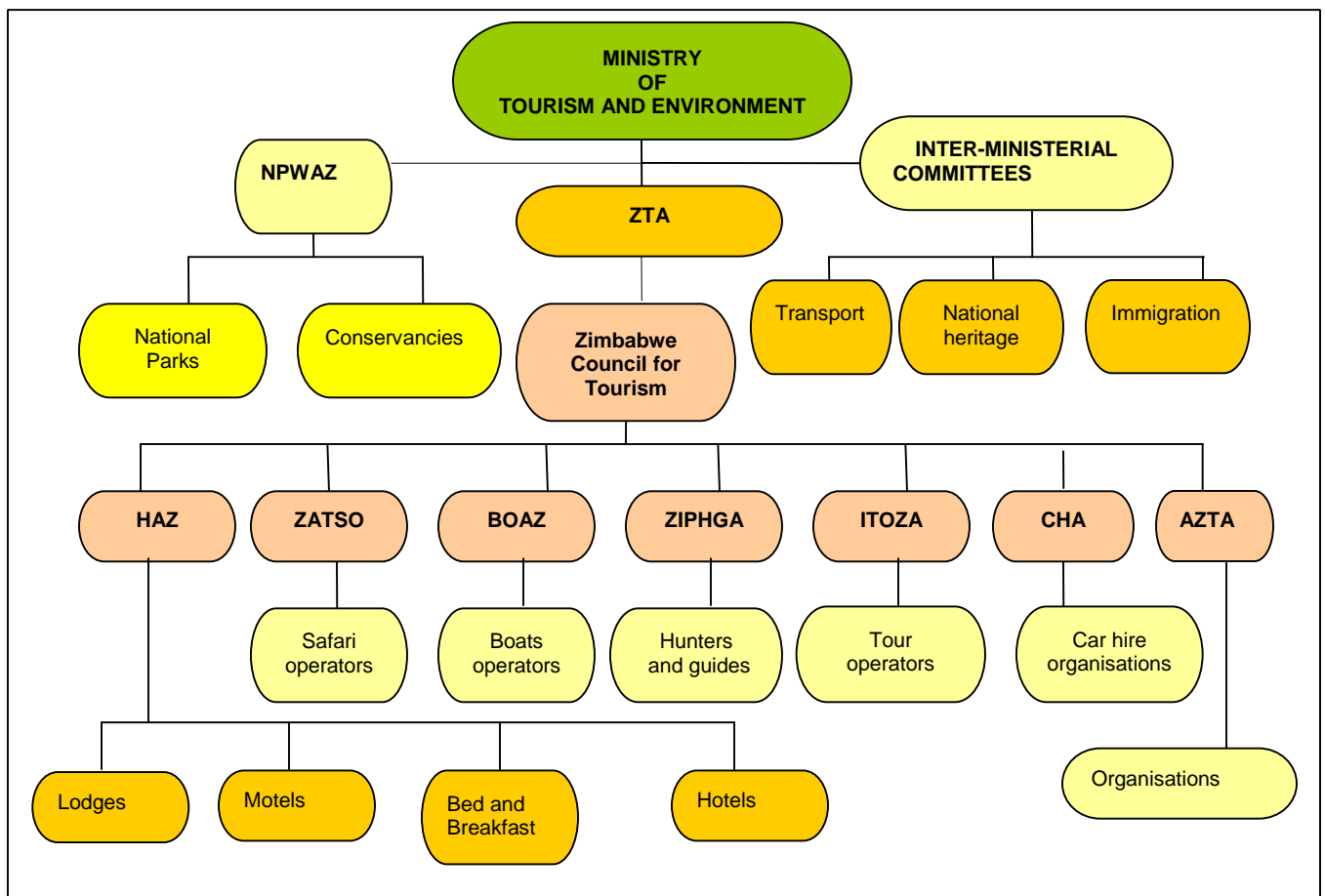
Other popular destinations in Zimbabwe include Lake Kariba, a great man-made inland sea that is nestled in mountains and bordered by enormous game reserves; the Mana pools, which lie in the Zambezi valley; Hwange National Park. the Eastern Highlands; the Great Zimbabwe Ruins, which lie in the south east of Zimbabwe and are the most extraordinary man-made ruins in Africa; and the Gonarezhou National Park, which is situated in the hotter and drier parts of Zimbabwe and is about 260km long and about 5 053 km<sup>2</sup> in extent.

## **5.3 THE STRUCTURE OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN ZIMBABWE**

The organisation of tourism activities in Zimbabwe can be differentiated into two distinct sectors, namely the public sector, which leads and drafts policies, and the

private sector, which represents the majority of investors in the industry. Tourism falls under the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment. The Ministry controls the two relevant authorities, namely the National Parks and Wildlife Authority of Zimbabwe (NPWAZ) as well as the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA). The structure of these organisations is shown in figure 5.2 below.

**Figure 5.2 Structure of the tourism industry in Zimbabwe**



**Source: Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2006**

The NPWAZ is responsible for all wildlife management issues in the country and it is directly responsible for the management of conservancies. The Zimbabwe Tourism

Authority is responsible for all the tourism and marketing-related issues (ZTA, 2008:5). The ZTA also has authority over the Zimbabwe Council for Tourism (ZCT), which is a private-sector organ that represents the following sectors; Hospitality Association of Zimbabwe (HAZ), Zimbabwe Association of Transport Service Organisation (ZATSO), Boat Owners Association (BOAZ), Zimbabwe Professional Hunters and Guides Association (ZIPGA), Inbound Tour Operators of Zimbabwe (ITOZA), Association of Zimbabwe Travel Agents (AZTA) and the Car Hire Association (ZTA, 2006).

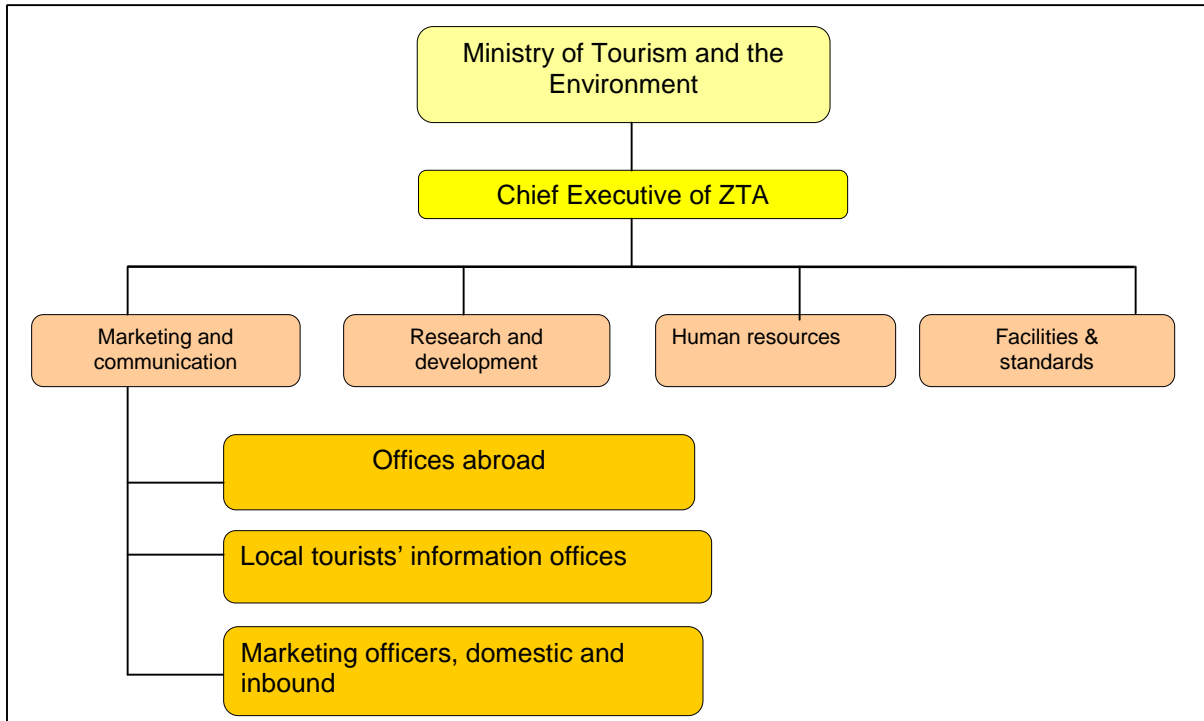
### **5.3.1 The public sector**

The public sector falls under the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, in 1996 the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment established an arm of government, called the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), through an act of Parliament. Chapter 14:20 of the Tourism Act of 1996 determines that the ZTA shall act as a national tourism board, which is defined as an organisation that is responsible for among other things the marketing and promoting of the destination (ZTA,1999:3-6).

### **5.3.2 The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA)**

Before ZTA's establishment in 1996, it was known as the Zimbabwe Tourism Development Corporation (ZTDC). The organisational structure of the ZTA and its link with the ministry of environment and tourism is illustrated in figure 5.3 below:

**Figure 5.3 The organisational structure of ZTA**



**Source: Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2006**

As an arm of government, ZTA is headed by a chief executive officer (CEO) who is appointed by the Minister of Tourism and the Environment as prescribed in the Tourism Act of 1996. The CEO heads all the departments of ZTA. He is responsible for the effective utilisation of the funds that are provided for the ZTA by means of a government grant (ZTA, 2000:3).

The ZTA envisions Zimbabwe to become a vibrant and preferred tourist destination for both local and international tourists who could enjoy the abundance and diversity of the country's resources and tourism products (ZTA, 2006). The ZTA works with various stakeholders to sustainably develop and promote Zimbabwe as a leading tourist destination through the setting up of high standards and the monitoring of the



achievement of these standards; undertaking of market research; and product development. The strategic objectives of the ZTA are to build and manage professionally the destination-marketing organisation. It is envisaged that the achievement of these strategic objectives could be achieved through team work and integrity, which would result in customer satisfaction (ZTA, 2000:4).

According to the ZTA (2003:6), the Authority has the following responsibilities:

- To promote Zimbabwe and its tourism industry to international, regional and domestic markets and to develop marketing skills and initiatives within the tourism industry;
- to promote high standards in the tourism industry through the establishment of standards and the provision of training. The monitoring and maintenance of standards is achieved through the registration and grading of designated tourist facilities;
- to undertake planning for the tourism industry, including the conducting of market research and the development of tourism databases. In addition, it seeks to promote awareness in Zimbabwe of the benefits of tourism by providing consultancy and advisory services in respect of tourism; and
- to investigate any matters that affect tourism and make recommendations to the Minister of environment and tourism on the administration of the tourism act and the promotion of the development of tourism facilities and infrastructure in Zimbabwe.

Whilst some of the major roles of ZTA are to promote Zimbabwe as a tourist destination, undertake market research and investigate matters affecting the tourism

industry, it seems the DMO has abdicated its duties since it has failed to strategically market and position Zimbabwe as a tourist destination.

### **5.3.3 Registration and grading of tourism establishments**

Any person who conducts or operates or intends to conduct or operate a designated tourist facility is required to be registered with or graded by the ZTA (ZTA, 2004:7). However, before registration and grading occurs, the designated tourist facility is inspected by ZTA. Such inspection may require a report from a chief health officer of the Ministry of Health. After the registration of a designated tourist facility, the CEO of the ZTA issues a certificate of registration, which indicates that the facility is registered and graded (ZTA, 2004).

The Tourism Act of 1996 states that it is a prerequisite that any service whatsoever provided for tourists or any premises or place in or on which a service for tourists is conducted be called a designated tourist facility. Operators of tourist facilities who require a licence have to obtain it from ZTA. Liquor and the tour guide licenses are examples of licences that are issued by the ZTA to facilities and individuals who, respectively, provide and deal in alcoholic beverages and who guide tours (ZTA, 2005).

### **5.3.4 The private sector**

The private sector tourism operators are an integral part of the tourism industry in Zimbabwe. This sector comprises tourism companies that are privately owned. The

large variety of companies in this sector makes it prudent for them to form associations that represent various groups of companies that share common interests and face similar challenges in the industry (ZTA, 2006:15). The private sector associations in Zimbabwe are varied and are headed by the Zimbabwe Council for Tourism (ZCT), which is affiliated to ZTA and deliberates on issues that arise from the industry and advise the ZCT members on the best way forward. The associations, which, according to the Zimbabwe Council for Tourism, represent various groupings, include, amongst others the Hospitality Association of Zimbabwe (HAZ), Boat Owners Association of Zimbabwe (BOAZ), Association of Zimbabwe Travel Agents (AZTA), Zimbabwe Association of Transport Services Organisations (ZATSO) and Inbound Tour Operators of Zimbabwe Association (ITOZA). As expressed in the names of the associations, they represent various groupings in the industry that come together to channel their concerns and suggestions through the ZCT (ZTA, 2002:10).

### **5.3.5 Functions of the Zimbabwe Council for Tourism (ZCT)**

According to the ZCT (2005:8), the main functions of the Zimbabwe Council for Tourism are to:

- Provide a forum for the discussion and resolution of the common problems of tourism enterprises;
- make co-ordinated recommendations to the ZTA regarding improvements in the tourism sector;
- provide representation on tourism boards and committees;

- provide research findings and training that is relevant to the private sector; and
- provide recommendations to the ZTA on policy issues and to lobby the government on certain practices that affect the industry.

Even though ZCT's functions are adequate, the organisation looks more like a club than a powerful body that can challenge ZTA and the government. This point has been strengthened by certain operations that ZTA engaged on, which some operators thought were disruptive to the operations of the Tourism industry. These operations were similar to Murambatsvina (by Government) and operation sun rise (by the Reserve Bank) which went on unabated by ZCT.

#### **5.4 BACKGROUND OF TOURISM MARKETING IN ZIMBABWE**

According to the ZTA (2004:6), during the period 2001 to 2003, the tourism industry experienced its worst business performance since Zimbabwe achieved independence in 1980. In 2003, the focus of the marketing efforts was shifted to the new markets with the posting of area managers to the non-traditional markets of Paris and Beijing. Only one posting was made to the traditional markets, namely to South Africa. The Chinese government conferred a preferred destination status on Zimbabwe in 2002. In September 2003, Zimbabwe launched the "Come to Victoria Falls, down in Zimbabwe" campaign in South Africa (ZTA, 2004:6)

The major challenge that the ZTA faced, was that of funding the external promotional activities. Zimbabwe also attempted to attend at least one major travel show in each

of the seven areas in which it is represented, such as the World Travel Market (UK), Indaba (South Africa) and ITB (Berlin, German). It has produced brochures, CDs, DVDs and videos (ZTA, 2003:4) for the purpose of marketing itself as a destination. ZTA has been involved in the ongoing consultations with relevant stakeholders (Immigration and Central Statistic Office) to improve the accuracy of the statistics on arrivals. Visits to border posts and ongoing workshops and meetings of the National Tourism Statistics Committee have been established. The ZTA has also been involved in enforcing compliance through the auditing of statistics in tourism establishments (ZTA, 2002:5). These statistics are meant to measure the utilisation of facilities and tourism receipts. The ZTA is also co-operating with the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to ensure compliance with the new Tourism Returns Forms (TR1 & TR2). The compilation of data for tourism satellite accounts through consultations with the relevant statistical organisations has kept ZTA visible in the industry (ZTA, 2004:7). It has been involved in visitor surveys, visitor expenditure, trends analysis, collaboration and the generation of tourism reports. It is hoped that the data will contribute to the development of the Geographic Information System on tourism (Hill *et al.*, 2002:5).

Zimbabwe is being promoted in China and its other traditional markets by means of road shows and the production and distribution of promotional material, which has been reproduced in various languages (ZTA, 2004:9). The distribution has been done through tourist offices, embassies and other related outlets. The ZTA strives to continually upgrade its website. On the domestic scene, the ZTA has attended local and provincial shows, such as the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair/Asambeni in Bulawayo and provincial agricultural shows in all the other cities (ZTA, 2005:6). The Destination Marketing Organisation is involved in the celebration of World Tourism

Day by holding celebrations in various centres. These celebrations support the Publicity Associations' programmes in major cities. Awareness campaigns that target schools, churches and other social groups have been launched (ZTA, 2005:6). The ZTA has been involved in the promotion of the destination, both locally and internationally, through travel expos and public relations activities in order to improve the visibility of its image. Corporate advertising has been undertaken in both the electronic and the printed media on special events, such as Heroes Day, Independence Day and the 21<sup>st</sup> February movement (ZTA, 2006:8). It has also been involved in hosting familiarization tours that are intended to increase the product knowledge of persons in the travel trade. Tour operators and travel agencies from various markets are invited each year while familiarization and educational tours are hosted for travel writers and prominent persons are invited to visit Zimbabwe.

As prescribed in the ZTA's duties, marketing has been one of its major functions since its inception. Apart from organising the "Shanyai/Vakatshani" travel expositions, Zimbabwe has entered the world of showcasing at the International Travel Bureau, ITB in Germany and Great Indaba in South Africa and has sent tourism attaché's to various source markets in order to promote the country as a tourist destination. In 2004, the ZTA participated in yet another type of marketing, namely the Miss Tourism World Beauty Pageant. Zimbabwe hosted the pageant upon its inception in 2004 and again in 2005 (Chidzidzi, 2006). As a result of the approved destination status accorded to it by the Chinese government, Zimbabwe has embarked on a "Look East" strategy, which is aimed at the Far East Asian market. This strategy has not delivered significant results in terms of tourist arrivals.

## 5.5 DESTINATION BRANDING IN ZIMBABWE

After Zimbabwe gained its independence in April 1980, the government aimed to disassociate the country from its negative past experiences, such as the colonial system, civil war, sanctions and the social ills that had contributed to it receiving negative publicity. The first step was to re-brand the country from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. In its search for a relevant identity, the then Zimbabwe Tourism Development Corporation adopted a branding notion termed “Discover Zimbabwe”. The challenge was to gain the acceptance of the Zimbabwean people. Because this action was undertaken on an ad hoc basis, there was no sufficient time for consultations with all stakeholders (ZTA, 2000:15). Another great challenge was to make the brand work. The brand was associated with the successful transformation of the political system. The reforms made in respect of tourism did not have a great effect, because the government decided to largely maintain the status quo by targeting the low-volume and high-return type of tourist markets (ZTA, 2006:12).

The concept of destination branding is premised on the objective of understanding the target audience. Such understanding can not be achieved effectively when the people within a country act independently. The process of re-branding should be based on reality and credibility, otherwise the audience loses trust and confidence in the brand (Anholt, 2002). When the “Discover Zimbabwe” brand was adopted, very little consultation was undertaken. Some stakeholders were of the opinion that the brand was not well focused and distinct, because the same theme was being used in other destinations.

In 1996, the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority was established through an act of Parliament (ZTA, 2004:2). The establishment of ZTA presented an opportunity for the destination to re-brand. The existence of the ZTA did in fact bring about significant changes. As the branding initiative lacked consistency, the public and private sector bodies co-operated to map a way forward. The aim was to develop a comprehensive theme that would address all the issues surrounding brand association, perception, image and positioning (ZTA, 2006:4).

The image created by the old ZTDC brand was sometimes at odds with the other branding initiatives. In order to overcome the discrepancy, the stakeholders agreed, after extensive consultation, that they needed a positioning statement that would posture Zimbabwe differently. Consequently, with the help of the European Union (EU), a positioning was proposed and, ultimately, “Africa’s Paradise” was developed and adopted. Success in this field often requires considerable time and it is bolstered by other factors, such as economic reforms (Zimbabwe Human Rights Organisation, 2007), resources, markets, image, time and identity. It is the “Africa’s Paradise” positioning that recently faced several challenges as a result of the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe.

## **5.6 AN EVALUATION OF DESTINATION BRANDING IN ZIMBABWE**

Seaton & Bennett (1996) argue that the marketing of a destination can only be done successfully by marketers who have a clear understanding and definition of the destination, because a destination is a complex and unique phenomenon. The geographical location and physical properties of Zimbabwe qualify it to be a



destination that can be marketed in respect of its intangible features of its history, people, traditions and culture.

Seaton & Bennett (1996) furthermore contend that “a destination is not merely an object, but that it has both physical and socio-cultural characteristics”. A destination is a concept that is formed in the minds of the tourists and is dependent on its image and tourists’ perception (Ngwodo, 2006:2). Very often tourists do not buy products per se, but are rather prepared to pay for an experience and a dream (Heath, 2007). According to Seaton & Bennett (1996:30),

*“destination branding should follow clear marketing guidelines by assessing the current and future markets; auditing the destination and analysing its appeal to the markets; developing strategic objectives and marketing mix elements; creating an organisation to implement the objectives; and implementing and evaluating the results”.*

It is these guidelines that are used to evaluate the status of destination marketing in Zimbabwe in this project. The guidelines are discussed individually in the sections that follow.

### **5.6.1 Assessment of the current markets and focusing on the future markets**

Before a destination can embark on a branding programme, there should be a clear comprehension of the branding philosophy that is to guide the destination’s

marketing efforts. The starting point is premised on an understanding of the destination's objectives, target markets and marketing strategy. The more a destination knows about its customers and their attitudes, desires and behaviours, the better it will be able to design and implement the marketing efforts required to stimulate their purchasing habits (Middleton in Bennett, 1995:254).

No carefully crafted communication strategies have been produced to sell the "Africa's Paradise" phenomenon to the Zimbabwean citizens. The prevailing conception is still that tourism is for foreigners. According to Rogers (2003:40), there are five categories of people in any market, namely;

- Innovators. They are venturesome and educated people who have access to multiple information sources and have a large propensity to take risks;
- Early adopters. They are social leaders who are popular and educated;
- Early majority. They are deliberate, mainly informal social contacts;
- Late majority. They are sceptical and traditional people of lower socio-economic status; and
- Laggards. They constitute neighbours and friends. They can be the main sources of information that raises fear or doubt.

Zimbabwe does not appear to conform to these categories in its market segmentation, target marketing and positioning.

Zimbabwe has lagged dramatically behind its immediate competitors in terms of tourist arrivals during the period 1999 to 2005. Comparative figures are provided in table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Analysis of tourist arrivals in Zimbabwe and its competitors**

Country	Year						
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Zimbabwe	2.24	1.96	2.21	2.01	2.25	1.85	1.50
South Africa	6.02	6.0	5.91	6.2	6.66	6.82	7.13
Kenya	0.97	1.0	0.99	1.0	0.87	1.13	1.67
Zambia	0.4	0.46	0.49	0.57	0.58	0.69	0.97
Mauritius	0.5	0.66	0.66	0.67	0.7	0.72	0.76
Botswana	0.84	0.86	0.88	0.91	0.98	1.08	1.19
Namibia	0.7	0.76	0.86	0.75	0.7	1.01	1.09

**Arrival in millions**

**Source ZTA, 2006.**

South Africa is of special note in regard to the arrival of tourists in Zimbabwe's competing destinations. It has maintained its top position as the regional leader in tourist arrivals. In 2005, Zimbabwe lost its second position to Kenya after receiving 1.5 million tourists compared to the 1.67 million received by Kenya. Zimbabwe has the smallest market share in terms of arrivals from the high-value markets in Europe and America (ZTA, 2005).

Although the ZTA argues that the "Look East" policy has begun to bear fruits, Zimbabwe is still hard hit in terms of market share in comparison with its competitors (ZTA, 2005:8). The budget for tourism marketing activities in Zimbabwe has remained extremely small in comparison with other SADC countries. Comparative figures for 2005 appear in table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.2 SADC country budgets (Southern Africa)**

Country	Budget (US\$)
South Africa	36 000 000
Mauritius	20 000 000
Mozambique	6 000 000
Namibia	3 900 000
Zambia	4 000 000
Zimbabwe	200 000

**Source: ZTA, 2006**

Zimbabwe's bottom position in respect of the national budgets provided for tourism marketing activities illustrates the continued stiff competition that it is experiencing from its neighbours. According to Chidzidzi (2006), Zimbabwe's competitors have engaged in more offensive and aggressive marketing of their respective destinations in both the traditional and the emerging markets. Competitors have taken advantage of the world heritage site, the Victoria Falls, to position their destinations strategically in the target market. These competitors have used positioning statements such as, "Home of the Victoria Falls"; "We take you to the Victoria Falls" and "Fly and see the Victoria Falls" (ZTA, 2006:14).

Zimbabwe has failed to convincingly position itself and differentiate itself as the original "owner" of the Victoria Falls and, above all, that there is a better view of the falls from the Zimbabwean side (ZTA, 2006:14). Competitors have taken full advantage of the international media by using international newspapers, magazines, journals and electronic media to position their destinations in the target market, which illustrates the effectiveness of their marketing endeavours (ZTA, 2006:37).

### **5.6.2 Auditing and analysing the appeal of the destination to the target market**

Over the years, Zimbabwe has used a focus strategy that is aimed at high yields and low volumes. This strategy has been affected by the political and economic challenges with which the destination is facing. Some weaknesses in the strategy have been noted. They concern the level of conceptualisation of tourism challenges at the human resources level and structural inhibitions in the limited budget allocation for the promotion of tourism (ZTA, 2000:8).

In the developed world, the name Zimbabwe evokes images of diseases, crime, lawlessness and general chaos (Raftopoulos, 2005:3). Tour operators and tourist-related companies in other countries are ill-informed about Zimbabwe and therefore the destination may benefit from a multination promotion strategy. However, political difficulties remain the main reason why policies that favour multination tourism promotion cannot be implemented successfully (Chan & Primorac, 2004:1).

### **5.6.3 Development of strategic objectives and marketing mix**

There is widespread acknowledgement in Zimbabwe that tourism is a high growth industry and arguably the fastest growing industry in the world (WTO,2005). The decline in tourist arrivals in Zimbabwe has affected the performance of the industry in general. The decline has taken place at a time when other countries in the region are enjoying a positive growth in their tourist numbers (Ncube, 2006:6). Whilst the negative publicity and perceptions in various markets have mainly been attributed to

political developments, it has also been acknowledged that Zimbabwe does not have a strategic marketing plan to manage and market tourism; counteract negative publicity; reverse trends and initiate developments (ZTA, 1999:4). The result has been that there has not been a plan of action to find solutions to the problems that emanate from past activities or neglect and to guide and encourage change and development in a desired direction (ZTA, 2003:8).

In the face of all these problems, the ZTA developed a draft of a strategic marketing plan in 2006. The plan set out to turn around the tourism sector in conjunction with other sectors of the economy. The plan was developed within the framework of the National Economic Development Priority Programme (NEDPP) (ZTA, 2006:10), which has also given direction to the planning process that followed from the draft tourism policy (ZTA, 2006:4). The NEDPP comprises a task force that comprises representatives of the ZTA; ZCT; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Tourism and the Environment; and other stakeholders. The aim of the task force was to bolster the country's image abroad. Its efforts were complemented by the engagement of professional consultants who are experienced in destination marketing and public relations (ZTA, 2006:11).

#### **5.6.4 Creating an organisation to implement the tourism objectives**

Co-operation is a major feature of successful destination branding. At present, Zimbabwe does have a logo for its tourism organisation, the ZTA. However, there has been no strap-line that embraces the salient features of the destination. While the current positioning statement has no connection with the logo of the Zimbabwe

Tourism Authority, there appears to be a conflict between ZTA and the tourism industry in general.

The design of a destination logo requires that a great deal of sensitisation of the Zimbabwean people, including all the other stakeholders, should occur (Ngwodo, 2006:5). Moreover, the branding process involved only a few people within ZTA and therefore it has always been perceived to be a ZTA project. While ZTA, as the organization responsible for marketing Zimbabwe, has established objectives, there is a need for a collaborative approach that will ensure synergy between all the views and aspirations of the stakeholders in tourism. The centralised marketing of tourism in Zimbabwe has become a bottleneck and hampers effective destination marketing. For this reason, the industry has not accepted ownership of the marketing efforts and has instead blamed the government for failures (Mavudzi-Kamphorst, 2006:6).

### **5.6.5 Implementing and evaluating tourism marketing strategies**

The marketing of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination should capitalise on a diffusion strategy in terms of which innovation is communicated over time to the members of the social system by means of a selection of communication channels (Nworah, 2006:4). With the failure of the destination to adopt a diffusion of innovation strategy, the “Africa’s Paradise” branding project may be at risk. Nworah (2006:4) has suggested that, in order to implement the branding strategy successfully, the destination should be projected by means of the following communication channels: advertisements, road shows, events, symposia, press releases, media relations, documentaries, publications, web strategies and even public diplomacy exercises. While such a framework would probably be ideal and effective, it may not be possible

to implement it under the present conditions. It is therefore very important for the destination to evaluate all its strategies and to monitor its performance from time to time (Buhalis, 2000:99).

## 5.7 THE SWOT MATRIX OF DESTINATION BRANDING IN ZIMBABWE

Table 5.3 below contains the results of a detailed SWOT analysis of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. The table indicates the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the destination faces using statements that have been acquired from various sources.

**Table 5.3 (a) Results of the SWOT analysis of destination branding in Zimbabwe**

COMPONENT MIX	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<b>Marketing and communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High level of awareness of tourism benefits</li> <li>▪ Informational and directional signs available</li> <li>▪ Well-co-ordinated marketing programmes</li> <li>▪ Attaches in international source markets</li> <li>▪ Broad market coverage</li> <li>▪ Good marketing skills</li> <li>▪ Well known brand name</li> <li>▪ Low volumes, high returns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No clear objectives, marketing and promotional plans</li> <li>▪ Over promising and failure to deliver.</li> <li>▪ Destination too expensive</li> <li>▪ No defined market share</li> <li>▪ Centralised marketing</li> <li>▪ Poor brand image</li> <li>▪ High growth without direction, segments not properly targeted</li> <li>▪ Loss of consumer goodwill</li> <li>▪ Weak brand promise</li> <li>▪ Inappropriate positioning statement.</li> <li>▪ Poor image of the destination in source markets</li> <li>▪ A negative perception about the country's offering</li> <li>▪ Wrong signals sent out to the international world</li> </ul>



<b>Enabling environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peace and tranquillity</li> <li>▪ Proper government legislations and tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No foreign currency</li> <li>▪ High level of inflation (100 000% April 2008) at compilation time</li> <li>▪ Shortage of fuel</li> <li>▪ Shortage of financial resources to fund promising strategic initiatives</li> <li>▪ No open skies policy</li> <li>▪ Being defensive instead of being introspective.</li> </ul>
<b>Brand image and positioning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A wide product base, uniquely different</li> <li>▪ A wide range of local festivals, events and activities</li> <li>▪ Adequate number of parks and outdoor recreation activities</li> <li>▪ Well-developed support services</li> <li>▪ A well-organised tourism industry</li> <li>▪ Appropriate organisational structure within the tourism industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No clear strategic direction</li> <li>▪ No cohesion between the private and the public sectors</li> <li>▪ Stakeholder and ZTA do not have shared vision</li> <li>▪ No alliances and joint ventures with other international bodies</li> <li>▪ Withdrawal of major international airlines</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3 (b) The SWOT analysis of destination branding in Zimbabwe continued**

<b>COMPONENT MIX</b>	<b>THREATS</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>
<b>Marketing and communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No communication plan for brand adoption strategies</li> <li>▪ Hostile and unfriendly coverage of Zimbabwe in the international media</li> <li>▪ Loss of market share</li> <li>▪ Slower market growth and implementation of the "Look East" policy</li> <li>▪ Expectations by tourists not met by the brand promise</li> <li>▪ East Asian tourists vie for destinations similar to their countries</li> <li>▪ The brand does not elicit nostalgia in the target market</li> <li>▪ No use of the Internet as a marketing tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify visitor satisfaction needs through market research and intelligence.</li> <li>▪ Exploit new market segments.</li> <li>▪ Research on the consumers' needs and expectations, not numbers and figures.</li> <li>▪ Build a positive image both locally and internationally.</li> <li>▪ Re-brand and reposition the destination.</li> <li>▪ Seek fast market growth potential.</li> <li>▪ Carry out customer feedback programmes through attachés.</li> <li>▪ Plan travel writers and travel agents familiarisation trips and always tell the truth.</li> <li>▪ Undertake public relations exercise through the press, both print and audio, and use the internet to relay the information.</li> <li>▪ Conduct travel events and launch tourism</li> </ul>

		<p>week to which international icons and reputable personalities are invited</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a strap line and a brand promise that is appealing to the target market</li> <li>▪ Never engage in a tug of war with international journalists, but invite them so that they have the first hand information</li> <li>▪ Remain visible at all times and always offer a counter concerning any negative publication and promise to improve the situation</li> </ul>
<b>Brand image and positioning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased advisory issued by governments to their citizens that Zimbabwe is not a safe destination</li> <li>▪ Downturn in the economy as a result of inflation</li> <li>▪ Increase in destinations offering the same or similar product lines</li> <li>▪ Zimbabwe known internationally for the wrong reasons</li> <li>▪ Stereotyping and labelling of Zimbabwe as a war zone</li> <li>▪ No defined strategy on international tourists</li> <li>▪ The SADC tourism has been dormant in promoting the region</li> <li>▪ Over dependency on international tourism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Devise trail blazing strategies through the involvement of all the stakeholders in the planning and implementation of strategies.</li> <li>▪ Vertical, forward or backward integration through the acquisition of tour operators or airlines.</li> <li>▪ Encourage collaborative investment.</li> <li>▪ Invite ambassadors from source market governments to sample the tourism products</li> <li>▪ Create multiple linkages within SADC, both for promotion purposes and the creation of peace parks</li> </ul>
<b>Enabling environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High seasonality of tourism products</li> <li>▪ Increase in the regional and international competition for tourists</li> <li>▪ Increase in terrorist activities</li> <li>▪ Spying by the government of Zimbabwe on cellular phones and the Internet</li> <li>▪ Negative attitudes by the international governments to effect regime change in Zimbabwe</li> <li>▪ No alliances or strategic mergers with international intermediaries in the generating regions</li> <li>▪ Introduction of “smart sanctions” targeted at high-ranking government officials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure maximum safety and security for tourists through zoning i.e. hooligan free zone</li> </ul>

**Sources: Adapted from various statements regarding the state of tourism, socio-economic and political conditions in Zimbabwe.**

The SWOT analysis has revealed a high level of lack of marketing and communication strategies, poor enabling environment which is coupled with a poor brand image and positioning.

## **5.8 MATTERS THAT COULD AFFECT FUTURE DESTINATION**

### **BRANDING AND POSITIONING IN ZIMBABWE**

The main task of branding a destination should never be left entirely to the tourist marketing organisations (Nworah, 2005:5). It is incumbent on the country's leadership to embark on public and economic diplomacy in order to attract investment and integrate the destination into the global community (Nworah, 2006:4).

In the light of the analysis undertaken thus far, it has become apparent that several matters could affect future branding initiatives in Zimbabwe. Each of these matters is discussed separately in the following sections.

#### **5.8.1 Policies and political matters in the destination**

Since Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, President R G Mugabe has been at the helm of the government, initially as Prime Minister and later as President after he had merged the two main parties, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union Patriotic Front (ZAPU PF), in 1987 (FinGaz, 2009). Mr Mugabe's Marxist background inclined him to construct a one-party state, but his former colleagues, such as Mr Edgar Tekere and Ms Margaret Dongo, strongly opposed the idea. Eventually, in 1999, Mr Morgan

Tsvangirai formed the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a party that has become a major threat to Mugabe's ZANU PF party (Raftopoulos, 2005:2).

Civil society in Zimbabwe has been under threat as a result of the misconception that NGOs sympathise with the MDC (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2003:4). The NGOs activities are hampered by government regulations, especially in respect of foreign funding of the local human rights organizations and the distribution of food aid (Zinhumwe, 2008:1). Despite these disruptions of NGOs' activities, the ruling party, under the leadership of Mr Mugabe, has promulgated laws that enable the government to seize white-owned farms under the pretext of the redistribution of land among the marginalised groups (Matchava-Hove, 2006:9).

The seizure and redistribution of land was supported by many African leaders, despite the measure being considered to be unreasonable and tyrannical in the eyes of the West. Mugabe had persuaded most African opinion formers to legitimise his policies, particularly regarding the issue of land redistribution (Pfaffenroth, 2008). The agreement reached at the 1979 Lancaster House talks on a willing buyer willing seller influenced and controlled Mugabe's actions until 1999. In the 2002 presidential elections he finally obtained the approval of the electorate to seize land from the white farmers (FinGaz, 2009:6).

The situation in Zimbabwe has been marked by chaos, hatred, corruption, and confusion as a result of the agrarian reform programme that Mugabe embarked on in 2000, after losing in the referendum that was called to change the constitution (Chiwanza, 2002:4). The land reform programme resulted in negative publicity, which has had a detrimental impact on the image of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination in its

source markets. The decline in the number of tourist can be deduced from the low number of people arriving in the country (Tribune Staff, 2008).

Many tourists shun the destination in favour of more stable and peaceful neighbouring countries. The destination has been perceived as being unsafe in comparison with competing destinations in the region (Pfaffenroth, 2008). While Zimbabwe has a relatively low rate of violence against tourists, it has been suggested that more fundamental issues of national identity and self-identity should be addressed in order to restore the identity of the country as a tourist destination..

#### **5.8.1.1 Policies**

The various laws and regulations that address tourism in Zimbabwe directly or indirectly should be reviewed with the prime purpose of identifying areas of duplication and contradiction. The legislation concerned involves wildlife; museums and national monuments; environment; and local authorities (Mutsambiwa, 2006:4). There is an urgent need to harmonise the legislation with the Tourism Act in order to achieve an integrated approach towards the achievement of the destination's objectives (ZTA, 2005:6). The review of these policies should be aimed at reflecting a thorough co-ordination between tourism planning and physical planning.

The air transport policies are also a cardinal consideration in the destination's accessibility, especially to long-haul markets. The destination should enter into negotiations and conclude contracts with viable airlines in order to ease accessibility of the destination by international tourists.

### **5.8.1.2 Visa regime**

The current visa regime is such that countries are divided into categories in terms of the visa requirements for their citizens, namely

- (a) visa not required,
- (b) visa issued at port of entry on the payment of the requisite visa fee and
- (c) should apply for a visa prior to travelling (Ministry of Foreign affairs, 2007:6).

The visa requirement issue is a major consideration, especially when it is borne in mind that competitors in the region are targeting the same markets. The competitors have multiple-destination packages and they have adopted a visa exemption policy for the UK, France, German, China and Japan. In order to attract visitors from a wider market segment, the destination should consider the introduction of visa exemptions for its target market in order to increase its market share (ZTA Draft Marketing Plan, 2005:8).

### **5.8.1.3 Politics**

Zimbabwe is fast becoming one of the tragedies of modern Africa. The government is unable to manage hyper inflation and is unwilling to heed advice (Pfaffenroth, 2008). Normal social and economic activities are being replaced by survival strategies and more than 35% of the Zimbabwean population is likely to require food aid in 2008 (Sachikonye, 2008:10). The political mediation process, led by President Mbeki of South Africa, has failed to bring about a constitution that could ensure free and fair elections and this situation has increased the possibility that the octogenarian President Robert Mugabe may stubbornly cling to power (Zimbabwean Situation, 2006). Ordinary Zimbabweans do not have the right of assembly in

Zimbabwe and intolerance of peaceful protests prevails. The government uses the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) to ban rallies and meetings and enforces the ban by means of violent police aggression (Zimbabwean Situation, 2004). More than 700 000 Zimbabweans were left homeless in 2005 following the demolition of their informal urban habitats under operation *murambatsvina* (“clear out filth”), which the government claimed was a clampdown on law and order. The public opinion is that the operation was politically motivated and was in fact an action taken against potential strikers who are MDC supporters (Sachikonye, 2005:5). Although President Mugabe defended his actions at the Millennium Summit in New York, a United Nations (UN) high-level report condemned the government for causing unjustifiable suffering to so many disadvantaged people (Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, 2007). All these factors could cloud the re-branding process, if corrective action is not taken.

### **5.8.2 The economic environment**

The continued rise of the inflation level in Zimbabwe has eroded the purchasing power of the Zimbabwean currency. The depreciation of the Zimbabwean dollar against major currencies has become a cause for grave concern. The diminishing purchasing power of the Zimbabwean dollar has given rise to a parallel market, which in turn has led to price distortions and made the destination very expensive. Even the ZTA has confessed that it has used the parallel market to obtain foreign currency (Chidzidzi, 2006). The impact of this situation on the tourism industry has been that the pricing structure of the tourist operators has become distorted. The Tribune Staff (2008:1) has observed that the overall effect has been that the destination has become increasingly more expensive than its competitors. The

purchasing power of the domestic tourist has also declined, which has resulted in low levels of domestic tourism activity.

Similarly, the inflation rate, which was higher than 230 million percent in December, 2008 and the highest in the world for a country that is not at war, has caused both consumers to change their spending habits and investors to be extremely cautious. These trends have been demonstrated by a decline in the real value of the disposable income of the population, which has impacted negatively on domestic visitation. In some instances, the continued decline in the number of visitors has resulted in some tourist businesses closing down (ZTA, 2002). The exchange rate between the Zimbabwean dollar and the United States dollar has been so high that stakeholders in the destination have raised their concern over the fact that the local currency is overvalued against the major currencies. This imbalance has provided the conditions for the parallel market (black market) to continue to thrive (Mambondiani, 2008:1), which is to the detriment of bona fide exporters (ZTA, 2006:5).

Galloping inflation (of 230 million percent in 2008) and the fluid and high interest rates have caused major problems for the tourism industry in respect of international credit cards (ZCT, 2005:4). Furthermore, the cost of borrowing is so prohibitive that it is difficult to execute major capital projects. The trend in a high-inflation economy is that the cost of borrowing continues to increase and translates into the charging of higher and more speculative prices, making the destination prohibitively expensive. Therefore monetary policy instruments should be introduced with due cognisance of promotional incentives for tourism (Muponda, 2008:2).



The shortage of foreign currency has impacted negatively on the destination. Currently the foreign currency that is available through the normal channels is inadequate and the ordinary citizen therefore tends to resort to the parallel market (i.e. the unofficial rate). Monetary instruments should address this anomaly (ZTA, 2006:44).

The pricing of tourism products is the key element with which most marketers differentiate their markets. The pricing of tourist products should take the consumers' perceptions and their buying behaviour into consideration (ZTA, 2006:30). Zimbabwe's major competitors have come up with short-term incentives to stimulate demand and gain a differential edge.

Even though the DMO may have minimum control over pricing at the business level, tourism operators do have major control. They influence and can even decide on the tour packages that are to apply in a given destination. Competing destinations are instrumental in selecting and packaging tours for specific market segments (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2006:12). The policy makers in the Central Bank of Zimbabwe have ignored the advice of the International Monetary Fund on the management of the hyper inflation. Instead they have resorted to printing money indiscriminately and enforced arbitrary price cuts that render businesses unprofitable (Mafaro, 2008:1). The situation has been exacerbated by the failure of the government to sustain normal relations with the international community. The destination was expelled by the Commonwealth in 2002 as well as by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and cut off from almost all the mainstream sources of aid. However, President Mugabe has developed a relationship with China in terms

of which his government has negotiated multi-billion dollar investments in return for raw materials (FinGaz, 2009).

### **5.8.3 The social environment**

The socio-cultural environmental factors that affect tourism include the size and structure of the population; mix of social classes; attitudes and values. Zimbabwe has a population of approximately 13.5 million (Sachikonye, 2005). The population does have a rising black middle class with the potential for domestic tourism and investment, but the destination should develop a domestic tourism strategy in order to tap into this potential market niche.

While the destination enjoys a base of skilled manpower, the economic hardships that prevailed over the past few years has led to a brain drain that has also affected the tourism sector (ZTA, 2003:6). The decline in the performance of the industries and the key economic sectors has led to large-scale unemployment and the closure of several companies and has reduced investment inflows (Matamisa, 2006:10). The decline has resulted in an increase in poverty-related crimes that have impacted negatively on the tourist industry and the destination's image in general (Chidzidzi, 2007). Therefore there is an urgent need for strategies that could contribute to a reduction in crime.

The continued increase in the number of HIV and AIDS cases continues to have a negative affect on the tourist inflows in several international tourist destinations,

including Zimbabwe (ZTA, 2006:44). The negative impact of HIV/AIDS on the country's image is a matter that requires urgent, but circumspect, attention (ZTA, 2006:32).

Any discussion on the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Zimbabwe is superfluous in the context of the current social and economic breakdown (FinGaz, 2002:6). The economy has contracted by 35% in 4 years; education and health are characterized by strikes, staff shortages and unaffordable fees; and household goods are either unavailable or available at exorbitant prices (Pfaffenroth, 2008). Such is the impact of extreme inflation that the MDGs benchmark of \$1 per day for persons who live in extreme poverty now applies to the greater part of the population, including qualified health workers, teachers and public sector workers such as policemen and soldiers.

The strides that had been made prior to 1998 through the building of schools close to residential areas and the provision of free primary education, which made Zimbabwe the African country with the highest literacy rate, are speedily being eroded as a result of high school fees and a high number of teachers who have left the country for neighbouring countries (Chan & Primorac, 2004:).

Malnutrition has inevitable consequences for health indicators and affects in particular the vulnerable members of the population, i.e. especially the young, the aged and those living with AIDS. Life expectancy in Zimbabwe may now have fallen below 40 years, possibly the lowest in the world, while child mortality has increased steadily since 1990 (FinGaz, 2009).

#### **5.8.4 The technological environment**

Moyo (1997:5) argues that “there has been rapid global growth in information and communication technology and that it affects people’s daily lives and their business transactions”. Tourists and tourist destinations are separated by varying degrees of distance. This distance contributes to difficulties in respect of tourist distribution. Zimbabwe is affected by its distance from its tourist source markets, because most of its tourist source markets are long-haul destinations. The failure to communicate effectively with actual and potential consumers has serious implications for Zimbabwe’s success as a tourist destination. The growing sophistication of information technology, particularly the advent of mediums such as the Internet and e-mail, has increased the speed and standard of communication to an unprecedented degree (ZTA, 2002:8). Zimbabwe should invest in technological infrastructure that is supportive of tourism. Successful destinations have used information technology opportunities to great effect in promotion, distribution and service delivery (ZTA, 2006:47). Information technology can fulfil a very significant role in the development of a destination.

Despite the significant role fulfilled by the ZTA, there appears to be a lack of resources in Zimbabwe to fully embrace and exploit the new technological advances and to engage in e-tourism in order to match competitors’ strategies. Information and communication technology (ICT) has an impact on the quality of tourism goods and services; distribution systems; and access through direct marketing in source markets. On the other hand, limited technology, or a lack of it, may lead to the tourism product or service becoming obsolete or subject to fierce competition as is the case in Zimbabwe (ZTA, 2006:46).

### 5.8.5 The ecological environment

According to Chidzidzi (2006), “the Zimbabwean government acknowledges the relationship that exists between the environment and the development of sustainable tourism”. The DMO should ensure that the development of tourism is based on a careful assessment of the carrying capacities of the local environment (ZTA, 2005:5). However, when the Zimbabwean government embarked on its land reform programme, a number of anomalies occurred. Animals were slaughtered in large numbers. In some cases deforestation followed. Due to a lack of proper land planning, some resettlements were done on land that was unsuitable for the purpose. As a result of these errors, top soil has been lost, resulting in some places becoming marred by gullies and gorges and rendering them useless for tourism activities.

In addition to losing their land, livelihood and possessions, the majority of the rural inhabitants face starvation. The government has taken advantage of the situation by using food aid to canvass the support of the hungry peasants. Consequently, in 2002, the government targeted 267 farms for the controversial land redistribution programme, a step that has disrupted the agricultural sector (Sachikonye, 2005:8), including the tourism industry, because some farms that had been used for safaris were turned into communal settlements. According to the FinGaz (2004), the result of the land reform programme was appalling, because at the end of 2000/2001 farming season, the country needed 593 000 tonnes of maize, 150 000 tonnes of wheat and 11000 tonnes of rice. These matters have had a direct impact on the image of the country as a whole.

### 5.8.6 General conditions in Zimbabwe

The general economic malaise and the sporadic shortages of fuel, food, and other basic commodities have eroded the confidence that the touring companies in the region and abroad may have had in Zimbabwe (Muleya, 2002:4). There are several issues in Zimbabwe that have contributed towards the negative image that the country has in the source markets. The problems that are cited most in the international media are the prevalence of corruption in government, economic mismanagement, breakdown in the health sector and lack of food security (Mupanga, Jekemu & Ruswa, 1996:3). Lack of food security has resulted in Zimbabwe losing its status of being the bread basket of the region. Consequently, the failure to maintain infrastructure that has a direct impact on accessibility (and also on tourism) and the shortage of foreign currency has affected the procurement of fuel and energy. When there is no fuel, the destination remains inaccessible. The lack of fuel does not only affect tourism, but also all the other industries that are directly associated with it.

Respect for the rule of law in Zimbabwe has been called into question and the government has displayed its disregard of human rights (Sachikonye, 2005:5). There is a lack of adherence to democratic principles as evidenced by the land reform measures, which were implemented on the basis of racial segregation and that disadvantaged and dispossessed the white minority (Pfaffenroth, 2008). These factors could have a negative effect on the push and pull factors.

From the government's perspective, Zimbabwe has remained a safe and peaceful destination with a unique culture, climate and people (Gono, 2008:7). This is not how

prospective tourists perceive the country to be. It is therefore necessary for the country to project an adjusted and desired image to the target market and to continuously manage the destination's brand identity (Moyo, 2000). Most importantly, while things such as the destination's competitiveness, attractions, advertising campaigns and other unique features could act as pull factors for the destination, the image that prospective tourists have of the destination remains the most important factor in determining whether they will ultimately visit the country.

### **5.8.7 Resource allocation, amenities and activities**

In order for the ZTA to fully accomplish its mandate, it should be fully funded, i.e. it should be a leader in destination marketing. The following are the most important weaknesses that have been identified in respect of the ability to market Zimbabwe as a tourist destination: inadequate funding for the ZTA's local and external operations; lack of resources and equipment, including a poor human resources skills base; poor conditions of service for staff, which has led to the failure to attract and retain skilled personnel; a poor corporate image; and a growing apathy on the part of international tour operators towards Zimbabwean products (ZTA, 2005).

There is also a need for a liberal approach to air transport policies in order to make airlines favourably disposed towards tourism in Zimbabwe. Foreign airlines have been either denied access or permitted restricted access for fear that the interest of the national airline may be jeopardized.

In order to increase tourists' length of stay, better provision should be made for the local transport network (ZTA, 2006:29-29). The destination has varied types of

accommodation, which is a major resource that attracts long-staying visitors. Even if the accommodation should vary from facilities for backpackers through budget accommodation to luxurious 5-star exclusiveness (ZTA, 2004:8), the DMO does not have the financial resources to package the destination's equity and sell it to tourists, because it relies on funding from a government grant and on a 2% levy that is paid by the tourism industry.

Amenities constitute the most important resource in a destination (ZTA, 2006:6). They include water, sewage-disposal systems, health facilities and electricity. The provision of power and water in Zimbabwe is problematic (ZTA, 2006:30). Continual power cuts and water shortages have had a negative effect on the image of the destination. In addition, there are no activities that can attract tourists to stay longer in the destination. These weaknesses emanate from the generally poor availability of resources and the limited extent of market research that is undertaken (ZTA, 2006:8).

## **5.9 LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE ZIMBABWEAN SITUATION**

A review of the situation in Zimbabwe has revealed that the ZTA's tourism marketing strategies are inadequate and not as aggressive as they ought to be. There is need to involve the public and private stakeholders within the tourism industry in order to devise new strategies that could give direction to the tourism industry. The sophistication of contemporary travel and leisure consumers requires producers to put them first. Furthermore, the radical transformation of the travel and tourism industry demands continuous innovation in order to remain competitive. In addition, the situation regarding the tourism industry is exacerbated by poor political



leadership that has failed to commit itself to the financial needs of tourism-marketing programmes. While several theories have been posited to explain the downturn in tourism in Zimbabwe, public opinion regards the invasion and redistribution of land to be the cardinal issue in the decline in tourist arrivals.

It has been stated that the image of a destination is affected to a larger extent by word of mouth reports than by any other influence. In order to restore the image of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination, it is essential that a thorough analysis of the situation be undertaken and marketing strategies developed to position the destination well in the international arena and to limit the damage caused by uncontrollable events. However, there is much that the tourist industry itself, and particularly the operators, can do. In a world of anonymity in which operators tend to refer to passengers or guests, by a seat number or a room number, it has been observed that hotel or lodge operators could create a different and welcoming atmosphere by sprucing up the destination's image through the provision of a superior service.

The Zimbabwean case study has revealed the need to create a holistic approach to the holiday experience of the tourists travelling to Zimbabwe. The actions of customs and immigration officers and the attitude of taxi drivers who, meet, greet, transfer and brief the arriving guests, are all key aspects of a holiday experience. All these factors present the essence of the brand. There is a crisis in Israel, Cuba is de-marketed by the USA the world over and South Africa has a greater incidence of muggings than Zimbabwe, but the tourism industry of these countries is booming. While the political issues that are at stake may be entirely different, the fact remains that the strategies

employed by these destinations have managed to limit the damage that political and other related crises could have caused.

A highly branded destination is likely to retain its pull power regardless of the prevailing political scenario. Zimbabwe could boast about the majestic Victoria Falls, but it would take just one reckless and inflammatory statement from the political leadership or a delay on an international forum or airport to ruin the image of the destination. To achieve the best results, Zimbabwe should show the world a realistic picture of itself instead of having the world forming a disparaging image of the country. The interdependence and combinatory nature of tourism products requires that all stakeholders should work together. Divisions among the stakeholders can only result in catastrophic and cataclysmic consequences for the entire destination.

In tourism, political stability is a mere hygiene factor in that it will not in itself necessarily promote tourism, but its absence will certainly destroy or damage the destination's brand image. Numerous case studies have revealed a sharp downturn in tourism arrivals as a result of coup de tat; revolution; political upheaval; war and terrorist activity; a crisis such as the foot-and-mouth disease in the UK; tsunamis and other natural disasters. However, tourist's memories have been shown to be relatively short, with a return to business as usual upon the resumption of normal conditions (Beirman, 2003). This fact should be coupled with a cohesive destination-marketing plan during and after a crisis.

Indeed, Zimbabwe is reeling from the effect of bad publicity that emanates from home and abroad. Such a situation calls for a damage control system to deal with sudden and adverse publicity. Rapid action is needed to lessen the impact of bad

news coverage. The action may consist of telephone calls to opinion makers and renowned travel writers; holding of press conferences; issuing of press releases; and emergency advertising campaigns. Innovation, assertiveness, marketing aggressiveness and re-branding remain the key marketing strategies that could be used to reposition Zimbabwe as a tourist destination.

## **5.10 SUMMARY**

It may be concluded that, in the face of a decline in its tourism performance, Zimbabwe should take stock of what has happened, what is happening and what should happen in future in order to develop multiple goals for recovery. It should develop a unique value proposition that could urge tourists to select the destination instead of its competitors. To achieve this goal, Zimbabwe should develop a database system for profiling visitors and visitor activity packages in order to induce longer stays in the destination. The literature review has revealed that there is need for the ZTA to take a leadership role in providing education for tourism partners and fully co-ordinate the re-branding process. Zimbabwe should ensure consistency in addressing the needs and wants of the tourists in the countries that the destination serves. This approach could assist in the development and fulfilment of the brand promise. Finding and developing undiscovered value interests within the destination could contribute to increasing the destination's product offering.

The next chapter considers the empirical research process applied in this project.

## 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 (Gummanson & 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

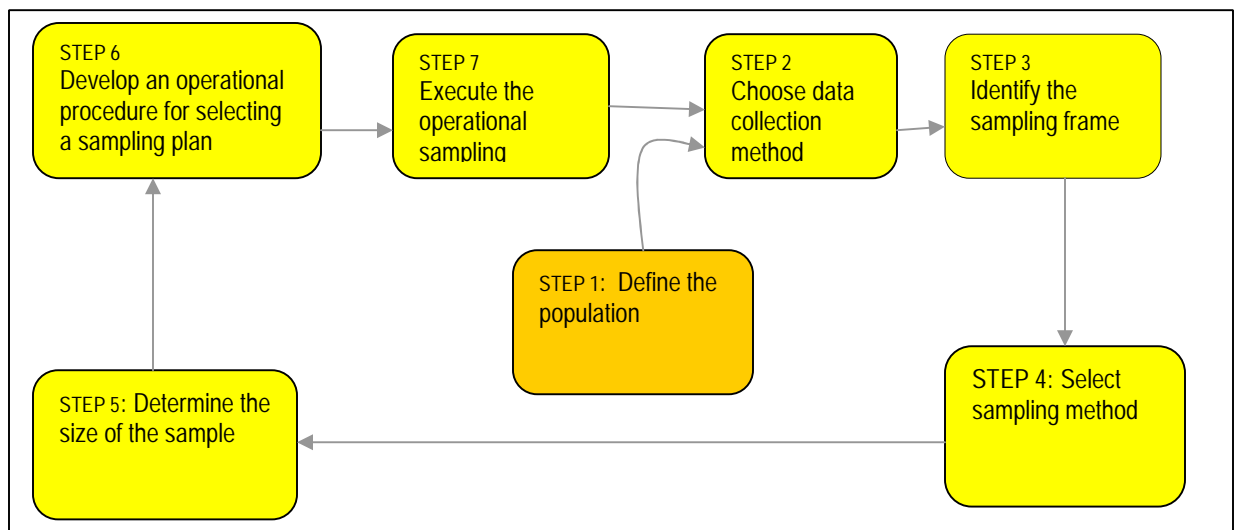


are a true representation of the population (McDaniel & Gates, 2001:328). Sampling is a process of selecting a small portion of the study population for data collection and analysis in order to draw conclusions for the study (Tustin *et al*, 2005:337). However, because the population of the survey was 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:

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

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

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

$$= 0,250008068$$

Therefore  $s \times n = 995$

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 & Iacobucci, 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 & Iacobucci (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 SPSS 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  $H_0$  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 coefficient 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 ( $\rho$ ) 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 & Iacobucci, 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.

## CHAPTER 7

### FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY REGARDING ZIMBABWE'S BRANDING AND POSITIONING

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7.7 SUMMARY.....289

## **CHAPTER 7**

# **FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY REGARDING ZIMBABWE'S BRANDING AND POSITIONING**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

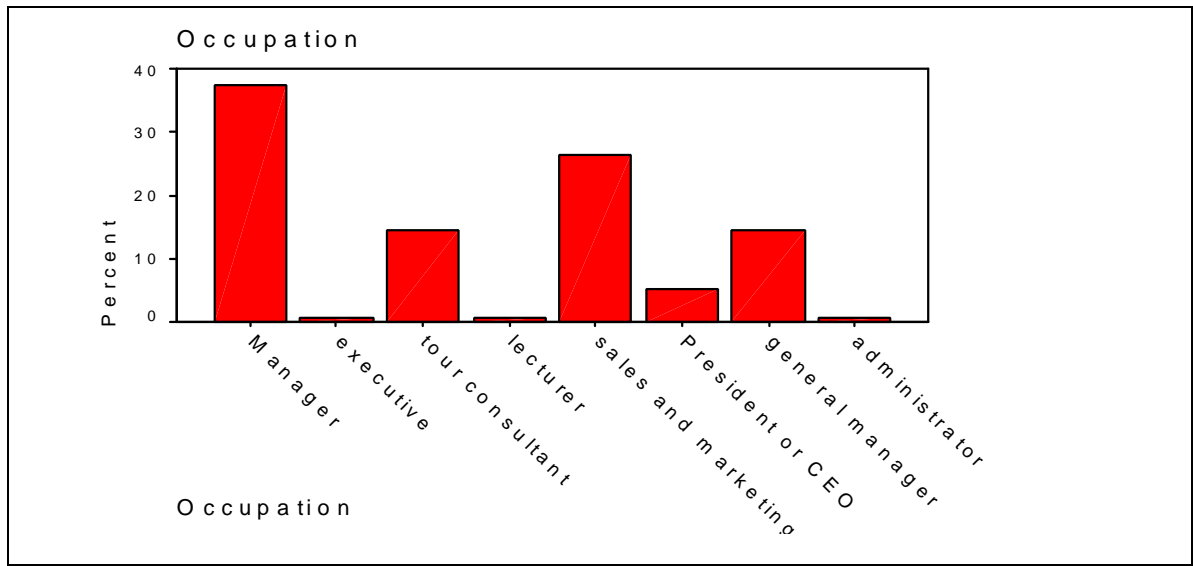
The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings that emanate from the empirical study supported by the theoretical framework. The chapter is divided into five sections in which the following matters are presented: a review of the general information on the respondents; respondents' level 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]**

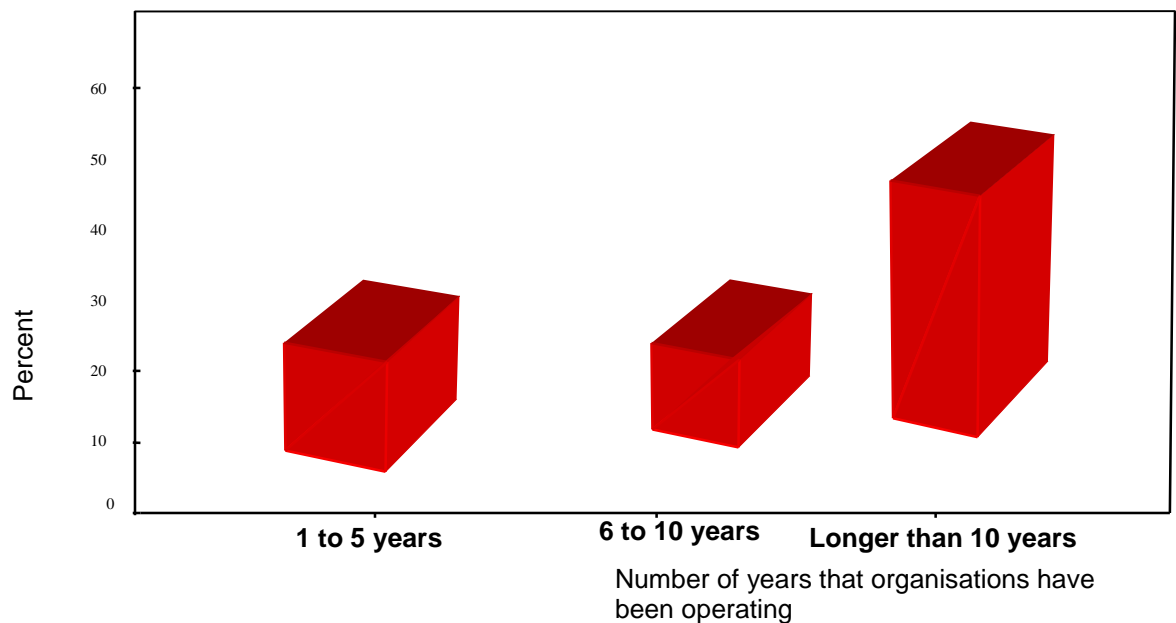
Type of organization	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Tourism representative body	10	6.6	6.6
Destination-marketing organisation	10	6.6	13.2
Overseas tour operator	8	5.3	18.5
Accommodation	31	20.4	38.9
Attractions/camps	3	2.0	40.9
Game lodges	23	15.1	56
Tour operators/travel agents/safari operators	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
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

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
<b>Total</b>		<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

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	2	3	4	5	Mean
		Disagree	Agree to some extent	Agree	Largely agree	Strongly agree	
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
<b>Frequency</b>	20	32	84	6	10
<b>Percent</b>	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]**

	<b>Elements emphasized in the brand</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
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	2	3	4	5	Mean
		Disagree	Agree to some extent	Agree	Largely agree	Agree to a great extent	
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	2	3	4	5	Mean
		Disagree	Agree to some extent	Agree	Largely agree	Strongly agree	
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.**

	<b>Most appropriate strategy</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
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
	<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100</b>

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	2	3	4	5	Mean
		Disagree	Agree to a limited extent	Agree	Agree to a Large extent	Strongly agree	
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**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
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**

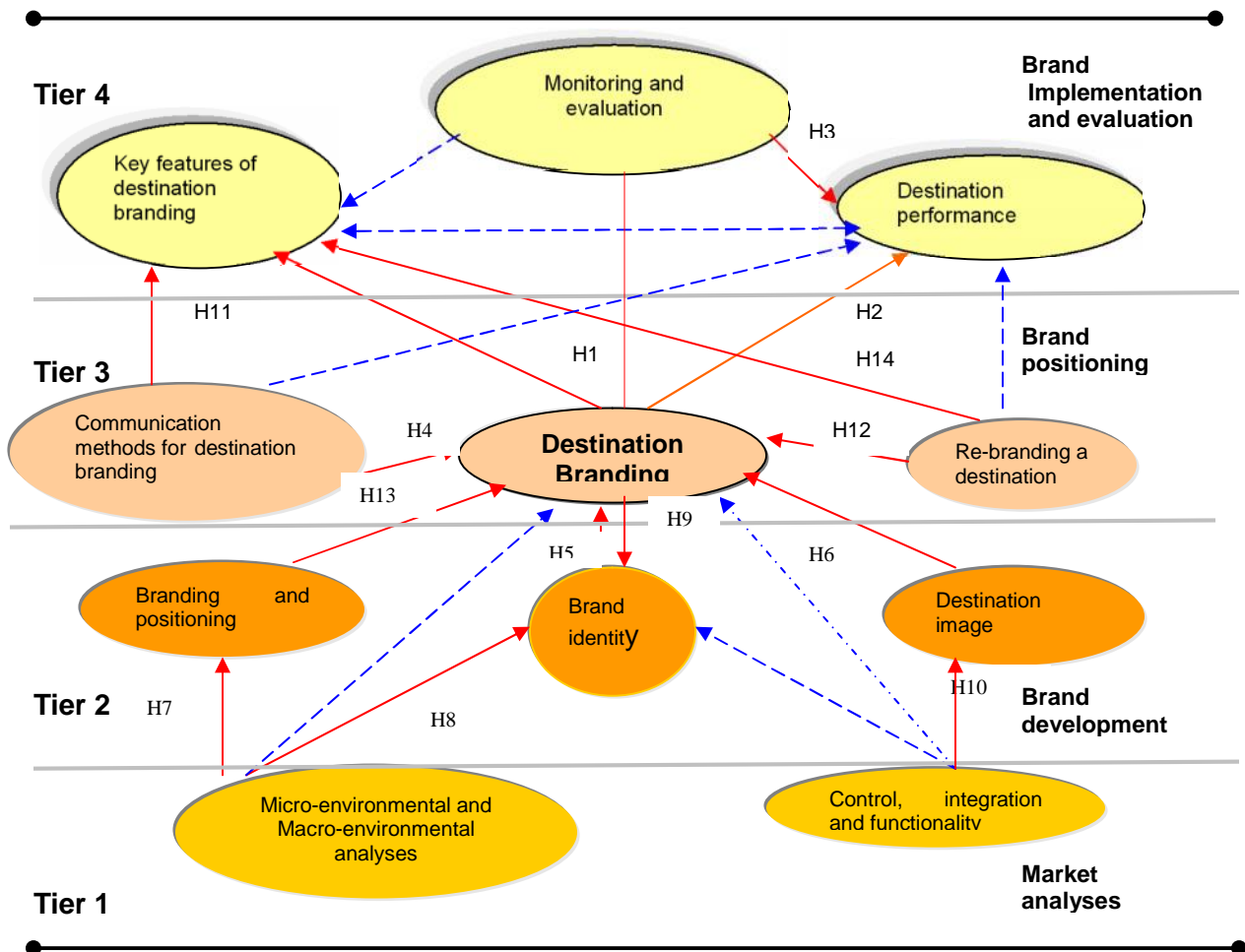
The study on branding and repositioning of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination provides an anchor and platform for the development of a conceptual framework for branding and repositioning. The testing of a conceptual framework is based on the flow chart of destination branding and positioning; international 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.

## CHAPTER 8

# TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR DESTINATION BRANDING AND REPOSITIONING

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## CHAPTER 8

# TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR DESTINATION BRANDING AND REPOSITIONING

### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter builds on the extensive literature review that is presented in chapter 2; the best practices in international destination-branding and positioning that are described in chapter 4; the situational analysis of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination that appears in chapter 5; and the results of the empirical survey that are set out in chapter 7.

The objectives of this chapter are to:

- discuss an overview of the cardinal factors in destination branding and repositioning;
- develop a framework for branding and repositioning of a tourism destination;
- discuss a framework for the strategic branding and repositioning of a destination in order to maximise its competitiveness;
- make a comparison of the framework that was developed for this study and other branding and positioning models that are discussed in this study; and
- discuss the uniqueness of the branding and positioning framework as compared to other similar frameworks on branding and positioning a destination.

## 8.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE CARDINAL FACTORS IN DESTINATION BRANDING AND REPOSITIONING

Most tourism activities take place at a particular destination and therefore the destination itself forms a pillar of any modelling that is done for the tourism system (Pike, 2004:1). The desire to become a recognisable destination presents a marketing challenge (Kotler *et al.*, 1996:156). While destination marketing has often presented complex challenges, the understanding and application of strategic thinking and marketing is the basis for differentiating a country's offering from that of its competitors. Heath (2004:6) emphasises that:

*"it is being increasingly accepted that the marketing success of a destination is not dependent on only the so-called push factors (i.e. market-demand forces), but it also depends on the pull factors (i.e. supply-side factors) that have a major impact on the branding success of a particular destination"*.

The literature reviewed in chapters, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and the data analysis undertaken in chapter 7 form the basis of the exposition presented in this chapter. The chapters referred to above provide the foundation for the development of a framework for branding and positioning that is described in chapter 7. According to Heath (2004):

*"a competitive analysis includes three constructs, namely competitor, resources and market analyses (i.e. the strengths, gaps and challenges faced by the destination concerned)"*.

Other scholars have also emphasised the importance of image analysis in the branding process (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997:12; Gartner, 1993) and cautioned that the image projected by the destination could on occasion differ from the image that is perceived by tourists. In such an event, the destination brand could lose its identity, because image formation is dependent upon a continuum of the acts of separate agents who act independently or in some combination to form a destination image that is unique to the individual destination (Keller, 2003). The development of the branding and positioning framework took into cognisance of the brand image and brand identity.

A key factor that emerged from the empirical survey regarding the branding process was the stakeholders' perceptions of the brand. The process of determining what these perceptions are, involves the analysis of the perceptions of various categories of stakeholders, namely visitors, local residents, the government and the business community. The results of such an analysis could assist the destination to formulate a positioning strategy (Framke, 2002:95; Axelrod, 1997; Chacko, 1997:2). The perceptions of the various stakeholders could become the source of differentiation, as discussed in chapter 2.

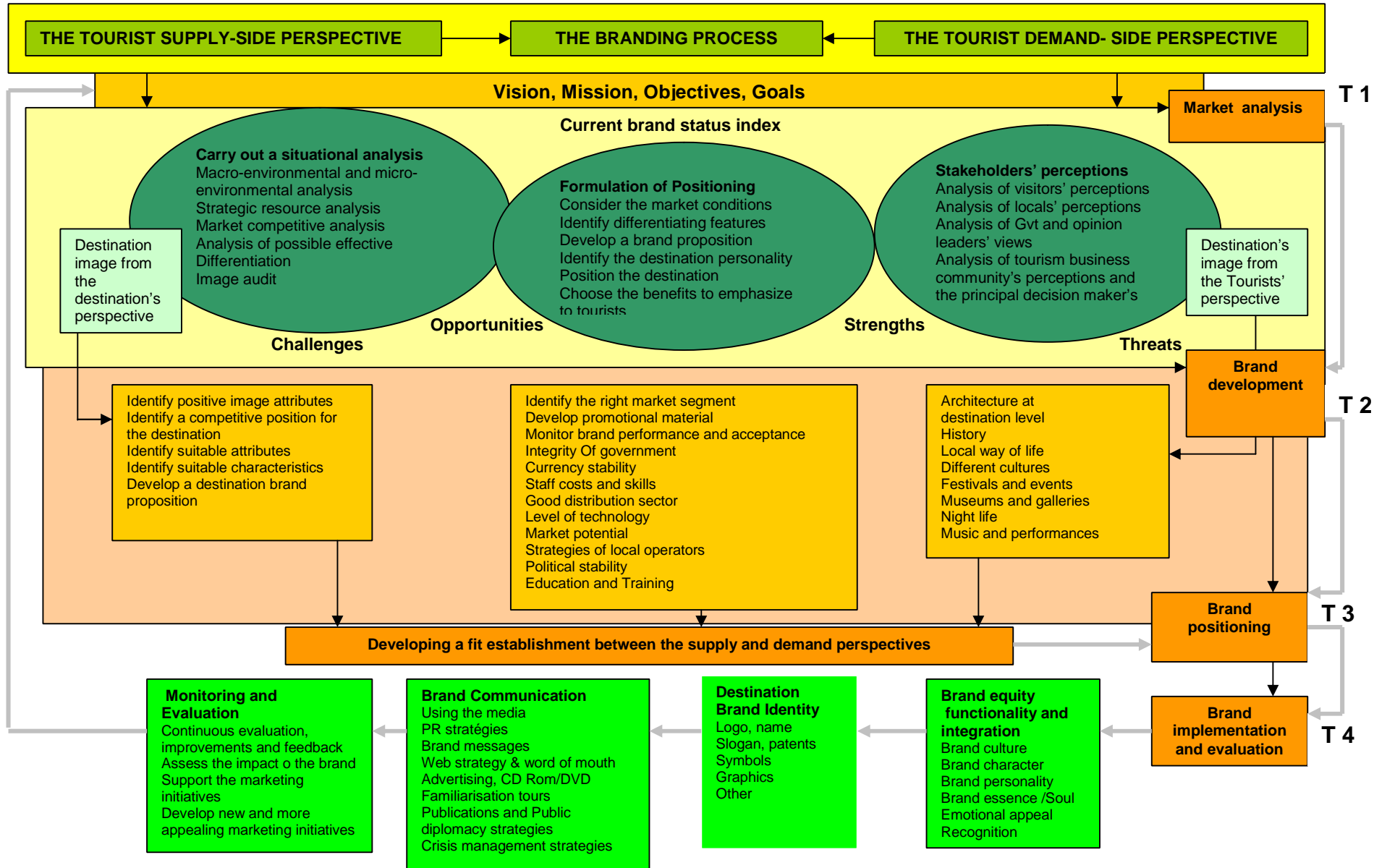
Other Scholars (Marzano & Scott, 2005; Trist, 1983; Keogh, 1990 and Landkin & Bertramini, 2000) have stressed the factors of brand equity and added value, which fulfil a significant role in the branding process (Aaker, 1996:7-8; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998:95, Brymer, 2003; Keller, 2003:76). Brand equity includes matters such as personality, quality of experiences, lifestyles, familiarity, identity, preferences, functionality, loyalty and brand awareness. These factors were incorporated into the proposed destination branding and positioning framework.

Some scholars have even argued that brand identity is the core of the branding process (Morgan, *et al*, 2002; Ooi, 2003; Olins, 2002) whereas others emphasise a very important factor such as promotion and communication of the destination to the target market, which can be achieved through the use of various strategies for reaching out to the customer (Fabricius, 2006a:9; Buhalis, 2000:102). The last important factor of the branding process is implementation, monitoring and evaluation, which provide feedback through a continuous developmental process that is aimed at the improvement and continual repositioning of the destination in the marketplace. Brand implementation and evaluation constitute the most important aspect in the proposed branding and positioning framework.

### **8.3 DEVELOPING A DESTINATION-BRANDING AND POSITIONING FRAMEWORK**

The proposed destination branding and positioning framework aims to explain the strategic role of destination-branding in the repositioning of a destination. The experience of Zimbabwe is used as an example. Destination branding is a strategic tool for destination marketers. Several constructs play an important role in the use of this strategic tool. These constructs include destination performance; key features of destination branding; destination branding; communication methods in destination branding; re-branding of a destination; branding and positioning; destination image; micro-environmental and macro-environmental analyses; monitoring, evaluation and control; and brand identity. In the following sections attention is given to the details on the relationships between these variables. The relationships are presented schematically in figure 8.1.

Figure: 8.1 Relationships between the constructs in the destination branding and positioning framework



Source: Researcher's own construction

The proposed framework provides a new way of looking at destination branding and positioning by explicitly demonstrating that destination branding does not consist of a single component. There are several factors involved in destination branding. These factors include market analysis; brand development; brand positioning; brand implementation; and evaluation. The constructs that are described and tested in chapter 7 are interwoven in this model to demonstrate how these components interact with other variables. The components are not independent or separate, as some scholars (Fabricius, 2006a; Keller, 2003; Morgan *et al*, 2002) have demonstrated. The components concerned are market analysis (Tier 1); brand development (Tier 2); brand positioning (Tier 3); and brand implementation and evaluation (Tier 4). The components are discussed individually in the following sections.

### **8.3.1. Market analysis**

The first step in destination branding is to undertake an environmental analysis, such an analysis of the broader context (Heath, 2004:20). The marketing environment comprises outside actors and forces that affect the destination's ability to develop and maintain successful relations with its tourists. The marketing environment should be viewed from both the tourist-supply and the tourist-demand demand perspectives. The macro environment consists of those forces that create opportunities and pose threats to the destination at large or to the stakeholders which is referred to as the current brand status index in the model. These factors, which are largely uncontrollable, include political, social, technological, economic and demographic

issues. The analysis of these factors can lead to the development of a vision, mission and goals for the destination.

According to Heath (2004:20), the competitive environment consists of all those suppliers of tourism offerings that compete for the same target market. The empirical survey revealed that the micro environment is the immediate environment that primarily comprises the current and potential tourism markets for the destination and the businesses linked to the destination. As shown in the empirical survey it is vital for the destination concerned to conduct an internal analysis, such as undertaking an audit of the available resource components. The aim of the audit is to identify the major sources of strengths and weaknesses as far as the destination's resources are concerned.

The development of any marketing strategy is premised on what is available, i.e. the core competences that can provide a competitive advantage (Heath, 2004:21). It is indicated in chapter 7 that the Zimbabwean tourism brand has been affected by several factors. The inception of the agrarian reform in 1999 contributed to the decline of the tourism industry (Chadenga, 2000:8). The resettlement programme resulted in some people being resettled in wildlife areas, an action that had a negative impact on tourism development. The insecurity that is perceived by tourists abroad, which is based on negative publicity, also contributed immensely to the decline in tourist arrivals. As indicated in the empirical survey, the situation has been exacerbated by the shortage of foreign currency, food and the general malice on the part of government. The respondents showed that the situation in that country is dire since some pointed out the political and safety issue as unpleasant surprises in the destination.

The absence of a strategic tourism plan has also resulted in the failure of the destination to decentralise information adequately to both the national and international markets as evidenced in the empirical survey. A market analysis should involve a SWOT analysis in order to identify the gaps, threats, opportunities, strengths and challenges that the destination should address as shown on the framework. A clear understanding of the macro and micro environments should guide the development of a vision and mission for and the determination of goals for the destination and thereby commence the course towards brand development.

### **8.3.2 Brand development**

The aim of brand development is to reach congruency between the desired brand image and the perceived image of the destination. However, it is difficult to coordinate and control the development of a brand image. A strategic approach to destination branding could be undermined by the fact that campaigns that are launched by various organisations at the destination level could project different messages to the target market. In most cases such campaigns are undertaken without any consultation on or co-ordination regarding the values of the destination that are to be promoted.

The failure of Zimbabwe to strike a balance between the perceived image and the projected image effectively jeopardises the relationship between stakeholders and threatens the achievement of the destination-branding objectives and long-term competitiveness of the destination. When a destination is faced with an image crisis, as is the case with Zimbabwe, it is important not to attempt to address the signs and symptoms, but rather to determine the root causes of the negative publicity that it



receives. Based on the empirical evidence, negative publicity is severe about Zimbabwe, therefore the DMO must consider changing the destination's logo, strap line or positioning in the future branding of the destination. The study revealed that the DMO should simultaneously take steps to counter negative images and cultivate pride in the citizens of the destination.

Whereas Zimbabwe has an excellent tourism infrastructure, including sports; wildlife; and natural and cultural tourism, these assets have not been converted from distinctive competencies to a competitive premium. The shortage of goods on the market has affected the merchandising and retailing of products. The accommodation and ancillary services have proved to be comparable to international standards. Transport is one of the most important vehicles for tourism development, but it has been seriously affected by the shortage of foreign currency and the resultant dearth of fuel. This situation implies that even if tourists do visit the country, they could be stranded and may not reach their destinations. Moreover, the study reveals that the destination lacks a regional strategy on tourism. The destination has done extremely well in respect of human resources development, but its attempts have been hampered by a large-scale brain drain as people move out of the destination in search of greener pastures.

At present the tourism industry in Zimbabwe is very diverse and fragmented. Many agents are acting in their own interests and are not projecting the same image of the destination to the international market. The result of this situation is that there is minimal involvement of the industry in the development of tourism plans. The failure by the destination to convert hostility into empathy, prejudice into acceptance, apathy into interest and ignorance into knowledge has only exacerbated the situation. The

study reveals that the government should manage the brand meanings and assets on the demand and the supply side while simultaneously integrating its branding and promotional initiatives. By the same token, experts have continued to complain about the non-availability of an attractive brand that postures Zimbabwe's geographical location; physical properties; and the quality of its intangible assets, such as history, nature, culture, people and traditions. Very often tourists do not buy products per se, but rather pay for an experience and a dream. While Zimbabwe has a world-class attraction portfolio, the area of facilitation requires urgent attention. The lack of information on entry formalities, particularly on visa requirements, calls for a complete paradigm shift in the way things are done.

In order to in create a positive destination image, it is essential for Zimbabwe to review all the essential matters that affect the average tourist. Examples of such matters are the fees charged by the national parks, which are said to be too high; cost of hotel accommodation; and even the services offered by Air Zimbabwe, which sometimes randomly cancels its flights. Tourism marketing in Zimbabwe is centralised and such marketing and promotion is very costly for the government. Currently, the destination is associated with images of diseases, crime, lawlessness and general chaos.

Tour operators and travel agents appear to be projecting contrasting images of the destination, while political problems remain the main reason why policies that favour the promotion of multinational tourism can not be employed successfully. A clear conceptualisation of these factors would provide leads for the reconciliation of the supply and demand perspectives and form the basis for brand positioning.

### 8.3.3 Brand positioning

At this stage of brand development, the positioning process seeks to enhance the attractiveness of the destination in the minds of the target audience. Positioning is a communication strategy that involves the development of marketing-mix strategies that are aimed at occupying a specific place in the market. It flows naturally through market segmentation and target marketing.

The target market comprises people who have the potential and motivation to visit the destination. In order to position Zimbabwe as a tourist destination effectively, it is essential to divide the market into segments that comprise distinct groups of homogeneous subjects or tourists/consumers. The perceived uniqueness of the brand association often determines whether the brand marketer will arrive at the most appropriate consumers' choices. However, a multi-stakeholder "buy in" could guarantee the subsequent use of the destination brand by all the stakeholders concerned, which is an important element in the positioning of the destination.

Effective positioning is premised on the basic principle of marketing that states that products and services are created to solve consumer problems; satisfy their needs and wants; and deliver on the promises made to them. It is urgently necessary to position Zimbabwe to become different from or better than its competitors who already offer a similar product. Positioning cascades downwards from the brand status analysis to brand development. Each step is invariably interlinked with the other.

In positioning itself as a destination, Zimbabwe should consider the following: Firstly, the unfulfilled need, for example, to look for opportunities to service those segments of the tourist markets that are currently not being serviced. Secondly, it is cardinaly important not to position the destination between market segments as such positioning may result in failure to serve and satisfy any of the segments. Thirdly, it should not attempt to serve two segments with the same strategy, because a strategy that serves one segment successfully can not be transferred to another segment. Finally, it is important that Zimbabwe should not position itself in the middle of the map, for example, it should not position itself in such a manner that its strategy can not be perceived clearly. These guidelines have implications for the key characteristics of a strap line, which should be developed in accordance with the group being targeted. Heath (2004) warns that DMOs should avoid the following errors:

- Under-positioning or failing to position the destination at all. Such an error could cause tourists to have a fuzzy or vague idea of the destination;
- Over-positioning or giving the market a very narrow picture of the destination;  
and
- confused positioning, which may result in the market having a confused image of the destination.

The above mentioned errors are an evidence of improper brand positioning for Zimbabwe. Therefore positioning should consider a fit establishment the destination's image and markets, situational factors and resources. Whilst Davidson & Rogers (2006) distinguish between a slogan and a positioning statement, the evidence presented in the empirical survey has shown that destinations must not just

develop slogans but should come up with positioning statements that would benchmark the destination for competitiveness. The empirical evidence considers a positioning statement to be a concise theme that is interwoven with all marketing communications (i.e. unified) while a slogan is an external marketing tool, which is often a phrase that is generated from the positioning statement. A slogan is intended to capture the attention of the target market and to reinforce the product's image. The aim of the slogan is to make a differentiating proposition that can contribute to positioning a destination in the minds of the prospective users. In order for a slogan to be successful, it should fulfil the following conditions:

- It should be based on genuine product attributes and not on fake attributes, which means that it should use various brand values and personalities. However, the emphasis should be on the benefits that the audience seeks;
- it should be readily understood by customers. Such understanding could be promoted by matching the brand elements and developing brand extension strategies;
- it should be inclusive of the leading players in the industry;
- it should be sustained over a long period of time through the use of a brand value chain; and
- it should be systematically exploited in a range of activities through the use of core brands and brand mantras in order to position the brand.

Therefore Zimbabwe needs to develop a position that is genuine without under or over promising. This positioning should easily connect with the target audience and easily understood by customers. From the evidence presented in the empirical

survey, the development of slogan or jingles should involve the tourism operators as well.

#### **8.3.4 Brand implementation and evaluation**

Once the desired market position has been devised and articulated, this position should be presented to the marketplace in a way that stands out from the other attention-seeking messages of rival destinations and substitute products. If this presentation is done successfully, the position could establish the destination as a top of the mind brand in the target audience. Such positioning could in itself lead to the achievement of a competitive advantage.

In order to gain a competitive advantage, the destination's attributes should create a gap, which represents an important buying criterion. The existence of this criterion should be carefully integrated into the implementation and evaluation process. The flow of information does not always proceed as intended and it should never be assumed that potential visitors have an accurate image or perception of the destination (Heath, 2004).

The brand implementation and evaluation stage is concerned with brand culture, character, personality and essence. The brand should have an emotional appeal and be easy to recognise and recall. The implementation process should be supported by an appropriate brand identity. For example, a logo, slogan, symbols or graphic that is appealing and alluring. The empirical evidence has shown that the brand implementation process should recognise the present situation in that country.

#### **8.3.4.1 *Developing a destination-brand equity***

The empirical evidence has shown that the functional characteristics of a brand include its culture, personality, soul recognition and emotional appeal. These factors should be aligned with the destination-brand identity and with what it represents. The functionality and integration of the brand amount to the value of the brand. This value is based on the extent to which it has a high brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, strong brand association and other assets, such as patents, trade marks and channel relationships (Vincent, 2004a). The brand equity concept involves the development of programmes and activities that are intended to build and manage the destination brand. It involves the interpretation and sustaining of the brand's performance.

In Zimbabwe, the importance of brand equity is often underestimated. The main consideration in respect of brand equity is that it emanates from the destination as well as from the tourists. The evidence shown in the empirical survey has shown that brand equity should therefore provide marketers with the strategic bridge that is required to leverage the destination from its past into the future.

It is essential that Zimbabwe should understand that the future prospects of the brand rest with the customers and their knowledge of the destination. It is knowledge that creates differential effects and drives brand equity. The marketing and distribution of such knowledge should be sustained over time, because its desired effect on the markets requires considerable time and effort.

### **8.3.4.2 Destination-brand identity**

A destination such as Zimbabwe, whose brand offers little emotional appeal, has a challenging task if it is ever to become a destination winner. The results of the empirical survey have shown that destination-brand identity conveys a sense of experiencing the brand rather than of merely delivering a sight encounter. Brand identity constitutes an amalgam of characteristics and these characteristics come in the form of logos, names, slogans, patents, symbols, graphics and other forms that are intended to lure the target audience.

The study revealed that Zimbabwe does not have a carefully crafted brand-identity strategy to sell the destination's positioning, namely "Africa's Paradise", both locally and internationally. The destination should use a diffusion strategy in terms of which innovation is communicated through a selection of communication channels over a period of time. As a result of Zimbabwe's failure to use a strategy for the diffusion of innovation, the Africa's Paradise brand could be at risk. In order to reinforce the destination's identity, the promotion of the brand could take the following forms: advertisements; road shows; events and symposia; press releases; media relations; documentaries; web strategies; and even public diplomacy.

Pike (2004) observes that we live in an over communicated society in which we are bombarded daily with information at levels that are unprecedented in our history. Therefore the mind has developed a defence mechanism against clutter. The only way to cut through the clutter to get to the mind is to use simplified and focused messages.



### **8.3.4.3 Brand communication**

The development of a destination brand should lead to the launching of the brand, direct marketing and communication. Direct marketing refers to any form of marketing and communication that is an interactive system of marketing and uses one or more advertising media to effect a measurable response and/or transaction. The marketing could be in the form of direct-response media advertising, direct mailing, e-mailing and telemarketing. Tools such as the following could be used to launch and communicate the brand to the target audience: publications, websites, newsletters, advertising, public relations, the printed and electronic media and familiarisation trips. These methods are discussed individually in the following sections.

#### **a) Publications and public diplomacy**

This marketing tool could be used in the design and transmission of the destination's messages to potential visitors. The process could involve the use of brochures, planning manuals, newsletters and visitor guides. Publications could be aimed at communication with stakeholders. Such publications take the form of annual reports and newsletters. Publications could also be used to obtain business leads. The Internet and its multiplicity of uses has become one of the most efficient methods of reaching a wide audience in the shortest possible time.

Destination guides provide an overview of a destination, its attractions, amenities and accessibility. These guides contain excellent photographs, concentrate on

facilitating understanding and have a comprehensive index. Paper-based guides are still used. The main advantages of publications are their flexibility and portability. They are also readily accessible. They facilitate comparisons between destinations in the same or different regions. However, the emergence of the Internet has witnessed the wide use of the electronic guides. These guides are important in complementing printed guides rather than making them obsolete.

**b) *Websites and word of mouth***

The biggest challenge to printed guides has come from the Internet. Most destinations have websites that can be updated regularly. Their weakness is that they can not be altered very often as a result of the cost involved and therefore become outdated and inaccurate. Websites can be accessed at any time from anywhere in the world and their distribution costs are low in comparison with printed guides. To capitalise on this major advantage, websites should be visually attractive and make use of the full screen. Tourists should be quick to load and navigate and they should contain factual information about the destination's features. The implication for Zimbabwe is that the DMO should design websites that contain excellent maps, travel directions and even virtual tours.

**c) *Crisis Management strategies***

Every destination especially Zimbabwe which is reeling and struggling with bad publicity needs to develop crisis management strategies in order to mitigate any potentially volatile situation. Developing crisis management strategies can take many forms. Newsletters have proved to be a valuable marketing medium for many

destinations. Their design, illustrations and snappy news items of newsletters have proved to be effective in strengthening the relationship between the destination and its clients through the regular flow of information. However, newsletters may prove to be very expensive to produce. To counter the distribution cost of newsletters, Zimbabwe could distribute e-newsletters to prospective tourists and tour operators in the form of PDF attachments. This strategy can be useful especially under political crisis like what is happening in Zimbabwe.

**d) Advertising**

Good advertising is likely to require the input of a specialist advertising agency, particularly an agency that has a clear understanding of and experience in destination marketing. In Zimbabwe, this option has been considered to be more expensive than public relations (PR), because the media costs are always high while the message, positioning and timing of public relations exercises are totally within the control of the destination. Advertising should be planned strategically and executed over a period of time as part of a campaign that is integrated with the overall sales and marketing plans for the destination.

**e) Public Relations**

Public relations (PR) can be described as a series of communications techniques that are designed to create and maintain favourable relations between the destination and its publics. PR is concerned with the reputation of the destination as a result of what it does and says and what the tourists say about it. It is about looking

after the reputation of the destination with the aim of earning the understanding and support of the stakeholders and influencing opinion leaders. Its primary goals are to manipulate demand and influence buyer behaviour by reaching out to the people and communicating to them the messages that are intended to influence their purchase cues. However, PR differs from direct advertising in that its target audience is wider. It targets local residents; local and central government; politicians; existing and potential buyers; domestic tourists; the media; shareholders; suppliers; investors; professional trade associations; and pressure groups.

According to Davidson & Rogers (2006), PR has five major roles, which the destination should use effectively, namely: **press releases** - newsworthy items of information that are placed in the news media to generate favourable publicity or reduce the impact of unfavourable publicity; **product publicity** - implementing tactics to draw attention to particular products, new or renovated hotels/attractions and special events; **destination publicity** – generating a favourable image for the destination, both internally and externally; **lobbying** - dealing with legislators and government officials to promote a cause or defeat a particular piece of legislation; and **counselling** - advising management on the public issues, especially the sensitive issues with which the destination may be associated.

In addition, the PR function also includes a research and monitoring role within the destination. Public relations strategies are useful to a destination such as Zimbabwe as they can help the destination to keep its target audience updated. Currently the destination is not effectively using the PR tools to positively position the destination.

**f) *Using the media***

It is clear that, despite the best marketing efforts, much positive and negative publicity for a destination appears in the media without the influence or control of the destination. It is vital for Zimbabwe to establish and nurture a good relationship with the local and international media. Such a relationship could produce positive editorial coverage, which is more essential for the image of the destination than extensive advertising. A destination such as Zimbabwe should channel good news or stories through the same media that publish negative reports in order to have an effective campaign to overcome bad publicity. The destination should maintain a PR library that enables it to respond quickly and effectively to media requests.

**g) *Familiarisation tours***

Trade shows are not only the place where exhibitors can meet buyers in person, but are also events at which buyers can actually experience the product at first hand. Such familiarisation trips are the only means through which potential buyers can be given an opportunity to have a preview of the local facilities, attractions and amenities.

The tours are meant to provide buyers with an experience of the destination and also with an opportunity to share certain facts on and features of the destination. While Zimbabwe has been involved in the presentation of familiarisation tours, trade shows and exhibitions, the results thereof have not been encouraging, mainly due to other non-tourism factors within the destination.

#### **8.3.4.4 Brand monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation is an important factor in destination branding and positioning. A destination such as Zimbabwe could use this component of the branding process to ensure that budgets are not exceeded and that plans achieve the results specified in their objectives. The destination could use the criterion of the number of room nights that are booked over a period of time to determine the levels of occupancy and to project the total number of tourist that come to the destination. It is important for Zimbabwe to gather statistics regarding the number of inbound and outbound tourists in order to have an overview of the distribution of tourists within the destination (local, regional, national and International).

When evaluating their destination brand, DMOs, hotels and other stakeholders should know what type of tourists come to their destination. Monitoring and evaluation is a very important component in the branding and positioning of a destination, because the information gained could provide feedback on whether the positioning is in accordance with the branding. It could also assist the marketers to develop appropriate communication strategies. Evaluation could also take the form of an investigation of the types of bookings (conventions, exhibitions, trade shows, special events, meetings) that are made over a period of time and the volume of business (Hankinson, 2004) that is booked through various marketing techniques, such as trade shows, direct mail, direct sales and advertising. It could even produce information on the local taxes that are generated from tourism.

## **8.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DESTINATION BRANDING AND POSITIONING FRAMEWORK**

The branding and positioning model seeks to close the gap in existing knowledge regarding destination marketing. This study revealed that consumers and investors rely on the brand and the destination image when making economic decisions. Brands have in fact become shortcuts to purchasing decisions. The destination branding and positioning model developed in this study could be implemented over a long term. It would require a great deal of effort and the development of marketing strategies in order to achieve the desired position. Branding is a source of competitive advantage. The proposed branding and positioning model requires the involvement of all stakeholders in the branding process and not merely the government. The involvement of the government and the private sector partners could contribute significantly to triggering the process of change that would increase the competitiveness of a destination.

A compelling facet of the proposed model is the consistency of all the messages, graphics and values that are used in the destination's umbrella concept. The model indicates that by formulating the branding and positioning strategies in partnership with stakeholders, perceptions could be changed and a new identity crafted without contradicting the widespread image that people have of the destination.

Communication of messages through the brand could contribute to leveraging the destination by creating opportunities to increase people's familiarity with and appreciation of a country. Communication could take the form of developing

attractive, informative and user-friendly websites. It could also be done by means of advertising, public diplomacy, public relations and personal selling. The feedback system that is embedded in the model provides the process with the opportunity for improvement and development.

## **8.5 COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK AND EXISTING BRANDING AND POSITIONING MODELS**

It is important to compare the proposed destination branding and positioning model with other models and processes that have been developed to date. The most recent frameworks include a market-positioning strategy (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004), destination-positioning strategy (Terzibsoglu, 2004; Kaczynski, 2003); brand-building matrix (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997); destination-brand pyramid (Morgan *et al.*, 2002); destination-audit process (Richie & Crouch, 2003:254); and the steps and tools for creating strategic destination brands (Tasci & Gartner, 2006). Other branding processes have recently been proposed by Kotler & Gartner (2002); Olins (2000) and Brymer, (2003). It is important to outline and compare these models in order to identify similarities and differences that could exist in the frameworks. These models are discussed in detail in chapters 2 and 3 of this report. The destination-branding and positioning model is found to be similar to the other destination-branding and positioning frameworks in the ways that are detailed in the following sections.

### **8.5.1 Market analysis**

While the market-positioning strategy (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004) propounds a



thorough market analysis, the proposed destination-branding and positioning framework propounds a market competitive analysis on the second level. The proposed destination-branding and positioning model also calls for an analysis of the micro environment and the availability of resources. This analysis corresponds to the internal analysis in the market-position strategy that is proposed by Lovelock & Wirtz (2004).

### **8.5.2. The competitor analysis**

Both the proposed destination-branding and positioning model and the market-positioning strategy of Lovelock & Wirtz (2004) acknowledge the importance of the evaluation of the destination's competitors. However, the market-positioning strategy goes on to detail the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation. The destination-branding and positioning model takes a slightly different view, especially in respect of the micro environment. It seeks to establish the current status of the destination and the perceptions of the stakeholders, which is a very important aspect of the positioning of a destination particularly the current one. This approach is similar to the proposals made by Heath (2004) and Brymer (2003).

### **8.5.3 The importance of image**

The market-positioning strategy of Lovelock & Wirtz (2004) does not take cognisance of the importance of the destination image in positioning a destination effectively. The destination image is a very important element in the positioning process. Furthermore, the proposed destination-branding and positioning model outlines all

the basic steps that should be followed in the positioning process. These steps are merely assumed in the market-positioning strategy. The proposed destination-branding and positioning model proposes the formation of national and/or international marketing teams that should be complemented by the formation of a global marketing strategy. What is of significance in the proposed destination-branding and positioning model is the development of a marketing campaign and a brand proposition that can assist in articulating the desired position of the destination.

#### **8.5.4 Brand equity**

Brand equity is one of the most important elements of the branding process. A true brand fulfils the perceived needs of the customers and simultaneously triggers a positive response in the customers' mindset. The major aim of the proposed branding and positioning model is to achieve sustainable tourist perceptions, which may lead to a competitive advantage for the destination. The personality of a destination brand begins with the tourist (Palmer & Bejou, 1995). Any DMO that wants to achieve marketing success should listen to its customers' wants, needs and expectations.

While there are many constructs associated with a destination, any nation's branding efforts should identify and define the brand personality. Failure to do so may result in confusion. One result of such confusion may be that the brand is forgotten. The definition of a brand personality is in line with the brand equity model that was developed by Brandt & Johnson (1997) and that incorporates the following components as part of brand equity: destination images and personality,

associations, preference, loyalty, awareness, familiarity, and availability. These concepts as evidenced in the empirical evidence have been incorporated into the proposed destination branding and positioning framework.

### **8.5.5 Functionality and integration**

In order to achieve a strong brand, the branding process should be functionally distinctive and unique. A strong brand could be achieved by offering superior products. Functionality is measured by means of the benefits that are enjoyed by the customers as result of the use of the product. In the proposed destination-branding and positioning framework, functionality is integrated with brand equity. However, the proposed destination-branding and positioning framework is similar to the model developed by Tasci & Gartner (2006) in respect of the steps and tools that are to be used to create strategic brands. The latter authors do not include the word functionality, but use the word benefits instead.

Functionality is what makes a consumer select a destination as his first choice amongst competing destinations. It represents those unique benefits that are sought and enjoyed by tourists and which give novelty to the destination. The uniqueness is not only achieved by means of discriminating benefits, but also by focusing on the motivating benefits that are the pull and push factors in respect of visiting a destination. Destinations, just like any product or brand, should be functional. Functionality is interpreted as the observable benefits of a destination. A country should function as a destination by offering transportation; state of the art infrastructure and facilities; trade and commerce; tourism and recreation attractions;

and other ancillary services that form the basis for emotional appeal, brand personality and character. A destination should suit each and every individual's circumstance and needs. This factor is considered to be an important branding element and therefore it is incorporated in the proposed model.

## **8.6 DISCUSSION**

When the residents believe in a brand that brand becomes reinforced and considered to be truthful (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998:17). For example, the use of word of mouth, political climate, public relations and even the graphic design of the logo can contribute to reinforcing a destination brand. Destinations should be open to change and should adjust to the political climate. By embracing and adapting to diverse cultures and peoples' ideas and lifestyles, destinations could evolve into strong brands. It is only in this way that destinations can consistently project a definite identity.

The destination-positioning framework that is proposed by Fabricius (2006:6a) has some shortcomings in that it is difficult to deduce from it the sequence in which the steps are to be followed. However, his framework does have clearly outlined stages that are presented in a diagrammatic format. While the destination-branding matrix proposed by Olins (2000) is a very important tool in brand building, it does not provide guidelines for the brand-building process, but merely provides a list of factors. There are nevertheless several similarities between the proposed destination-branding and positioning model developed for this study and the destination brand-building matrix. All the components that are present in the brand-building matrix (Olins, 2000) are present in the proposed destination-branding and

positioning model. These two models differ on the fundamental issue of the steps that are to be followed in the branding process. Upon a closer look at the brand-building matrix, it is tempting to conclude that its structure is a mere list of the attributes of successful branding. The brand-building matrix is merely a small component of the proposed branding and positioning model and it is therefore inappropriate to compare the two models.

The proposed destination-branding and positioning framework could also be compared to the destination-brand pyramid that is proposed by Morgan *et al.*, (2002:33). While the destination-brand pyramid represents the foundation of the branding processes, it is noteworthy that branding is concerned with perceptions and that therefore image fulfils a very important role in the development of a brand. The destination-branding pyramid has gaps in its formation. The pyramid does not take cognisance of the fundamental fact that branding should be done from a supply as well as a demand perspective, whereas the proposed destination-branding and positioning model specifically articulates this fact. Whereas the destination-branding pyramid proposes logical steps that are to be followed in the branding process, it appears to lose sight of the fact that branding is more than the development of a name, sign or logo. The questions that are outlined in the destination-branding pyramid may not eventually lead to the development of a brand, although it is important to ask these questions before deciding on the brand. Morgan *et al.*, (2002) do not consider the branding process from a pluralistic point of view, but merely consider it from the perspective of a tourist's motivation to visit a destination.

While Kotler & Gartner (2002) present a detailed list of the steps to be followed in the branding process, they consider only a part of the branding process. Branding is a

continuous process that can not be accomplished by following the simple steps that they propose. The process proposed by Kotler & Gartner (2002) tends to lack detail and oversimplifies the complexity of the branding phenomenon.

Fabricius, (2006b), also developed a guide to branding in his key links to destination-branding. He overlooks the fundamental issue of image analysis. The assumption made by Fabricius is that a destination brand has already been developed and he therefore starts with the question: Where are we now and how well do we compare to the competition? It is assumed that by answering these questions, the destination will identify its position within the market by means of a destination competitive analysis. The second stage of Fabricius' model is concerned with positioning, for which purpose the marketers should ask the following questions: Where would we like to be? What are our dreams and goals? The third stage is concerned with the clients, namely who our clients are and what their preferences are? The fourth stage is concerned with key success factors. The question to be asked is: What do we need to do well in order to comply with their needs? The final stage is concerned with institutional management and monitoring in respect of which he recommends that destination marketers should ask the following question: What should we do to maintain market leadership? Fabricius' framework was developed solely from the point of view of destination marketing management, but it does add a dimension to the branding process.

Brymer (2003) also discussed the branding process. His branding model considers only one aspect of the branding process and is therefore not particularly useful for the development of an effective destination brand. The model presents a novel approach to destination branding, considers both the supply and the demand sides,

but has the shortcoming of not addressing the complexity of the destination-branding and positioning phenomenon. The proposed destination-branding and positioning framework is unique in several ways, namely:

- It projects brand meanings step by step from both the demand and the supply perspective;
- it comprises a step by step holistic approach to the branding process, analysis of the brand image, brand position, promotion and/or communication;
- it provides for a current situational and competitive analysis; visitors' and stakeholders' perceptions; analysis of the current brand status index; formulation of positioning; and the development of branding and communication strategies;
- it contains a separate stage for the strategic fit between the supply side and the demand side;
- it provides a separate stage for the establishment of brand equity; functionality and integration; brand identity; and communication; and, finally,
- it provides room for evaluation and feedback.

## **8.7 SUMMARY**

Chapter 8 developed and contextualised a branding and positioning framework that can be used for repositioning a destination for greater competitiveness. The proposed destination branding and positioning framework is both theoretically and empirically balanced. The framework is differentiated into four tiers that influence the

performance of a destination brand namely: market analysis, brand development, brand positioning and brand implementation and evaluation. These tiers are then discussed and an explanation is provided of how they are interlinked in the brand-building process. The discussion is followed by a discussion and comparison of the destination-branding and positioning model with other models that are discussed in this study. The framework that was developed for this study could be used to brand and reposition a destination in a crisis and enhance its competitiveness. Chapter 8 revealed that a destination that fails to brand itself, can not expect to be positioned strategically in respect of its target market.

The next chapter focuses on the conclusions drawn from and the recommendations that emanate from this study.



## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the conclusions reached in this study in relation to the objectives that were formulated for it. The chapter also provides recommendations that are aimed at the development of a strategic destination-branding and positioning model that could be used for repositioning a destination for increased competitiveness. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the areas recommended for further research that were identified in the course of the study as well as with some concluding remarks.

#### 9.2 REVISITING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of destination branding in order to develop a model that could be used to strategically reposition a destination for increased competitiveness and to apply the model to the Zimbabwean situation. The objectives that were formulated for the study were articulated as follows:

- **To clarify the context of branding within destination marketing and to outline the strategic role of branding/re-branding in the positioning/repositioning of a destination (chapter 2).** For the purposes of

developing a framework for destination-branding and positioning, a study was undertaken of the literature on branding and positioning in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject. It was furthermore deemed necessary to:

- *Discuss the significance and role of destination marketing.*
- *Identify the role of branding in destination marketing, clarify the major aims of destination branding and demonstrate the importance of destination branding as a strategic tool in destination marketing.*
- *To determine what the relationship is between destination branding and positioning in destination marketing.*
- *To discuss the importance of the concept of image in destination marketing and to establish the link between a destination's image and its branding.*
- *To establish what major challenges are faced by a destination-marketing organisation in branding and positioning a destination.*

The literature review led to the development of a destination branding and positioning flow chart that is presented as table 18 in chapter 2. The flow chart is based on an analysis of the strategic role of destination branding; micro-environmental and macro-environmental planning; positioning; image; brand development; brand implementation; management and evaluation.

- **To analyse the destination-branding process and competitive positioning.** The analysis was undertaken in chapter 3. In order to achieve the above-stated objective of the chapter, an explication of the following matters is presented in chapter 3: A discussion of the destination-branding

process and its strategic role in the positioning of a destination; the important role of destination-brand equity and how it relates to brand identity; the strategic brand management process and its impact on the health of the brand; how a destination can effectively and sustainably brand on the web; the role of positioning as an element of destination branding; and the role of image as an element of destination branding and positioning

- **To evaluate international trends and best practices in the branding and positioning of destinations.** The main objective of the study was to develop a model that could be used in the repositioning of a destination. In order to achieve this objective, the approaches to destination branding and positioning of destinations in several countries were analysed critically and justified in chapter 4. It was found that the international approaches to destination branding include the use of public diplomacy strategies and these strategies were analysed within the context of destination branding and positioning. This analysis contributed to the development of a strategic branding and positioning framework.
- **To determine the current situation in Zimbabwe regarding destination marketing with particular emphasis on branding and positioning strategies.** In chapter 5, an attempt is made to establish the current situation in Zimbabwe regarding the branding and marketing of the destination. Strategies that are used by the DMO to market the destination are analysed. The analysis is followed by a detailed discussion on the factors that affect the destination brand and how these factors contribute to negative equity. Thereafter the findings of a detailed SWOT (strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities and threats) analysis of the destination are presented. The SWOT analysis contributes towards the identification of factors that could erode the health of the brand.

- **To discuss the methodology that was applied in the study.** The discussion of the methodology appears in chapter 6. It includes details of the research approach and the instruments that were used to determine stakeholders' attitudes, expectations and perceptions regarding the branding and repositioning of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. The design of the instruments was based on the information garnered from the literature survey that is reported in chapter 2; analysis of branding and positioning strategies contained in chapter 3; and the situational analysis of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination that appears in chapter 4. A survey instrument was developed and tested with the co-operation of industry practitioners and lecturers in the tourism management departments in various state universities in Zimbabwe.
- **To determine stakeholders' attitudes, expectations and experiences regarding the branding and positioning of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination (chapter 7).** This objective was achieved by means of the conducting of an empirical research. The results of the empirical survey are discussed in chapter 6.
- **To refine the proposed framework on the strategic branding and repositioning of a destination for sustainable destination competitiveness.** The basic framework that is articulated in chapter 2 is refined in chapter 8. The intensive literature review that is reported in

chapters 2 to 4 and the results of the empirical survey that appears in chapter 6 contributed to the development of a strategic destination-branding and positioning framework. The framework was compared to other branding, positioning, brand-identity and image frame works.

- **To contribute to the body of knowledge on destination marketing and to provide guidelines for stakeholders' implementation of the branding and positioning of a destination as well as to propose areas for further research.** The contribution to the relevant body of knowledge as well as the guidelines for implementation are outlined and discussed in chapter 9. The significance of the study for the relevant body of knowledge is based on the results of the survey that are discussed in chapter 7 and the proposed strategic guidelines for branding and positioning a destination are outlined in chapter 8.

### **9.3 AN EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS**

The findings and conclusions of the research project are outlined and discussed in this section. The information obtained from the literature review and the empirical research survey is used as the background to the discussion.

The discussion focuses on the importance of branding in destination marketing; implications of branding in destination marketing; factors that affect the branding and positioning of a destination; and the challenges that prevail in respect of destination branding and positioning.

### **9.3.1 The importance of branding and positioning in destination marketing**

Branding has often mistakenly been considered to amount to having a logo, symbol or tagline. Branding comprises much more these symbols as they are merely the visual expressions of the brand. The value of a brand goes beyond a name, a jingle or a positioning statement. In fact, successful brands add value to products and services (Keller, 2003) and they are associated with the destination. Branding can be viewed as a tool that could be used for building relationships between a destination and its audiences. It can also contribute to personalising the relationship between the audience and the branded destination. This personal relationship involves the building of emotional bonds that are based on experiences at the destination.

Branding is founded on expectations. The expectations are, in turn, based on what people know about the destination, what they think about it and what they expect from those friends, family members and acquaintances who have visited the destination. People who have incomplete knowledge of a destination, nevertheless make up their minds and build a portfolio of (Blain *et al.*, 2005) relationships that are based on trust and loyalty.

Branding has an umbrella effect on the destination's performance. A brand could be the main cause of the degree of differentiation between the destination and its competition. Each and every destination is different and has a unique identity. The value of the brand depends strongly on perceived differences that are valuable to the customer. A decision to choose a particular brand is sometimes based on the

intangibles that are borne by emotions than on cold facts. While the creation of a brand is never a simple task, there are a number of important factors that should be considered when (Felsenstein & Fleischer, 2003) developing a brand. A destination such as Zimbabwe should give serious consideration to these factors.

It is vitally important for the parties responsible for destination marketing in Zimbabwe to ensure that they have a clear idea of the visitor's holiday experience in the destination before they commence the development of a brand for the destination. To obtain this idea would include the conducting of extensive research on the perceptions held by the stakeholders. The research findings could contribute to the gaining of an understanding of what the target audience and the local residents think of the destination (Buhalis, 2000). When the South African brand was developed, the key stakeholders in the South African tourism industry at that time were consulted. The consultations included the government, opinion leaders, local residents, artists, NGOs, civic groups and the international community. The aim was not to establish how the destination should be, but to evaluate how it is perceived. The positioning that is chosen for a destination should be acceptable and credible within the destination itself. When branding a destination, it is important not only to look at the targeted audience, but also to reach out to all the interested parties in order to achieve consensus regarding the perception that the target audience and the local population have of the destination. The failure of any destination to brand and position itself on the international map could result in it being relegated to a minor position in the minds of potential tourists. The re-branding of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination could contribute to the repositioning of the destination in the international market. The process could lead to the creation of a favourable image that is alluring to the target audience.



### **9.3.2 Implications of branding and positioning in destination marketing**

When branding a destination, the picture that is projected to the world about the destination should portray the reality of the destination (Baker, 2007). Failure to do so could result in gaps being created in the perceptions held about the destination and the experiences offered by it. The inhabitants of a destination should know what the visitors expect from them and should be comfortable with these expectations. The destination should align the brand with other aspects of the destination. Such alignment involves the development of positioning strategies, because the failure to align may lead to a conflict between the perceptions held by potential or actual visitors, positioning and the brand. In addition, the national promotional strategy should dovetail with the branding strategy.

After developing a new brand, Zimbabwe should market its new position, both nationally and abroad. It is important to communicate the new position to current and prospective target audiences. While this matter appears to be obvious, it may be fraught with difficulties. The marketing of destinations requires strategic advertising rather than mere tactical advertising, which means that it should be low on product and high on values. It means furthermore that what is sold is the attributes of the destination rather than the product (the destination) itself. The destination should embark on an aggressive marketing campaign, to enable the brand to change the perceptions held by the target audiences. The brand should be dynamic and continue to serve the destination for many years, because it is impractical and exorbitantly expensive to make regular and radical changes to a brand. To avoid this pitfall, the brand should be flexible and adapt to circumstances as they unfold. As the

audience changes, the competitive environment changes, too, therefore the brand-building process should take these matters into consideration in the long term.

Branding should make allowances for catastrophes. Such incidents are the circumstances that could change the market conditions and reposition the destination, possibly for the better. In order for the branding process to be effective, everyone within the destination should “sing from the same hymn book.” The branding process can not be achieved successfully through advertising or through the use of a website alone. It should among other things involve the local residents so that they are enabled to spread the message by word of mouth and become ambassadors of the destination wherever they go. The experiences at the destination should match the expectations of the visitors and, ideally, even exceed them. If this occurs, there is a likelihood of converting tourists into repeat visitors. A good destination brand should be evident in the entire destination, including the physical environment; attitudes of residents; experiences at the destination; events; points of entry and exit; and, finally, in the transport facilities. In destination branding, everyone at the destination has a role to play.

### **9.3.3 Factors to be considered in destination branding and positioning**

The cardinal element of destination branding is the positioning of the destination in the mind of the target population. Zimbabwe has had a long trend of tourist inflows, but in the relatively recent past its image has varied from mixed to a negative as a result of the bad publicity that the country has had. Its negative image is to a large extent not a result of tourist factors, but is primarily due to non-tourism factors. The destination has been projecting a rather confusing positioning statement without

having clearly defined target markets. It is therefore important for Zimbabwe to develop a brand identity for the destination that is based on the benefits that targeted tourists seek from a destination. The brand architecture should correspond to the destination's characteristics. Zimbabwe should develop a symbol or logo that is relevant to the destination and that will promote preference and recall. The symbol/logo or sign could be used to differentiate the destination from its competitors and form the basis for brand identity. Once that has been done, tourists will begin to associate the country with its new identity, personality and character. Above all, the brand should deliver a long-term competitive advantage.

At present, Zimbabwe is faced with a difficult situation concerning tourism arrivals. To reposition itself as a tourist destination on the international scene, demands strong management of its image, both internally and externally. Since the introduction of the economic embargo, several factors have continued to have a strongly negative impact on Zimbabwe. The economic embargo has crippled the local currency to the extent that the inflation rate has risen to over 231 million % (CSO, 2008), the highest in the world. Due to negative publicity in the international media and cautionary advisories from tourist-generating countries, prospective tourists are shunning the destination. They prefer to go to neighbouring countries despite the fact that Zimbabwe has unique attractions to offer. The result has been that the number of tourists visiting Zimbabwe has decreased, primarily as a result of non-tourism factors. Officials have consistently failed to devise realistic marketing strategies to stimulate tourism in the country. A lack of investor confidence in the tourism sector and in other sectors has led to disinvestment in the country.

Respondents report poor integration of tourism marketing strategies and ascribe it to a lack of financial resources. There is also a lack of appreciation of the importance of the industry by government and consequently a lack of contribution by the government. Above all, there has been lack of co-operation by government with foreign tour operators, and a resultant decline in tourist arrivals.

The need for an appropriate national, regional, and international promotional structure to deal with the management and promotion of tourism cannot be over-emphasised. The survey indicates that there are a number of factors that encourage tourism marketing. For example, the existence of state of the art tourism facilities and products that are of international standard is very encouraging. Whilst the destination experienced peace and stability from 1987 to 1999, which created favourable conditions for the tourism industry, there have been incidents of human rights abuses and politically motivated violence from 2000 to 2008. The ability to reposition Zimbabwe as a leading tourist destination lies in the destination's ability to control the effect of the non-tourism factors.

The existence of a pristine natural environment and abundant wildlife, complemented by the existence of UNESCO world cultural heritage sites, demonstrates the plurality and richness of the destination. In addition, the existence of a well-developed infrastructure and excellent service provision could set the tone for signalling a revival of tourism once the non-tourism factors are addressed.

Zimbabwe's current destination brand is tired and has outlived its timeframe. The first priority should therefore be to develop a new destination brand. In conjunction with the development of a brand, the destination's image should be confronted

aggressively by producing consistent, well-focussed promotional material, coupled with a thoroughly considered brand strategy. The destination should allocate financial resources for appropriate marketing campaigns... Due to the complexity of branding and the difficulties associated with the development of a brand that is consistent with the destination's resources and that matches the target market with the services provided in the destination, a programme of action should be developed to enable the destination to respond to the changing market needs. Destination branding could be used to disassociate Zimbabwe from its recent past and act as a base for differentiation. Differentiation should convey the new national image and, by emphasising the new position, emphasise that the destination has changed,. Globalisation has caused the world to "shrink" and has brought with it increasing competition and the need for innovation, Zimbabwe should accept the challenge to play a prominent role in world tourism.

#### **9.3.4 Challenges of destination branding and positioning in Zimbabwe**

Extending a brand into the global sphere is a very complex process that requires specialised knowledge of tourists' perceptions and expectations. It requires an understanding of scale, distance, materials and techniques that, in turn, make high demands on the brand. A great destination brand should have meaning. It should connect with the target audience emotionally by providing a complete sensory experience of the environment. It was observed in the empirical study that, although a negative image of a destination could be overcome, a concerted effort is required of all the agents who manage the brand. Zimbabwe has been branded as a banana republic and/ or a coconut republic by foreign media. The negative tone of such branding is intended to discredit the destination and to create a crisis situation.

Although Zimbabwe once had a positive image, this image has been eroded in source markets, largely as a result of negative publicity. The study reveals that one of the most appropriate strategies that could be used by destination marketers to reposition Zimbabwe as a tourist destination is that of image rebuilding. However, image rebuilding should be preceded by the creation of conducive macro and micro environments that could enable tourists to have confidence in the destination. If such environments are not created, a great deal of resources could be wasted on branding and imaging.

The media play a significant role in shaping tourists' attitudes and perceptions. Negative media coverage can jeopardise any branding initiative. This has been proven to be the case in Zimbabwe. As the destination has a negative image in source markets, a major task is to conduct an international benchmark study of the destination. Such a study could reveal the causes of the negative image and enable the destination to build a new image constructively. In a destination that experiences negative publicity, such as that experienced by Zimbabwe, there will continue to be tension between the stakeholders until they unite in respect of a common purpose of rebuilding and re-branding.

Respondents in the survey consider the application of destination branding in Zimbabwe to be reasonable. However merely having a destination brand is not enough. Branding should be complimented by a well-developed infrastructure, skilled workforce, favourable policies that encourage return on investment and by travel trade. Reference has been made to the fact that the application of destination branding in Zimbabwe lacks the level of sophistication that is proposed in the relevant literature. A high level of brand sophistication is a prerequisite for successful

destination branding. Whilst the respondents agree that the destination brand has a strong character and identity, it appears that there is no strategic co-ordination among the stakeholders and the institutions involved in the promotion of the destination. As a result of this lack of co-operation, various organisations that are involved in destination marketing have created individual images for their products.

The message and strap line that is currently being used for Zimbabwe is outdated and too general. Respondents strongly agree that the destination has failed to deliver on the brand as a result of its poor service delivery. Attractions, scenery, adventure and emotional appeal are the key elements that are emphasised in the current brand, but the destination has no defined destination-marketing strategies to market these elements and it has become over dependent on international tourists. The situation has been exacerbated by a lack of support from the local population who are ignorant about the brand. The Zimbabwean brand is perceived to be static and lacking in tangible and intangible elements. The destination has relied on word of mouth as a brand communication tool. Over reliance on this method has devastating consequences in a crisis situation, because it can not be controlled.

The study also reveals that the destination has relied on government-controlled printed media for the communication of its messages. The government-controlled media offer one-way communication, are expensive and not credible in the long run. To create a strong destination brand, requires a long-term rather than a short-term approach. Destination branding is a slow process that requires patience, perseverance and introspection.

## **9.4 A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC DESTINATION BRANDING AND POSITIONING**

One of the major objectives of the study was to develop a strategic destination-branding and positioning model. A basic model is proposed in chapter 3, which is based on the intensive literature review. The initial model consists of the following components: branding committee; planning and analysis; image; brand development; brand positioning; brand implementation; brand management; and brand evaluation.

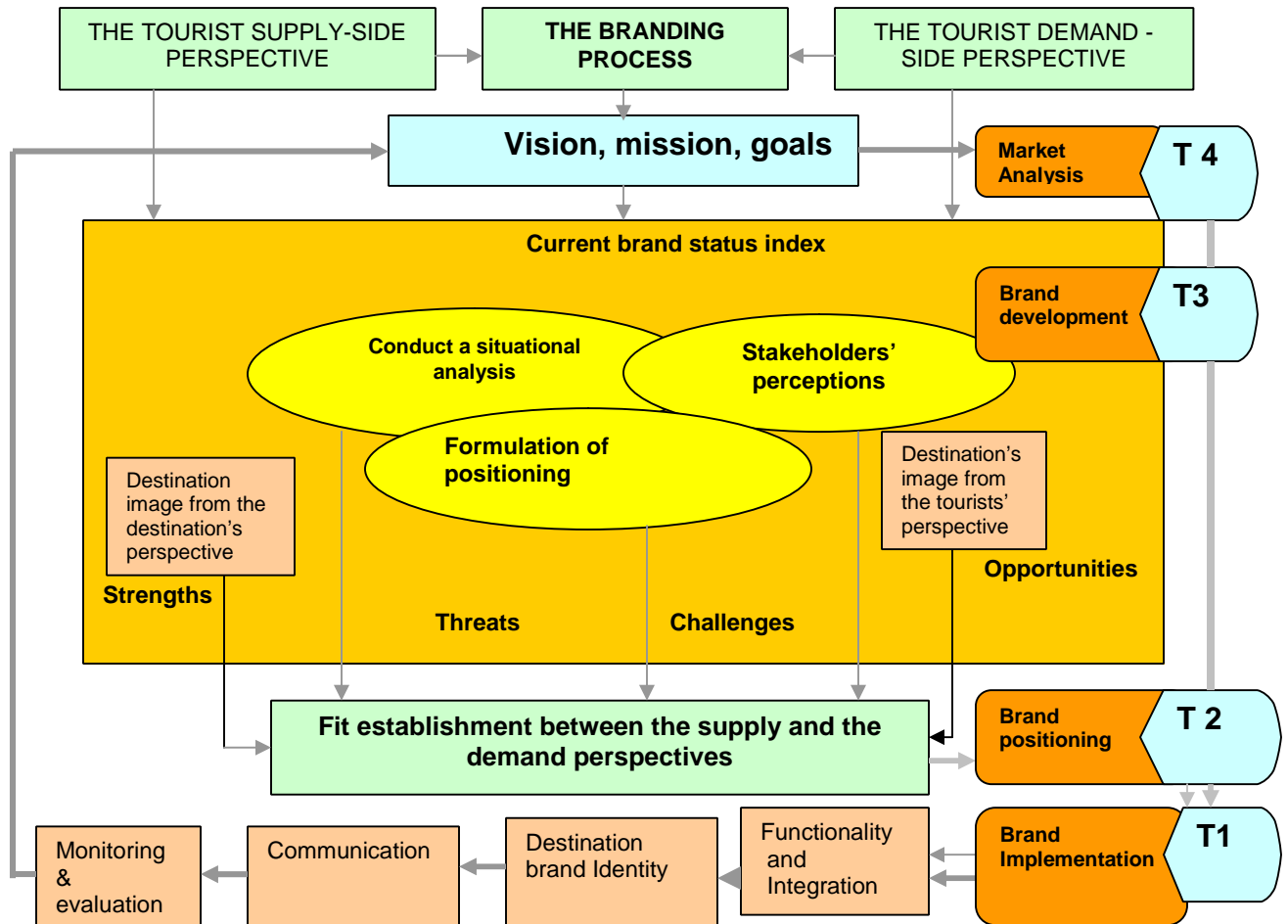
The Destination branding and positioning flow chart and the destination branding and public diplomacy campaigns model developed in chapters 3 and 4 were used as baseline for the development of the final framework, which is presented in chapter eight. The final model was refined and tested through empirical survey.

Therefore, the construction of the final framework took into account of the analysis of international best practices in branding and positioning of a destination (chapter 4); a situational analysis in Zimbabwe (chapter 5); and the empirical survey (chapters 6 and 7). In chapter 8, the proposed strategic destination-branding and positioning framework was compared to other branding, positioning, brand identity and image models

The aim of the present section is to present a summary of the final framework that is derived from this study.



**Figure 9.1 Summary of the strategic destination-branding and positioning framework**



**Source: Researcher's construction, 2009**

The final framework, which is presented by means of the above diagram, has a wider applicability and could be used by other tourism destinations, because it can be adapted to the regional, national, and local levels of tourism destination. The strategic destination-branding and positioning framework possesses a number of special features. It provides an explicit explanation of the components and steps that should be followed in destination branding and positioning. These components fulfil an important role in this model as they provide guidelines on the destination-branding

process. The following are the critical steps: market analysis; brand development; brand positioning and brand implementation; monitoring; and evaluation. A brief exposition of each of these steps is provided below.

#### **9.4.1 Market analysis**

A market analysis comprises an assessment of both the supply and the demand perspectives on the destination's image. The process involves the conducting of an audit of the image that is held by domestic and international tourists and the stakeholders (chapter 2). This analysis determines the brand architecture (chapter 2); positioning; identity; marketing and promotion (chapter 2 and 3); and also considers the factors that could erode brand equity (chapters 3 and 4). The purpose of the market analysis stage is to assist the marketers to gain a sound knowledge of the specific areas upon which they can base their decisions regarding the development of a brand. This stage is deemed to be the planning stage at which the key macro-environmental and micro- environmental analyses are undertaken. It is at this stage that the vision, mission and goals are formulated.

#### **9.4.2 Destination brand development**

The brand development phase consists mainly of an assessment of the outcomes of the market analysis as well as the information that is derived from the situational analysis (i.e. the analysis of possible areas of differentiation), stakeholders' perception (opinion leaders' views). Furthermore, it comprises the formulation of a positioning strategy (i.e. identification of the brand personality and choosing the

benefits to emphasize). It is a very important stage, because it contributes a great deal to brand positioning.

### **9.4.3 Destination brand positioning**

Brand positioning is a very important stage in this model. It involves the establishment of a fit between the supply and the demand perspectives on the destination's attributes as well as an analysis of the current brand status index. Positioning is determined by the image or perception of the tourists and results in the formulation of a competitive position for the destination (chapter 2) and a subsequent detailed marketing mix (chapter 2).

Unlike the other models that consider positioning solely from a product perspective, this model proposes that destination positioning should also consider other key factors. These factors include the architecture of the destination, history, way of life, festivals, events, culture, identify, and appropriate market segment as well as the development of the relevant promotional material. It takes into account the integrity of the government, stability of the currency, staff costs, available skills, technology and political stability (chapter 4). The process also includes the identification of the brand images, attributes and characteristics that contribute to the development of a brand proposition.

### **9.4.4 Brand implementation, monitoring and evaluation.**

Brand implementation is split into four unique stages, namely functionality and

integration; destination-brand identity; communication; and monitoring and evaluation. Destination branding and positioning is a continuous process and not a once-off event. The brand character, personality, essence, recognition and emotional appeal should resonate with the expectations of the target audience. One way to achieve such resonance is through the establishment of identity. Tourists should identify themselves with the brand's personality by means of its symbols, slogans and/or logos. The symbols/logos should be supported by promotional activities and communicated by means of various strategies, such as public relations, websites, advertising, marketing mix and public diplomacy. These activities should be monitored continuously and complemented by the use of more appealing marketing initiatives, assessment of the impact of the brand, continuous evaluation of and feedback regarding the brand's performance.

## 9.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made on the basis of the information obtained from the literature study and the empirical findings of the study. These recommendations are made under the following headings: Resource allocation, destination image, destination branding, brand identity, destination promotion and the development of crisis-management strategies.

### **a) *Resources allocation***

It is increasingly being accepted that destination branding requires a significant investment in terms of finance, infrastructure and human resources. Destination branding can not be achieved in isolation. It should be a co-operative national effort

that involves all the stakeholders. The study emphasises that destination branding can not be limited to an advertising campaign, slogan/sign or logo, although these symbols can contribute to the consolidation and reinforcement of pleasurable memories of the experience provided by the destination. These factors all contribute to the creation of an image that is perceived by visitors.

Resources are identified as key attributes that could contribute towards the success of a branding enterprise. If a brand is starved of marketing, human resources and funds, the popularity of the brand may decline. Respondents in the survey indicate the need to allocate adequate resources for the marketing of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination and the establishment of a sound base for both the national and the international marketing teams.

The study reveals that there is considerable under-utilisation of capacity in the Zimbabwean tourist facilities as a result of reduced visits and narrow range of activities resulting from short length of stay. The destination should upgrade its infrastructure and develop unique and innovative products to augment the existing products. While the destination boasts relevant and appropriate training programmes, friendly people and a service culture, these attributes are being compromised by the poor salaries paid to employees as a result of the decreasing profitability of the tourism industry as tourist arrivals continue to decline.

**b) *Destination image***

Studies should be undertaken to establish what tourists' perceptions are of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination. The image that caused Zimbabwe to stand out from its competitors in the previous decade has changed dramatically. In contrast,

South Africa's image has increased in stature. The situation in the country has therefore also been affected by changes in the competing landscape.

The study reveals that destination branding is intended to develop the economy and to benefit the country by selling its products and services. Since branding changes the mindset and is used to influence tourists in their purchase cue, the country should develop means and capabilities of managing its national image and the destination brand in order to make it as effective as possible in selling all its products, technology and services.

The study furthermore reveals that a destination-branding project comprises amongst other things the devising and entrenchment of an image that is shared by all the stakeholders. It should also be possible for the various industries and service providers to adapt the brand as it should not necessarily serve tourism only. If an image is shared by the entire nation, the target market adaptation is easier, and the potential to yield favourable results is maximized. The respondents indicate that the biggest task in Zimbabwe is to build differentiating messages and create visual ideas that could be put into words to encapsulate what the destination brand represents. The task can only be successful if there is increased market differentiation, taking into consideration the urgent need to dissociate the destination from its recent past by recreating a new image for the destination that paradoxically, emphasises, the scenic perspective; adventure; services and facilities; key attractions; emotional appeal; and infrastructure. To achieve this new position, the destination should ensure safety and security for tourists by, for example, declaring some tourist areas to be hooligan-free zones.

**c) *Re-branding the Destination***

Destination branding entails among other things the creation of a logo/slogan and/or graphics in order to identify the destination and to differentiate it from its competitors. Moreover, the branding process should from the outset involve the “buy in” of all the stakeholders, thereby ensuring that all the stakeholders participate in the branding process. This study concludes that destination branding is indeed a strategic tool for long-range tourism planning and that it could be used effectively in the formulation of a market segmentation strategy. Such a strategy could provide focus and integrate stakeholders’ efforts. Whereas the destination-branding process is concerned with alignment, it should be noted that consistently doing what is correct creates a symphony that harnesses the power of the greatest possible number of message partners and stakeholders within the destination.

This study also demonstrates that branding can contribute to influencing the influencers and to maintaining sound communication with those who control the messages, while minimising negative impacts for the destination. In the light of the current problems that are being experienced in Zimbabwe, the destination could benefit from a re-branding process. However, the study simultaneously indicates that non-tourism factors should also be taken into consideration in the re-branding process. The importance of these factors implies that an appropriate structure should be established to manage the brand and to ensure that the quality and performance standards of the brand do not deteriorate below the criteria that are set.

The study reveals that there is a lack of leadership regarding the management of brand equity and the review of the design, production and distribution of brochures. The destination should develop a clear strategic direction that fosters the attainment

of cohesion between the private and the public sectors. A shared vision could lead to the formation of strategic alliances, joint ventures with other international bodies and the luring of international airlines to again fly to the destination.

**d) *Destination positioning***

While Zimbabwe is not a novice in the selling of tourism experiences. Given the negative events that have been occurring in the country, the position projected by the “Africa’s Paradise” slogan is no longer appropriate, The study reveals that in the course of the 1990s, the Zimbabwean brand contributed to positioning the destination on the world map. However, some respondents in the survey are of the opinion that the brand positioning has outlived its usefulness, because it lacks an aggressive and forceful identity. It has lost its lustre and no longer lures tourists. For brand positioning to succeed, it is fundamental to ensure that the positioning exercise remains realistic and opportunistic at all times in order to avoid the risk of failure. Zimbabwe is renowned for its uniqueness, diversity, nature, hospitality, service and value for money. On the other hand its weaknesses as a destination are its political turmoil, instability of its currency and, above all, an economic recession.

It is apparent from the study that the destination should conduct market research and do intelligence gathering in order to identify the extent of visitor satisfaction and exploit new market segments. The information-gathering process should include a search for opportunities to build on the destination’s position, both locally and internationally. These objectives could be achieved by identifying markets that have large growth potential; undertaking public relations exercises through the media; and using the Internet to relay information on the destination. A destination should remain visible at all times, always counter negative publicity and promise to improve the



situation. The study recommends that the destination should not become involved in a tug of war with the international media, but should invite representatives of the media to experience the destination at first hand.

**e) *Destination identity***

A prominent issue that emerges from this study is the importance of brand identity, which provides the impetus for the achievement of a competitive advantage. It should remain a priority for a destination such as Zimbabwe, if it is to adopt the best practice in destination branding. Zimbabwe had identified itself as “Africa’s Paradise”, but this positioning statement is described by some of the respondents as “a shoddy job” that was done haphazardly without satisfactory consultations. The industry and other stakeholders appear to be confused about the use of the strap line, “Africa’s Paradise”. This confusion indicates that there is no strategic fit between the destination and its positioning strategy.

The study concludes that the continued use of the present brand will not yield positive results. The brand is said to have a poor brand identity selling point. The findings of the study suggest that it is necessary to apply a holistic approach to Zimbabwe’s brand identity by rebuilding the brand’s character, personality, essence, culture and blueprint. A brand identity should be in accordance with the tourists’ experiences and should be distinctive

The findings of the study lead to the recommendation that the destination should devise trailblazing strategies that involve all the stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the strategies and encourage their collaborative investment in them. The establishment of a brand identity could also involve the issuing of

invitations to ambassadors of source market governments to sample Zimbabwe's tourism products while simultaneously creating multiple linkages within the Southern African Development Community (SADC). To achieve success with the establishment of these multiple linkages there is need to promote the creation of peace parks in order to broaden the product base.

Zimbabwe's brand identity has been blurred by a high level of corruption and it has been plagued by internal operating problems, political turmoil, inflation, HIV/AIDS and the failure of the leaders to admit the existence of a crisis. The government should address these issues aggressively.

**f) *Promoting the destination***

It should be acknowledged that destination branding is a long-term investment, but that the brand is nevertheless destined to become obsolete in the long term. A brand should be established and promoted for at least a generation.

It is furthermore recommended that the promotion of the destination should not be considered to be the responsibility of the government only. It is essential that provision should be made for continuity. Therefore the destination brand should be designed professionally (i.e. political connotations should be avoided) to ensure that it survives a change of the government. Moreover, a brand should be owned and promoted by the inhabitants as a national asset and be considered to be a strategic marketing tool for all export business.

It is also recommended that promotion of tourism should be directed at the establishment of credibility. An essential part of such credibility is the establishment

of management standards for self-control and self-maintenance in the tourism industry. These standards are dependent on the development of quality standards and on the functioning of control and monitoring mechanisms in respect of the use of the brand by the various sectors of the tourism industry. Since the “seven Ps” of tourism marketing are applicable all over the world, these principles are also available to Zimbabwe and it a matter of urgency for this country to begin to customise its marketing strategies. It is recommended that the destination should develop clear marketing objectives, promotional plans and mitigating strategies that could contribute to enhancing the image of the destination while also keeping it affordable for tourists. The destination should send out positive signals to the international world in order to garner consumer goodwill.

**g) *Destination’s competitive advantage***

A new approach to the repositioning of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination is recommended. The approach should be based on the competitive advantage that the destination has over its competitors and on the changing market demands, as outlined in the model. While the destination has a competitive advantage over its competitors and excellent tourism potential, it is considered to have poor market penetration as a result of its negative image in source markets. Although the most commonly used communication tools in branding and positioning are websites, electronic media, public relations and travel expos, respondents indicate that Zimbabwe tends to rely primarily on travel expos and a website that is not current. The destination should develop and update its website regularly and use it as a marketing tool.

***h) Development of crisis management strategies***

It is recommended that Zimbabwe should develop crisis management strategies to protect its destination brand and enable itself to transform a crisis situation into an opportunity. A strategy of this nature could be achieved through the use of a number of approaches that could include focusing on the positive aspects of the destination; highlighting special circumstances; focusing attention on other non tourism elements of the destination which have a direct impact on the destination in order to change the way that people think about the destination; shifting paradigms; and creating a new destination image.

Destination-marketing strategies that could be employed during a crisis situation include the use of promotion, market-segment mix, channel mix, geographical mix and/or even product mix. All of these factors should be considered and steps should be taken to address the prevailing needs and to generate the outcome that the destination desires in a crisis situation. Destinations should develop a blueprint that details a crisis communication plan and a spokesperson for the destination should be nominated to take charge of the plan. The plan should specify what is required of the spokesperson, the training that is to be given, development of messages, recruitment of third party media spokespersons and identification of key media contacts. The successful execution of the plan is of critical importance and the destination should rehearse the blueprint in preparation for a crisis.

## **9.6 ISSUES THAT REQUIRE FURTHER RESEARCH**

The following four broad areas are identified for further research on the branding and repositioning of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination:

competitiveness in tourism, but it can not guarantee success. The model developed in this study could be applied to any international destination that is embarking on a branding and positioning exercise.

- The application of the strategic branding and positioning model that was developed in this study in other destinations that are experiencing circumstances that are similar to that in Zimbabwe and to compare the results with the findings of this study.
- Assessing the effect of politics on branding and its impact on the marketing of a tourism destination, with particular reference to Zimbabwe.
- Evaluate the level of collaboration amongst stakeholders in the destination-branding process and its impact on the position that Zimbabwe holds as a tourist destination.

## **9.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This study contributes to the prevailing literature on destination marketing, particularly in the field of destination branding and positioning. It has led to the development of a strategic destination-branding and positioning model. The study also contributes to the clarification of the complexity of destination branding by streamlining the closely related and interlinked terms that are usually used interchangeably, for example branding, destination brand and nation branding. It also illustrates the close relationship that exists between destination branding, destination image and destination positioning. These factors are clarified by means of both the literature review that was undertaken and the empirical survey that was conducted.

While destination branding is a strategic tool in the repositioning of a destination, the empirical evidence indicates that there are also non-tourism factors that could affect the health of the brand. Therefore branding is indeed a tool for achieving greater

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## **Personal Interviews**

A. Musonza, Deputy General Manager. Elephant Hills Hotel Victoria. Interviewed by the Researcher, 20 June, 2007

E. Nyakunu, Former Chief Executive Officer for Zimbabwe Council for Tourism (ZCT), Harare. Interviewed by the Researcher, 25 June, 2007

J. Manjengwa, Marketing and Communications Manager. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, (ZTA), Harare. Interviewed by the Researcher, 25 June, 2007.

L. Banda, Training Manager. Zimbabwe Sun Hotels (ZIMSUN). Harare. Interviewed by the Researcher, 30 June 2007.

N. Chikudza, 2007 Quality controller Manager. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA). Harare. Interviewed by the Researcher, 26 June, 2007

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: COVERING LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRES

#### COVERING LETTER

Dear Respondent,

#### THE BRANDING OF ZIMBABWE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

A study is currently being conducted of destination branding with particular reference to Zimbabwe. The study, which aims to, among others, address the following objectives, is being undertaken under the auspices of the University of Pretoria:

- To clarify the context and importance of branding in destination marketing
- To investigate the current and potential role of branding in the marketing of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination
- To determine stakeholder attitudes, experiences and expectations regarding the branding of Zimbabwe
- To develop a framework and strategic guidelines for the future branding and positioning of destinations such as Zimbabwe.

As you are a key stakeholder in Zimbabwe's tourism industry, you will have valuable insights that can assist us to achieve the study objectives. We would therefore greatly appreciate, if you could spend some time answering key questions about the branding of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination.

This survey is an attached word document and should take around 20 minutes to complete. We have tried to make it as "user friendly" as possible. You can type your responses directly on the questionnaire, save it and return it to the e-mail address below, or fax it to the number below.

Once completed, a summary of the key findings of this research will be sent to all participants with our grateful acknowledgement. We will be very pleased if you may return the completed questionnaire by the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2007.

Thank you

RESEARCHER: Mr Joram Ndlovu [E-mail: ndlovuj@msu.ac.zw](mailto:ndlovuj@msu.ac.zw): [ndlovujol@yahoo.com](mailto:ndlovujol@yahoo.com)



PROJECT LEADER: Prof Ernie Heath – [ernie.heath@up.ac.za](mailto:ernie.heath@up.ac.za)

# QUESTIONNAIRE 1

## SURVEY OF DESTINATION BRANDING WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ZIMBABWE

### SECTION 1: AWARENESS OF DESTINATION BRANDING

1.1 Select one destination that best describes your understanding of successful Destination branding.

.....  
.....

1.2 Why have you chosen this destination?

.....  
.....  
.....

1.3 From your perspective, which of the following statements most accurately describes the key role of destination branding:

To support the creation of a name, symbol, logo and or graphics, which both identify and differentiate the destination from competing destinations	1
To convey the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination.	2
To consolidate and reinforce the collection of pleasurable memories of the experience provided by the destination, all with the intent purpose of creating an image that is accurately perceived by visitors.	3

1.4 What are your views on the following possible key features of destination branding? Use a Likert Scale 1 – 5, where 1 = disagree, 3 = agree and 5 = greatly agree.

Possible key features of destination branding	1	2	3	4	5
Branding involves buy in from the start making sure that all the stakeholders are involved in the building process from an early stage.					
It is more than an advertising campaign which requires constant internal and external reminders and messages in order to win the minds and hearts of visitors.					
It helps to influence the influencers and maintain good communication with those who control messages while minimizing negative impacts.					
It creates a symphony to harness the power of as many messages, partners and stakeholders within a region as is possible and the strongest umbrella brand.					
It is concerned with alignment by doing what is correct constantly.					
Branding helps to identify products and helps to distinguish them from competitors.					
Branding is used in marketing segmentation strategy and provides focus for the integration of stakeholders' efforts.					
It is a strategic weapon for long range planning in tourism.					



## SECTION 2: ZIMBABWE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

2.1 In a few words or a phrase, describe your view of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

2.2 From a visitor perspective, which of the following components of Zimbabwe will, in your opinion, provide pleasant or unpleasant surprises?

	Components	Pleasant surprises	Unpleasant surprises
1	Attractions and parks		
2	Road infrastructure and communication		
3	Superstructure		
4	Quality of service and people		
5	Peace and safety		
6	Culture and events		
7	Recreational activities		
8	Value for money		

2.3 In your own opinion, what is Zimbabwe's key differentiator as a tourist destination, relative to its key competitors?

Facilities	1
Geographical location	2
Infrastructure	3
Attractions	4
Ambience	5
Hospitality and service	6
Accessibility	7
Value for money	8
Other (Please specify).... Friendly people.....	9

2.4 In your own opinion, are adequate resources allocated for the marketing Zimbabwe as a tourist destination?

Adequate	1
Inadequate	2
Do not know	3

2.5 To the best of your knowledge are there national or international marketing teams



to market Zimbabwe?

National	1
International	2
Both	3
Do not know	4

2.6 In recent times various negative comments have been made concerning Zimbabwe as a destination. Please indicate whether you agree or not with the statements outlined.

Statements		Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	No comment
1	Bad publicity in source markets.			
2	Poor service delivery.			
3	Not delivering on the brand promise.			
4	Over-dependency on international tourism.			
5	No defined tourism destination marketing strategies .			
6	No aggressive marketing in source markets.			

### SECTION 3: STAKEHOLDER ATTITUDES TOWARD ZIMBABWE'S BRANDING AND COMPETITIVE POSITIONING

3.1 Based on the definition of branding you selected in Section 1 (Question 1.3), to what extent do you think the concept of destination branding is being applied in Zimbabwe?

Not at all			To a great extent	
1	2	3	4	5

3.2 In your opinion, which of the following are the key elements (if any) emphasized in the Zimbabwe's current tourism brand approach?

1	Emotional appeal	
2	Nostalgia	
3	Key attractions	
4	Out-door activities	
5	Scenic and adventure	

6	Services and facilities	
7	Infrastructure	
8	Peace and safety	
9	Other. Please specify. Friendly people	

- 3.3 In your opinion, what are Zimbabwe's tourism brand identity selling points? Please identify the most compelling points and rate them. Use a scale 1 to 5, where 1 = not at all up to 5 = to a great extent.

Branding identity selling points		1	2	3	4	5
1	Image (perception about the brand in the visitors' minds)					
2	Personality (human characteristics associated with the brand)					
3	Essence (emotional elements and values of the brand)					
4	Brand culture (how the brand will live up to its promise to visitors)					
5	Brand blueprint (architecture of the brand outlining various messages that will communicate the promise)					
6	Brand character (how the brand is perceived and constituted internally i.e. integrity, trustworthiness and honesty)					
7	Other. Specify.					

- 3.4 Rate the following statements that best describe your impressions of the Zimbabwean brand? Use a Likert Scale 1 – 5 where 1 = disagree, 3 = agree and 5 = greatly agree.

Statements		1	2	3	4	5
1	The tourism brand has measurable objectives.					
2	The tourism brand has tangible characteristics representative of the destination.					
3	The tourism brand is so unique and novel.					
4	The tourism brand promise is in accordance with the tourists' experience offered.					
5	The brand has an emotional appeal.					
6	The brand can be used for market leadership.					
7	The brand has a distinctive advantage over its competitors					
8	The brand has a strong character and identity.					

- 3.5 The main objectives of positioning are to increase the distinctiveness of a place in the minds of potential customers by evoking images of a destination which differentiates it from competitors.

To the best of your knowledge does the destination have any positioning strategy relative to competing destinations?

Yes	1
No	2

3.6 If your answer to question 3.5 is 'yes', how would you describe Zimbabwe's tourism positioning strategy?

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

3.7 Compared to three popular destinations indicated below, where would you benchmark Zimbabwe? Use the following grid, 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = very good and 5= excellent, to compare Zimbabwe's positioning against its key competitors.

Destination	Brand image	Market Penetration	Tourism potential
South Africa			
Zambia			
Mozambique			

3.7 In your opinion, what do you think are the most commonly used methods to communicate the branding and positioning of the destination to both the domestic and international tourists? Please indicate your answer with an (X) in the table below.

	Information source	Most commonly used in destination branding	Applied to the Zimbabwean situation	Zimbabwe's rating of tools				
				1	2	3	4	5
1	Direct sales							
2	Website							
3	Electronic media							
4	Print media							
5	Public relations							
6	Word of mouth							
7	Travel expos							
8	Road shows							
9	Other. Specify							

#### SECTION 4: CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR ZIMBABWE'S FUTURE BRANDING AND POSITIONING

4.1 Briefly describe your key expectations regarding the future tourism branding of Zimbabwe.....  
.....  
.....

4.2 In your own view, do you think that a specific logo should be a key element in

Zimbabwe's future branding strategy?

1	Yes	
2	No	
3	Do not know	

4.3 In your own opinion what is the most appropriate strategy that could be used to reposition Zimbabwe as a tourist destination? Please select the most appropriate strategy.

Image rebuilding	1
Increased brand awareness	2
Establish points of difference	3
Identify new target markets	4
Create different marketing campaigns for different segments	5
Other. Please specify.	6

4. 5. From the literature review and analysis of successfully branded destinations, it is apparent that there are various key aspects which need to be addressed when developing a successful destination branding strategy. Indicate on a scale of 1- 5 (1 = disagree to 5 = strongly agree), the extent to which you agree or disagree with regard to the following statements pertaining to Zimbabwe's future tourism branding strategy.

Development of the future Zimbabwean destination brand		1	2	3	4	5
1	There should be collaboration between the Government and stakeholders at the destination.					
2	There should be congruency between the brand's physical and social values at the destination level.					
3	The brand should support the vision of sustainable destination development.					
4	The brand should project a simple, appealing, believable and distinct image.					
5	There should be an umbrella concept to cover the country's separate branding activities.					
6	The Zimbabwean brand should focus on definite target markets.					
7	The brand should identify and define the destination's attributes as a basis for branding activities.					
8	The brand should have a catchy slogan, images and/or symbols.					
9	The brand should be used as a marketing tool at special events.					
10	It is essential that stakeholders understand and embrace Zimbabwe's tourism brand strategy as the umbrella for their respective marketing initiatives. .					
11	A destination brand situational analysis is essential as a base for future branding strategy.					

12	Tourism industry stakeholders should be involved in the development of a destination brand strategy.					
13	Current and prospective visitor perceptions should be considered in brand strategy formulation.					
14	Competitive destination branding strategies should be evaluated when developing a destination brands strategy.					
15	The brand status and competitive positioning of the destination should be monitored, evaluated and benchmarked regularly.					
16	When developing a destination brand strategy, all stakeholders must be encouraged to live and implement the brand.					
17	At the destination level, an umbrella brand needs to be created so that private sector and regional stakeholders can link into the brand.					
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.					
19	The destination should embark on a public diplomacy strategy in order to create a positive image for the destination.					

4.6 In your own opinion, how often should the Zimbabwe's tourism brand status be reviewed?

1	Monthly	
2	Quarterly	
3	Half yearly	
4	Yearly	
5	Never	

4.7 What are your suggestions and recommendations concerning future strategies for Tourism branding in Zimbabwe?.....  
.....  
.....

4.8 Do you have any specific comments concerning the critical success factors to Brand and position Zimbabwe as a tourist destination in the future?  
.....  
.....

4.9 N.B. Please feel free to make any further comments and/or suggestions regarding this study: .....  
.....  
.....

## SECTION 5: GENERAL INFORMATION

- 5.1. Name of your organisation (optional): .....
- 5.2. Position of the person completing the questionnaire:
- 5.3. Type of organisation (Please tick or specify)

Tourism representative body	1
Destination marketing organisation	2
Overseas tour operator	3
Private sector stakeholder with an international tourism product	4
Airline focusing on Zimbabwe	5
Other (Please specify): .....	6

- 5.4. Private Sector Stakeholder. Please specify the nature of your business

Tourist attraction	1
Accommodation facility	2
Conference facility	3
Game lodge/nature reserve	4
Distribution channel (e.g. tour operator/travel agent)	5
Airline	6
Ground transport (rail, coach, car rental, etc.)	7
Other (please specify) .....	8

- 5.5 What are the estimated percentage shares of your domestic and international Business?

Business	Percentage
Domestic	
International	

- 5.6. For how long has your organisation been in operation? Tick the appropriate box.

1 - 5 years	1
6 - 10 years	2
Longer than 10 years	3

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY  
YOUR INPUT IS SINCERELY APPRECIATED

## QUESTIONNAIRE 2

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

- 1 In regard to destination marketing how would you define the concept destination branding?
2. Based on the supplied definition of destination branding, to what extent is your organisation applying the concept of destination branding?
3. In your own opinion, what does the Zimbabwean brand represent?
4. Who were involved in the design of your logo/brand?
5. What were your critical factors that you considered in deciding your final brand /logo?
- 6 Was your brand/logo pre-tested to ensure that it clearly and accurately reflects the desired image and experience of the destination?
- 7 Does your brand/logo support the overall vision and strategic plan for the destination and how do you ensure copyrights from competitors?
- 8 What image or experience are you trying to create through your brand other marketing activities?
- 9 To what extent do you involve Industry in the development of the Tourism brand and what are your future expectations of industry in the development of the Zimbabwe tourism Brand?
- 10 To what extent do you feel that you have been successful in creating your desired image?
- 11 To what extent do you measure if the visitor's perceive your destination image the way you want it to be perceived?
- 12 Do you have a video that reinforces your destination's logo/brand in the local or international arena?
- 13 How competitive is Zimbabwe's brand position against its competitors in Southern Africa?
- 14 What are the major critical success factors used for branding and positioning Zimbabwe?
- 15 How strong is the brand position relative to key competitive brands?





- 16 In your own view, what do you think are the perceived constraints and opportunities relating to Zimbabwe's branding and positioning effort?
- 17 What is the level of awareness and attitudes of stakeholders towards the destination's brand?
- 18 What is your future plan for branding and positioning the destination?
19. Do you have any additional comments that you think have not been covered by the preceding questions?

## APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis Number	Hypothesis	Summary of Tests
H1	Destination branding is a positive determinant of the key strategy links in destination branding	$X^2 = 168.2$ $X(3;0.05) = 7.815$ Since $X^2 < x$ calculated the Ho is rejected and it is concluded that at the 0.05 level of significance destination branding is a positive determinant of the key strategy features of destination branding.
H2	Destination brand is a positive determinant of the performance of destination brand	$Z = 453/1216 - 76/152 / (76/152) (76/152) = -1.55/1216 / (1/4864) = -8.8898$ reject Ho at the 0.05 level of significance and conclude that destination brand is a positive determinant of the performance of the destination
H3	Destination performance is a positive determinant of brand strategy	$X^2 = 4/89 + 51^2/94 + 49^2/99 + 4^2/180 + 50^2/191 + 50^2/201 = 77.5$ $X(2;0.05) = 5.991$ Reject Ho at the 0.05 level of significance and conclude that H3 is true. There is no independence.
H4	Brand position is a positive determinant of the destination brand	$Z = (401/1368 - 1/2) / \sqrt{1/1368(1/2)(1/2)}$ $Z = -15.3$ . Reject Ho at the 0.05 level of significance and conclude that the brand position is a determinant of destination branding.
H5	Brand Identity is a positive determinant of the destination brand	$X^2(4;0.05) = 9.488$ $X_{calc} = 28^2/67 + 27^2/213 + 1/23 + 16^2/67 + 16^2/213 + 44^2/69 + 117^2/60 + 1/23 = 276.4$ Since $X^2_{[4,0.05]} < X_{cal}$ . Reject Ho and conclude at the 0.05 level of significance that the selling points of the brand identity and responses are dependent. Therefore brand identity is a positive determinant of the destination brand
H6	Destination image is a positive determinant of the destination brand	$X^2 = 14^2/8 + 2^2/8 + 7^2/8 + 14^2/236 + 0 + 5^2/236 + 10^2/237 + 28^2/63 + 12^2/63 + 6^2/63 + 10^2/63 = 49.38$ $X^2(6;0.05) = 12.592$ Since $X^2(6;0.05) < X^2_{calc}$ , reject Ho and conclude that, at the 0.05 level of significance, destination image is a positive determinant of destination brand
H7	Macro-environmental and micro-environmental analysis is a positive determinant of the destination position	$X^2 = 21^2/13 + 8^2/14 + 13^2/13 + 17^2/70 + 10^2/71 + 7^2/67 + 22^2/44 + 40^2/45 + 17^2/42 + 15^2/20 + 13^2/20 + 2^2/20 = 130.7$ Since $X^2 = 130.7 > X^2(6;0.05)$ Reject Ho and conclude that there is no independence between destination and brand image



H8	Micro-environmental and micro-environmental analysis is a positive determinant of brand identity	$Z_{stat} = P^{\wedge} - Po / (PoQo/n) = (147/760 - 1/2) / (760 / 1/4) = -16.90$ $Z_{stat} > Z_{table}$ , reject $H_0$ and conclude at $\alpha = 0.05$ that $H_8$ is true at $\alpha = 0.05$ .
H9	Evaluation and monitoring is a positive determinant of brand identity	$Z_{stat} = P^{\wedge} - Po / (PoQo/n) = (351/760 - 1/2) / (760 / 1/4) = -2.1$ $Z_{stat} > Z_{table}$ . reject $H_0$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ Evaluation and monitoring is a positive determinant of brand identity
H10	Control is a positive determinant of the brand image	$Z_{stat} = P^{\wedge} - Po / (PoQo/n) = (150/760 - 1/2) / (760 / 1/4) = -16.7$ Since $Z_{stat} > Z_{table}$ , reject $H_0$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ and conclude that control is a positive determinant of destination image.
H11	Destination branding is a positive determinant of the communication methods used	$X^2 = 67.01$ ; $X^2_{(6,0.05)} = 12.59$ $X^2_{calc} > X^2_{(6,0.05)}$ Reject $H_0$ and conclude that at $\alpha = 0.05$ there is no independence. Therefore destination branding is a positive determinant of brand communication methods.
H12	Destination branding is a positive determinant of destination rebranding strategies	$Z = P^{\wedge} - Po / (PoQo/n) = (75 - 76) / (23.1 / 1/4) = -0.53$ Therefore $Z_{cal}$ falls within the acceptance region. $H_0$ is accepted and it is concluded that destination branding is a positive determinant of rebranding strategies.
H13	Brand positioning is a positive determinant of destination branding	$Z = P^{\wedge} - Po / (PoQo/n) = (126 - 76) / (381 / 152) = 1.6$ Reject $H_0$ at 0.05 level of significance and conclude that brand position is a determinant of destination branding
H14	Key features of destination branding are positive determinants of rebranding strategies	$X^2 = 49/56 + 1/56 + 25/45 + 16^2 / 140 + 35^2 / 140 + 9^2 / 113 + 19^2 / 55 + 33^2 / 553 + 15^2 / 445$ $X^2_{(4;0.05)} = 9.488$ Since $X^2_{(4;0.05)} > X^2_{calc}$ , reject $H_0$ and conclude that there is independence between the factors. Hence key branding aspects are positive determinants of rebranding strategies. Therefore the results indicate that destination branding is a positive determinant of rebranding strategies

## APPENDIX 3: INFERENCE STATISTICS

### 1.0 Statistical tests to prove conclusions

#### 1.1. Variance, Validity and Reliability

Variance is one of the important measures of dispersion and is usually affected by the standard deviation, which is the most important measure of dispersion.

The Co-efficient of variation helps show how far a response lays from the mean.

##### 1.1.1. Analysis of variance in Sample

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Years organisation have been operating	152	2.3355	.8295	.688
Type of organisation	152	3.61	1.13	1.287
Valid N (list wise)	152			

In the above table, the coefficients of variation are shown as 0.688 and 1.287 respectively. The closer the coefficient of variation to zero, the lower the variability and the tighter the clustering of responses around the mean. In the above table, there is close clustering of responses regarding the years the target organizations have been operating. There was less variation in the years of operation, which there is high variation in the types of organizations which were targeted.

##### 1.1.2. Validity and Reliability testing using variance

The above table shows that there is high reliability in the use of the targeted organizations since the high variation took care of any biases which could result from surveying closely similar organizations.

#### Analysis of Variance in Responses

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Branding creates symphony to harness the power of messages and stakeholders	152	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.4605	1.3116	1.720
Branding involves buy in and stakeholder involvement	152	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.6842	1.2203	1.489

Branding requires constant internal and external reminders	152	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.7105	1.1136	1.240
Branding is used in marketing segmentation strategy and provides focus and integrate stakeholders efforts	152	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.8684	1.2108	1.466
Valid N (listwise)	152						

There is high variability in the responses given for the particular question. From the standard deviation we can easily obtain the standard deviation (Punch, 1998:114). This variance is the square root of the variance. This means that the standard deviation can give us a numerical estimate of the level of spread in the data. Therefore the high variability was as a result of the differences in the sample population. Some respondents viewed branding from a product point of view while others thought branding was a sign, logo, or symbol.

## 2 Chi-square Test

### Type of organization

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Tourism representative body	15	25.3	-10.3
destination marketing organization	13	25.3	-12.3
overseas tour operator	9	25.3	-16.3
Private sector stakeholder with international product	96	25.3	70.7
Airline focusing on Zimbabwe	18	25.3	-7.3
Training	1	25.3	-24.3
Total	152		

A chi-square test can be used to test if the two variables are related; this can be achieved through the use of cross-tabulations. It has two sets of variables namely the observed and the expected. The difference between the observed and the expected will result in the residual value. This value is then used to make conclusions to decide on the importance of the differences between the variables. This test shows that there are no significant differences between variables. It can be inferred that the

difference in the results the ANOVA and the chi-square test is a result of variability of factors affecting the brand.

### 3. T Test Statistics

	type of organization
Chi-Square	243.368
df	5
Asymp. Sig.	.000

A 0 cell (0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 25.3.

Testing the relationship between respondent's Occupation and their Best description of a Brand

### 2. Chi-Square Tests

$H_0$  There exists a relationship between respondents' occupation and their description of a brand

$H_1$  There is no relationship between the respondents' occupation and their description a brand

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.718	14	0.783
Likelihood Ratio	9.878	14	0.771
N of Valid Cases	152		

A 14 cells (58.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 21.

If the expected value is less than 5, we reject the Null Hypothesis. The above table shows Chi Square Values of less than 5. Therefore there is no relationship between the two variables. Therefore we reject  $H_0$  and conclude that there is no relationship between a respondent's occupation and their description of a brand.

### 5. Cramer's V and Contingency Co-efficient

#### Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.253	0.783
	Cramer's V	0.179	0.783
	Contingency Coefficient	0.245	0.783
N of Valid Cases		152	

A. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

B. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis

Cramer's V values should lie between -1 and 1. The closer to 1, the stronger the relationship. Therefore, the above table shows a high positive relationship between one's Occupation and their best description of a Brand. There is a significant difference between the chi-square test and the Cramer's V and contingency Co-efficient. The results show that the difference may have been caused by other factors. The conclusions of this study are that even though branding can be used as a strategic tool in repositioning a destination, there are other underlying factors which need to be considered.

## 6. T-Test

The T-Test is used to test the null hypothesis that the variable means is equal to the sample mean when the variable being investigated has a normal distribution in the sample or population.

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.148	6	0.525
Likelihood Ratio	4.807	6	0.569
N of Valid Cases	152		

A. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 20.

When the expected value is less than 5, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no relationship between the respondents' occupation and their description of a brand.

## 7. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.184	0.525
	Cramer's V	0.130	0.525
	Contingency Coefficient	0.181	0.525
N of Valid Cases		152	

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c Correlation statistics are available for numeric data only.

Cramer's Values should lie between -1 and 1. The closer to 1, the stronger the relationship

Therefore there is strong positive relationship between the variables. Therefore respondents in similar occupations tend to give similar definitions.

### 7.1 One-Sample T Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
branding involves buy in and stakeholder involvement	152	3.6842	1.2203	9.898
brand influences communication and minimize negative impacts	152	3.6316	1.1831	9.596
branding is concerned with constantly doing what is right	152	4.0395	1.1954	9.696
branding is used in marketing segmentation strategy and provides focus and integrate stakeholders efforts	152	3.8684	1.2108	9.821
branding is a strategic weapon for long range planning	152	3.9342	1.2799	0.1038
branding helps to identify products and helps to distinguish from competitors	152	4.0395	1.0025	8.132

### 7.2 One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Branding involves buy in and stakeholder involvement	37.223	151	.000	3.6842	3.4887	3.8798
brand influences communication and minimize negative impacts	37.843	151	.000	3.6316	3.4420	3.8212
branding is concerned with constantly doing what is right	41.663	151	.000	4.0395	3.8479	4.2310





branding is used in marketing segmentation strategy and provides focus and integrate stakeholders efforts	39.390	151	000	3.8684	3.6744	4.0625
branding is a strategic weapon for long range planning	37.898	151	000	3.9342	3.7291	4.1393
branding helps to identify products and helps to distinguish from competitors	49.677	151	000	4.0395	3.8788	4.2001

From the statistics above a conclusion can be reached that branding involves stakeholders' involvement, influences communication, is a market segmentation strategy, is a strategic weapon for long range planning and hence helps to identify products and used to distinguish one's products from competitors. Therefore branding is concerned about doing what is right.

## 8. Spearman's rank order

### Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
type of organization	3.61	1.13	152
branding helps to identify products and helps to distinguish from competitors	4.0395	1.0025	152

### 8.1 Correlations

		type of organization	branding helps to identify products and helps to distinguish from competitors
type of organization	Pearson Correlation	1.000	0.49
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	5.51
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	194.316	8.368

	Covariance	1.287	5.542
branding helps to identify products and helps to distinguish from competitors	Pearson Correlation	0.49	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	5.51	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	8.368	151.763
	Covariance	5.542	1.005

a List wise N=152

## 8.2 Correlations

			type of organization	branding helps to identify products and helps to distinguish from competitors
Spearman's rho	type of organization	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.68
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	4.06
	branding helps to identify products and helps to distinguish from competitors	Correlation Coefficient	0.68	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	4.06	.

a List wise N = 152

$R^2$  is the co-efficient of determination. The value shows 68% of the variability in the response that branding helps to identify products and helps to distinguish from competitors. 32% are other factors. Since 68% is more than half, therefore branding is a very strong factor.

## 9. Regression

### Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
branding involves buy in and stakeholder involvement	3.6842	1.2203	152
type of organization	3.61	1.13	152



### 9.1 Correlations

		branding involves buy in and stakeholder involvement	type of organization
Pearson Correlation	branding involves buy in and stakeholder involvement	1.000	0.91
	type of organization	0.91	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	branding involves buy in and stakeholder involvement		1.32
	type of organization	1.32	
N	branding involves buy in and stakeholder involvement	152	152
	type of organization	152	152

### Conclusion

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	SE of the Estimate
1	0.91	0.08	0.02	1.2192

a Predictors: (Constant), type of organization

R<sup>2</sup> is the co-efficient of determination. The value shows that 91% of the variability in the response that stakeholders should be involved when coming up with a brand is accounted for by the type of organization where the sample was drawn, while 9% is accounted for by all the other factors. Therefore the type of an organization strongly determines the definition of branding.